



**Source 1: Vayikra/Leviticus 25:14, 17 and Rashi there**

And when you make a sale to your fellow Jew or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow Jew, you shall not wrong one another.

And you shall not wrong, one man his fellow Jew, and you shall fear your God, for I am the Lord, your God.

**And you shall not wrong, one man his fellow-Jew:** Here, Scripture is warning against wronging verbally, namely, that one must not provoke his fellow, nor may one offer advice to him that is unsound for him but according to the mode of life or the benefit of the advisor. And if you say, "Who can tell whether I had evil intentions." Therefore, it says, "and you shall fear your God."-The One Who knows all thoughts-He knows. Concerning anything held in the heart and known only to the one who bears this thought in his mind, it says "and you shall fear your God!"

וכי תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיִד עמיתך אל תונו איש את אחיו ולא תונו איש את עמיתו ויראת מאלקיך כי אני ה' אלקיכם

**ולא תונו איש את עמיתו:** כאן הזהיר על אונאת דברים, שלא יקניט איש את חברו לא ישיאנו עצה שאינה הוגנת לו לפי דרכו והנאתו של יועץ. ואם תאמר, מי יודע אם נתכוונתי לרעה, לכך נאמר ויראת מאלהיך, היודע מחשבות הוא יודע. כל דבר המסור ללב, שאין מכיר אלא מי שהמחשבה בלבו, נאמר בו ויראת מאלהיך

**Source 2: Rabbi Goldfein Wednesday Night Parsha Shiur Behar – 14/05/2003**

I want to tell you something – when we speak of a *lo ta'aseih* here, this is equal to any other type of *lo ta'aseih*. This would be the same thing as eating *treifos* or even *neveilos* or even *shkotzim* or *romosim*. There's no difference! The fact is, many of these are far more *chamur*, are far more serious. If a person had his choice, he would be far better off eating in a *treifa* restaurant.

**Source 3: Gemora Bava Metzia 58b**

Rebbi Yochanan said in the name of Rebbi Shimon ben Yochai: "Hurting with words is worse than hurting with money, because in this case it says "Fear God" and in this case it doesn't say "Fear God." "Rebbi Elazar says "This one is his body and this one is his money." Rebbi Shmuel Bar Nachmeini says "This one is able to be returned and this one is not able to be returned."

א"ר יוחנן משום ר"ש בן יוחאי גדול אונאת דברים מאונאת ממון שזה נאמר בו ויראת מאלהיך וזה לא נאמר בו ויראת מאלהיך ור' אלעזר אומר זה בגופו וזה בממונו רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר זה ניתן להישבון וזה לא ניתן להישבון

**Source 4: Vilna Gaon to Mishlei/Proverbs 18:8**

Harsh speech is more difficult for a person than hitting him, because a blow only hits the body, and this goes to the soul. Furthermore, a blow will heal, but speech may never heal.

הדיבור הרע קשה לאדם יותר מהכאה, כי ההכאה אינה אלא בגוף, וזה יורד גם לנפש. ועוד, שההכאה תתרפא, אבל דיבור לא יתרפא

**Source 5: Gemora Bava Metzia 59a**

Rova expounded: What is meant by the verse: (Tehillim/Psalms 35:15) "But in my adversity they rejoiced and gathered themselves together... they tore me and did not stop?" David exclaimed before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! You know full well that had they torn my flesh, my blood would not have poured forth to the earth. Moreover, when they are engaged in studying *Tzara'at* and "Tents" they jeer at me, saying, "David! What is the death penalty of him who seduces a married woman?" I reply to them, "He is executed by strangulation, yet has he a portion in the world to come. But he who publicly puts his neighbour to shame has no portion in the world to come."

דרש רבא: מאי דכתיב ובצלעי שמחו ונאספו... קרעו ולא דמו. אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שאם היו מקרעים בשרי לא היה דמי שותת לארץ. ולא עוד, אלא אפילו בשעה שעוסקין בנגעים ואהלות אומרים לי: דוד, הבא על אשת איש מיתתו במה? - ואני אומר להם: מיתתו בחנק, ויש לו חלק לעולם הבא, אבל המלבין את פני חבירו ברבים - אין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

Mar Zutra bar Tuvya said in Rav's name... Better had a man throw himself into a fiery furnace than publicly put his neighbour to shame. From where do we know it? — From Tamar. For it is written, (Bereishit/Genesis 38:25) "when she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law [etc]."

אמר רב זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב, ואמרי לה אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא, ואמרי לה אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחאי: נוח לו לאדם שיפיל עצמו לכבשן האש ואל ילבין פני חבירו ברבים. מנא לן - מתמר, דכתיב היא מוצאת והיא שלחה אל חמיה.

Rav said: One should always be heedful of wronging his wife, for since her tears are frequent she is quickly hurt. Rebbi Elazar said: Since the destruction of the Temple, the gates of prayer are locked, for it is

אמר רב: לעולם יהא אדם זהיר באונאת אשתו, שמתוך שדמעתה מצויה אונאתה קרובה. אמר רבי אלעזר: מיום שנחרב בית המקדש ננעלו שערי תפילה, שנאמר גם כי אזעק ואשוע שתם

written, (Eichah 3:8) "Also when I cry out, he shuts out my prayer." Yet though the gates of prayer are locked, the gates of tears are not, for it is written, (Tehillim 39:13) "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not remain silent to my tears."

