

What do we owe our friends?

1. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001 film)

Harry, Ron, and Hermione sneak down the stairs, and Harry sees Trevor the toad.

Harry: Trevor. [Trevor croaks]

Ron: Trevor! Go! You shouldn't be here!

Neville Longbottom: Neither should you. You're sneaking out again, aren't you!

Harry: Now, Neville, listen, we were...

Neville: No! I won't let you! You'll get Gryffindor into trouble again! Uh, I-I'll fight you!

Hermione: Neville, I'm really, really sorry about this, but: Petrificus Totalus!

[uses the Full Body-Bind Curse on Neville, who freezes and falls]

Ron: [gulps] You're a little scary sometimes, you know that. Brilliant, but scary.

Harry: [to Neville] Sorry.

Hermione: [to Neville] Sorry.

Ron: [to Neville] It's for your own good, you know.

...

At the awarding of the house cup:

Dumbledore: ...Yes, yes, well done Slytherin, well done Slytherin, however recent events must be taken into account, and I have a few last minute points to award. [...] And finally, **it takes a great deal of courage to stand up to your enemies, but a great deal more to stand up to your friends**, I award 10 points, to Mr. Neville Longbottom!

I. What are friends for? Biblical and Rabbinic Models of Friendship

2. Job 2:11-13 | When Job's three friends (*re'im*) heard about all these calamities that had befallen him, each came from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could not recognize him, and they broke into loud weeping; each one tore his robe and threw dust into the air onto his head. They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights. None spoke a word to him for they saw how very great was his suffering.

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת רֵעֵי אֱיֹב אֶת כָּל-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת הַבָּאָה עָלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ אֶל-יֹפֶז הַתִּימָנִי וּבִלְדָּד הַשּׁוּחִי וְצוֹפָר הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיֵּצְאוּ יָחִידִם לָבוֹא לְנוֹדֵלּוֹ וּלְנַחֲמוֹ וַיִּשְׁאוּ אֶת-עֵינֵיהֶם מֵרְחוֹק וְלֹא הִכִּירוּהוּ וַיִּשְׁאוּ קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּקְרְעוּ אִישׁ מְעִלּוֹ וַיִּזְרְקוּ עָפָר עַל-רֹאשֵׁיהֶם הַשָּׁמַיִמָּה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֹתוֹ לָאָרֶץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וּשְׁבַעַת לַיְלֹת וְאִין-דָּבָר אֵלָיו דָּבָר כִּי רָאוּ כִּי-גָדֹל הַכָּאֵב מְאֹד:

3. Bava Batra 16b:5 | The Gemara asks: **How did they all know** at the same time what had happened to Job so that the three of them came together? **There are** those **who say** that **they** each **had a crown** which displayed certain signs when something happened to one of the others. **And there are** those **who say they** each **had trees and when the trees withered they knew** that sorrow had visited one of them. **Rava said** that **this** closeness between Job and his friends explains the adage **that people say: Either a friend (*haver*) like the friends of Job or death.**

מָנָא הוּא יָדְעִי אִיכָא דְאֶמְרִי כְּלִילָא הָוָה לָהּ וְאִיכָא דְאֶמְרִי אֵילָנֵי הָוָה לָהּ וְכִינּוּן דְכֻמְשִׁי הוּא יָדְעִי אֶמְרָא רַבָּא הֵיכֵן דְאֶמְרִי אִינְשֵׁי אוֹ חֲבֵרָא קְחֵבְרִי דְאִיב אוֹ מִיתוּתָא

4. Pirkei Avot (1:6) Joshua ben Perahiah and Nittai the Arbelite received [the oral tradition] from them. Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: appoint for thyself a teacher, and acquire for thyself a companion (*haver*) and judge all men with the scale weighted in his favor.

(2:9) He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the right way to which a man should cleave? Rabbi Eliezer said, a good eye; Rabbi Joshua said, a good companion (*haver*); Rabbi Yose said, a good neighbor;... He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the evil way which a man should shun? Rabbi Eliezer said, an evil eye; Rabbi Joshua said, an evil companion (*haver*); Rabbi Yose said, an evil neighbor...

(5:16) All love that depends on a something, [when the] thing ceases, [the] love ceases; and [all love] that does not depend on anything, will never cease. ...And what is an example of love that did not depend on anything? Such was the love of David and Jonathan.

