

Top 10 Ideas - Class 7

Saturday, March 13, 2010
9:53 PM

לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטַּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against your countrymen. You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:18

- I. This verse completes a group of verses which deal with human relations and high standards of treatment of others, and seals the section with the formula "I am the LORD".
 - a. Whoever treats humans poorly is expressing a low level of faith in the creator of all of God's children as equal before their maker.
 - b. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter: since to love your neighbor as yourself is such a difficult command, you should know that God stands ready to help you if you sincerely wish to do it!
- II. What is the difference between vengeance and bearing a grudge?
 - a. Vengeance: A says to B: Lend my your sickle and B answers: No. The next day B in turn asks to borrow a hatchet. A replies: No! Just as you did not lend me your sickle, so I will not lend you my hatchet.
 - b. Grudge: A says to B: Please lend my your hatchet, and B replies No. The next day B asks: Please lend me your sickle. A replies: I will lend you the sickle, even though you did not lend me your hatchet.
 - c. PT Nedarim 9:4 - How is it possible to avoid vengeance and bearing a grudge? If one were cutting food and by accident cut oneself, would the injured hand wreak vengeance by cutting the other hand?
 - d. Hertz 501
- III. Is it truly possible to "Love one's neighbor as yourself"?
 - a. Rabbi Pinchas Peli: "It is easier to love the whole world than to love one's neighbor." "Can love be commanded?"
 - b. Akiva said this was the most important verse of the Torah. But his colleague Ben Azzi said the most important verse was "humans were created in the image of God"
 - c. Nahmanides : Not really possible to love others as one's loves oneself.
 - d. Hillel summarized the whole torah by saying "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. The rest is commentary"
 - e. Hertz points out that reiya is Israelite and non-Israelite.
 - f. Love of self is implied in this verse: Pirke Avot 1:14: "If I am not for myself who will be? But if I am only for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?"