



אחרי-קדושים

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Avoiding Hate

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Part I. Hate Crimes

Let's Change The Subject

I had planned on talking to you tonight about a mitzvah in this week's *sedrah*, the mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew (Kedoshim 19:18). It's a very important subject and it takes a lot of work, a lot of thinking and a lot of practice, and I thought we should dedicate our lecture tonight to the subject.

After all, we are *mechuyav* to generate love for the Am Yisroel in general and for every Yisroel individually. And how much love? There's no *shiur* how much! Even *kamocho*; all the way to the top (Kedoshim 19:18). And because it's impossible to achieve such a level with one big step, with empty protestations about loving everyone – that's good for the liberals, the fakers, but we're talking now to serious people – so I was thinking that it's a subject we should take time to dilate on this.

But on the way down the steps from upstairs, I decided that there's an introduction to the

subject that is overlooked – it's the rung on the ladder that comes before acquiring an affection for your fellow Jews – and I decided that it would be better if we speak about this subject first.

Hate and Ham

In the *possuk* preceding the command to love a fellow Jew, there's a preface – a separate mitzvah: **לֹא תִשְׂנֵא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ** – You should not hate your brother, your fellow Jew, in your heart (Kedoshim 19:17). And so we're not talking about love anymore. It's a step before that still – “Don't hate your fellow Jew.”

Now, 'hate' you might think means that you're thinking murderous thoughts about him. That you're plotting against him or at least that you won't talk to him. No. **עַל שְׂנְאָה שְׂבִיל הַכְּתוּב מְדַבֵּר** – The Torah is talking about your feelings, your thoughts (Arachin 16b). *Bilvavecha* means: even though you do nothing at all as a result of the *sinah*, just to have that emotion of dislike in your heart against a fellow Jew is a *lav d'oraysa* no less

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than any other *lav*. You dislike a fellow Jew? It's like you're eating a ham sandwich.

And even the smallest *shiur* of dislike for a fellow Jew is forbidden. חֲצִי שְׁעוֹר אָסוּר מִן הַתּוֹרָה. There's no minimum amount of dislike that is permitted. And therefore we have to understand that *sinah* is one of the *michsholim* that will cause a person very great distress in the time to come, when the *din v'cheshbon*, the final calculation of his life-work, will be made. Because one of the important factors will be, how did you think about your fellow man? You'll say, "I didn't harm him. I didn't even speak against him!" It's not enough. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "What did you *think* about him? What were your *emotions* about him?" It's what's doing *bilvavecha*, the thoughts and feelings, that is proscribed by the Torah. And therefore there's a very big responsibility.

Hateful Results

But actually the responsibility is bigger than you imagined. Because when a person is not careful with this emotion, if he leaves the *middah* of *sinah* unchecked, it eventually causes him to do many other sins as well. That's what the Orchos Tzadikim tells us. He has an entire chapter there about this *middah* and he says that מִדַּת הַשִּׁנְאָה הוּא מְדַת הַגּוֹרְרֵת עֲוֹנוֹת הָרַבָּה – *the trait of sinah always drags along with it many other sins.*

In order to emphasize how far this sin goes, he tells us that it's not only one sin; he spends a lot of time telling us about various sins that come as a result of disliking a fellow Jew. Right away you understand that it's a *bitul mitzvas asei* of וְאֶהְבֵּתָ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹד. Because if you dislike somebody then you can't love him. It's impossible. And therefore those who are guilty of *sinah* to somebody are not only transgressing a *lav*, not only are they guilty of eating ham, but they're being *mevateil* a *mitzvas asei*; it's like not putting on *tefillin*, like not eating a *kezayis matzah* on Pesach night.

But it's more than that. The Orchos Tzadikim has a long laundry list over there of *aveiros*. "Like *lashon hora*," he says. *Lashon hora* is a severe *aveirah* in itself and there's always a temptation to speak about others – if you're not going to be careful with it you'll be *oiver* all the time.

