

Don't Be a Hater!

“לֹא-תִשָּׂא אֶת-אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ.”

“*Don't hate your brother in your heart*” is one of the 613 Mitzvohs in the Torah. Lest we think that perhaps this mitzvah of not bearing animosity amongst our brethren has little practical ramifications ‘nowadays’ in the advanced cultures in which we live, the saintly *Chofetz Chaim* (Israel Meir HaKohen Kagan, 1839 – 1933) describes to us the severity of hatred:

“The Talmud (Yoma 9a) says: For what reason was the 1st-Temple destroyed? Because of the three things which were commonplace – idol-worship, illicit relations, and murder. If so, then, regarding the 2nd-temple, during which time people were involved with Torah, mitzvohs, and acts of kindness, why was it destroyed? Because of baseless hatred. This teaches us that baseless hatred is equal to the 3 cardinal sins of idol-worship, illicit relations, and murder.

Let's consider: throughout our daily prayers, we plead for the re-building of the Beis HaMikdash (Temple), and we anxiously await its arrival every single day. However, we don't contemplate the fundamental impediment for its restoration: for, if the power of this bitter iniquity of baseless hatred was sufficient to destroy the Beis Hamikdash – even though they were entrenched in Torah, Mitzvohs, & kindness – all the more so it has the power to prevent it being rebuilt in our days. Surely, then, we must strengthen ourselves with all of our might to remove from within us this terrible iniquity, which lies buried deep within our hearts.

For in our times we find that this sickness has manifest itself in every corner and crevasse, in large communities and small alike, and if we don't contemplate how to fix that which we've corrupted, then, G-d forbid, we'll be relegated to exile.” [אהבת ישראל פ"ב]

At the very root of nearly 2000 years(!) of exile – which we suffer from to this very day! – lies none other than the mitzvah of “*Don't hate your brother in your heart*”. Rectifying this problem, therefore, must begin with understanding the halachic parameters of this mitzvah.

In this learning session, we'll explore the following issues:

- **Why does the Torah stress not to hate in ones *heart*?**
- **What does it mean to ‘hate’ exactly?**
- **Why does it say don't hate your *brother*? Are there some people to which hatred is indeed allowed?**

1 – BASIC SOURCES

Source 1. Vayikra 19:17

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, reprove your nation, but incur no guilt because of him”	"לא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ הִוָּכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חַטָּא"
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How to read a verse!

In the verse of “Don’t hate your brother in your heart”, there are 3 obvious terms which need to be clarified:

1. “Heart” (“בְּלִבְךָ”)
2. “Hate” (“תִּשְׁנֵא”)
3. “Brother” (“אָחִיךָ”)

We’ll proceed to clarify each of these terms.

2 – “HEART”

לא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ

There is clearly some type of emphasis of not hating in one’s ‘heart’.

What do you think this implies?

The Talmud directly addresses this issue:

Source 3. Erchin 16b

It’s taught in a baraisa: “ <i>Don’t hate your brother in your heart</i> ” – I could have thought that this means that one is not allowed to hit or curse (i.e. external expressions of hate), that’s why the verse says “ <i>in your heart</i> ”, which teaches us that the verse is speaking about hatred within ones heart (i.e. internal hatred)	תנו רבנן (ויקרא יט, יז) "לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך" יכול לא יכנו לא יסטרנו ולא יקלקלנו ¹ ת"ל "בלבבך" שנאה שבלב הכתוב מדבר
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¹ הקשו המפרשים דאך ס"ד דמותר להכות או לקלל הרי איכא איסורא דלא יוסיף ולא יקלל! ובאמת מפני זה פ' רש"י דמייירי הכא ע"ד תוכחה, דהיינו שיש אופנים במצוות תוכחה דאכן מותר להכות או לקלל כמבואר בהמשך הסוגיא דערכין התם, אבל הרמב"ם בסהמ"צ שם מתרץ זה דכוונת הברייתא שיעבור עליו בשתי לאוין [קהילות יעקב ערכין ס"ד]

A simple understanding of this Gemara is provided by the R' Achai Gaon (8th century, colloquially referred to by the name of his book, the “Shi’iltos”, which is Aramaic for “questions”, i.e. inquiries):

Source 4. R' Achai Gaon [שאלות פ' וישב ס' כ"ז]

