



"דעותנו", במה לשיח חינוכי רעיוני  
מזכירות "הנוער הציוני העולמית" - ישראל  
"Deotenu", foro de diálogo educativo ideológico  
Mazkirut "Hanoar Hatzioni Haolamit" – Israel

## ON TU B'AV AND THE MANY WAYS OF LOVING

Romi Morales

There is no doubt that love is one of the most intense and important feelings that human beings can experience. Everyone, by nature, needs love. We may take as an example a baby, who is not independent until after having several years of life. If it were not for love (which is shown by the support and relief that comes from the parents, who provide food, shelter and security), the baby could not survive alone, not even one day. We all need love. We want to be loved, wanted, sought, recognized and loved by the Other and, therefore, many of the decisions we make in life, consciously or not, are based on this primary need.

Despite our constant search for love, when Judaism tell us to respond to "*free hate*" (sinat jinam) with "*free love*" (ahavat jinam), suddenly this is not so natural to us. If when we talk about "love" we refer to that deeply strong feeling that drives us to desire and do good deeds for the object of our love (being that ourselves, another person or an object); When we talk about something "free" we intend to explain that it is delivered without demanding anything in return. I guess that's where the big paradox begins: Why *should I* give you my best, to generate something deeply good and happy in you, without me receiving anything in return (not even or especially love)? And the question may be valid and relevant to ourselves, to our peers, our family, the Tzevet, our chanichim, the Tnua, Israel, the Jewish people, or even the world.

In contrast to this perspective, there are those cases in which the question we ask to ourselves is another: How *can I* give you my best, to generate something good and happy in you, even if I will not receive anything in return (not even or especially love)? This question may be the one that best represents the concept of "*ahavat jinam*".

While this, supposedly, should be the "*ideal*" form of love, I would like to highlight two aspects about it. "*Ideal*" sounds like "*not real*" and no, I don't think this is the case. No, I'm not naive either. I think it is possible to love at these levels and not necessarily because we are altruistic, but because I am convinced in the creative and productive force of love. Who loves with all his being, surrenders himself with all his being in spite of not seeing the fruits of that love, because he still feels full, by the simple fact of loving. Sounds a bit strange, I know. But there are thousands of examples of this. Consider, for example, the tens of thousands of Jalutzim who loved the land of Israel even when it could not give back all the effort and dedication they invested in it, or not by the time they expected. Or we could talk about the hundreds of this movement's chaverim who educated their chanichim in the darkest times in the history of our people, even when they were perhaps more busy to survive than to recognize the task of their madrichim. The story is full of great love lovers. Without going any further, I think that today we also often meet those Chaverim who give everything for themselves and for the Tnua, and they feel full even if all the effort and dedication they invest goes unnoticed.

I believe that the world would be a happier place if in all the areas in which we interact we meet people who are willing to give everything without expecting anything back.



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However, the reality is different. And many times the gap between the ideal and the real, is what generates frustration.

For this reason I believe that the Tnua should be a platform in which our manigim (leaders) can respond to both forms of love, equally. To those javerim who need reasons to be able to give (love), I think that as a hanaga we must take care of building a Tnua that is like that "refuge" that gives security and support to the chaver so that it can feel full to innovate, develop and create without fear and at the same time give relief when, in the process, things did not go as planned. Likewise, I think that as Hanaga we should also pay attention to those who give themselves unlimitedly, especially because they tend to be taken as "obvious", that is, we tend to feel safe that they will always be there, no matter what. And yes, they might be there, giving it their all, but they deserve to be valued, appreciated and recognized as well.

If the Tnua is a *"school for life"*, and our best and most effective tool is education, I believe that our educational practice must be based on and be able to guarantee love for all the actors involved in it. If we are able to create a space that legitimizes, values and recognizes the different ways of loving, I am sure that this feeling will be able to find fertile land to flourish and expand into new areas. This is how from our Tnua we can change the world: educating to generate something good and happy around us, or in other words *"educating with love, for love"*.