

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 273

NOT IN YOUR HEART

A Covenant Deep Dive into Leviticus 19:17 — *lo tisna et achikha bilvavekha (you shall not hate your brother in your heart)*, לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ, and *hokheach tokhiach (you shall surely reprove)*

Why Does the Covenant Forbid Hidden Hatred, Command Open Reproof, and Warn That Silence Makes Us Share Our Brother's Sin — and How Does the Covenant Believer Reprove Without Wounding and Receive Reproof Without Hating? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

✧ JUDAISM	✝ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Maimonides counts three commandments in Leviticus 19:17 : not to hate a brother in the heart, to reprove, and not to shame (Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive 205; Negative 302–303). The Talmud asks how far reproof must go and answers that it must be repeated — but records a sage who doubted anyone in his generation could still receive it (Arakhin 16b). The written verse comes first.	Jesus gave the verse a procedure: <i>“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone”,</i> then take <i>“one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established”</i> — a direct citation of Deuteronomy 19:15 (Matthew 18:15–16). John calls the one who hates his brother a murderer (1 John 3:15). The Tanakh is the source of both.	The Qur’an names the believers brothers and forbids mockery, suspicion, spying, and backbiting (Q. 49:10–12). The Prophet said, <i>“Do not hate one another... and it is not lawful for a Muslim to desert his brother for more than three nights”</i> (Sahih al-Bukhari 6076), and <i>“The religion is sincere counsel”</i> (Sahih Muslim 55). Both stand close to Leviticus 19:17–18 .

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to five questions about **Leviticus 19:17**: what the verse says word by word, what hidden hatred breeds, why the covenant commands open reproof, how reproof is to be given and received, and how the covenant believer keeps the command today. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אלהים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations and their English meanings appear together in ***bold italic***. Scripture references are bold. Verse numbers follow the English version; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Rabbinic literature, the Greek translation, the New Testament, and the Qur'an and hadith are cited as historical and comparative reference only. This is a covenant study, not counseling or legal advice; where reproof touches abuse, danger, or crime, the covenant believer should also seek the protection of qualified help and lawful authority where he lives. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The governing command and its chapter; Cain, Esau, Joseph's brothers; Abraham and Jacob reproving; Jethro and Moses; the witness who stays silent; the law of the man who hated beforehand; confession and restitution
Nevi'im (Prophets)	1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zechariah	Eli's silence; Abigail and Nathan; Absalom and Amnon; the reprover hated in the gate; the watchman; evil devised in the heart; David and Saul; the betrayal of Ahithophel
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Nehemiah	Open rebuke and hidden love; the wise reprover and the scoffer; covering and repeating a matter; Yahweh's own reproof; the friend who betrays; the offended brother; Nehemiah examines his heart and then speaks

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Ancient translations	Septuagint (Greek), Leviticus 19:17; Targum Onkelos, Leviticus 19:17	How the closing clause " <i>you shall not bear sin because of him</i> " was read before the common era and in Aramaic
Rabbinic literature	Talmud Arakhin 16b; Yevamot 65b; Bava Metzia 58b; Shabbat 54b; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Character (De'ot) 6:5–9; Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive 205, Negative 302–303	How far reproof goes, when silence is better, the ban on public shaming, and the counting of the verse's commandments
New Testament	Matthew 5:23–24; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3–4; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:26; James 5:19–20; 1 John 2:9–11; 3:15	Reproof, reconciliation, and hatred of a brother in Christian scripture

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 3:104, 110; 9:71; 16:125; 49:10–12; 103:3; Sahih Muslim 49, 55, 2564; Sahih al-Bukhari 6065, 6076	Brotherhood, enjoining right and forbidding wrong, sincere counsel, and the limit on estrangement
Modern practice	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Council of Ministers decision on the religious police (April 2016); documented shunning practices in some Christian communities	How the command to correct has been turned into force or exclusion

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — ONE VERSE, THREE CLAUSES

I-A. The Question as It Is Asked

Leviticus 19:17 is a single short sentence in Hebrew. It is one of the most practical verses in the Torah and one of the least practiced. Nearly every broken marriage, divided family, split assembly, and lost friendship passes through it. The question has five parts:

First: what does the verse say, word by word — and what does “*you shall not bear sin because of him*” mean?

Second: why does the Torah forbid hatred “*in your heart*” — and what does hidden hatred breed when it is left there?

Third: why is open reproof commanded as the remedy, and does silence make a man share his brother’s sin?

Fourth: how is reproof to be given — and how is it to be received?

Fifth: how does a covenant believer keep the verse today — in marriage, friendship, work, the assembly, and the public square?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 236** (*Let There Be Light*) examined the power of the spoken word and the talebearing of **Leviticus 19:16**. **Doc 245** (*The Voice of Your Brother’s Blood*) examined bloodguilt from Cain onward. **Doc 249** (*Little by Little*) examined how to teach without overloading or offending. **Doc 264** (*As the Sin of Divination*) examined how rebellion ruins marriages and friendships. **Doc 269** (*You Shall Rise Before the Gray Head*) studied **Leviticus 19:32** from the same chapter. The May 2026 listing *The 613 Laws of the Tanakh* draws

three of its laws from this verse. The present document gives **Leviticus 19:17** its own full treatment and refines two lines of the earlier listing (Section XII).

I-B. The Verse in Its Chapter

Leviticus 19 opens with the charge that governs every line after it:

“You shall be holy, for I, Yahweh your Elohim, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2)

Verses 16 through 18 form one unit about the tongue and the heart toward a neighbor. Each verse ends with the signature of **Yahweh** or leads into it:

VERSE	WHAT IT FORBIDS OR COMMANDS	WHAT IT GUARDS AGAINST
19:16	Do not go about as a talebearer; do not stand against the blood of your neighbor	Speaking <i>about</i> a neighbor instead of <i>to</i> him; silence when his life is in danger
19:17	Do not hate your brother in your heart; surely reprove your fellow; do not bear sin because of him	Hidden hatred; silence that shares guilt
19:18	Do not take vengeance; do not keep a grudge; love your neighbor as yourself	Hatred acted out; hatred stored up

The order matters. Verse 16 closes the road of gossip. Verse 18 closes the road of revenge. Verse 17 stands between them and opens the one road left: **go to the man himself and speak**. The command to love the neighbor (**19:18**) is the most quoted line of the chapter; **19:17** is how that love is kept when a neighbor has done wrong.

Finding — **Leviticus 19:16–18** is one unit: it forbids talebearing, hidden hatred, vengeance, and the grudge, and it places open reproof between them as the covenant’s remedy. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 19:16, 17, 18**; the same pairing of hidden hatred and open speech in **Proverbs 26:24–26** and **27:5**).

II. THE TEXT — LEVITICUS 19:17 PHRASE BY PHRASE

The Hebrew text:

לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֶטְאִ

The verse in a literal working translation:

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely reprove your fellow, and you shall not bear sin because of him” (Leviticus 19:17)

The verse has three clauses: a prohibition on the heart (“*you shall not hate*”), a command to the mouth (“*you shall surely reprove*”), and a warning about the consequence of disobeying either (“*you shall not bear sin*”).

