

## Laws of Interpersonal Relationships:

### 1- Judge Your Fellow With Righteousness - Part 2 :

1. When observing the actions of a Beinoni (an average person, who tries to avoid sins but at times slips up): If the action in question leans toward a positive interpretation, or if both sides seem to be about equal, the Torah obligates us to judge the person favourably and give him the benefit of the doubt. If the action seems more likely to be negative, but not definitely so, we ought to suspend judgment and leave the matter in doubt, rather than judge the person negatively. However, midas chassidus (a worthy approach) would be to judge him favourably even in such a case.
2. Judging a person favourably attests to the fact that you love him, which is also another Mitzvah.
3. Judging a person unfavourably may very well be an outgrowth of the same guilt you have.
4. Judging favourably will require Mesiras Nefesh - self sacrifice
5. When observing the actions of a stranger: There is no Torah obligation to judge him favourably. However, midas chassidus would be to judge him favourably. Nevertheless, the Torah allows us to protect our legitimate interests (in cases of risk of damage or monetary loss if we are too trusting of his tions).
6. In this scenario our Rabbis advise is “respect him and suspect him.” Treat the person cordially, but exercise caution. A person should not give verbal expression to his suspicions - he should keep them to himself.
7. Even in a case of someone we do know and would ordinarily be obligated to judge favourably - if the situation is one in which the doubtful action might lead to harm or damage to oneself or others, then we are permitted to harbour suspicion in order to protect ourselves.
8. Even when we are obligated to give the person the benefit of the doubt, that does not excuse us from our obligation to rebuke a person who has acted in a questionable way, when circumstances require it.
9. If it is necessary to investigate what really happened, for the purpose of carrying out the Mitzvah of soft-spoken rebuke effectively, we should do so.

#### After the Fact:

10. One is required to do all the necessary steps of Teshuva when transgressing this Mitzvah.
11. In addition, he is obligated to conciliate the person he suspected, and even go a step further by giving him a hearty blessing.
12. However, if he never expressed his suspicion but only harboured them in his mind, or even if he expressed them but the person suspected did not find out about them, then he should not ask his forgiveness.
13. If you have been erroneously suspected of wrongdoing, take comfort in the fact that the Rabbis say of this: “Let my portion be with those who are suspected of something they have not done.” However, this does not exonerate the one who wrongly suspects.

#### Avoiding Suspicion:

1. A person has an obligation to avoid doing things publicly that will rouse the suspicion of others. This is learned out from the words: “You shall be blameless before Hashem and Yisrael.”
2. When it is necessary to act in public in a manner that is likely to arouse suspicion, we should give those around us an explanation for our actions.
3. Ordinarily, we are advised not to publicize our sins - they are to remain between us and Hashem. However, in a case where someone else is under suspicion for having committed a wrong for which you are responsible, the proper thing to do would be to admit one’s sin in order to clear the other person of suspicion.

## The Prayer for Judging Favorably

יְיָ רַחֵם מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ד' אֱלֹהֵי וְאַלְמֵי אֲבוֹתַי  
שׂוֹמְרוֹנֵי בְרִיתְךָ וְתַחֲרוֹמֵי תוֹרַתְךָ דָּדָּד יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּאוֹפֵן שְׂאוֹמֵר לִקְטֹר עֲצָמֵי בְרִיתְךָ שְׁלֵא  
אֲבִישָׁל בְּשׂוֹם דְּבָר שְׂאִינוּ מִיֵּב וְלֹא אִיכָר דְּבָר  
שְׁלֵא בְרִצְיֹנָךְ וְתוֹכִיץ לְהוֹזִיל מִבּוֹ לְכֹל תְּמִיד  
וְלֹא אֲתַקֵּר לְעוֹלָם אַחַר תְּיֻמֹּת בְּנֵי אָדָם חַס  
וְשְׁלוֹם.

רַק אֲדַרְבֵּה, אִיבָה לְהַשְׁתַּדֵּל תְּמִיד בְּכֹל סֵךְ וְעַן  
וּבְבוֹרָה לְמַעַן תְּמִיד זְכוֹת וְטוֹב בְּכֹל אֲתִיר  
וְאֲתִיר טַבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ תְּקַדֵּשׁ אֲפִילוֹ סְפָחוֹת  
שְׂכַפְחוֹתִים וְאֲפִילוֹ בְּכֹל שְׂפָתָיִם, אֲפִילוֹ  
בְּלוֹחָמִים וְדוֹרְשִׁים אוֹתִי בִּינָם אִיבָה בְרִיתְךָ  
לְחִינּוֹם לְכַף זְכוֹת תְּמִיד וְתַתֵּן לִי שְׂכֹל לְדַעַת  
מֵאֲתִיר אִיךְ לְחַפֵּשׁ וְלַמְצֹא בָהֶם זְכוֹת וְטָעוֹת  
מִזְכוֹת תְּמִיד.

May it be Your will, Hashem, my G-d, and the  
G-d of my forefathers, that You should assist  
me in Your mercy, guide me and show me the  
straight path so that I will safeguard myself in  
Your mercy, not to stumble in anything not  
good and not to speak anything which is not  
in accordance with Your will. May I merit  
always to be good to everyone and that I  
should not find faults in anyone. Heaven  
forfend.

Rather, may I always be worthy to do my  
utmost, using all my capabilities to find merit  
and worth in each and every member of the  
Jewish people, Your holy nation, even the  
smallest of the "snail" and even those who  
stand up against me. Through Your mercy,  
may I always merit to judge others favorably;  
may You bestow upon me the intelligence to  
understand how to search for and find  
redeeming factors, strengths and virtues in my  
fellow man at all times.

THIS INSPIRING PRAYER IS FOUND ON THE WALL OF RAVEL HERRL.

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## **2 - Do Not Hate:**

### **The Mitzvah:**

1. The Torah says, "Do not hate your brother in your heart."
2. This Mitzvah is incumbent on men and woman alike, at all times and in all places.
3. Children should be trained in this Mitzvah from a small age. We should certainly not do the opposite, and try to drag children into our own hostilities by urging them to dislike those who we consider our enemies. The best way to train children is by example by avoiding using hateful expressions in their presence.

### **The Overall Prohibition:**

1. The basic Mitzvah forbids us to hate "your brother" - which means any Jew, even an ignorant am ha'aretz.
2. Although one is permitted to hate a non-Jew - it is not advisable.
3. There are specific exceptions that apply to various levels of sinners, as well as in cases where someone threatens to harm us.
4. Hatred towards a child is always forbidden, even in the case where a child commits serious sins, since he is not yet fully responsible for his actions, nor is he fully obligated to keep the Mitzvos.
5. Even if we **do not say a word** against our fellow Jew, if we harbour hatred in our hearts when it is prohibited to do so, we have violated this Mitzvah of "Lo Sisna". In addition, hatred in one's heart violates the Mitzvah to love our fellow Jew.
6. However, if we release that hatred in an unharnessed manner and express it by striking a person, whether physically or with words, or even denying him a favor because of our hatred, then according to many Poskim we are all the more guilty of transgressing the sin of "Lo Sisna," in addition to whatever other sins we committed along the way (such as Lashon Hora, etc.)
7. In the case of a sinner, whom we are allowed to hate, according to some opinions we are not permitted to hate him secretly while making an outward show of friendliness to him. Rather, we should show him our hurt openly.