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Means and Ends: Enemies and Friends

What kind of world do we live in? Aleph and Bet. Torah came to create a mensch. Free in fantasy, limited in reality. So Torah sets out a blueprint to perfect this world in the Commandments. I am the Lord, first commandment. Everything emanates from this. So today we will look at how the Torah views our interaction with enemies and the overall way we are to encounter enemies as we seek to fill in the fourth side in our quest for wholeness in this world. We will speak of our overall attitude towards the world, the attitude of love, Lev, and the way to achieve it by balancing love with discipline and restriction, for this is a world of bet and not aleph. This morning we will look at how the Torah approaches enemies, and strangers, and how the encounter also includes instruction about means and ends.

First, let us look at the principle of **Means and Ends**.

Mitzvah Haba'ah B'Aveira (Talmud- Sukkah : page 9.)

A stolen Sukkah is disqualified from use.

- A biblical story of Jacob, Esav and Rivka found in Parshat Toldot illustrates as well the disapproval of using illegitimate means to reach a justifiable goal. The end does not justify the means.
- Story of how Jacob seduced Esav with lentil soup to acquire the birth right. Was he justified? Jacob was a legitimate, righteous soul, and Esav only wanted the soup out of hunger; he did not care about the importance of being the first born. So was Jacob justified in redeeming the firstborn right?
- We see that Jacob himself had doubts about his behavior, that he knew he was wrong and hesitated to act with duplicity. He says, "Maybe my father will touch me and find out that I am lying." He wanted to desist from this behavior.
- But Rivkah had a dream (free in imagination and limited in reality - chofshi

b'dimuno, v'asur b'saichulo) that she had to follow: "The older will serve the younger." So she said to Jacob, the sin will be "on me." 'AWLAI...' Rav Zaks, suggests that the punishment for utilizing means that are incorrect are hinted at in the use of the word 'AWLAI' which suggests the suffering that ensued from Eisav, Lavan, and the loss of Yosef. Thus the Torah does not condone a mitzvah that emanates from an aveirah.

- A further biblical instruction on this is in the story of Abraham purchasing the field of Efron from the Hittites. Though Efron wanted to give him the field as a gift due to the stature of Abraham, Abraham refused and paid him for it publicly, to show the legality of the purchase and that it was done legally and ethically. He did not want anyone to cast aspersions on the purchase and suspect it was under duress. It was an assertion that all transactions must be done ethically and legally.
- Another example in Jewish Law is that you cannot take the land of Israel from others, you have to purchase it, as Yeshivot do in Israel. You cannot start a war in order to take it; only if attacked first, you are allowed to fight back and take it.
- Rav Moshe Feinstein, the great Posek (decisor of law) in our generation ruled that one is prohibited to take tzedaka (charity) with money earned illegally. Even though his Yeshiva was in dire straits financially, he disallowed accepting money that was earned illegally.

Various types of Enemies

Relationship to enemies and to Amalek and to strangers:

Enemies

- "...Return your enemy's lost ox; help your enemy if his load is too heavy and his donkey has fallen down." (Exodus 23:4-5)
- If your friend's donkey needs loading, and another friend's donkey needs unloading go to the latter first because of the suffering of the animal. However, if your friend's donkey needs unloading and your enemy's donkey needs loading, help your enemy first since you may turn your enemy into your friend due to your kind deed. Clear assertion of trying to heal rifts between people who have enmity with each other.
- Another example is found in Vayishlach, Genesis, 32:4-33:20. The story of how Jacob engages Esav after many years of separation. He anticipates that Esav will

be his enemy, and he is filled with fear. ("He was frightened, and he was distressed" 32:8). He prepares for war by first giving GIFTS (hoping to appease his enemy with kindness), then PRAYS to G-d for protection, for peace and avoidance of war, and then arms his people for BATTLE and to fight if necessary. (Another factor in battle is how we approach the environment: we don't cut down trees indiscriminately, (Deut. 20:19-20), we cover up the blood of corpses, and we clean up defecation (Deut. 23:13-15).

Amalek:

- Exodus 8-16, Deuteronomy 25:17-19. Ex 17: verse 16. 'Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the Lord, The Lord will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation.' Me dor dor. (They attacked you from the rear against your elderly and the weak after you had just experienced miracles and were hot with faith and they cooled you off and said we are not afraid of your G-d); when evil is prevalent in the world faith in G-d is lost. So Amalek represents the destruction of faith, the entry of doubt into the world and thus must be fought against in every generation.
Amalek = safek. = 240.
- Deut. 25:17-19. "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way (korcha) when you came out of Egypt. He cooled you off (kar) when you were hot with faith." Amalek had no fear of G-d. "...You shall blot out the name of Amalek from under the heaven, do not forget."
- What was the origin of Amalek? Genesis 36: 9-13; "...He was the grandson of Esav, the son of Timnah and Eliphaz. She bore Amalek to Eliphaz the son of Esav."
- Who was Timnah? A convert turned away by Jacob and accepted by Esav. The seed of the wound of rejection became the hatred of Israelites. (Esav reconciles with Jacob at the funeral of Isaac.)

Strangers

- How do we encounter the stranger? Bava Metzia 59B; 'It has been taught: R. Eliezer the Great said: Why did the Torah warn against the wrongdoing of a stranger in 36 or as others say, in 46 places? Because he has a strong inclination

to mistreat the stranger and so it needs to be repeated over and over again.' What is not clear from the grammar is, who has the strong inclination to evil? Is it the stranger who may relapse as some commentators say? Or perhaps the Israelites who have a strong inclination to mistreat the stranger and so it needs to be repeated over and over again. So why does the Torah repeat this so many times? Precisely because it is so difficult to do and it seems to go against our natural inclination. Fear, which leads to anger, feeling harmed which leads to revenge; forgiveness is the most difficult virtue; (Illustrate the story of Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur. Exodus 31:2.)

- So the Torah still commands us not to oppress the stranger, for we were strangers in Egypt and know what it feels like to be the other, singled out and hated. Exodus, 22:20 - We are commanded to treat the stranger and the native born equally. We know very deeply the heart of the stranger. We are both human, both created in the image of G-d so we must fight against the hatred in our heart as G-d once fought the greatest ruler and the strongest empire in the ancient world on our behalf. We were made into the world's archetypal strangers so that we would fight for the rights of strangers - our own and those of others wherever they are, whoever they are, whatever the color of their skin, whatever their culture because though they are not in our image, they are nevertheless in G-d's image. So that is the answer, we must love the stranger because we are created B'tzelem Elokim, in G-d's image.