YOU SHALL NOT WRONG ONE ANOTHER*

וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עֲמִיתוֹ

וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ

כִּי אֲנִי יה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם׃

And you shall not wrong one another;
but you shall fear your God;
for I am Adonai, your God.

And you shall not wrong one another—You shall not cause harm to one another physically or in ways that have material consequences—for example, by giving "misleading information or improper advice" (Sforno); nor shall you cause painful feelings with your words. Such "wrong-doing by word" (Rashi) includes: reminding someone of their past, raising false hopes, and bringing shame upon another publicly, but particularly, "hurting somebody by words in such a way that only God can see the evil intent" (S.R. Hirsch). *But you shall fear your God*—Even if you believe that only the One Above knows that you intended harm, because your words were so cunningly contrived, you shall know too that the Creator's rule prevails throughout all of creation, and that our defiance of it can lead ultimately only to atonement or the fragmentation of our souls, the disintegration of the inner part of ourselves that makes us unique beings. *For I am Adonai, your God*—My "face," that is, the teaching of my Torah, is inescapable for you—even as you seek to avoid and disclaim it—because it is the blueprint of My creation, in which you must live: thus I remain your God despite your resistance and rejection of Me.

* Leviticus 25:17 (in Behar)

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