



Week 2

הקפדה

This guided learning sheet explores the *middah* of *hakpadah*—resentment. Each source is accompanied by explanation and discussion questions to facilitate personal reflection and group dialogue.

The first box of questions in color below are general questions about participants' experience of working on *middot* and remain the same from week to week. These questions are a helpful tool to check in and reflect on growth over time, in a consistent manner. Though the questions remain the same each week, the answers will naturally change depending on which *middah* is being explored. You may choose to start or end your learning session with these questions. The rest of questions are specifically related to the *middah* of the week and are interspersed throughout the session to deepen the conversation.

General questions when reflecting on the *middah* of the week:

General questions remain the same from week to week and are helpful tools to reflect on growth over time. The answers will vastly change depending on the *middah* of the week.

1. What did I learn about myself this week?
2. What felt difficult when working on this *middah*?
3. What felt natural or easy when working on this *middah*?
4. How has practicing this *middah* improved your life or how does it have the potential to impact your life?
5. Does anyone in the group have a story of how this *middah* came up in a real situation (this week or beyond)? How did you respond?
6. Does anyone in the group have insights, advice or tips to keep in mind when working on this *middah* going forward?

Source 1

Hakpadah, which includes being exacting with others and resentful, is not a private feeling which stays contained internally, nor is it without long-term consequences:

מסכת תענית דף כ עמוד ב'

שאלו תלמידיו לרב אדא בר אהבה: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא הקפדתי בתוך ביתי

His students asked Rav Ada bar Ahavah: In what merit did you live so long? He replied: In all my days I was never kapadan (exacting / resentful) within my own home.

Takeaway: *Rav Ada's answer was entirely psychological and relational: the absence of hakpadah in his home. This may suggest that our closest relationships and home environment are where hakpadah is most dangerous and difficult to uproot.*

Discuss:

1. This source appears to make a direct connection between longevity and eradicating *hakpadah*. Do you find this connection surprising? Why or why not?
2. Rav Ada specifies "within my own home." Why might *hakpadah* be especially destructive and difficult to release in our closest relationships?
3. What would it look like practically to commit to not being exacting or resentful in your closest relationships? What would you need to give up? What might you gain?

Source 2

The Torah speaks of an internal experience of hatred:

ויקרא יט:יז

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך

You shall not hate your brother in your heart.

Takeaway: *The word "בלבבך" (in your heart) highlights that commanded to actively work on our inner emotional state, not just our outer behavior. Outward hatred, in some respects, is easier to identify and address. But the hatred that festers silently is far more corrosive.*

Discuss:

1. The Torah commands us not to hate "in our heart." Can we really be commanded about such internal feelings? What does the Torah expect of us when we really do feel genuine hatred or resentment?
2. What is the difference between acknowledging hurt (which is healthy) and nursing hatred in the heart (which the Torah forbids)? Where is that line?
3. Why might silent, hidden resentment in one's heart be more dangerous than open conflict?

Source 3

Can hatred be quantified?

משנה סנהדרין פרק ה משנה ג

שונא – כל שלא דיבר עמו ג' ימים מתוך איבה

A "hater": someone who has not spoken with another person for three days due to animosity.

Takeaway: *The definition of hatred is measurable: three intervals of time in which you avoid someone because of animosity. We might think our internal feelings don't count until we act on them, but sustained avoidance IS an act. This definition also gives us a kind of inverse guide: the antidote to becoming a soneh/hater is to re-establish connection or engagement before three days/opportunities pass.*

Discuss:

1. Have you ever reached that threshold with someone in which you had three points in time or three opportunities to connect and you avoided them? Looking back, what was the turning point that either repaired or deepened the rift?
2. What small, concrete action could re-establish connection before resentment fully calcifies into the status of hatred?

Sources 4 & 5

Our means of measuring others impacts Hashem's measurement of us:

מסכת ראש השנה יז עמוד א'

כל המעביר על מידותיו מעבירים לו על כל פשעיו

Someone forgoes their *middah*—their tendency to measure and judge others strictly (from the Hebrew word *limdod*, “to measure”)—is met by Hashem in kind: He, too, sets aside strict judgment and forgives their intentional sins.

רש"י שם

המעביר על מדותיו - שאינו מדקדק למדוד מדה למצעים אותן, ומניח מדותיו והולך לו... מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו -

אין מדת הדין מדקדקת אחריהן, אלא מנחתן והולכת

“Forgoes their middah” refers to one who does not scrutinize others carefully when they cause him pain and instead drops his measuring stick and moves on. “Is forgiven for all of his intentional sins” means that Hashem in kind forgoes His attribute of strict judgment and moves on from being exacting with such a person's sins.

