



ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM

Helping or Hustling?

The Fine Line between Advice and Agenda

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM

Acharei Mot

Following the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry "into the Holy." Only one person, the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), once a year on Yom Kippur, may enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred *ketoret* to G-d.

Another feature of the Day of Atonement service is the casting of lots over two goats, to determine which should be offered to G-d and which should be dispatched to carry off the sins of Israel to the wilderness.

The *parshah* of *Acharei Mot* also warns against bringing *korbanot* (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other forbidden sexual relations.

Kedoshim

The *parshah* of *Kedoshim* begins with the statement: "You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy." This is followed by dozens of *mitzvot* (Divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies himself and relates to the holiness of G-d.

These include the prohibition against idolatry; the *mitzvah* of charity; the principle of equality before the law; and the laws regarding Shabbat, sexual morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one's parents, and the sacredness of life.

Also in *Kedoshim* is the dictum, "Love your fellow as yourself," which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called "a central principle of the Torah," and about which Hillel said, "This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary."

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

If someone offers advice that seems to benefit both the person seeking help and the advisor, what does that tell us about the nature of the advice? Is the outcome enough, or does the balance of interests matter?



We must not place something harmful in the path of someone who cannot see it.



TEXT 1

Leviticus 19:14

לֹא תִקְלֹל חֵרֵשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עֵוֵר לֹא תִתֵּן מְכֻשָׁל,
וְיִרְאַתָּ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי ה'

You shall not curse a deaf person. You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person, and you shall fear your G-d. I am G-d.

QUESTION

We already know that harming others is forbidden, so why does the Torah repeat it with the example of a blind person?

TEXT 2

Exodus 21:33-34

לג. וְכִי יִפְתַּח אִישׁ בּוֹר אֹךְ כִּי יַכְרֶה אִישׁ בֵּר וְלֹא
יִכְסֶנּוּ, וְנָפַל שָׁמָּה שׂוֹר אֹךְ חֲמֹר.
לד. בַּעַל הַבּוֹר יִשְׁלֵם, כְּסֹף יִשְׁיב לְבֹעֲלָיו, וְהַמֵּת
יִהְיֶה לוֹ.

33. And if a person opens a pit, or if a person digs a pit and does not cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it,

34. The owner of the pit shall pay; he shall return money to its owner, and the dead body shall be his.

TEXT 3

Deuteronomy 22:8

כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חֹדֶשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מֵעֲקוּהָ לְגִגֶּךָ, וְלֹא
תַשִּׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתְךָ כִּי יִפֹּל הַנֹּפֵל מִמֶּנּוּ.

When you build a new house, you shall make a guardrail for your roof, so that you shall not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house, that the one who falls should fall from it [the roof].

TEXT 4A

Maimonides, *Sefer
Hamitzvot*, Positive
Mitzvah #184

לַעֲשׂוֹת מַעֲקֵה לְגַג הַבַּיִת.

הִיא שְׂצֻנּוֹ לְהַסִּיר הַמְּכַשׂוּלִים וְהַסְּכָנוֹת מִכָּל מוֹשְׁבוֹתֵינוּ. וְזֶה שְׂנִבְנָה כּוֹתֵל
סָבִיב הַגַּג וְסָבִיב הַבּוֹרוֹת וְהַשִּׁיחִין וְהַדּוֹמָה לָהֶם, כְּדִי שְׂלֹא יִפּוֹל הַמְּסַתֵּךְ
מֵהֶם אוֹ בָּהֶם.

וְכֵן כָּל הַמְּקוֹמוֹת הַמְּסוּכָּנִין וְהָרְעוּעִים, כְּלָם יִבְנוּ עַל סֵדֶר שְׂיִסוּר הָרְעוּעַ
וְהַסְּכָנָה.

The positive *mitzvah* to build a guardrail on the roof of a house.

This commandment instructs us to remove hazards and dangers from all our dwellings. That is why we must build a protective wall around the roof, around pits, ditches, and anything similar, so that no one in danger might fall from them or into them.

Likewise, any unsafe or unstable places must be repaired or constructed in a way that eliminates the risk and removes the danger.



