

JOURNAL JOTS FOR KEEP CLIMBING



Love your neighbor as yourself.¹

MUSSAR² Everyday Holiness

for

TAMMUZ

The ultimate threat to the soul is sleep. Once the other has called us, once we have fallen in love, we are enjoined to a life of never-ending responsibility. This love has

¹ Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19, James 2:8

² Learning to live right and holy according to the principals we learn from Scripture.

taken away from us the the ever-present luxury of infancy: the freedom to fall asleep at will. As adults, we must always be wakeful and on guard; we must sleep with one eye open, as parents learn to do in the presence of their children.

Yet to live in a state of such sleeplessness is exhausting. We seek relief, which can come at the hands of yet others for whom we have not yet accounted. We do not live in the world alone with our Beloved. We live in a broader community. We do so, in larger part, so that the demands of infinite commandment, the demand of sleeplessness can be shared...

Without such a community the sleeplessness required by love would be unbearable... Learning to stay more awake is central to Mussar practice.

~ Rabbi Ira Stone, *A Responsible Life: The Spiritual Path of Mussar*

The following JOURNAL JOTS are taken from *To Heal A Fractured World - The Ethics Of Responsibility* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. As we climb together, may our Abba's heart more brightly shine in and through each one of us.

DAY - 1

The G-d who created the world in love calls on us to create in love.

DAY - 2

The G-d who gave us the gift of freedom asks us to use it to honor and enhance the freedom of others.

DAY - 3

More than G-d is a strategic intervener, He is a teacher. More than He does our will, He teaches us how to do His.

DAY - 4

More than any previous generation in history, we have come to see the individual as the sole source of meaning. We have become lonely selves in search of purely personal fulfilment. But surely that must be wrong. Life alone is only half a life.

DAY - 5

It is worth reminding ourselves that there is such a thing as ethics, and it belongs to the life we live together and the goods we share - the goods that only exist in virtue of being shared.

DAY - 6

Within the limits of human intelligence, we can climb at least part of the way to heaven, but the purpose of the climb is the return to earth, knowing that here is where G-d wants us to be and where he has given us work to do.

DAY - 7

Honor the image of G-d in other people.

DAY - 8

Someone else's physical needs are my spiritual obligation.

DAY - 9

We know G-d less by contemplation than by emulation.

DAY - 10

The choice is not between 'faith' and 'deeds', for it is by deeds that we express our faith and make it real in the life of others and the world.

DAY - 11

Jewish ethics is refreshingly down-to-earth. If someone is in need, give. If someone is lonely, invite them home. If someone you know has recently been bereaved, visit them and give them comfort. The sages called this 'imitating G-d'. That is religion at its most humanizing and humane.

DAY- 12

See possession less as things we own than things we hold in trust, one of the conditions of which is that we use part of what we have to help others. If there is one thing I have heard more often than any other from those who spend part of their time in service to others, it is that they gain more than they give.

DAY - 13

The things we spend most of our time pursuing turn out to be curiously irrelevant when it comes to seeing the value of life as a whole. They are urgent but not important, and in the crush and press of daily life, the urgent tends to win out over the important.

DAY - 14

The message of the Hebrew Bible is that serving G-d and serving our fellow human beings are inseparably linked, and the split between the two impoverishes both.

DAY - 15

Unless the holy leads us outward toward the good and the good leads us back, for renewal, to the holy, the creative energies of faith run dry.

DAY - 16

Goodness brings blessing to lives other than one's own. It is as near as we get to a universal language.

DAY - 17

G-d's call to Abraham: 'Walk ahead of Me and be perfect' (Genesis 17:1). Don't wait, in other words, until I command you. Sometimes you need to take the initiative.

DAY - 18

Behind the ethics of responsibility is the daring idea that more than we have faith in G-d, G-d has faith in us.

DAY - 19

Biblical faith demands courage. It is not for the faint-hearted. Its vision of the universe is anything but comfortable.

DAY- 20

To imitate G-d is to be alert to the poverty, suffering and loneliness other others. Opium desensitizes us to pain. The Bible sensitizes us to it.

DAY - 21

The concept of 'sanctifying the Name' introduces into ethics a simple but surprising principle. We are G-d's ambassadors on earth The way we live affects how others see Him..

DAY - 22

When a people join hands, becoming even momentarily 'like one body with one soul', they are a formidable force for good.

DAY - 23

Responsibility is the negation of learned helplessness. It is a great weight to carry. But the alternative is heavier still.

DAY - 24

We are at home in the universe to the extent that we make our universe a home for G-d.

DAY - 25

The faith that counts is the faith made real in life, in deeds, and in words that heal some of the wounds of a fractured world.

DAY - 26

Faith is *the refusal to let go* until you have turned suffering into a blessing.

DAY - 27

We can never know the good we do, still less the consequences to which it gives rise. But this is the only legacy worth leaving: the trace we leave on other lives, and they on others in turn.

DAY - 28

If I were to sum up what faith asks us to be, I would say: a *healing presence*. That is the common factor among the many different lives that have inspired me.

DAY - 29

We are here because G-d brought us into being in love and gave us work to do, saying in His still, small voice: 'Bring a fragment of my presence into other lives.'