(א'ו') יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה וְנִתַּאי הָאֶרְבֵּלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אָמַר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְקִנְיָה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָיוּ דִן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת:

(ב'ט') אמר להם, צאו וראו איזוהי דרך ישראל שידבק בה האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין טובה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר טוב. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן טוב.... אמר להם צאו וראו איזוהי דרך רעה שיתרחק ממנה האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין רעה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר רע. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן רע...
(ה'טז) כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר, בטל דבר, בטלה אהבה. ושאינה תלויה בדבר, אינה בטלה לעולם. איזו היא... ושאינה תלויה בדבר, זו אהבת דוד ויהונתן:

5. Avot D'Rabbi Natan 8:3 | And acquire for yourself a friend. How so? This teaches that a person should acquire a friend (*haver*) for himself who will eat with him, and drink with him, and study Scripture and Mishnah with him, and go to sleep with him, and tell him all his secrets, both secrets of the Torah and secrets of the ways of the world. For when they sit and engage in Torah together, and one of them makes a mistake in the law, or the division of chapters, or declares an impure thing pure, or a pure thing impure, [or a forbidden thing permitted or a permitted thing forbidden, then his friend will correct him. And how do we know] that when his friend corrects him and studies with him, that they will have great reward from their studies? For it says (Ecclesiastes 4:9), "The two are better than the one, for they have great reward from their efforts."

וקנה לך חבר כיצד מלמד שיקנה האדם חבר לעצמו שיאכל עמו וישנה עמו ויקרא עמו וישנה עמו וישן עמו ויגלה לו כל סתוריו סתר תורה וסתר דרך ארץ שכשיושבין ועוסקין בתורה וטעה א' מהם הלכה או ראש הפרק או שיאמר על טמא טהור או על טהור טמא [ועל אסור מותר ועל מותר אסור חבירו מחזירו. ומניין] שכשחבירו מחזירו וקורא עמו שיש להם שכר טוב בעמלן שנא' (קהלת י') טובים השנים מן הא' אשר יש להם שכר טוב בעמלם:

6. Rambam on Pirkei Avot 1:6 | And he said, "acquire for yourself a friend". He said it with an expression of acquisition and he did not say, "Make for yourself a friend," or "Befriend others." The intention of this is that a person must acquire a friend for himself, so that all of his deeds and all of his matters be refined through him, as they said (Ta'anit 23a), "Either a friend or death." And if he does not find him, he must make efforts for it with all his heart, and even if he must lead him to his friendship, until he becomes a friend. And [then] he must never let off from following [his friend's] will, until his friendship is firmed up. [It is] as the masters of ethics say, "When you love, do not love according to your traits; but rather love according to the trait of your friend." **And when each of the friends has the intention to fulfill the will of his friend, the intention of both of them will be one without a doubt.**

And how good is the statement of Aristotle, "The friend is one." And there are three types of friends: a friend for benefit, a friend for enjoyment and a friend for virtue. Indeed, a friend for benefit is like the friendship of two [business] partners and the friendship of a king and his retinue; whereas the friendship for enjoyment is of two types - the friend for pleasure and the friend for confidence. Indeed, the friend for pleasure is like the friendship of males and females and similar to it; whereas the friend for confidence is when a man has a friend to whom he can confide his soul. He will not keep [anything] from him - not in action and not in speech. And he will make him know all of his affairs - the good ones and the disgraceful - without fearing from him that any loss will come to him with all of this, not from him and not from another. As when a person has such a level of confidence in a man, he finds great enjoyment in his words and in his great friendship. **And a friend for virtue is when the desire of both of them and their intention is for one thing, and that is the good. And each one wants to be helped by his friend in reaching this good for both of them together. And this is the friend which he commanded to acquire; and it is like the love of the master for the student and of the student for the master.**

זכר אותו בלשון קנייה ולא אמר עשה לך חבר או התחבר לאחרים הכונה בזה שצריך לאדם שיקנה אוהב לעצמו שיתקנו בו מעשיו וכל עניניו כמו שאמרו או חברותא או מיתותא ואם לא ימצאהו צריך להשתדל בו בכל לבו ואפילו אם יצטרך שימשכנו לאהבתו עד שישב אוהב ולא יסור מהמשך תמיד אחר רצונו עד שתתחזק אהבתו כמו שיאמרו בעלי המוסר כשתאהב לא תאהב על מדותיך ואמנם תאהב על מדת אהוביך וכשיכוין כל אחד משני האהובים אל זאת הצוהא יהיה כונת כל אחד משניהם להפיק רצון חבירו ויהיה כונת שניהם יחד דבר אחד בלא ספק. ומה טוב מאמר אריסטוטלוס האהוב אחד הוא והאהובים ג' מינים אוהב תועלת אוהב מנוחה ואוהב מעלה אמנם אוהב תועלת כאהבת שני השותפים ואהבת המלך ומחנהו ואמנם אוהב מנוחה הוא ב' מינים אוהב הנאה ואוהב בטחון אמנם אוהב הנאה כאהבת הזכרים לנקבות וכיוצא בהם. ואמנם אוהב בטחון הוא שיהיה לאדם אוהב תבטח נפשו בו לא ישמר ממנו לא במעשה ולא בדבור ויודיעהו כל עניניו הטוב מהם והמגונה מבלי שירא ממנו שישגיחהו בכל זה חסרון לא אצלו ולא זולתו כי כשיגיע לאדם בטחון באיש זה השעור ימצא מנוחה גדולה בדבריו ובאהבתו הרבה. ואוהב מעלה הוא שיהיה תאות שניהם וכונתם לדבר אחד והוא הטוב וירצה כל אחד להעזר בחבירו בהגיע הטוב והוא לשניהם יחד וזה האוהב אשר צוה לקנותו והוא כאהבת הרב לתלמיד והתלמיד לרב:

