

# *Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi*<sup>1</sup>

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah Kedoshim:***             Leviticus 19:11-22  
                  ***Haftarah:***                         Ezekiel 20:10-17  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***             I Peter 1:3-9

***Love your neighbor.***

[Leviticus 19:18(c)]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:169-170;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition No. 5, *Rofei*, the Prayer for Healing.

***Lo tignovu*** – You are not to pilfer ... ***v'lo-techachashu*** – and you are not to deal falsely ...  
***v'lo-teshakru ish ba'amito*** – and you are not to deceive. Leviticus 19:11.

Trustworthiness. Honesty. Integrity. Are those your watchwords? Do they describe your business dealings? Do they describe your interpersonal and inter family interactions? Are they part of your *love language*? Well, they should be – because they are definitely a part of the love language of our King! We, of all people, are to be the 'real deal'. No hype, hyperbole, or hypocrisy. No shallowness. No superficiality. No false dealing. No fraud. No scam. No rip-off. No cover up. No making commitments we haven't thought through, and aren't ready to fulfill with excellence. No marquee cliché' theology. No drama. No 'on and off' faithfulness to Covenant. As Messiah stated it when speaking with Natani'el [Nathaniel], 'an Israelite in whom is no guile'. That 'no guile' thing is ... well, sort of foundational.

## ***Arise, My Love – My Beautiful One!***

The Holy One is speaking – and releasing prophetic empowerments - again. He is briefing His Covenant People on what love – of God and fellow man - looks like in real time. What He is saying is absolutely amazing. Through the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover Protocols of *Sefer Vayikra* our Heavenly Bridegroom-King is calling and empowering ordinary Joes and Janes to *become/be made holy even as He is holy*. This is indeed the Great Adventure.

Heaven's Bridegroom is not just interested in getting His Betrothed Bride-to-be ready for a wedding, you see – He is interested in getting us ready to sit on a throne and rule alongside Him, and to travel the world on His behalf representing Him to the nations. He is a Wise, Benevolent, Faithful, and Ever-Vigilant Servant King; so He is training us to be wise, benevolent, faithful, and ever-vigilant co-regents with Him. He is not just preparing to share with us His scepter – He is preparing to

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share with us the goodness of His *Beautiful Heart*, the mysteries of His *Brilliant Mind*, and the power of His *Magnanimous Personality*.

We are learning. We are beginning to see *things*, and *time*, and *people*, and *life*, from His Perspective. We are learning to think like He thinks. We are learning to feel what He feels. We are learning to value what He values. We are learning to desire what He desires. We are learning to *love Him like He deserves to be loved* and *love others like He loves them*. We have not achieved any of those objectives fully yet, of course; but we are learning - and our Covenant Partner is ever-so patient.

As we are getting a handle on these things – albeit imperfectly - we find ourselves beginning to speak in harmony with what He is saying. We can finally visualize what it would be like to act in symphony with what He is doing. And so our Divine Bridegroom is now ready to teach us *the weightier matters of Torah*. Hold on your hats, dear ones, as He takes us farther than we have ever been into the Plan of Redemption into which He has drafted us, and shows us *what loving our neighbor* and *loving the stranger* look like through His Eyes. And hold onto your hearts as He discusses practical ways to make *wisdom and compassion, patience and passion, flow together in perfect harmony* in our day-to-day lives.

### ***Reflecting the Bridegroom's Integrity In Interpersonal Relations***

The first essential element of the Heavenly Kingdom's Kind of Love is *absolute integrity in interpersonal relations*. The best way I know how to express this in modern language is *honesty and reverence on steroids*. The world has more than enough liars, equivocators, deceivers, prevaricators, exaggerators, manipulators, players, and charlatans. Our Covenant Partner calls us to provide the world a clear and meaningful alternative. He calls us to model to the nations *another, more excellent way*. The Holy One therefore begins His 'Weightier Things' download with the following words:

***Lo tignovu***

*You will not steal,*

***v'lo-techachashu***

*nor deal falsely,*

***v'lo-teshakru ish ba'amito***

*nor lie to one another.*

***v'lo-tishav'u vishmi l'shaker v'chilalta et-shem Eloheicha***

*And you will not swear by My name falsely, nor profane the name of your God:*

**Ani YHVH**  
*I am the Holy One.*  
[Leviticus 19:11-12]

Since our Bridegroom-King never says one thing when He means another, neither should we. Since He never equivocates, neither are we to do so. Since He has no need or shortage of material possessions, and He is a Giver, not a Taker, so it is to be with us. Since He fulfills all His promises – and goes far beyond His actual commitment, so are we called to do. Since He does everything He says He will do, so should we. And since He *brings only honor to His Name*, that should be the focus of everything we do as well. For us to do anything else would be totally inappropriate.

Shaul of Tarsus would later express these Divine Imperatives of Kingdom Love as *‘love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.’ I Corinthians 13:6.* But let’s get specific. The level of honesty and integrity in interpersonal relations to which we are called has seven separate elements.

**1. *Lo tignovu* – Following the King Means Stealing No More**

First, *since the Bridegroom-King we serve does not steal, we who represent Him on earth are not to steal either.* If we are to represent our King honorably, we simply must learn how to respect other people’s property interests. We are sons and daughters of the Creator of the Universe. He is our Shepherd; so we lack nothing. He makes us lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside still waters. He restores our soul. We should, as a result, be so ‘over’ *coveting*. We should be so ‘over’ any interest *in laying up for ourselves treasures on earth*. If so, why on earth would we ever want to steal – or take by subterfuge or deception – anything physical and tangible anybody else on this earth has?

