

**Get
Angry**



or

**Gain
Greatness**

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## **Preface**

What choice do we have when we think we are ready to explode over some relative or friend who has slighted us in a seemingly unforgivable way?

We can choose to grab hold of a Gemara Rosh Hashana 17a, six lines up from the bottom. This is one of the most incredible statements in all of Shas which teaches a most significant, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity:

“One who forgives others will be forgiven for all of his sins.”!!!

What a unique opportunity!

## 1. Measure for Measure

Of course it is difficult to be tolerant, not to measure the exact pain and agony and desire to teach that person a lesson once and for all.

How can we pass over the hurt and the pain? How can we erase our suffering and embarrassment?

We can focus on the joys of becoming sin-free, the satisfaction, excitement, peace and ecstasy. We can change our lives in one swooping mitzvah.

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But wait a minute... this person just punched me in the face, so to speak, and now you're suggesting that I should think about forgiving him??

The Sefer Hachinuch explains we have a mitzvah (Vayikra 19:18) "to love others as oneself."

This is the reason why we should not bear a grudge against others. Rather, realize that it was a message from Hashem Who runs the world!

2. For Yourself

How many claims do you think Hashem could have against you? Don't we wish we could make a list of 'x' amount of sins we may have done and have Hashem erase them all from our slate?

We have a new insight in understanding, "Love others as yourself."

Do you want Hashem to forgive you? [yes]

Well, He says I will forgive you, if you do so for others!!

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Shulchan Aruch 606:1, explains that refusing to forgive others is considered cruelty... we are now learning that the primary cruelty may be to oneself by refusing to gain forgiveness for all of one's sins.

### 3. Choosing Thoughts

Hashem has granted us the unique ability to choose what we desire to think and focus on! Thus we can decide to think about the gifts Hashem keeps showering us with, such as breathing His enjoyable air, seeing the letters I am reading now, thinking about and smiling with gratitude.

Similarly, we can choose to think about the many gifts our spouse has bestowed on us over the last 24 hours, etc.

The gift of memory is so useful, beneficial and enjoyable. Fortunately, Hashem has also created us with change-the-channel and delete buttons.

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What is the greatest form of expressing love to another person?

We see the answer from how the Torah puts together “do not bear a grudge... love your friend.”

4. Two Steps

The Rambam at the close of his Halacha teachings of the laws of not bearing a grudge, Deos 7:8, explains:

- 1- Erase it from your heart and thoughts, and
- 2- Don't remember it at all.

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That is exactly how we pray and hope Hashem will erase our sins.

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We find this lesson also in Sanhedrin 7a,

"How fortunate is one who ignores insults, he will be saved from a hundred troubles."

Two of the great benefits we can gain -

1- To achieve the merits to live long healthy years - strive to never get upset at home, Taanis 20b,

2- Always be humble like Hillel, Shabbos 30b.

5. The Greatest Rule

Rashi in Vayikra 19:18 quotes R. Akiva that to love others as yourself is the greatest rule of the Torah. It encompasses the entire Torah. As when Hillel taught a convert the whole Torah in one sentence, "What you don't want others to do to you, don't do to them."

We hope and pray that all people we may have hurt or insulted will forgive us. So too, we should forgive.

This explains why Hashem will forgive us for all of our sins, because we are fulfilling the main principle of the Torah to love others as ourselves!

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"If not now, when? If not you, who?"

Avos 1:14



## 6. Primary Goal

Is the main purpose of Torah study just to sit and read words?

The Gemara Brochos 17a says in the name of Rava, "The primary goal of Torah is for it to be studied and practiced with repentance and good deeds.

This fits well with Rava's teaching in Rosh Hashana 17a that one who forgives others will be forgiven for their sins. He is demonstrating that he is fulfilling the goals of the Torah.

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In Taanis 21b, we learn that Rava would merit an annual Heavenly peace greeting every year before Yom Kippur, which shows the connection to living with atonement and forgiveness!

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## 7. Love Peace

There is only one place in Pirkei Avos where we are taught, "Become a disciple of..." In Avos 1:12 we are advised to be a disciple of Aaron to love peace, pursue peace, love people...

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Similarly, in Tehillim 34:15 we learn:

"Who desires life?

Who loves days?

Who wants to see goodness?...

Seek peace and pursue it."

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We learn that 'Peace' is considered a name of Hashem and the Torah is called Peace. Thus 'forgiving others' is a supreme quality which fosters peace and all of life's blessings.

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It's a Rambam that, "Peace is so great because the entire Torah was given to us to produce true peace in the world"...

8. The Preface

Three verses before the Torah teaches us to love others as oneself we learn -

“Judge people favorably.”

Give them the benefit of a doubt to the side of merit (Rashi).

This helps us to love and forgive others...

1- maybe we miscommunicated,

2- maybe the person was not feeling well,

3- maybe they are actually right, and we made a mistake,

4- maybe he was under duress,

5- maybe he regrets what he did, but is embarrassed to apologize.

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This is another great mitzvah we can gain, by ignoring and forgiving as the Rambam teaches...

## 9. Rambam...

In the laws of Repentance 2:9, the Rambam says, "One who refuses to forgive when he should, he is the sinner..."

Then in 2:10 he says -

"Forgive with a complete heart and willing desire. Even if one was very hurtful to you and very sinful, do not take revenge or bear a grudge... Follow the Jewish way to forgive..."

Mesilas Yeshorim also adds four points in his Chapter 11:

"What does it mean to love others as oneself?"

- without any difference,
- no distinctions,
- no tricks,

→ exactly as yourself!

## 10. The 'Bottom' Line

We should ask ourselves,

“Who is more important:

- this or that person-

- or the Creator Who made me and Who feeds me daily?”

If I get angry and refuse to forgive this person, maybe I can be upset at this fellow and teach him a lesson and have him suffer...

...or I can gain Hashem's forgiveness and save myself from untold troubles.

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What a choice we can make when we see the whole picture and look to the top of the line.