II. The Standing of Friends in Ritual and Halakha

7. Pirkei Avot 4:12 Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua said: let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own, and the honor of your colleague as the reverence for your teacher, and the reverence for your teacher as the reverence of heaven.

ר' אלעזר בן שמוע אומר, יהי כבוד תלמידך חביב עליך כשלך, וכבוד חברך כמורא רבך, ומורא רבך כמורא שמים:

8. Tosefta* Avodah Zarah 3:5 One may buy from them (Kutim) and give them an undeserved gift (as opposed to gentiles). Of what does this speak? With a gentile who he doesn't know, or if he was going from place to place. But if he was his neighbor or his friend (*ohavo*), this is permitted, because it is like selling to him...

מוכרין להן [לכותים] ונותנין להם מתנת חנם [ואין נותנים מתנת חנם לגויים]. במה דברים אמורים בגוי שאין מכירו, או שהיה עובר ממקום למקום. אבל אם היה אוהבו או שכינוהו זה מותר, שאינו אלא כמוכרו לו.

9. Mishnah Tamid 6:3 The priest who won the right to burn the incense would take the smaller vessel containing the incense from within the spoon, and would give it to a priest who is his friend (*ohavo*) or his relative, whom he designated to assist him, and enter the Sanctuary with him...

מי שזכה בקטרת, היה נוטל את הבזק מתוך הכף ונותנו לאוהבו או לקרובו. נתפזר ממנו לתוכו, ונתנו לו בחפזו...

10. Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 225:1 One who sees his friend (*haver*) after thirty days, says shehecheyanu (who has kept us alive....) and after twelve months, one blesses m'chayeh meytim (who gives life to the dead) and this is for one who is very dear to him and is happy when seeing him.

הרואה את חברו לאחר שלשים יום אומר שהחינו ואחר י"ב חודש מברך מחיה מתים והוא שחביב עליו הרבה ושחברו בראיתו:

11. Mishneh Torah, Sanhedrin 23:6 A judge may not adjudicate the case of a friend (*ohavo*). This applies even if the person is not a member of his wedding party or one of his more intimate companions (*rei'o k'nafsho*). Similarly, he may not adjudicate the case of one he hates. This applies even if the person is not his enemy and one whose misfortune he seeks. Instead, the two litigants must be looked upon equally in the eyes and in the hearts of the judges. If the judge does not know either of them and is not familiar with their deeds, this is the fairest judgment that could be.

אסור לדין לדון למי שהוא אוהבו אף על פי שאינו שושבינו ולא רעו אשר כנפשו ולא למי ששונאו אף על פי שאינו אויב לו ולא מבקש רעתו אלא צריך שיהיו שני בעלי דינים שוין בעיני הדינים ובלבדם. ואם לא היה מכיר את אחד מהם ולא מעשיו אין לך דין צדק כמוהו:

III. Possible Mechanisms for Privileged Status?

12. Bava Metzia 71a:3 | ...The verse states: "If you lend money to any of My people, even to the poor person who is with you" (Exodus 22:24). The term "My people" teaches that if one of **My people**, i.e., a Jew, and a gentile both come to borrow money from you, **My people take precedence**. The term "the poor person" teaches that if a **poor person and a rich person** come to borrow money, **the poor person takes precedence**. And from the term: "Who is with you," it is derived: If **your poor person**, meaning one of your relatives, and one of **the poor of your city** come to borrow money, **your poor person takes precedence**. If it is between one of **the poor of your city** and one of **the poor of another city**, the one of **the poor of your city takes precedence**.

איכא דמתני לה להא דרב הונא אהא דתני רב יוסף (שמות כב, כד) אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך עמי ונכרי עמי קודם עני ועשיר עני קודם ענייך ענייך קודמין עניי עירך ועניי עיר אחרת עניי עירך קודמין

13. Sanhedrin 19b:17 | Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Anyone who teaches another person's son Torah, the verse ascribes him credit as if he sired him, as it is stated: "Now these are the generations of Aaron and Moses" (Numbers 3:1), and it is written immediately afterward: "And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadav the firstborn and Avihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar" (Numbers 3:2), but it does not mention the names of Moses' children. This serves to say to you that **Aaron sired** his children, **but Moses taught** them Torah. **Therefore**, the children **were also called by his name**.

