

To Be Holy

I. A Unique Transmission

ויקרא יט: א-ב

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדָשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

HaShem spoke to Moses, saying:

Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, HaShem your God, am holy.

רשי ויקרא יט: ב

דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל. מלמד שנאמרה פרשה זו בהקהל מפני שרוב גופי תורה תלויין בה (ספרא):
 Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel— This (the addition of the words עדת) teaches us that this section was proclaimed in full assembly because most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah are dependent on it (contained in it) [Sifra, Vayikra Rabba]

If the system isn't broken, why change it?

II. Foundational Farming

ויקרא יט: ט-י

וּבְקַצְרְכֶם אֶת־קִצְרֵי אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פְּאֵת שְׂדֵךְ לְקַצֹּר וְלִקְטֹף קִצְרֵיךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט:

וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תַעֲזֹב וּפְרֹט כִּרְמֶךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעֵנִי וְלִגְרֹ תַעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

You shall not pick the undeveloped twigs of your vineyard, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am HaShem, your God.

What are the parameters of these laws—are they simply another form of צדקה?

What lessons can be learned by all parties from שחחה, פאה, לקט?

III. An Unnecessary Warning?

ויקרא יט: יד

לֹא־תִקְלַל חֵרֶשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עֹרֵר לֹא תִתֵּן מְכַשֵּׁל וְיִרְאֵת מִאֲלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

You shall not curse the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am HaShem.

What are the three stages to the prohibition of עור לפני? What is their logic?

IV. Damaging Speech [Navigating a Potential Conflict]

ויקרא יט: טז

לֹא-תִלְךָ רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֵד עַל-דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְקוּק:

Do not go as a talebearer among your people, do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor, I am HaShem.

What are the various forms of damaging speech?

What happens when this prohibition runs up against עור לפני עור ?

V. Traveling Towards a Crescendo (and a letdown?)

ויקרא יט: יז-יט

לֹא-תִשְׁנֵא אֶת-אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הֹכֵחַ תּוֹלִיחַ אֶת-עֲמִיתְךָ וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטָא:
 לֹא-תִקֹּם וְלֹא-תִטַּר אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְקוּק: אֶת-חֻקְתֵּי תִשְׁמֹרוּ בְּהִמְתָּךְ לֹא-תִרְבִּיעַ
 כְּלָאִים שָׂדֶךָ לֹא-תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים שֶׁעֵטְוֹ לֹא יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. Reprove your brother but incur and do not bear a sin because of him.

Do not not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the members of your people. And you shall love (for) your fellow as (for) yourself: I am HaShem.

You shall observe My decrees. You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; you shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material.

What are the parameters of the Mitzva of Tochacha?

What is the meaning of the phrase “do not bear a sin because of him?”

How else can this sentence be understood?

What are the day-to -day practical implications of vengeance?

Is “Love your fellow as yourself” an accurate translation of וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ? What might be the problem with it? What is the Torah’s true intent? Does this make things harder or easier?

Why can we explain the Torah’s leap from “brotherly love” to *sha’atnez*?