II-A. “You Shall Not Hate Your Brother”

The verb is *sane* (*to hate*), שָׂנֵא, H8130. It is the ordinary Hebrew word for hatred — the opposite of *ahav* (*to love*), אָהַב, H157, which follows in the next verse. The object is *achikha* (*your brother*), from *ach* (*brother*), אָח, H251. The Torah could have said “*your enemy*” or “*the wicked*.” It says “*your brother*” — the one closest to you, the one with whom the bond is supposed to be strongest. The first hatred recorded in the Tanakh was between brothers (**Genesis 4:8**), and the Torah names the danger where it most often begins.

II-B. “In Your Heart”

The word is *bilvavekha* (*in your heart*), בִּלְבָבְךָ, from *levav* (*heart*), לֵב, H3824 — the seat of thought, will, and intention. The verse does not forbid every feeling of anger. It forbids hatred that is kept inside, hidden behind a calm face. Three witnesses describe exactly this:

“He who hates disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within him; when he speaks graciously, do not believe him... though his hatred is covered with deception, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly” (Proverbs 26:24–26)

“He who hides hatred has lying lips” (Proverbs 10:18)

“Let none of you devise evil in your heart against his neighbor... for all these are things that I hate, says Yahweh” (Zechariah 8:17)

Zechariah uses the same picture as **Leviticus 19:17** — evil kept “*in your heart*” against a neighbor — and says **Yahweh** hates it. The psalmist describes the man who may dwell on **Yahweh**’s holy hill as one who “*speaks truth in his heart*” and “*does not take up a reproach against his neighbor*” (**Psalms 15:2–3**).

Finding — The verse forbids hatred that is concealed — kept in the heart while the face and lips say otherwise. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 19:17; Proverbs 10:18; 26:24–26; Zechariah 8:17; Psalms 15:2–3**).

II-C. “You Shall Surely Reprove”

The command is *bokbeach tokbiach* (*you shall surely reprove*), הוֹכִיחַ תּוֹכִיחַ. The verb is *yakach* (*to reprove / argue / set right*), יָכַח, H3198, doubled in the Hebrew emphatic form: an infinitive followed by the finite verb, as in “*you shall surely die*” (Genesis 2:17). The force is “*you must certainly do it.*”

The verb *yakach* (*to reprove / set right*) does not mean “to condemn.” It belongs to the language of the court and the open conversation. It means to lay out a case, to show what is right, to decide between two parties. Three uses show its range:

“Come now, and let us reason together (venivakhechah), says Yahweh: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18)

“And Abraham reproved (vehokhiach) Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech’s servants had seized” (Genesis 21:25)

“Set it here before my brothers and your brothers, that they may decide (veyokhichu) between us two” (Genesis 31:37)

In **Isaiah**, **Yahweh** uses the verb to invite Israel to come and reason with Him, and the reasoning ends in cleansing. In **Genesis 21**, Abraham uses it over a personal wrong — a stolen well — and the reproof ends in a covenant (Section IV). In **Genesis 31**, Jacob uses it to ask witnesses to judge between him and Laban. Reproving in the Tanakh is not an outburst. It is bringing a matter into the open so that it can be set right.

Finding — *Yakach (to reprove)* means to lay a matter open and set it right — between **Yahweh** and man, and between man and man — not to condemn or humiliate. **Corroborated** (Isaiah 1:18; Genesis 21:25; 31:37, 42).

The verse also shows that reproof covers wrongs done *to you*, not only sins against **Yahweh**. Abraham’s well was a personal loss. The verse itself opens with hatred toward “*your brother*” — the kind of hatred that grows from a wrong suffered. The remedy for that hatred is to tell the brother.

Finding — The reproof of **Leviticus 19:17** includes telling a brother how he has wronged you, not only correcting his sin against **Yahweh**. **Corroborated** (Genesis 21:25; 31:36–42; the setting of **Leviticus 19:17–18**).

II-D. “Your Fellow”

The object of reproof is *amitekha* (*your fellow*), from *amit* (*fellow / associate*), עִמִּית, H5997. It is a rare word, used almost entirely in **Leviticus** — for the neighbor one must not deceive (**Leviticus 6:2**

[Hebrew 5:21]; **19:11**), judge unfairly (19:15), injure (24:19), or wrong in buying and selling (25:14–17) — and once in **Zechariah 13:7**, where **Yahweh** calls His shepherd “*the man who is My fellow.*” The word names the person you live and deal with every day: the one beside you in the field, the market, and the court.

II-E. “And You Shall Not Bear Sin Because of Him”

The closing clause is *velo tissa alav chet* (and you shall not bear sin because of him), וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא חַטָּאת עָלָיו. The verb is *nasa* (to lift / carry / bear), נָשָׂא, H5375; the noun is *chet* (sin / guilt), חַטָּא, H2399. The clause has been read in three ways:

READING	WHAT IT MEANS	WHERE IT COMES FROM
1. Incur guilt yourself	If you do not reprove him, you will carry guilt on his account — for your silence, and for the hatred that grows in its place	The plain Hebrew idiom <i>nasa chet</i> (to bear sin); JPS 1985: “ <i>but incur no guilt because of him</i> ”
2. Do not lay sin on him	Reprove him, but do not load him with guilt beyond what he has done	A possible sense of <i>alav</i> (upon him); some modern translations
3. Do not shame him	Even while reprovng, do not embarrass him so that you sin against him	Rabbinic reading (Arakhin 16b; Sefer HaMitzvot, Negative 303)

Tanakh’s own use of the idiom settles which reading is primary. Wherever the Torah says a person “bears sin” or “bears his iniquity,” it means that *he himself* carries the guilt and its consequence:

“*They shall keep My charge, lest they bear sin for it and die*” (Leviticus 22:9)

“*Whoever curses his Elohim shall bear his sin*” (Leviticus 24:15)

“*That man shall bear his sin*” (Numbers 9:13)

The closest parallel is the law of the silent witness, five chapters earlier:

“*If a person sins in that he bears the voice of an oath, and he is a witness, whether he has seen or known — if he does not tell it, then he shall bear his iniquity*” (Leviticus 5:1)

The phrase is *venasa avono* (and he shall bear his iniquity), וְנָשָׂא עֲוֹנוֹ. The man who knows and stays silent carries guilt. **Leviticus 19:17** applies the same principle to the brother who has done wrong: the one who sees and says nothing does not stay innocent. The ancient Greek translation reads the clause the same way: “*and you shall not take sin on account of him.*”

Finding — “*You shall not bear sin because of him*” means first of all that silence and hidden hatred make a man share in guilt. **Corroborated** (Leviticus 5:1; 22:9; 24:15; Numbers 9:13; and the watchman of Ezekiel 3:18–21 and 33:7–9, Section V). That the clause by itself forbids shaming is **Not in the text** as its plain meaning; the manner of reproof is taught elsewhere and is **Corroborated** on its own witnesses (Section VI).

II-F. Verse 18 Completes the Thought

“*You shall not take vengeance, nor keep a grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh*” (Leviticus 19:18)

Two more verbs close the doors that 19:17 leaves open. *Naqam (to avenge)*, נָקַם, H5358, is hatred acted out. *Natar (to keep / guard a grudge)*, נָטַר, H5201, is hatred stored up — the word used of a vineyard keeper guarding his vines (Song of Songs 1:6). The grudge is a thing a man tends. **Leviticus 19:17–18** forbids hatred in all three of its forms — hidden, stored, and acted out — and sets in their place one road (speak to him) and one destination (love him as yourself).