Please note, however, that this does not only apply to physical possessions. The Hebrew verb the Holy One uses to describe the first kind of conduct which is inconsistent with His love and His Nature is **ganav** [gimel, nun, veit]. Our English Bibles translate this Hebrew verb as ‘steal’. It means *to take away something from another person and deprive that person of the taken object or right’s possession, enjoyment, and/or use.*

We are also to respect – and therefore not to ‘steal’ - any person’s ‘space’. For instance, we should not invade anyone else’s turf or home – or touch anyone or even their clothing - unless they invite us.

Similarly, we must always respect – and therefore be careful not to ‘steal’ - any man’s *time*. For instance, we should never demand another person’s attention, or his respect, or an explanation, or a debate, or an apology.

Thirdly, we must also respect – and therefore not ‘steal’ - any person’s *dignity*. For instance we should not go around to people whining, complaining, or gossiping about how badly a person is behaving or treating us - or anyone else for that matter. Unless someone's life or health is in imminent danger, we should not in any way publicly expose what we may perceive as misdeeds or improper motives or priorities on the part of any other person. The public almost never has a ‘need to know’ of our neighbor’s personal failings, weaknesses, or misdeeds.

Fourthly, we should not steal any person’s *personal, household, workplace, neighborhood, community, or national peace* - for instance by going to any person’s friends, associates, or family members to try to pressure them to change.

We are called to give consideration to what every man, woman and child within your sphere of influence has been given by Heaven a right to possess, trust that the Holy One got it right - and *let it be*.

There is, of course, one who *ganavs*. Yeshua taught that ‘the thief’ comes to steal. **John 10:10.** The point is that all who *ganav* show that their true father is not the Holy One, but is instead ‘the thief’. Understand therefore that the *lo tignovu* [i.e. you will not exercise dominion or control over what does not belong to you] aspect of Covenantal holiness is not a matter of legislation; it is a matter of *identity, mission, and destiny*. It is one of the weightier things of Torah. As Shaul of Tarsus put it: ***“Give no place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”*** Ephesians 4:27-28.

We are put on earth to reflect the Light of Our Bridegroom-King’s Face and model the goodness and generosity that characterizes the Kingdom of Heaven. For us to instead *take or try to exercise dominion or control over something* – indeed absolutely anything – that the Holy One has given to someone else would be to prove we are not His People at all, but are instead subversive agents of the dominion of that other kingdom – the kingdom of *the Thief*.

A little later in the aliyah the Holy One will expand upon this instruction, saying:

***You will do no injustice in judgment.  
You will not be partial to the poor nor honor the person of the mighty.  
In righteousness you will judge your neighbor.***  
[Leviticus 19:15]

There is to be no ‘robbing from the rich to give to the poor’ in the Kingdom of Heaven. No co-regent of the Bridegroom-King is to either take from the rich to

give to the poor or take from the poor - or vice versa. Nor is it and appropriate for any son or daughter of the King to take anything from either the rich or the poor to use for his or her own enjoyment.

## ***2. Lo techachashu v'Lo-Teshakru - Kingdom Love Is Real, Practical, and Honest***

Secondly, since the One we represent ***does not disappoint or frustrate people by making promises He does not keep, nor make representations that have no substance, neither are we to do such things.*** We are emissaries, not independent actors. We are only to speak the words and convey the messages that the Holy One has instructed us to speak. We are not to act out of raw emotion or fleshly impulse. We are not to make rash vows. We are never to make promises – or threats – that we have not passed through the Bridegroom-King for pre-approval, counsel, and appropriate modification.

The Hebrew verb the Holy One uses to describe the kind of conduct that is inconsistent with His love and His Nature is *kachash* [kaf, chet, shin]. Our English Bibles translate it as '*dealing falsely*'. What does that mean? It means that we are not to imitate Ya'akov in his dealings with Yitzchak over the fatherly blessing. It means that we are not to behave like Lavan in his dealings with Ya'akov over his daughters and his flocks [see especially **Genesis 29:21-23 and 30:28-36**].

We are instead to be forthright, honest, honorable, respectful, and up front. That is not just a matter of personal integrity, or even morality – it is a matter of *Covenantal responsibility*. We are not in this for ourselves – we are ambassadors of the Great King of Heaven. The way we relate to people and possessions does not just reflect upon our character – it reflects upon HIS.

In the course of dealing with our dealings with others it is essential that we consciously strive to stay on the high road of unassailable truth. That is our safety zone. That is the basis for overcoming.

Of course the truth can sometimes hurt, like a medical treatment - but honesty is the only script that will lead to either personal healing or relational health. Anyone who wants to successfully navigate through the human interactions of life has to learn from the Holy One how to aggressively resist the fleshly temptation to try to gain advantage [or avoid vulnerability] in such conflicts by engaging in any of the following:

- overstatement/exaggeration;
- unfounded accusation based upon negative emotion;
- misdirection;

- moralizing;
- double-standards;
- playing the victim to gain sympathy;
- employing guilt trips;
- resorting to half-truths or lies to cover-up his own mistakes/misdeeds,
- subterfuge,
- bluffing,
- projection of one's motives onto another;
- insincere repentance;
- false humility, and
- every any other form of deceptive thought process, speech, or behavior one may be tempted to employ.

