

You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reprove your fellow. (19:17)

The *mitzvah* of *tochachah*, administering rebuke to a fellow Jew who is erring, has two criteria that should be met. Indeed, if these two conditions are not met, it is better that one does not rebuke. First and foremost is *l'shem Shomayim*: He must be acting for the sake of Heaven. He has no ulterior motives; he does not hate the sinner; he simply cannot tolerate to see Hashem's *Torah* denigrated: He cares for his fellow-Jew who probably does not realize the seriousness of his actions. He speaks from the heart, out of love and caring. His words will thus leave a lasting impression, even if it is not immediately noticeable. When one truly speaks from the heart, his words will surely enter the heart of he who has strayed. One must first fulfill the admonition, "*Lo sisnah*," "Do not hate your brother," before he can fulfill "*Hocheach tocheach*," the *mitzvah* of rebuke. Second, one must speak with care and respect, with sensitivity to the feelings of the subject of his rebuke. By embarrassing the sinner, he will accomplish only one goal - turning him off completely.

The *Alshich Hakadosh* teaches us that one should never call the sinner by a degrading name. Rather, he should focus on the sinner's virtues, demonstrating to him how demeaning it is for someone of his refinement to act in such a reprehensible manner. One must rebuke his fellow Jew, not abuse him. This concept is especially noteworthy for educators and parents who are involved in shaping the lives of young *neshamos*, souls. Their abusive criticism can scar the minds of their young charges for a lifetime.

Shlomo Hamelech says in *Sefer Koheles 12:13*, "*The sum of the matter, when all has been considered: Fear G-d and keep His commandments.*" The *Baalei Mussar* interpret this to say that ultimately the words of admonishment of one who fears Hashem will be heard. *Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl*, was wont to say, "It is worth it for me to give a lecture for an entire hour so that one person would *daven*, pray, *Maariv*, with a little more *kavanah*, concentration, a little more feeling, even if that person is only me!" It all depends upon the attitude and purpose of the *mocheach*, he who administers the *tochachah*.