Takeaway:

The word "ma'avir" (passes over/forgoes) is key. It doesn't mean pretending the hurt didn't happen, or being passive. It means noticing the hurt/issue and then choosing to let it go. If we want Hashem to be lenient with us we must practice leniency with others.

Discuss:

1. The Gemara says that releasing resentment triggers a Divine response — our own sins are forgiven and released. How does this reframe the personal cost/benefit of *hakpadah*?

2. Rashi implies that the person *chooses* to let go, not that they claim the hurt didn't happen. What is the difference between genuine release and suppression or denial?
3. What makes it hardest for you to drop the measuring stick and let go of your own strict accounting?

Source 6

The same passuk we saw earlier which forbids hating "in the heart" also commands us to give constructive rebuke:

ויקרא יט:יז

הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמְּיִתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חַטָּא

You shall surely rebuke your fellow, and you shall not bear sin on account of him.

Takeaway: *Avoiding direct, honest conversation is not the spiritual high road, contrary to what one might expect. It breeds the very silent hatred the first half of the verse forbids. "Do not bear sin BECAUSE of him" (i.e. don't let your silence and holding your tongue from feedback become inner hatred of the other).*

Discuss:

1. Why do you think the commandment to give rebuke directly precedes the prohibition not to bear sin on account of another? What might the Torah be implying about the relationship between silence and resentment?
2. What common reasons or rationalizations people (and perhaps, specifically women) have for not giving *tochachah* (constructive criticism/ rebuke/ feedback) that may be more based in avoidance and fear rather than a justified reason?

Source 7

The Kli Yakar presents a deeply counterintuitive insight: genuine ahavat Yisrael (love of one's fellow) is expressed through tochachah, while sinat chinam (baseless hatred) is often disguised as silence or even flattery:

כלי יקר: ויקרא יט:יז

וסמך למצות התוכחה פסוק לא תשנא אחיך בלבבך, כי בזמן שהאהבה מצויה בישראל כל אחד בטובתו של חברו חפץ ועל כן הוא מוכיחו שלא ישל בעבירה, אבל בזמן ששונאים זה לזה לעולם אינו מוכיחו ואדרבה הוא מחניפו לאמר כשורה עשית ולא פעלת און וכל כוונתו להדיח עליו הרעה לפי שהוא שמח במפלתו, ומדה זו הלא היא ברבת בני עמינו מיום שגברה אגרופה של שנאת חנם מן חורבן בית שני והלאה ועד היום לא סרה, והנגע הולך ופושה עד אשר ישקיף ה' וירא, ויסיר לב האבן מקרבנו.

The mitzvah of *tochachah* (rebuke) is placed next to the prohibition of "do not hate your brother in your heart" because at a time when there is love amongst the Jewish people, every person cares for others' wellbeing and therefore, rebukes another so that they won't stumble in sin. But at a time when Jews hate each other they do not rebuke one another and instead flatter one another saying "What you did is good; you did not do anything wrong". And all his intention is to cast evil upon the other, since he actually rejoices in the other's downfall/sin. This quality exists from the times of unjust hatred leading up to the destruction of the Second Temple onwards, and to this day it has not

been eradicated, and the scourge is growing and spreading until G-d looks and sees, and removes the heart of stone from among us.

Takeaway: *Really loving someone means being invested enough in their growth to speak hard truths. Flattery or silence can actually be a form of sinat chinam in disguise, as it reveals a desire for someone else to continue failing.*

Discuss:

1. The Kli Yakar says that when love is present we rebuke, and when hatred is present we flatter. Do you find this intuitive or counterintuitive?
2. He describes sinat chinam as manifesting in flattery and silence (כשורה עשית, “you did well”), even when someone hasn't. Have you ever recognized this pattern in yourself, of smiling and saying nothing while inwardly judging or hoping for another's failure?
3. What does it look like to love someone enough to speak honestly?

Source 8

The Rambam introduces the crucial nuance that not every situation requires or benefits from direct confrontation:

רמב"ם הלכות דעות פרק ו הלכה ט

מי שחטא עליו חבירו ולא רצה להוכיחו ולא לדבר לו כלום מפני שהיה החוטא הדיוט ביותר, או שהיתה דעתו משובשת, ומחל לו בלבו ולא שטמו ולא הוכיחו הרי זו מדת חסידות לא הקפידה תורה אלא על המשטמה.

