

לֹא־תִשְׁנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטָא: 1.

You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him (them). Vayikra 19:17

שלוש עליך ניכר שהוא ישן חובטו במקלו ורשות היתה לו לשרוף את כסותו והם אומרים מה קול בעזרה קול בן לוי לוקה ובגדיו נשרפין שישן לו על משמר ר' אליעזר בן יעקב אומר פעם אחת מצאו את אחי אמי ישן ושרפו את כסותו

Peace be upon you. If he would not reply, it was evident that he was sleeping. The man of the Temple Mount would therefore strike him with his staff, and he even had license to burn the watchman's garment, in order to discipline him. And those overhearing the watchman being rebuked would say to one another: What is that sound in the Temple courtyard? It is the sound of a Levite being flogged and having his clothing burned, as he was caught sleeping during his watch. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: Once, the supervisors found my mother's brother sleeping on his watch, and they burned his garment.

Tamid 28a

תניא רבי אומר איזו היא דרך ישרה שיבור לו האדם יאהב את התוכחות שכל זמן שתוכחות בעולם נחת רוח באה לעולם טובה וברכה באין לעולם ורעה מסתלקת מן העולם שנאמר (משלי כד, כה) ולמוכיחים ינעם ועליהם תבא ברכת טוב

It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Which way of life is an upright path that a person should select for himself; what should be his guiding principle? One should love admonition, for as long as statements of admonition from the wise are heard in the world, pleasantness comes into the world, goodness and blessing come into the world, and evil departs from the world, as it is stated: "But to those who admonish shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them" (Proverbs 24:25). Tamid 28a

אמר רבי יוסי בר חנינא התוכחות מביאה לידי אהבה, שנאמר (משלי ט, ח): הוכח לחכם ויאהב, היא דעתיה דרבי יוסי בר חנינא דאמר כל אהבה שאין עמה תוכחה אינה אהבה. אמר ריש לקיש תוכחה מביאה לידי שלום,

Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina said: "A love without reproof is no love." Resh Lakish said: "Reproof leads to peace; a peace where there has been no reproof is no peace."

Why should true love require reproof? What does healthy criticism sound and feel like? What does that type of criticism look like? Why would healthy criticism be something that enhances (completes, according to the rabbis) a loving relationship? In order to rebuke someone you love, you need to be honest. While honesty is an important characteristic in a relationship, does honesty always entail willingness to rebuke? How much honesty is needed in a healthy, loving relationship? Are there times when friends and those who love each other should refrain from being honest?

6. אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן כל המוכיח את חבירו לשם שמים זוכה לחלקו של הקדוש ברוך הוא

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Anyone who rebukes another for the sake of Heaven is privileged to dwell in the portion of the Holy One, Blessed be He... Tamid 28a

When it comes to rebuking another person, what type of motives are negative, and what are positive? Sometimes, we might rebuke someone because we simply don't like that person and we want to hurt them. But perhaps if we are rebuking that person because we want to help them out, that might be a positive motive. The rabbis say to examine our motives before expressing rebuke. In other words, "think before you speak!"

6. תנו רבנן (ויקרא יט, יז) לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך יכול לא יכנו לא יסטרנו ולא יקלקלנו ת"ל בלבבך שנאה שבלב הכתוב מדבר

§ The Sages taught in a baraita: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall rebuke [hokhe'ah tokhiah] your neighbor, and do not bear sin because of him" (Leviticus 19:17). Why does the verse specify "in your heart"? One might have thought that the verse means: Do not hit him, do not slap him, and do not ruin him due to hatred. Therefore the verse states "in your heart." This teaches that the verse speaks of hatred in the heart. Arakhin 16b

מנין לרואה בחבירו דבר מגונה שחייב להוכיחו שנאמר (ויקרא יט, יז) הוכח תוכיח הוכיחו ולא קבל מנין שיחזור ויוכיחו תלמוד לומר תוכיח מכל מקום יכול אפי' משתנים פניו ת"ל לא תשא עליו חטא

From where is it derived with regard to one who sees an unseemly matter in another that he is obligated to rebuke him? As it is stated: "You shall rebuke [hokhe'ah tokhiah] your neighbor." If one rebuked him for his action but he did not accept the rebuke, from where is it derived that he must rebuke him again? The verse states: "You shall rebuke [hokhe'ah tokhiah]," and the double language indicates he must rebuke in any case.

