

GOOD SALESMAN

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"Surely reprove your friend" (Vayikra 19:17)

The Jewish people are a nation of individuals bonded together and responsible one for another. Many of the Torah's commandments express the requirement to care of and to take remedial action on behalf of one's fellow Jew. Should one fall on hard financial times others are expected to give financial assistance and moral support. If one is captured by enemy forces or arrested by a wicked government the free men are asked to collect the funds necessary to redeem the incarcerated fellow. Many other laws show the individual that he is not separate and apart. No man is an island in Judaism.

In Parashat Kedoshim the Torah specifies many of the laws between man and man that foster brotherhood including the basic responsibility to "Love your friend like yourself." One of the more difficult commandments is to reprove our friends when we observe their laxity in misvah performance or - heaven forbid -- violation of the negative precepts -- the "don'ts" of the Torah. How can one who is himself imperfect reprove another? How does one correct one who does not want to be corrected?

Reproof is like sales. A merchant who wants to sell his merchandise is not always blessed with a willing buyer. Sometimes a negative, rude individual challenges the sales person's acumen and patience. The buyer is in the market but one cannot be certain the shopper is ready to buy. But the vendor certainly tries. He or she acts as pleasant as he or she can tiptoe through the sales presentation -- customizing his or her responses to the tough buyer dealing with the changing moods of the ornery customer. No one ever put up a sign saying "Only easy customers allowed. All difficult buyers stay away!" The seller is always in the position where he or she must patiently overcome one's natural tendencies and reactions to please the customer.

The Hafetz Hayim says: "One who wants to correct another should not give up if one's attempt are not successful at the outset. The job is not an easy one. A person who wants to succeed must be a good sales person-- the sale when made will be profitable for both parties. It is a win-win situation.

TABLE TALK --QUESTION TO DISCUSS AT THE SHABBAT TABLE

"Do not hate your brother in your heart." 19:17

Why does the verse use the plural form --lebabekha-- for the word "heart" rather than the singular

form --libbekha?

The Torah, in the Keriyat Shema also uses the plural form for the word heart. The Sages teach one should serve G-d with one's good inclination and also with one's evil inclination -- with one's "heartS".

Here too the Torah expects that we beware hating another in our heart and manifesting that dislike from our "good" inclination.

Often a person motivated by hate will reprove another for the sake of a misvah. For example, one may yell at another to refrain from talking in the synagogue during the prayers. The Torah does not look at this reproof, motivated by animosity, favorably. One may not hate his brother in his heart -- even the "good" inclination.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

It is permitted to hang a curtain on a curtain rod in a doorway or on a window for privacy even if one intends to leave it hanging for a long time -since the curtain is attached from the top only and sways in a regular breeze it is considered a temporary partition, which one may "construct" on Shabbat. [Source Menuhat Ahaba, volume 3, chapter 23:22 --siman315]

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