

## Healing Hatred of the Heart

A class by Rabbi Yonatan Y. Halevy

### 1) Vavikra (Leviticus) 19:17

לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ  
 וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. You must reprove your fellow, and do not bear a sin because of him.

### 2) Ramban<sup>1</sup> (ad loc.)

*Do not hate your brother in your heart* – [the verse used the phrase “in your heart”] since it is the way of those who hate to conceal the hate within their heart, as it is said: “*With his lips, an enemy will conceal himself*” (Mishle (Proverbs) 26:24) [implying that an enemy will often conceal his hatred by way of friendly speech, therefore] the verse mentions the most common scenario<sup>2</sup>.

And it says, *You must reprove your fellow* – this is a separate Mitzvah [unconnected with “*Do not hate your brother*”] to inspire him with words of reproof. And do not bear a sin because of him – you will be held guilty if he transgresses and you do not give him reproof...

Afterwards, the Torah commands that you should love him [*“You must love your fellow as (you love yourself)”*]. Therefore, one who hates his fellow, transgresses a prohibition, and one who loves his friend, performs a positive Mitzvah.

**In my eyes** the correct [explanation] is that [the words] *You must reprove your fellow* are [to be

understood] like [the verse], “*And Avraham confronted Avimelech*” (Bereshit (Genesis) 21:25).<sup>3</sup>

And the verse [which has three parts] is saying, **1. Do not hate your brother in your heart**, when he acts towards you in a manner that does not please you, rather, **2. Give him reproof** [in the form of constructive criticism] and say, “Why did you do that to me?” **3. And do not bear a sin because of him**, to conceal the hatred for him in your heart, without telling him. For by confronting him, he will [have an opportunity to] apologize to you, or he will do Teshuvah [correct his ways] and admit the transgression, and receive atonement.

### 3) Rashbam<sup>4</sup> (ad loc.)

*Do not hate your brother in your heart* – If someone acted towards you in an evil way, don’t appear to him to him as one who loves him [i.e. a friend], and inside you plot against him. This is not a good way to act.

Do not hate him in your heart; rather, offer him reproof for what he did [by approaching him gently and in private], and through this there will be peace.

And do not bear a sin – in your heart [by hating him secretly].

<sup>1</sup> **Ramban.** Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman was a leading medieval Jewish scholar, Sephardic rabbi, philosopher, physician, kabbalist, and biblical commentator. He was raised, studied, and lived for most of his life in Girona, Catalonia. An important figure in the re-establishment of the Jewish community in Jerusalem following its destruction by the Crusaders in 1099.

<sup>2</sup> “In your heart” is not to be taken literally; it is just a way of expression, and therefore even expressed hatred, “outside of one’s heart,” is prohibited.

<sup>3</sup> Before a treaty was signed with Avimelech, Avraham initiated a dialogue with him to resolve a grievance about a disputed well. Avimelech was sincerely ignorant of the matter, and the issue was resolved.

<sup>4</sup> **Rashbam.** (1085 – 1158) A Hebrew acronym for Rabbi SHmuel Ben Meir, was a leading French Tosafist and grandson of Shlomo Yitzhaki, “Rashi”.

#### 4) Rambam<sup>5</sup>, Sefer HaMitzvot (The Book of Commandments), Passive Commandment 302 and Active Commandment 205

**302:** He has warned us not to hate each other, and this [prohibition is from the verse]: **“Do not hate your brother in your heart.”**

The expression used by the Sifri is: “I [God] was only referring to [and prohibiting] a concealed hatred.” However, if one displays his hatred for him, and notifies him that he hates him, one has not transgressed this prohibition, but he does transgress **“Do not take revenge”** (Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18) and **“Do not bear a grudge”** (ibid.), and he transgresses the active Commandment **“Love your fellow as [you love] yourself”** (ibid.). However, concealed hatred is a transgression greater than any other.

**205:** We are commanded to give reproof [gentle constructive criticism in private] to a transgressor or someone who intends to transgress, and to prevent him from doing so through words of reproof.

...Included in this command is that we should give reproof to each other, when a man sins against his friend. We should not preserve [any hatred] in our hearts, nor let it be counted as a transgression [by continuing to secretly hate the person]; rather, we are commanded to give him reproof by talking [to him] until no trace [of hatred] is left in our hearts.

#### 5) Rambam, Mishneh Torah (Code of Jewish Law), Hilchot De’ot, 6:5-6

Anyone who hates another in his heart transgresses a prohibition, as it is written: **“Do not hate your brother in your heart”**...

The Torah only prohibits hatred in the heart, but one who hits his fellow or insults him does not transgress the prohibition of **“Do not hate”** – even though this behavior is not permitted [for other reasons].

When a man wrongs another, he should not secretly hate him and keep silent. Rather, he has a Torah obligation to notify the other person and say to him:

“Why did you do such-and-such to me?” and, “Why did you sin against me in this particular situation?” as it says: **“You must reprove your fellow”**.

#### 6) Yad HaKetanah, Hilchot De’ot 7:2, 4

The Torah only prohibited concealed hatred. But when one displays the hatred and notifies the other that one hates him, and even if one hits his fellow and insults him, one does not transgress this prohibition, but one does transgress the prohibitions regarding taking revenge, hitting people, embarrassing another, and the positive command to **“Love your fellow as [you love] yourself”**, but one does not transgress **“Do not hate”**. Our Sages said: **“Do not hate your fellow.”** One might think [that this prohibition includes] not to curse him, not to hit him, and not to slap him. [However] the verse states: ‘in your heart,’ I [God] have only prohibited hatred [concealed] in the heart.”

The classic concealed hatred is where one does not make known or display one’s hatred at all; rather, one hides it and conceals it in one’s heart. This [emotional state] is referred to by the Torah as **Sitma [a burning anger]**, and is a root that sprouts gall and wormwood<sup>6</sup>, for that is the nature and essence of Sitma, **which makes it impossible to extinguish from one’s heart at all, and it burns like a fire within one.**

The heart is constantly renewing itself to cultivate evil against his fellow, and their hearts become more distanced. The hatred grows more and more intense, until he seeks to take the life of his fellow.

This [concept] is illustrated in our holy Torah, as it says (Bereshit (Genesis) 27:41), **“And Esav harbored hatred<sup>7</sup> towards Yaakov, etc. ... And Eisav thought: [May the days of mourning for my father end] then I will kill my brother Yaakov.”** **However, if one makes known and displays the hatred, and expresses it from his heart, then the fire of hatred will be extinguished from his heart.**

<sup>5</sup> **Rambam:** Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1204) was a rabbi and physician in Morocco and Egypt. Famous for penning the thirteen principles of Jewish faith. His greatest works are the Mishneh Torah, Sefer HaMitzvot, and Guide for the Perplexed.

<sup>6</sup> A reference to a poisonous influence from Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:17.

<sup>7</sup> In Hebrew: “Vayistom,” from the word “Sitma”.

## 7) Sefer Chafetz Chaim<sup>8</sup>, Introduction, Negative Mitzvah 7

Sometimes, the one who speaks [Lashon Hara, derogatory speech about another person for no constructive benefit] also transgresses the prohibition of **“Do not hate your brother in your heart”** (Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:17).

For example, if one speaks to the other person peacefully in his presence, and then when not in his presence one speaks badly of him in front of others [one has transgressed the prohibition against hatred]. This is all the more so if one explicitly instructs them [the listeners] not to go and notify the other person [about what was said], then he definitely transgresses this prohibition [against hating another].

## 8) Be'er Mayim Chaim (ad loco.)

**Sometimes the one who speaks also transgresses...** Our Sages said (in Gemara Arachin 16b) that the verse is [prohibiting] concealed hatred.

The Rambam rules like this... where he writes: *“And one who hits his fellow, and insults him, even though this act is not permitted, does not transgress the prohibition of not hating one’s fellow.”*

[The Rambam] specifically mentioned *“insulting him”* [as a case where one does not transgress the prohibition against concealed hatred] since even though one’s hatred has built up to the point that it has found expression [in the form of an insult to the person], **at least his friend knows how to protect himself from it.**

However, with concealed hatred, even though it has not yet been expressed by way of an action, something much worse can be perpetrated to his fellow, **since he does not know how to protect himself from it.** Therefore, the Torah forbids this [form of hatred] specifically.

<sup>8</sup> **Yisrael Meir (HaKohen) Kagan** (1838 –1933), known popularly as the Chafetz Chaim (lit. 'Desirer of Life'), after the title of one of the books he wrote. Was an influential rabbi of the Musar movement, a Halachist, and ethicist whose works continue to be widely influential in Jewish life.

<sup>9</sup> Lit. students of wise people or sages. This translation is true for each and every mention of “Torah Scholar”.

If so, in the above situation [referred to by the Chafetz Chaim as speaking negatively behind someone’s back, which is a form of concealed hatred], there are two negative factors present:

1. his hatred has grown so strong that it has found expression [by way of speech]; and
2. his friend does not know how to protect himself from it, since he speaks to him in person in a peaceful and loving manner, and when he is not in his presence [behind his back] he “strikes” him with his tongue.