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני א"ר יונתן כל המלמד בן חברו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו ילדו שנאמר (במדבר ג, א) ואלה תולדות אהרן ומשה וכתוב ואלה שמות בני אהרן לומר לך אהרן ילד ומשה לימד לפיכך נקראו על שמו

14. Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 29:16 | This applies only in a case when you [have reason to] believe that the sinner will listen to you, but when you know [for sure] that he will not pay attention to your words, then you are forbidden to admonish him. For Rabbi Illa'a said in the name of Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Shimon, "Just as it is a mitzvah for a person to say something that will be heeded, so it is a mitzvah to refrain from saying something that will not be heeded." Rabbi Abba says, "It's his duty" [to refrain from saying such]. for it's said: "Don't admonish a scorner lest he hate you; reprove a wise man and he'll love you."

15. Alexander Nehamas, philosopher & author of *On Friendship* (*The Atlantic* interview, 2016)

There is no behavior that is characteristic of friendship. Friends can be doing anything together—even fighting, even killing each other sometimes. There's nothing that if you see two people doing it you'll say, "That must be because they're friends," because they could be doing it for different reasons. In order to be a friendly action you have to do it out of friendship, for your friend's sake. So I can go visit you in the hospital and do it because I have an obligation to do so, or because I want to get something out of you, or I can do it because I'm your friend. The action will be the same in all three cases. It's in the motive, in the intentions, where friendship is located, rather than the content of your behavior.

IV. Love Pacts and Partnership

16. Teshuvot HaRosh 8:13 (transl. by Eyal Levinson) In honor of the God of Israel [...] and in honor of his entire Torah [...] We, the undersigned, have accepted upon us the commandments, and we have made a vow [...] to emigrate to Israel [...] and to live in Jerusalem or nearby, as we agree between us, to do the will of God and to serve Him wholeheartedly. [...] And we swore to each other upon the Torah [...] in accordance with God and many people, that we will be friends, that for seven years after we leave this place, we will not separate from each other [...] We will both set times for studying Torah together. And if, God forbid, sin prevents us from earning a living enough for the two of us, one will set time to study, and his friend will be involved in worldly things, in trade and crafts. [...] And all the profit that the Creator will send, will be between the two of us, to support ourselves and the people of our households [...] And if, heaven forbid, one cannot supply enough to support the two households, we will both be working [...]

17. Bill of Association of *Ahavat Shalom* Mystical Fellowship of Bet El, 1754

...The spirit took hold of us...to become as one man, companions, all for the sake of the unification of the Holy One, blessed be he, and his Shekhinah, in order to give satisfaction to our Creator. For this purpose we have made a pact and the following conditions are completely binding upon us. First, we the undersigned, twelve of us, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Judah, agree to love one another with great love of soul and body, all for the purpose of giving satisfaction to our Creator through our single-minded association, although we are separated. [...] Each one of us will think of his associate as if the latter were part of his very limbs, with all his soul and all his might, so that if, God forbid, any one of us will suffer tribulation all of us together and each one of us separately will help him in every possible way. The main principle is that each of us will rebuke his associate when, God forbid, he hears of any sin the latter has committed. This embraces the obligation of the undersigned to bind ourselves together in the mighty bond of love. We take it upon ourselves from now onward, even after we have departed this life and gone to the world to come, that each one of us will endeavor, both in this world and the next, to save, perfect and elevate the soul of each one of our circle to the best of his ability, and with every kind of effort to do everything possible for the others' eternal bliss. [...] All this have we taken upon ourselves under the penalty of the ban and by an irrevocable resolve in accordance with the laws of our sages of blessed memory. We are resolved to keep all these things, and we give them the full force of all the regulations that have been issued from the days of Moses our teacher, on whom be peace [...]

18. I Samuel 18:1-4 | When [David] finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan's soul became bound up with the soul of David; Jonathan loved David as himself. Saul took him [into his service] that day and would not let him return to his father's house.— Jonathan and David made a pact, because [Jonathan] loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the cloak and tunic he was wearing and gave them to David, together with his sword, bow, and belt.

וַיְהִי כְּכִלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֶל-שָׁאוּל וְנָפֶשׁ יְהוֹנָתָן נִקְשְׁרָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ דָּוִד (ויאהבו) [וַיִּאָּהֲבֻהוּ] יְהוֹנָתָן כְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ: וַיִּקְחֵהוּ שָׁאוּל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְלֹא נָתַן לְשׁוֹב בֵּית אָבִיו: וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוֹנָתָן וְדָוִד בְּרִית בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתוֹ כְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ: וַיִּתְּפֹשֶׁט יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת-הַמַּעֲלִי אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ לְדָוִד וּמַחֲזִיו וְעַד-חֶרְבּוֹ וְעַד-קֶשֶׁתוֹ וְעַד-חֲגָרֹו: