

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF*

לֹא־תִשְׂנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ
חוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ
וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא:
לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ
וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ
אֲנִי יְהוָה:

You shall not hate your brother in your heart;
you shall surely rebuke your neighbor,
and you shall not bear sin because of him:
You shall not take vengeance,
nor bear any grudge against the children of your people,
but you shall love your neighbor as yourself:
I am Adonai.

You shall not hate your brother in your heart—Your “brother” includes all Jews (Chofetz Chaim) about whom, when we observe or encounter their wrongful acts, we are not to keep festering within ourselves condemnation or hatred, thus destroying klal Yisrael. *You shall surely rebuke your neighbor*—You shall tactfully challenge wrongful speech or actions, never publicly and always with respect and kindness, giving your fellow Jew the benefit of the doubt that an honest mistake has been made (possibly yours) or that there is good reason for the behavior in question, and you shall do so regardless of whether the person is far your senior or your junior, as it is said: “Even the disciple must rebuke the master” (Baba Metziah 31a). *And you shall not bear sin because of him*—If we do not speak out to protest that which destroys the individual and the community, then we ourselves have done evil (Kohelet Rabbah 8); because in failing to rebuke we carry the sin not only of the individual whom we could have helped return to the path of righteousness, but the community as well, as it is said:

“Jerusalem was destroyed only because they did not rebuke each other. . .” (Shabbat 119b). *You shall not take vengeance*—You shall live in the image of your God, guided by the Torah, not adopting the values and behaviors of those who harm you. *Nor bear any grudge against the children of your people*—You shall not poison yourself and your community by refusing to forgive those who have harmed you by error or ignorance in word or deed; but neither shall you make yourself or your community vulnerable to those who intend malevolence against you. *But you shall love your neighbor as yourself*—This is not a matter of how you feel but what you shall *do* toward others: only that which you would have done to yourself (Rambam, Hilchos Chanukah 4:14); that is, you shall sanctify yourself, make yourself holy, by applying in your daily life—toward yourself, your neighbor, and your God (Rashi, Shabbos 31a)—the Torah’s statutes and ordinances. *I am Adonai*—Thus you and your community shall remain aligned with the plan of your Creator.

* Leviticus 19:17-18 (in Kedoshim)