It is a *mitzvah* to:

1. protect others
2. not cause harm

TEXT 4B

Maimonides, *Sefer
Hamitzvot*, Negative
Mitzvah #298

הַזְהִירָנוּ מִהַגִּיט הַמוֹקְשִׁים וְהַמְכַשׁוּלוֹת בְּאַרְצֵנוּ וּבְבֵיתֵנוּ כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא
יָמוּתוּ בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם. וְהוּא אָמְרוּ וְלֹא תַשִּׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתְךָ.
וְלִשׁוֹן סִפְרֵי: וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֵה זֶה מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה, וְלֹא תַשִּׂים דָּמִים זֶה מִצְוַת
לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה.

The Torah warns against leaving traps or obstacles in our land or our homes, so that people should not die because of them. As it says, "You shall not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house."

In the words of the *Sifrei*: "You shall make a guardrail" is a positive commandment, while "Do not cause blood" is a prohibition.

ANSWER

The Torah mentions a blind person to teach that harm isn't only physical. It's also forbidden to mislead or take advantage of someone who lacks clarity, even when the harm isn't visible.

TEXT 5

Rabbi Yerucham
Fishel Perla, Notes to
Sefer Hamitzvot of
Rabbi Saadia Ga'on,
Negative Mitzvah
#55

מתבאר דבמכשול בינדים יש אזהרה מיוחדת בפני עצמו מקרא ד"לא תשים דמים בביתך".

ולזה לאו ד"לפני עור לא תתן מכשול" אוקמוהו במכשול שאינו עושה בינדים מממש, אלא במשיאו
עצה רעה לעשות עבירה — כגון ששואלו אם כשרה אשה זו לכהונה, והוא אומר לו שהיא כשרה
וזה נושאה והיא אינה כשרה. או עצה רעה שמפסידו ממון בכך כמו שאמרו בספרא. או מושיט כוס
יין לנזיר ואבר מן החי לכן נס . . .

והוא ענין אחר לגמרי, וצריך אזהרה מיוחדת בפני עצמו.

What emerges is this: when it comes to creating a physical hazard with one's own hands, there is a distinct prohibition derived from the verse, "You shall not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house."

The prohibition of "You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person," however, was applied by the sages to a different kind of stumbling block—not a physical danger but misleading someone with harmful advice that leads to sin. For example, if the question arises about whether a certain woman is permitted to a *Kohen* and you falsely answer yes, you cause him to marry her when in fact she is forbidden. Another example is giving advice that causes financial loss; or handing a cup of wine to a *nazir*, or a limb from a living animal to a non-Jew. . . .

This is an entirely different matter, and therefore requires its own separate warning.

TEXT 6

Rashi, Leviticus
19:14

"וּלְפָנַי עֵוֶר לֹא תִתֵּן מְכַשׁוֹל". לְפָנַי הַסּוּמָא בְּדַבָּר לֹא תִתֵּן
עֵצָה שְׂאִינָהּ הוֹגֵנֶת לוֹ.

אֵל תֹּאמַר "מְכֹר שְׂדֶךְ וְקַח לְךָ תַמְזֹר, וְאַתָּה עוֹקֵף עָלֵיו
וְנוֹטְלָהּ הַיָּמִינוּ".

"You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person": Before a person who is "blind" regarding a matter, you shall not give advice that is unsuitable for them.

[For instance] do not say to someone, "Sell your field and buy a donkey [with the proceeds]," while [in truth] you plan to cheat them since you yourself will take it from them.

Giving advice for
your own gain turns
guidance into self-
serving behavior.



TEXT 7

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Likutei Sichot 27, p.
146

מיט צוגעבן דעם סיום "וְאֵתָהּ עֹקֵף עָלָיו וְנוֹטְלָהּ הַיְמָנֹו" איז רש"י
מְדַגֵּישׁ אַז דָּעַר חֲסָרוֹן בְּאַשְׁטֵיט נִיט אֵין גּוֹרֵם זַיִן אַז דָּעַר "סוּמָא"
זָאל פֿאַרְבֵּיטן אַ שְׂדֵה אויף אַ חֲמֹר, ווייל אֵין דָּעם איז נִיט מוּכָרָח
אַז עס זָאל זַיִן אַ הֶפְסֵד.

