

REBUKE: HOCHEI-ACH TOCHI-ACH

MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2003; 27 NISAN 5763; YOM HASHOAH
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Leviticus 19:17

You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

לֹא-תִשְׂנֵא אֶת-אָחִיךָ, בְּלִבְבְּךָ; הֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיתְךָ, וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו
חַטָּא.

1. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO REBUKE?

Ibn Ezra on this verse

“You shall not bear his sin” – because the punishment will be on you for his sin.

Talmud: Arachin 16b

How do we know that if a man sees something unseemly in his neighbor, he is obliged to reproof him? Because it is said, Hochei-ach. If he rebuked him and he did not accept it, where do we know that he must rebuke him again? The text states, Tochi-ach.

It was taught: R. Tarfon said, I wonder whether there is anyone in this generation who accepts reproof, for if one says to him “remove the mote from between your eyes,” he would answer, “remove the beam from between *your* eyes!” R. Eleazar B. Azariah said, “I wonder if there is one in this generation who knows how to reprove?”

R. Judah, son of Rabbi Simeon B. Pazzi asked of R. Simeon B. Pazzi, “what is preferable, reproof with honest purpose or false humility? He answered, “Won’t you agree that true humility is better for Rav said, humility is the greatest of them all.”

2. WHAT MAKES REBUKE DIFFICULT?

Tosefot on Arakin 16b

He makes himself humble and he does not wish to rebuke. This humility is not for the sake of heaven, but, rather his sole intent is that he will not be hated by the one he would have rebuked.

מסכת ברכות י.

הנהו בריוני דהוו בשבבותיה דר"מ והוו קא מצערו ליה טובא הוה קא בעי ר' מאיר רחמי עלויהו כי היכי דלימותו אמרה ל' ברוריא דביתהו מאי דעתך משום דכתיב (תהילים קד) יתמו חטאים מי כתיב חוטאים חטאים כתיב ועוד שפיל לסיפיה דקרא ורשעים עוד אינם כיון דיתמו חטאים ורשעים עוד אינם אלא בעי רחמי עלויהו דלהדרו בתשובה ורשעים עוד אינם בעא רחמי עלויהו והדרו בתשובה:

Talmud: Brachot 10a

There were once some highway men in the neighborhood of R. Meir who caused him a great deal of trouble. R. Meir accordingly prayed that they should die. His wife, Bruriah said to him, "How do you make out that such a prayer should be permitted? Is it written 'Let the **s**inners [chot'im] cease!?' Rather, it is written, 'Let the **s**ins [chatta'im] cease!' (Psalms 104:35). Since the sins will cease there will be no more wicked men. Rather, pray for them that they should repent and there will be no more wicked." He did pray for them and they repented.

(Bruriah quotes from Psalms 104:35

יתמו חטאים מן-הארץ ורשעים עוד אינם; ברכי נפשי את-ה'; הללו-י-ה

Let sinners cease out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Hallelujah.)

3. WHEN SHOULD YOU GIVE UP?

מסכת בבא מציעא לא.

א"ל ההוא מדרבנן לרבא ואימא (ויקרא יט) הוכח חדא זימנא תוכיח תרי זמני א"ל הוכח אפי' ק' פעמים משמע תוכיח אין לי אלא הרב לתלמיד תלמיד לרב מנין ת"ל הוכח תוכיח מ"מ

Talmud: Baba Metziah 31a

One of the rabbis said to Rabba, "You should not hate your brother in your heart, you shall surely rebuke your neighbor." Perhaps *hochei-ach* means once and *tochi-ach* means twice? He replied, "*Hochei-ach* implies even a hundred times as for *Tochi-ach*, I know only that the master must rebuke the disciple and where do we know that the disciple must rebuke his master, from the phrase *Hochei-ach Tochi-ach*, implying under all circumstances.