Since our Covenant Partner does not use trickery or deception or subterfuge to get His Way, neither are we as His representatives to do so. We are not believers in a cause or a moral position; we are followers of a King. It is not about us. It is not about ‘truth’ or ‘justice’ in some empirical sense. It is all about Him, and what He is doing.

The only safe path is to keep following our King wherever He leads, and *sh'ma*-ing His Voice and His heart as we go. This may mean we have to take a few lumps and endure a few bruises in the ego and pride areas. But as representatives of the King the goal in our dealings with other human beings is never to win - or even merely survive – a skirmish or contest. The goal is to bring Heaven to earth in real time. We are here to introduce health and healing, joy and blessing, goodness and faithfulness, and kindness and *shalom*, into the world. Such a goal can never be achieved through deception.

### **3. *Lo-Tishav'u - Kingdom Love Means No False Swearing in His Name***

Fourthly, since the King we have been redeemed to serve and represent to the people of earth does not swear falsely, but is always faithful and trustworthy to fulfill all of His Covenant commitments, we are not to swear falsely at all. Everything we say in His Name reflects on His character and reputation. So it is especially egregious if we invoke His Name while making a boastful, hyped, or false declaration, promise, suggestion, or commitment. The Bridegroom-King’s Holy Name is not a magic talisman. It is His Presence, His Attributes, and His Character - not our pronunciation of the syllables that make up His Name - that brings His Kingdom to bear in a given situation. Invoking our King’s Name in conversation should never be used as a way to get leverage, impress people with spirituality, or to get something we want. Our King’s Name is holy beyond human imagination, and anyone who would represent Him simply must learn to regard it as such. He is therefore very, very jealous over His Name; and we He has

redeemed should be jealous over it as well.

When in the midst of ordinary dealings with other human beings we need to *leave the Creator's Name out of all our complaints, justifications, accusations, arguments, and explanations*. We must not get haughty and self-righteous in the course of our conversations. We must never imply, suggest, or declare that the Creator is on our side, or against someone else. See e.g. **Joshua 5:13-15**. We should never declare that our Bridegroom-King is angry at or is going to judge, punish, humble, or oppose any person. That is not why we are here. That is not the message we have been given to carry to the nations. The Creator alone has the perspective and wisdom to make those kinds of decisions. He decides who He will forgive and whose sin or whose name He will blot out. He's much, much better at that kind of thing than we are. And He is constantly at work in the lives of people, calling them to repentance, such that He does not need 'help' from us in the form of condemning them for their sin. If we just let Him deal with the spiritual issues involved in interpersonal dealings - instead of trying to bulldoze other people into submission in 'His Name' - He will always bring about a better result than we ever could.

#### **4. Kingdom Love Means Never Profaning His Beautiful Name**

Fifthly, since our King does nothing but bring honor and glory/weight to His Beautiful Name, we are not to do anything to diminish its honor or glory. The Hebrew verb the Holy One uses to describe the kind of conduct that is inconsistent with His love and the way His Name should be honored is **chalal** [chet, lamed, lamed]. Our English Bibles translate it as 'profane'. **Chalal** literally means to *perforate, pierce*; i.e. to cause *damage to something by making holes in it that let corruptive influences in*. Hence, to **chalal** the Holy One's Name would be to downgrade or diminish its holiness, reputation, and integrity. That is, of course, one of the things fallen mankind did consistently in the generations that culminated in the Great Flood. See **Genesis 4:26 in the Hebrew text**.

Keep in mind, therefore, that every single utterance of our Bridegroom-King's Name by human beings has the potential either to *increase* the esteem in which that Name is held or to *decrease* that esteem. Any use of the Holy One's Name that is flippant, casual, or careless – or which arises from an attempt to manipulate another person or a situation – decreases the honor of His Name. Love for the Holy One and for our fellow man combine to constrain us to use our King's Name only in a reverent, proper, careful and selfless manner that will increase the esteem in which both He and His Name are held.

***Reflecting the Bridegroom's Magnanimity in Interpersonal Relations:  
Doing Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do To You***

The next level of *kedusha* [Covenant-based holiness] that the Holy One calls forth from His Bride-People is *magnanimity*. That means reflecting both His *complete understanding of human frailty and need* and His *compassionate response to same* – and doing so in *real, noticeable, atmosphere-shifting ways*. The words with which the Bridegroom-King chooses to address this important Kingdom issue are:

***Lo-ta'ashok et-rei'acha***

*You are not to oppress your neighbor*

***v'lo tizzol***

*nor are you to strip/plunder.*

***lo-talin pe'ulat sachir itcha ad-boker***

*The wages of him who is hired are not to remain with you all night until morning.*

***Lo-tekalet cheresh***

*Do not curse the deaf,*

***v'lifnei iver lo titen michshol***

*nor put a stumbling block before the blind,*

***v'yareta me'Eloheicha***

*but fear your God:*

***Ani YHVH***

*I am the Holy One.*

**[Leviticus 19:13-14]**

***Lo ta'ashok.*** One essential aspect of what *loving our neighbor* means is that we do not *oppress* him. The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as ‘oppress’ in this passage is *ashak* [ayin, shin, kuf]. It means to take a position against, to strive against, and/or to seek or take advantage in relation to someone. Our Bridegroom-King’s ***Lo ta'ashok*** empowerment means that we are to view all interactions or relationships with any human being as *a wonderful opportunity for us to release life, health, peace, and blessing into another person’s life* – not as a game, contest, or personal challenge we want to ‘win’. We are not to approach interactions or relationships militarily; we are to approach them covenantally. The reason the Holy One has us interact with or be in relationship with people is not so that we can get anyone to give us anything [be it wealth, respect, or anything else], nor is it to make them to do what we want, or behave as we think right or believe what we say we believe. The reason we in the Redeemed Community of the Holy One interact with other human beings is solely about spreading the love, mercy and wisdom of our King.

