

I HATE CRITICISM

Background

It is difficult to imagine a relationship of love, mutual respect, and dedication that was greater than the one that Yaakov Avinu shared with his oldest son Reuvain. Reuvain recognized his father as his teacher, mentor, and spiritual guide, and looked up to him as the *Gadol Hador*. Within that context, it is obvious that Reuvain would be looking for direction from his beloved father, and if his personal conduct needed improvement, he would surely be open to it and even actively seek any advice that his father would give him.

ספר דברים פרק א

וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה
בְּעֵשְׂתֵי עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד
לְחֹדֶשׁ דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
יְדוֹד אֱתוֹ אֱלֹהִים

And it was in the fortieth year [of Moshe's leading the Jewish Nation through the desert], in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month that Moshe spoke to the Jewish Nation, saying all that HASHEM had commanded him to say to them.

רש"י על דברים פרק א פסוק ג

ג) ויהי בארבעים שנה
בעשתי עשר חדש באחד
לחדש - מלמד שלא
הוכיחן אלא סמוך למיתה
ממי למד מיעקב שלא
הוכיח את בניו אלא סמוך
למיתה אמר ראובן בני
אני אומר לך מפני מה לא
הוכחתך כל השנים הללו
כדי שלא תניחני ותלך
ותדבק בעשו אחי

Questions

If so, what was Yaakov's fear? If his fully mature son, a *tzaddik* in his own right, would be willing and interested in hearing the ways in which he could improve himself, what did Yaakov have to fear in rebuking him?