



Polarization, Mistrust, and Teshuva: Civic Friendship in Jewish Thought and the High Holiday Liturgy

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I. Introducing the Concept of Civic (or Political) Friendship from Political Philosophy

Aristotle, *Eudaimonian Ethics*

"it is thought to be the special business of the political art to produce friendship..." (1234b22)

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

"Like-mindedness appears to be civic friendship... But this sort of like-mindedness is present among the decent, since they are like-minded both with themselves and with one another...; they also wish for what is just and what is advantageous, and they aim at these also in common. ... For when people do not keep watch over the commons, it is destroyed. It results, then, that they fall into civil faction, compelling one another by force and not wishing to do what is just themselves." (1161b4-15)

"Persons who have [too] many friendships... are thought to be friends of nobody...: I mean the sort of people we call obsequious. Yet one may be political friend to many people and not be obsequious but truly equitable."

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

"[W]hat love is in its own, narrowly circumscribed sphere, respect is in the larger domain of human affairs. Respect... is a kind of 'friendship' without intimacy and without closeness." (243)

Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers*

"It is not the emotions of friendship that are relevant to politics, but rather its core practices." (120)

"One doesn't even have to like one's fellow citizens in order to act toward them as a political friend. There is a very easy way of transforming one's relations to strangers. We might simply as about all our encounters with others in our polity, 'would I treat a friend this way?' When we can answer 'yes,' we are on the way to developing a citizenship that is neither domination nor acquiescence..." (140)

"Friendship is the bond of the city, as Aristotle argued, and political friendship is not merely a serviceable aspiration, but a crucial one. Citizens who adopt it commit themselves to pursuing liberty and equality simultaneously, and to resisting accounts of politics that insist that commitment to one requires short-changing the other." (139)

II. Civic Friendship as Central to the Jewish Notion of Love

Pirkei Avot 5:16	משנה אבות ה'ט"ז
(16) All love that depends on something, when the thing ceases, the love ceases; and [all love] that does not depend on a thing, will never cease. What is an example of	(טז) כָּל אֲהָבָה שֶׁהִיא תְּלוּיָה בְּדָבָר, בָּטֵל דָּבָר, בָּטֵלָה אֲהָבָה. וְשֶׁאִינָה תְּלוּיָה בְּדָבָר, אִינָה בָּטֵלָה לְעוֹלָם. אִיזוֹ הִיא אֲהָבָה... שֶׁאִינָה תְּלוּיָה בְּדָבָר, זוֹ אֲהָבַת דָּוִד יְיָהוֹנָתָן:

love... that did not depend on a thing? Such was the love of David and Jonathan.	
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Leviticus 19:17-18 (17) You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kin but incur no guilt on their account. (18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against members of your people. Love your fellow [Israelite] as yourself: I am YHWH.	ויקרא י"ט:י"ז-י"ח (יז) לֹא־תִשְׁנֹא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֶטְא: (יח) לֹא־תִקֶּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹל אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:
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III. Civic enmity/ Civic Friendship as a portal between Tisha B'Av and The High Holidays

