

**MESECHTA SOTAH SHIUR**

IT is customary to learn the 49-page tractate of Sotah during the Omer.

The Kollel Yungeleit deliver a shiur in Mesechta Sotah each night in Kollel at 7:45pm before the 8:30pm Maariv.

DOR LEDOR

Winter zman is here and Dor Ledor learning has switched to Motzai Shabbos.

All fathers and boys are invited to join this weekly learning program. Spend some quality time learning Torah together and enjoy nosh, raffles a story and a hot cup of soup to warm up.

This week 7:20-8:05pm in the Yeshivah lunchroom.

To sponsor a week of learning and support this fantastic program please contact Rabbi Shlomo Barber.

NEW ZMAN IN KOLLEL

The new Zman has started and the Kollel is back into learning.

The Shaalos Uteshuvos, Tanach, Shulchan Aruch and Chassidus shiurim have resumed as well as the retirees morning Kollel and the Kollel Yungeleit are available for one-on-one learning.

The Kollel will be learning Hilchos Shabbos this zman, exploring the Melachos of Shabbos in depth.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem



Rabbi Yankel Raskin leads the retirees morning Shulchan Aruch shiur

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Opening up our bottled-up feelings

When we think of the Mitzvah of Hocheiach Tochiach, we usually associate it with rebuking someone when we see them doing something wrong. But the Rambam defines a more primary dimension of this Mitzvah;

When a person sins against his fellow, one should not remain silent. Rather it is a Mitzvah to inform the person and ask "why did you do that? Why did you wrong me by doing X?"

If someone hurts you or does something that upsets you, it is natural to feel negative feelings towards them. At this point you have one of two options. Either you say nothing and keep these feelings inside. Or you can bring it to their attention and talk about it.

The easier path is to say nothing. We'll keep things civil and polite rather than raise what could potentially be an awkward or difficult conversation. We will dismiss it as being nothing and brush it off.

Immediately before the Mitzvah of Hocheiach Tochiach, the Torah tells us that we should not harbour hatred in our hearts towards our fellow. This is a very significant sequence.

The Torah is teaching us that the way to avoid negative feelings in our hearts is through verbalising those feelings and bringing it up for open discussion.

There are many advantages in relationships that can be achieved by discussing hurt feelings rather than bottling them up.

There is benefit in just speaking out the issue and expressing one's hurt. Even if the other person is not receptive, just verbalising our feelings lightens the load, allowing us to release our feelings without letting them fester inside.

It may give them the opportunity to explain from their side. We may have interpreted or perceived something as being done deliberately when it was not. We may have sensed a wrong where none was intended. Because we are so close to the situation, it is hard to think objectively and judge the other favourably (another mitzvah). If we raise the issue, the other person has the opportunity to explain. If we don't raise the issue, we will forever carry the negative sentiment that just may be totally unfounded.

This is the intent of the concluding words of the Posuk *Velo Tisa Alav Cheit*, "do not place sin upon him".

Don't jump to conclusions that it was intentional or malicious. Rather bring up the issue to clarify and get a better understanding of what happened.

If the action was indeed hurtful, be it deliberate or unintentional, raising the issue allows the other person to recognise the result of their words or actions. We give them the opportunity to genuinely apologise and allow the relationship to heal and move on.

The overriding objective of the Mitzvah Hocheiach Tochiach is to restore peace. The Torah understands that openly discussing issues is the only way towards peace and reconciliation.

If this is the purpose, it is understood that issues should be raised in a manner which seeks to restore peace and is conducive to doing so. The one raising the issue should not be just venting or complaining but should be willing to listen and genuinely accept the justification or apology of the other.

The Rambam (sefer hamitzvos 205) writes that one should raise the issue and discuss it until the matter no longer bothers them. It may take a number of conversations until the matter can be put to rest.

Pushing feelings aside may be a temporary way of dealing with hurt, indeed things should never be discussed in the heat of the moment when emotions run high. But at some point, sooner rather than later, as awkward as it may be, we have to have the discussion. If we don't, the feelings remain there. And they fester.

