



אִישׁ הַיֶּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה Judges 21:25

Having tough conversations in communal homes and on the streets The Paradoxical Art of Building Community (and telling each other off) where "every man does as he sees fit"

תני ר' שמעון בן יוחי משל לבני אדם שהיו נתונים בספינה ונטל אחד מהן מקדח והתחיל קודח תחתיו. אמרו לו חביריו למה את עושה כן, אמר להן מה איכפת לכם, לא תחתי אני קודח.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai told a parable: A group of people were in a boat, and one of them took a drill and began drilling underneath himself. His friends said to him: Why are you doing that?! He replied: What difference does it make to you? Am I not drilling underneath my own seat?!
(Lev. Rabbah 4:6.)

I. The Power of Diversity, Autonomy and Pluralism

1. Deuteronomy - Chapter 33 [JPS]

ד תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב:

4 - Moses charged us with the teaching, as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

2. Mishnah - Masechet Yevamot, Chapter 1 [translation from English Kehati]

ד - אף על פי שאלו אוסרין ואלו מתירין אלו פוסלין ואלו מכשירין לא נמנעו בית שמאי מלישא נשים מבית הלל ולא בית הלל מבית שמאי כל הטהרות והטומאות שהיו אלו מטהרין ואלו מטמאין לא נמנעו עושין טהרות אלו על גבי אלו:

4 - Even though these prohibit and these permit, these declare ineligible and these declare eligible, Bet Shammai did not refrain from marrying women of Bet Hillel, nor Bet Hillel from Bet Shammai. So too, in all matters of cleanness and uncleanness which these declared clean and these declared unclean, they did not refrain from relying on one another when preparing food.

3. Babylonian Talmud – Masechet Bava Metzia 84a [translation Soncino]

אמרו רבנן: מאן ליזיל ליתביה לדעתיה - ניזיל רבי אלעזר בן פדת, דמחדדין שמעתתיה. אזל יתיב קמיה, כל מילתא דהוה אמר רבי יוחנן אמר ליה: תניא דמסייעא לך. אמר: את כבר לקישא? בר לקישא, כי הוה אמינא מילתא - הוה מקשי לי עשרין וארבע קושייתא, ומפרקינא ליה עשרין וארבעה פרוקי, וממילא רווחא שמעתא. ואת אמרת תניא דמסייע לך, אטו לא ידענא דשפיר קאמינא?

Said the Rabbis, 'Who shall go to ease his mind? Let R. Eleazar b. Pedath go, whose disquisitions are very subtle.' So he went and sat before him; and on every dictum uttered by R. Johanan he observed: 'There is a Baraita which supports you.' 'Are you as the son of Lakisha?' he complained: 'When I stated a law, the son of Lakisha used to raise twenty-four objections, to which I gave twenty-four answers, which consequently led to a fuller comprehension of the law; whilst you say, "A Baraita has been taught which supports you:" do I not know myself that my dicta are right?'



II. A Jewish Critique of Live and Let Live

4. Genesis – Chapter 18

יְיָ וַיְהִי, אָמַר: הַמִּכְסָּה אֲנִי מַאֲבָרְהָם, אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה. יִח וְאַבְרָהָם--הֵיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל, וְעַצוֹם; וְנִבְרָכוּ-בּו--כָּל, גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ. יֵט כִּי יִדְעֵתִיו, לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יַצְחֶה אֶת-בָּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו, וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה, לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט--לְמַעַן, הִבִּיא יְהוָה עַל-אַבְרָהָם, אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר, עָלָיו.

17 Now the Lord had said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? 19 For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right, in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.”

5. Sifra - Behukotai 2 [Translation MHK]

וכשלו איש באחיו אינו אומר איש באחיו אלא איש בעון אחיו, מלמד שכל ישראל ערבים זה בזה.

“and a man will stumble on his brother” It does not say that a person literally trips on his brother, but rather on the sin of his brother—which teaches that all of Israel is guarantor one for the other.

