

# CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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Jewish Psychology – Forgiveness - Week 5 – 2020

1. *And Abraham said about Sarah his wife, "She is my sister," and Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. And G-d came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and He said to him, "Behold you are going to die because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a married woman."  
...And G-d said to him in a dream... And now, return the man's wife, because he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and [you will] live; but if you do not return [her], know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours."  
*And Abimelech arose early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were very frightened. And Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us, and what have I sinned against you, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? Deeds that are not done, you have done to me." And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?"  
...And Abimelech took flocks and cattle and menservants and maidservants, and he gave [them] to Abraham, and he restored to him his wife Sarah. And Abimelech said, "Here is my land before you; wherever it pleases you, you may dwell." And to Sarah he said, "Behold I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; behold it is to you a covering of the eyes for all who are with you, and with all you shall contend."  
And Abraham prayed to G-d, and G-d healed Abimelech and his wife and his handmaids, and they gave birth. For the L-rd had shut every womb of Abimelech's household, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.  
(Genesis 20:1-18)**
  
2. But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you...And now, you did not send me here, but G-d, and He made me a father to Pharaoh, a L-rd over all his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:5-8)
  
3. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid, for am I instead of G-d? Indeed, you intended evil against me, [but] G-d designed it for good, in order to bring about what is at present to keep a great populace alive.  
(ibid, 50:19-20)
  
4. *They journeyed from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to circle the land of Edom, and the people became disheartened because of the way. The people spoke against G-d and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this desert, for there is no bread and no water, and we are disgusted with this rotten bread." The L-rd sent against the people the venomous snakes, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died.  
The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the L-rd and against you. Pray to the L-rd that He remove the snakes from us." So Moses prayed on behalf of the people.  
*The L-rd said to Moses, "Make yourself a serpent and put it on a pole, and let whoever is bitten look at it and live. Moses made a copper snake and put it on a pole, and whenever a snake bit a man, he would gaze upon the copper snake and live. (Number 21:4-8)*
  - a. **RASHI:** From here we learn that if a person asks you for forgiveness, you should not be cruel and refrain from forgiving.*
  
5. There are four types of temperaments. One who is easily angered and easily appeased—his virtue cancels his flaw. One whom it is difficult to anger and difficult to appease—his flaw cancels his virtue. One whom it is difficult to anger and is easily appeased, is a *chassid* - pious. One who is easily angered and is difficult to appease, is wicked. (Ethics of our Fathers 5:11)

6. **MISHNA:** Even though the offender pays him [compensation], the offence is not forgiven until he asks him for pardon, as it says: *now therefore restore the man's wife etc.* (Genesis 20:7) Whence can we learn that should the injured person not forgive him he would be cruel? From the words: *so Abraham prayed unto G-d and G-d healed Abimelech etc.* (Genesis 20:17)
7. **GEMARA:** Our Rabbis taught: All these fixed sums stated above specify only the payment [civilly due] for Degradation. For regarding the hurt done to the feelings of the plaintiff, even if the offender should bring all the 'rams of Nebaioth' in the world, the offence would not be forgiven until he asks him for pardon, as it is written: *Now therefore restore the man's wife for he is a prophet and he will pray for thee.* (ibid)  
(Talmud, Tractate Baba Kama 92a)
8. *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart...You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge."* (Leviticus 19:17-19)
9. *Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear any grudge?* (Leviticus 19:18)  
That refers to monetary affairs, for it has been taught: What is *revenge* and what is *bearing a grudge*? If one said to his fellow: 'Lend me your sickle', and he replied 'No', and to-morrow the second comes [to the first] and says: 'Lend me your axe'! and he replies: 'I will not lend it to you, just as you would not lend me your sickle' — that is revenge. And what is bearing a grudge? If one says to his fellow: 'Lend me your axe, he replies 'No', and on the morrow the second asks: 'Lend me your garment', and he answers: 'Here it is. I am not like you who would not lend me [what I asked for]' — that is bearing a grudge.  
But [does] not [this prohibition apply to] personal affliction? Has it not been taught: Concerning those who are insulted but do not insult others [in revenge], who hear themselves reproached without replying, who [perform good] work out of love of the L-rd and rejoice in their sufferings, Scripture says: *But they that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might?* (Judges 5:31)  
[That means,] indeed, that he keeps it in his heart [though without taking action].  
But Raba said: Whoever forgoes his reckonings with others for injustices done to him, the heavenly court in turn forgoes punishment for all his sins  
...but that is only in cases where his antagonist has sought to appease him, in which case he should allow himself to be appeased toward him. [However, if no apology has been offered, the scholar should not forgive him, in order to uphold the honor of the Torah.] (Talmud, Tractate Yoma 23a)
10. Three the Holy One, blessed be He, loves: he who does not display temper, he who does not become intoxicated, and he who does not insist on his [full] rights. (Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 113b)  
a. **RASHI:** In the sense that he does not retaliate those that have pained him. He does not harbor hatred.
11. When one person sins against another, he should not hide the matter and remain silent... rather, it is a mitzvah for him to bring the matter into the open and say, "Why did you do such and such to me?" ...And if the person [who sinned] returns and asks him for forgiveness, then he should forgive, for the forgiver should not be cruel. (Maimonides, Laws of Moral Conduct 6:6).
12. Teshuvah and Yom Kippur only achieve atonement for sins between man and G-d... However, sins between man and his fellow man... are not forgiven until compensation is paid... and the person has been asked for forgiveness... It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and difficult to appease. Rather, a person should be easily placated and difficult to anger, and when the sinner asks him for forgiveness, he should forgive him with a full heart and a willing spirit. (Ibid, Laws of Teshuvah 2:9-10).
13. If a person injures another, even if he paid full compensation... he does not achieve atonement for the sin that he committed until he seeks out the injured party and is granted forgiveness from him. And it is forbidden for the injured party to be cruel and refuse to forgive him, for this is not the way of Jewish people.