***Lo tizzol.*** A second aspect of this particular ‘weightier matters’ download is that we are to learn to never dishonor the Holy One by *plundering* or *robbing from* our neighbor. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘plunder’ or ‘rob’ in this passage is *gazal* [gimel, zayin, lamed]. *Gazal* means to strike a person so as to



*strip the flesh off of him.* This can be done physically or verbally. It can even be done with disapproving looks. The Holy One's ***lo tizol*** empowerment reminds us that flesh-killing and flesh-shredding are not our business. Our Bridegroom-King knows how to kill the flesh in the most agreeable and healing way. We tend to slash; He gently debrides. We tend to flay; He tenderly binds up. The Holy One has called us to bring health and well-being, restoration and healing, to mankind. It is therefore never going to be our job to point out or try to beat down or kill any other man or woman's flesh.

***Lo talin ... Lo tekalel ... Lo titen mischol.*** Another aspect of loving our neighbor involves recognizing his limitations – what he can and cannot afford, what he can and cannot see, and what he can and cannot hear – and neither judging him for that blindness/deafness nor taking advantage of it to the person's hurt. The One we represent knows the weaknesses and inadequacies of every human being we will ever see or meet far better than we do; and He is all about healing and restoring. It is only confused and broken human beings who are into judging, mocking, and making life harder for people.

The world is broken. Is that news? All the people around you are broken. Why do you expect so much from them? All the world's institutions, organizations and political systems are broken. Are you really so foolish as to trust in any of those anyway?

The good news is that there is still a way to fix the world. But it starts with getting fixed ourselves. For starters, we are not to even try to fix the world until we can appreciate it as it is, for what it is. And we are not to try to fix another person until we can love them as they are, where they are, for what they are.

Our King plans on empowering us to bring health and healing into our little corner of the world. But we have to start looking at the corner of the world in which we are assigned influence by our King with 'fresh eyes'. We cannot allow ourselves to feel, much less express, revulsion at any component or facet of our corner of the world, or anyone in it. We are not here to point out blind spots, to judge evil, to condemn folly, or to criticize vanity. We are not here to find or obsess about faults. We are here search the rubble and the carnage around us for any and every gram of potential for goodness that yet remains. Much such potential is there, dear ones, just waiting for someone who will look past the debris, find the sparks of Divine Creativity, and care enough to pick them the smouldering embers out of the ashes, dust them off, breathe life into them, and lovingly set them free.

The people of your world are waiting. And all creation groans in eager expectation.

Are you coming?

***Reflecting the Bridegroom's Wisdom, Patience, and Mercy  
in Dealing With Interpersonal Conflicts:  
Releasing a Fountain of Blessing, Not a Toxic Flood of Criticism***

The Bridegroom-King's call to be holy as He is holy extends to many issues which the Holy One considers far more important to our purpose in life than how well we sing, preach, teach, dance, write or play music, pray, prophesy, or evangelize. There are a number of areas that define what 'Beautiful People' do and do not do – and it all seems to start with how they do and do not use the precious gift of speech. The Holy One makes it clear that holiness is inconsistent with *lashon ha ra*. One cannot be holy as He is holy and be an accuser, a gossip, a critic, or a judge. As the Holy One Himself puts it:

***Lo telech rachil be'amecha***

*Do not go about as a talebearer among your people;*

***lo ta'amod al-dam re'eicha Ani YHVH***

*nor take a stand against the life of your neighbor. I am the Holy One.*

[Leviticus 19:16]

***Lo telech rakil.*** What is a 'talebearer'? Are you one? Proverbs 11:13 explains: ***A talebearer reveals secrets; but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.***" Compare Proverbs 18:8, which states: ***The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles; and they go down into the inmost body.*** Proverbs 26:20 clarifies: ***Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.***

The Hebrew word that our English Bibles translates as 'talebearer' is *rakil*. This incorporates a lot of things involving the misuse of the human capacities of speech. A *rakil* is a sin-exposer<sup>2</sup>. A *rakil* is a *secret-teller*<sup>3</sup>. A *rakil* is an *accuser*. A *rakil* is a *blame-placer*. A *rakil* is a *drama-promoter*. A *rakil* is a *scandal-monger*<sup>4</sup>.

The common element in all the above - *i.e.* what makes one a *rakil*/talebearer – is the spreading of negativity with one's mouth. It involves *speaking in a negative or disrespectful way* about any person, group, movement, place, or thing. It involves *voicing accusations of blame and/or wrongdoing* – either as the original complainant or as a repeater. It involves making *derogatory assessments*. It involves *assigning guilt by association*. It involves *the calling of names* and

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<sup>2</sup> See Proverbs 18:8 and 26:22.

<sup>3</sup> See Proverbs 11:13 and 20:19.

<sup>4</sup> See Jeremiah 6:28, when the work *rakil* is applied to *one who slanders and corrupts*, and Ezekiel 22:9 where a *rakil* is identified with *one who causes bloodshed*.

*labels*. It involves *expressing negative opinions* about anyone or anything. Those kinds of usage of the organs of speech are all decidedly *counter-Kingdom*.

Do you get it, dear one? The kind of holiness to which our Bridegroom-King has called us means that absolutely no *negative speech* should come from our mouths.

