People Pleaser



**#1**

**Pirkei Avos 3:13**

*He [Rabbi Chanina] used to say: Anyone who is pleasing to his fellows is pleasing to G-d. Anyone who is not pleasing to his fellows is not pleasing to G-d.*

**Questions:**

**Is being** *“****pleasing to his fellows”* a reason or an indication for being “*pleasing to G-d?”***

**#2**

**Talmud Shabbos 31a**

*Once there was a gentile who came before Shammai and said to him: "Convert me on the condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.” Shammai pushed him aside with the measuring stick he was holding. The same fellow came before Hillel, and Hillel converted him, saying: “That which is despicable to you, do not do to your fellow, this is the whole Torah, and the rest is commentary, go and learn it.”*

**Question: Our relationship toward our fellow man is certainly very important. But there are also many other important commandments that apparently have nothing to do with other people, like keeping kosher, Shabbat etc.. How could Hillel have dismissed these as mere commentary?**

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**#3**

**(a) Are you self-conscious?**

**(b) Why does a person care what others think of them?**

**(c) Should you care what others think of you?**

**(d) What motivation do people have when they are trying to please others?**

**(e) Your friend is asking you for a favor which you do not really want to do. You do it in any case. What motivates you to do so?**

**(f) Are “people pleasers” happy people?**

**(g) Are “people pleasers” liked forever, or can they only be well-liked by many people for a while?**

**#4**

**Shaarei Teshuva 3:60**

*It is forbidden to ask your friend to do you a favor if you know that he doesn't really want to.*

*Sophie K.*

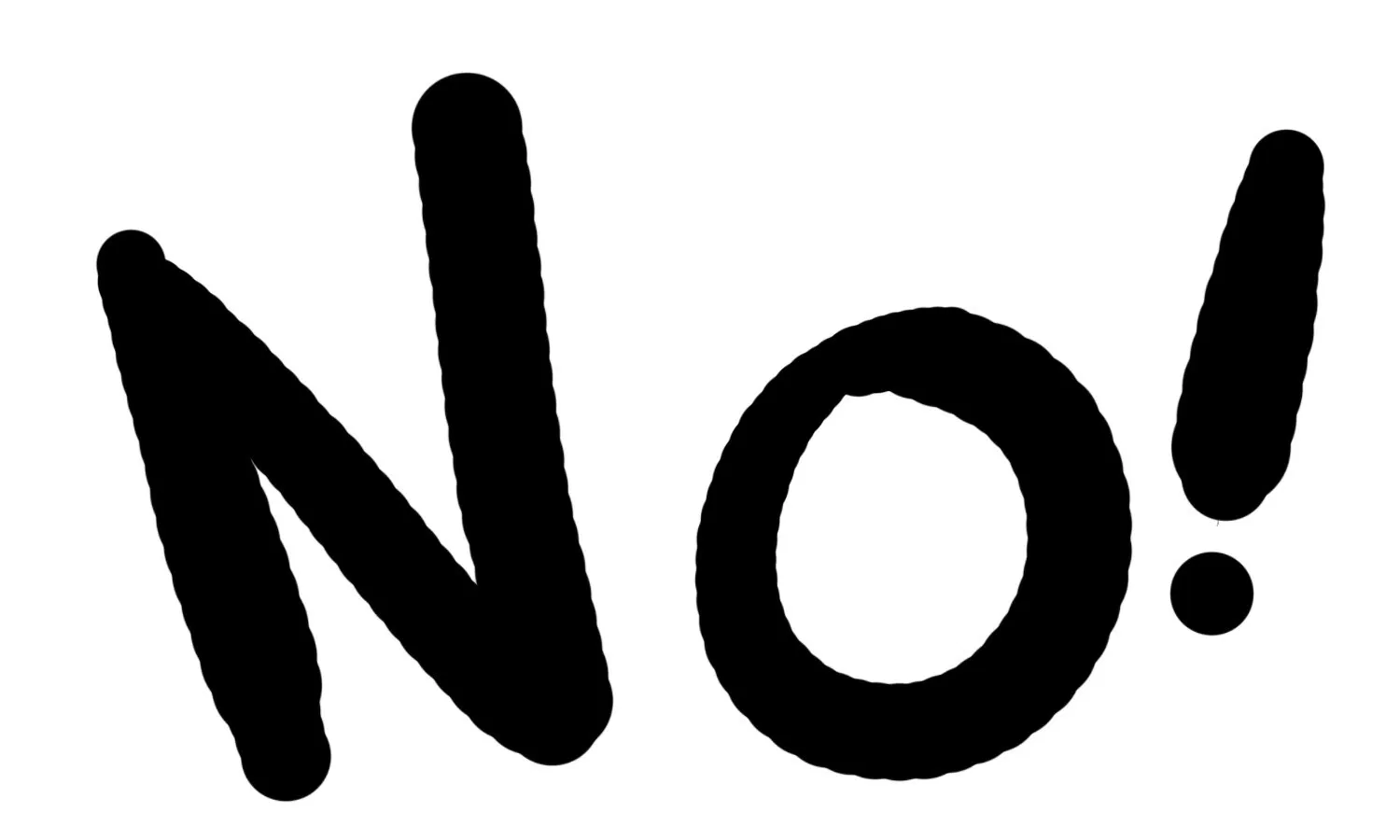
*My entire life I've had a hard time saying "no" to people. But now everyone assumes that I am always available and don't even seem to notice that I am doing them favors. And when I need something, no one even offers.*

**Questions:**

**(a) What would you advise Sophie?**

**(b) When would you say “no” to your friend's request?**

**(c) When should you say “no” to your friend's request?**

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**#5**

**Pirkei Avos 3:13**

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**Rabbi Moshe Isserles (his very first comment on Shulchan Aruch, Code of Jewish Law)**

*And don’t be ashamed before others who mock you in serving G-d.*

**Pirkei Avos 5:23**

*Rabbi Yehuda Ben Teima says:* ***Be brazen as leopard****, light as an eagle, swift as a gazelle, and mighty as a lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven.*

**Tur Orach Chaim 1**  
*For at times a person wants to perform a Mitzvah but refrains from doing it because people mock him; thus, he [Rabbi Yehuda ben Teima] cautions that you should be brazen in the face of the mockers, and not refrain from performing the mitzvah.*

**Questions:**

**(a) These last two statements seem to contradict the notion that we need to please everyone (Pirkei Avos 3:13 above). How would you resolve this seeming contradiction?**

**(b) What are situations when we should follow the instructions of our Mishnah and when should we refrain from doing so?**

**#6**

**Pirkei Avos 3:13**

*He [Rabbi Chanina] used to say: Anyone who is pleasing to his fellows is pleasing to G-d. Anyone who is not pleasing to his fellows is not pleasing to G-d.*

**Visions of the Fathers, Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D.**

*Some people have feelings of inferiority which cause them to think that others will not like them. In order to gain friendship, they go out of their way to do things for people, in the hope that this will make them more acceptable. These “people pleasers” may indeed be well liked by others, but this hardly seems to warrant an assurance that G-d is particularly happy with them. They may be doing some things which are quite displeasing to G-d.*

None of the Torah commentaries suggest that we should become people pleasers no matter what.

**Question: What is a possible resolution to this difficulty? How would you explain our Mishnah?**

**#7**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**