



RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

Should We Decide?

Last time we saw the opinion that if parents carry a genetic disease, and there is a chance that they will pass the disease to their children, then they cannot have children in the natural way. Instead, they must undergo preimplantation genetic diagnosis, PGD, to ensure that they will have healthy children.

However, the Talmud's tale, that we have seen recently, seems to suggest otherwise. We recall the discussion between Chizkiyahu and Yeshayahu as to how much effort one must go to in order to have children. "Chizkiyahu said: I had no children because I envisaged through divine inspiration that the children that emerge from me will not be virtuous. Yeshayahu said to him: Why do you involve yourself with the secrets of the Holy One, Blessed be He? That which you have been commanded, you are required to perform, and that which is God's responsibility let Him take care of."

King Chizkiyahu did not want to have children, knowing that they would not be appropriate. But the Prophet Yeshayahu rebuked the king, that this was not an option. Chizkiyahu suggests that if one knows that their children will not be suitable then they should not have children. Presumably, he would suggest that if technology, such as

PGD, is available to ensure that one's children will be healthy, then one is obligated to use it.

However, Yeshayahu does not encourage, or even permit, such an approach, instead he suggests that we are not supposed to be involved in such decisions. Our obligation is to have children and leave the rest up to the Almighty. Of course, we must educate and nurture our children that they can become the best version of themselves as possible, but we are not under any obligation to make great effort to change their fate. And this is the Talmud's conclusion.

It appears as though the Talmud does not condone, and even forbids, taking steps to prevent unwanted traits being passed on to the next generation.

Some authorities do take such an approach and do not support using PGD, and definitely are not of the opinion that the couple are under any obligation to use PGD to have healthy children.

However, some poskim do promote and encourage using PGD for genetic diseases. What possible explanation can be given, according to this approach, to the Talmudic tale and apparent obvious conclusion?

More on this next time. ■

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