<p>The rabbi's taught: “Don't hate your brother in your heart”, I could think that one shouldn't hit him or curse him, so the verse says “in your heart”, which implies that the verse is specifically referring to hatred within ones heart, that is to say that <i>even</i> hatred in ones heart is prohibited, even though he does nothing to the other.</p>	<p>דאסיר להו לדבית ישראל למישנא חד חבריה דכתיב לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך...ת"ר לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך יכול לא יכנו ולא יקללנו ולא ימרטטנו תלמוד לומר בלבבך בשנאה שבלב הכתוב מדבר למימרא דשנאה בעלמא קאמר רחמנא ואע"ג דלא קא עביד מידעם</p>
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R' Achai Gaon teaches us that the emphasis of “*your heart*” is to **include** internal-hatred: that the prohibition applies *not only* when one expresses his hatred (for example, by hitting or cursing), but *also* if he merely bears the animosity internally.²

On the other hand, the Rambam seems to rule differently:

Source 5. Rambam, Hilchos Deyos 6:5

<p>Whoever hates any one of Israel within his heart, violates a prohibitive commandment, as it is said: “<i>Don't hate your brother in your heart</i>” (Lev. 19.17.); but the punishment of lashes is not pronounced for violating this prohibitive commandment, as no act was committed, for, the Torah did not prohibit save by hatred within the heart. However, he who hits his fellow, or besmirches him with words, although forbidden to do so, has not violated of the prohibitive commandment of “<i>Don't hate your brother in your heart</i>”</p>	<p>כל השונא אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּלִבּוֹ עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה שְׁנֹאֵמֵר (ויקרא יט, יז) "לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך". ואין לוקין על לָאו זֶה לְפִי שְׂאִין בּוֹ מַעֲשֶׂה. וְלֹא הַזְהִירָה תוֹרָה אֶלָּא עַל שְׁנֹאָה שְׂבִלְבָב. אֲבָל הַמִּכָּה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ וְהִמְחִרְפוֹ אִף עַל פִּי שְׂאִינוֹ רְשָׁאֵי אֵינוֹ עוֹבֵר מְשׁוּם לֹא תִשְׁנָא</p>
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The Rambam states unequivocally that the emphasis of the word “in your heart” is to **limit** the prohibition of “Don't Hate” to one's heart alone. Although there may very well be serious problems with expressing ones animosity externally³, “Don't Hate” is only violated so long as one bears the hatred within his heart.

Question: What are the Shi'iltos and the Rambam arguing about, exactly? What lies at the root of this disagreement between these two great Talmudic-giants??

What do you think?

² כן דייק הרה"ג ר' יצחק ברקוביץ שליט"א בספר "מראה מקומות על הלכות בין אדם לחבירו", וכן שמעתי מאת מו"ר הרה"ג ר' שלמה מילר שליט"א, ואח"כ מצאתי שכ"כ הנצי"ב בעמק שאלה על השאלות פ' וישב כ"ז

³ Such as “Don't take revenge”, and “Love your neighbour” [ב] [לא תעשה ש"ב]

“סברא היצוּנא”

We can pin-point the root of this disagreement by focusing our attention to a fundamental question: which type of hatred is worse/more-severe: *internal* or *external*?⁴

Perhaps internal hatred is more severe, in so far as one who ‘covers up’ his animosity causes the hatred to become inflamed within him, like a growing fire, which is fueled over time.⁵

Or, perhaps, on the contrary, externally-expressed hatred is more severe in so far as it can often lead to fighting and the likes.

If we’ll say that internal-hatred is more severe, then when the Torah says “*Don’t hate your brother in your heart*”, it’s **only** prohibiting hatred in ones heart.

- This is the Rambam’s opinion⁶

If, however, we’ll say that external-hatred is more severe – and internal-hatred is therefore the more novel concept (“חֲדוּשׁ”) – then when the Torah says “*Don’t hate your brother in your heart*”, it’s coming to include hatred **even** in ones heart.

- This is the Shi’iltos’ opinion

“RESPONSIBLE LEARNING”:

Try reading the Gemara according to the Rambam!⁷

⁴ הסבר זה במחלוקת הרמב"ם והשאילתות מצאתי בס' משפטי השלום מאת הרה"ג ר' יצחק סילבר שליט"א פ"ב סק"י
⁵ Yad Ketana [הל' דעות פ"ז הלכה ב']. Another explanation, offered by the Chofetz Chaim [סק"ז], is that hatred which remains internal does not allow the subject of one’s negative feelings to protect or defend himself – perhaps if you’d let him know how you feel, he could explain himself and rectify the problem.