Here's a man, a man and his wife, and to them their landlord seems to be the meanest fellow in the world. Now had he been the landlord, what he would have done is a different question. He would have raised the rent a long time ago. But it doesn't matter. This man doesn't like his landlord. So it's *lo yimaleit*; it's almost impossible to avoid it. Whenever that man's name comes up you'll always find something derogatory to say about him. And so, besides the *lav* itself of disliking a fellow Jew הַשִּׁנְאָה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ מְסַפֵּר לְעוֹלָם בְּשִׁנְאָתוֹ – *he always speaks with animosity and he'll always find complaints against him.*

Killing Trees

וְתַמִּיד דּוֹרֵשׁ רָעָה עָלָיו – *and always he seeks to hear evil about him.* I'm still reading to you from the Orchos Tzadikim. He says that by nature you want to hear misfortunes about your enemy. You're happy when things don't go his way. וְשִׂמְחָה לְאִידוֹ – *You rejoice in any misfortune that happens to him.* Now, to rejoice in the misfortune of a Jew is a very, very serious sin but once you have a *sinah* for someone it can't be helped. Instead of being נוֹשֵׂא בְּעוֹל חֲבֵרוֹ, instead of carrying the yoke of sympathy for him, he does the opposite. In his heart he has a joy, or a satisfaction, when he hears about it. He considers that he deserved it. He doesn't of course but this man's mind is already twisted because of his *sinah*.

וְגוֹרְמַת נִזְיָקִין – *And it's a middah that will cause actual damages too,* לֹא בְּשִׂינְיָק לֹא בְּשִׂינְיָק לֹא – *because you'll find ways to cause damage or injury.* People who have *sinah* in them will go to lengths to do harm to the other man's property.

Besides for the sin of causing him damage you're also oiver on **לֹא תִקֶם**, of taking revenge. And it can't be helped – if you dislike someone you'll always look for ways and means of taking revenge, of giving him his comeuppance. I know a case of a man who was a *soneh* so he took his car – I saw him do it – and he rubbed the car against a tree in front of the house of the person he hated. He rode it back and forth until he scraped off all the bark of the tree and the tree died. I saw him do that. He got nothing out of it. No benefit. Just because of his *sinah* he went and destroyed the tree of a fellow Jew.

Now, it doesn't mean you'll go that far but it's very possible. Once you look at him as your enemy, anything is possible. And even if he's not your enemy – it's only a little bit of a dislike – if you do anything, even the smallest thing, that's another sin: *nekamah*.

וְנוֹטֵר עָלָיו – in addition you'll always bear a grudge against him which is *ossur* in the Torah. **וְלֹא תִטֹר**. You're not doing anything but just the fact that you're guarding a desire to get even in your heart, is a sin of *netirah*.

More and More Sins

The Orchos Tzadikim continues: **וְלֹא יִרְחַם עָלָיו** – *he won't have any pity on him*, **אֲפִלּוּ הוּא רְחוּק מְאֹד** – *even though he's very much in distress*. A fellow Jew who is in distress, it's a *mitzvah* to have mercy on him. But this man can't do it; he just can't. He won't have any *rachamim* at all to a *sonei*. Maybe he'll say some words of compassion but it's nothing, it's empty words; it's falsehoods, *shekarim*.

וּמִחֲמַת הַשְּׂנְאָה יִגְנֶה אֶת מַעֲשָׂיו הַטּוֹבִים – *and even good deeds that a person does, if your enemy does good deeds, you'll disparage them*. **וְיִשְׂנִיֵּאֵם בְּעֵינָיו** – *and you'll cause his deeds to be hated by yourself and by other people*. Sometimes he deserves credit for various things and we're obligated to be *makir tov* to people who do good

things. Sometimes people do things for the *tzibbur*, they do things for the *tovah* of good Torah institutions. There are all kinds of good things people do. But you'll never recognize that man's good things. Anytime you hear that he did something good, you'll find ways and means of discounting his deeds. **וְלֹא יוֹדֶה לוֹ עַל הָאֱמֶת** – *you'll never admit the truth*. And even though somebody is telling you the virtues, the *mitzvos* and *ma'alos* of this person but because you dislike him, you won't admit that it's any good at all.

So you see what the Orchos Tzadikim is telling us here. Once you dislike a fellow Jew so your mind becomes full of deceit and falsehood. Your *sinah* blinds your eyes and twists your judgments and because of that it's a never-ending cascade of more sins. Of course, the dislike you sense in your heart is in itself an *aveirah* – and it's not a small one – but the fact that it also brings to many other sins makes it even more dangerous. And because it's one of those sins that always drags along other sins with it, it becomes one of the very big problems in our lives that we have to deal with.

