

פרשת
וישב
Parashat Vayeshev

*Bereshit / Genesis 37:1-40:23, Amos 2:6-3:8,
John 2:13-4:42*

Is there such a thing as a little Hatred?

In this week's reading we see at the opening of the Torah portion the following, *Bereshit / Genesis 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. 37:4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.* (NASB, ג וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי-בֶן-זְקֵנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כְּתוֹנֶת פְּסִים: ד וַיֵּרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי-אֵתוֹ אָהָב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל-אָחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלָם:) We are told previously that Joseph would bring a bad report of his brothers back to his father (Israel). Here we are told Jacob loved his son Joseph more than he loved his brothers, and that because of this, his brothers saw this and they hated him. Hatred is a human emotion. Hatred has the capability of taking on deep and extreme forms that are rooted in feelings of animosity, anger or resentment, which can be directed against certain individuals, groups, entities, objects, behaviors, concepts, or ideas. Hatred is also something that is learned. We are all born with the capacity for aggression as well as compassion. These things are found in the rabbinic literature under the concept of being born with both the Yetzer Hara and Yetzer Hatov. This is known as the rabbinic

duality of man found in the evil inclination and the good inclination. The Yetzer hara (evil inclination) is not a demonic force that pushes a person to do evil, but rather a drive towards pleasure, property, and security. It is a work of the flesh, it is what drives one to seek the benefit of himself (selfishness) as opposed to selflessness. When left unchecked leads to evil (see *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit / Genesis 9:7*). The Yetzer hara needs to be controlled, the rabbis say this is achieved by the Yetzer hatov (good inclination), which leads to many benefits such as marriage, business, and community. According to the Rabbis, this is the distinguishing factor between children and adults. Children seek pleasure and acquisition and have not yet developed a sanctified relationship, which means they are not able to exercise the responsibility to engage in business. Anyone who has raised children understands that the evil desires can at times control a child, and if not guided (disciplined) can go on unchecked leading the child to develop tendencies that lead to criminal activities when an adult. This is why these tendencies (the Yetzer hara and tov) are strongly influenced by the families, communities, and culture we grew up in.

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit / Genesis 9:7 states the following regarding these things:

בראשית רבה ט' ז'

(ז) רבי נחמן בר שמואל בר נחמן בשם רב שמואל בר נחמן אמר: הנה טוב מאד, זה יצר טוב. והנה טוב מאד, זה יצר רע. וכי יצר הרע טוב מאד אתמהא?! אלא שאלולי יצר הרע, לא בנה אדם בית, ולא נשא אשה, ולא הוליד, ולא נשא ונתן. וכן שלמה אומר: (קהלת ד): כי היא קנאת איש מרעהו:

Midrash Rabbah Bereishit / Genesis 9:7

(7) Rabbi Nahman said in Rabbi Samuel's name: 'Behold, it was good' refers to the Good Desire; 'And behold, it was very good' refers to the Evil Desire. (It only says 'very good' after man was created with both the good and bad inclinations, in all other cases it only says 'and God saw that it was good') Can then the Evil

Desire be very good? That would be extraordinary! But without the Evil Desire, however, no man would build a house, take a wife and beget children; and thus said Solomon: 'Again, I considered all labour and all excelling in work, that it is a man's rivalry with his neighbour.' (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

To the rabbis, the evil inclination and the good inclination are said to have both been created by God. Without the evil inclination, man would not have a desire to build a house, take a wife, have children, etc. The proof text is taken from *Ecclesiastes 4:4 I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind. (NASB)*

In the case of Joseph and his brothers, how much influence Jacob had on his sons to treat each other properly is not know. The brothers however chose to take their flocks back to the region of Shechem, a place known for idolatry and sin. This may have been the reason for Joseph bringing a bad report to his dad about his brothers. In the narrative of this week's Torah portion, we read how Reuben convinced his brothers not to kill Joseph but to sell him, so that he could later rescue him from their hand. Here we understand that aggression has the capacity to do horrible evils. Reuben demonstrated that one must be mindful to choose to do what is right as opposed to what is evil, even though it is easier to do evil than good. The key to overcoming hatred is education at home, in schools, and in communities within the context of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures we are looking at this week are from *Bereshit / Genesis 37:1-11*.

Bereshit / Genesis 37:1-11

37:1 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. 37:2 These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives.