Praise to God, I later found [this exact observation] in the Sefer HaMitzvot of the Rambam...

## 9) Babylonian Talmud Berachot 19a

Rabbi Elazar said on behalf of Rabbi Chanina: Torah scholars<sup>9</sup> increase peace in the world. As it is said: *“And all your children will be students of God, and your children will have peace”* (Isaiah 54:13) – do not read *‘banayich’* (your children), but *‘bonayich’* (your builders).

## 10) Chief Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook<sup>10</sup> – Olat Re’ayah, Commentary on the Prayerbook (Volume 1, Page 330)

**“Torah scholars increase peace in the world”.** Some people are mistakenly misguided with the notion that world peace will not be built except by establishing one standard of beliefs and traits. If this is the case, when they witness a Torah scholar engaging in intellectual inquiry, and via this study, **differing opinions and sides to a matter are seen to increase,** they believe that this is the cause of factionalism, **the very opposite of peace.**

**The truth is not so. For absolute peace can only be obtained in this world through the format of a multiplicity of peace.** A multiplicity of peace means that all of the divergent facets of a matter, and the understandings which derive out of study, will all be

<sup>10</sup> **Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Kook:** (1865-1935) Born in Latvia, and was a student in the Volozhin Yeshivah. Appointed the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, pre-1948. Was famously known for increasing communication between religious and non-religious Zionists and non-Zionist Orthodox Jews, which led to much controversy around him, especially from the latter.

illuminated, and it will become clear how all of them have a place, everything in accordance with its value, purpose, and content.

When the true wisdom is uncovered with all of its many facets, the matters which at first appear extraneous or contradictory, will be seen as vital to the whole. **It will become apparent that only through a synthesis of all the components, of all the details, of all the categories, and of all the opinions that at first appear different, specifically through them will the just and true light appear** – the knowledge of God, His awe and His love, and the light of the true Torah.

Therefore [we are taught that] “*Torah scholars increase peace in the world*”. Through their exegesis, they evolve and explain new insights and reveal many new facets. **Contained in each new understanding is a diversity of viewpoints.** Through this **multi-faced prism**, which encompasses a matter from all of its sides, the Torah scholars increases peace.

As it says, “*And all your children will be students of God*”. **It will be recognized that everyone, even people who are opposites in their paths and opinions, are all seekers of God. Within every one of them is a contribution that will be brought to light** through the knowledge of God and the illumination of truth.

#### **11) Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav<sup>11</sup>, 15 cen. Spain Menorat HaMaor**

And a (Torah Scholar) should be merciful with all creatures, compassionate to the poor, a salvation to the destitute, a friend to wise people, a brother to the righteous, a companion to the simple, a friend to the pious, merciful to students, a father to the orphan, a

husband to the widow, a reminder to the intellectual, a teacher to the simple, a joy to the person struggling through the day. And anyone who brings joy to those who are in pain and suffering, and consoles the mourners, and speaks to the hearts of the poor and the unfortunate, it is certain that he will be of the world to come.

As we have learned in the Babylonian Talmud Ta’anit about Rabbi Berokah Chozah who was in the marketplace:

*Rabbi Beroka Hoza’ah was standing in the market of Debey Lapat. Elijah came and appeared to him. [Rabbi Beroka] asked "Who, in this market, has a share in the world to come?"... He replied "These two have a share in the world to come." [Rabbi Beroka] asked them, "What is your occupation?" They replied, "We are jesters, when we see men depressed, we cheer them up; furthermore, when we see two people quarrelling, we strive to make peace between them."*

And any Torah scholar, who is careful in any of these, and acts appropriately in all aspects of what I wrote, he is called a Torah Scholar, righteous and fair, honest, trustworthy, honors God and His Holy Torah. And through the merit of Torah scholars, God brings peace to the world, as it is said “*Rabbi Eliezer said Rabbi Haninah, Torah scholars increase peace in the world*” ...

#### **12) Rabbi Chaim Shabtai<sup>12</sup> - Responsa Torat Chayim**

And may Hashem, blessed be He, place in the hearts of Torah Scholars love, brotherhood, peace and friendship of Torah scholars increasing peace in the world.

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<sup>11</sup> **Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham Aboab**, was an early 14th century Spanish Talmudic scholar and Kabbalist. Famous for his magnum opus, Menorat HaMaor. He is known for his intellectual approach to rabbinic literature, which he juxtaposed with contemporary Spanish Kabbalah.

<sup>12</sup> **Rabbi Chaim Shabtai**, or Maharchash, was a Jewish scholar from Salonika (1550-1647), famous for his Jewish legal work “Torat Chayim”.