⁶ כ"כ הרמב"ם בפירושו בשה"מ הנ"ל וז"ל אבל שנאת הלב הוא חטא יותר חזק מן הכל עכ"ל
⁷ בקושטא דמלתא כ' הנצי"ב דלהרמב"ם היה גירסה אחרת בהאי ברייתא, דבת"כ שם גרס' ת"ל בלבבך לא אמרתי כי אם שנאה שבלב, וכן מביא הכ"מ ברייתא דת"כ ולא הגמ'. עכ"פ לכאורה אפ' להרמב"ם אין גירסת הגמ' דידן סותר את שיטתו ואפשר לפרש גם לדבריו. [כן הסכים מו"ר הרה"ג ר' שלמה מילר שליט"א]

3 – “HATE”

לֹא־תִשְׂנֵא אֶת־אֶחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ

The next, very basic question which we’ll tackle is what are the parameters of “hate”?

The Talmud, in the context of discussing certain individuals who are disqualified to serve as legal judges or witnesses, provides us with a number of ‘indicators’⁸:

Source 6. Sanhedrin 27b, 29a

<p><u>Mishna:</u> One who loves or one who hates one of the litigants is disqualified (from being a judge or witness). With regard to one who loves one of the litigants, this is referring to his groomsman. One who hates is referring to anyone who, out of enmity, did not speak with the litigant for three days.</p> <p><u>Gemara:</u> The Sages taught in a baraisa: (This halacha, that one cannot adjudicate against an enemy is derived from the verse) “<i>And he was not his enemy, neither sought his harm</i>” (Numbers 35:23), that one about whom it can be stated: “<i>And he was not his enemy,</i>” can testify about him. And one who “<i>neither sought his harm</i>” can judge him.</p>	<p><u>מת':</u> האוהב והשונא אוהב זה שושבינו שונא כל שלא דבר עמו שלשה ימים באיבה</p> <p><u>גמל':</u> ת"ר "והוא לא אויב לו" יעידנו, "ולא מבקש רעתו" ידיננו (במדבר לה, כג)</p>
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Based on the inferences in this Gemara, the sages⁹ derive the following ‘indicators’ of what’s considered hate (as well as a 3rd indicator based on other sources):

Indicator #1: One who, due to animosity, does not speak with his fellow for 3 days.

Indicator #2: One who, due to animosity, wishes to harm his fellow in any way.

Indicator #3: One who, due to animosity, rejoices in another’s misfortune.

⁸ The examples provided in the Talmud are merely ‘indicators’ (סימן) of degrees of hatred which are definitely included in the prohibition of “Don’t hate”. However, if it is clear that one bears intense hatred which happens to manifest itself in other ways, “Don’t hate” would also be violated. [שו"ת מהרי"ל דיסקין, כתבים ס' כ ד"ה לכן. וכן בעמק הנצי"ב בספרי במדבר ח"ב עמ' שכד מפורש שזהו רק סימן.]

⁹ שו"ת מהרי"ל ס' ל"ג, וכן ראיתי מובא בס' משפטי השלום וגם בלרעך כמוך בשם ר' שרירא גאון

4 – “BROTHER”

לא-תשנא את-אחיך בלבבך

The following Gemara will help us clarify what the word “your brother” in the verse is alluding to:

Source 7. Pesachim 113b

<p>R' Shmuel the son of Yitzchak said in the name of Rav: an individual is permitted to hate one who he sees doing an <i>aveira</i> [Even though an individual cannot testify by himself. Rashi], as it says in the verse “<i>When you see your enemy’s donkey buckling under it’s load...</i>”</p> <p>[Question] Is it really permitted to hate someone?! But the verse says “<i>Don’t hate your brother in your heart</i>”!</p> <p>[Answer] Rather, Rav must be referring to a scenario where ones sees within his fellow a misdeed.</p> <p>R’ Nachman the son of Yitchak says that it’s a mitzvah to hate him, as it says in the verse “<i>Fear of G-d are those who hate evil</i>”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">אמר רבי שמואל בר רב יצחק אמר רב מותר לשנאתו הרוואה דבר ערוה בחבירו יחידי אע"פ שאינו רשאי להעיד מותר לשנאתו. רש"י שנאמר (שמות כג, ה) "כי תראה חמור שנאך רובץ תחת משאו"...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ומי שריא למסניה והכתיב (ויקרא יט, יז) "לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך"...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">אלא לאו כי האי גוונא דחזיא ביה איהו דבר ערוה</p> <p style="text-align: center;">רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר מצוה לשנאתו שנאמר (משלי ח, יג) "יראת ה' שונאי רע"</p>
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The Gemara presents a contradiction: On the one hand, the Torah prohibits hating someone else. On the other hand, the Torah seems to refer to a situation where one has a ‘hater’, someone who, seemingly, one is allowed to hate.

