

TIME 4 MITZVA

#11 Emulate Hashem - וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו	Emulate His ways	וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו (דברים כח:ט)

- “How on earth can we follow Hashem?!” asks the **Gemara**¹. “Rather follow his traits; just like he clothes people, so too you clothe people...” This mitzvah is the source in the Torah for the necessity of having good character traits.
- Q) **Rav Yitzchak Berkowitz** asks: If the mitzva is to be a good and well-mannered person, then say it straight out! Why does the Torah leave it for us to interpret?
 - A) The answer is that Jewish kindness is unlike any other kindness. We are not polite, we do not give charity, we do not pity the weak, we do not visit the sick, we are not hospitable - because it’s “nice” or “moral”. Our **הַסֵּד** is G-dly; it can never be altered nor adapted. An act can be a nice deed, or it can be a divine deed. Our morals are set by Hashem.
- This concept stretches so far that **Rav Dovid Tevel MiMinsk**² explains that if one does a Mitzva such as kindness because his physical morals tell him to or because that’s what society considers good, then he will only receive material reward. Only if one performs **הַסֵּד** because it’s a G-d-given mitzva and in order to emulate G-d will he measure for measure receive real, spiritual reward, in **עוֹלָם הַבָּא**.
- **Rav Asher Weiss**³ notes that the Torah uses the term to “go in his ways” rather than to “be similar to him”, since it’s not enough to *be* compassionate or to *feel* other people’s pain, but you’ve got to *do* something about it!

“By emulating the middos of Hashem, we become the mirror reflecting Hashem in this world” - **Rav Shimshon Pincus**

1. סוטה יד.
2. דרשות בית דוד, דרוש ב.
3. מנחת אשר, שיחות על התורה, פרשת ראה.

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#12 Cleave to Hashem - דְּבִיקוֹת

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
דְּבִיקוֹת	Be close to תְּלִמְדֵי חֻמְמִים	ובו תִּדְבֶק (דברים י:כ)

- The **Gemara**¹ explains that the way to be close to Hashem is to be close to great תְּלִמְדֵי חֻמְמִים who are experts in His Torah, and the **Rambam**² elaborates that one is influenced by his surroundings so spending time with those already close to Hashem will draw one nearer to Him as well.
 - The **Chayei Adam**³ writes that the result of performing the 6 constant Mitzvos is another Mitzva which encompasses all of those: דְּבִיקוֹת - being close to Hashem Himself!
- Q) The **Nesivos Shalom**⁴ asks: Why is there even a need for such a Mitzva? Surely all the Mitzvos and אֶהְבֶּתָּ ה' we have ultimately bring us closer to Hashem? And as if once isn't enough, the Torah mentions this Mitzva 4 times!⁵ What's going on?
- A) He answers based on the **Ramban**'s understanding of this Mitzva: "You should remember and love Hashem constantly, your thoughts not depart from Him..."⁶ or as the **Maharal**⁷ puts it: If the דְּבִיקוֹת is not constant, it isn't considered דְּבִיקוֹת at all. The novelty in this Mitzva is that one must walk around with a permanent awareness of Hashem every second. Even when eating or sleeping or chatting, it should be done with Hashem in mind. In light of this, it's no wonder the Torah repeats this instruction!
- Apart from asking Hashem to grant our needs, a main goal of תְּפִילָּה is to feel extreme דְּבִיקוֹת towards Hashem.

*The **Karliner Rebbe**, when asked what he'd learnt from his Rebbe the **Maggid of Mezritch**, with whom he'd spent so much time, replied: "I learned one thing: how such a giant of a man, so knowledgable and close to Hashem, can lower himself to the point where he seems to be nothing special in my eyes."*

5. דברים י:כ, יא:כב, יג:ה, ל:כ
6. רמב"ן על התורה, דברים יא:כב
7. נתיבות עולם נתיב העבודה פרק ד

1. כתובות קיא:
2. משנה תורה הל' דעות ו:א
3. חיי אדם כלל א סעיף ה
4. נתיבות שלום פרשת עקב