And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. 37:4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. 37:5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 37:6 He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; 37:7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.' 37:8 Then his brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. 37:9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, 'Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' 37:10 He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?' 37:11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. (NASB)

א וַיָּשָׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִגְדוֹר אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: ב אֵלֶּה |
תְּלֻדֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן-שִׁבְעָה-עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה רָעָה אֶת-
אָחָיו בְּצֹאֵן וְהוּא נָעַר אֶת-בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת-בְּנֵי זְלֶפְחָה נָשִׂי
אָבִיו וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-דְּבָרָתָם רָעָה אֶל-אָבִיהֶם: ג וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל
אֶהָב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בְּנָיו כִּי-בֶן-זִקְנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשֵׂה לוֹ
כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים: ד וַיִּרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי-אֵתוֹ אֶהָב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל-
אָחָיו וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם: ה וַיַּחְלֵם יוֹסֵף
חֲלוֹם וַיַּגִּד לְאָחָיו וַיּוֹסְפוּ עוֹד שָׁנֵא אֹתוֹ: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם
שָׁמְעוּ-נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי: ז וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי חָנּוּן

מְאַלְמִים אֲלֵמִים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֶלְמָתִי וְגַם-נִצָּבָה
וְהִנֵּה תִסְבֶּינָה אֶלְמַתֵּיכֶם וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוֶינָן לְאֶלְמָתִי: ח וַיֹּאמְרוּ
לוֹ אֲחֵיו הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּמַלֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם-מְשׁוּל תִּמְשַׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסְפוּ
עוֹד שָׂנֵא אֹתוֹ עַל-חֲלֹמְתוֹ וְעַל-דְּבָרָיו: ט וַיִּחְלֵם עוֹד
חֲלוֹם אֲחֵר וַיִּסְפֹּר אֹתוֹ לְאֲחֵיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלֹמְתִי חֲלוֹם
עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׁמַשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשֶׂר כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים
לִי: י וַיִּסְפֹּר אֶל-אָבִיו וְאֶל-אֲחָיו וַיִּגְעַר-בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתָּ הֲבֹא נְבוֹא אֲנִי וְאִמִּי וְאֲחָיָךְ
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְךָ אַרְצָה: יא וַיִּקְנְאוּ-בּוֹ אֲחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר
אֶת-הַדְּבָר:

Notice here how there are both positive and negative aspects to hatred. Jacob got upset about what Joseph was saying about his dream but yet he kept what he said in his heart to ponder what was going to take place at a future time. (37:11) In regards to the positive aspect of hatred, it is acceptable to hate those things that God hates. Certainly this demonstrates our love for God just as it says in *Tehillim / Psalms 97:10* “*Let those who love the Lord hate evil*” The closer we draw near to the Lord, the more conscious we are of sin in our lives. Do we not grieve and burn with anger when God’s name is maligned, when we see hypocrisy in a persons faith, when we see blatant unbelief, and godless behavior? The more we understand who God is and develop a love for His character, the more we will be like Him and the more we will hate those things that are contrary to His Word. In the Torah portion however, negative hatred is what Joseph’s brothers demonstrated which is directed towards others. Yeshua and his disciples spoke of hatred as being like murder in the following way:

Matthew 5:21-26

5:21 ‘You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ 5:22 ‘But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be

guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 5:23 'Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 5:24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 5:25 'Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 5:26 'Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. (NASB)

1 John 3:11

3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 3:12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. 3:13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 3:19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him (NASB)

Yeshua spoke of the ancients who said if one commits murder he is liable to the judgment. He raises the bar saying anyone who is angry with his brother is as one who has committed murder. In the case of

Joseph's brothers, they were determining their hearts to commit murder. In this situation they were not hiding their hatred for Joseph in their hearts, they were openly expressing their desire to kill him. The Apostle John goes on to say that the highest calling on our lives is to love one another. The opposite of which is hatred giving the example of Cain and Abel where Cain was of the evil one because of his hatred for his brother. The root of the hatred was due to Abel's deeds being righteous, and Cain's being evil. John parallels this to our having passed from death to life and because of this the world will hate us. He says, *3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (NASB)* He goes on to say that Yeshua demonstrated his love by laying down his life for ours and he gave us the example. The question is if one does not love and express that love by his deeds, does the love of God abide in him? The *Talmud Bavli Berakhot 17a Part 12* states, *"In the World-to-Come there is no eating, no drinking, no procreation, no business negotiations, no jealousy, no hatred, and no competition."* The Lord calls us to not just love with the words of our mouth, we are to love by our actions. This is why the rabbis say the Olam Haba (the World to Come) will consist of not eating, drinking, or procreation, but of love saying there will not be jealousy, hatred, or competition in heaven.

The Talmud also describes hatred in the following way:

Talmud Bavli Yoma 9b:8

אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצות וגמילות
חסדים מפני מה חרב מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם ללמדך
ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות ע"ז גלוי עריות
ושפיכות דמים

However, considering that the people during the Second Temple period were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and acts of kindness, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there was wanton hatred during that period. This comes to teach you that the sin of wanton hatred is equivalent to the

three severe transgressions: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and bloodshed.