One might have thought that one should continue rebuking him even if his face changes due to humiliation. Therefore, the verse states: “Do not bear sin because of him”; the one giving rebuke may not sin by embarrassing the other person. Arakhin 16b

Mesilat Yesharim, by Moshe Chayim Luzzato (Ramchal), Ch. 20

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1746), also known as the RaMCHaL after his initials, is best known for his classical work on piety, Mesilat Yesharim (Path of the Just) How often does a person rebuke sinners at the wrong time, or in the wrong place, so that they pay no attention to what is said! The rebuker is thus the cause of their becoming more confirmed in their wickedness, and of their desecrating the name of God by adding rebellion to sin. In a case of this kind, it is the part of saintliness to remain silent. “As it is our duty to reprove when we are likely to be heeded”, say our sages, “so is it our duty to withhold from reproof when we are not likely to be heeded.” (Yevamot 65)10

ואמר רבי יוחנן בן נורי מעיד אני עלי שמים וארץ שהרבה פעמים לקה עקיבא על ידי שהייתי קובל עליו לפני רבן (שמעון ברבי) וכל שכן שהוספתי בו אהבה לקיים מה שנאמר (משלי ט, ח) אל תוכח לץ פן ישנאך הוכח לחכם ויאהבך

And Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri says: I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses before me that Akiva was lashed, i.e., punished, many times on my account, as I would complain about him before Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel the Great. And all the more so I thereby increased his love for me. This incident serves to affirm that which is stated: “Do not rebuke a scorner lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you” (Proverbs 9:8). A wise man wants to improve himself and loves those who assist him in that task. Arakhin 16b

היכי דמי תוכחה לשמה וענוה שלא לשמה כי הא דרב הונא וחייא בר רב הוו יתבי קמיה דשמואל אמר ליה חייא בר רב חזי מר דקא מצער לי קביל עליה דתו לא מצער ליה בתר דנפיק אמר ליה הכי והכי קא עביד אמר ליה אמאי לא אמרת ליה באנפיה אמר ליה חס לי דליכסוף זרעיה דרב על ידאי

The Gemara asks: What is considered rebuke for its own sake and humility not for its own sake? The Gemara answers: It is like this incident that occurred when Rav Huna and Hiyya bar Rav were sitting before Shmuel. Hiyya bar Rav said to Shmuel: See, Master, that Rav Huna is afflicting me. Rav Huna accepted upon himself that he would not afflict Hiyya bar Rav anymore. After Hiyya bar Rav left, Rav Huna said to Shmuel: Hiyya bar Rav did such-and-such to me, and therefore I was in the right to cause him distress. Shmuel said to him: Why did you not say this in his presence? Rav Huna said to him: Heaven forbid that the son of Rav should be humiliated because of me. This

provides an example of rebuke for its own sake, as Rav Huna originally rebuked Hiyya bar Rav only when Shmuel was not present, and of humility not for its own sake, as Rav Huna did not forgive Hiyya bar Rav but simply did not wish to humiliate him. עד היכן תוכחה רב אמר עד הכאה ושמאל אמר עד קללה ורבי יוחנן אמר עד נזיפה כתנאי רבי אליעזר אומר עד הכאה רבי יהושע אומר עד קללה בן עזאי אומר עד נזיפה Arakhin 16b

9. תניא א"ר טרפון (תמיהני) אני אם יש בדור הזה שמקבל תוכחה אם אמר לו טול קיסם מבין. 9. עיניך אמר לו טול קורה מבין עיניך אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה תמיהני אם יש בדור הזה שיודע להוכיח

It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Tarfon says: I would be surprised if there is anyone in this generation who can receive rebuke. Why? Because if the one rebuking says to him: Remove the splinter from between your eyes, i.e., rid yourself of a minor infraction, the other says to him: Remove the beam from between your eyes, i.e., you have committed far more severe sins. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria says: I would be surprised if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to rebuke correctly, without embarrassing the person he is rebuking. Arakhin 16b

10. אמר רבי יוסי בר חנינא התוכחת מביאה לידי אהבה, שנאמר (משלי ט, ח): הוכח לחכם ויאהבה, היא דעתיה דרבי יוסי בר חנינא דאמר כל אהבה שאין עמה תוכחה אינה אהבה. אמר ריש לקיש תוכחה מביאה לידי שלום,