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#13 Love Jews - ואהבת לרעך כמוך

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
ואהבת לרעך כמוך	Love fellow Jews	ואהבת לרעך כמוך (ויקרא יט:יח)

- **רבי עקיבא**¹ famously calls this Mitzva “a great rule in the Torah”.
 - Interestingly, most of the examples which the **Rambam**² gives when describing this Mitzva are not actions, rather how one should feel towards a fellow Jew. This shows how important the manner in which we perform Mitzvos and one’s intentions are.
 - The **Rambam**³ holds that even when doing a מצוה דרבנון such as visiting the sick or comforting mourners, one can fulfill the far greater מצוה דאורייתא of loving a fellow Jew. However, that is only if you’re not doing it because it’s a mitzva but because it’s a fellow Jew, and you feel the love towards him!
- Q) How can the Torah command us to feel a particular emotion? Is it my fault if I don’t love my neighbour? And this mitzva is an obligation to love every single Jew in the world (except for a heretic)!
- A) **Rav Eliyahu Dessler**⁴ explains that in reality we *can* affect our emotions; we *can* make ourselves love every Jew - and we’ll be held accountable if we fall short of it! How? By giving. Have you ever wondered why a parent feels such a natural love towards their child? Or where that immense pleasure comes from after spending so much time creating or working something out? It’s because they’ve given and invested so much in them. So too, if we start to think about and give of ourselves, our time and our money to others, our love towards them will develop.

“In what merit will I be able able to enter עולם הבא? Torah - do I have really have Torah? יראת שמים - do I really have שמים? With one thing will I be able to enter - because I love Jews!”

- **Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz**

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#14 Love converts - גֵּרִים

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
גֵּרִים	Love converts	וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר (דברים י:יט)

- The **Rambam**¹ holds that one who loves a convert fulfills the Mitzva of “וְאַהֲבַתְּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ” too. The **Sefer Hachinuch**² explains that the reason why there is an additional mitzva with regards to a convert is because of Hashem’s extreme love for him.
 - So important is this love for the convert that **Chazal**³ compares it to the level of love we must have towards Hashem!
 - The **Gemara**⁴ notes that the extra care we must show towards a convert is mentioned no less than 36 - and others say 46 - times in the Torah!
- Q) What is so important about this Mitzva that it is stressed more than any other Mitzva in the entire Torah?!
- A) The answer is that this mitzva teaches us a profound lesson, and surprisingly even instructs us on how to deepen our relationship with Hashem. The Torah commands us to love גֵּרִים “because you were גֵּרִים in Egypt”⁵, which can’t mean we were converts. Rather, the accurate translation of גֵּרִים is ‘strangers’. People find it difficult to like or get along with people who are different to them, but אֶהְדוּת requires that they do. In fact, אֶהְדוּת by definition means the *unity* of *different* types of people, not a larger version identical individuals. Only by getting out of one’s own comfort zone and attaching oneself to those ‘strangers’ who may be a bit different to us, can we attach ourselves to Hashem, which too requires us to rise above our natural realm.⁶

The greatness of Hashem is specifically in his bonding, love and care of lowly, less fortunate people such as converts, more so than great people.⁷

- **Maharal**

7. גבורות ה' פרק סט

4. בבא מציעא נט:

5. דברים י:יט, ועוד

6. עלון 'תורה והוראה', עקב תשע"ה

1. משנה תורה, הל' דעות ו:ד

2. ספר החינוך, מצוה תלא

3. עיין ספר החינוך שם

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#15 *Don't hate Jews* - לא לשנא

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
לא לשנא	Don't hate your 'brothers'	לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך (ויקרא יט:יז)

- This Mitzva is the negative form of Mitzva #13, to love fellow Jews. The reason why they are counted as 2 Mitzvos is because Hashem wants to give us more merit, so considers it as if we've done 2 Mitzvos.¹ Look out for this among other Mitzvos too.
- The **Gemara**² says that one only transgresses this Aveira if the other person doesn't know that you hate him, as the Pasuk says: "Do not hate your brother in your *heart*". Once again we see the significance of our feelings and thoughts towards one and other, which are often even more important than our actions.
- The **Orchos Tzaddikim**³ warns that hate is the first step on a descending path to evil, and leads to all sorts of other sins, e.g. Lashon Hara and revenge.
- There is an exception to this prohibition, namely to hate רשעים. In fact, it's a Mitzva to do so, as the Pasuk says: "Those who love Hashem hate evil"⁴. When one hates evil, he distances himself from it and becomes closer to Hashem. However, as the Pasuk suggests, the love of Hashem must come first. In fact, the **Baal Hatanya**⁵ explains that the more one loves Hashem and his Torah, the more he will hate that which apposes Him.
- Another reason why the love of Hashem comes first is because often people hate others for their own sake and honour, yet hide it under a banner of Hashem's honour. Therefore, the Pasuk mentions the אהבת ה' first, to teach that only a hatred which emanates from love is valid. This also means that the hatred is focused on the evil rather than the person himself

"If only I could love the greatest Tzaddik as much as Hashem loves the greatest Rasha" - Rav Shlomo of Karlin

4. תהילים צז:י
5. ליקוטי אמרים, פרק י

1. משנה סוף מכות
2. ערכין טז:
3. ארכות צדיקים, שער השנאה

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#16 Rebuke - תּוֹכָחָה

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
תּוֹכָחָה	Rebuke one who sins	הוֹכַחַת תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ (ויקרא יט:יז)

- When one sees another Jew sin, it's an obligation to inform him and ask him why he committed the sin.
- The **Rambam**¹ and **Sefer Hachinuch**² write that the first time you rebuke him, it should be done in a calm and private manner. If he doesn't regret it or he repeats his sin multiple times, then you should do it publicly. Furthermore, you are obligated to rebuke him until he listens - however many attempts this may take - or until he threatens to harm you.
- The **Gemara**³ has an important rule with regards to giving rebuke: "Just as it is a Mitzva to say something which will be listened to, so too it's a Mitzva not to say something which will not be listened to." Nowadays, this Mitzva is generally reserved for one's teacher or close friend, to whom they'll listen.
- The **Gemara**⁴ says something frightening: Anyone who has the power to object to and improve someone's behaviour and fails to do so is considered to have taken part in the sin.
- In 1973, **Rav Moshe Feinstein**⁵ issued a call for action in light of the high level of assimilation in the Jewish people, and instructed Yeshiva students to give up a tenth of their Torah learning time in order to reach out to irreligious Jews! Similarly, **Rav Chaim Schmulevitz**, **Rav Elazar Man Shach** and the **Steipler** wrote a letter urging everybody to devote at least one evening a week to this cause.

*When **Rav Moshe Schneider**, who was a Rosh Yeshiva in London, wanted to give תּוֹכָחָה to a student, he would take him for a walk (which he'd anyway often do to speak with them in learning) and begin with a parable: "If you're in a garage and a worker comes out from under a car and some oil drops on him, you wouldn't point out his stain since he's filthy all over. But if there's just a black thread on a bride's white dress, then it's worth pointing out." And with that, he gave his rebuke.*

4. שבת נד:

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1. משנה תורה, הל' דעות ו:ו-ח

2. ספר החינוך, מצוה רלט

3. יבמות סה:

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#17 *Don't embarrass* - לא להלבין

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
לא להלבין	<u>Don't embarrass</u> someone	ולא תשא עליו חטא (ויקרא יט:יז)

- The reason why this Mitzva comes directly after the Mitzva of תוכחה both in the Torah and in the Rambam's list is because one must take extra care when rebuking someone not to do it in a way which will embarrass him, particularly the first time you rebuke him.¹
- The **Mishna**² states that one who embarrasses someone in public loses his share in הקב"ה! The **Gemara** even declares in 3 places³ that it's better for someone to jump into a fiery furnace than to embarrass someone in public.
- The **Gemara**⁴ lends such importance to a person's dignity that it says that a person's honour overrides a Rabbinic Aveira! If one may transgress a Rabbinic Aveira in order to save someone from embarrassment, how much more so must we be careful not to embarrass anyone.
- Rav **Chaim Schmulevitz**⁵ explains that one of the best ways to develop consideration for other people's feelings is to recognise the greatness of every individual. Since everyone is a creation of Hashem and contains within them a part of Hashem Himself, who could be so bold as to dishonour a work of G-d?!

