

The Weekly Daf



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Shabbos 51-57

Week of 21-27 Teves 5758 / 19-25 January 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Proof of the Reproof

When Rabbi Simon told Rabbi Zeira that he hesitated to reprove some sinners because he assumed that they would pay no heed to his warning, the latter told him that he was still obligated to try. To prove his point he quoted an interpretation of Rabbi Acha ben Chanina about the heavenly punishment visited upon the righteous Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* because they failed to reprove their sinful neighbors.

Hashem had initially spared these individuals from the general destruction and defended their failure to offer reproof on the grounds that He knew that their warning would not be heeded. "Even if it was clear to Hashem," challenged the Attribute of Justice, "how was it so clear to them?" The initial pardon was then withdrawn — the only time in history that a prophecy for good was rescinded — and the death decree was issued, because one who fails to offer reproof is considered an accomplice to sin.

The clear implication of this *gemara* is that where there is *absolute certainty* that the sinful party will not heed the warning there is no obligation to offer reproof. Some leading commentaries, however, point out in *Mesechta Beitzah (30a)* that if the sin is one which is explicitly written in the Torah, and we can therefore assume that the sinner is aware of it, there is an obligation to offer reproof even if we are certain that it will be ignored. This opinion is codified as law by the Rema in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 608:2*.

How do we reconcile this ruling with our *gemara*? Our *gemara* discusses sins which were explicitly written in the Torah, yet stresses that the guilt of not reproofing was based only on their not being certain that it would be accepted?

The Magen Avraham (*ibid.*) solves the problem: When one is certain that a sinner who is aware of the sin will ignore his reproof he is no longer considered guilty as an accomplice. But he still is obligated by the Torah to reprove a fellow Jew.

Shabbos 54a

Two Mirrors of a Miracle

How does one view this sort of miracle?

A woman died, leaving her husband with an infant who required nursing. The poor fellow could not afford to hire someone to nurse the child. A miracle happened and the father was able to nurse his child!

"How great a man is this," exclaimed Rabbi Yosef, "that such a miracle happened for him!"

"On the contrary," countered the Sage Abaye, "how inferior is such a man that the natural order of things had to be upset for him (and he was not granted heavenly help in acquiring the required funds in natural fashion — Rashi)."

These two perspectives are explained by Iyun Yaakov in this manner:

Rabbi Yosef sees the miracle as a heavenly tribute to this man's greatness because the course of nature was changed in his merit. Had he simply been granted the wealth to hire a nurse, this would have been much less recognized as something extraordinary testifying to his status.

The Sage Abaye, on the other hand, sees this miracle as a put-down of its beneficiary. Had he been granted wealth he would have been able to afford everything he wanted. The miracle which occurred supplied him with only the narrow fulfillment of one need and was therefore a heavenly sign of how lacking in merit he was.

Shabbos 53b

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