II-G. The Word Study

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>sane (to hate)</i> שָׂנֵא	H8130	To hate; the opposite of love	Leviticus 19:17; Deuteronomy 19:11; Genesis 37:4
<i>sinah (hatred)</i> שִׁנְאָה	H8135	Hatred as a settled state	Proverbs 10:12, 18; 26:26
<i>ach (brother)</i> אָח	H251	Brother; kinsman; covenant brother	Leviticus 19:17; Genesis 4:8; Psalms 133:1
<i>levav (heart)</i> לֵבָב	H3824	Heart; inner thought and will	Leviticus 19:17; Zechariah 8:17; Psalms 15:2
<i>yakach (to reprove)</i> יָכַח	H3198	To reprove, reason, decide, set right	Leviticus 19:17; Isaiah 1:18; Genesis 21:25
<i>tokhachat (reproof)</i> תּוֹכַחַת	H8433	Reproof, correction, argument	Proverbs 27:5; 12:1; 29:1
<i>mokhiach (reprover)</i> מוֹכִיחַ	H3198	One who reproves; an arbiter	Proverbs 25:12; Amos 5:10; Job 9:33

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>amit</i> (fellow) עִמִּית	H5997	Fellow, associate, neighbor	Leviticus 19:17; 25:14; Zechariah 13:7
<i>nasa</i> (to bear) נָשָׂא	H5375	To lift, carry, bear (guilt)	Leviticus 5:1; 19:17; 24:15
<i>chet</i> (sin / guilt) חֵטָא	H2399	Sin and the guilt it carries	Leviticus 19:17; 22:9; Numbers 9:13
<i>naqam</i> (to avenge) נָקַם	H5358	To take vengeance	Leviticus 19:18
<i>natar</i> (to keep a grudge) נָטַר	H5201	To guard, keep; to hold anger	Leviticus 19:18; Psalms 103:9
<i>satam</i> (to bear animosity) שָׂטַם	H7852	To hold a grudge, cherish animosity	Genesis 27:41; 50:15
<i>kasah</i> (to cover) כָּסָה	H3680	To cover, conceal; to pass over	Proverbs 10:12; 17:9
<i>ahav</i> (to love) אָהַב	H157	To love	Leviticus 19:18, 34; Proverbs 9:8

III. WHAT HIDDEN HATRED BREEDS — FIVE WITNESSES

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, the danger the verse names is tested against the record of the Tanakh. Five witnesses show the same pattern: a grievance is held inside, the mouth goes silent or false, and the hatred ends in violence.

Witness One — Cain. When Cain's offering was not accepted,

“Cain was very angry, and his face fell” (Genesis 4:5).

Yahweh Himself went to him and spoke openly: *“Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin crouches at the door; its desire is for you, but you must rule over it”* (Genesis 4:6–7).

Yahweh modeled the reproof the Torah would later command — before the act, in private, with a warning and a way out. Cain did not answer **Yahweh**, and he did not speak openly with his brother.

“And it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him” (Genesis 4:8).

Witness Two — Esau. After the blessing was taken, *“Esau bore a grudge against Jacob... and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob”* (Genesis 27:41).

The verb is *satam* (to bear animosity), סַטַּם, and the plan was made *“in his heart”* — the very place **Leviticus 19:17** names. The household had to send Jacob away for twenty years (**Genesis 27:42–45**). When the brothers met again face to face, Esau ran, embraced him, and wept (**Genesis 33:4**). What hatred in the heart had held apart for twenty years, an open meeting ended in a morning.

Witness Three — Joseph’s brothers.

“They hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him” (Genesis 37:4).

The Hebrew is *lo yakhlū dabro leshalom* (they could not speak to him for peace), לֹא יִכְלוּ דַבְּרוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. They *“hated him yet more”* (37:5, 8).

Hatred that could not speak became a plot, a pit, and a sale into slavery (37:18–28). Years later the story turns on the same verb in reverse: after Joseph made himself known and wept over them, *“after that his brothers spoke with him”* (**Genesis 45:15**). The family was healed when the speaking began.

Witness Four — Absalom and Amnon. After Amnon violated Tamar,

“Absalom spoke to Amnon neither bad nor good, for Absalom hated Amnon” (2 Samuel 13:22).

The Hebrew is *velo diber Avshalom im Amnon lemera ve’ad tov*, וְלֹא־דִבֶּר אַבְשָׁלוֹם עִם־אֲמֹנֹן, לְמִרְעָ וְעַד־טוֹב — he said nothing at all. He waited *“two full years”* (13:23) and then had Amnon killed at a feast (13:28–29). The killing led to Absalom’s exile, his return, his rebellion, and his death (2 Samuel 14–18). This is **Leviticus 19:17** broken exactly as written: hatred in the heart, no word spoken, and blood at the end.

Witness Five — the law of the cities of refuge. The Torah writes the difference between hidden hatred and accident into its law of homicide. The manslayer may flee to a city of refuge if he killed *“without knowing, and did not hate him beforehand”* (Deuteronomy 19:4, 6). But *“if a man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and rises against him and strikes him”*, the city may not shelter him (**Deuteronomy 19:11–12**). In the court of the covenant, hatred held beforehand is evidence.

Finding — Hatred held in the heart without open speech leads to deception, estrangement, and violence. **Corroborated** (Genesis 4:5–8; 27:41; 37:4–28; 2 Samuel 13:22–29; Deuteronomy 19:4–12). In each restored case, the healing began with open speech (Genesis 33:4; 45:15).

IV. OPEN REPROOF — FIVE WITNESSES OF WHAT IT SAVES

The Tanakh does not only warn against hidden hatred. It records men and women who spoke, and what their speaking saved.

Witness One — Abraham and Abimelech: reproof that ends in covenant.

“And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech’s servants had seized” (Genesis 21:25).

Abimelech’s answer is a lesson in itself: *“I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today”* (Genesis 21:26).

Had Abraham held the grievance in silence, Abimelech could never have repaired it. Because he spoke, the two men cut a covenant at the well and named it Beersheba (Genesis 21:27–32).

Witness Two — Jacob and Laban: reproof before witnesses. After twenty years of cheated wages, Jacob laid his whole case before Laban in the presence of their kinsmen:

“What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?... Set it here before my brothers and your brothers, that they may decide between us two” (Genesis 31:36–37).

He named what was done to him plainly (31:38–42). The quarrel ended not in bloodshed but in a heap of stones, a covenant meal, and a boundary both men swore to keep (Genesis 31:44–54).

Witness Three — Jethro and Moses: reproof received. When Jethro saw Moses judging the people alone from morning to evening, he said,

“The thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear yourself out” (Exodus 18:17–18).

Jethro spoke to Moses directly, gave the reason, and offered a remedy.

“So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said” (Exodus 18:24).

The greatest prophet of Israel received reproof from a Midianite priest, and the nation was better judged for it.