And without delay! Imagine a man is eating bacon every day for breakfast. And then for lunch he's eating oysters. And supper, some other *tarfus*. And all day long in between he's snacking on other *issurim*. So will such a man be permitted to say he's going to get around to it, to doing *teshuvah*? *Chas v'shalom!* It's an emergency! Right now he has to stop! He has to *kasher* all of his *keilim*! He has to clean out his kitchen! He has to throw away everything in his refrigerator!

Get Brain Washed

And that's what the *possuk* in our *sedrah* is telling. **וּבָזָה הַזֵּהָרְנוּ לְהַסִּיר מִנַּפְשֵׁנוּ מִדַּת הַשְּׂנְאָה** – By means of this *possuk* Hakadosh Baruch Hu is commanding us to remove from ourselves the *middah* of *sinah*. You have to get busy *kashering* your mind and your actions from all the *issurim*. Just because you have good things in your head

too, Torah and *mitzvos*, doesn't mean you can allow the wickedness of **לֹא תִשָּׂא** to be there too. It's like buying good kosher meat, expensive kosher meat, and putting it into a pot where there's a piece of ham! So what good is the kosher meat? You have to get rid of that ham and *kasher* the pot. And it's not a *middas chassidus*. It's a command. It's a fundamental *halachah* – **לֹא תִשָּׂא בְּלִבְבְּךָ אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ** means that if you have any bit animosity towards a person, you have to get busy and try to rid yourself of it.

How to do it, that's a different story – we'll talk about that soon – but the first thing is you have to know that you're obligated to do it, to take steps to rid yourself. You have to make it your business to scour yourself clean from any animosity against your fellow man that you might have in your heart. Because it's there! It's natural for a person to look down on other people and to find fault in them. A person is naturally concerned primarily about himself or herself which means that you'll take umbrage at various slights to your honor or misdeeds that others did to you. It festers inside and from time to time it will erupt in your emotions and thoughts, and so you have to work against it. You can't just allow it to take asylum in your heart and remain there. You have to do your best to drive it out!

Part II. Hate Studies

You're The Prime Suspect

Now, the first thing to do is: we have to suspect ourselves. Instead of ignoring the problem, we should get busy suspecting that maybe it's true – “maybe there are plenty of people in this world whom I don't like too much?” Now, there's no big *simchah* in studying how much you dislike people. But if you don't do it you'll go through life disliking this one or that one, being bothered by this one and disgusted by another

and you'll never realize that you're sinning all the time. And so, number one is to suspect yourself, to know that you're probably sinning without even knowing.

That's why it's important to look around and see how you react when you see somebody. If you do that, your eyes will open up and you will see how urgent this subject is; because everybody, to some extent, is guilty when it comes to some people that he knows. Think about various people in your *kehillah* or in your group where you are. Your neighbors and acquaintances. Your family even, siblings and cousins and *mechutanim*. What do you think when you see them?

“How do I feel towards this man? And that man? And the other man?” See if your emotion towards him is a calm decent emotion, at least a form of respect for an ordinary *shomer mitzvos*. Or do you have certain grudges, certain things that rub you wrong? It may not be a fiery *sinah* but even those slight feelings of disliking someone is called *sinah*. And if we study the subject of our emotions it's interesting to see how many people we actually dislike among *shomrei mitzvos*.

Reasons For Animosity

Now, suspecting yourself means being aware of the many common reasons that people are *nichshal* in this *cheit*. And therefore we go back again to the Orchos Tzadikim. When the author discusses this problem, he wants to make us aware, so he gives various reasons why people might be *nichshal*. Of course, there are hundreds of ways, thousands of ways that can be but he's giving some examples that are meant to open our minds to the different possibilities, the various scenarios that many people face.

Sometimes a person has animosity because someone caused him a loss of money and therefore you have a grudge against him. That's *sinah*. **אוּ שְׂהֵבָהוּ** – or maybe because somebody once hit you. Let's say your *rebbe* once hit you when you

were a boy and you always remember that and you have a dislike for that *rebbe*. או שְׂהוּצִיא עָלַי שָׁם – or maybe somebody slandered you, he issued a false report about you.

או עֲבוּר שְׁבִישׁוּהוּ – Or someone once put you to shame. Sometimes you were embarrassed by someone - even many years ago - and you just can't forget it. I'm ashamed to admit it but I remember what people said to me many years ago. I was in the yeshivah for many years; I dealt with maybe two thousand boys. Every one of them was polite to me; everyone was nice and polite. Only five *bochurim* in my entire career - nineteen years I was in the yeshivah - and only five *bochurim* said something fresh to me.