6. Babylonian Talmud – Masechet Shabbat 54b

משנה ואין העגל יוצא בגימון, ולא פרה בעור הקופר, ולא ברצועה שבין קרניה. פרתו של רבי אלעזר בן עזריה היתה יוצאה ברצועה שבין קרניה שלא ברצון חכמים. -**גמרא** תנא: לא שלו היתה, אלא של שכנתו היתה, ומתוך שלא מיחה בה - נקראת על שמו. רב ורבי חנינא ורבי יוחנן ורב חביבא מתנו... כל מי שאפשר למחות לאנשי ביתו ולא מיחה - נתפס על אנשי ביתו, באנשי עירו - נתפס על אנשי עירו, בכל העולם כולו - נתפס על כל העולם כולו.

Mishnah. Ewes may not go out protected [hanunoth]. or a calf with a gimon, or a cow with the skin of a hedgehog, or with the strap between its horns. R. Eleazar b. ‘Azariah’s cow used to go out with a thong between its horns, [but] not with the consent of the rabbis....**Talmud**: It was taught: This was not his, but a female neighbour of his; yet since he did not protest thereat, it was designated his. Rab and R. Hanina, R. Johanan and R. Habiba taught [the following] ...Whoever can forbid his household [to commit a sin] but does not, is seized for [the sins of] his household; [if he can forbid] his fellow citizens, he is seized for [the sins of] his fellow citizens; if the whole world, he is seized for [the sins of] the whole world.

III. Rebuke—A demonstration of our mutual responsibility

9. Leviticus – Chapter 19

יֵז לֹא-תִשָּׂא אֶת-אָחִיךָ, בַּלְבָּבָהּ; הֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיתֶךָ, וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חָטָא. יִח לֹא-תִקֶּם וְלֹא-תִטֹּר אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ, וְאֶהְבֵּת לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ: אֲנִי, יְהוָה.



17 You shall not hate your kinsman in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD.

*How do the three clauses of v. 17 relate to one another?
Note the JPS translation/punctuation, and propose alternative translations.
What is the relationship of v. 17 and 18?*

SKILL ONE: Patient rebuke without humiliation

10. Babylonian Talmud – Masechet Arakhin 16b

מנין לרואה בחבירו דבר מגונה שחייב להוכיחו? שנאמר: +ויקרא י"ט+ הוכח תוכיח, הוכיחו ולא קבל מנין שיחזור ויוכיחו? תלמוד לומר: תוכיח, מכל מקום; יכול אפי' משתנים פניו? ת"ל: לא תשא עליו חטא. תניא, א"ר טרפון: (תמיהני) +מסורת הש"ס: [תמה] +אני אם יש בדור הזה שמקבל תוכחה, אם אמר לו טול קיסם מבין עיניך, אמר לו טול קורה מבין עיניך. אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: תמיהני אם יש בדור הזה שיודע להוכיח. ואמר רבי יוחנן בן נורי: מעיד אני עלי שמים וארץ שהרבה פעמים לקה עקיבא על ידי, שהייתי קובל עליו לפני רבן (שמעון ברבי) +מסורת הש"ס: [גמליאל] +וכל שכן שהוספתי בו אהבה, לקיים מה שנאמר: +משלי ט'+ אל תוכח לץ פן ישנאך הוכח לחכם ויאהבך.
רש"י - קיסם - כלומר עון קטן שבידך זה יכול לומר לו טול אתה עון גדול שבידך הלכך אין יכולין להוכיח שכולן חוטאים. **שיודע להוכיח** - דרך כבוד שלא יהו פניו משתנים. **קובל עליו** - כשהייתי רואה בו דבר גנאי.

Whence do we know that if a man sees something unseemly in his neighbor, he is obliged to reprove him? Because it is said: Thou shalt surely rebuke. If he rebuked him and he did not accept it, whence do we know that he must rebuke him again? The text states: 'surely rebuke' all ways. One might assume [this to be obligatory] even though his face blanched, therefore the text states: 'Thou shalt not bear sin because of him'. It was taught [in a Baraita]: R. Tarfon said, I wonder whether there is any one 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. Johanan b. Nuri said: I call heaven and earth to witness for myself that often was Akiba punished through me because I used to complain against him before our Rabban, Gamaliel Beribbi, and all the more he showered love upon me, to make true what has been said: Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee.

