

CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

Acharei Mot/K'Doshim—Leviticus 19:1-2;13-18

AYNO SAME'ACH B'HORA'AH—Not Taking Joy in Handing Down Judgment

...Key KOSHI...

*HOW is “rebuke your kinsman” a fulfillment of “you shall love your neighbor as yourself”?
HOW can we effectively share our hearts without breaking another’s?*



P'SHAT...Studying Torah—Encountering The Word—The Will—The ONE

The truly wise individual is not one who has achieved wisdom but a *talmid chacham*—a wise student...one who is constantly learning—including by observing and reflecting on what can be learned from other people.

<p>19:1] The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 2] Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the Eternal your God, am holy.</p> <p>13] You shall not defraud your fellow (Israelite). You shall not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer shall not remain with you until morning.</p> <p>14] You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the Eternal.</p> <p>15] You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kin fairly. 16] Do not deal basely with members of your people. Do not profit by the blood of your fellow (Israelite): I am the Eternal.</p> <p>17] You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kin but incur no guilt on their account.</p> <p>18] You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against members of your people. Love your fellow (Israelite) as yourself: I am the Eternal.</p>	<p>א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְוַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם</p> <p>13 לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק אֶת־רֵעֶךָ וְלֹא תִגְזֹל לֹא־תִלְוִין פְּעֻלַּת שְׂכִיר אֹתָךְ עַד־בֹּקֶר : 14 לֹא־תִקַּל חֵרֶשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מְכֻשָׁל וַיִּרְאֵת מֵאֲלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה : [שְׁנִי] [חֲמִישִׁי כִשְׁהוֹן מְחֻבְרִין] 15 לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂוּ עֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט לֹא־תִשָּׂא פְּנִיָּה וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גְדוֹל בְּצַדִּיק תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתָךְ : 16 לֹא־תִלְוֶה רֵכִיל בְּעַמִּיתָךְ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה : 17 לֹא־תִשְׂנֵא אֶת־אֲחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הוֹכֵחַ תוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתָךְ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֶטָּא : 18 לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְבֵּת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹד אֲנִי יְהוָה :</p>
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REMEZ...*Acquiring Torah*...When Torah penetrates our entire being, not just our *seichel/intellect*, this is the acquisition of Torah. –R' Avi Fertig

V.17

You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him

ETZ HAYIM... “*achee-cha*”—The literal meaning of “*your kinsfolk*” is “*your brother*.” The following verse speaks of loving one’s neighbor, and this verse prohibits hating one’s brother. HIRSCH suggests that though we can lose the status of being a friend or a neighbor...we can never stop being related to a brother, even if it hurts us. Therefore, we are forbidden to hate him. This is one of the rare instances when Torah seems to command feelings rather than behavior.

MUNK... *You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart.* AVOT D’R’NATAN tells us that it is permitted to hate apostates, traitors and evildoers who reject all entreaties to repent...Hatred of another that is secretly harbored in the depth of one’s soul becomes “*baseless hatred*,” which our Sages equate with the reason that the Second Temple was destroyed. That is why Jerusalem will only be redeemed through love and peace. [cf. Isaiah 1:27]

RAMBAN... *in your heart ...* For people who hate have a tendency of concealing their hatred in their hearts.

“*An enemy dissembles with his speech; inwardly he harbors deceit.*” [Proverbs 26:24] Notice that one who hates violates a prohibition, while one who loves his neighbor fulfills a positive commandment. “*Ho’Chey-ach Tochi-ach*” This is a separate commandment. You are supposed to inform your kinsman when he has done wrong so as not to “*incur guilt*”...For you would owe a guilt offering if he is going on his way to sin and you fail to reprove him...When your fellow does something to you that you do not like, you must not keep your dislike inside. You must reproach him: “*Why did you do that to me?*” You must not commit the sin of harboring enmity...When you reprove him, he will either explain his behavior to you or will apologize for what he did, and you will forgive him. Thus the text goes on to say “*You may not bear a grudge.*” It is, of course, quite possible to forgive but not forget. So the text insists that one must wipe one’s fellow’s misdeed out of one’s heart along with any former hatred for him. Only then will it be possible to “*love one’s fellow as oneself.*”

RASHI... “*and do not bare sin because of him.*” ... The phrase is not an independent statement, but a condition: reproach your neighbor, but do it so as not to bear sin because of it

RASHBAM... “*and do not bare sin because of him.*” ... Do not hate him secretly, but rather *reprove your kinsman* for whatever it was he did to you. From this open reproof, peace will result, and you will *incur no guilt because of him*. Rather, you will no longer carry this wrong feeling about him in your heart.

