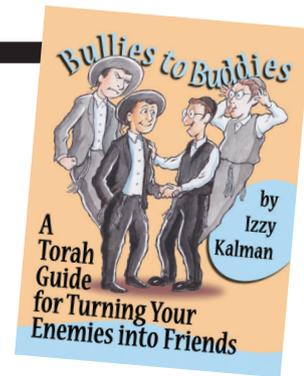

If you haven't yet bought Izzy Kalman's new book, Bullies to Buddies: A Torah Guide for Turning Your Enemies Into Friends, what are you waiting for? Every teacher and parent needs to have this book. I don't know of any family where some of the children don't have problems with friends, some of them serious enough that there are tears and pleading to stay home on school mornings. And I don't know of any family at all where the children always get along and nobody is ever mean to anybody else. I also don't know of any school where bullying isn't a problem; unfortunately, the typical government-mandated anti-bullying policies do not work. Izzy Kalman can help. Here's an excerpt from his introduction to the book. Please note. This book is written for children. - Rische Deitsch



The Torah On One Foot

Izzy Kalman

It would be really great if we had a rule that let us know the right way to treat people without having to think too hard about each situation. Fortunately our Torah has given us such a rule.

Rabbi Akiva taught us that *ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocho*, love your fellow as yourself, is the all-encompassing principle of the Torah. That means that all of the Torah involves loving other people just as we love ourselves.

Hillel is famous for teaching us another way of understanding how the Torah wants us to treat each other. A non-Jew came to the great Rabbi Shammai, wanting to become a Jew. He said, "Teach me the whole Torah while standing on one foot" (meaning very quickly). Shammai impatiently chased him away with a stick.

The same man then went to Hillel and asked him to teach him the whole Torah on one foot. Hillel said to him, "Don't do to others what you hate them doing to you. That is the whole Torah. All the rest is commentary."

It is obvious that if everyone lived by Akiva's and Hillel's principles, life would be wonderful. People wouldn't fight. Bullying wouldn't happen. But we have known the principles for thousands of years. So why doesn't everyone follow them by now?

It's because most of us don't really know what these principles come to teach us, which is why we often have trouble getting along.

Almost everyone thinks that these Torah teachings instruct us not be mean to anyone, and to always be nice. But isn't this obvious? Do we really need a Torah to tell us that we should be nice to people and not be mean?

Here's why we need these principles.

BULLIES TO BUDDIES

Of course it's important to be nice. Your parents and *mechanchim* are always teaching you to be nice. It is so easy to be nice to people when they are nice to us.

But people aren't always nice. Sometimes they are mean on purpose. But often they are mean and they don't even realize it. I bet that people have sometimes accused you of being mean to them and you were totally surprised. So what are we supposed to do when people aren't nice to us? What should we do when they bully us? That's the hard part—knowing what to do when people treat us badly.

Because we are always taught that it's good to be nice and bad to be mean, this is what happens when someone is mean to us. We think, “*How dare they treat me that way? They're supposed to be nice to me! I am always nice to everyone! How can they treat me so badly?*”

So we get angry with them.

We want revenge.

We want to get them punished.

So what the Torah teaches us is to love them like we love ourselves. It means we should be considerate and respectful to them because we want them to be considerate and respectful to us. We shouldn't be angry and mean back because we hate it when they are angry and mean to us.

You might think that it's crazy to be nice to people when they are mean to you. Won't you be a big loser? Won't people think you are a *nebbish* or a *naar* who can be easily taken advantage of, so they'll keep on being mean?

The answer is: Probably not. You will actually come out the winner. You will be in control. They will respect and like you more. And they will also win. Everyone wins when you live by *ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocho*.

This is how it works. When someone is nice to you, do you feel like being mean back, or nice?

Nice, of course.

And when someone is mean to you, do you feel like being nice back, or mean?

Mean.



Everyone is like that. When people are nice to us, we feel like being nice back. When they're mean to us, we feel like being mean back. Nobody taught this to us. It's our *nefesh habehamis* at work. It is programmed to treat others the way they treat us because that helps animals survive in the world of nature, in the jungle.

If we are animals in the jungle and you are nice to me, it means you are probably on my side. You are safe. I can be nice back to you and it will be good for both of us. It would be foolish for me to be mean to you because then I will turn you into an enemy and you might hurt me.

On the other hand, if you are mean to me in nature, you are probably looking to hurt me for some reason, maybe even to eat me for dinner. If I am not able to escape from you, I had better be really mean back to you or you are going to eat me and you won't even say a *brachah!*

But we aren't animals in the jungle. We are human beings in civilization. I don't have to be afraid of you because you aren't looking to eat me for dinner. No matter how angry you might be with me, you aren't going to try to injure me physically because you know I can call the police on you, and get you in big trouble.

If I listen to my *nefesh habehamis*, and I treat everyone the way they treat me, I will end up having a lot of enemies. Whenever people are mean to me, I will be mean back. Then they'll be mean again to me because I was mean to them. We'll probably go back and forth being mean and even meaner, and turn into enemies. We'll actually be pushing each other to become worse people.

