

### Leviticus 19: 9-15

ובקצרכם את קציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שדה לקצר ולקט קצירך לא תלקט:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

וכרמך לא תעולל ופרט כרמך לא תלקט לעני ולגר מעוב אתם אני יהוה אלהיכם:

You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the ETERNAL am your God.

לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בשם עימתו:

You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another.

ולא תשבועו בשמי לשקר וחללת את שם אלהיך אני יהוה:

You shall not swear falsely by My name, profaning the name of your God: I am the ETERNAL.

לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגדל לא תלין פועל שכיר אתך עד בקר:

You shall not defraud your fellow. You shall not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer shall not remain with you until morning.

לא תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תפון מכשל ונראת מאליהיך אני יהוה:

You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the ETERNAL.

לא תעשוק עול במשפט לא תשא פני דל ולא תהדר פני גדול בצדק תלין עמייתך:

You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kindred fairly.

### Pirkei Avot 2:5

He used to say: A brute is not sin-fearing, nor is an ignorant person pious; nor can a timid

person learn, nor can an impatient person teach; nor will someone who engages too much in business become wise. In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.

You shall not. This is not a question, neither a riddle, nor a request. It is a command, an imperative. We are compelled to love those around us. To see to their wellbeing. To see the image of G-d in everyone and act accordingly. We are commanded to not let our blessings be a burden on the backs of the less fortunate. We cannot take from others what deprives them of dignity, nor blindly receive without acknowledging those on the periphery of society. It sounds comically simple: be kind. But this requires a fierceness of character, a brazenness of Malchut (kingship or divine presence) to look into a world where every manner of misdeed is available and to choose to not ignore the grievous injury of injustice. Resolving to act with the vigor of youth, fully planning to save the world, and tempering that passion with the wisdom of knowing that saving one person is saving the world entire. When we look at each other and see the divine and the human, the vulnerability with which we all exist, and the majesty with which every soul is endowed, we refuse to take the path of least resistance; casting off the wellbeing of our neighbors as though they should be granted in heaven or beyond the sea. We refuse to see our blessings as simply our due, exempting ourselves from all but our own immediate concerns. This is not a task for the half-hearted, it is a divine ordinance requiring an expansiveness of love and a willingness to check our apathy at the feet of the stranger.

### All of Us or None

Bertolt Brecht

Slave, who is it that shall free you?  
Those in deepest darkness lying.  
Comrade, only these can see you  
Only they can hear you crying.  
Comrade, only slaves can free you.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.  
One alone his lot can't better.  
Either gun or fetter.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

You who hunger, who shall feed you?  
If it's bread you would be carving,  
Come to us, we too are starving.  
Come to us and let us lead you.  
Only hungry men can feed you.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.  
One alone his lot can't better.  
Either gun or fetter.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Beaten man, who shall avenge you?  
You, on whom the blows are falling,  
Hear your wounded brothers calling.  
Weakness gives us strength to lend you.  
Come to us, we shall avenge you.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.  
One alone his lot can't better.  
Either gun or fetter.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?  
He who can no longer bear it.  
Counts the blows that arm his spirit.  
Taught the time by need and sorrow,  
Strikes today and not tomorrow.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.  
One alone his lot can't better.  
Either gun or fetter.  
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

### Thought Starters

Considering Brecht's supposition that common experience is central to solidarity, what can we draw from the Levitical text regarding the safe keeping of moral fortitude in the face of injustice?

Much is made of awareness, both in these texts and modern life. What role does awareness play in our pursuit of moral character and justice work?

Does the separation between experience and awareness require of us a greater vulnerability to the realities of human nature? Should we cultivate the primacy of intentional thought when dealing with matters of justice?



Spider's Web  
by Katie Melua

If a black man is racist, is it okay?  
If it's the white man's racism that made him that way  
Because the bully's the victim they say  
By some sense they're all the same

'Cause the line between wrong and right  
Is the width of a thread from a spider's web  
The piano keys are black and white  
But they sound like a million colors in your mind

I could tell you to go to war  
Or I could march for peace and fighting no more  
How do I know which is right  
And I hope he does when he sends you to fight

'Cause the line between wrong and right  
Is the width of a thread from a spider's web  
The piano keys are black and white  
But they sound like a million colors in your mind

Should we act on a play  
Or should we chase the moments away?  
Should we live? Should we give?  
Remember forever the guns and the feathers in time

'Cause the line between wrong and right  
Is the width of a thread from a spider's web  
The piano keys are black and white  
But they sound like a million colors in your mind  
The piano keys are black and white  
But they sound like a million colors in your mind