

Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

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Parshas Vayetzei

פרשת ויצא

כסלו תשפ"ד



Rebuke out of Love

In *Hilchos De'os*, the Rambam describes the proper way to give *tochacha*, rebuke. He writes that one should speak calmly and softly, “בנהח ובלשון רכה.” Furthermore, “ויודיעו שאינו אומר לו אלא לטובתו” – the one rebuking should inform the other party that he is only delivering his words of rebuke for the benefit of the listener. Part of the *mitzva* of *tochacha* is that the listener should feel that the one rebuking him really has the listener’s best interests in mind. The *mochiach* is not saying these things because it makes him feel better about himself; he is not trying to raise himself up at the expense of the other person, but is rather genuinely trying to help the listener. The *mochiach* should convey the message, explicitly or implicitly, that he has genuine love for the listener and his goal is for the listener’s benefit. This is an essential component in the *mitzva* of *tochacha*.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky *ztz"l* writes that this may explain a difficult word in this week’s *parsha*. The Torah describes that when Yaakov arrived at the well, he saw that the shepherds were not drawing water, and he addressed them: “ויאמר להם יעקב: “אחי, מאין אתם?” “Yaakov said to them: My brothers, where are you from?” (*Bereishis* 29:4). The word “אחי” seems very strange here. Yaakov did not know these shepherds. Why does he call them “my brothers”? “אחי” implies some sort of relationship, almost a friendship. Why does Yaakov address the shepherds this way?

Rav Yaakov explains that Yaakov was about to rebuke the shepherds. He told them, “הן עוד היום גדול, לא עת האסף המקנה.” “The day is still long; it is not yet time to bring the livestock in. Water the flock and go on grazing” (29:7). Rashi explains that Yaakov was rebuking the shepherds for stopping their work, since they were employed by others. “You haven’t fulfilled your day’s labor!” Since Yaakov was rebuking them, he felt that he had to stir up within himself and convey to them a brotherly connection. He therefore called them “אחי,” my brothers, establishing a relationship with them.

Rav Yaakov writes that this creates a *chova gedola*, a great obligation on anyone who gives rebuke nowadays. He must feel a strong love towards the one he is speaking to. If he doesn’t, then he cannot fulfill the *mitzva* of *tochacha* properly. There is a good test to see if you have given *tochacha* properly. If you have conveyed that you are rebuking the other person because you care about him, then when you finish, he will thank you. The goal of the *mochiach* is that the listener will appreciate the *tochacha*. Based on this, the best English translation of *tochacha* is “advice” instead of “rebuke.” This is Rav Yaakov’s approach to *tochacha*.

This applies in the context of parenting as well. When a parent gives *tochacha*, he has to give the rebuke out of genuine love for his child. His sole intention should be that he is trying to help his child improve. One should not discipline his child out of revenge or anger, but rather out of concern for what is best for the child’s development.

This point is developed at length by Rav Orlowek *shlit"l* in his books on parenting. Rav Orlowek discusses a situation in which a child is causing trouble in *shul*, which embarrasses his father. The father then overreacts. Rav Orlowek writes:

When we worry about appearances, our emotions get the better of us... Had the child misbehaved at home, his father might have reacted more sensibly. Since he was concerned, however, with how *he* appeared to others, his emotions got the better of him. He forgot our most important rule: *discipline must be solely for the recipient's benefit*. As difficult as it may sometimes seem, we must ignore other peoples' opinions of us and our children. Focus only on what parental response best serves your child. Remember, onlookers forget, but your child may consciously or unconsciously resent you for years to come, and if this overreacting becomes a pattern, he will certainly not forget, and probably not forgive.

Rav Orlowek also develops the idea that rebuke and criticism must be based on love:

Rabbeinu Yonah points out that one of the functions of a true friend is to give criticism. *This means that in order to criticize someone, you must first establish yourself as a friend. We must invest in the relationship beforehand in order to weather problems that may develop in the relationship later on.* Most children are not mature enough to understand that criticism and rebuke can be a sign of caring, love, and a sincere desire for the person being rebuked to have a good life. Love must be securely in place if the rebuke is to have the desired effect without straining the relationship. People often fail to look ahead. They do not take the time and trouble to establish the kind of relationship we are speaking of, one that can not only weather criticism, but will indeed prosper from it. In such a relationship, criticism is an additional sign of love and caring.