*Is this a pro or anti-reproof source? Explain.
What are average guys like us supposed to do?
Make a list of do's and don'ts for rebuking based on these two sources.*



<u>Do's</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
Based on Verses:	
Based on Talmud:	

Clarifying our Goal(s): Maimonides (Mishneh Torah) Laws of Attributes, Chapter 6

ו כְּשִׁיחָטָא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ--לֹא יִשְׁטַמְנוּ וְיִשְׁתַּק, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּרִשְׁעִים "וְלֹא-דָבַר אֲבָשָׁלוֹם עִם-אֲמֹנוֹן, לְמַרְעֵ וְעַד-טוֹב: כִּי-שָׁנָא אֲבָשָׁלוֹם, אֶת-אֲמֹנוֹן" (שְׁמוּאֵל ב יג, כב); אֵלֶּכּה מִצָּוָה עָלָיו לְהוֹדִיעוֹ וְלֹאמַר לוֹ, לְמַה עָשִׂיתָ לִּי כֹךְ וְכָךְ וְלְמַה חָטָאתָ לִּי בְּדָבַר פְּלוֹנִי: שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיתְךָ, וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֹטֵא" (וִיקְרָא יט, יז). וְאִם חָזַר וּבִקֵּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ לְמַחֵל לוֹ, צָרִיךְ שְׂיִמְחַל; וְלֹא יִהְיֶה הַמוֹחֵל אֲכֹזֵרִי, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֲבָרָהָם, אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים" (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ, יז).

ט מִי שֶׁחָטָא עָלָיו חֲבֵרוֹ וְלֹא רָצָה לְהוֹכִיחוֹ וְלֹא לְדַבֵּר לוֹ בְּלוֹם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה הַחוֹטֵא הַדְּיוּט בְּיוֹתֵר אוֹ שֶׁהָיָה דַּעְתּוֹ מְשֻׁבָּשֵׁת, וּמַחֵל לוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ, וְלֹא שֹׁטְמוֹ וְלֹא הוֹכִיחוֹ--הָרִי זוֹ מִדַּת חֲסִידוּת: לֹא הִקְפִּידָה תּוֹרָה, אֲלֵא עַל הַמִּשְׁטָמָה.

6 - When one person wrongs another, the latter should not remain silent and despise him as [II Samuel 13:22] states concerning the wicked: "And Avshalom did not speak to Amnon neither good, nor bad for Avshalom hated Amnon." Rather, he is commanded to make the matter known and ask him: "Why did you do this to me?", "Why did you wrong me regarding that matter?" as [Leviticus 19:17] states: "You shall surely admonish your colleague." If, afterwards, [the person who committed the wrong] asks [his colleague] to forgive him, he must do so. A person should not be cruel when forgiving [as implied by Genesis 20:17]: "And Abraham prayed to God..."

9 - It is pious behavior if a person who was wronged by a colleague would rather not admonish him or mention the matter at all because the person who wronged him was very boorish or because he was mentally disturbed, [provided] he forgives him totally without bearing any



feelings of hate or admonishing him. The Torah is concerned only with those who carry feelings of hate.

SKILL TWO:

11. Babylonian Talmud – Masechet Yevamot 65b

ואמר רבי אילעא משום ר' אלעזר בר' שמעון : כשם שמצוה על אדם לומר דבר הנשמע, כך מצוה על אדם שלא לומר דבר שאינו נשמע. רבי אבא אומר : חובה, שנאמר : +משלי ט'+ אל תוכח לץ פן ישנאך הוכח לחכם ויאהבך.

R. Ile'a further stated in the name of R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon: As one is commanded to say that which will be obeyed, so is one commanded not to say that which will not be obeyed. R. Abba stated: It is a duty; for it is said in Scripture, Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee.

12. Ibid – Masechet Shabbat 148b

הנח לישראל, מוטב שיהו שוגגין ואל יהו מזידין. סבור מינה הני מילי בדרבנן, אבל בדאורייתא - לא. ולא היא, לא שנא בדרבנן ולא שנא בדאורייתא. דהא תוספת דיום הכפורים דאורייתא היא, וקא חזינן להו דקאכלי ושתו עד שתחשך, ולא אמרינן להו ולא מידי.