With the addition of the closing phrase "You plan to cheat them since you yourself will take it from them," Rashi emphasizes that the problem is not simply causing the "blind person" to exchange a field for a donkey, since that in itself does not necessarily result in a loss.

It's not the advice
itself that's wrong.

It's the **intention** and
gain behind it.



TEXT 8

Rashi, Leviticus
25:17

כִּאֵן הַזֵּהִיר . . . וְלֹא יִשְׂאֲנוּ עֵצָה שְׂאִינָה
הוֹגֵנֶת לוֹ לְפִי דֶרֶכּוֹ וְהִנָּאֲתוּ שֶׁל יוֹעֵץ.

The Torah is warning against . . . offering advice to someone that is unsound for them but according to the mode of life or the benefit of the advisor.



We must pause, act thoughtfully, and do what's right for others, not for ourselves or for praise.

TEXT 9

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 27, p. 147

און דאס ווערט ארויסגעבראכט אין דער דוגמא
הנזכרת לעיל "אל תאמר מכור שדה וקח לך חמור
ואתה עוקף עליו ונוטלה הימנו": אפילו אז דער
מקבל העצה וועט דערפון ניט האבן קיין שאדן
כלל, זי איז אבער "אינה הוגנת לו" — ניט קיין
צורך פאר עס, האט דאס תורה גע'אסר'ט. ווייל
געבנדיק אן עצה א צווייטן דארף מען דורכאויס
טראכטן וועגן יענעמ'ס מצב און קובע זיין וואס
ס'איז א צורך פאר יענעם ("הוגנת לו"), און ניט
אויסנוצן דאס פאר אייגענע פארדינסטן — "ואתה
עוקף עליו ונוטלה הימנו".

כאטש ער קען זיך טראכטן: זעה (דער סומא בדבר)
איז לא חסר כלל — איז וואס הארט עס אז ער
(דער יועץ) וועט זיין געהנה?

This is brought out in the example cited above:
"Do not say to someone, 'Sell your field and buy a
donkey,' and then cheat them since you yourself
will take it from them." It may very well be that the
one receiving advice will not suffer any actual loss
at all. Still, since the advice is "unsuitable for
them"—not truly needed for their situation—the
Torah forbids it. For when giving advice to another
person, one must think only of *that person's*
circumstances and determine what is genuinely
appropriate for *them*, and not exploit the situation
for one's own profit—"and then cheat them since
you yourself will take it from them."

One might argue: If the person (who is "blind
regarding this matter") loses nothing at all, then
what's the problem if the advisor benefits?

