On this week’s daf we find that it is permitted to verbally misdirect another for the greater good of keeping the peace. The case of Yosef HaTzaddik and the Shevatim is used as the proof in the Gemara to show that this principle includes a person who falsifies in order to prevent another from doing him bodily harm.

Once, when the Ponevezher Rav, zt”l, was in New York to raise money for the Yeshiva, there were many who looked askance at him. These people (generally grossly unlearned) felt that Yeshivos were backward at best and that giving them money was a complete waste. There were many incidents in those years of people humiliating fundraisers or even beating them up.

During that trip, when he was on the subway, the Rav noticed a group of youths who seemed to be gesturing at him in a way that made it seem as though they were about to single him out for some “fun” at his expense. Since not long before a fundraiser had actually been manhandled by a group of youths, the Rav realized that these were probably the culprits who were now coming after him. Obviously, it was of utmost importance to avoid being alone with them. But how could he shake them off?

The Rav went up to the young man who appeared to be the leader and pulled out a piece of paper with an address. “Could you please direct me to this address? I am a visitor here and don’t know my way.”

The youthful leader looked very pleased as he answered, “With pleasure! Just get out with us this stop and we will be more than happy to lead you there!”

At the next stop, the Rav indicated to the ruffians that they should disembark first and made as if he was planning to follow. While the group of young men waited on the platform, the Rav slowly made his way to the exit. Much to their surprise, he “accidentally” missed the closing doors. Imagine their chagrin as the train pulled away with the Rav safely inside while they looked on from the platform, completely baffled!
the Gemara tells us that just as it is a mitzvah to say something that one will listen to, so too it is a mitzvah to refrain from saying something to another as to which that person will not listen to.

The commentators, however, ask a question from the Gemara in הר"ן שם טז which states that one should keep giving over rebuke until the recipient begins to hit you!

The Biur Halacha quotes the Sefer Chasidim (Simin 413) who explains that the obligation to give rebuke to others only applies to someone as to whom the person giving the rebuke is very close to and comfortable with (לכד Đo ובו). As to any other person, one has to be exceedingly careful, because if they are given rebuke they can begin to take revenge on the one who gave the rebuke.

Perhaps the Gemara in הר"ן שם טז is referring to a person with whom one is close to and there is no real concern that the rebuke will destroy the relationship. As a result, one can keep giving a calm rebuke (obviously out of love). However, our Gemara is referring to people who will react negatively to the rebuke in which case a person should not even start.

This concept is very critical when dealing with the chinuch of children and when working on oneself. Continuing to criticize a child in a situation where he won’t listen may not only destroy the relationship. As a result, one can keep giving a calm rebuke (obviously out of love). However, our Gemara is referring to people who will react negatively to the rebuke in which case a person should not even start.

The conclusion of the Gemara is that women are not obligated in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו, nonetheless, they receive credit for assisting their husbands to fulfill the mitzvah. It is this assistance in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו that generates a mitzvah to marry. A difficulty that commentators have with this position of Ran is from our Gemara. Our Gemara teaches that a woman without children cannot demand a divorce from her husband since she is not commanded in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו. If she claims that she wants to have children who will take care of her when she is older and will bury her after she passes away her request is granted. According to Ran she should be able to demand a divorce so that she could perform the mitzvah of assisting her husband in fulfilling the mitzvah of פרו ורבו.

Sefer Miknah suggests two explanations for the exemption from פרו ורבו and the obligation to marry. The first is that although women are not commanded in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו, they are commanded in the obligation to inhabit the world (לשבת תורת, Yeshayahu 45:18). It is in reference to that mitzvah that marriage is characterized as a mitzvah for women. Secondly, one could suggest that women are exempt from the mitzvah of פרו ורבו altogether but it is prohibited to marry without kiddushin because of the prohibition against being a harlot. In other words, the mitzvah of kiddushin is an optional mitzvah similar to the mitzvah of shechitah. There is no obligation to do shechitah to an animal but if one wants to eat meat the animal must be slaughtered and that slaughtering fulfills a mitzvah. So, too, a woman is not obligated to marry, but in the event that she chooses to get married it is a mitzvah that is even worthy of reciting a beracha.

If a lady was married twice and in both cases she did not have children for ten years, she should not marry a third husband unless he already has children. The Gemara asks, if she married a third husband and remains childless, can the first two husbands reclaim the גבעז which they paid her. The Gemara says that she can claim that she was able to conceive when she was married to the first two husbands, and only now became infertile. Since we know that the general rule is that although a person is commanded in the mitzvah, nevertheless, a woman’s exemption from the mitzvah of פרו ורבו on the one hand, and a woman’s obligation to marry, on the other.

Rabbeinu Nissim, the Ran, writes that although women are not commanded in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו, nonetheless, they receive credit for assisting their husbands to fulfill the mitzvah. It is this assistance in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו that generates a mitzvah to marry. A difficulty that commentators have with this position of Ran is from our Gemara. Our Gemara teaches that a woman without children cannot demand a divorce from her husband since she is not commanded in the mitzvah of פרו ורבו. If she claims that she wants to have children who will take care of her when she is older and will bury her after she passes away her request is granted. According to Ran she should be able to demand a divorce so that she could perform the mitzvah of assisting her husband in fulfilling the mitzvah of הפרו ורבו. Sefer Miknah suggests two explanations for the exemption from הפרו ורבו and the obligation to marry. The first is that although women are not commanded in the mitzvah of הפרו ורבו, they are commanded in the obligation to inhabit the world (לשבת תורת, Yeshayahu 45:18). It is in reference to that mitzvah that marriage is characterized as a mitzvah for women. Secondly, one could suggest that women are exempt from the mitzvah of הפרו ורבו altogether but it is prohibited to marry without kiddushin because of the prohibition against being a harlot. In other words, the mitzvah of kiddushin is an optional mitzvah similar to the mitzvah of shechitah. There is no obligation to do shechitah to an animal but if one wants to eat meat the animal must be slaughtered and that slaughtering fulfills a mitzvah. So, too, a woman is not obligated to marry, but in the event that she chooses to get married it is a mitzvah that is even worthy of reciting a beracha.

Yevamos has been dedicated in honor of Shelly Mermelstien, Sherry Merkel, Selma and Yehiel Horowitz in memory of their late father, Shlomo Horowitz.

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