

The Obligation to Give Rebuke - *Tochacha* - Part 2:

Receiving Rebuke:

1. We should be happy to receive *Tochacha* and should love those who offer it.
2. A person should favor his friends who give him rebuke, when necessary, over those who flatter him.
3. When possible, a person should live near his mentor, so that he can benefit from his *Tochacha* - but only on condition that he accepts the rebuke.
4. According to some opinions, receiving *Tochacha* willingly is the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of "circumcise your heart." Someone who rejects *Tochacha* violates the prohibition of "Do not be stiff-necked."
5. A person who hates *Tochacha* is actually harming himself. By refusing to hear words of rebuke he blocks off the option of Teshuva and remains mired in his sins.

Exemptions To This Mitzvah:

1. If the sinner is known to be physically violent and there is a risk that he will try to kill or even strike anyone who reproves him, there is no obligation to give *Tochacha*.
2. We are not required to spend money on this Mitzvah. i.e. in a case where voicing rebuke would endanger one's physical security or one's property.
3. We are not obligated to rebuke a non-Jew who violates one of the Seven Noahide Laws.
4. We are not obligated to rebuke a Jew who has thrown off the yoke of Torah completely. e.g. Publicly violates the Shabbos or purposely eats non-kosher food.
5. Sometimes there is an obligation to speak up even in the case of such a sinner, either in order to protest the Chilul Hashem caused by his actions or to prevent others to be drawn in his ways. Especially when remaining silent might be interpreted as agreement with the wrongdoing. (e.g. peaceful demonstrations)
6. Today, when many sinners have not intentionally rejected the way of torah but are merely ignorant of their heritage or misinformed, there certainly is a great merit in introducing them to the Mitzvos.

Parameters of the Mitzvah:

1. You should rebuke a person even a hundred times or more if necessary. i.e. there is no maximum limit.
2. If the recipient of the *Tochacha* becomes upset, then one should stop earlier. e.g. when the sinner gets upset and reprimands you. (this is regarding the particular sin; but there is a new obligation to give *Tochacha* when anew sin is committed.)
3. You should rebuke someone even if he is greater than you, including your Rav or parent. However, it must be done in respectful way.

Stopping a Sin in Progress:

1. When we see someone, even your Rav, in the midst of doing a sin, we have a Mitzvah to stop them, and at times even to restrain them forcibly. (e.g. tearing off Shaatnez from person who refuses to listen to your protest)
2. If you cause damage to the garment while pulling it off, no compensation needs to be paid.
3. If time will not be lost, it is best to do so in as private a place as possible to avoid embarrassing the person. All the more so when the sin is clearly being done unintentionally.
4. One should avoid potential stumbling blocks in order to prevent people from sinning. (e.g. removing a flyer with an immodest picture from neighbours door)

The Loving Method of *Tochacha*:

1. *Tochacha* should be given lovingly and with the right intentions.
2. Rebuking in public is limited to situations when there is an urgent need to stop a person from committing sin.
3. Generally, we have to be very careful not to embarrass the offender when giving *Tochacha*, thereby sinning in the process.
4. We should not speak harshly to the offender and not reprove him publicly.
5. Speak to him privately, using pleasant, gentle language, reminding him all the time that we have his best interests in mind - that he should merit a good portion in the Next World.
6. Follow the approach of Aharon HaKohen and choose gentle, conciliatory words that will draw the person to Torah.
7. Ideally, along with the rebuke, we should offer guidance in how to correct the transgression.
8. The mode of the rebuke should match the subject. A soft approach should be used if the wrongdoer is of soft character. A more forceful approach may be necessary with tougher personality.
9. When giving *Tochacha* to a well respected person or in front of a public audience (when not all of them are guilty), we should only hint at the sins committed and not state them explicitly.
10. Sugar coating rebuke with a good joke is effective.

Additional Guidelines:

1. The rules of rebuking privately apply when a sin has been committed privately.
2. When a sin was done in public, we should rebuke the sinner on the spot, so as to avoid a Chilul Hashem.
3. When one person has been wronged by another, the wronged party should reprove the offender privately, as often as necessary. If he prefers not to rebuke, he may choose to forgive the wrongdoer wholeheartedly. This is even considered a Midas Chassidus.