IBN EZRA... “*You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart...*” Au contraire! You must “*love your fellow as yourself...*” [v.18] Note that these two commandments are matters hidden in the heart, not external actions, yet the people Israel would only be able to remain settled in the Land so long as they kept them. The Second Temple was destroyed due to gratuitous hatred. “*Reprove your kinsman...*” Reprove him openly, for perhaps your suspicion is ungrounded. “*And incur no guilt because of him,*” for you would be punished on his account if you suspected him unfairly and did not bring the matter out into the open.

TALMUD... Our Rabbis taught: “*You shall not hate your brother in your heart...*” One might have understood one may not smite him, slap him, curse him, therefore the text says: “*In your heart...*” Whence do we know that is a person sees something unseemly in his neighbor, he is obliged to reprove him? Because it says: “*You shall surely rebuke...*”

If he rebuked him but he did not accept it, whence do we know he rebukes him again? For the text states:

“*Hochiach Tochiach*” ...It was taught: R’ Eleazar ben Azariah said: I wonder if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to reprove!... R’ Yochanan ben Nuri said: I call heaven and earth to witness how often Akiva was rebuked through my words, for I used to complain about him before Rabban Gamliel, yet he showered me with love all the more, making true the teaching:

“*Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you; reprove a wise person and he will love you.*” [Prov 9:8]...

R’ Judah asked of R’ Shimon ben Pazzi: What is preferable: reproof with honest purpose or *false modesty?

[*for one to pretend unworthy of administering reproof, whereas in fact it is the fear of arousing hatred that deters him] ...What is honest reproof and what is false modesty? For instance, in the case of R’ Huna and R’ Chiyah bar Rav who were sitting before Shmu’el, when R’ Chiyah said: Sir, look how greatly he is vexing me! R’ Huna thereby took not to vex him any longer. After R’ Chiyah left, R’ Huna explained to Shmu’el: He did this and that unkindly thing...! Whereupon Shmu’el said: Why did you not tell him to his face? R’ Huna replied: Heaven forbid that the seed of Rav should be put to shame on account of me! [Arachin, 16b]

JPS... Verses 17-18 constitute a unit. The context suggests the interpretation that an individual should not allow ill feelings to fester; rather, he should confront his kinsman and admonish him directly, avoiding grudges and vengeance that breed hatred... “*Reprove your neighbor so that you will incur no guilt because of him...*” Beyond self-interest, civic responsibility requires a person to admonish others out of concern for the community as a whole...In the *Damascus Covenant*, one of the compositions among the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the duty to admonish fellow members of the community went so far as to require one to report wrongdoing on the part of others to a special examiner.

D'RASH...*Helping the Heart feel what the Mind understands ...*

ALAN MORINIS...

This method of personal transformation might seem to apply specifically to judges and rabbis, whose job it is to hand down legal rulings. It certainly does apply to them, but the Talmud teaches that anyone who measures something is a judge, and so we are all judges in one sense or another. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter explains that words directed at those who preside in courts also apply to every one of us, because we all render all kinds of decisions every day.

Our teaching says we are not to delight in handing down judgments. We are cautioned not to enjoy the exercise of power that is implicit in decision making, because that pleasure can corrupt our judgment. We can end up judging matters according to our enjoyment, rather than what is best or right...

The delight we are warned against relates to any feelings of authorship or power one who makes a decision might feel...If we find ourselves deriving joy from the process of making decisions, especially those of consequence that may have an impact, there is a real possibility that the focus has come to fall too much on “me” rather than on the righteousness that ought to be sought...

The Talmud tells us, “Every judge who judges with complete fairness, even for a single hour, tradition gives that judge credit as though he had become a partner with the Holy One of Blessing...” This teaching provides an important awakening...If I speak truth in a situation, there is more truth in the world...Every decision I make is a contribution to creating the world...

...When the exercise of power and wisdom becomes pleasurable, rather than a weighty responsibility, when it is more about serving us rather than serving God, we will inevitably be drawn away from the wise decision making we seek...Acting with integrity for the sake of goodness itself is intrinsically satisfying...Only such an attitude opens the way for us to connect with our own souls and with God.

[With heart in Mind, pgs. 195-198]

SOD...*Helping the soul-light shine...Practice focuses on recalibrating the soul-traits that are obstructing your soul's light from shining into your I*

Rabbi SHLOMO RISKIN...