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11. How and When to Rebuke

ט) אמר ר' טרפון
העבודה אם יש בדור הזה יכול להוכיח, אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה העבודה אם יש בדור הזה יכול לקבל תוכחת, אמר ר"ע העבודה אם יש בדור הזה יודע היאך מוכיחים

Rabbi Tarfon said: “In this generation there is no one capable of rebuking [because everyone is a sinner].” Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: “In this generation there is no one capable of receiving rebuke.” Rabbi Akiva said: “In this generation there is no one who knows how rebuke ought to be worded.” Sifra 89a-89b

12. Once in a public lecture by a famous rabbi, one of the students in the lecture fell asleep, right in front of the rabbi. The rabbi was insulted, woke up the student (who was an adult, grown man) in front of the entire class, and said something like, “What, I’m boring you?” While the rabbi himself was obviously insulted, there was no doubt that the student was embarrassed at the public rebuke. At the end of the lecture, during the open question-and-answer session with the rabbi, another student said to the rabbi in front of all the students, “Rabbi, I hope you won’t be offended if I rebuke you (and he cited the biblical verse from Vayikra 19:17), but I think it was inappropriate for you to have embarrassed my friend in front of the entire group like that.” Initially, the rabbi was very taken aback at this criticism, and defended why he did it. But very quickly, the rabbi apologized profusely at the thought of having embarrassed someone, especially in public. He asked for forgiveness in front of the whole group.

Afterwards, the students all thought it was unclear what should have happened during that lecture. Was it appropriate for the rabbi to have publicly rebuked his student for sleeping in front of him during a lecture? Was it wrong for him to have embarrassed his student in public? Probably it was. How should the rabbi have rebuked his student, if at all? Should the student’s friend have rebuked the rabbi like he did? Did it embarrass the rabbi (it did, at least initially)? Did it embarrass his friend even more (it did, in fact)? How should the rabbi have reacted to the rebuke? He actually was the model of how to accept rebuke—he accepted it graciously and apologetically, and vowed to try not to do it again.

13. Mesilat Yesharim, by Moshe Chayim Luzzato (Ramchal), Ch. 20

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14. Seder ha-Dorot ha-Chadash, p. 59, the Baal Shem Tov
(c.1698-1760)

A great teaching which the Baal Shem Tov planted for us is that if you see another person doing something ugly, meditate on the presence of that same ugliness in ourselves. And know that it is one of God's mercies that God brought this sight before your eyes in order to remind you of that fault in you, so as to bring you back in repentance...For if you saw someone desecrating Shabbat, or desecrating God's name some other way, you should examine your own deeds and you will certainly find among them desecration of the Shabbat and cursing God's name. Or if you heard some profanity or obscene language, you should consider your own impudence, and when you failed to conduct yourself modestly. If you heard some skeptical or atheistic talk from someone, then you should work to strengthen your faith and trust in God. (As paraphrased from "Jewish Spiritual Practices" by Yitzchak Buxbaum, p. 305, found in "Teaching Jewish Values")

15. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Dayot, Chapters 6:6-9

הלכה ו

כשיחטא איש לאיש לא ישטמנו וישתוק כמו שנאמר ברשעים ולא דבר אבשלום את אמנון מאומה למרע ועד טוב כי שנא אבשלום את אמנון, אלא מצוה עליו להודיעו ולומר לו למה עשית לי כך וכך ולמה חטאת לי בדבר פלוני, שנאמר הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך, ואם חזר ובקש ממנו למחול לו צריך למחול, ולא יהא המוחל אכזרי שנאמר ויתפלל אברהם אל האלהים

הלכה ז

הרואה חבירו שחטא או שהלך בדרך לא טובה מצוה להחזירו למוטב ולהודיעו שהוא חוטא על עצמו במעשיו הרעים שנאמר הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך, המוכיח את חבירו בין בדברים שבינו לבינו, בין בדברים שבינו לבין המקום, צריך להוכיחו בינו לבין עצמו, וידבר לו בנחת ובלשון רכה ויודיעו שאינו אומר לו אלא לטובתו להביאו לחיי העולם הבא, אם קיבל ממנו מוטב ואם לאו יוכיחו פעם שניה ושלישית, וכן תמיד חייב אדם להוכיחו עד שיכהו החוטא ויאמר לו איני שומע, וכל שאפשר בידו למחות ואינו מוחה הוא נתפש בעון אלו כיון שאפשר לו למחות בהם.