***Lo ta'amod al-dam re'eicha.*** We are to see atonement available and made accessible at all times. We should never write anyone or any situation off as irredeemable. We are never to attribute to the Holy One negative thoughts or concepts which emanate from our own fallen minds. We are never to start a discussion or a sentence with a negative phrasing such as *'It is sad [or pathetic, or terrible, or unfair, etc.] that ....'* or *'I think it is so disgusting when people ....'* or *'I am [or get] outraged [or disappointed, or hurt, or frustrated, etc.] that ....'* We are never to tell anyone *'It makes God so angry when you ....'*

Do you catch yourself doing any of these things, dear ones? Have your organs of speech – the precious vessels with which you have been empowered to bring *shalom* and blessing into the world - been used instead to bring discord, dissatisfaction, and drama into it? Has your tongue been used to fan the flames of dissatisfaction, conflict, discord, rebellion, and drama instead of bringing healing and resolution? Make *t'shuvah*, dear one! Return your vessels and organs of speech to their rightful, intended, ambassadorial use! Remember and take heed to what David said:

***O Holy One, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?  
He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.  
He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor,  
nor takes up a reproach against his friend.***

[Psalm 15:1-3]

### ***Reacting Calmly and Graciously To Other People's Misconduct and Failure***

Another area the Holy One's call to "***Be holy as [He] is holy***" is designed to radically transform our interactions involves *how we react or respond when someone else breaks covenant, misbehaves, falls, or fails*. We are not to facilitate or excuse bad behavior, but we are also not to judge or condemn the people associated with such conduct. Our focus is always to be on the individual in question's potential for glorious redemption instead of his/her sin, and upon the future the Holy One can build if given a chance, not on the mess we see plainly in front of our eyes at the moment.

What are we to do when confronted with sin, weakness, or rebellion in others? We are to stay calm. We are to remain King and Kingdom-focused. **Psalm 37:3-7**. We

are to act like we have been here before. **Psalm 37:30.** We are not to over-react. We are never to pout or fret. **Psalm 37:1.** We are not to allow ourselves to be repulsed. We are not to allow our flesh to indulge the least sensation of self-righteousness or condescension. We are not to reject the person because of the sin. We are not to go on a crusade to stamp out the sin or expose and embarrass – much less condemn - the sinner. We must also never let the sun go down on any anger we may start to feel. **Psalm 37:8.** We cannot ever assign a person who is presently sinning or going astray from the Will of the Holy One to contempt. If we are going to be holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy, we are to always remember the great mercy and kindness that was shown to us by the Holy One at the time the shoe was on the other foot, and we were the mess. **I Corinthians 6:9-11.** The love and mercy He showed us when we least deserved it, that is what we are to show to people who sin - even when they hurt us or those close to us. As the Holy One puts it:

***Lo-tisna et-achicha bilvavecha***

*Do not hate your brother in your heart.*

**[Leviticus 19:17a]**

***Lo tisna.*** What does it mean to ‘hate’ your brother in your heart? It means to take up any position or stance that is adverse to him. It means to place yourself above or against him instead of alongside of him. It means to think, speak, act, or react like you are his better, his superior, his judge, or his enemy. It means to leave the position the Holy One has assigned you as his friend, his helper/co-laborer, his encourager, and his counselor, and take on yourself instead the serpentine role of accuser, critic, judge, and persecutor.

So, if we are being holy as the Bridegroom-King is holy, what are we supposed to do when we see a fellow man over whom we have been given a measure of influence engaged in sin? English Bibles interpret what the Holy One instructed us to do in such situations as:

***Hoche'ach tochiach et-amitecha***

*Admonish your neighbor*

***V'lo-tisa alav chet***

*and do not bear sin because of him.*

**[Leviticus 19:17b]**

***Hoche'ach tochiach.*** What does it mean to ‘admonish’ [KJV ‘rebuke’] one’s neighbor? If you approach it Hebraically you will find that it nowhere near what the English verb ‘admonish’ or ‘rebuke’ in current usages seems to suggest. It most definitely does not mean to judge, accuse, attack, or berate. It does not mean to take on a superior, self-righteous air and show disapproval and disgust.

So if not those things, what does *admonish/rebuke* mean? The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as *admonish/rebuke* in this passage is *yakach*<sup>5</sup>. This Hebrew verb means to quietly take step up and go the forefront; i.e. to humbly and discreetly go in front of another, take the pressure and attention off of them, and assume a temporary leadership role for their benefit. Picture a flock of geese. When one falters under the pressure of the wind and the exertion, another steps up and takes the faltering one's place. The second goose goes in front of the the faltering one, endures the brunt of the wind currents in the faltering one's place, and lets the faltering one 'draft' off his movements until his strength can be restored and he can resume his place. *Yakach* does not mean to angrily reprove – or necessarily to say anything at all. It means to set an example, and take practical, effective steps to introduce healing and restoration to the faltering one in your sphere of influence. Accusation and condemnation have no place. What is needed is leadership – and respect for the worth and potential of the individual even when his behavior and attitude is nowhere near the holiness level where it needs to be.

***Lo-tisa alav chet.*** We are here at such a time as this to *cover* sins, not to *cry* or *gasp*, *scream* or *gossip*, *fret* or *fume* about them. We are here to model and laud to the world the process of *t'shuvah* and the precious Divine give of atonement - not to wound people with condemnation. Every detour we take from the narrow path of Torah the Holy One has cleared for us into the off-course swamp of negative thought and speech will only complicate and prolong the effect of whatever sin we see in other people. Whenever we indulge negative thoughts, emotions, speech, and/or behaviors in response to other people's sins, we actually join them in sinning. We do the work of the accuser instead of co-laboring in the work of the Healer.