When a person is harmed by another yet chooses not to rebuke or even address it—because the offender lacks understanding or sound judgment/was not thinking clearly—and he fully releases it in his heart, without holding a grudge or offering criticism, this is considered an act of piety. The Torah only takes issue with holding onto hatred [not silence chosen from wisdom and compassion]

Takeaway: *When a conversation would be pointless, silence is praiseworthy. This sort of silence is accompanied by genuine forgiveness in the heart — not when it masks ongoing resentment. Silence + forgiveness = praiseworthy. Silence + hidden resentment = forbidden.*

Discuss:

1. The Rambam mentions not rebuking when the hurt was caused by a lack of sound judgment. What are other possible factors that would justify avoiding constructive confrontation? When is it useless or even destructive to have such conversations?
2. How do we know we are silent because of a genuine ability to release resentment and not because of avoidance or anger?
3. Do you find it difficult to forgive someone you do not confront? What then does internal forgiveness mean to you?
4. How do we distinguish between kind/wise silence and conflict-avoidant silence?

Source 9

Rav Wolbe presents the character trait of humor as a prescription for immunity to *hakpadah*:

ספר עלי שור חלק ב' דף רמב

מה יעשה אדם שלא יגיע כלל לידי הקפדה? הלא זה שכל ימיו מלאים הקפדות חייו אינם חיים. איך יחליץ מזה? מידה אחת ישנה שמי שניחן בה אינו קפדן. מידה זו היא **בדיחות הדעת** הנקרא בפי העולם ה**ומור**. זוהי מידה שיש בה חמלה על קשי יום, סלחנות לחלושי דעת, עין חדה לחולשת בני אדם מבלי לזלזל בערכם, התעלות מעל המצבים מביכים... **כאשר הפקחות והאהבה כרובים זה בזה.**

What should a person do to make sure they don't come to a place of *hakpadah*? A person who is exacting and full of resentments' life is not a life at all. How does one stay away from this? There is one quality that if a person has they are not a *kapadan* (very exacting and resentful). It is the trait of *b'dichut hadaat* which we call "humor". This trait contains: compassion for life's hardships, forgiveness for the simple-minded, a sharp eye for human weakness without contempt for their worth, the ability to rise above embarrassing situations... when intelligence/perceptiveness and love are intertwined.

Takeaway: *Humor as a trait is a profound inner orientation. It is the ability to hold the gap between human ideals and human reality with lightness rather than bitterness. It is the antithesis of both naive idealism and sharp cynicism.*

Discuss:

1. Why do you think Rav Wolbe chose humor, rather than patience or forgiveness as the prescription against *hakpadah* (exactitude and resentment)?
2. Rav Wolbe says true humor requires intelligence/perceptiveness and love. Why are both necessary? What happens when you have one without the other?
3. What is the difference between Rav Wolbe's definition of humor and the way we generally think about it? Is this a quality you have ever thought about cultivating?
4. Is there someone in your life who embodies this trait of humor? What difference do you see it makes in the quality of their life and relationships?

Source 10

The deepest frame for releasing resentment is *emunah*:

מסכת תענית דף יח עמוד ב'

כשבקש טוריינוס להרוג את לוליניוס ופפוס אחיו... אמרו לו... ואנו נתחייבנו כליה למקום, ואם אין אתה הורגנו - הרבה הורגים יש לו למקום, והרבה דובין ואריות יש לו למקום בעולמו שפוגעין בנו והורגין אותנו.

When Trajan sought to execute Luleyanus and Pappus his brother... they said to him: ...We have already been condemned by Heaven. And if you do not kill us — Hashem has many other agents of death. He has many bears and lions in His world that could encounter and kill us.

Takeaway: *There is great value in internalizing that the people who hurt us are instruments in a larger Divine plan. This doesn't erase pain, but it does dissolve personal grievance.*

Discuss:

1. Why did Luleyanus and Papus tell Trajan that if he didn't kill them, bears and lions would? What was the deeper spiritual message they were communicating?
2. This statement seems to rob Trajan of his sense of personal power over others. How can this reframe of "you are just an instrument" improve our own relationships?
3. Is there a risk that this perspective can be misused as a way of bypassing legitimate justice, or necessary action? How can we hold both real human pain and an *emunah*-based perspective at the same time?
4. This perspective requires deep *emunah*. Do you find such perspective accessible in moments of anger and hurt? What would it take to cultivate this kind of perspective as a default orientation?