

משיח MASHIACH

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There is much practical wisdom in the Torah about how to deal with conflicts. Leviticus 19:17-18 states:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of

person keeps everything inside. The pressure builds up. It eats away at the person and poisons their heart. Bearing a grudge is self-destructive and is as unacceptable as revenge.

Both of these expressions of hate are off limits in our family. How then can a person who is offended respond? What is acceptable?

The above Scriptures mention two acceptable responses. First, “Rebuke your neighbor frankly” (Lev 19:17; cf. Matt 18:15). Go to them, tell them how they have wronged you, and give them an opportunity to repent (make *teshuvah*). We have taught our children that repentance is to say sincerely, “I am very sorry for _____ (in detail!). It was wrong. I won’t do it again. Please forgive me”—and then to make any necessary restitution. If a person repents, the offended person should forgive and verbalize their forgiveness by saying sincerely, “I forgive you” (Luke 17:3-4). This is what we have taught our children, and it works. Moreover, this process of reconciliation applies to parents and children equally. Sometimes I wrong my children and they rebuke me frankly. I, in turn, repent the way I have taught them to repent. I set the example for them to imitate. If I don’t follow these principles, they won’t either.

The second acceptable response in these texts is to “overlook an offense” (Prov 19:11; e.g. Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”). This means to forgive and forget. Let it bounce off of you without the offense entering your heart. This is an acceptable response as long as the person truly does this. How can anyone do this? We can do this because God does this to us. He overlooks thousands of our offenses. We can show mercy to others because he is merciful to us. Yeshua said, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matt 6:14-15; cf. 18:21-35).



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your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Similarly, Proverbs 19:11 contends:

A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

These passages form the basis of how my family handles offenses. In our home, if someone offends you, there is an acceptable response and an unacceptable response. The unacceptable response is to “hate your brother in your heart” (Lev 19:17). This can be manifest in two ways: First, by seeking revenge—getting back at the person and hurting them as much as they hurt you. This is taking the offense and hurling it back at the person. A second way of responding with hate is to bear a grudge. Here, the