Yom Kippur Liturgy, "Al Het" And for the sin we committed before You by <i>sinat hinam</i> (wanton, baseless hatred).	מחזור ליום כיפור וְעַל חֶטְא שִׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁנְאָת חֲנָם:
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Tanna debei Eliyahu Zuta, Introduction The beginning of sin is evil thoughts, the second [cause] for it is mockery, the third is arrogance, the fourth is cruelty, the fifth is idleness, the sixth is the evil eye, the seventh is baseless hatred. The beginning of fear/awe [of God] is shame, the second [cause] for it is humility, the third is a clean (honest) profession, the fourth is compassion, the fifth is the observance of commandments, the sixth is the pursuit of peace, the seventh is love of people.	תנא דבי אליהו זוטא, מבוא תחלת עבירה הרהור, שנייה לה ליצנות, שלישית לה גסות הרוח, רביעית לה אכזריות, חמישית לה הבטלה, שישית לה עין הרע, שביעית לה שנאת חנם: תחלת יראה בושה, שנייה לה ענוה, שלישית לה אומנות נקייה, רביעית לה רחמנות, חמישית לה קיום מצות, שישית לה רדיפת שלום, שביעית לה אהבת הבריות:
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Yoma 9b However , the second Temple – a period in which people were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot , and acts of kindness , why was it destroyed? Due to the fact that there was "sinat hinam" (wanton, baseless hatred) . This comes to teach you that the sin of sinat hinam is equivalent to the three severe transgressions: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations and bloodshed.	יומא ט: אָבֵל מִקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵי נִשְׁחִיו עוֹסְקִין בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים, מִפְּנֵי מָה חָרַב? מִפְּנֵי נִשְׁחִיָּתָהּ בּוֹ שִׁנְאָת חֲנָם. לְלַמֶּדְךָ שֶׁשְׁקוּלָה שִׁנְאָת חֲנָם כְּנֶגֶד שְׁלֹשׁ עֲבִירוֹת: עֲבֹדָה זָרָה, גְּלוּי עֲרִיּוֹת, וּשְׁפִיכוּת דָּמִים.
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Gittin 55b-56a Jerusalem was destroyed on account of Kamtza and bar Kamtza. There was a certain man whose	גיטין נה:-נו. אֶקְמָצָא וְבַר קְמָצָא חָרַב יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – דִּהְהוּא גִבְרָא דְרַחֲמִיָּה קְמָצָא, וּבִעַל דְּבִבְיָה בַר קְמָצָא.
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<p>friend was named Kamtza and whose enemy was named bar Kamtza. He made a feast and said to his servant: Go bring me Kamtza. The servant mistakenly brought him bar Kamtza. The host came and found bar Kamtza sitting and said to him, "...Arise and leave." Bar Kamtza said to him: "Since I have already come, let me stay and I will give you money for whatever I eat and drink." ... "I will give you money for half of the feast" ... "I will give you money for the entire feast." The host said to him: "No." Finally, he grabbed his hand, stood him up, and took him out. Bar Kamtza said to himself: Since the Sages were sitting there and did not protest learn from it that they were content with what he did. I will therefore go and inform against them to the king. He went and said to the emperor: The Jews have rebelled against you...</p>	<p>עבד סעודתא, אמר ליה לשמעיה: זיל אייתי לי קמץא. אזל אייתי ליה בר קמץא. אתא, אשכחיה דהוה יתיב. אמר ליה: מכדי ההוא גברא בעל קום פוק! אמר ליה: הואיל ... הוא, ... דבבא ואיתי, שבקו ויהיבנא לך דמי מה דאכילנא ושתיבא. אמר ליה: לא. אמר ליה: יהיבנא לך דמי פלגא דסעודתך! אמר ליה: לא. אמר ליה: יהיבנא לך דמי כולה סעודתך! אמר ליה: לא. נקטיה בידיה ואוקמיה ואפקיה. אמר: הואיל והווי יתבי רבנן ולא מחו ביה, שמע מינה קא ניחא להו, איזיל איכול בהו קורצא בי מלכא. אזל אמר ליה לקיסר: מרדו בך יהודאי!</p>
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<p>Arakhin 16b</p> <p>It is taught in a <i>baraita</i> that Rabbi Tarfon says: I would be surprised if there is anyone in this generation who can receive rebuke. Why? Because if the one rebuking says to him: Remove the splinter from between your eyes, i.e., rid yourself of a minor infraction, the other says to him: Remove the beam from between your eyes, i.e., you have committed far more severe sins. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria says: I would be surprised if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to rebuke correctly, without embarrassing the person he is rebuking.</p>	<p>ערכין ט"ז ב</p> <p>תניא א"ר טרפון (תמיהני) אני אם יש בדור הזה שמקבל תוכחה אם אמר לו טול קיסם מבין עיניך אמר לו טול קורה מבין עיניך אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה תמיהני אם יש בדור הזה שיודע להוכיח</p>
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IV. Reading the book of Jonah through the lens of Political Friendship

