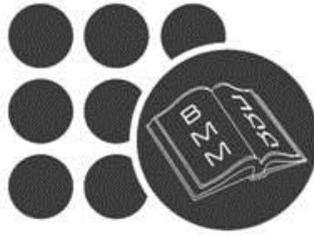


How Could Yaakov Kiss Rachel?

(And can I also kiss people I'm
not married to?) **Part 1**



Beit Midrash Morasha
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בית מדרש מורשה

Opening Quote: Oscar Wild

I can resist anything except temptation.

Source 1: Bereishit 29:10-11

And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob drew near and rolled the rock off the mouth of the well, and he watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב אֶת רַחֵל בֵּת לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ
וְאֵת צֹאן לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ וַיֵּגֶשׁ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּגְלֹל אֶת הָאֶבֶן
מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וַיִּשְׁקוּ אֶת צֹאן לָבָן אַחֵי אִמּוֹ:

And Jacob kissed Rachel, and he raised his voice and wept.

וַיִּשָׁק יַעֲקֹב לְרַחֵל וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת קוֹלוֹ וַיִּבְרֹךְ:

Source 2: Vayikra 18:6

No man shall come near to any of his close relatives, to uncover [their] nakedness. I am the Lord.

אִישׁ אִישׁ אֶל כָּל שְׂאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ לֹא תִקְרַב: לְגִלּוֹת
עֲרוּהָ אֲנִי ה'.

Source 3: Rambam Seifer HaMitzvot Negative Commandment #353

The 353rd prohibition is that we are forbidden from deriving pleasure from any forbidden partner, even without sexual relations, e.g. through kissing, hugging, and the like.

The source of this prohibition is G-d's statement, "To a close relative, do not approach to have forbidden sexual relations," as if to say, "do not come close to them in any type of closeness which could lead to sexual relations."

האזהרה שהזהרנו מלהתענג באחת מכל העריות ואפילו בלי ביאה, כגון החיבוק והנישוק וכיוצא בהן מפעולות שאדם נהנה בהן. והוא אמרו יתעלה באזהרה על זה: "איש איש אל כל שאר בשרו לא תקרבו לגלות ערווה" (שם, ו), כאילו אמר: לא תתקרבו אליהם קרבה המביאה לגלות ערווה.

Source 4: Ramban there

With investigation in the Talmud, the matter is not so that in coming close to a forbidden partner that has no actual sexual relations, like hugging and kissing, there is an actual Torah prohibition...

This prohibition is from the Rabbis, or is it from the Torah from the aspect of gaining pleasure for something forbidden, like a half *shuir*, but the verse is simply a support.

כפי העיון בתלמוד אין הדבר כן שיהיה בקריבה שאין בה גלוי ערוה כגון חבוק ונישוק לאו ומלקות... זה האיסור מדרבנן, או יהיה מן התורה דכל דמתהני מאיסורא איסורא הוא כענין בחצי שיעור, אבל קרא אסמכתא בעלמא.

Source 5: Wallace Stegner:

Touch. It is touch that is the deadliest enemy of chastity, loyalty, monogamy, gentility with its codes and conventions and restraints. By touch we are betrayed and betray others ... an accidental brushing of shoulders or touching of hands ... hands laid on shoulders in a gesture of comfort that lies like a thief, that takes, not gives, that wants, not offers, that awakes, not pacifies. When one flesh is waiting, there is electricity in the merest contact.

Source 6: Gemora Sotah 21b

What is the case of a "Pious Fool"? A woman is drowning in the river and he says: 'It is not appropriate to look at her and save her'.

היכי דמי חסיד שוטטה? כגון דקא טבעה איתתא בנהרא, ואמר: לאו אורח ארעא לאיסתכולי בה ואצולה.

Source 7: Shach Yoreh Deah 157:10

It is implied that even the Rambam is only saying that when hugging and kissing is done in a way of physical attraction, because we find in the Shach in many places that the Sages of the Gemora would hug and kiss their daughters and their sisters...

ומכל מקום משמע דאף הרמב"ם לא קאמר אל
כשעושה חיבוק ונישוק דרך חיבת ביאה שהרי
מצינו בש"ס בכמה דוכתי שהאמוראים היו מחבקים
ומנשקים לבנותיהם ואחיותיהם

Source 8: Rabbi Moshe Feinstein *Igrot Moshe* Even HaEzer 4:32

Extending a hand to a woman to greet her

In the matter of extending a hand to a woman as people do when they meet, certainly it is obvious that it is forbidden, as I have written in Orach Chaim 1:113, because you must be concerned for it being done in a way of physical attraction and enjoyment, but I have written in Even HaEzer 1:56 for someone who saw that there are even God-fearing Jews who are lenient in this that we should judge them favourably, that they only do this when she extends her hand to them, because then it isn't being done in a way of attraction, and also I wrote that practically it is hard to rely on this. And from what I wrote in Even HaEzer 2:14 I see no contradiction from the fact that I permitted a man to travel on the busses [even though his thigh would touch that of the woman next to him] because in that situation there is almost no chance of physical attraction.

הושטת יד לאשה לנתינת שלום

בדבר להושיט יד לאשה כדרך הנותנים שלום
בהפגשם ודאי הוא פשוט שאסור ככתבתי באו"ח
ח"א סימן קי"ג דהרי יש לו לחוש גם לדרך חבה
והנאה, אבל כתבתי בח"א דאה"ע סוף סימן נ"ו
לאחד שראה שיש גם יראי ה' שמקילין שיש לדון
לכף זכות דסומכין ליתן כשהיא מושיטה להם
שלא יעשה להו דרך חבה ותאוה, וגם שם כתבתי
דלמעשה קשה לסמוך ע"ז. ומה"ב אה"ע סימן י"ד
איני רואה שום כתירה ממש שהתירתי לילך
באוטובוסים (באסעס) דשם ליכא כמעט לכולהו ענין
חבה.

Source 9: Rabbi Yehonatan Chipman, *Yerushalayim* (online article: <http://goo.gl/L6zfhJ>)

I have also witnessed Rav Soloveitchik, ztz"l, shaking hands with girls and women. One case in point I specifically remember was high school graduation ceremony for the Maimonides School in Brookline, where I taught in 1974. The Rav was unquestionably one of the Torah giants of the last generation, as well as being renowned for his yirat shamayim and great care in halakhic matters. Thus, if he behaved in a certain manner, we must assume that his behavior was correct, and try to understand his reasoning... Unfortunately, I never heard the Rav speak explicitly about this specific subject; hence, I cannot state what his sources or reasoning were...

It was this approach that led the authors of the Yeshiva University Career Planning and Placement Handbook to advise their students that: "Shaking hands is a customary part of the interview process. All students halachically can shake hands since this is business protocol, regardless of the sex of the interviewer."

Source 10: Midrash Lekach Tov Bereishit 29:11

Rebbi Tanchum says that also a kiss of a relative (is not foolish) as it says
"And Yaakov kissed Rachel" because she was his relative.

ר' תנחום הוסיף אף נשיקות של קרובות,
וישק יעקב לרחל, שהיתה קרובתו

Source 11: Alexander McCall Smith

Mma Ramotswe sighed. 'We are all tempted, Mma. We are all tempted when it comes to cake.'

That is true,' said Mma Potokwane sadly. 'There are many temptations in this life, but cake is probably one of the biggest of them.'