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SIX LESSONS TO UNLOCKING THE TRUTH  
TO GOD'S HOLY LAND



## LESSON 6

# I.S.R.A.E.L.—Love Our Neighbour

We now come to the final letter in our “I.S.R.A.E.L.” acrostic, and it is only fitting that the “L” stands for “love our neighbour” — a commandment that is a fundamental teaching for both Christians and Jews. Treating others with empathy and respect is at the very core of the *Torah* and the message of the Gospels. In fact, Scripture repeatedly talks about how we are to treat our neighbour.

**How do you define “neighbour”?  
Who is your neighbour?**

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**Jesus said** the greatest commandment was to love God with all of our heart, mind, and soul; and that the second was to love our neighbour as ourselves (see Matthew 22:37-39).

**What do you think it means to love someone as you love yourself?**

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**Why do you think Jesus included loving neighbours as a part of the greatest commandment?**

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### KEY VERSE:

*“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself.”*

— LEVITICUS 19:18

### MAIN TEACHING POINT

Love for God and love for our neighbour is at the heart of the teachings in both the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament. Christians and Jews are commanded to show love through caring for others.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Think about the six lessons in this course and the words that make up I.S.R.A.E.L. Write them in the first column next to their respective letters.
2. In the second column write down one thing that you have learned from each lesson. (For today's lesson, write down what you anticipate learning.)

Letter	Word (or phrase)	Lesson(s) learned
I		
S		
R		
A		
E		
L		

## Going Deeper

**Our story today is from 2 Kings 5:1-19**, an account of Naaman, a powerful commander of the Aramean army who had leprosy. Notice the acts of love demonstrated throughout this story. Keep in mind that the people of Aram and Israelites were neighbours, but were not always friendly. In fact, many Israelites had been captured by the Aramean army and had been enslaved, including the young girl in today's reading.

**Read 2 Kings 5:1-6.**

**How must it have felt to be a powerful commander with leprosy, a disease of the skin?**

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**Why do you think the servant girl suggested Naaman visit the prophet?**

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**Why might that have been a difficult thing for the servant girl to do?**

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**Why do you think Naaman was willing to take the advice of a servant?**

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**Read 2 Kings 5:7-12**

**What was the king of Israel's reaction to the letter from the king of Aram?**

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**What do you think was the primary motive behind the king of Israel's reaction?**

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**What instructions did the prophet Elisha give to Naaman once he heard about his condition?**

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**Why did Naaman get upset when he heard the instructions? What did he expect from the prophet?**

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**Read 2 Kings 5:13-19**

**Who helped to change Naaman's mind when he refused to follow the instructions? Why do you think they intervened?**

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**What happened when Naaman followed Elisha's directions? How do you think Naaman felt at that moment?**

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**What did Naaman say to Elisha? What was Elisha's reaction?**

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**Why do you think Elisha wouldn't accept any reward from Naaman? What was Elisha's motivation?**

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**Who in the story acted out of empathy for Naaman?**

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**How did their actions fulfill Leviticus 19:18?**

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**Keeping the story of Naaman in mind, we're now going to take a closer look** at the parable Jesus shares in Luke 10:25-37 after an expert in the law asks him a question about the “greatest commandment.” Keep in mind that Jesus was a Jew and was familiar with the law. When he was teaching during his earthly ministry, many people tried to challenge him, expecting him to go against the law. Jesus, however, was very clear that he was not doing away with the law but was fulfilling it (see Matthew 5:17).

**Read Luke 10:25-28.**

**What did the expert consider to be the law?**

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**Why do you think Jesus affirmed what the expert said was the law?**

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**Answering a question with another question was a technique frequently employed by rabbis in their teachings. Why do you think Jesus did that here?**

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**What does the man's answer, which Jesus affirms, say about the importance of loving our neighbours as ourselves?**

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**Read Luke 10:29-37**

**What is the next question the expert asks Jesus? Why do you think he asked that question?**

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**Again, how does Jesus answer the man's question?**

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**What is the significance of having the only man who stopped to help be a Samaritan?**

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**How is the Samaritan described in the parable? Who are the other men who walked by?**

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**How do you think the man who asked the question felt after hearing the parable?**

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**What are some of the parallels you see between this parable and Naaman's story?**

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**Based on these two stories, who is it we should help? Why?**

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**How does showing mercy make you a neighbour?**

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## Think About It

**Loving our neighbour is one of the most important commandments** for both Christians and Jews. Throughout the Bible, we are instructed to care for each other.