<p>Jonah 1</p> <p>(1) The word of GOD came to Jonaha son of Amittai: (2) Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim judgment upon it; for their wickedness has come before Me. (3) Jonah, however, started out to flee to Tarshish from GOD's service. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went aboard to sail with the others to Tarshish, away from GOD's service. (4) But GOD cast a</p>	<p>יונה א'</p> <p>(א) ויהי דבר יהוה אליונה בן-אמתי לאמר: <u>(ב)</u> קום לך אל-נינוה העיר הגדולה וקרא עליה כי-עלתה רעתם לפני: (ג) ויָקָם יונה לבָרֹחַ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ וַיִּמְצָא אֲנִיָּה וַיֵּלֶךְ בָּהָא תַרְשִׁישִׁי וַיֵּתֵן שָׂכָרָה וַיֵּרֶד בָּהָא לְבֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה: (ד) ויהוה הטיל רוח-גדולה אל-הים ויהי סער-גדול בַּיָּם וַהֲאֲנִיָּה חֲשָׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר: (ה) וַיִּרְאוּ הַמִּלְחָמִים וַיִּזְעְקוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אֱלֹהֵיוֹ וַיִּטְלוּ אֶת-הַכֶּלִּים אֲשֶׁר בָּאֲנִיָּה אֶל-הַיָּם</p>
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mighty wind upon the sea, and such a great tempest came upon the sea that the ship was in danger of breaking up. (5) In their fright, the sailors cried out, each to his own god; and they flung the ship's cargo overboard to make it lighter for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the vessel where he lay down and fell asleep. (6) The captain went over to him and cried out, "How can you be sleeping so soundly! Up, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will be kind to us and we will not perish." (7) They said to one another, "Let us cast lots and find out on whose account this misfortune has come upon us." **They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. (8) They said to him, "Tell us, you who have brought this misfortune upon us, what is your business? Where have you come from? What is your country, and of what people are you?" (9) "I am a Hebrew," he replied. "I worship the ETERNAL, the God of Heaven, who made both sea and land." (10) The men were greatly terrified, and they asked him, "What have you done?" And when the men learned that he was fleeing from GOD's service—for so he told them— (11) they said to him, "What must we do to you to make the sea calm around us?" For the sea was growing more and more stormy. (12) He answered, "Heave me overboard, and the sea will calm down for you; for I know that this terrible storm came upon you on my account." (13) Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to regain the shore, but they could not, for the sea was growing more and more stormy about them. (14) Then they cried out to GOD: "Oh, please, ETERNAL One, do not let us perish on account of this man's life. Do not hold us guilty of killing an innocent person! For You, O ETERNAL One, by Your will, have brought this about." (15) And they heaved Jonah overboard, and the sea stopped raging. (16) The men feared GOD greatly; they offered a sacrifice to GOD and they made vows.**