The resolution, says the Gemara, is that “Don’t Hate” is referring specifically to someone who’s behaving as “your brother” (“אחיך”)¹⁰, i.e. he’s not flagrantly transgressing the Torah. However, in regards to one who is not acting properly, *the prohibition of “Don’t hate” does not apply*. Not only that, but according to R’ Nachman the son of Yitchak it’s a mitzvah to hate such a person!!

However, this is not so simple. There are a number of critical qualifications which severely constrict the practical applications in which hating another individual is actually allowed:

¹⁰ בגמ' התם אינו מבואר דמפרט משום דכ' "אחיך", ולכאורה היה מקום לומר דחידש הגמ' רק משום דיש סתירה בין המקראות דבחד קרא כת' לא תשנא ובאידיך קרא כת' חמור שאנך דמשמע דיש מי שמותר לשנאותו. עכ"פ פ' זה שכתבתי לעייל מצאתי בפירוש בתורה תמימה על הפסוק לא תשנא וגם הרה"ג ר' יצחק ברקוביץ שליט"א פ' כן להדיא, וכן הסביר לי מו"ר הרה"ג ר' שלמה מילר שליט"א דזה פשוטות המילה של "אחיך".

2 Critical Qualifications

#1 – Hate the bad, not the person

Source 9. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, “Tanya” [לקוטי אמרים פ' ל"ב]

<p>Regarding those whom we've already given rebuke to, and there's now a mitzvah to hate them, there nonetheless still exists a mitzvah to love them, and both of these things are true: hate – in terms of the bad within them; love – in terms of the good which is dormant within them, which is a spark of divinity within them which breathes life in to their divine soul.</p>	<p>וגם המקורבים אליו, והוכיחם ולא שבו מעוונותיהם, שמצוה לשנאתם, מצווה לאוהבם גם כן, ושתייהן הן אמת: שנאה - מצד הרע שבהם, ואהבה - מצד בחינת הטוב הגנוז שבהם, שהוא ניצוץ אלקות שבתוכם המחיה נפשם האלקית.</p>
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We're *never* talking about hating the individual, only his misdeeds. The person himself has within him a spark of the Almighty Himself, so to speak.

#2 – Exhaust *all* other possibilities

Source 10. Sefer HaChinuch #238

<p>(The Mitzvah of “Don’t Hate”) is practiced in every place and at all times by males and females. And one who transgresses it and fixes hatred in his heart towards any proper Jew has transgressed this negative commandment. But we do not administer lashes for it, as there is no act [involved] with it. But there is no prohibition in the hatred of the evildoers, but rather [it is] a commandment to hate them, <u>after we rebuke them about their sin many times and they do not want to return</u></p>	<p>ונוהגת בכל מקום ובכל זמן בזכרים ונקבות. והעובר עליה וקבע שנאה בלבו לאחד מכל ישראל הכשרים עבר על לאו זה, ואין לוקין עליו, לפי שאין בו מעשה, אבל בשנאת הרשעים, אין בו אסור, אלא מצוה לשנאתם אחר שנוכיח אותם על חטאם הרבה פעמים ולא רצו לחזור בהם</p>
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The Sefer HaChinuch informs us that juxtaposition of the mitzvah of “*Don’t Hate*” next to “*You shall surely give rebuke*” (refer back to **Source 1** above) teaches us that these two Mitzvoths are interconnected – hatred is only even potentially allowed once one has entirely exhausted the options of rebuking the other individual, and encouraged him to mend his ways.