Raba son of R. Hanan also said to Abaye: We learnt, One must not clap [the hands], beat [the breast], or dance on Festivals. Yet we see that they do it, and do not rebuke them in any way? — Then on your reasoning, when Rabbah said: A man should not sit on the top of a stake, lest an article roll away from him and he come to fetch it, — yet we see [women] who carry pitchers and sit at the entrance of alleys, and we do not rebuke them? But leave Israel: better that they should [sin] in ignorance than deliberately. Now, he understood from this that that [principle] holds good only in respect of Rabbinical [enactments] but not Scriptural laws. Yet that is not so: there is no difference between a Rabbinical and a Scriptural law. For lo! the addition to the Day of Atonement is Scriptural, yet we see them [women] eat and drink until it is dark and do not rebuke them.

SKILL THREE:

13. Jerusalem Talmud - Masechet Sota 1:4, Rabbi Meir and his Disciples

Rabbi Zevadyah the son-in-law of Rabbi Levi would tell this story: Rabbi Meir used to deliver a sermon in the synagogue of Hammat every Friday night. And there was a woman there who was accustomed to listen. One time, the sermon ran late. She went and sought to enter her house and found that the candle had gone out. Her husband said to her: "Where were you?" She said to him: "Listening to the preacher." He said to her: "From such and such that this woman will not enter here into her house until she goes and spits in the face of the preacher." Rabbi Meir saw with Divine Spirit and gave himself a sore in his eye. He said: "Any woman who knows how to cure a sore eye by charm, come and charm." Her neighbors said to her: "Your answer will bring you in to your house. Make yourself a charm for him, and you spit in his eye." She went to him, and he said to her: "Do you know how to cure eyes by charm?" From her great awe of him, she said: "No." He said to her: "Well, spit in it seven times, and that will be good for it." Once she had spit in his eye, he said "Go and tell your husband. 'One time' you said to me! And she spit seven times." His students said to him "Rabbi, do we degrade



the Torah in such a manner? If you would have said to us, would we not have brought him and whipped him on the bench in order to force him to consent to be reconciled with his wife? He said to them, "And should not the honor of Meir be equivalent to the honor of his Creator, if with respect to the Holy Name which is written in holiness, the Scripture says that it should be erased by water to effect peace between a man and his wife, is it not all the more so with respect to Meir?"

SKILL FOUR:

15. Or HaChayim – Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 17

לא תשנא את אחיך וגו'. פירוש אם נסבב מאחריך דבר הגורם לשנאתו לא תשנאהו בלבבך אלא בפיק דבר אליו תוכחות על אשר ככה סבב, והוא אומר הוכח וגו'. ואומרו ולא תשא עליו חטא, פירוש לא תחליט בדעתך שמה שנסבב מאחריך ברשע עשאו ועודנו עומד בחטאו עמוס על שכמו אלא תהיה דן אותו לכף זכות, ותוכיחנו ועל ידי התוכחה יהיה אחד מב' דברים, או יתן אמתלא להנעשה ואין חטא, או יתחרט על הנעשה וישוב לבל עשות כדבר הזה, והרי הוא כריע כאח לך :

Do not hate your kinsman etc—If your brother does something that causes you to hate him, do not hate him in your heart. Rather, speak to him in rebuke about what has occurred, as it says in the verse "rebuke" etc. And the verse says "do not put sin upon him"—which means that you should not make up your mind that whatever occurred was done from wickedness and that your brother still stands with his sin weighing on his shoulder. Instead, judge him favorably, and rebuke him. By way of the rebuke one of two things will happen, either he will give an explanation for what took place, and in fact there was no sin, or he will regret what happened and repent, change his ways, and be your brethren again.

16. Bereshit Raba (Albeck) – Parshat VaYera 54

AND ABRAHAM REPROVED ABIMELECH, etc. (XXI, 25). R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: Reproof leads to love, as it says, Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee (Prov. IX, 8). Such indeed is R. Jose b. Hanina's view, for he said: Love unaccompanied by reproof is not love. Resh Lakish said: Reproof leads to peace; hence, AND ABRAHAM REPROVED ABIMELECH. Such is his view, for he said: Peace unaccompanied by reproof is not peace