Witness Four — Abigail and David: reproof that prevented bloodguilt. David was on his way to kill every male in Nabal's house. Abigail met him on the road, bowed, and reasoned with him: when **Yahweh** has made him ruler,

“this shall be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, that you have shed blood without cause” (1 Samuel 25:31).

David answered, *“Blessed be Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from coming to bloodguilt”* (1 Samuel 25:32–33).

Her reproof did not shame the king. It kept him from sin.

Witness Five — Nathan and David: reproof that brought repentance. After Bathsheba and Uriah, **Yahweh** sent Nathan to David (2 Samuel 12:1). Nathan came to the king himself, not to the people. He told a story that let David judge the wrong before he knew it was his own, and then said, *“You are the man”* (2 Samuel 12:7). David answered, *“I have sinned against Yahweh”* (12:13). The reproof was private, truthful, wise in its manner, and plain in its conclusion. Psalm 51 is its fruit.

The wisdom books sum up what the narratives show:

“Open rebuke is better than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Proverbs 27:5–6)

The Hebrew sets the two side by side: *tokhachat megullah (open reproof)* against *ahavah mesuttaret (hidden love)*, טובה תוכחת מגילה מאהבה מסתרת. A love that never says the hard word is hidden; it helps no one. And the one who risks the hard word is not the loser in the end:

“He who reproves a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue” (Proverbs 28:23)

“Let the righteous strike me — it is kindness; let him reprove me — it is oil on my head; let my head not refuse it” (Psalms 141:5)

Finding — Open reproof, given rightly, restores relationships, makes covenants possible, prevents bloodguilt, and leads to repentance. **Corroborated** (Genesis 21:25–32; 31:36–54; Exodus 18:17–24; 1 Samuel 25:23–35; 2 Samuel 12:1–13; Proverbs 27:5–6; 28:23; Psalms 141:5).

V. SILENCE THAT SHARES THE GUILT

The closing clause of **Leviticus 19:17** warns that the silent one “*bears sin.*” The Tanakh gives this warning its sharpest form in the commission of the prophet Ezekiel:

“When I say to the wicked, You shall surely die, and you do not warn him... that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn... he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul” (Ezekiel 3:18–19)

Yahweh repeats the charge almost word for word in **Ezekiel 33:7–9**. Two points stand out. The one who warns is not responsible for the hearer’s response; he has “*delivered his soul.*” And the one who stays silent does not stay neutral; the blood is required at his hand. This is the watchman’s form of “*you shall not bear sin because of him.*”

V-A. Eli: Reproof Without Restraint

Eli did speak to his sons.

“Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all this people” (1 Samuel 2:23).

But he went no further, and **Yahweh**’s verdict was this: *“I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them”* (1 Samuel 3:13).

A father with authority who gives a weak word and then does nothing has not kept the command.

V-B. David: Anger Without a Word

When David heard what Amnon had done to Tamar, *“he was very angry”* (2 Samuel 13:21). The text records no word to Amnon and no justice for Tamar. Absalom’s silent hatred (Section III) grew in the space his father’s silence left. The king’s anger, held without speech or action, became the son’s hatred, held without speech until it struck.

Finding — Silence before a brother’s wrong is not neutral: the one who could speak and stays silent shares in the guilt, while the one who speaks has delivered his soul whatever the hearer does.

Corroborated (**Leviticus 5:1; 19:17; Ezekiel 3:18–21; 33:7–9; 1 Samuel 3:13; 2 Samuel 13:21–22**).

VI. THE MANNER OF REPROOF — WHAT THE TANAKH REQUIRES OF THE ONE WHO SPEAKS

The command to reprove is not a license to attack. The same Scriptures that command open reproof govern how it is given. Six principles stand on more than one witness each.

VI-A. Examine Your Own Heart First

When Nehemiah learned that the nobles were enslaving their poor brothers through debt, he was *“very angry.”* The next words are:

“And my heart consulted within me, and I rebuked the nobles” (Nehemiah 5:6–7).

The Hebrew is *vayimmalekh libbi alay* (*my heart took counsel within me*). He did not speak in the heat of the first moment. He weighed the matter in his own heart, then spoke openly. The psalmist prays the same order:

“Search me, O El, and know my heart... and see if there is any grievous way in me” (Psalms 139:23–24); and the prophet: *“Let us search and examine our ways”* (Lamentations 3:40).

VI-B. Go to Him, Not About Him

“Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not reveal the secret of another” (Proverbs 25:9)

The Hebrew is *rivkha riv et re’ekha* (*contend your contention with your neighbor*). The first conversation belongs to the one who did the wrong — not to friends, family, the assembly, or the public. This is why **Leviticus 19:16 (no talebearing)** stands immediately before **19:17**. Nathan went to David, not to the court (**2 Samuel 12:1**). Abraham went to Abimelech (**Genesis 21:25**).

VI-C. Establish the Facts

“He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (Proverbs 18:13)

“The first to plead his case seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him” (Proverbs 18:17)

Many reproofs go wrong because the reprover has only heard one side. Abimelech did not know what his servants had done (**Genesis 21:26**). The reprover asks before he accuses, and where the matter is serious, he lets two or three witnesses establish it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**).

VI-D. Speak Gently, Plainly, and at the Right Time

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1)

“By long patience a ruler is persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone” (Proverbs 25:15)

“As an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover to a listening ear” (Proverbs 25:12)

Gentleness is not vagueness. Nathan was gentle in his approach and plain in his verdict: *“You are the man.”* Abigail was humble in her posture and clear about the bloodguilt David was about to incur.

“A word spoken in its season, how good it is” (Proverbs 15:23).

VI-E. Know the Hearer — the Limit of the Scoffer

“Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser” (Proverbs 9:8–9)

This verse holds the three words of **Leviticus 19:17–18** together — *reprove*, *hate*, *love* — and adds a limit. Reproof is commanded, but it is not a duty to keep pressing a man who mocks every correction:

“Do not speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words” (Proverbs 23:9).

Moses was rejected the first time he reproved a Hebrew (*“Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?”*, **Exodus 2:13–14**). Jonathan’s first reproof of Saul was heard (**1 Samuel 19:4–6**); his second was answered with a spear (**1 Samuel 20:32–33**). When reproof has been given and refused, the reprover has delivered his soul (**Ezekiel 3:19**).

VI-F. Then Release — Cover or Speak, but Never Store

Proverbs seems at first to pull in two directions. It praises open rebuke (**27:5**), and it also says:

“He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends” (Proverbs 17:9)

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions” (Proverbs 10:12)

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Proverbs 19:11)

The two teachings fit together. *“Repeating a matter”* is telling it to others — the talebearing of **Leviticus 19:16**. *“Covering”* is refusing to spread it. And *“passing over”* a small offense is a real release, not a grudge in disguise. The Tanakh leaves a man two honest roads when he is wronged: let it

go truly, or speak to his brother. It leaves him no third road of storing it in the heart (Leviticus 19:17), keeping it (19:18), or spreading it (19:16). Joseph shows the end of the road. When his brothers feared that he was nursing a grudge —

“Perhaps Joseph will bear a grudge against us” (Genesis 50:15,

*the same verb **satam** as Esau’s) — he answered,*

“You meant evil against me, but Elohim meant it for good... do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones” (Genesis 50:20–21).

