

Beruriah

A story from the Talmud

Talmudic stories about Beruriah frequently highlight her intelligence along with other aspects of her personality. She is shown as someone who was kind, outspoken and witty. Jewish texts also recount the tragedies that Beruriah endured throughout her life. In one story, when neighbors treat Beruriah and her husband Rabbi Meir badly, Rabbi Meir prays and asks God to strike down those who are responsible. To this Beruriah responds:

“Do you justify yourself because of the Psalmist’s pleas, ‘Let sins cease from the land?’ Sinners don’t have to die for sins to cease; it is sufficient that they stop sinning” *Talmud, Brakhot 10a, Telushkin 147*

In other words, Beruriah believed Rabbi Meir should have prayed for their neighbors *to recognize the error of their ways rather than pray for their demise or death.*

What do you think about Beruriah’s concern? What is the difference between hoping that someone gets punished for a wrongdoing or hoping they learn from their mistakes?

Adapted from: <http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishpersonalities/a/Who-Was-Beruriah.htm>