So instead of listening to my *nefesh habehamis*, I will listen to my *nefesh haElohis*, my *neshamah*, which tells me to love you as I love myself. You know what will probably happen? Exactly what Hashem wants. It will create a win/win situation. It's because your *nefesh habehamis* is also programmed to treat me the way I

treat you. Since I am now being nice to you, after a while you are probably going to be nice back to me. Now we're friends instead of enemies!

Instead of pushing you to become a worse person, I'm actually helping you become a better person.

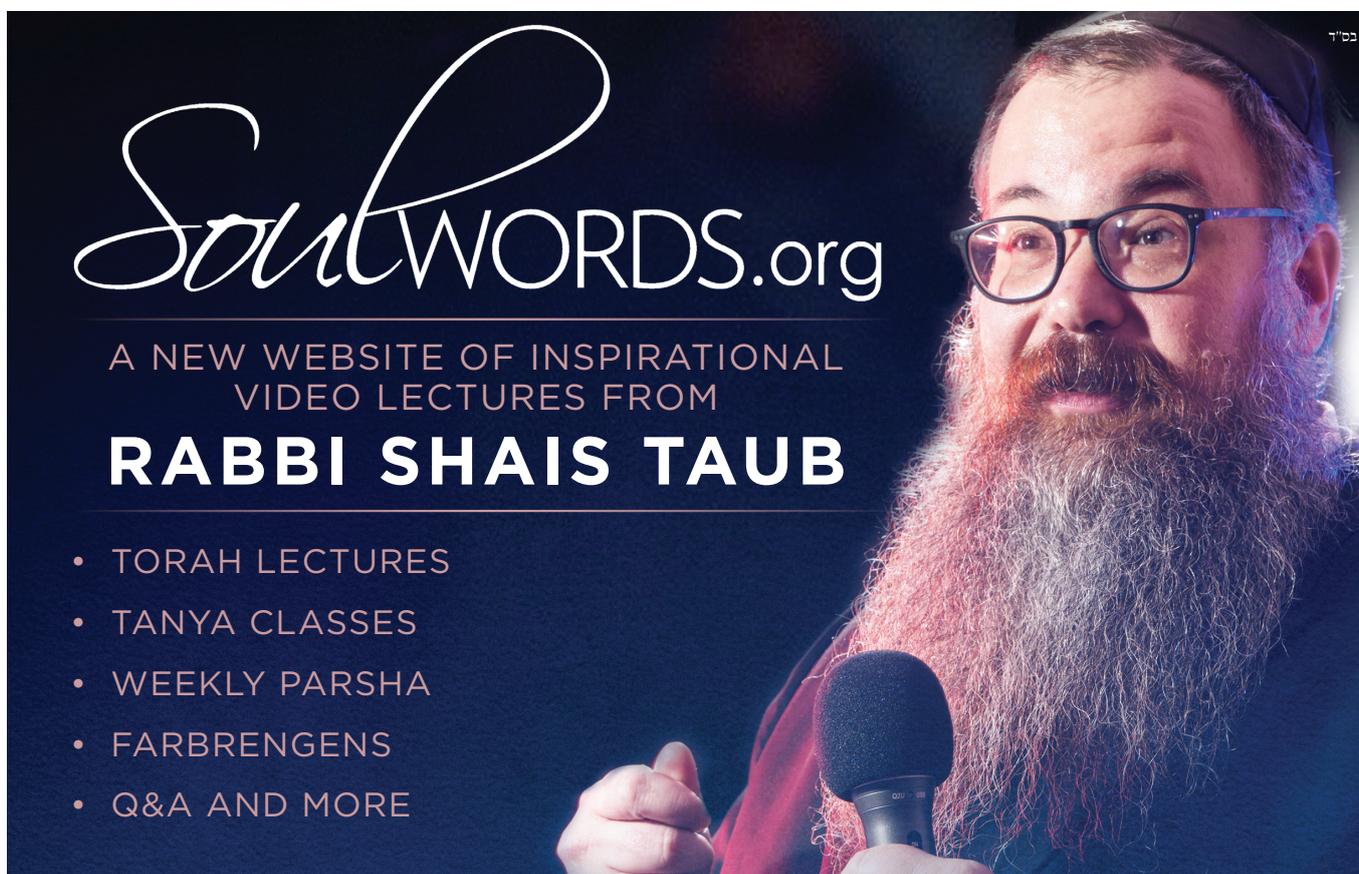
This idea is so wonderful that almost all religions in the world have adopted it, and even people who don't believe in Hashem follow it. In recent times it has been named The Golden Rule.

The more people understand and follow *ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocho*, the more good there will be in the world. Little by little, everyone will become better, and who knows? Maybe it will make the Moshiach come!

Throughout your life, if you are ever unsure about how to handle a problem with another person, ask: "Am I loving this person as myself?" or "Would I like it if they were doing to me what I am doing to them?" If the answer is yes, you will probably solve the problem. If the answer is no, you will probably get bad results and should change your strategy.

It is not always obvious how to use *ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocho*. This book should make it clearer for you....

Free review copies are available to publications wanting to review *Bullies to Buddies: A Torah Guide for Turning Your Enemies Into Friends*, or to heads of schools or organizations that might consider using it as a text for students. Suggest it to your child's school today!



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