Finding — The reprover must examine himself first, go privately to the one who did wrong, establish the facts, speak gently and plainly, recognize when a scoffer will not hear, and afterward release the matter without grudge or gossip. Corroborated on every point (Nehemiah 5:6–7; Psalms 139:23–24; Proverbs 25:9; 18:13, 17; 15:1; 25:12, 15; 9:8–9; 23:9; 17:9; 19:11; Leviticus 19:16–18; Genesis 50:15–21). That a man must keep reproving a scoffer who refuses every word is Not in the text (Proverbs 9:8; 23:9).

VII. RECEIVING REPROOF — THE OTHER HALF OF THE COMMAND

A command to reprove assumes someone willing to be reproved. The Tanakh speaks to the hearer as plainly as to the speaker, and it uses the language of Leviticus 19:17 to do it — **hate** and **reproof** side by side:

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is brutish” (Proverbs 12:1)

“He who hates reproof will die” (Proverbs 15:10)

“He who is often reproved, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be broken, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1)

The prophets record what happens when a whole society turns against the reprover:

“They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks uprightly” (Amos 5:10);

They *“lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate” (Isaiah 29:21).*

And the gravest sign of judgment is when **Yahweh** removes the reprover altogether: He made Ezekiel mute

“so that you shall not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house” (Ezekiel 3:26);

And to Israel in Hosea’s day He said,

“Let no man contend, and let no man reprove” (Hosea 4:4).

A people that no longer hears reproof has lost one of Yahweh’s mercies.

VII-A. Yahweh Reproves Those He Loves

“My son, do not despise the discipline of Yahweh, nor loathe His reproof; for whom Yahweh loves He reproves, as a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3:11–12)

“Behold, happy is the man whom Eloah reproves; therefore do not despise the discipline of Shaddai” (Job 5:17)

Yahweh does not keep His displeasure hidden.

“These things you have done, and I kept silent; you thought that I was altogether like you. I will reprove you, and set it in order before your eyes” (Psalms 50:21).

The One who forbids hidden hatred does not practice it. He reproves openly, and His reproof is a sign of His love.

Finding — The covenant believer is commanded to receive reproof as well as to give it; hatred of reproof is folly that leads to ruin, and Yahweh’s own reproof is a mark of His love. Corroborated (Proverbs 3:11–12; 12:1; 15:10, 31–32; 29:1; Job 5:17; Psalms 50:21; 141:5; Amos 5:10).

VIII. WHEN YOU HAVE MADE AMENDS AND THEY STILL HATE YOU

VIII-A. The Question as It Is Asked

Sections IV through VII describe reproof that is heard and reconciliation that is reached. Not every story ends that way. A believer goes to the one he offended. He listens. He admits his wrong without excuse. He apologizes and tries to make it right. And the other person still hates him in his heart — and shows it in what he does: cold distance, slander, broken confidences, betrayal. He will not forgive. What then?

The answer begins with the verse itself. **Leviticus 19:17** governs your heart, not the other man’s. *“You shall not hate your brother in your heart”* remains your command even when your brother breaks it toward you. His refusal does not release you from the covenant, and it does not make you responsible for his choice.

VIII-B. First, Make Sure Your Part Is Truly Done

Before the question *“what then?”* comes the question *“what first?”* The Torah does not leave amends to feeling. It names three parts:

“When a man or a woman commits any sin that men commit, to act unfaithfully against Yahweh, and that person is guilty, then they shall confess their sin which they have done, and he shall restore his guilt in full, and add to it a fifth, and give it to him against whom he has done wrong” (Numbers 5:6–7)

The words are *vehitvaddu* (*and they shall confess*), וְהִתְוַדּוּ, from *yadah* (*to confess / acknowledge*), H3034, and *veheshiv* (*and he shall restore*), וְהָשִׁיב, from *shuv* (*to return*), H7725. The same law appears in **Leviticus 6:4–5** [Hebrew 5:23–24]: what was taken is returned in full, with a fifth added, *“in the day of his guilt”* — that is, promptly. Confession names the wrong. Restoration repairs the loss. The added fifth goes beyond the bare debt.

Jacob shows the third part: humility and patience. Returning to the brother he had wronged twenty years earlier, he sent gifts ahead and said,

“I will appease his face with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me” (Genesis 32:20 [Hebrew 32:21]).

Then he bowed to the ground seven times as he came near (**Genesis 33:3**). He did not demand acceptance. He said *“perhaps.”* **Proverbs** gives the same counsel to the man caught in his neighbor’s debt:

“Go, humble yourself, and press your plea with your neighbor” (Proverbs 6:3).

Four questions test whether a believer’s part is done:

First: Have I named what I did plainly, without *“but”* and without blaming him? (**Numbers 5:7; Psalms 32:5**)

Second: Have I restored what can be restored — money, property, reputation — and more? (**Leviticus 6:4–5**)

Third: Have I asked, not demanded, and given him time? (**Genesis 32:20**)

Fourth: Have I changed the conduct that caused the wrong? (**Proverbs 28:13**: *“He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy”*)

Finding — The covenant’s amends have three parts — honest confession, full restoration with more added, and humble patience — and the one who caused the wrong must complete them

before he asks what comes next. Corroborated (Numbers 5:6–7; Leviticus 6:4–5; Genesis 32:20; 33:3; Proverbs 6:3; 28:13).

VIII-C. The Tanakh Knows This Wound

A believer who is met with hatred after seeking peace is not alone, and the experience is not proof that he failed. The psalms name it exactly:

“Too long has my soul dwelt with him who hates peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war” (Psalms 120:6–7)

The Hebrew is *ani shalom vekhi adabber hemmah lammilchamah*, אֲנִי-שָׁלוֹם וְכִי אֲדַבֵּר הֵמָּה לְמִלְחָמָה — literally, *“I am peace; and when I speak, they are for war.”*

“In return for my love they are my adversaries, but I am prayer. They have repaid me evil for good, and hatred for my love” (Psalms 109:4–5)

When the wound comes from a friend, it is deeper:

“Even my own close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Psalms 41:9 [Hebrew 41:10])

“For it was not an enemy who reproached me — then I could bear it... but it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together... He has put forth his hand against those at peace with him; he has profaned his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart” (Psalms 55:12–14, 20–21 [Hebrew 55:13–15, 21–22])

“War was in his heart” is **Leviticus 19:17** broken from the other side: the smooth words and the hidden hatred that **Proverbs 26:24–26** warns of. **Proverbs** also explains why such a man is so hard to win back:

“A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a fortress” (Proverbs 18:19)

The Hebrew is *ach nifsha mikkiryat oz*, אָח נִפְשָׁע מִקְרִיַּת-עֹז. The word *nifsha* (*wronged / offended*) comes from *pasha* (*to transgress*), H6586 — the brother who has been sinned against. Tanakh does not pretend he will open his gates quickly. It says he is a fortress.

Finding — Being met with hatred, betrayal, and refusal after seeking peace is a known experience of the righteous in the Tanakh, not by itself evidence of failure; and an offended

brother can be harder to win than a fortified city. Corroborated (Psalms 120:6–7; 109:4–5; 41:9; 55:12–21; Proverbs 18:19).