I'm *moichel* them with a *mechilah gemurah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu should bless them; they should have *brachah v'hatzlachah b'chol ma'aseh yedeihem*. They should grow old and have great grandchildren and they should have *parnassah b'revach*. All good things should happen to them. But there's no question that it takes work; it's an *avodah* to remove from your heart feelings of dislike. You forget many other things, but this person that embarrassed you or said something against you, all your life and it rankles in you; all your life you'll have an animosity towards him if you don't work on uprooting it out.

Unjustified Animosity

Sometimes it happens that you're upset at someone, you feel a dislike for a fellow Jew, עֲבוּר שְׂאִינוּ גּוֹמֵל לוֹ חֶסֶד – because that person didn't do you a favor. You were hard up for a favor and he didn't come through. And you can't forget it. או שְׂאִינוּ מְלוֹה לוֹ בְּשַׁעַת דְּחֻקוֹ – or maybe you applied to him for a loan and he doesn't want to lend it to you. And maybe you suffered from that. You couldn't buy a house or you had a lot of trouble marrying off your daughter and you have a certain dislike for this person.

Oh no! It's forbidden! Even if it's true that the person could have loaned you the money, the most you can think is he didn't do the mitzvah, but you have no right to react with *sinah*. Yes, he didn't do the mitzvah but more than that, you can't think!

The truth is that maybe he's not *mechuyav* to do you a favor. It could be he has some reason why he didn't do you a favor. The fact that he didn't do favors to you does not justify *sinah* at him. If he does favors, of course you have to be grateful to him. But to dislike him because he didn't do the favor, you have no right. You cannot put any blame on him. The Torah doesn't give you permission to dislike him.

That's a serious matter. You're not justified; and therefore it's a form of unjustified hatred, of *sinas chinam*. Of course you'll try to justify it with various explanations but it won't help. Your excuses are not excuses. It's *ossur*; there's nothing to talk about.

You know, I speak to a lot of people on the phone. People call me all the time, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and neighbors. And everyone has *taanos*, complaints against other people. Sometimes it's justified, sometimes it's not. A complaint, OK, could be. But to have a dislike? To have animosity just because you feel somebody wronged you? You have absolutely no right. It's a *chiddush* to many people - the Torah demands from us that we think and feel according to the directives of the Torah and very very rarely is it permitted to dislike a *frum* Jew.

The Right To Complain

Even to have a complaint against a fellow Jew you need special permission. You hear such a thing? Just to feel a complaint against someone you need a *heter*. We learn that from a Gemara. The Gemara tells a story in Bava Metzia (76a): Mr. A told his employee, "Go out and hire workers for me today at five dollars an hour." But the employee,

he knows that the going rate is less than that, so he goes out and he hires workers at four dollars an hour. And they consented; the workers consented to work for four dollars.

Later on they discovered that the boss was offering five, and they're upset at this employee who hired them. They would have bargained for more if they had known. But still, the Gemara says, they cannot claim five because they consented to work for four. They don't have any claim in Beis Din. אין לו עָלָיו אֲלָא תִרְעָמָת – they have nothing against this man except a complaint.

Fregt the Gemara, what right do they have to have a complaint? After all four dollars, that was the going price in the market and they consented to work for four dollars, and so תִרְעוּמוֹת מֵאֵי עֲבִירְתָּהּ – what right do they have to a complaint?

You hear that question?! “What right do they have to even a simple complaint?” It's not even *sinah* we're talking about. Just to be *displeased* with someone else! That's what the Gemara is telling you here, that you cannot have *taarumos* unless there's a *halacha*, a *psak din* that justifies you. If the *psak* doesn't give you the right, then you're in the wrong to have *taarumos*. You are the wrongdoer here!

Unreasonable Dislike

Let's say you went into a post office to mail a package and the clerk told you, “No, I cannot accept it from you for registered mail because it's pasted up with plastic tape. We can't accept that.” So you walked away and you had *taarumos* on the clerk. “He's too strict,” you're thinking, “He should have overlooked it.” No! It's forbidden to think that way. You can't even have *taarumos* against him. He's only doing what the law requires. He can't accept registered mail that's pasted with tape. And even though you felt slighted and insulted, nevertheless you haven't the slightest reason to hold a complaint against him. What he did was only because of his duty.