תפילתי. ואף על פי ששערי תפילה ננעלו שיערי דמעו לא ננעלו, שנאמר שמעה תפילתי ה' ושועתי האזינה אל דמעתי אל תחרש

#### Source 6: Rambam, Mishneh Torah Hilchot De'ot 6:10

A person is obligated to show great care for orphans and widows because their spirits are very low and their feelings are depressed. This applies even if they are wealthy... as [implied by Exodus 22:21]: "Do not mistreat any widow or orphan."

How should one deal with them? One should only speak to them gently and treat them only with honour. One should not cause pain to their persons with [overbearing] work or aggravate their feelings with harsh words and [one should] show more consideration for their financial interests than for one's own. Anyone who vexes or angers them, hurts their feelings, oppresses them, or causes them financial loss transgresses this prohibition....

חייב אדם להזהר ביתומים ואלמנות מפני שנפשו שפלה למאד ורוחם נמוכה אע"פ שהן בעלי ממון אפילו אלמנות של מלך ויתומיו מוזהרים אנו עליהן שנאמר כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון והיאך נוהגין עמהן לא ידבר אליהם אלא רכות ולא ינהוג בהן אלא מנהג כבוד ולא יכאיב גופם בעבודה ולבם בדברים קשים ויחוס על ממונם יותר מממון עצמו כל המקניטן או מכעיסן או הכאיב להן או רדה בהן או אבד ממון הרי זה עובר בלא תעשה

#### Source 7: Rabbi Goldfein Wednesday Night Parsha Shiur Behar – 14/05/2003

I've said it a number of times, that I remember in Telz Yeshiva there was one time that the Yeshiva... brought in a new cook. And after a while there were a few in the Yeshiva that weren't too happy with what they thought was her lack of standard of Kashrut. They found a vleishik pot in the milchik kitchen, and a milchik pot in the vleishik side and things like that... They weren't too happy with a few things they saw. So they started to rumble a bit, and they wanted the Yeshiva should change cooks. And she was a widow. And they got a few other people to side with them, and they made certain representations to various Rosh Yeshivas, and they were gaining momentum. So first the Rosh Yeshivas said "Let's be patient, let's see." But no, they were gathering momentum. They came to Rav Gifter, and he threw them out. He threw them out. He said, "Are you asking me to give up my *cheilek* in *Olam HaBa* because of your considerations over a pot in the wrong place? To drive a widow out from her livelihood?" And he shouted out them "Get out of here!" and he threw them out of his office. He became so angry, he didn't want anything to do with it. He knew this... they didn't. They were *am ha'aratzim*, like unfortunately we have many such situations today. They'd never learned *Yoreh Deah*, they'd never learned *Choshen Mishpat*. Rav Gifter had. The degree that you're talking about with the wrong pot on the wrong side is like an anthill compared to Mount Everest to the *aveiros* that they were stepping on. HaKadosh Baruch Hu said "*veharagti etchem!*" their children will be orphans and their wives widows...

There are many more severities that the Gemora brings on *ona'at devarim* that we do not find by other *lavin*... The Torah was far more severe on this than so many other *lavin* in the Torah? This is the place to be *machmir*! People talking about other Mitzvot, we don't find these [sorts of statements] by matza and lulav and whatnot, *treifos* and so on! The Gedolim, the real Gedolim, are very very careful with this, because they know what they are dealing with.

#### Source 8: Rabbi Moshe Alshich to Vayikra 25:17

Regarding hurting with words the Torah says: "A man [*ish*] may not harm his nation." To say that in your eyes you are a man [i.e. an important person, as implied by the Hebrew *ish*]... not so the other party whom you are undermining; and so too it seems to you that you are more righteous than him, and fitting to call Hashem your God, but he is not, and you are making a mistake... If you are an *ish*, he is to Me your nation, an *ish* of your value... and "You shall revere your God" i.e. rather than relating to Him as **your** God alone, because I am Your God – his as yours. Because who knows who is greater before Him – you or him, or if both are equally great? Also, you think that you are injuring the honour of your friend, but it's not so – it is the honour of your God that you are injuring.

ולענין התכת התיבות יאמר אל תונו איש את עמיתו, לומר הלא בעיניך אתה איש שהוא חשוב ככל איש או אנשים שבמקרא, מה שאין כן שכנגדך שאתה נותן בו דופי ומביישו ומאנה אותו בדברים, וכן יראה לך כי צדיק אתה ממנו וראוי ליקרא ה' אלהיך מה שאין כן הוא והנך טועה. וזהו ולא תונו איש את עמיתו כו', כי על מה שאתה איש חשוב בעיניך הנה אצלי עמיתך וחברך איש כערכך. וזהו איש את עמיתו, כי אם איש חשוב אתה עמיתך דומה לך הוא זה. ואשר בעיניך שיותר תתייחס אתה ליקרא אני אלהיך, הנה ויראת מאלהיך כלומר מלייחס אותי לאלהיך. כי הלא אני ה' אלהיכם כמוך כמוהו. כי מי יודע איזה יכשר לפניו יתברך הזה או זה, ואם שניהם כאחד טובים... הלא באונאת דברים תחשוב כי בכבוד חברך אתה נוגע, ולא כן הוא כי הלא ויראת מאלהיך כי בכבוד אלהיך אתה נוגע.

#### Source 9: Rabbi Jonathan Sack: The Great Partnership – Religion, Science and the Search for Meaning page 296

There is a difference between righteousness and self-righteousness. The righteous are humble, the self-righteous are proud. The righteous understand doubt, the self-righteous only certainty. The righteous see the good in people, the self-righteous only the bad. The righteous leave you feeling enlarged, the self-righteous make you feel small. It is easy enough to befriend the former and avoid the latter.