Rav Orlowek notes that when the Chofetz Chaim writes that a person is responsible to train his family to avoid *lashon hara*, he writes that one should rebuke his family “רק בלשון רכה,” “only with a gentle voice.” We see here a crucial component of *tochacha*: “Gentle rebuke is the only formula for achieving positive results.”

Friends and parents must invest in building a healthy relationship before they can offer successful *tochacha*. Furthermore, they have to work on themselves in order to be able to give *tochacha* the right way.

Rav Pesach Krohn *shlit"l* tells a story along these lines. One *menahel* in a *cheder* has an interesting practice. If a boy misbehaves and is sent to the principal, the principal discusses the situation with the child, tells him what he did wrong, and sometimes punishes him. Then, as the boy is leaving, the principal always says, “I love you Yosef,” or, “I love you Shlomo.” Once, a boy misbehaved and was sent to the office. The principal dealt with him, but the boy didn't leave. The *menahel* asked, “What's wrong? You should go back to class now.” The boy answered, “But *Rebbi*, you didn't tell me, ‘I love you’!”

This is a perfect application of Rav Yaakov's *yesod*.

This story is also a good application of another *yesod* in giving *tochacha* – to try to end on a positive note. Rav Orlowek writes:

The way something ends up is usually the way it is remembered most distinctly. So finish up any rebuke on a positive note. This can be a sincere statement that you're sure there will now be improvement, or an affirmation of the many good things the child does and the wonderful traits he possesses. It can mean after delivering your rebuke that you'll be turning your shared attention to something positive.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski *ztz"l* shares another story regarding this point. One Rosh Hashana when Rabbi Twerski was a young boy, there was a guest in his home who challenged him to a game of chess. Later, Rabbi Twerski's father called him into his study and said, “Abraham, you played chess on Rosh Hashana.” The boy answered, “Yes, but the guest is a learned person, and he said it is okay.” His father repeated, “You played chess on Rosh Hashana.” Rabbi Twerski's father felt that it was clearly inappropriate to play chess on Rosh Hashana and his son should have known better. Young Abraham Twerski accepted the rebuke. As he was about to leave, his father said to him with a twinkle in his eye, “But you did checkmate him, didn't you?”

Rabbi Twerski writes that he remembers and treasures that line from his father, even eighty years later:

This little scene could not have been orchestrated more perfectly. I had done something wrong, and I was held accountable. I sincerely regretted my misdeed, and this wiped the slate clean. It was now time for some positive stroking... One can admonish and chastise without crushing another's ego. Sternness need not be cruel to be effective.

We should all learn and use these practical applications of Rav Yaakov's *yesod*.

Have a wonderful and peaceful Shabbos!

Chana Ginsburg

The dvar torah has been adapted from the Sefarim of Rav Beinish Ginsburg

SAVE THE DATE!
PTA on Tuesday December 5th, IYH



Kita Chet
celebrate
d Rosh
Chodesh
with a
fantastic
breakfast.

Fourth grade made lots of Chumash headway this week. They learned about a nazir, and then had a siyum with grape juice. Sara and Malka dressed up as the Kohein Gadol to explain their different garments, and Miri Kahane's Abba came in to discuss Birkat Kohanim.



The girls "mastered Mem"! They were treated to MARshmallows on a Makel, received prizes for kaMAR MEsudar, and our parents received a MAagnet!





Kita Gimmel Kebatz learned the 4 different brachot for scents, and sewed Besamim bags



Fourth grade Kebatz learned how to weave &-strand bracelets.



Kita Gimmel Kebatz
learned about musical
instruments with 4 strings
and different ways to play
them.



All the girls
learned a song
about the
planets to
appreciate the
vast universe
that Hashem
created, and
then made
edible planet
representations!

Kita Gimmel started a language enrichment program. They received pinkasim to fill with all the new words they learn!



Kita Alef celebrated Rosh Chodesh Kislev with a Aruchat Meshutefet, creating Sufgania Sandwiches!