VIII-D. What His Refusal Does — and Does Not — Mean

Your soul is delivered. **Yahweh** told Ezekiel that the one who warns has *“delivered your soul”* whether or not the hearer turns (Ezekiel 3:19, 21). The same is true of the one who has confessed and restored. You are answerable for what you did and for your amends. You are not answerable for his response.

“The soul who sins shall die... the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:20).

His unforgiveness becomes his burden. The verse that opened this study warns that hatred held in the heart makes a man “bear sin” (Leviticus 19:17). When the one you wronged refuses all amends and keeps hating, the command he is breaking is the same one you are keeping.

Forgiveness in the Tanakh has a human word and a divine word. When Joseph’s brothers asked him to forgive them, they said,

“Please lift the transgression of your brothers” — *sa na lefasha achekha*, שָׂא נָא לְפָשַׁע אַחֵיךָ (Genesis 50:17).

The verb is *nasa* (to lift / bear), the same verb as **Leviticus 19:17**. The other Hebrew word for forgive, *salach* (to pardon), סָלַח, H5545, is used in the Tanakh only with **Yahweh** as its subject (**Exodus 34:9; Numbers 14:19–20; Psalms 103:3; Jeremiah 31:34**). A man can lift a burden off his brother or refuse to. Only **Yahweh** pardons. If you have sought His pardon and done your amends, your standing before Him does not wait on your brother’s consent (Psalms 32:5; 51:17).

Three things are often confused. The Tanakh keeps them apart:

	WHAT IT IS	WHO IT DEPENDS ON	WITNESS
Release	Letting go of vengeance and the grudge; no hatred kept in the heart	You alone	Leviticus 19:17–18; Proverbs 19:11; Genesis 50:19–21
Reconciliation	Two people walking together again in peace	Both of you	Genesis 33:4; 45:15; Amos 3:3 (as illustration)

	WHAT IT IS	WHO IT DEPENDS ON	WITNESS
Trust	Confidence that the other will not harm you again	Shown by fruit over time	Genesis 42:15–16; 44:16–34; Proverbs 26:24–26

Joseph shows all three. He released his brothers in his heart — he wept over them before they knew him (**Genesis 42:24**). But he did not hand them his trust at the first meeting. He tested them — *“by this you shall be tested”* (**Genesis 42:15**) — until Judah offered himself as a slave in place of Benjamin, the very thing the brothers had refused to do for Joseph (**Genesis 44:33–34**). Only then did he make himself known (**Genesis 45:1**). Reconciliation followed the evidence of changed hearts.

Finding — A man can release a grudge without the other’s consent; reconciliation needs both; trust is rebuilt by fruit, not by words alone. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 19:17–18; Genesis 42:15–45:15; 50:17–21; Proverbs 26:24–26**). That the one who has done his amends remains guilty before Yahweh because the other refuses to forgive is Not in the text (Ezekiel 3:19; 18:20).

VIII-E. David and Saul: Peace Without Returning to Harm

The fullest Tanakh witness to this situation is David and Saul. David had done Saul no wrong; he had served him, played for him, and fought for him. Saul hated him anyway. Twice David had Saul in his power and spared him. The first time, he spoke to Saul openly — reproof in the pattern of **Leviticus 19:17** — and handed the matter to **Yahweh**:

“Yahweh judge between me and you, and Yahweh avenge me of you; but my hand shall not be upon you” (**1 Samuel 24:12** [Hebrew 24:13])

Saul wept and said, *“You are more righteous than I”* (**1 Samuel 24:17**).

Then he went on hunting David. The second time, Saul said,

“I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm” (**1 Samuel 26:21**).

The text continues: *“So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place”* (**26:25**).

David did not go back to Saul’s house. He said in his heart, *“I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul”*, and he moved out of reach (**1 Samuel 27:1**).

David kept every part of **Leviticus 19:17–18**. He did not hate Saul in his heart — when Saul died he lamented him (**2 Samuel 1:17–27**). He reproved him openly. He took no vengeance. But he did not

confuse refusing vengeance with walking back into danger. Words of regret from a man who has not changed are not the same as safety.

When David’s own counsellor Ahithophel betrayed him to Absalom (2 **Samuel 15:12**), David did two things. He prayed,

“O Yahweh, I pray, turn the counsel of Abithophel into foolishness” (15:31).

And he acted wisely, sending Hushai to counter that counsel (15:32–34). He did not seek Ahithophel’s life. The betrayer’s own counsel came to its end (2 **Samuel 17:23**).

Jacob and Laban reached the same kind of peace: a heap of stones, a covenant meal, and a boundary neither would cross to do harm —

“Yahweh watch between me and you when we are absent one from another” (Genesis 31:49, 52).

Even Jacob and Esau, once reconciled, lived in separate lands and met again to bury their father (Genesis 33:16–17; 35:29).

Finding — A believer who refuses vengeance may still keep distance and protect himself from one who keeps doing harm, and may make peace by boundary where trust is not possible. Corroborated (1 **Samuel 24:12–22; 26:21–25; 27:1; 2 Samuel 15:31–34; Genesis 31:44–53**).

VIII-F. What You Must Not Do

Do not repay.

“Do not say, I will do to him as he has done to me; I will repay the man according to his work” (Proverbs 24:29).

“Do not say, I will repay evil; wait for Yahweh, and He will save you” (Proverbs 20:22).

“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense” (Deuteronomy 32:35).

Do not rejoice when he falls. *“Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest Yahweh see it and it be evil in His eyes”* (Proverbs 24:17–18).

Do not answer his slander with yours. The talebearing forbidden in **Leviticus 19:16** is still forbidden when the other man is doing it first.

Do not let his hatred become yours.

“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil” (Psalms 37:8).

His refusal to keep **Leviticus 19:17** is the very moment you are tested in keeping it.

VIII-G. What You Can Still Do

Pray for him. *“In return for my love they are my adversaries, but I am prayer”* (Psalms 109:4).

When Israel rejected Samuel’s leadership, he said, *“Far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh in ceasing to pray for you”* (1 Samuel 12:23).

Yahweh restored Job’s fortunes *“when he prayed for his friends”* — the same friends who had wounded him with their words (Job 42:10).

Do good when the need arises. *“If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden... you shall surely help with him”* (Exodus 23:5).

“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat... for you will heap coals of fire on his head, and Yahweh will reward you” (Proverbs 25:21–22).

Guard your heart and your house. *“Make no friendship with an angry man... lest you learn his ways and get a snare for your soul”* (Proverbs 22:24–25).

“When he speaks graciously, do not believe him” (Proverbs 26:25).

When betrayal comes even from close companions, the prophet’s answer is: *“As for me, I will look to Yahweh; I will wait for the Elohim of my salvation; my Elohim will hear me”* (Micah 7:5–7).

Leave the door open. Do not close what Yahweh may yet open. Esau, who planned murder in his heart, ran to embrace Jacob twenty years later (Genesis 27:41; 33:4). Joseph’s brothers, who could not speak peaceably to him, ended by speaking with him (Genesis 37:4; 45:15).

“When a man’s ways please Yahweh, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).

