

DA2. Seeking Reconciliation with Our Brother

We are to seek reconciliation with our brother.

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

Key New Testament Scriptures

Matthew 5:23-24

So if you are offering your gift at the Temple altar and you remember there that your brother has something against you, leave your gift where it is by the altar, and go, make peace with your brother. Then come back and offer your gift.

Matthew 18:15-17

Moreover, if your brother commits a sin against you, go and show him his fault- but privately, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he doesn't listen, take one or two others with you so that every accusation can be supported by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to hear them, tell the congregation; and if he refuses to listen even to the congregation, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.

Additional New Testament Scriptures

Matthew 5:9, 6:12, 14-15, 18:21-22

Mark 11:25-26

Luke 6:27-32, 37, 17:3-4, 23:34

John 20:21-22

Acts 17:29-30

Ephesians 4:2, 26, 31-32

Galatians 6:1-2

Colossians 3:13

Hebrews 12:14-15

1 Peter 4:8

1 John 1:9

Related New Testament Mitzvot

DA03 Not Harming Our Neighbor

DA09 Giving to Our Neighbor That Which Is Owed Him

DA10 Living in Peace with Our Neighbors

DA18 Not Causing Our Neighbor or Brother to Stumble

DA22 Not Robbing or Stealing from Our Neighbor

DA23 Not Slandering or Giving False Testimony Against Our Neighbor

DA24 Loving Our Brother and Neighbor

DA25 Not Defrauding Our Neighbor

DA26 Not Quarreling or Fighting with Our Neighbor

DA31 Not Coveting that which Belongs to Our Neighbor
DA35 Not Extorting Our Neighbor
DA36 Forgiving Our Brother Who Sins Against Us
DA37 Forgiving Our Neighbor Who Sins Against Us
DA45 Not Sinning Against Our Brother or Neighbor
DA47 Not Deceiving Our Neighbor
DA48 Not Harboring Bitterness Against Our Neighbor
DA49 Not Harboring Malice or Being Spiteful to Our Neighbor
DA64 Not Speaking Badly or Critically of Our Brother or Neighbor
DA65 Not Insulting Our Neighbor
DA66 Not Harboring Evil Suspicions Against Our Neighbor
DA75 Not Provoking Our Neighbor
GA01 Repenting of Our Sins and Turning to God
GA02 Seeking Forgiveness of Sins in Yeshua
GA03 Producing Fruit of Repentance
RA01 Mediating and Adjudicating Disputes between Brothers
RA03 Correcting Our Self Before Seeking to Correct Others
RA04 Correcting One Another with Humility and Gentleness
RA07 Judging Rightly and Not Falsely
RA08 Not Judging or Condemning Apart from a Beit Din
RA10 Rebuking and Exhorting with Patience and Instruction
RA11 Pursuing Justice
RA17 Not Committing Perjury
RA21 Judging Without Prejudice or Partiality

Supportive Tanakh Scriptures

Exodus 22:9-13

If a person trusts a neighbor to look after a donkey, ox, sheep or any animal, and it dies, is injured or is driven away unseen, then the neighbor's oath before ADONAI that he has not taken the goods will settle the matter between them- the owner is to accept it without the neighbor's making restitution. But if it was stolen from the neighbor, he must make restitution to the owner. If it was torn to pieces by an animal, the neighbor must bring it as evidence, and then he doesn't need to make good the loss. If someone borrows something from his neighbor, and it gets injured or dies with the owner not present, he must make restitution.

Deuteronomy 19:15-18

One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him. If a malicious witness comes forward and gives false testimony against someone, then both the men involved in the controversy are to stand before ADONAI, before the cohanim and the judges in office at the time. The judges are to investigate carefully. If they find that the witness is lying and has given false testimony against his brother, ..

Proverbs 19:11

People with good sense are slow to anger, and it is their glory to overlook an offense.

Micah 6:8

⁸ *Human being, you have already been told what is good, what ADONAI demands of you- no more than to act justly, love grace and walk in purity with your God. (Mic 6:8 CJB)*

Comment

This *Mitzvah* #D2 assumes that an offense (a sin) has been committed either by us against a brother believer, or against us by a brother believer. Matthew 5:23-24 speaks to the former and Matthew 18:15-17 speaks to the latter. If it is we who have committed the offense, our obligation is clear; we are to repent by going to our brother, confessing our sin, asking his forgiveness, making restitution where possible, and attempting to reconcile our relationship.

If it is our brother who has committed the offense, there is a step we must take before implementing the multi-step solution described in Matthew 18:15-17; it is to decide whether we should overlook the offense pursuant to Proverbs 19:11. That is because the offense, while sinful, may have been committed innocently, may be too trivial to pursue, or our relationship may be more likely to be left intact by our silently forgiving the offense and not pursuing our repentance from our brother in a formal way (Ephesians 4:2). We may, however, opt for correcting our brother in love pursuant to Galatians 6:1.

If we pursue an offense against our brother pursuant to Matthew 18:15-17, there are three steps that we must take. The first is to go to our brother, show him his fault, and seek reconciliation. If our brother repents then we must forgive him and lay the matter to rest. If he does not, we should again consider whether we should let the matter drop and, if we elect not to do so, Scripture instructs us to return to our brother with one or two others to be witnesses to our conversation and interaction. These witnesses will form their own view of who is right in the controversy and will try to persuade the wrongdoer to repent. Naturally, if it is we who are wrong, then we must repent to our brother. However, if the witnesses side with us and our brother will not listen to them and repent, there is a third step that we may pursue, which is to bring the matter to a *beit din* (ecclesiastical court) of a suitable congregation – hopefully the congregation that both our brother and we attend as members. If the *beit din* rules against our brother and he will not repent by complying with what the *beit din* requires of him, then Matthew 18:17 says that our brother is to be treated as we would a “pagan or a tax-collector,” which means an unbeliever.

For a more detailed discussion of the foregoing, we recommend reading “Disputes, Discipline, and Reconciliation in the Body of Believers” by Michael Rudolph, published by Tikkun International in 2002.

Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2

N04 Forgiving Our Neighbor

N05 Resolving Disputes, Correcting, Reconciling With, & Bringing Discipline to Brother Believers

N13 Repenting of Our Own Sin before Seeking to Correct Our Neighbor

N15 Pursuing Peace with Our Neighbor
N16 Nursing Anger Toward Our Neighbor