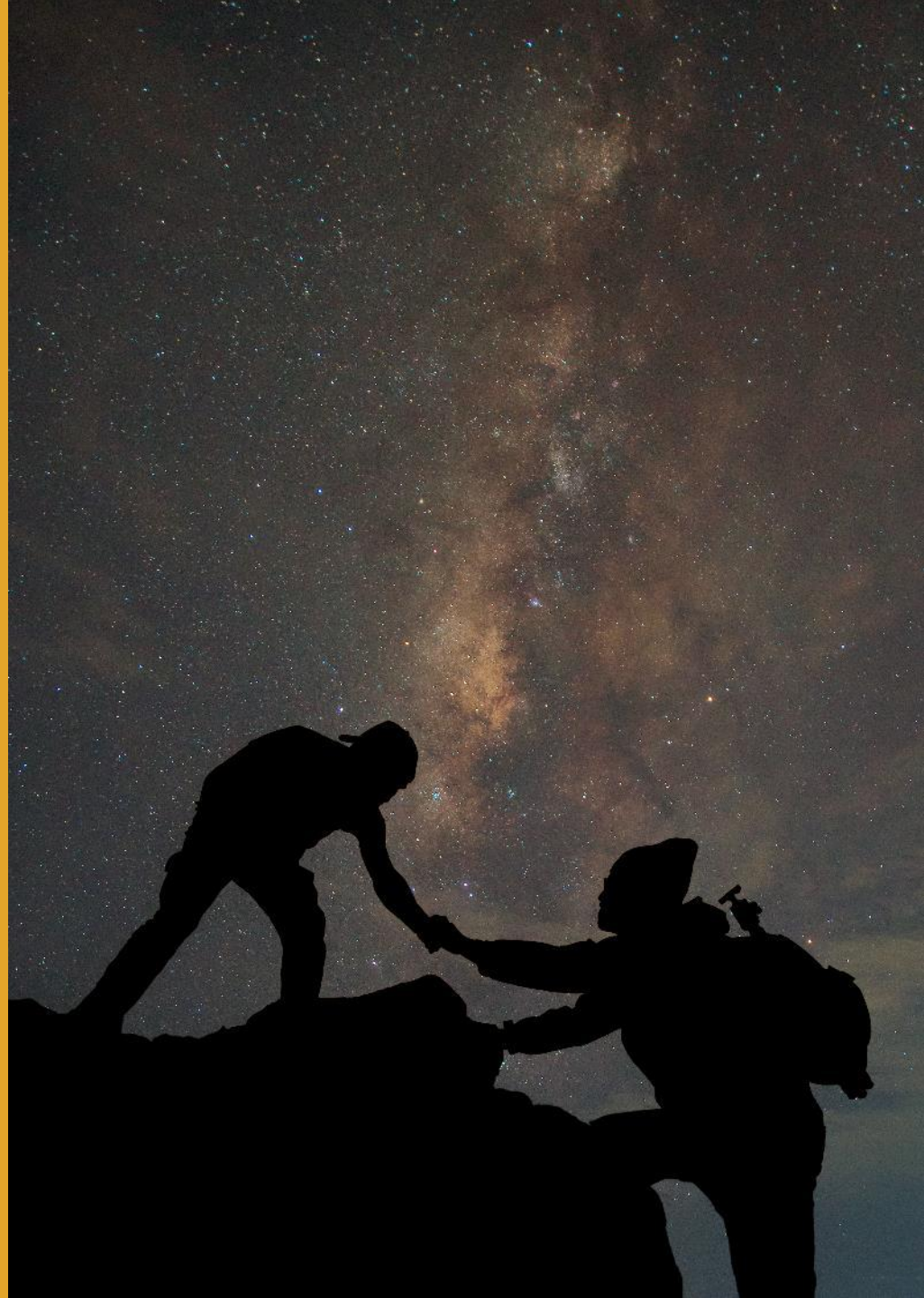
TEXT 9

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 27, p. 147

און דאס זאגט רש"י "וְלִפְנֵי עֵנָר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשׁוֹל" —
"לִפְנֵי הַסּוֹמֵא בְּדַבָּר לֹא תִתֵּן עֵצָה שְׂאִינָהּ הוֹגְגֶת
לוֹ": "מִכְשׁוֹל" דָּא אִיז פּוֹלֵל אֶפִּילוּ וְעַן (פֶּאָר דְּעַם
"סוֹמֵא בְּדַבָּר" אִיז גִּיט אַרױסְגַּעקױמַען קײן הַפֶּסֶד
כָּלֵל, נָאָר) דְּעַר "מִכְשׁוֹל" (דוֹרְכַּפֶּאל) אִיז בְּלוֹיז
אִין אױפֿן נְתִיבַת הָעֵצָה — "עֵצָה שְׂאִינָהּ הוֹגְגֶת לוֹ":
דְּעַר "סוֹמֵא" מײַנְט אַז דְּעַר "יױעֵץ" גִּיט אַן עֵצָה
ה"הוֹגְגֶת לוֹ", און דְּעַר יױעֵץ אִיז "עױקֶף עֲלֵיו",
נֶאֱרָט אִים אָפֿ און גִּיט אִים אַן עֵצָה "לְפִי דְרָכּוֹ
וְהִנָּאֲתוּ".

