

You shall reprove your fellow and you shall not bear a sin because of him. (19:17)

The *Bialystoker Maggid*, זל (cited by *Horav Gedalya Schorr*, זל), posits that we have two forms of *tochachah*, rebuke. In one instance, the rebuker chastises his fellow, saying, “How could you commit such a sin?” Another scenario has the rebuker challenging his fellow, alleging, “Who are you (who do you think you are) to have the audacity to commit such a grave sin?” In both instances, the rebuker is magnifying the sin and making it greater/larger than the sinner. He is either too small or the sin is too large, but, in any event, the offense is greater than the offender.

The *Maggid* teaches us that neither approach is appropriate; rather, the rebuke should elevate the sinner above the sin. He should say: “How could an individual of your stature, someone as important and distinguished as you are, fall into the clutches of sin? You are so above such despicable behavior. *Es passt nisht*. ‘It does not become you.’” By preserving the offender’s esteem, one has a better chance of getting through to him and convincing him to repent his ways.

Horav Nachman, זל, *m’Breslov* teaches that reproof is not merely venting one’s anger, but rather, it is to “bring out the beautiful fragrance within your fellow Jew.” Every person has the potential either to rise to greatness or to descend to depravity – to be a *tzaddik*, righteous person, or a *rasha*, wicked person. Reproof serves as the lodestar to guide the person, to help him to reach - and stay on -- the correct path, to prevent him from going astray. It is appropriate (form of) reproof that will succeed in bringing out the beautiful fragrance, the inherent good, within each person.