Rather, when the attacker has asked forgiveness once, and then a second time, and we know that he has repented for his sin and he has abandoned the evil that he has done, then one must forgive him. Any person who forgives quickly is considered praiseworthy, and his actions are pleasing to the Sages.

(Ibid, Laws of Personal Injury 5:9-10).

**14. MISHNA:** ...For transgressions as between man and the omnipresent the day of atonement procures atonement, but for transgressions as between man and his fellow the day of atonement does not procure any atonement, until he has pacified his fellow. This was expounded by R. Eleazar b. Azariah: from all your sins before the L-rd shall ye be clean, (Leviticus 16:30) i.e., for transgressions as between man and the omnipresent the day of atonement procures atonement, but for transgressions as between man and his fellow the day of atonement does not procure atonement until he has pacified his fellow.

**15. GEMARA:** ...R. Isaac said: Whosoever offends his neighbor, and he does it only through words, must pacify him, as it is written: *My son, if you have stood surety for your fellow, have given your hand for a stranger, you have been trapped by the sayings of your mouth; you have been caught by the sayings of your mouth Do this then, my son, and be saved for you have come into your fellow's palm; go, humble yourself and give your fellow superiority.* (Proverbs 6:1-3) If he has a claim of money upon you, open the palm of your hand to him, and if not, send many friends to him.

R. Hisda said: He should endeavor to pacify him through three groups of three people each, as it is said: *He cometh before me and saith: I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.* (Job 33:27)

R. Jose b. Hanina said: One who asks pardon of his neighbor need do so no more than three times, as it is said: *Forgive. I pray thee now . . . and now we pray thee.* (Genesis 50:7) And if he [against whom he had sinned] had died, he should bring ten persons and make them stand by his grave and say: I have sinned against the L-rd, the G-d of Israel, and against this one, whom I have hurt.

(Talmud, Tractate Yoma 85b, 87a)

**16.** [One who is asked to] forgive should not be callous and withhold forgiveness. On the contrary, he should forgive immediately, unless his intent is for the benefit of the person asking forgiveness, to humble his brazen heart.

Alternatively, [one may withhold forgiveness] if he fears that forgiving will cause harm to himself. In such a situation he is not required to forgive, because his own life takes precedence over the life of his fellow.

**17.** If one person spread a disparaging report about another, the latter is not required to forgive him under any circumstances, even if he is repeatedly asked for forgiveness, because some people may have heard of the false rumor but not of the appeasement. It will appear to them that the rumor may be true, and that this person has not yet been cleared of unfavorable suspicion.

Nevertheless, [as an expression of] the attribute of humility, it is proper to forgive even one who spread a disparaging report. (Shulchan Aruch HaRav O.C. 606:4)

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Today's class is sponsored by Eliana Bar-Shalom and her family in loving memory of her husband, **Jerome A. Shaffer (4/2/1929 – 11/17/2016)** Philosopher and Therapist.

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