...In our post-modern society, where almost anything goes and every possible moral or immoral position may be justified and rationalized by the subjective perspective of the individual who espouses it, it becomes increasingly difficult for a religious leader to act as a moral censor, chastising specific people for improper conduct. Indeed, is there any way at all in which one can move the transgressor to clearly see the evil in his action?

I would like to recount some incidents which reflect two different (but complementary) methods of “Tochecha—chastisement” for our generation... The reader may decide as to their effectiveness.

The first incident is when Chafetz Chaim took a yeshiva student who smoked on Shabbat into his home, warmly held his hand in his own, and merely said but one word, “Shabbos,” as his tears fell on the student’s hand.

The second is based on the Mussar Navardok Academy, founded by one of the most outstanding disciples of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, Rabbi Yosef Yozel. One of the principles of this higher academy of Jewish learning—which emphasized individual training in character development and had 180 Yeshivot throughout Europe before the Nazis destroyed all but one—as “*hatava bimkom hakpada*,” respect rather than resentment, repay insult with heightened consideration, respond to a slap with an embrace. The idea was that if an individual did me a bad turn, the most effective way for him to realize the evil of his deed would be by my behaving toward him with special accord and sensitivity. Hopefully, the contrast would make him realize the folly of his actions.

Rabbi Nekritz, a great sage and devotee of the Navardok school of ethical training, was marrying off a granddaughter to Rabbi Yehiel Perr. Many of the Torah sages—rabbis, grand-rabbis and *roshei yeshiva*—were present, many more worthy scholars than there were blessings and honors to dispense under the nuptial canopy during the ceremony. Every one of the assembled was greatly surprised when an unknown rabbi was given the esteemed honor of intoning the last of the seven nuptial blessings, known as *brakha acharita*. It was assumed that this relatively unknown rabbi must have had some special influence on the bride and groom—but, truth to tell, they had not laid eyes upon him before their wedding ceremony and hadn’t the faintest idea who he was. Rabbi Nekritz was frequently asked that evening who his special guest was, but he responded only with a silent and knowing smile. It was only after the rabbi had passed away, and during the week of mourning in his honor, when his granddaughter herself (who had been the bride) asked her grandmother about the strange guest’s identity, that the secret was revealed.

Several years before, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Nekritz had been invited to the wedding of the daughter of a rabbi they didn’t really know. He kept calling and pressing them, so they agreed to attend. They assumed he would arrange transportation, but when he did not, they traveled by bus and train to the catering hall. They were seated with people they didn’t know, Rabbi Nekritz was not given an honor during the ceremony, and no arrangements were made to take them home. When Rabbi Nekritz’s granddaughter was married, he invited that same rabbi—and honored him with the final blessing. *Hatava bimkom hakpada*—he repaid insult with respect.

A third method of chastisement was effectuated by a well-known friend of mine, the learned and charismatic educator Rabbi Benjamin Levine—grandson of the sainted tzaddik of Jerusalem, Rabbi Arye Levin. He was invited a year in advance to speak at the graduation ceremony of a high school in Israel which bore the name of

his sainted grandfather. A short while before the graduation, he was hospitalized with a difficult bout of pneumonia. He returned home greatly weakened—and the evening of the graduation was cold, windy and rainy. His wife called the assistant principal asking that her husband be excused due to illness. “It would be a desecration of God’s name if he doesn’t show up. He must come, even if he had to crawl on all fours to get here,” she responded, not even offering to send (or pay for) a taxi. My friend insisted on going—despite his wife’s remonstrances that he rest at home—and he set out by bus. The entire trip he thought to himself, “How would my grandfather have taught this assistant principal that she had reacted insensitively? My grandfather would have attempted to provide her with an ideal model of proper conduct. “

When Rabbi Levine rose to speak, he said he had to give a brief introduction. He wanted to give special thanks to the assistant principal, who had arranged for him to speak. He said that when she heard he had been ill with pneumonia, she called to graciously suggest that perhaps in light of the inclement weather he ought to stay home. When he said that he felt he had to come under any condition, she offered to send a taxi. He felt it only proper to thank her for her sensitivity and consideration before giving his commencement address. The audience gave the assistant principal a standing ovation. She called my friend the next day to apologize profusely and to thank him for having taught her a most important lesson.

CONSIDER

WHAT is in your heart you really should share with a neighbor?

HOW can you criticize constructively...with Kedusha?

R' Chaim of Volozhin taught:

One who does not know how to reprove with tenderness is exempt from the duty of Tochecha

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself—I am Adonai.”