Leave the judgment with Yahweh. *“Yahweh therefore be judge, and judge between me and you, and see, and plead my cause”* (1 Samuel 24:15).

“Cast your burden upon Yahweh, and He shall sustain you” (Psalms 55:22 [Hebrew 55:23]).

Where betrayal crosses into fraud, theft, violence, or false witness, the Torah sends the matter to judges and lawful courts, not to private revenge (Deuteronomy 16:18–20; 19:16–19). A believer who seeks lawful protection is not breaking Leviticus 19:18; he is using what the covenant itself provides.

Finding — When amends are refused and hatred continues, the covenant believer keeps his own heart free of hatred, refuses vengeance and gossip, prays for the one who hates him, does good when need arises, guards himself with wise boundaries, leaves the door open, and commits judgment to Yahweh and to lawful authority. Corroborated (Proverbs 24:17–18, 29; 20:22; 25:21–22; Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalms 109:4; 1 Samuel 12:23; Job 42:10; Exodus 23:5; Proverbs 22:24–25; Micah 7:5–7; Proverbs 16:7; 1 Samuel 24:15; Deuteronomy 16:18–20).

IX. IS ALL HATRED FORBIDDEN?

The Tanakh does not forbid every kind of hatred. It commands the hatred of evil:

“You who love Yahweh, hate evil” (Psalms 97:10)

“Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate” (Amos 5:15)

“The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Proverbs 8:13)

Proverbs names among the things Yahweh hates

“one who sows discord among brothers” (Proverbs 6:16–19).

And Ecclesiastes says there is *“a time to love, and a time to hate”* (Ecclesiastes 3:8).

What, then, does Leviticus 19:17 forbid?

It forbids hatred of a brother — a person — held in the heart. Hatred of evil is open; it is spoken in the gate, where Amos places it beside justice. Hidden hatred of a person is the opposite: it is silent, it grows, and it looks for its moment. The Torah draws the line in a single law about the enemy’s animals:

“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden... you shall surely help with him” (Exodus 23:4–5)

The Torah assumes that a man may have an enemy, and that someone may hate him. It does not let that hatred govern what he does.

“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat” (Proverbs 25:21);

“Do not say, I will repay evil; wait for Yahweh, and He will save you” (Proverbs 20:22).

Finding — Leviticus 19:17 forbids hidden hatred of a person, not the open hatred of evil the Tanakh commands. **Corroborated** (Psalms 97:10; Amos 5:15; Proverbs 8:13; Exodus 23:4–5; Proverbs 25:21). That the covenant forbids all hatred of every kind is **Not in the text**.

X. WHAT THE COMMAND MEANS TODAY FOR THE MODERN BELIEVER

X-A. The Modern Forms of Hidden Hatred

Hidden hatred did not end with Absalom. It has new names. The table sets each beside the Tanakh’s answer.

MODERN FORM	WHAT IT IS IN THE TEXT’S TERMS	THE COVENANT ANSWER
The silent treatment	Speaking “ <i>neither bad nor good</i> ” (2 Samuel 13:22)	Go and speak to him (Leviticus 19:17; Proverbs 25:9)
Venting to everyone but the person	Talebearing; “ <i>repeating a matter</i> ” (Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 17:9)	Argue your case with your neighbor himself (Proverbs 25:9)
The public call-out online	Revealing the matter before the private word was given	Private first; witnesses only if needed (Proverbs 25:9–10; Deuteronomy 19:15)
Quiet withdrawal from a friend, family, or assembly	Brothers who “ <i>could not speak peaceably</i> ” (Genesis 37:4)	Seek the face-to-face meeting (Genesis 33:4; 45:15)
Smiling while resenting	Hatred disguised with the lips (Proverbs 26:24–26)	Speak truth in the heart (Psalms 15:2)
Keeping a list of old wrongs	Keeping the grudge (Leviticus 19:18)	Pass over it truly, or speak it once (Proverbs 19:11)
Saying nothing when a brother is going wrong	Bearing sin because of him (Leviticus 19:17; Ezekiel 3:18)	Warn him, and deliver your soul (Ezekiel 3:19)

X-B. In Marriage and the Household

The household is where **Leviticus 19:17** is tested most often. A husband and wife who stop speaking about what hurts them begin to live like Absalom and Amnon under one roof: courteous on the surface, estranged underneath. The Tanakh calls a wife *ezer kenegdo* (*a helper corresponding to*

him) (Genesis 2:18) — one who stands face to face. Face to face is where reproof belongs. A spouse keeps the command by saying plainly and gently what is wrong, at a good time, and then letting it go. Parents keep it by correcting their children in time (Proverbs 13:24; 29:15) and by not repeating Eli’s weak word (1 Samuel 3:13). When a child or spouse reproves a parent or partner rightly, the one reproved keeps the command by receiving it, as Moses received Jethro (Exodus 18:24).

X-C. In Friendship and Work

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:6). A friend who never tells you the truth is not a friend in the Tanakh’s sense. In the workplace, Abraham’s well is the pattern: name the specific wrong to the person responsible, give him the chance to say ***“I did not know”***, and look for an agreement (Genesis 21:25–32). **Many disputes end the moment the wrong is spoken to the right person.**

X-D. In the Assembly

Elders and teachers are not exempt in either direction. They must reprove when the flock goes astray (Ezekiel 3:17; 34:4), and they must receive reproof as Moses and David did. An assembly where no one may question a leader has made itself like the people who ***“hate him who reproves in the gate”*** (Amos 5:10). An assembly where every grievance becomes a public accusation has forgotten Proverbs 25:9. Where a matter is serious and private reproof fails, it is established by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15) — never by rumor.

X-E. In the Public Square

Social media has made it easy to reprove a stranger in front of millions while never speaking to him at all. The Tanakh reverses the order: the private word first, the witnesses second, the public last and only when the matter requires it. The prophets did reprove kings and nations in public — Nathan, Elijah, Jeremiah, Amos — but they spoke **to** the one at fault, in his presence or by his name, not **about** him to an audience that could not answer. **The covenant believer who speaks to the public about public wrongs speaks as a witness, with facts, to the one responsible, and without hatred in his heart.**

X-F. A Covenant Believer’s Checklist

#	WHAT THE COMMAND ASKS	TEXT
I	Notice when anger toward a person is settling into hatred, and do not let it stay hidden	Leviticus 19:17; Genesis 4:6–7

#	WHAT THE COMMAND ASKS	TEXT
II	Search your own heart before you speak	Nehemiah 5:7; Psalms 139:23–24
III	Get the facts; hear both sides	Proverbs 18:13, 17; Genesis 21:26
IV	Go to the person himself, privately, before anyone else	Proverbs 25:9; Leviticus 19:16
V	Speak gently, plainly, and at a good time	Proverbs 15:1, 23; 2 Samuel 12:7
VI	If he will not hear and the matter is serious, bring two or three witnesses	Deuteronomy 19:15; Genesis 31:37
VII	If he mocks every word, stop; you have delivered your soul	Proverbs 9:8; Ezekiel 3:19
VIII	Then release it: no grudge, no revenge, no retelling	Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 17:9; 19:11
IX	When you are reproved, listen, weigh it, and thank the one who risked it	Psalms 141:5; Proverbs 12:1; Exodus 18:24

XI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION KEEPS LEVITICUS 19:17

The table sets the three traditions against Tanakh’s findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only.