This idea is echoed in the following source by R' Yehonasan Wilner (one of the relatively recent halachic commentators, quoted by the Chofetz Chaim), who adds one vital caveat to the mitzvah of “rebuke”:

Source 11. R' Yehonasan Wilner, [ספר מרגניתא טבא, מובא בסוף ס' אהבת חסד מאת הח'ק]

One should try his utmost to benefit others, and to chase after peace, and to guard himself from violating “*Don't hate*”. For even regarding a full-fledged wicked individual does this prohibition apply, as our great teacher R' Meir from Lublin has taught us, whilst one has yet to rebuke his fellow, and in our generations there is simply no one who is capable to rebuke properly. For if he had been rebuked properly, perhaps he would have accepted the reprimand, and mended his ways.

Rather, one should pray for divine-mercy on his fellows behalf, that ה' should help him repent entirely.

להשתדל בטובת חבירו ולרדוף אחר השלום ולהזהר מלאו דלא תשנא ואף ברשע גמור יש איסור לדעת מהר"מ מלובלין לשנאותו כ"ז שלא הוכיחו ואין בדור הזה מי שיודע להוכיח¹¹ שמא אם היה לו היה מקבל וטבעו הרע גרם לו כמ"ש ואל תדין את חבירך עד שתגיע למקומו וכ"ש שאסור לקלקלו רק יבקש רחמים עליו שיעזרהו ה' על תשובה שלמה.

The great halachic-giants point out that in our times we are simply incapable of rebuking one another properly¹². It follows, then, that since allowance of hatred to those who are not behaving properly only applies once they've been sufficiently reprimanded, in so far as we are simply incapable of doing this properly, this allowance (and even mitzvah, like R' Nachman the son of Yitzchak said above) *is practically not applicable*.

¹¹ דבריו מובא גם בחזו"א ביו"ד סי' ב' סקכ"ה

¹² This is *not* to imply that we are absolved of the Mitzvah of giving rebuke in our current times, as some may be inclined to believe. Rather, that one can never be fully certain that he's fulfilled it sufficiently. [מור"ר הרה"ג ר' שלמה מילר שליט"א].

EXAMPLES:

1. When the Friedman's moved in to Shimon's neighbourhood, Shimon tried to make the new family feel welcome. He was a bit surprised at Mr. Friedman's cool response, but it did not daunt him; he continued to make friendly overtures, offering his help and advice freely.
After a few days Shimon began to feel increasingly uncomfortable. Not only was the new neighbour unresponsive, for some reason it seemed he was holding a grudge against Shimon. Not only did he not respond to Shimon's greetings, it seemed Mr. Friedman was going out of his way to annoy him. Shimon sensed feelings of animosity growing within him, but with enormous effort he managed to restrain himself and did not say a word, keeping his burgeoning feelings of antagonism locked tightly inside. "It isn't easy," Shimon told himself, "but at least I'm doing the right thing by holding in my feelings..."
Is this indeed true?

2. One day, Shimon was surprised to come across the halacha that stated that hatred in the heart is the basic prohibition of "Don't hate." "Well," he figured, "if that's the case, then I was wrong to hold in my feelings. I would do better getting the hostility out of my system."
The next time Shimon bumped in to Mr. Friedman, he launched in to a long, irate tirade about all the wrongs Mr. Friedman had done to him from the day he moved in. ***Is this a violation of "Don't hate"?***

3. Ever since the unsuccessful attempt at rebuke, the relationship between Shimon and Mr. Friedman continued to deteriorate. Shimon's friend Yossi attempted to smooth out the kinks in the relationship, but he was up against a brick wall. Shimon was convinced that he was not at fault. "Look, I tried to clear up the air, and Friedman didn't let up on his animosity. If he can't stand me and my family, then I have a green-light to hate him too." ***True or false?***

4. "All right, all right," Shimon concedes, "I admit I was wrong in the way I handled my feelings towards Mr. Friedman. What now? I suppose I ought to change my seat in shul and sit next to him, or invite him out to dinner, even though I can't carry out a proper conversation with him; we think differently on every topic." ***What do you think?***

5. Shimon was on his way home one day when he saw two familiar faces at the bus stop, both of whom had just gotten off the bus. One of them was his not-so-friendly neighbour Mr. Friedman, who was struggling with a large, unwieldy package that was about to fall. The other was his old friend Pinny, trying to lift a dozen bags laden with fruits and vegetables. *Hmmm*, he thought, *I can only help one of them.* ***Who should it be?***

The above examples are from the book "The Code of Jewish Conduct" by Rabbi Yitchok Silver, and are printed exclusively for this learning session with the author's explicit consent.