להקל מעליהם ויזנה ירד אל־ירכתי הספינה וישכב ויִרְדָּם: (ו) ויקרב אליו רב החבל ויאמר לו מה־לך בְּרָדָם קוֹם קרא אל־אלֹהֶיךָ אוֹלִי יתעַשֶׂת הָאֱלֹהִים לָנוּ וְלֹא נֹאכֵד: (ז) ויאמרו־אִישׁ אֶל־רעהוֹ לכוּ וּנְפִילָה גִוְרָלוֹת וְנִדְעָה בְּשִׁלְמֵי הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ וְנִפְלֹ גִוְרָלוֹת וְנִפֹּל הַגִּוָּרֵל עַל־יוֹנָה: (ח) ויאמרו־אֵלָיו הַגִּיד־נָא לָנוּ בְּאִשֶּׁר לִמִּי הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ מִה־מְלֹאכֶתְךָ וּמֵאֵין תִּבּוֹא מֶה אֲרָץ וְאִי־מִנָּה עִם אֶתָּה: (ט) ויאמר אליהם עֲבְרִי אֲנֹכִי וְאֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲנִי יֵרָא אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־הַיַּבָּשָׁה: (י) וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מִה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ כִּי־יָדְעוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים כִּי־מִלְפָּנֶי יְהוָה הוּא בָרַח כִּי הִגִּיד לָהֶם: (יא) ויאמרו־אֵלָיו מִה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ וְיִשְׁתַּק הַיָּם מֵעַלֵּינוּ כִּי הַיָּם הוֹלֵךְ וְסֹעֵר: (יב) ויאמר אליהם שְׂאוּנִי וְהִטִּילְנִי אֶל־הַיָּם וְיִשְׁתַּק הַיָּם מֵעַלֵּיכֶם כִּי יוֹדַע אֲנִי כִּי בְּשָׁלִי הִסְעָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה עֲלֵיכֶם: (יג) וַיַּחֲתֵרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־הַיַּבָּשָׁה וְלֹא יָכְלוּ כִּי הַיָּם הוֹלֵךְ וְסֹעֵר עֲלֵיהֶם: (יד) וַיִּקְרָאוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נֹאכֵד בְּנַפְשֵׁי הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וְאֶל־תֵּתֵן עָלֵינוּ דָּם נָקִיא כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה כָּאֲשֶׁר חָפַצְתָּ עָשִׂיתָ: (טו) וַיִּשְׁאוּ אֶת־יוֹנָה וַיִּטְלֵהוּ אֶל־הַיָּם וַיַּעֲמֵד הַיָּם מִזְעָפוֹ: (טז) וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־זֶבַח לַיהוָה וַיִּדְּרוּ נְדָרִים:

<p>Jonah 3:4-10</p> <p>(4) Jonah started out and made his way into the city the distance of one day's walk, and proclaimed: "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (5) The people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast, and great and small alike put on sackcloth. (6) When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. (7) And he had the word cried through Nineveh: "By decree of the king and his nobles: No human or animal—of flock or herd—shall taste anything! They shall not graze, and they shall not drink water! (8) They shall be covered with sackcloth—human and animal—and shall cry mightily to God. Let everyone turn back from their own evil ways and from the injustice of which they are guilty. (9) Who knows but that God may turn and relent? [God] may turn back from wrathfulness, so that we do not perish." (10) God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment that had been planned for them, and did not carry it out.</p>	<p>יונה ג'ד'ו'</p> <p>(ד) וַיֵּחַל יוֹנָה לָבוֹא בְעִיר מִהֶלֶךְ יוֹם אֶחָד וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְכִנּוּהָ נִהְפָּכֶת: (ה) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲנָשֵׁי כִנּוּהָ בְּאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרְאוּ-צוֹם וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּ שָׂקִים מִגְדוֹלָם וְעַד־קִטְנָם: (ו) וַיִּגַע הַדָּבָר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ כִּנּוּהָ וַיָּקָם מִכִּסְאוֹ וַיַּעֲבֵר אֶדְרֵתוֹ מֵעָלָיו וַיִּבֶס שָׁק וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־הָאֶפֶר: (ז) וַיִּזְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּכִנּוּהָ מִטַּעַם הַמֶּלֶךְ וּגְדָלָיו לֵאמֹר הָאֲדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה הַבֶּקֶר וְהַצֹּאן אֶל־יִטְעֲמוּ מֵאוֹמָה אֶל־יָרְעוּ וּמִים אֶל־יִשְׁתּוּ: (ח) וַיִּתְפָּסוּ שָׂקִים הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־אֱלֹהִים בַּחֲזָקָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדֶּרְכּוֹ הָרָעָה וּמִן־הַחֲמָס אֲשֶׁר בְּכַפֵּיהֶם: (ט) מִי־יֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחָם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ וְלֹא נֶאֱבַד: (י) וַיֵּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדֶּרְכָּם הָרָעָה וַיִּנָּחֻם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה:</p>
<p>Jonah 4:10-11</p> <p>(10) Then GOD said: "You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight. (11) And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many animals as well!"</p>	<p>יונה ד'י'ו'א"</p> <p>(י) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵתָּה חֲסַתָּ עַל־הַקִּיקְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲמַלְתָּ בּוֹ וְלֹא גִדַּלְתָּ שִׁבּוֹן־לִילָה הִיא וּבֹן־לִילָה אֶבֶד: (יא) וְאַנִּי לֹא אָחוּס עַל־כִּנּוּהָ הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר יֵשֵׁבָהּ הַרְבֵּה מִשְׁתִּים־עֹשִׂיהָ רַבּוֹ אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע בֵּין־יְמִינוֹ לִשְׂמָאלוֹ וּבֵהֵמָה רַבָּה:</p>