Eventually they will come out and may do so in harmful ways, especially if such negative feelings accumulate over time. Like the proverbial bottle, bottled-up feelings will eventually explode.

Keeping feelings to yourself also takes a toll on your own physical and emotional wellbeing.

If you can genuinely forget and forgive, and not just superficially brush it off, that's great. There is no need to go through this exercise. But most of us are not on that super-human level and we do feel pain, hurt and insult. Pretending that it is all good and that everything is ok, when it clearly is not, does not help at all.

With open communication and genuine goodwill, the objective of this Mitzvah, expressed in the previous Posuk will be realised, ואהבת לרעך כמוך, true unity, peace and brotherly love.

The Mitzvah of Tochecha - Rebuke

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

One of the Taryag Mitzvos of the Torah is the Mitzvah of Tochecha. The Mitzvah is contained within the words הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עֲמִיתְךָ, *You shall surely rebuke your friend*¹.

The Posuk begins לֹא-תִשְׁנָא אֶת-אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ, *You shall not despise your friend in your heart*. From this we learn that the purpose of the Mitzvah of Tochecha is remove feelings hatred and to increase peace. With this being the objective, it is understood that how one approaches and delivers rebuke is very important to consider.

The Posuk concludes with the words וְלֹא תִשָּׂא וְלֹא תִשָּׂא, *And you shall not bring sin upon him*. The commentaries and Poskim offer different explanations on the meaning of these words.

- Rabbeinu Yonah says that it refers to the rebuker who would be sinning if he does not rebuke.
- Rashi, Rambam and Sefer Hachinuch explain that it is a warning to the rebuker not to cause embarrassment to the one that they are rebuking otherwise they bring sin upon themselves.
- Others explain that before rebuking one must be sure that the other has done wrong and should not exaggerate the wrong doing – i.e. do not place upon him sins that he has not done.
- The purpose of rebuking is to remove hatred from one's heart. The Torah teaches that one must rebuke rather than bring sin upon themselves by harbouring bad feelings towards another.

There are 2 distinct applications of the Mitzvah of Tochecha.

The first applies when someone is wronged by someone else. The Mitzvah teaches us that they should not keep quiet and therefore harbour ill-will towards them. Rather it is a Mitzvah to inform them about it and ask why did you do such and such to me?²

The purpose of raising the discussion is to achieve peace. It gives the opportunity to the other to apologise for their actions. Alternatively the other may be able to justify their actions or explain that they did nothing wrong or that it was completely unwitting. The one raising the issue should genuinely be prepared to listen to the other side and to accept their words.

The second form of Tochecha applies when one sees their friend sinning, or going in a bad way. There is a Mitzvah to return them to the right

path and to inform them that they are sinning and harming themselves with their bad ways. This is derived from the verse³ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ *You shall surely rebuke your friend*.⁴

When rebuking one's friend, either for Mitzvos between man and Hashem or between man and his fellow man, they should do so in private and should speak softly and peacefully. He should inform them that he is only doing this for their benefit⁵.

The requirement to speak softly when rebuking is integral and one who is incapable of doing so should not rebuke⁶, because their words will not be received. Such a person is exempt from the Mitzvah of rebuking⁷. One who speaks harshly is not considered to be fulfilling the Mitzvah at all⁸.

One should not rebuke by speaking harshly which may cause the other to become embarrassed. This is also why the rebuke (at least initially) must be done in private.

If one rebukes harshly and causes embarrassment to the other, this itself is considered a sin. The Gemara⁹ says that one may think that one can rebuke someone in a way (or to the extent) that their face changes colour (from embarrassment), therefore the verse says *And you shall not place sin upon him*¹⁰. Rashi explains that this applies when rebuking in public, however the Rambam¹¹ understands that this applies even when rebuking in private¹².