*The **Beis Halevi** once rebuked a certain gentleman in public who had acted in an unbecoming way. Unfortunately, the man did not take heed of the rebuke and continued acting inappropriately. On the following Erev Yom Kippur, the man was surprised to answer the door to the Beis Halevi. "Since you didn't accept my rebuke," he told the man, "it comes out that I embarrassed you for nothing, so I am coming to ask your forgiveness."*

1. ערכין טז:
2. אבות ג:טו
3. ברכות מג:, בבא מציעא נט., סוטה י:
4. ברכות יט:
5. שיחות מוסר, מאמר כח

1. ערכין טז:
2. אבות ג:טו
3. ברכות מג:, בבא מציעא נט., סוטה י:

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#18 Don't afflict - לא לענות

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
לא לענות	Don't afflict the weak	כָּל אֶלְמָנָה וְיָתוּם לֹא תַעֲנוּן (שמות כב:כא)

- The **Rambam**¹ and **Sefer Hachinuch**² learn that this Aveira is specific to widows and orphans under בַּר/בֵּית מִצְוָה, whereas **Rashi**³ understands that even though the Torah refers to these people specifically, that's only because this is a common case, but the Aveira applies to anyone in a weaker or more vulnerable position than you.
- The Torah⁴ warns that Hashem listens to the prayers of widows and orphans more than others, and that whoever transgresses this sin will die, putting his wife and children in the same position as those who he afflicted.
- **Rav Shimshon Pinkus**⁵ explains why their prayers are the most effective, with a parable: When a beggar goes round knocking on doors for money, the people who give him just a small amount or nothing don't do so thinking "I don't care if he starves", rather they realise he's knocking on so many doors that he doesn't need his donation.
- A widow and orphan have no one else to turn to; they can't cry to their father or husband for help, and they have no option other than to turn to Hashem. When Hashem sees that they rely totally on Him, He surely answers! This is the way for all of us to approach Hashem in prayer too.

*The **Satmar Rebbe** once attended the wedding of an orphan boy, and throughout the Chupah, Brachos and even at the Sheva Brachos, he was crying. He cried and cried and cried, until the Chassan got so worried about what the meaning of this sobbing was and what was in store for him, that he approached the Rebbe. "At most weddings," the Rebbe said compassionately, "the Chassan's parents cry, sob and daven for the children, and those tears are so powerful. But who would daven for you? Where would those tears come from? That is what I was doing."*

4. שמות כב:כא-כג
5. שערים בתפלה עמ' צו-צז

1. משנה תורה, הל' דעות ו:י
2. ספר החינוך, מצוה סה
3. רש"י שמות כב:כא

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#19 Don't gossip - רכילות

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
רכילות	Don't gossip	לא תלך רכיל בעמך (ויקרא יט:טז)

- The **Rambam**¹ explains that לשון הרע - damaging speech which is true - and מוציא שם רע - damaging speech which is false - are part of this Aveira.
- The **Gemara**² makes many huge statements about the severity of speaking and listening to לשון הרע. For example, לשון הרע is as bad as the 3 Aveiros which one must give up their life rather than perform - idol worship, immorality and murder! Furthermore, it's as if he's denied the existence of Hashem ושלום!
- **Rav Yosef Kairo**, author of the Shulchan Aruch, learnt regularly with a מלאך, who told him a terrifying thing³: When a person goes up to heaven after he passes away, he will find lots of Mitzvos for which he is being rewarded which he never performed. They will tell him that these Mitzvos are the mitzvos which so-and-so performed, yet they were transferred to you when he spoke לשון הרע about you! Moreover, your Aveiros also get transferred to him! **Rabbeinu Bachya**⁴, **Rav Refael MiHamburg**⁵ the **Chassam Sofer**⁶ all express the same frightening idea.
- Based on this, the **Chafetz Chaim**⁷ explains the peculiar reason given by the **Shlah** for why one says a Pasuk based on their name at the end of שמונה עשרה: To practise saying our name so that we remember it when we go up to heaven. Why would we forget it? After we have seen how many transfers of Mitzvos and Aveiros take place as a result of לשון הרע, it's no wonder we'll get confused as to who we are!