ELEMENT	✧ JUDAISM	✚ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Hidden hatred	Counted as its own prohibition (Sefer HaMitzvot, Negative 302). Maimonides teaches that one who is wronged should not stay silent and hate, but should tell the other (De’ot 6:6).	<i>“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer”</i> (1 John 3:15); <i>“do not let the sun go down on your anger”</i> (Ephesians 4:26); reconcile with your brother before bringing your gift (Matthew 5:23–24).	<i>“Do not hate one another... it is not lawful for a Muslim to desert his brother for more than three nights”</i> (Sahih al-Bukhari 6065, 6076); a Muslim does not wrong, forsake, or despise his brother (Sahih Muslim 2564).

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	✝ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
The duty to reprove	Reproof is commanded and is to be repeated (Arakhin 16b; Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive 205). <i>“Whoever can protest the conduct of his household and does not is held responsible for his household”</i> (Shabbat 54b).	<i>“If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him”</i> (Luke 17:3). Matthew 18:15–17 sets a procedure: alone, then with witnesses, then before the assembly.	<i>“Let there be among you a community inviting to good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong”</i> (Q. 3:104). <i>“Whoever sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, with his tongue; if he cannot, with his heart”</i> (Sahih Muslim 49).
Manner and limit	Rebuke privately and gently (De’ot 6:7); shaming a person in public is <i>“like shedding blood”</i> (Bava Metzia 58b). <i>“Just as it is a duty to say what will be heeded, so it is a duty not to say what will not be heeded”</i> (Yevamot 65b, citing Proverbs 9:8).	<i>“Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself”</i> (Galatians 6:1); bringing back one who strays <i>“covers a multitude of sins”</i> (James 5:20).	<i>“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the way that is best”</i> (Q. 16:125); no mockery, no insulting names, no spying, no backbiting (Q. 49:11–12).
Covenant strength	Keeps the three clauses as law, demands privacy, and forbids public shaming — close to Proverbs 25:9 and 2 Samuel 12 .	Matthew 18 reads Leviticus 19:17 through Deuteronomy 19:15 — private reproof, then witnesses — the same order this study found in the Tanakh.	The three-night limit on estrangement and the call to <i>“make settlement between your brothers”</i> (Q. 49:10) guard against the grudge of Leviticus 19:18 .
Covenant departure	Reading <i>“do not bear sin because of him”</i> as a ban on shaming moves the verse’s warning from the silent one to the speaker; the plain idiom warns the silent (Section II-E). Maimonides permits public exposure in matters between a man and Heaven when private rebuke fails (De’ot 6:8), beyond what Proverbs 25:9 describes.	In some communities the final step of Matthew 18:17 has become formal shunning of family members — a practice that goes beyond the Tanakh’s pattern of reproof and leaves a brother with no road back (compare Genesis 33:4; 45:15).	The words <i>“with his hand”</i> have been used to justify religious police enforcing conduct by force; Saudi Arabia removed its religious police’s power of arrest in 2016. The Tanakh’s reproof is a word spoken to a brother, not coercion by a private enforcer.

XII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library’s own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else’s.

Correction 1 — the 613 Laws listing, law 33. The May 2026 listing *The 613 Laws of the Tanakh* gives law 33 as “*Not to put any Israelite to shame (Lev. 19:17).*” That reading of “*you shall not bear sin because of him*” comes from the rabbinic tradition (Arakhin 16b; Sefer HaMitzvot, Negative 303). The plain Hebrew idiom means that the silent one incurs guilt (Section II-E). Gentleness in reproof is a true covenant teaching, but it rests on **Proverbs 15:1, 25:9–15**, and the example of **2 Samuel 12**, not on this clause.

Suggested wording: “*Not to bear guilt on your brother’s account by keeping silent (Leviticus 19:17).*”

Correction 2 — the 613 Laws listing, law 36. The listing gives law 36 as “*To rebuke the sinner (Lev. 19:17).*” The verse says “*your fellow,*” and the command includes telling a brother how he has wronged you (**Genesis 21:25**; Section II-C), not only correcting sin against **Yahweh**. Suggested wording: “*To reprove your fellow openly, rather than hate him in your heart (Leviticus 19:17).*”

Confirmation — law 30. Law 30, “*Not to cherish hatred in one’s heart (Lev. 19:17),*” matches the text. No change is needed beyond giving the book name in full.

XIII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON LEVITICUS 19:17

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, each declaration rests on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	Yahweh forbids hatred of a brother held hidden in the heart behind a calm face or false words.	Leviticus 19:17; Proverbs 26:24–26; Zechariah 8:17
II	Hidden hatred leads to deception, estrangement, and bloodshed; open speech has healed what it divided.	Genesis 4:8; 27:41; 37:4; 2 Samuel 13:22; Genesis 33:4; 45:15
III	Open reproof is commanded as the remedy, and it includes telling a brother how he has wronged you.	Leviticus 19:17; Genesis 21:25; Proverbs 27:5
IV	The one who sees a brother’s wrong and stays silent bears guilt; the one who speaks has delivered his soul.	Leviticus 5:1; 19:17; Ezekiel 3:18–19; 33:7–9

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
V	Reproof is given privately, truthfully, gently, and after self-examination; it is not pressed on the scoffer.	Proverbs 25:9; 15:1; 9:8; Nehemiah 5:7; 2 Samuel 12:1–7
VI	Reproof is to be received as a kindness; Yahweh reproves those He loves.	Psalms 141:5; Proverbs 3:11–12; 12:1; Exodus 18:24
VII	After reproof comes release: no vengeance, no grudge, no retelling — only love of the neighbor as oneself.	Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 17:9; 19:11; Genesis 50:19–21

XIV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE BELIEVER WHO ASKS

Behind this verse there is usually a real name: a brother who wronged you years ago, a spouse you no longer speak to about what matters, a friend you quietly stopped calling, an elder whose error everyone notices and no one mentions — or a reproof someone gave you that you still resent. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: look into your heart. If there is a name there you cannot think of without hardness, the verse is speaking to you:

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart” (Leviticus 19:17).

Bring it before **Yahweh** first (Psalms 139:23–24).

Second: go and speak to him. Not about him, and not to everyone else — to him. ***“Argue your case with your neighbor himself”*** (Proverbs 25:9).

He may say what Abimelech said: ***“You did not tell me”*** (Genesis 21:26).

Third: speak the way Nathan and Abigail spoke — humbly, truthfully, gently, and plainly.

“A soft tongue breaks the bone” (Proverbs 25:15).

Fourth: when you are the one reproved, do not hate the reprover.

“Let the righteous strike me — it is kindness” (Psalms 141:5).

He has risked your friendship to keep his covenant with you.

Fifth: then let it go. ***“You shall not take vengeance, nor keep a grudge... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh”*** (Leviticus 19:18).

Open rebuke is better than hidden love (**Proverbs 27:5**) — and the end of open rebuke is not victory, but a brother restored.

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“You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely reprove your fellow, and you shall not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor keep a grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.”

Leviticus 19:17–18 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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