From this Posuk we learn that one is forbidden to embarrass a fellow Jew even if it is done in private and how much more so when in public¹³. The Alter Rebbe¹⁴ uses the words מֵאֵד מֵאֵד, that a person must be extremely careful not to embarrass a fellow Jew. Our sages teach that one who embarrasses their fellow has no share in Olam Haba¹⁵. Many Poskim write that embarrassing someone else is one of the Mitzvos that one must give up their life for rather than transgress¹⁶.

If a person sins in public and this is causing a Chillul Hashem, one has to rebuke them immediately, even in public, to avoid the Chilul Hashem¹⁷. Nonetheless, in such a situation one needs to be even more careful to do so gently so as not to cause embarrassment¹⁸.

From the double-fold expression הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ, we learn that even if the rebuke is not accepted. If the private rebuke is not accepted, one may rebuke in public. If they know that the rebuke will not be accepted they may not continue to rebuke in public¹⁹. One must continue to rebuke them "even 100 times"²⁰ or until the person scorns or threatens to harm them and says that they will not listen²¹, but this should be done in private.

There are specific guidelines on how one should

rebuke one's parents, teachers and Talmidei Chachamim who we are obligated to treat with greater respect and honour.

One needs to be very cautious when coming to rebuke another. It is very difficult to fulfil the Mitzvah of rebuking correctly²² and one must take care that their words come from the heart and are therefore received by the other.

Before rebuking another, they must be absolutely sure that the other has in fact sinned and not to rely on estimations. To be חוֹשֵׁה בְּבִשְׂרֵימ, wrongfully suspecting someone, is itself an Aveira.

When a person violates a Rabbinic commandment or one which is not clearly written in the Torah, and you know that they will not listen to the rebuke, it is preferable not to say anything. מוֹטָב שִׁיהִי שׁוֹגֵג וְאֵל יִהְיֶה מְזִידִין. However, one must rebuke for a violation of a sin that is clearly written in the Torah²³.

Even though there is a requirement to be דן לכתוב זכות, to judge others favourably and not presume wrongdoing, this applies in one's heart. However one is still obligated to rebuke.

There is a discussion in Poskim whether one is obligated to actively pursue the Mitzvah of Tochecha or whether it only applies if one comes in contact with someone who has sinned²⁴.

Someone who has the ability to rebuke and does not do so, the sin of the other is attributed to him and he too is punished²⁵.

1. Vayikra 19:17
2. Rambam Hilchos Deios 6:6. Shulchan Aruch Harav 156:6 based on Erchin 16b
3. Vayikra 19:17
4. Rambam Hilchos Deios 6:7
5. Rambam Hichos Deios 6:7
6. See Halichos Bein Adam Lechaveiro p55 that the same applies to a person who is intimidating or causes fear even if they speak gently from their perspective.
7. Keser Rosh – Rabbi Chaim of Volozhyn Siman 143.
8. See Halichos Olam that such a person has an obligation to learn how to speak gently. One who is unable to rebuke gently and therefore rebukes harshly is akin to someone who does not have an Esrog and therefore takes an apple instead. i.e. there is no Mitzvah.
9. Erchin 16b. Also Toras Kohanim Kedoshim
10. Shulchan Aruch Harav 156:8
11. ibid
12. Shulchan Aruch Harav 156:8 and Hilchos Onaah 30
13. Shulchan Aruch Harav ibid based on Rambam ibid
14. Hilchos Onaah 29
15. Pirkei Avos 3:11
16. Tosfos Sotah 10. Embarrassing another is a form of murder. We learn this from the Torah's account of Tamar who was prepared to be burned rather than embarrass Yehudah.
17. Mishna Berura 608:10 based on Magen Avraham 608:3
18. Halichos Olam
19. Shulchan Aruch Harav 608:5
20. Erchin ibid
21. Shulchan Aruch Harav 608:5 and 6
22. Ksav Sofer OC 57
23. Shulchan Aruch 608:2
24. See Sdeh Chemed Asifas Dinim Maareches 5
25. Shabbos 54b