And so when people feel they must relieve themselves by having some kind of an outlet for their feelings, then they should know that they're sinning. Even if you say nothing at all; just to have in your mind an unjustified complaint is a sin. When you have a justification, the Gemara *paskens* yes, you can have *taarumos* but without a *psak din*, it's forbidden to have hard feelings, any complaints. And to dislike someone? It's out of the question. It doesn't matter what excuse you have.

וְיֵשׁ שִׁנְאָה רָעָה מִמֶּנָּה – Even worse than the sin of animosity towards someone who wronged you in some way is *sinas chinam*; that's having a dislike for somebody for no reason at all. The tragedy is that it's very widespread. When we're not careful it's easy to fall into the trap of the *yetzer hora* of *sinas chinam*.

Sometimes you don't like a person's looks and therefore you despise him, you look down at him. Just because his nose is not the size that you think a person should have or his eyes are too close together, whatever it is, sometimes just because of looks alone you might dislike people. Or maybe he talks too much, he talks too loud, he's too arrogant for your taste. He shows off. There is really no excuse at all, you just don't like him. He's not your type. He's not your taste: it's a *sinah*.

Growing Thicker Skin

Now of course the world doesn't think that way. “It's a free country,” you say. “I don't get along with somebody, so what? I'm not going to murder him. He's just not my cup of tea.” Hakadosh Baruch Hu says: you have no right to such feelings. And it's something that is considered a big blemish on a person's character.

And nobody should say it doesn't apply to me. Almost everybody is guilty of *sinas chinam* at least towards somebody. And even though you never voiced these grudges, you never articulated them, but you have a certain something in your mind against them.

That's *sinas chinam*, and it's an extremely difficult problem that we're facing. And therefore we have to get busy and think of ways and means of correcting that; even if you don't love them yet – you're not there yet – but at least not to have any *sinas chinam* is a matter that has to be taken seriously.

“What can I do?” a woman says, “She's getting under my skin.” That's what one woman said to me on the phone. “What can I do?” is not a *terutz*. So grow thicker skin. *Something* you have to do! It's work? It's not easy? Nobody said that success would be easy. Actually in most cases it costs no money. It's a very small sacrifice to train yourself to change your attitude. And the more you do it and the more effort you put into it, the more you'll succeed.

When you make a *cheshbon* to search into the attitudes you have and you find various forms of dislike, so you'll be ready to combat them, to oppose them and try to eradicate them from your mind. And that's already a tremendous success – you're already fulfilling a very big mitzvah of לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ.

Part III. Ending Hate

It's All From Above

Now, in order that we shouldn't leave empty-handed – our regulars know that in this place we like to walk away with something that has a little meat on it, something that we can take home – so we'll take a few minutes now and talk about two practical *eitzos* that I heard from my *rebbeim*; two methods of thinking that can help us overcome the *nisayon* of לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ.

Firstly, when it comes to somebody who wronged you – or you imagine wronged you – so one of the most sensible ways of removing the *sinah* from your heart – besides of course from reminding yourself that it's forbidden, that it's like

eating ham – is to remember the *klal gadol* that actually it wasn't this person at all. Everything that is done to you is done by Hashem.

That's number one, what the *seforim* say: יְקַבֵּל בְּאַהֲבָה כָּל מֵה שְׂיִגְזֹר לוֹ הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרֵךְ – you should accept with love of Hashem anything that He decreed for you. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to help yourself or protect yourself and your property, but when all is said and done, Hakadosh Baruch Hu decreed you shouldn't get any favors from that person. Hakadosh Baruch Hu decreed that he should step on your lawn or embarrass you or block your driveway or open up a competing business on the same street.

Trust In Him

When you're upset at the person it means that you're forgetting the most important subject in the world – you're forgetting Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And therefore that's number one; to live with the idea that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge, that He is the one who makes the decisions and He knows what He's doing.

A person who lives that way – at least he tries; he's always reminding himself that it's all Hakadosh Baruch Hu – then he won't fall into this *sinah*. When he has difficulties and other people don't come to help him, he doesn't have any animosity towards them. He knows that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge. And even though he thinks maybe people should come and help him, he's thinking that Hashem is doing it.

It's only when you put your hope in people – you think that a person can help and harm you – so you're disappointed, and the reaction is of course that you're angry at the person. “How could he do this to me?” But if a person is willing to admit the truth that it's Hashem, then he won't put any kind of burden of blame and dislike on anyone. Someone who knows the truth that Hashem is standing behind the scenes, pulling the strings, so יִנְצֵל מִשִּׂנְאָה – he'll be saved from hatred.

