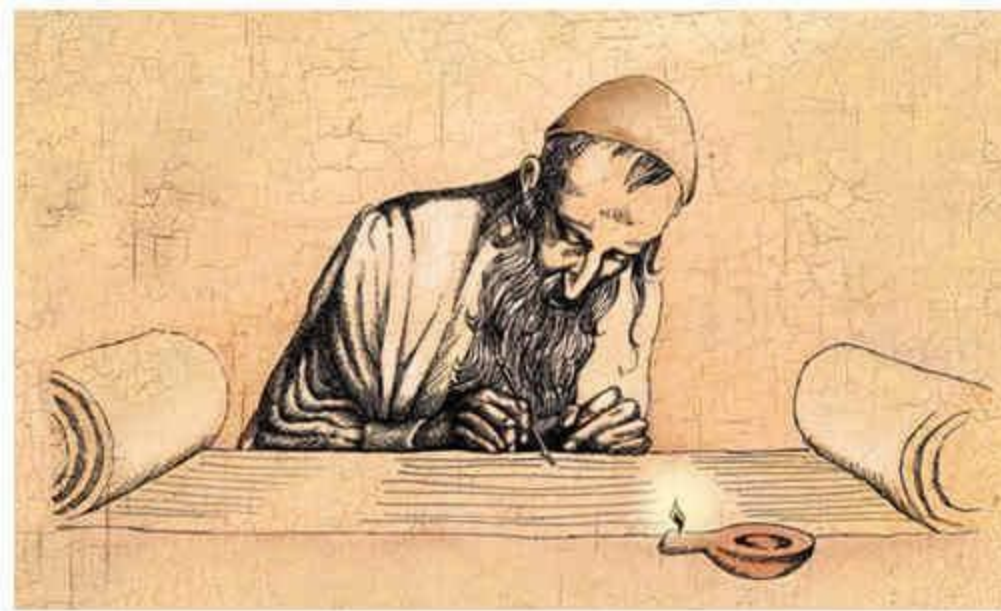


ALONE, WITH OTHERS

A Lesson for Students

Community is an essential value in the Jewish religion yet even in a religion that values togetherness, there is still a necessity for aloneness. In the *Alone & Together* issue of *Parabola Magazine*, Joshua Boettiger presents *Alone, with Others*, a reflection on the themes of community and solitude in Jewish history and theology. In the following *Parabola in the Classroom* lesson, students will read Mr. Boettiger's article and answer questions. The questions are designed to help students address the critical points of the article as well as serve as a basis for further critical thinking, discussion, and reflection. Students will also be able to identify and explain significant beliefs of Judaism as well as aspects of Jewish culture and identity. While community remains paramount in Jewish identity, there is also the prophet alone on the mountaintop with the Divine.



Pre-Reading Questions:

1- Who was Abraham?

2- Why is Moses the most significant Jewish prophet?

3- What are the Ten Commandments?

4- Why is Judaism a moral and ethical religion?

5- What two religions have roots in Judaism?

6- What is the Torah?

7- Define monotheism.

8- Define Diaspora.

Questions while Reading:

1- What cyclical reasoning does the solitary Jew live with?

2- What did Ben Azzai say yet why is it surprising?

3- How did Ben Azzai explain this seeming contradiction?

4- According to the author, what is the creative tension?

5- What is Judaism well known for?

6- What does Judaism not accept?

7- What concept is not present in Judaism?

8- How are sacred texts preferably studied?

9- How do Jews remember the dead, sanctify God's name, or hear Torah read?

10- What is God's reasoning for this in Genesis?

11- According to the author, how as people of the book are Jews meant to encounter the words of God?

12- According to the author, why must Jews cultivate silence?

13- According to the author, how does an autocratic community arise?

14- According to the author, what does Judaism insist upon?

15- What is the individual who goes up the mountain or into the desert honor-bound to do?

16- According to the author, what is the cost of belonging?

17- Define the Hebrew word levadoh?

18- Why was Jacob named *Israel*?

19- Why was the levadoh essential to Jacob's naming?

20- What is the very reason Moses is on the mountain?

21- According to the author, when do we realize that we are not alone?

22- Why were Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son forced to seclude themselves in a cave for twelve years?

23- What did father and son do for twelve years in the cave?

24- What did they see when they finally left the cave?

25- What happened to everything they set their eyes on?

26- Why does God send them back to the cave?

27- What is the lesson of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son?

28- How did Leonard Cohen describe his monastic routine with his fellow monks on Mount Baldy?

29- According to the author, what does true togetherness allow us to feel?

30- According to the author, what is clear regarding being alone and being with others?

31- What is The Zohar?

32- According to the author, what might be the need of community?

33- According to the author, what question is the individual seeker compelled to ask either on her way into the cave or on her way back out?

34- What did Mordechai Kaplan assert?

35- According to the author, why is it not so easy to belong?

36- According to the author, what is the dance of vitality?

37- According to the author, what is necessary to have a community that is transformative?

38- What is a mikvah?

39- According to the author, how is a community like a mikvah?

40- What words are inscribed over the author's synagogue in Vermont?

41- How do these words reflect on the themes of alone and together?

Take it to the Web

The story of Moses is a story of alone and together. Research the story of Moses and create a play focusing on the themes of alone and together through the story of Moses. Present the play to the classroom and the larger community via the web.

“A religion is as much a progressive unlearning of false ideas concerning God as it is the learning of the true ideas concerning God.”

~ Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan