

# When not to keep your mouth shut



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## 1 Love your neighbour

(Leviticus 19:18) וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֵךְ כָּמוֹךָ

You should love your neighbour

(who is) like you

**Amar Rabbi Akivah** (4) אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָה

Rabbi Akiva says (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 30b):

**V°ahav-ta l°rei'acha** (2) וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֵךְ  
(l°rei'acha) kamocho (לְרֵעֵךְ) כָּמוֹךָ

Love your neighbour (who is) like you (Leviticus 19:18).

**(Zeh k°lal gadol,)** (2) זֶה כָּלֵל גָּדוֹל  
(gadol batorah,) (גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה,  
**Zeh k°lal gadol batorah.** זֶה כָּלֵל גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה.

This is the most important rule in the Torah.

## Hillel's Golden Rule

Hillel said (Talmud Shabbat 31a):

What is hateful to you, do not do to others.

This is the whole Torah and the rest is commentary.

Now, go and learn!

## 2 Image of God

### בראשית פרק ה

אֵלֶּה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת אָדָם בְּיוֹם בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם בְּדַמּוֹת אֱלֹהִים  
עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ:

### Genesis Chapter 5

1. This is the book of the generations of Adam; on the day that God created Adam, He made him in the likeness of God.

### בראשית פרק א

כֹּז וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ  
זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

### Genesis Chapter 1

27. God created the human in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

### Points to discuss:

1. Why should you love your neighbour?
2. What does it mean that your neighbour is 'like you'?
3. Why is this mitzvah so important to the Rabbis?
4. According to Hillel, how should you fulfill this mitzvah?

### 3 Shedding blood

#### בראשית פרק ט

ג כִּלְרֵמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יְהִי לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־רַק לְעֹשֵׁב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם  
אֶת־כָּל־דְּאֵד־בְּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ: ה וְאֵד־אֶת־דַּמְכֶם  
לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם אֲדַרְשׁ מִיַּד כָּל־חַיָּה אֲדַרְשֶׁנּוּ וּמִיַּד הָאָדָם מִיַּד אִישׁ אָחִיו  
אֲדַרְשׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁ הָאָדָם: ו שִׁפְךְ דַּם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָךְ כִּי  
בְּצַלְם אֱ-לֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם:

#### Genesis Chapter 9

3. All creeping things that live shall be food for you; like the grass of the field, I have given you them all.
4. However, do not eat flesh with its life-blood [blood or flesh from a living animal].
5. And also, I will seek your blood and your lives; from any living thing I will seek it [vengeance]; and from any human being, from the hand of any man [who sheds the blood of] his brother; I will seek [vengeance] for the soul of a human being.
6. He who sheds blood of a human being, by a human being shall his own blood be shed; for He made the human being in the **image of God**.

#### Talmud Bava Metzia 58b

R. Johanan said on the authority of R. Simeon b. Yohai:

Verbal wrong is more heinous than monetary wrong, because of the first it is written, 'and you shall fear your God,' but not of the second.

R. Eleazar said: The one [verbal wrong] affects his [the victim's] person, the other [only] his money.

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: For the former [monetary wrong], restoration is possible, but not for the latter [verbal wrong].

A tanna recited before R. Nahman b. Isaac: **He who publicly shames his neighbour is as though he shed blood.** Whereupon he remarked to him, 'You say well, because I have seen it [such shaming], the ruddiness departing and paleness supervening.'

## 4 Tough Love

### Leviticus Chapter 19:17-19

טז לֹא־תֵלֵךְ רָכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תֵעָמֵד עַל־דַּם יְרֵעֶךָ אֲנִי ה' אֹמֵר:

17. You should not go about as a tale-bearer among your people; you should not stand (and do nothing) by the blood of your neighbour; I am Hashem.

יז לֹא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא:

18. You should not hate your brother in your heart; instead, you must rebuke your companion; then you will not bear a sin because of him.

יח לֹא־תִקָּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה' אֹמֵר:

19. Do not take revenge against the children of your people; rather love your neighbour [who is] like you; I am Hashem.

### Points to discuss:

1. What does bearing tales have to do with your neighbour's blood?
2. What kind of hate is forbidden here?
3. How does telling someone off help you to love your neighbour?
4. How can you bear a sin because of your neighbour?

## **A Argument over breakfast**

Harry and Jake are twins aged 10. Their younger brother Simmy is 8.

One Sunday morning, before breakfast, Jake goes into Simmy's room and notices a pile of sweet wrappers under the bed. Downstairs, the rest of the family are having breakfast. Jake runs downstairs, shouts out 'Mum, look what I found in Simmy's room! Simmy's stealing sweets!' and triumphantly shows his Mum the sweet wrappers. As she examines the evidence, Harry laughs at his silly little brother. Simmy, feeling embarrassed and angry, bursts into tears and runs out of the room, kicking Harry as he goes past. Mum tells Harry off for laughing. Dad runs after Simmy to bring him back to face the accusation.

- 1. Of the children (Harry, Jake, Simmy), who is the most naughty here?  
Is any of them blameless?**
- 2. Should Simmy be punished for kicking Harry?**
- 3. What should you do in Jake's place? Should you tell your parents? If not, what could you do?**
- 4. Suppose that Simmy is severely overweight or diabetic. How does this change things?**

## **B Playground bully**

One day in the school playground, Fred notices that Ricky is crying. When he calms down he explains that Dave pushed him over and grabbed his phone. Ricky says that it's nothing really and not to interfere, that Dave gave the phone back. But Fred notices that Dave picks on Ricky most days. None of the teachers seem to notice and Ricky won't tell anyone about it.

- 1. What should Fred do?**

**Dave is a candidate to be a prefect next year and is very popular with the teachers. Does this change things?**

## **C Huff and puff**

Melissa and Rachel are 14 and are good friends.

One day, Melissa notices that Rachel's clothes smell like cigarettes. Rachel admits that her 18 year-old brother Michael smokes; he has given her some to try. She says 'It's not a big deal, just a few cigarettes. I'm not addicted or anything!'

Melissa tells Rachel she thinks this is a bad idea but Rachel just laughs and says that Melissa should stop worrying.

**1. What should Melissa do?**

**2. Imagine that it is an illegal drug instead of cigarettes? Does that change things?**

## **D The online friend**

Sarah and Paula are best friends in year 10. Paula meets a university student called Dave online and spends a lot of time chatting with him.

Then one day Paula tells Sarah that she is finally planning to meet Dave at a local cafe. Paula's parents have forbidden her to go out with boys. Paula swears Sarah to secrecy and asks Sarah to lie for her and pretend she is with Sarah on the day. Sarah is very worried. If she does the wrong thing she is afraid Paula will never talk to her again.

**1. Should Sarah do as Paula asks?**

**2. If not, whom should she speak to?**