He Loves His Children

And now we come to *eitzah* number two. Like we said earlier, sometimes your *sinah* is just plain old *sinas chinam*. He didn't especially do anything to you – you just don't like him. He's on your nerves. He's not 'your type'. Could be you'll say it's this thing or that thing but actually they're usually only superficial things. And therefore the trick is to stop thinking superficially and start thinking along with the Torah, to gain Torah attitudes.

Now, what's the second most important principle in the Torah? The first most important teaching, of course, is "Bereishis bara Elokim"; that Hashem created the world and is in control of the world, that's number one. But after *Bereishis bara*, what comes on its heels? The answer is *Oheiv amo Yisroel!* The second most important principle in the Torah – it means the second most important attitude that a Jew is expected to acquire – is that Hashem loves His people! A *frum* Jew is loved by Hashem! And it doesn't mean only that He loves the nation in general; that too, but more than that. He loves every single one of them individually.

Now, I don't like to say the following in public but it's too important to leave out so I'll say it anyhow. This love that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has for Yisroel, even one Yisroel, just one Yisroel, is *shokul k'neged kol ha'olam kulo*. You hear that? One Yisroel is more important than the whole world!

Now, we don't care what the world says – they'll say it's chauvinism; maybe so, but we stick by the Torah, and the Torah says it. It's included in the great principle of *Hashem oheiv amo Yisroel*. We don't care what the others say. We can't – we listen to what the Torah says: אֶהְיֶה לָאָדָם כְּאֶהְיֶה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – "I love all of you," says Hashem. Constantly it's reiterated. More than a mother loves her children Hashem loves every *frum* Jew.

Who Are You to Disagree?

And – now, this is very important so let it settle into your head – He loves this Jew *despite all of their idiosyncrasies and despite all of the various things that bother you!* This Yisroel that the Torah is speaking about is this fellow Jew who you dislike. The one who's always getting on your nerves. The one whose nose is not to your liking. The one who you dislike because he didn't help you when you needed it or whatever it is that earned him your dislike, Hashem is madly in love with him. And it's not a *mashal!* He loves him more than a mother loves her little boy, her little girl. Hashem loves every Jew intensely!

And if Hashem chooses to love a person, who are you to dislike that person? When you consider that this person, a *shomer mitzvos*, is beloved by Hakadosh Baruch Hu, where do your puny emotions come in? You're going to be independent of the will of Hashem?! "You, Hashem, love him, but me, little me, not so much. I have a different attitude than You." How can you dislike what Hashem loves? It's outrageous!

Now, all these things, you have to know, are easy to say, but they're not so easy to carry out. Because actually, these are the emotions of all of us. And so we have to learn how to instruct ourselves to think in the Torah's ways. It's a very big responsibility to overcome all the human weaknesses and to try to train ourselves to look at our fellow Jews in the light of the Torah, which means you have to have a genuine respect, a Torah-based respect, for your fellowman.

You have to have a feeling that this man is important. If he's a Jew, he's important. If he's a Jew who is observant, he deserves consideration as somebody who is beloved by Hashem and you have to have that attitude toward him no matter what other considerations you might think about. He's not friendly to you. He doesn't speak to you. Maybe he looks superior in his ways. Maybe he

seems a little bit proud. But it's no excuse. All these things are false delusions to deceive ourselves into the sin of *sinas chinam* and it's only with education that a person can gain the ability to have high regard for his fellow man.

Listen To Yourself

Now all of these ideas won't help if you're not serious about implementing them. As much as we'll hear various ways of cleansing ourselves of this *middah* it won't help if you don't do it. And it's a *chiyuv* to get rid of it as soon as possible, because the longer you wait, in addition to the fact that you will have more *aveiros*, as time goes on it will also be more difficult to clean yourself of this *aveirah*.

And therefore, besides hearing these ideas, a person has to get serious about them; you have to challenge yourself. It's what the Orchos Tzadikim calls *לְיִסֵּר אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ*, to give yourself strict instruction, telling yourself to “stop this nonsense”. You can't rely on the fact that you came here to a lecture and you listened patiently to my speech for an hour. It's very good, it's something, but you have to speak to yourself too. Like it says (Shaarei Teshuvah ch. 2), *אִם הָאָדָם לֹא יַעֲוִרר נַפְשׁוֹ מִהַ יִּוְעִילֵהוּ, הַמוֹסְרִים* – if a person won't speak to himself what will it help if others give him mussar? It's only when a person listens to instructions and he also instructs himself, that's when you accomplish something.

