

## *THE DUTY TO REBUKE AND ADMONISH OTHERS*

QUOTATIONS FROM TALMUD, ZOHAR AND MIDRASH

*“Do not say that the pit and grave will be your refuge (Avos 4:21) In this world you have the burden of livelihood and many other worries. You are therefore not aware of minor annoyances. A mosquito can bite you, and because of your many concerns, you may not even feel it. But in the grave you have no other distractions. You can even hear the sound of the maggots crawling toward you and feel the pain of their every bite into your flesh. There is nothing that can take your mind away from this suffering. G-d help us”.*

(Rebbe Nachman, Sichot ha Ran 84)

*One should love admonition, for as long as there is admonition in the world, goodness and blessing come to the world, and evil departs from the world.*

(Tamid 28a)

#### **THE DUTY TO ADMONISH AND PROTEST: QUOTATIONS FROM TALMUD, ZOHAR AND MIDRASH**

- 1) Anyone capable of admonishing reproaching or rebuking members of his household and does not do so: is punished and considered culpable for the sins of the members of his household; against the people of his city, is punished for the sins of the people of his city, against the entire world, is punished for the sins of the of the entire world (Shabbat 54b)
- 2) Since Pinchas should have protested against Hophni, Scripture considers it as though he had sinned (Shabbat 55b)
- 3) One who has the ability to admonish and protest and does not, the sin is ascribed to him (Yerushalmi Shabbat ch. 5).
- 4) Because of four things, the property of householders is usurped by the government, (one of which is) because they have the ability to protest and do not do so (Sukkah 29b)
- 5) **There were great men of Israel who saw evil and looked the other way. The Holy One remarked to them, "There will come a time when I will do likewise." (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations).**

6) Abner was punished (by being killed) because he should have protested against Saul, and did not do so. (Sanhedrin 20a)

7) Joshua the high priest wore soiled garments because his sons married women unfit for the priesthood, and he did not protest against them (Sanhedrin 93a)

8) Concerning Zedekiah it is written (11 Kings 24:19): And he did what was evil in the eyes of the L-rd. The evil is attributed to him because he was able to protest and did not (Sanhedrin 103a)

### **BLESSINGS AND CURSES DEPEND ON ADMONISHING OTHERS**

**9) If a person learned, taught, observed, (negative commandments), and performed (positive commandments), but did not protest, he is deemed cursed. On the other hand, if a person did not learn, did not perform (positive commandments), did not observe (negative commandments), did not teach others, and did not have the ability to protest, yet he protested, he is deemed blessed. (Vayikra Rabbah 25)**

10) The Holy One, Blessed be He, said (to the Divine Attribute of Justice): "These are completely righteous men, and these are completely wicked ones." He replied: "It is fully revealed to me that they had the ability to protest, but did not do so." He responded: "It is fully known to Me that if they had protested, they would not have heeded them." He retorted: "If it is fully known to You, is it fully known to them?" They, therefore, should have protested and allowed themselves to be humiliated for the sanctity of Your Name, and to suffer beatings from the Jews. (Tanhuma Tazria 9)

11) "Take all the leaders of the people and hang them. (Num. 25:4)" The sins were attributed to the leaders of the people because they did not protest against the people. (Tanhuma Balak 19)

## **THE ONE WHO CAN PROTEST BUT DOESN'T HAS BLOOD ON HIS HANDS**

12) Who was responsible for the deaths of all those killed in the civil war against Benjamin because of the killing of the concubine in Gibeah of Benjamin?) Pinchas! Because he had the power to protest and did not protest. We learn from this that anyone who has the power to protest and does neither protest nor attempt to bring the Jews to improve their ways, all blood that is shed among the Jews, is shed because of him. (Yalkut Judges 68)

13) The great Sanhedrin should have tied iron ropes around their waists and lifted their clothes above their knees and gone throughout all the cities of Israel, one day to Lachish, one day to Eglon, one day to Hebron, one day to Jerusalem, to teach them proper manners. (ibid)

14) Jerusalem was destroyed only because they did not admonish one another. (Shabbat 119)

## **IT IS NOT A GOOD SIGN WHEN A SCHOLAR OR RABBI IS LOVED BY ALL PEOPLE**

15) If a Rabbinical scholar is loved by the people of his city, it is not because he is superior, but because he does not admonish them concerning matters of Heaven. (Kethuboth 105b)

**16) When the footsteps of the Mashiach will be heard, there will be no admonition. (Sotah 49a)**

17) Because of what did Jeroboam merit the kingdom? Because he castigated Solomon. (Sanhedrin 101b)

18) One should love admonition, for as long as there is admonition in the world, goodness and blessing come to the world, and evil departs from the world. (Tamid 28a)

19) **Everyone who admonishes his friend for the sake of Heaven, merits the portion of the Holy One, Blessed be He; moreover, a mantle of grace is drawn over him. (Tamid 28)**

20) Anyone who knows -how to admonish and admonishes the public, brings content to his Creator. (Tana d've Eliyahu Rabba 3)

### **THE ONE WHO FLATTERS THE WICKED DESERVES ALL THE CURSES OF THE TORAH**

21) One who knows that his fellow man is wicked, yet he flatters him, or if he knows that his colleague is full of sins, yet he says to him, "You are righteous," deserves that all the curses in the Torah come upon him. However, one who admonishes his colleague that he repent, takes the blessings of the one who is admonished. If he accepts the admonition and repents then, he too, receives blessings. (Yalkut Devarim 793)

22) Is there any man who hates his son? However, if he does not admonish him concerning Torah, wisdom, and proper manners, he will eventually hate him. If he admonishes him, however, he will eventually love him. (Yalkut Proverbs 950)

### **THE RIGHTEOUS ARE CONSIDERED EVILDOERS IF THEY DON'T PROTEST**

23) The Divine Attribute of Justice rose and said before G-d: Even on the righteous among them, You shall write on their foreheads a Tav of blood, Tav standing for Tamut, you shall die. The Holy One, Blessed be He, replied and said: "Why?" She answered, "Because they did not reproach your children with words of admonition, and they did not instruct them not to sin." The Holy One, replied, "It is revealed before me that if they had admonished them, they would not have listened". The Attribute of Justice replied, "Even though they would not have accepted,

nevertheless, the righteous should have rebuked them". The Holy One acceded and proceeded to treat the righteous of that generation in Jerusalem as wrongdoers. Six angels of destruction were dispensed to Jerusalem and they devastated it (Otyot R' Akiva).

24) Whoever is able to admonish and does not do so is stricken with tzaraas. (Zohar Part III part 45b)

25) The righteous man is conscientious to go to the wrongdoers to help them turn away from their sins. He informs them of the heavenly judgment and the punishment of Gehinomm. He does not allow himself to rest day or night until he has rebuked them and brought them to full repentance. (Zohar Pg. 20b)

### **ALL JEWS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE ANOTHER**

26) All Jews are responsible for each other. (Shevuos 39a)

**27) Why do many Torah scholars die young? The answer is: they allow themselves to be disgraced, for they do not avenge like a snake the words of Torah and the fear of Heaven. (Avos of R Nasson)**

28) Some sins are so great that those who commit them are not afforded Divine assistance to repent. Included among them is one who was able to rebuke others, be it a group or individuals, and did not do so but left them in their backsliding. (Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 4:1)

29) It is a Jew's duty to protest against sinners. Anyone who, has the ability to protest, and does not do so, is held responsible for that sin. (Remah Yore Deah 334:48)

30) Evil decrees fall only upon those who could have protested and did not. (Yalkut Ruth on the verse, "And Elimelech died... ")

## **KING SALOMON DID NOT SIN BUT BECAUSE HE DID NOT REBUKE HIS WIVES HE WAS CALLED A SINNER**

31) Anyone who says that Solomon actually sinned is in error. The sages ask: But it is written, "and Solomon sinned..."? They answer: Because he should have reprimanded his wives and did not, scripture considers it as if he actually sinned. Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Shmuel that Solomon would have preferred to be a lackey to a foreign ruler rather than have it be written in Scriptures that he sinned. Rashi explains the Gemorah to mean that he would rather have suffered indenture to chop wood and draw water for idol worship. This teaches us how severe the rebuke is for one that could have protested and did not. (Shabbos 56b)

32) The reason that the people in the civil war against Gibeah died was: Hashem said to them, "For My honor you did not protest, but for the honor of mortals you do protest!" (Sanhedrin 103b)

33) The verse "and I shall destroy from amongst you the righteous and the wicked," refers to the righteous who are imperfect. Since they were able to protest and did not, they are considered imperfect. (Avoda Zara 4a)

## **ONE NEED NOT HONOR A TEACHER IF HE PROFANES THE HONOR OF G-D**

34) Aaron did not protest when Moses hit the rock at Mei Meriva for he considered himself as Moses' disciple. However, one need not give honor to a teacher when there is a profanation of the Divine Name. Because he did not protest, he was punished in the same way as Moses. (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukas)

35) From the incident of Pinchas one should learn to be zealous for Hashem when there is a profanation of the Divine Name of the Torah.

The importance of this is shown by the gratitude and good favor through which Hashem gave the priestly covenant of peace to Pinchas. (Shelah Hakodesh, Ten Praises)

**THERE WERE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE AT THE TIME OF THE FLOOD BUT BECAUSE THEY DID NOT PROTEST THEY WERE NOT SAVED**

36) It is written (Midrash Tanchuma, Reei) that many upright people lived in Noah's generation but, nevertheless, perished with the others. The reason they perished is that they did not protest the wrongdoings of the others, unlike Noah who did protest. (The Chida, Chomas Anach, Parshas Noah)

37) One who does not oppose those who persist in their evil ways is punished for all their sins. Furthermore, he transgresses the negative command, "You shall not bear his sin..." It is obligatory upon every G-d fearing and G-d loving person and those of pure heart to arouse zeal ... (Shaare Teshuvah, Shaar 3:59)

38) It is possible that Moses, assured of the righteousness of his brother Aaron, knew that Aaron's intention in making the golden calf was not evil. However, he accused him for the evildoing of the people. Since their downfall came through him, he was deserving of rebuke. (Rambam, Ki Sisa)

**DO NOT ENVY WRONGDOERS BECAUSE YOU THEREBY TRANSGRESS THREE NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS**

39) Do not envy wrongdoers, for anyone who sees their actions and does not arouse zeal transgresses three negative commands. For this reason a man should sever relations with them and have a separate way from them (Zohar I pg. 239b).



40) The Angel of Death does not have the same power over a man who is zealous for Hashem as he has over other men. (Zohar 29b)

41) Anyone who is able to protest and does so, thereby avenging Hashem from the wicked of this world, Hashem, seals a covenant with him and his seed, just as He did with Pinchas. (Reishis Chochma, Shaar HaYirah, ch. 12)

42) If even a minor sin receives public and judicial acceptance, this is the product of corruption and an unpardonable sin; and furthermore, the entire people are held guilty. Forgiveness is possible only after a punishment has been executed upon the entire nation. This was the sin of Sodom. (HaAkeida 20)

### **FOR LACK OF REBUKE NEW GENERATIONS LEARN THE EVIL WAYS OF THE OLD ONES**

43) Because they did not protest against evildoers, the future generations learned from their bad ways. (Rashi Sotah 41 b)

44) It is clearly derived from both the Oral and Written law that one who can protest and does not do so, is held responsible for that sin and for neglecting a positive commandment. Furthermore, he is considered in the category of the wicked. (Chinuch Mitzvah 239)

45) The judges of Israel are responsible for the sins of their people. (Yalkut Yechezkel 341)

46) It is written "Ben Adam: A sentinel have I appointed you for the Family of Israel and you have heard the word of My mouth... but you did not speak up to warn the wicked one concerning his evil way to save his life. He, the wicked one, shall die for his sin, and I shall demand his blood from you." (Yechezkel 3:17)

47) In summary, I would like to cite that which R' Chaim Sofer writes in his illustrious work, Sha'arei Chaim (6a): "Woe to us from the day of Judgment; Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke, when the time comes for Hashem to search through the action of every living being and it will be found written: This righteous man desecrated the Sabbath; this pious man transgressed the prohibition of Niddah; this G-d fearing man transgressed the prohibition against eating non-Kosher food and wearing shaatnes; this holy man is guilty of having relations with a married woman. All believers will be astonished and wonder at the sins attributed to these pious men, for these men were part of a generation of righteous. But Hashem will reply in wrath, "Behold, it was in your power to rebuke such and such a wicked man. Why did you not remember him and remind him of his sin?"

It is quite evident that those who have the capability to rebuke and admonish their fellow man are required to do so. Hesitation or neglect of this requirement is calamitous; perseverance and meticulous fulfillment of this responsibility accrues abundance of blessings.

**HE WHO HAS IN HIS POWER TO REBUKE AND HE INDEED DOES SO, AND HE AVENGES THE VENGEANCE OF G-D FROM THE EVILDOERS IN THIS WORLD, THEN HA KADDOSH BARUCH HU MAKES A COVENANT (BRIT) WITH HIM AND WITH HIS DESCENDANTS FOR ETERNITY AS HE DID TO PINCHAS**

*(RESHIT CHOCHMA, SHAR HA KEDUSHA 12,*

*IN THE NAME OF RAV ABOAB)*

### **THE DUTY TO ADMONISH OTHERS ACCORDING TO RABBENU YONAH**

In the book Shaare Teshuva, Page 31 says the following: **“There is a type of individual who is capable of preventing wrongdoing by speaking out against it, yet he does not speak out. There are no words of rebuke in his mouth. He does not fix his eye on the actions of the sinners, nor pay attention, nor act as one who rebukes them. However, we have been commanded to destroy the evil from the midst of our people, as it says, "so you will exterminate the evil from your midst" (Deuteronomy 13:6) Our Rabbis said, "Whoever is capable of speaking out against the [wrongdoing of the] members of his household [thereby preventing it yet does not speak out, will be punished for the members of his household. If he is capable of speaking out against the People of his City but does not he will be punished for the people of his city. If he is capable of speaking out against the whole World but does not he will be punished for the whole World As it says, "And they shall fall one upon another" Leviticus 26-37) And they said, “All of Israel are guarantors for one another”. –**

### **THE RABBIS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO PLEASE THEIR LISTENERS WILL NOT MERIT TO HEAR THE WORDS OF TORAH THAT HASHEM WILL SPEAK IN THE DAYS OF THE REDEMPTION**

*In the book kav ha Yashar it is written: It is a common occurrence in today's day and age, that people give public lectures with false and misled ideas. Their words are not pure and true, and they confuse people for the sake of receiving praise for their talents. These people have exchanged the everlasting world for this temporary world. They*

*bring about evil decrees, as we have explained above. Anyone who has fear of G-d should consider well the terrible loss that he is incurring by choosing money or honor in this world, rather than the eternal life of the World to Come. The honor that people may give him for his speech or lecture is but a thorn in his soul. Very suddenly he shall find himself overcome by a terrible fear and darkness. Woe unto the shame and humiliation that he will suffer when the time for him to die will come. These people will surely not merit to hear the words of Torah that Hashem will speak.*

#### **TRY TO AVOID POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP**

In the book Shaarei Kedusha, Part 2, Chapter 4 it is written: One should flee from high office as far as possible, and as we discussed at length concerning the characteristic of pride, and as is written in the Zohar; The pure one is the one who makes himself humble in this world. Do we have anyone greater than Moshe, the teacher of all Israel, who refused the Holy One, Blessed is He, for seven days and did not want to be appointed by Him, and who said (Exodus 4:13), "Please send whomever You will send," to the point that it is written; (verse 14) "G-D became angry with Moshe?" And this anger had consequences for him [in that he lost the Priesthood], as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, stated (Zevachim 102a). Finally, he relented and accepted G-d's appointment. And eventually he was punished at the waters of Merivah, and all his merits did him no good.

#### **WHOEVER ACCEPTS POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE END WILL BE PUNISHED**

**For whoever accepts authority over the community even for the sake of Heaven, like Moshe, in the end, will be punished because he is held responsible for all their actions; as our Rabbis, of blessed**

memory, said on the verse; (Deuteronomy 1: 13, see Rashi there, Chok vol. 9 pg 26) "And I will make them heads over you." How much more is this true [in our generation] regarding orphans like ourselves, that, G-D forbid, we will not be able to arise [from the punishment to which we will subject ourselves].

**HAKADOSH BORUCH HU WILL SPEAK DIVREI TORAH  
WHICH HE WILL IMPART TO US THROUGH MASHIACH**

As the Midrash tells us, (Osios d'Rabbi Akiva, Os 7, Yalkut Yeshaiia, remez 429), Hakodosh Boruch Hu will sit in Gan Eden and will expiate on the words of the Torah. All the righteous souls will sit before Him, the entire Heavenly entourage on His right side, and the sun, moon, zodiac, and stars on His left side. Hashem will expound on the words of the Torah that will be given to us through Mashiach. After the lecture, Zerubavel ben Shaltiel will stand up on his feet and say 'Yisgadal v'yiskadash shemei rabba'. His voice will be heard from one end of the world to the other, and all the people in the world will answer, 'Amen yehei sh'mei rabba'. The sinful souls still left in hell shall also answer 'Amen', and through this merit they will also be rescued from their predicament, as it says in the Midrash.

AL KEIN, therefore, a person should take extra care to expound only true Torah words, and his introductions to them should be nothing but the truth. G-d's Torah should be always on his tongue, and he shall thus merit hearing new Torah words from Him, Amen.