**Read the following verses and make note of ways we are to care for each other.**

Verse	How do we show love
Proverbs 3:28	
Proverbs 3:29	
Proverbs 14:21	
John 15:12	
1 John 4:11	

**What ways do you specifically show love to others?**

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**For more teaching about loving your neighbour,** watch the video featuring *The Fellowship* founder and President Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, and his daughter, Yael Eckstein, Executive Vice President.



## Apply It

Since we have completed our acrostic for "Israel," think of words to make an acrostic for the word "love." Challenge yourself to think of action words — ways you can actively show love to others.

For an extra challenge, think specifically of how you can share love with the people of Israel.

Letter	Words that begin with the letter (especially action words)
L	
O	
V	
E	

**You may want to write these words in a word cloud or picture** (you can find several word cloud generators online) to create an illustration that you can post to remind you of your commitment to love God's people.

## Hebrew Words for Lesson 6

Hebrew Word	English Spelling	English Meaning
אהבה	<i>Ahava</i>	Love
שכן	<i>Shachen</i>	Neighbour
עזרה	<i>Ezra</i>	Help
לב	<i>Lev</i>	Heart
ידיד	<i>Yedid</i>	Friend
ידידות	<i>Yedidut</i>	Fellowship

## Devotional Reflection — The Hallmark of Our Faith

*“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge  
against anyone among your people,  
but love your neighbour as yourself.  
I am the LORD.”*

— LEVITICUS 19:18



Hillel the Elder was a great sage that lived in the Holy Land during the first century BCE. He was once challenged by a man who demanded: “Teach me the entire *Torah* while I am standing on one foot!”

Now, the man had already challenged other rabbis of the time, and none of them would consider such a ridiculous request. After all, who could teach about the Five Books of Moses (the *Torah*), the books of the Prophets, and the Holy Writings (including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, etc.) while someone stood on one foot! But Hillel was different, and especially known for his patience. He was kind to the man and took up the challenge. While the man stood on one foot Hillel taught: “What is hateful to you, do not do to others. The rest is commentary – go study it!”

**Hillel’s reply was another way of saying the Bible verse telling us to “love your neighbour as yourself”** (Leviticus 19:18). In other words, Hillel was teaching that loving others is essentially what the Bible is all about! (Try saying that on one foot!)

**In Psalm 118:19 we read: “Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.”** In the Jewish tradition, the sages teach that this verse refers to when a person enters heaven and stands before the heavenly tribunal in judgment. Each person will be asked: “What was your occupation?” In other words, “What did you spend your life doing?” If one answers: “I fed the hungry,” the tribunal will say: “This is God’s gate. You, who fed the hungry, may enter.” If a person answers: “I gave drink to the thirsty,” the tribunal will say: “This is God’s gate. You, who gave drink to the thirsty, may enter.” And so on. The sages were teaching that all who performed acts of kindness, and those who gave charity, are permitted to enter God’s gate.

**Helping others through acts of kindness has always been extremely important in Judaism.** As Hillel the Elder demonstrated, it is the main lesson behind the entire Bible. God counts on us to provide for the needy and to use what God has given us for the less fortunate.

**In that way, we show our regard for God as Creator of all people, share His goodness with others, and draw others to Him.** At the same time, we contribute to the overall mission of all humanity. Judaism refers to this as *tikkun olam*, which means, “fixing the world,” making it a place of goodness and godliness. That is our purpose and our privilege.

**We find this same teaching in the Christian Bible** (what Christians call the New Testament), when Jesus taught his disciples, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (John 13:34-35).



## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR

**The hallmark of both the Jewish and Christian faith is love** — for God, for family and friends, for our neighbours, for one another, and for the world.