

## Parshat Acharei Mos - Kedoshim 5781

The beginning of Kedoshim, the second of this weeks Sedros, is packed full of mitzvos. The Haamek Dovor says that the connection between all the mitzvos read is that they are designed to bring sholom, peace, to klal Yisroel. Many of the mitzvos obviously help promote peace, such as V'ahavta lereicha komocho or not stealing. Others, such as keeping shabbos and not worshiping idols are important but do not obviously relate to sholom, and require more detailed analysis.

If we consider just one of these mitzvos, in (17:19) it says, **לֹא תִשְׁנֵא אֶת אָהִיבְךָ בְּלִבְךָ**. Do not hate your brother in your heart.

Why does the torah need to say the word “bilvovecho”? Hatred is an emotion which will most likely start in the heart, so what does the Torah add by mentioning it specifically.

The commentaries offer different approaches to this question.

Rambam and Ramban suggest that the difference is primarily halachic, with the Torah teaching us how one transgresses this particular issur.

Ramban says that Bilvochecho is just one example that the Torah gives us of how not to dislike somebody, but of course, you should not take a dislike to anyone in any way at all, not only internally.

Rambam disagrees and says that this issur applies davka in your heart. Other types of dislike are not allowed and will probably be covered by other issurim, but not part of this transgression.

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev understands the possuk differently. In the Shema, we are told to love Hashem, with all our heart. The words used there are “Bechol Levovecho” to which Rashi famously comments that the word “Levovecho” is in the plural, meaning that we should love G-d with our Yetzer Hatov and also our Yetzer Horah. The possuk teaches us that, when someone sins, we should not hate them with “both our hearts”. Our Yetzer Hatov will feel the pain of the aveiroh but the Yetzer Horah will want to criticise and rebuke the person for personal gain, not for kovod hatorah. Therefore any remonstration or guidance should only be lishma-for its own sake, and not done with “both our hearts”, in contrast to the way we must love G-d.

The second part of the possuk states; **הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ**. This is commonly translated as you should surely rebuke your friend and is taken to be a separate mitzva altogether from the issur of hating someone, which was set out in the first half of the possuk.

However, we can already see from the explanation of R' Levi Yitzchok that the two parts of the possuk are connected ie that when you have seen someone committing an aveiro, and you need to rebuke him, be careful to do it for the right reasons.

But Rambam and Ramban offer an alternative explanation combining the two parts of the possuk together. Maybe hocheach tochiach doesn't come from the word rebuke but from vehochiah Avrohom es Avimelech – to remonstrate or argue, as in the term vikuach. This means verbalizing why you did this to me and how can we sort it out. So the first half of the possuk relates to a situation where you do not like your brother, or friend, because you have a different point of view to them – then the Torah tells you– “hocheach tochiach”, sit down and approach your friend, air your views and see if you can reconcile your differences. In this way you will hopefully find a resolution and not be in a situation whereby you have ill feeling towards anyone else.

We started by mentioning that the theme of the mitzvos of the parsha are to bring sholom amongst the Jewish people. With this explanation, the possuk fits in beautifully so that we are not talking about one person rebuking the other, but of two people with different opinions working together to reconcile differences.

Ruth Calderon, in her incredible, and now famous, maiden speech to the Knesset, quoted a story from Gemora Ketubot 62b. Rav Rechumei would spend the whole year learning in his Yeshiva. Every erev Yom Kippur he would return home to see his wife.

One year he got so caught up in the subject he was learning, that he forgot to return home. His wife, waiting anxiously as night falls, realizes that this year, he is not coming. Rav Rechumei, immersed in the moment, is sitting on the roof of the Beis Hamedrash, welcoming the Yom Hakodosh.

A tear falls from his wife's cheek, but as that happens, the roof that Rav Rechumei is sitting on collapses, and he falls to his death.

Ms Calderon, who is a secular Professor of Talmud, suggested that the tragedy of the story was that both the Rav and his wife were correct. He felt that the burden of the house rested on his Torah learning, and his wife felt she was looking after the home and felt the responsibility was hers. When she shed her tear, she lost focus on seeing the other point of view, and tragedy befell them both.

The message of our possuk is that different views need to be reconciled which will reduce hatred and bring forward feelings of peace towards one another.