The Holy One then clarifies our responsibility even further:

***Lo-tikom***

*You will not take vengeance.*

[Leviticus 19:18a]

The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as 'take vengeance' in this Divine instruction is *naqam*<sup>6</sup>. It means to *feel* or *express anger*, and/or to inflict any form of verbal condemnation or either emotional or physical punishment. Under no circumstance is either anger or condemnation to enter into our reaction or response to the sin, failings, or other breaches of covenant of others. At no point are we ever to usurp the role of either the accuser of the brethren or the Righteous Judge. Taking on either role is totally inconsistent with being holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy. There is a day for judgment coming; but this is *not that*

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<sup>5</sup> *Yakach* is *yod, kaf, chet*. Strong's Hebrew word #3198, it is pronounced *yaw-kawkh'*.

<sup>6</sup> *Naqam* is *nun, qof, mem sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word #5358, it is pronounced *naw-kahm'*.

day. And there is a seat of judgment prepared against the day of judgment; but *it is not ours to sit on*. Every time we reject this instruction of the Holy One and try to sit on the seat of judgment in our Bridegroom-King's place, our counsel becomes the counsel of the ungodly, our way becomes the way of sinners, and our the seat becomes the seat of the scornful. Everyone else will be able to see it, but we will not. That is why Yeshua taught 'Judge not, that you be not judged. For by the same standards of judgment you use, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you dish it out, it will be dished out back to you. **Matthew 7:1-2**.

The Holy One is not done with this issue yet, however. Next He says:

***v'lo-titor et-b'nei amecha***

*and you are not to bear any grudge/offense/anger against the children of your people.*

**[Leviticus 19:18b]**

We are called to become more and more unoffendable each day. As we walk with the Holy One we are to take on His mercy, His compassion, His characteristic of slowness to anger, and His delight in forgiveness and redemption. Like our Bridegroom-King, we are to reject any negative feelings and disregard all accusatory statements about or toward a fellow man – and to keep doing so no matter how badly the person in question may behave toward us or anyone else. We are to indulge no bias, no prejudice, no predisposition, and absolutely no animosity whatever - under any circumstances ... *ever*. We are to ***Be holy as [He] is holy***.

### ***The Weightiest Matter of All***

The Holy One concludes this part of the 'weightier matters' download about what holy love for one's fellow man is supposed to look like in real situations and real time by saying:

***V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho***

*But you will love your neighbor as you yourself are loved:*

***Ani YHVH***

*I am the Holy One.*

**[Leviticus 19:18c]**

This injunction is what has come to be known in religious circles today as the 'second commandment'. But it is not something that makes any sense independent of the other aspects and definitions of love for neighbor that the Holy One has set forth in the rest of Leviticus 19. Radically loving our neighbor is part and parcel of, and presupposes the existence of, the other aspects and definitions of holy, covenantal love. It means nothing if not done in connection with a lifestyle of [a] refusing to get and stay angry, [b] refusing to entertain negative thoughts; [c] rejecting the temptation to accuse or even listen to accusations; [d] rejecting the temptation to criticize; [e] refusing to speak or behave in a condescending or

judgmental manner; [f] refusing to sit as any man's judge; [g] refusing to uncover or expose private sin or failure; [g] being there to help people in their time of faltering; [h] showing a willingness to step up to lead and protect others they are down; and [i] refusing to indulge, hold, nurse, or spread any offense, grudge, or sense of revulsion.

What does the Holy One's "*You will love your neighbor kamocho*" empowerment really mean? Contrary to popular, simplistic theology it does not depend for an instant on whether or to what extent we think we 'love ourself'. The issue is not whether, in our current state of brokenness, we do or do not love ourself. The issue is whether we are willing to let the Holy One love other people His Way – just like and to the extent He loves us – only using our bodies and unique personalities and testimonies to do it?

We are not called to love our neighbor as best we can. It has to go much, much deeper than that to have any redemptive effect. We have to love beyond our capability to love. We have to forgive beyond our capability to forgive. We have to inspire beyond our capacity to inspire. What we are called to do is to surrender all our capacities and instrumentalities of love to the Holy One, get out of the way, and let Him love others the way only He can love them. He alone knows how to use our voices, faces, words, actions, and reactions effectively to express His great love.

Are you ready to become a humble vessel through which He pours out life-changing measures of Divine Love? That, dear one, is the weightiest of all the weighty matters of Torah. And that is what *being holy as He is holy* entails in real situations, in real time.

### ***But What About Times of Real and Painful Interpersonal Conflict?***

Some level of interpersonal conflict is, of course, unavoidable in this world. That does not mean we should seek it. And it certainly does not mean we should fixate on it. The wise learn how to navigate each conflict as only one temporary obstacle on a greater course. The foolish fixate on conflict, personally invest themselves in it, and lose their sense of direction. When an interpersonal conflict cannot be avoided by common sense, do you at least know Heaven's rules of engagement?

The first such rule is very simple: Keep three things in mind at all times:

1. this conflict will pass – if I can just resist the temptation to over-react to it;
2. how well - or how badly - you handle this moment of conflict could significantly affect not only your future but the future of the other person or persons involved, and all affected families, for generations;

3. all other persons involved in the conflict are deeply loved by the Creator, are designed in His image, and are called to greatness despite their obvious flaws – just as you are, despite yours.

So . . . considering the ‘bigger picture’, is getting your way, having your say, expressing your displeasure, defending yourself, or proving your point ever really that important? Not in the Kingdom of Heaven, it isn’t.

Are you in the midst of an Interpersonal Conflict? If so, and you want to navigate a provocation successfully, it pays to remember that interpersonal conflicts are not sporting events. At sporting events, some wind up winners and some wind up losers - and at the end everybody just shakes hands and walks away. Interpersonal conflicts are very different. If not managed, interpersonal conflicts can become bloody battlefields upon which some part of each participant in the conflict is guaranteed to die.

The goal in interpersonal conflicts should never be to win - that would just lead to a rematch - then another, and another, until you eventually lose - with escalating consequences all the while. The goal in interpersonal conflicts should always instead be for all parties involved to survive, to heal, to move beyond the conflict, and to go forward from it stronger and wiser in every good way than they were before the conflict.

Everyone - including yourself as well as every person with whom you will ever have an interpersonal conflict - suffers from vast areas of blindness and deafness. What we each cannot see, what we are each unable to grasp, what we each do not know - would fill oceans if not galaxies. So how do we recognize and deal honorably and respectfully with the other person's legitimate blind spots and deaf zones? How do we avoid become blind men leading the blind and deaf men lecturing the deaf? Look not for what you can take from the other person, or what you can accuse them of, or at what bad things they have done. Instead acknowledge his worth and recognize and thank him for all the good that he or she has ever done. If you cannot do that, you will never work through the conflict successfully - even if the other person confesses to everything you believe he has done, apologizes, begs forgiveness, and repays you five-fold for everything you lost at his hands.

Do not expect people to see things as you see things, hear things as you hear them, or believe them as you believe them. Relationship is about communication and give and take, not 'right and wrong', 'good and evil', 'fair and unfair', or 'moral and immoral'. Do not think yourself superior to, belittle with your words or facial



expressions, or in any way disrespect any person because of their legitimate blind spots, deaf zones, or areas of ignorance.

This is a time for real people like you to stay calm, walk in wisdom, stir up the smoldering embers of hope, and speak in pure words of faith pulsing with life, health and peace. This is a time for ordinary Joes and Janes of all ages and stations in life to engage as often as possible in actions that, if done in sufficient quantity with sufficient passion and frequency by a significant number of people across the globe, would fix the world.

You have a distinct personality, purpose, and potential. Do not allow yourself to be so easily discouraged. You have a great calling, mission, and destiny. Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Your Creator has designed you with the ability to stay calm, on course, and true to task even in the midst of provocations and aggravations. Do not allow yourself to be so easily aggravated or offended. You have seeds of greatness in your heart waiting to germinate, fountains of wisdom in your soul ready to burst forth, and reservoirs of strength in your body and its members just waiting for a reason to engage. Do not allow yourself to be so easily defeated - or to substitute good entertainment, good causes, or even good works for the awe-inspiring creative miracle you were created to release upon the earth.

Of course interpersonal conflicts come in every person's life. When they come, we must choose how we will respond, and where we want to go from here. Depending on how we respond, the conflict can either become a springboard into a powerful season of growth and maturity or a trapdoor into a season of regression in which offense, feelings of victimization, woundedness, self-pity, wreak havoc on our hearts, minds and destinies.

It is not our opinions, criticisms, philosophies, or doctrines the broken world in which we live desperately needs; what will fix the world is a consistent outflow of acts of kindness birthed out of a joyful heart, providing an irrefutable demonstration of Heavenly Wisdom perfectly blended with Earthly love. Just remember - whatever you sow you in this regard you will also reap.

***Respecting the Creator, His Priorities, His Will,  
His Covenant Protocols, His Creation, and The Distinctions He Has  
Made Between Species***

Another aspect of becoming holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy involves how we interact with and relate to our King's Laws/Instructions for Living, His Priorities, and His Ways. As the Holy One Himself puts it:

***Et-chukotai tishmoru***

*Keep My statutes.*

***behemtecha lo-tarbia kil'ayim sadecha***

*Do not let your livestock breed with another kind.*

***lo-tizra kil'ayim***

*Do not sow your field with mixed seed.*

***uveged kil'ayim sha'atnez lo ya'aleh aleycha***

*Nor is a garment of mixed linen and wool to come upon you.*

**[Leviticus 19:19]**

One cannot be holy if he or she does not treat the Holy One's instructions for life on earth with honor, respect, and reverence. Everything the Holy One has said, and caused to be recorded, in the *Kedusha* Discourse, in Torah, in TaNaKh, or in the apostolic writings, He spoke and caused to be recorded for an important purpose. We must, if we are to become holy and our Bridegroom-King is holy, and fulfill our mandate to be His Kingdom of priest, learn to resist the serpent's temptation to re-write, re-interpret, and re-prioritize everything the Holy One has said. We do not get to substitute our pitiful imitation of logic, our ridiculously short-sighted frame of reference, or our blatantly self-interest clouded and flesh-obsessed set of values for our Creator's boundless wisdom and understanding. We do not get to just do whatever feels right or pleasing to us in the moment, or appeals to our fallen minds, and throw a spiritual-sounding label on it.

***Behemtecha lo-tarbia.*** We are not to make up our own genetic formulas. For us, as mere mortals, to genetically re-engineer livestock species, fields, or orchards in hopes that we can make more money or get a little more production or volume out of a species is the ultimate expression of disdain for our Creator and His Wisdom. Every time we do so, we invariably wind up messing up the ecological system the Holy One established.