*"One who speaks לשון הרע is like a fly, who always rests on the dirt. If a person has boils, the fly will ignore his whole body and aim for the boil. So too does the slanderer ignore all the good in the person and picks out the evil to speak about."*⁸

1. ספר מעשה לשון
2. דרשה לשבועות
3. חפץ חיים שער הזכירה פרק ז
4. ארחות צדיקים שער לשון הרע

1. משנה תורה הל' דעות ז:ב
2. ערכין טו:
3. מגיד מישרים ויקהל
4. חובות הלבבות שער הכניעה פרק ז

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#20 *Don't take revenge* - לא תקום

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
לא תקום	Don't take revenge	לא תקום (ויקרא יט:יח)

- The **Sefer Hachinuch**¹ explains that this Mitzva teaches us a fundamental lesson on how to view every occurrence in our lives. The root of taking revenge is not realising what the source of the thing which upset you is. There's one reason for every annoyance or difficult situation which you encounter: Hashem is sending you a message. It may be because you've sinned, it may be because Hashem wants you to realise something, but the underlying purpose for everything that happens to you is that Hashem is talking to you through messengers. Just like you don't hate the postman who delivers your bad news or your bills, so too it's illogical to take revenge on someone delivering Hashem's crucial message to you.
- One transgresses this Aveira even passively, e.g. not lending someone something because he didn't lend you."
- The **Sefer Hachinuch** uses this Mitzva to explain an important rule with regards to being punished for transgressing an Aveira. For any *active* מצוות לא תעשה, one receives lashes. If there is a way to transgress it without doing an action, then one is exempt from lashes even if he does it actively. For example, if someone punches someone in the face in return for that person doing the same, he is exempt since it's possible to transgress this Aveira passively.

*"Just like if you trip over your leg and hurt yourself, you wouldn't go and kick that leg back, so too if another Jew hurts you then you shouldn't take revenge, since we're all one."*²

- Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4

1. ספר החינוך, מצוה רמא
2. מובא בסמ"ג, מצות עשה ט

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#21 *Don't bear a grudge* - לא תטור

Siman	Definition	Source in Torah
לא תטור	Don't bear a grudge	ולא תטור (ויקרא יט:יח)

- Following the previous Mitzva of not taking revenge, this Mitzva takes it a step further and commands us not to even bear a grudge or any dislike towards the person who wronged you. Not only this, but the words following these in the Torah are “וְאַהֲבַתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ”, which shows that even after the person wronged you, you must still love him like you love yourself!
- The **Chafetz Chaim**¹ advises us how one can love a fellow Jew to such a high degree even after he's wronged him, from how the Pasuk ends off: “אֲנִי ה'” - “I am Hashem”. What are these words doing here? Hashem is telling us: “You think this man isn't deserving of love after what he's done? Well I do, and I love every Jew however much they've sinned against me, because I know how holy he really is.” When we realise how Hashem still loves him, then how can we not do so?
- The **Mesillas Yesharim**² explains that the natural reaction to someone who wrongs you is to want to pay them back, and Hashem gave us this Mitzva to rise above our natural instincts and become more elevated individuals with self-control.
- The **Gemara**³ states an exception to this prohibition, namely a תלמיד חכם who is insulted. In such a case, it is not only permitted but an obligation upon him to bear a grudge, since he is standing up for the Torah's honour. With regards to taking revenge, the Gemara permits it but says that it is best to forego it, whereas the **Rambam**⁴ holds it is an obligation just like bearing a grudge.

“Bearing a grudge against another person is like injecting yourself with poison and hoping your friend drops dead.”