הלכה ח

המוכיח את חבירו תחלה לא ידבר לו קשות עד שיכלימו שנאמר ולא תשא עליו חטא, כך אמרו חכמים יכול אתה מוכיחו ופניו משתנות ת"ל ולא תשא עליו חטא, מכאן שאסור לאדם להכלים את ישראל וכל שכן ברבים... בין קטן בין גדול

הלכה ט

מי שחטא עליו חבירו ולא רצה להוכיחו ולא לדבר לו כלום מפני שהיה החוטא הדיוט ביותר, או שהיתה דעתו משובשת, ומחל לו בלבו ולא שטמו ולא הוכיחו הרי זו מדת חסידות לא הקפידה תורה אלא על המשטמה.

When a person sins against another, the injured party should not hate the offender in deep silence...But it is that person's duty to inform the offender and say, "Why did you

do this to me? Why did you sin against me in this matter?" Therefore it is said, "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:17). If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, the offender should be forgiven. The forgiver should not be unyielding, as it is said, "And Avraham prayed unto God (for Avimelech)" (Genesis 20:17).

If one observes that another committed a sin or walks in a way that is not good, it is the person's duty to bring the erring one back to the right path and point out that he/she is wronging him/herself by this evil course, as it is said, "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor". One who rebukes another, whether for offenses against the one who rebukes him/herself or for sins against God, should administer the rebuke in private, speak to the offender gently and tenderly, and point out that the rebuke is offered for the wrongdoer's own good, to secure for the other a life in the World to Come. If the person accepts the rebuke, well and good. If not, the person should be rebuked a second, and third time. And so one is bound to continue the admonitions, until the sinner assaults the admonisher and says, "I refuse to listen." Whoever is in a position to prevent wrongdoing and does not do so is responsible for the iniquity of all the wrongdoers whom that person might have restrained.

8—One who rebukes his fellow, the first time he must not speak harshly and humiliate him, as it is said: "Do not bear guilt because of him". Thus said our Sages: "Can it be that you rebuke him until his face becomes white?" Thus it says "Do not bear guilt because of him." From here we learn that no person may humiliate any Jew, even more so in public...whether of low or high social status...

9—Someone who has been wronged by his fellow and doesn't want to rebuke him nor say anything to him, because the sinner is exceedingly common or not right in his mind—and the person forgave him in his heart and didn't bear any ill feelings, and didn't rebuke him—this is an act of special piety. For the Torah is only concerned about ill feelings.

discuss role of vidui with people --which includes truth telling, with older people
Big Friendship

Susan--notice when I feel like rebuking someone and think it through, and noticing is it in the service of heaven

Meeting next week-- We did intro to tochecha, and did texts 1-5. I told story of Laura J-K and the harm done by not rebuking; also if person is fired but never given the feedback needed that would have enabled the person to change to save their job; we did the importance of tochecha, and also talked a bit about knowing when to do tochecha--for the sake of heaven, and to create space for goodness and blessing; we talked about the importance of societal rebuke with demonstrations, etc. We talked about knowing our motives for the rebuke. Are our feelings bc of something we need to work on, or something that legitimately requires rebuke.



Next week, bring vidui as an example of speaking truth and deciding when to speak the truth to elders; work on when to do rebuke

Also mentioned was how to receive rebuke, and how rebuke is hardest with those closest to us--(more to lose?--explore why a bit); with spouses and children, we question when and whether to rebuke

Do 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 , 13 onwards

Nov 17, they found this very hard--lots of complex ideas, and some contradictory. Main points--tochecha should be for the sake of heaven. We all have responsibility for each other and for society to make us and society better. Don't be swayed by xian values of turn the other cheek and don't throw the first stone. Use someone's bad behaviour to look at our own. Do tochecha in a way that will do the most good, and enable someone to hear it; told story of hearing racist jokes at the dinner table--do we say something in public and embarrass the person but show others how the jokes are unacceptable, or tell the person privately so as not to embarrass them--competing values. Which will do the greater good?