This is exactly what Rashi addresses when he explains: "You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person"—before a person who is 'blind' regarding a matter, you shall not give advice that is unsuitable for them." Here, "stumbling block" includes even a case where the "blind person" has not suffered any actual financial loss, but the "stumbling block" lies solely in the nature of the advice itself—"advice that is unsuitable for them." The one who is "blind regarding a matter" believes the advisor is offering them advice that is in their best interest, while in reality the advisor is "cheat[ing] them since [they themselves] will take it from them," deceiving them, and giving advice that is really only in line with the advisor's own benefit.

Ahavat Yisrael is
putting others
needs before your
own.



TEXT 10

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *ibid.*,
p. 147

דא האט מען א הוראה נפלאה אין דעם ענין פון אהבת ישראל — אויף וויפל א איד איז
מחוייב זיך אריינלייגן אין דער טובה פון א צווייטן אידן:

עס איז ניט גענוג וואס די פירסט זיך אין אן אופן אז דער זולת האט בפועל א תועלת פון זיין
הנהגה, נאר אין דעם איז אויך נוגע זיין "דוך", פנונה ומטרה: בשעת די טובה פון צווייטן א
טובה דארפסטו אינגאנצן זיין "אויסגעטאן" פון זיך און טראכטן דורכאויס וועגן דעם
צווייטן'ס מצב, און אזוי ארום וועלן זיך אין דעם ניט אריינמישן קיין נגיעות ופניות וכו'.

This provides us with a remarkable lesson about the extent to which a Jew is obligated to invest him- or herself in the well-being of another Jew.

It is not enough that your actions happen to bring someone else benefit. What also matters is your approach, your intention, and your purpose. When you do a favor for another, you must be completely free of self-interest, thinking only of the other person's situation. Only then will your kindness be pure, untainted by hidden motives or personal gain.



When helping someone spiritually, it should be clear you're doing it for their benefit, not for personal gain.

TEXT 11

Tikunei Zohar, p. 5a

וְהִיָּה אֱמוּנַת עֲתִידָךְ וְכוּ' (יִשְׁעֶיָּה לֵג,
(ו).

"אֱמוּנַת" סֵדֶר זְרָעִים,

"עֲתִידָךְ" סֵדֶר מוֹעֵד,

"חֲסוֹן" סֵדֶר נְשִׁים,

"יִשׁוּעוֹת" סֵדֶר נְזִיקִין,

"חֻכְמָה" סֵדֶר קְדָשִׁים,

"וְדַעַת" סֵדֶר טְהָרוֹת . . .

וְסִימָן זַמ"ן נָב"ט.

"And it shall be the faith of your times . . ." (Isaiah 33:6).

"Faith" refers to the order of Zera'im,

"your times" to the order of Mo'ed,

"strength" to the order of Nashim,

"salvations" to the order of Nezikin,

"wisdom" to the order of Kodashim,

and "knowledge" to the order of Taharot. . . .

And the mnemonic is *ZeMaN NaKaT* (an acronym for the six orders of the Mishnah).

The Six Orders of the Mishnah

ז - זרעים - *Zera'im* (Seeds) Agriculture ←

מ - מועד - *Mo'ed* (Times) Sabbath and Holidays ←

נ - נשים - *Nashim* (Women) Marriage, Divorce ←

ב - נזיקין - *Nezikin* (Damages) Civil and Criminal Law ←

ק - קדשים - *Kodashim* (Holy Things) Rituals of the Temple ←

ט - טהרות - *Taharot* (Purities) Rituals of Purification ←

זמ"ן נק"ט =

TEXT 12

David Gonzales, "For Lubavitch Hasidim, Caravan of 'Mitzvah Tanks' Honors Rebbe," *The New York Times*, March 24, 1994, sec. B, p. 3

For some 25 years, the mitzvah tanks have been a familiar sight in bustling downtown streets and college campuses in many cities across the country, as they vied for the hearts and minds of Jews.

The Rebbe bestowed the decidedly martial name shortly after Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, calling them the tanks of his movement. . . .

It is a means of protecting ourselves by attacking the opposing power, the enemy. . . . This is a tank against assimilation, alienation. The Rebbe in positioning it introduces awareness and combats apathy and ignorance.



tank = נקט

Mitzvah tanks are spiritual weapons, bringing light and *mitzvot* into the world.

TEXT 13

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Torat
Menachem* 5734:3
(76), p. 434

לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ – שֶׁהַזִּוּלָת לֹא יִחְשׂוּשׁ שֶׁהוּא רוֹצֵה לְרַמּוֹת אוֹתוֹ, אוֹ לְהַרְוִיחַ מִשְׁהוּ
מְזָה – "לַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ שֵׁם" אוֹ שֶׁאֵר פְּנִיּוֹת. וְכֹאֲשֶׁר מֵאַמִּין לוֹ שֶׁהוּא מִתְכַּנְּוִין לְמָה
שֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר – אֲזַי נִפְתַּח לֵב הַשׁוֹמֵעַ, שֶׁיִּשְׁמַע וְיִבִּין וְיִכִּיר כּוֹ' מָה שֶׁמְדַבְּרִים עִמּוֹ
בְּנוֹגַע לְתוֹרָה, אוֹ תְּפִילִין, אוֹ מְזוּזָה, אוֹ צַדִּיקָה, אוֹ בֵּית מְלֵא סְפָרִים . . .
לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ צָרִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת אֲצִלוֹ עֲנֻן הַ"טְהָרוֹת" – לְטַהֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִכָּל עֲנֻנִים
שֶׁל פְּנִיָּה כּוֹ'.

First and foremost, the other person must not feel that you're trying to deceive them or gain something from it for yourself, whether to "make a name" for yourself or any other ulterior motive. When they believe that you speak with sincerity, then their heart opens, allowing them to listen, to understand, and to recognize what you're sharing about [the *mitzvot* of] learning Torah, or [donning] *tefilin*, or [affixing a] *mezuzah*, or [giving] charity, or filling one's home with Jewish books. . . .

So, before anything else, one must embody the quality of "purity"—to cleanse oneself of any self-serving interests or hidden agendas.

Purity Comes First

Before guiding others,
your own motives
must be pure.

ט = *Taharot*

טהרות Purities



QUESTION

How do we avoid
this all-too-human trap of trying
to personally gain from our
transactions?

TEXT 14

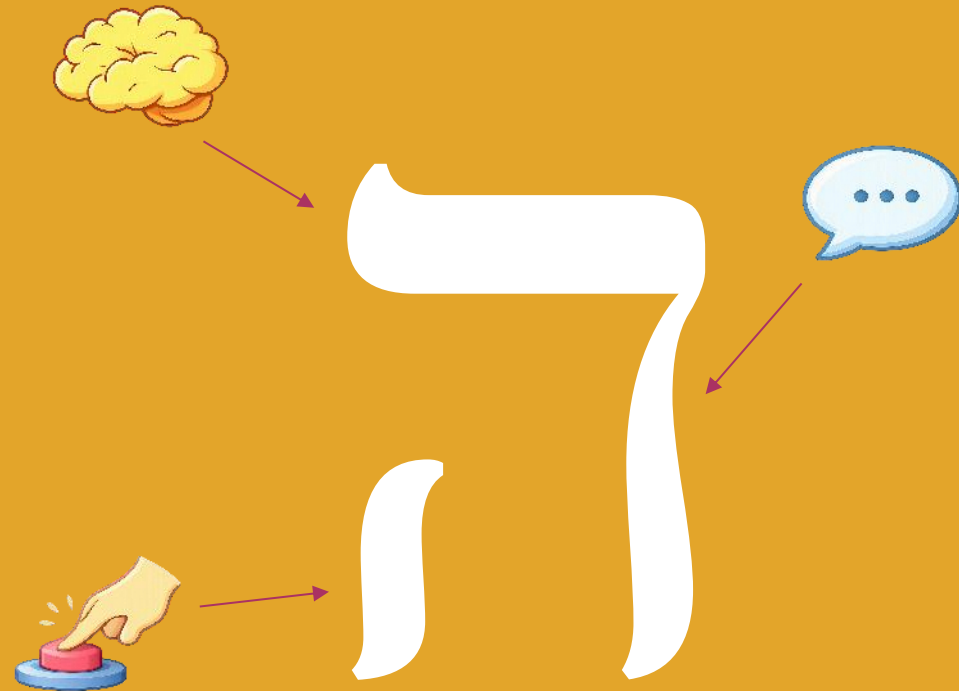
Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, *Torah Or*,
Megilat Esther,
p. 95b

הַיָּה תְּמוּנַת וְצוּרַת הַה' הוּא ג' קוּיין, שְׁנַי קוּיין
מְחוּבְּרִים שָׁהם בְּחִינַת מַחְשָׁבָה דְּבוּר. וְקוּ
הַג' הוּא בְּחִינַת מַעֲשֵׂה.

The form of the letter *hei* is made of three lines:
two connected lines that represent thought and
speech, and a third line that represents action.

Thought → Speech → Action

The connected lines of the letter *hei* show that thought flows directly into speech. The disconnected line of action reminds us to pause and consider before acting.



TEXT 15A

Isaiah 43:7

כָּל הַנִּקְרָא בְּשִׁמִּי וְלִכְבוֹדִי בְּרָאֲתִיו
יִצְרָתִיו אֶף עָשִׂיתִיו.

Everyone that is called by My name, for My
glory I created it, I formed it, I even made it.

TEXT 15B

Rabbi Shneur
Zalman of Liadi,
Likutei Torah,
Balak, pp. 67a-b

וְהֶעֱנִינִי דְכִתִּיב "וְלִכְבוֹדִי בְרָאתִיו יִצְרָתִיו אֶף
עָשִׂיתִיו", וְהֵם בְּחִינַת מַחְשָׁבָה דִּיבוּר וּמַעֲשֵׂה.

"בְּרָאתִיו" הוּא בְּחִינַת מַחְשָׁבָה, לְשֵׁהוּא יֵשׁ
מֵאַיִן.

"יִצְרָתִיו" הוּא בְּחִינַת הַדִּיבוּר, לְשֵׁהוּא בְּחִינַת
צוּרָה, לְשִׁמְצִייר הָאוֹתִיּוֹת לְשִׁבְמַחְשָׁבָה.

"אֶף עָשִׂיתִיו" בְּחִינַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂה.

כְּתִיב בְּלִשׁוֹן "אֶף", לְפִי לְשֵׁהמַעֲשֵׂה דְבָר נִפְרָד
בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ, לְשֵׁהאִינוֹ כְּעֶרְךָ הַדִּיבוּר נִגְדָה
הַמַּחְשָׁבָה לְשִׁמְצִייר הָאוֹתִיּוֹת הַמַּחְשָׁבָה מִמֶּשׁ,
כִּי מָה לְשִׁחֻשֵׁב הוּא מְדַבֵּר. מָה לְשֵׁהאִין כֵּן עֲנִינִי
עָשִׂיָה גְשָׁמִיּוֹת הוּא עֲנִינִי בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ . . .

וְצוּרַת הֵה' הוּא ג' קוֹיִן כו'.

The verse states, "For My glory I created it, I formed it, I even made it." These correspond to thought, speech, and action.

"Created it" refers to thought—something emerging from nothing.

"Formed it" refers to speech, which gives shape, forming the letters that were first present in thought.

"I even made it" refers to action.

The Torah uses the word "even" here because action is its own category, distinct from speech. Speech is directly linked to thought—it simply shapes the very ideas already present in the mind. But physical action stands apart as something entirely different. . . .

This is reflected in the shape of the letter *hei*, which is made up of three lines: two connected lines representing thought and speech, and a separate line representing action.

Imbalance in Action

TOO IMPULSIVE

TOO LITTLE

TOO MUCH

ח

ר

ק

Korach's letters show imbalance: when thought, speech, and action aren't aligned it leads to harm.

THE LETTER *HEI* REMINDS US:

Thought and speech are connected, but our actions are what truly make a difference.