***Sha'atnez lo ya'aleh aleycha.*** We who have been called to represent the Bridegroom-King on earth also do not get to disregard the order the Holy One followed in Creation and make up our own fabric blends in hopes of increasing sales or comfort. Everything the Holy One made He made unique – and that uniqueness serves a greater purpose than we can imagine. It is the utmost of disrespect for the Creator to re-design and re-combine His Creation in direct contravention of His instructions.

### ***Honoring Betrothal Commitments Above Sexual Attraction***

The secular cultures around us deify romantic and sexual attraction. Romance has become an idol for both old and young, male and female. And sexual attraction has displaced covenant commitment as the reason for and the substance of interaction, courtship, betrothal and marriage. But the Holy One has ordained that,

for His People, sexual attraction is to be a mere bi-product of life and relationship, not the reason for or the focus of it. To be holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy means that we must keep our vessels and organs and appetites for sexuality under submission to a greater purpose, a greater plan, and a greater destiny. Just because sparks of romance – or lust, as the case may be – fly when two people come into proximity of each other does not mean that we are just to ‘let nature take its course’. That is sheer folly. It is toxicity and self-destruction, identity confusion, and mission sabotage all circling the participants like buzzards coming in for a feast. Hence, the Holy One says:

***V'ish ki-yishkav et-ishah shichvat-zera***

*Whoever lies carnally with a woman*

***v'hi shifchah necherefet l'ish***

*who is betrothed to a man as a bondmaid*

***vehofdeh lo nifdatah o chufshah***

*and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom,*

***nitan-lah bikoret***

*for this there shall be scourging;*

**[Leviticus 19:20]**

In the covenant community no human being is to be regarded as a sex object. No human being is to be considered or treated as either an object of conquest or an instrument of personal, selfish pleasure. Sexual attraction and stimulation are to be avoided and resisted except when indulging same will fulfill covenant purposes – which means any time the urge for same arises in any context other than a marriage between a man and a woman who have entered into a lifetime covenant commitment to cleave only to the other so long as both shall live, and to become one with each other and no other person ever. If someone in the Covenant community selfishly chooses to violate this critical instruction of the Holy One, he is subject to scourging by the judges of the city. But neither party is to be killed if what was involved was just passion run amuck. That is not necessary, as an official scourging is expected to teach the participants, and any bystanders, the lesson that in the Covenant community, charged with representing the wisdom, ways, and superior pleasures of the Bridegroom-King to the world, base sexual impulses and urges can and must be mastered and controlled.

### ***Questions for Today's Study***

1. In Vayikra 19:1 the Holy One says: “Be ***Kedoshim*** [literally, “holy ones”], because I am ***kadosh*** (holy)”. Note that many of the *mitzvot* in today's aliyah look like the so-called “Ten Commandments” of Exodus 20, slightly reworded.

[A] Which of the “ten commandments” can you identify in Leviticus 19?

[B] Write three columns, with ten entries under each column. On the left, list

the ten commandments, one per line; in the middle, write the verse(s) in Exodus 20 which contain the ten commandments; on the right, write the verse(s) in Leviticus 19 which parallel each commandment found in Exodus 20.

2. Some of the corresponding instructions in Leviticus 19 contain the phrase “I am the Holy One [*Ani YHVH*]” and others contain the phrase “ I am the Holy One your God [*Ani YHVH Eloicheim*]”. Look at the things commanded with the words “I am the Holy One”; now look at the ones commanded with the words “I am the Holy One your God”. Can you tell a difference in the emphasis of the commands accompanied by “I am the Holy One your God” from those accompanied by “I am the Holy One”? Explain.

3. In today’s Haftarah Ezekiel is prophesying about the sins of our fathers in covenant:

[A] List the things the Holy One says that He gave our fathers while they were in the wilderness.

[B] What does the Holy One say our fathers in the wilderness did with each of the things the Holy One gave them?

[C] What does the Holy One say captured the hearts of our fathers while they were in the wilderness?

[D] How strong is your relationship with the Holy One’s statutes and ordinances?

[E] How well are you receiving and incorporating in your life the gift of the Holy One’s Sabbaths?

[F] Are there any idols in your life – and if so, what are they?

4. In the assigned reading for today from the B’rit Chadasha Kefa [i.e. Peter] has some very Torah-based things to say about true Biblical holiness:

*Do not let your adornment be merely outward —  
arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel —  
rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,  
with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,  
which is very precious in the sight of God.  
For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God  
also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,  
as Sarah sh’ma-ed Avraham, calling him lord,  
whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.  
Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife,  
as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life,  
that your prayers may not be hindered.  
Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another;  
love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;  
not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing,  
knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

[I Peter 1:3-9]

[A] What instructions regarding true Biblical holiness does Kefa specifically address to women?

[B] What instructions regarding true Biblical holiness does Kefa specifically give to men?

[C] What instructions regarding true Biblical holiness does Kefa give to all, regardless of gender?

[D] What does Kefa imply will hinder the effectiveness of a man's prayers?

*May you be adorned in robes of righteousness,  
a holy nation, a kingdom of priests,  
clearly distinguishable from the society in which you live.*

***The Rabbi's son***

***Meditation for Today's Study***

Psalm 119:169-170

*Let my cry come before You, O Holy One;  
give me understanding according to Your word.  
Let my supplication come before You;  
Deliver me according to Your word*