Notice how the Talmud describes the generation of people at the time of the destruction of the 2nd Temple were “*engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and acts of kindness, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple*” and then ask the question “*why was the Second Temple destroyed?*” This seems a little bit facetious (tongue-in-cheek) because the people of that generation were committing idol worship, murder, hatred, and were not keeping the Mitzvot of God. We are then directed to the hatred of the Babylonians who utterly destroyed the Second Temple. The Talmud describes the Babylonian hatred as being equivalent to three transgressions, (i) Idol worship, (ii) forbidden sexual relations, and (iii) bloodshed. Hatred is paralleled to idolatry, the worship of a graven image, or something that one sets up in his/her heart. Hatred has the effect of causing one to focus upon the wrong deed that is ultimately the outcome of the anger rather than allowing the Lord God Almighty to take care of the situation, or giving forgiveness. Forbidden sexual relations is a reference to adultery, fornication, incestuous relationships, and bestiality. (*Vayikra / Leviticus 18*) In addition to this, it is written in the Torah “*You shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughter to his son nor take his daughter for your son.*” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:3*) saying that one is not to marry a person from the pagan nations. However, if they become proselytes one is permitted to marry them. In biblical days, when these nations were still identifiable, it was forbidden for a woman to marry any male descendant of an Ammonite or Moabite proselyte, as it says “*An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of Ha-Shem.*” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:4*) Today this is paralleled to not marrying someone who does not have the same beliefs due to issues with marriage and religious beliefs. The idea of hatred paralleling forbidden sexual relations is that we are to subdue our sexual inclinations and practice sanctity and clean thinking. These concepts follow through by teaching us there is a need to be intentional in keeping our hearts from hatred towards others.

The Apostle James said the following describing the one who

hates according to *James 1:19-27*.

James 1:19-27

1:19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 1:20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 1:21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 1:24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. 1:26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)

James says that the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. (1:20) He speaks of putting aside the hatred that one has hidden in the heart. James says filthiness and wickedness are in the heart and we are to be humble before God to keep the word of God in our hearts which is able to save souls. The point of the matter is the one who hates his brother transgresses a negative commandment and the one who loves his neighbor fulfills a positive commandment. In the narrative on Abraham contending with Abimelech (*Bereshit / Genesis 21:25*) over the well of water in which the servants of Abimelech had forcibly seized, the Torah is describing how Abraham talked to Abimelech about this. The Torah is saying do not hate your neighbor in

your heart after he has done something to you against your wishes. The Torah teaches us that we should rebuke him asking “*why did you do this to me?*” and not bear upon him sin by hatred and hiding that hatred in the heart and not telling him about being upset over his actions. The Rabbis say when we hide the sin of hatred in our hearts, this does not give our neighbor the opportunity to repent and ask for forgiveness and receive atonement before God. The Torah warns against taking revenge in this way by bearing a grudge in our hearts for what has been done to us. With this in mind, when Yeshua said that anyone who is angry with his brother is as one who has committed murder. Could this have meant one prevents a soul from repentance and causing a soul to enter into eternal damnation? Can we learn something about the significance of talking with a person about sin and those who have sinned against us? We are told we should erase our fellow man’s wrongdoing and our neighbors sin from our hearts. We are also told to go to our brother and talk to him about his sin. This is the path of righteousness because it leads to mercy, and forgiveness. The Mishnah Pirkei Avot on Self Destruction states the following:

Pirkei Avot 2:11 on Self-Destruction

And it causes many sins for hatred awakens quarrels and one falls into the grips of controversy and evil speech and causes one to become happy for the misfortune [of others] and to damage and cause pain and to take vengeance and to spite like a snake [against the other] and many similar evils.

The description that is given to us from the Mishnah is that there is no sin of all sins like that of hatred. Note how a characteristic of hatred is that one finds joy in another persons misfortune. The reason being is with the sin of hatred, every moment of our existence focuses upon the hate. The Torah writes, “*Do not hate your brother in your heart*” (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:17*) and also states, “*you shall love your fellow as yourself.*” (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:9-18*). This is the reason why the rabbis say in the Talmud that gratuitous hatred destroyed the Holy Temple. Note the parallels we can find in our bodies as being the Temple of God! The description of hatred and its connection to many

forms of evil describe hatred like no other sin because it is rooted in vanity, delusion, and lack of love and empathy. This may be the reasons why Yeshua focused so much on love, and commanded His followers to love one another no matter what and why John wrote in *1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (NASB)* Hate is what drove Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery. In not so uncertain terms, they were giving him a death sentence at the hands of others. This is why they believed he was dead, selling Joseph into Egyptian slavery. Keeping hatred in our hearts is like selling our soul to hatred. When one does such a thing, one becomes of little use to God. But if we seek to turn from hatred, asking the Lord God Almighty to forgive us in Yeshua the Messiah, He is powerful to do so, and to deliver us from this sin of all sins known as hatred, and bring us into His love and Mercy so that we too can give love and mercy to others. This is what the Torah teaches us, and this is why Yeshua taught us about the importance of love and its connection to eternal life. This is how the Torah and the Gospel Message go work together!