V. Forgiveness as Central to Friendship – and the Link from the High Holidays to the Entire Year Ahead

Shai Held, "Covenantal Joy: What Sukkot Can Teach Us," in *Heart of Torah* II, 69-70:

"Sukkot takes place mere days after Yom Kippur, and that... adds to the intense joy of the holiday. In the course of moving through the world we all too often fall short of both God's expectations and our own aspiration. We lose sight of God, and we cause pain and

disappointment to others. Imagine living in a world where forgiveness – from God and from others – was not available; imagine living in a universe of “one strike and you’re out.” Friendship would be impossible, parenting would be inconceivable, and marriage would last days at most; an enduring covenant with God would be unimaginable. *Teshuvah* (repentance), *mehilah* (forgiveness), and *kapparah* (atonement) are what make life and relationships possible. This is what the Talmud means when it suggests that *teshuvah* was created even before the world itself (BT Pesachim 54a). Without human repentance and divine forgiveness, life would be little more than a series of irredeemable broken relationships. With human repentance and divine forgiveness, the almost miraculous possibility of healing and renewal emerges. Part of what we experience on Sukkot is the joy of living in a world where forgiveness is possible. Covenant depends on – and celebrates – the possibility of restoring relationships.”

<p>Siddur Ashkenaz, Bedtime Shema</p> <p>(1) I hereby forgive anyone who has angered me, or sinned against me, either physically or financially, against my honor or anything that is mine, whether accidentally or intentionally, inadvertently or deliberately, by speech or by deed, by thought or by speculation... any Israelite [is forgiven], may no man be punished on my account. May it be Your will, Adonoy, my God and God of my fathers, that I shall sin no more nor repeat my sins, neither shall I again anger You nor do what is wrong in Your eyes. The sins I have committed, erase in your abounding mercies, but not through suffering or severe illnesses. ...</p> <p>(2) Blessed are You, Adonoy, our God, King of the Universe, Who causes the fetters of sleep to fall upon my eyes, and slumber upon my eyelids.... Let my thoughts not terrify me— nor evil dreams or evil fancies (disturb me), and may my bed be perfect before You.</p>	<p>סידור אשכנז, קריאת שמע על המיטה</p> <p>(א) רבוננו של עולם הריני מוחל לכלמי שהכעיס והקניט אותי או שחטא כנגדי בין בגופי בין בממוני בין בכבודי בין בכל אשר לי בין באונס בין ברצון בין בשוגג בין במזיד בין בדבור בין במעשה בין במחשבה בין בהרהור ... לכל בר ישראל ולא יענש שום אדם בסבתי: יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהי ואלהי אבותי שלא אחטא עוד ומה שחטאתי לפניך מחוק ברחמיך הרבים אבל לא עלי ידי יסורים ונחליים רעים: ...</p> <p>(ב) ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם המפיל חבלי שנה על עיני ותנומה על עפעפי: ... ואל יבהילני רעיוני ונחלומות רעים ורהורים רעים ויתהא מטתי שלמה לפניך...</p>
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