4. When one sins against Hashem, even if the sin was done in private, if the offender does not repent after being rebuked privately, he should be shamed publicly and his sin publicized. The local Rabbanim should curse and humiliate him to his face; but this must be done with the constructive purpose of getting the sinner to do Teshuva, or preventing a Chilul Hashem. These measures should be continued until the person repents.

Household Members:

1. **Talmud Yevamos 62b:** Concerning a man who loves his wife as himself, who honours her more than himself, who guides his sons and daughters in the right path and arranges for them to be married near the period of their puberty, Scripture says, 'And thou shalt know that your tent is in peace.'
2. **Rambam:** Whenever a person is not careful regarding [the conduct of] his wife, his sons and the members of his household, warning them, and ***scrutinizing their ways at all times*** so that he knows that they are perfect without sin or transgression, he is himself a sinner, as [implied by Job 5:24]: "And you shall know that your tent is at peace and scrutinize your dwelling, and you shall not sin."
3. **Rambam:** Similarly, our Sages commanded that a man honor his wife more than his own person, and love her as he loves his own person. If he has financial resources, he should offer her benefits in accordance with his resources. He should not cast a superfluous measure of fear over her. He should talk with her gently, being neither sad nor angry.
4. These sources teach us that the head of a household has an extra measure of responsibility towards his family members regarding this Mitzvah.
5. If a person becomes aware of a problem of some kind in his house, he should rebuke the offender gently and pleasantly.
6. Tochacha should never be given when one is upset and angry, nor should it flow from extreme zealotry or personal resentment.
7. In general, the atmosphere in the home should be of mutual love and respect. A lack of Shalom Bayis in the home is one of the primary causes of children going off the *derech*.

The Rebellious Child:

1. In most cases the child can be gradually drawn back to a Torah path with unconditional love.
2. While the child is deeply entrenched in his rebellion, the parents should temporarily not make an issue over spiritual matters, but limit their demands to minimal standards of *derech erez*.
3. Great care must be taken that the other family members not be negatively influenced.
4. Banishing the child should be avoided if at all possible.

5. Each case must be judged and treated according to the particular circumstances, with guidance from Rabbis and professionals.
6. We can take measures to reduce the risks of having rebellious children...
7. Shalom Bayis is an important factor in producing well-adjusted children.
8. Constant criticism is an almost certain formula for breeding resentment.
9. when rebuking one's child is necessary, it should be well cushioned by plenty of compliments.
10. Catch the child during successful moments, so you can comment sincerely on his achievements and positive points, thereby encouraging and strengthening him.
11. Even when there is the need to "lay down the law." regarding Torah prohibitions, we should do so in pleasant tone.
12. On the few occasions when we must display anger, it should be a feigned anger, not genuine anger.

Better to Remain in Error:

1. In certain situations, when it is ***absolutely certain*** that the offender will not accept rebuke, we are told to refrain from giving Tochacha, adopting the approach "***it is preferable that they transgress unintentionally than that they do so with full knowledge.***"
2. We should not be too quick to assume that the Tochacha will fall on deaf ears. Sometimes the situation is not so clear cut. It may be our own fear or embarrassment that had led us to a wrong assumption.
3. If the violation is an aveira that is not explicitly stated in the Torah, then if the person is transgressing unintentionally, and we are certain that he will not accept the Tochacha, we are advised not to rebuke him.
4. The same applies in the case of a Torah prohibition which the public has assumed an unfortunate custom of being lenient with the prohibition.
5. Sometimes there is an obligation to voice our objections even in these cases, if it is necessary so that others should not learn from their ways.
6. If there is doubt that the Tochacha will be accepted, then we should rebuke the transgressor, even if the violation is only a Rabbinic prohibition.
7. If the offender is fully aware of the prohibition and is violating it intentionally, then the principle of "preferable to transgress unintentionally" does not apply. We are obliged to speak up even if we are certain that he will not accept our rebuke.

Auxiliary Mitzvos Connected to Rebuke:

1. Kiddush Hashem
2. Loving Hashem
3. Returning a lost object
4. All Jews are responsible one for another
5. Do not stand idly by while your brother's blood is shed