

The Weekly Daf



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Sanhedrin 107-113

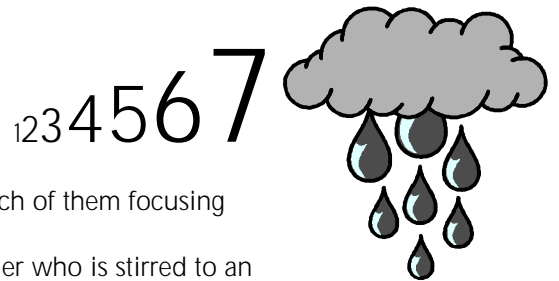
Week of 28 Tamuz - 5 Av 5755 / 26 July - 1 August 1995
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Listening to a Eulogy

The great flood which destroyed a wicked world was delayed until the tzadik Mesushelach (A/K/A Methuselah - ed.) passed away so that he would not be included in their judgment. The Torah, however, makes a point that another seven day period of grace was granted after his passing.

What was the point of these seven days?

These seven days, explains the Sage Rav, were the days of mourning for Mesushelach. This teaches us that the eulogies said for tzadikim have the power to delay tragedy.



Two insights are offered by the commentaries regarding this power, each of them focusing on a different sort of listener:

- The eulogy for a tzadik can inspire repentance in the listening sinner who is stirred to an awareness that he no longer has the tzadik's merits to protect him. (*Maharsha*)
- The deceased hears the eulogy said for him. The Sage Rav urged Rabbi Shmuel bar Shilas to warm up the audience when the time came to say a eulogy for him "because I will be standing there." If the tzadik delayed tragedy in his lifetime he is considered as still being here during the seven day period of mourning and eulogies. (*Iyun Yacov*)

Sanhedrin 108b

Lesson of the Olive Leaf

The dove which Noach sent from the ark to check on whether the great flood had subsided returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. This, says Rabbi Elazar, was the dove's way of uttering this prayer:



"Sovereign of the Universe, may the food which nourishes me be as bitter as the olive leaf but coming directly from Your hand and not sweet as honey but dependent on flesh and blood."

This, explains Maharsha, is a lesson for every man to be content with even the little he receives from Heaven and not seek the luxuries which will make him dependent on other humans. Keep your Shabbos meals down to a simple weekday level, say our Sages, rather than be dependent on others.

Sanhedrin 108b

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