And so you'll say, “Chaim! Be logical! Remember how wrong you are in your dislike, your animosity. Remember how big of a sin it is just to allow that emotion, those thoughts, to fester inside you! You have to put an end to it!” And the more you talk to yourself, the bigger effect it will have. Sometimes you have to scold yourself: “What are you doing having such thoughts and emotions? You think you're going to get away with it just because it's *bilvavecha*, just because it's hidden away in your heart?”

The Chofetz Chaim was known to have spoken to himself. He scolded himself. On the roof of the yeshiva, there was a little garret in Radin and sometimes a brash youngster used to walk up and stand by the door and listen in as the Chofetz Chaim spoke to himself. And he'd say, “Yisroel Meir, who do you think you are?” Or, “Yisroel Meir, is this the way for a decent Jew to behave?” They heard him saying these words to himself. The Chofetz Chaim!

That's what the Orchos Tzadikim says. *וְרֵאוי לְאָדָם לְיִסֵּר אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ* – a man should instruct himself with strict words, *וּלְהִתְרַחֵק מֵהֶן* – in order to keep far away from such attitudes of dislike for people.

It's Worth The Effort!

Now, you shouldn't feel like the things we're saying here are a burden; here you're an Orthodox person, a good fine Jew, and along comes Rabbi Miller and he's burdening you with extra ideas about scouring the mind from even the smallest emotions of dislike. Oh no! This subject is actually one of the most important tests of our lives. We're in this world to get along with other people.

Our contacts with our fellow Jews are numberless and so it's worth whatever time and effort you put into it because by thinking into this you'll find various forms of dislike, and you'll come up with *eitzos* – besides for the ones you heard here – to combat them, to oppose them and try to eradicate them from our minds.

Of course, the Torah says it's not enough that you should ‘not dislike’ somebody. We are obligated to love them but that's a very big order. It's not merely talk; it's serious business that has to be studied. But at least not to dislike is a big first step. That's a very big start. A person who learns little by little to change his attitude is not only fulfilling the very big *mitzvah* of *lo sisna es achicha belvavecha* but he's taking a big step forward in the even greater *mitzvah* of *וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ*. That's a very important subject, the subject I

had wanted to talk with you about – learning how to actually love, to feel affection for a fellow Jew.

But it's late already and we'll save that subject for a different night. For now we said enough and I wish you all *brachah v'hatzlachah* in fulfilling this command of Hashem to uproot and remove from our minds even the smallest blemish of dislike for a fellow Jew, the Jew who is loved by Hashem more than anything else in this world.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Ending Baseless Hatred

There is a Torah prohibition against disliking a fellow Jew. A mere dislike of a fellow Jew who practices the *mitzvos* is equivalent to eating a ham sandwich. The entire Torah is predicated on loving your fellow Jew, but not hating a fellow Jew comes first!

This week I will *bli neder* take some time each day to identify the various people I dislike. I will then begin working on stopping to hate them, firstly by realizing how sinful it is. Additionally, I will reflect on the fact that however that person may have wronged me, no one has the power to hurt me unless it is so decreed by Hashem. Finally, I will spend some time thinking about the great principle of the Torah that Hashem loves His people Yisroel, including these fellows I dislike.

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By speaking in English, like we are now, aren't many ideas dangerous? Things that can be picked up by goyim that we are against them?



And the answer is, what I'm saying here, a goy can listen to it too. It is very good for *goyim* to hear these words. He will become a *mentch* if he listens to my words.

The truth is, *divrei Torah* are good for everybody. Only they are not allowed to learn it (Sanhedrin 59a), but the benefits of Torah procedure are good for all mankind. There's no question about it.

תורה תחילתה גמילות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים. The whole Torah is nothing but *gemilus chassadim* (Sotah 14a). And if you follow the Torah you will be successful in this world too. So *lehavdil*, many *goyim* are reading the Bible today, many *goyim*, even today and they are gaining a certain perfection in character, no question about it.

And therefore, if they would come and listen... there's no question they'd go away satisfied and happy that they heard so many things that will help them succeed in life.



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