TEXT 16

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Torat Menachem
5742:3, p. 1717

וְהַחֲלִיזוּק לְשִׁבְזָה הוּא: כְּאֲשֶׁר הַמַּעֲשֵׂה מְחוּבָר
עִם הַמַּחְשָׁבָה (לְלֹא כָּל הַפְּסֵק) — אֵינוֹ חוֹשֵׁב
עַל הַזּוּלָּת אֲלָא עַל עֲצָמוֹ בְּלִבְדּוֹ, הֵינּוּ,
הַמַּחְשָׁבָה הִיא אוֹדוֹת עֲצָמוֹ, הַדִּיבּוּר הוּא
אוֹדוֹת עֲצָמוֹ, וְהַמַּעֲשֵׂה הוּא גַם עֲבוּר עֲצָמוֹ.
וּמֵאַחֵר לְשִׁמְעוּשָׁה הַצְּדָקָה הוּא עֲבוּר עֲצָמוֹ, הֲרִי
הוּא מְסַתְּפֵק בְּנִתְיִנְתָּ ח"י "סְעֻנָּט" (כִּי גַם זֶה
מְסַפִּיק כְּדִי לְשִׁיחֵיהָ לוֹ הָעֵילוּי דְּמְסַפָּר ח"י),
בְּמִקּוֹם לְתַת ח"י דוֹלָר, אוֹ ח"י פְּעָמִים מְאֹה
דוֹלָר, וְכִיּוֹצֵא בְּזֶה בְּהִתְאֵם לְמַעֲמָדוֹ וּמִצָּבוֹ.

מָה לְשֵׂאִין כֵּן כְּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנוּ הַפְּסֵק בֵּין הַמַּעֲשֵׂה
לְמַחְשָׁבָה (כְּצִיּוּר אוֹת ה"א), הֲרִי הוּא חוֹשֵׁב
אוֹדוֹת עֲנִינְ הַמַּעֲשֵׂה גּוֹפֵא, הֵינּוּ, אוֹדוֹת
הַפְּעוּלָה עִם הַזּוּלָּת, וְלֹא אוֹדוֹת הַפְּעוּלָה שְׁלוֹ
(בְּהַמְשֵׁךְ לְעֲנִינְ הַמַּחְשָׁבָה).

Here's the distinction: When action is directly connected to thought (without any interruption), the person is really only thinking about themselves. All thoughts, speech, and actions are focused on their own benefit. For example, when giving charity, they may only give a small amount, like 18 cents, because this satisfies their internal requirement, even though they could afford to give \$18 or 18 times \$100, depending on the situation.

However, when there's a break between thought and action (like the shape of the letter *hei*), the person is thinking not just about their own action but about the action itself, meaning about how their action impacts others.

TEXT 16

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Torat Menachem
5742:3, p. 1717

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִינְךָ הַהֶפְסֵק שֶׁבֵּין מַחְשָׁבָה לְמַעֲשֵׂה
(כְּצִיּוּר אֹת ה"א, וְלֹא כְּצִיּוּר אֹת ח"ת)
לְהוֹרוֹת עַל צְמֻצוֹם הַהִשְׁפָּעָה לְפִי עֵרֶךְ כְּלִי
הַמְקַבֵּל, הֵינּוּ, שֶׁהַמְשַׁפֵּיעַ צָרִיךְ שְׂהִיית זְמַן
כְּדֵי לְצַמְצֵם אֶת הַהִשְׁפָּעָה לְפִי עֵרֶךְ כְּלִי
הַמְקַבֵּל, שְׂאֵז קִבְּלַת הַהִשְׁפָּעָה הִיא בְּאוֹפֶן
הַמִּתְאִים.

This break between thought and action (as seen in the form of the letter *hei*, not the form of *chet*) indicates the need for the giver to first curate their influence according to the receiver's capacity. This ensures that the recipient can receive the influence in a way that is appropriate for them.

KEY POINTS

1. The *mitzvah* not to place a stumbling block before a blind person is typically understood as a prohibition not to lead others astray.
2. *More literally, as Rashi interprets it, we understand it as a unique prohibition not to advise or help others if your intentions are for personal gain. This is what distinguishes it from conventional prohibitions not to harm others.*
3. When helping others, we must have *their* needs in mind, not mixing in any of our own.
4. *This is especially true when helping others in a spiritual sense.*
5. One way to ensure this is to always take pause and see to it that our thoughts don't immediately spring into action: rather, we deliberate and act intentionally.

