

BS"D



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From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KI SEITZEI - 5764

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From: TorahWeb.org [torahweb@torahweb.org] Sent: August 25, 2004
Subject: Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky: Chesed - A Prerequisite for Marriage
to subscribe, email weekly@torahweb.org for anything else, email: torahweb@torahweb.org the HTML version of this dvar Torah can be found at: <http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>
RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY:

CHESED - A PREREQUISITE FOR MARRIAGE

Descendants of Amons and Moav are disqualified from marrying into the Jewish people. Two reasons are given by the Torah for this prohibition: they didn't bring bread and water to the Jewish people as they traveled near their land, and in addition they hired Bilam to curse them. We can understand why the attempted curse of Bilam was a reason to distance ourselves permanently from those nations responsible for hiring him. If Bilam would have succeeded, it would have meant the annihilation of Bnai Yisroel. It is difficult to comprehend, however, why the lack of hospitality shown by Amon and Moav should be sufficient grounds to prevent us from ever marrying them.

The significance of the inaction of Amon and Moav can be understood on two levels. When Eliezer is searching for a wife for Yitzchok he is looking only for one character trait, i.e. kindness. It is the kindness which Rivkah exhibits by giving water to a traveler that convinces Eliezer that Rivkah is destined to marry Yitzchok. Chesed is so essential to the success of a marriage that the absence of it would disqualify a potential wife for Yitzchok regardless of any other virtue she may possess.

It was a total lack of consideration for others that eventually led to the exclusion of the descendants of the Givonim who joined Bnai Yisroel in the days of Yehoshua. Chazal (Yevamos 78b - 79a) elaborate on the actions of the Givonim. They took brutal revenge on the sons of Shaul because Shaul had indirectly caused them to lose their source of bread and water. After witnessing the brutality of the Givonim, Chazal decreed that since only one who exhibits chesed is worthy to marry into Bnai Yisroel, one may not marry a Givoni. The Givonim who had suffered by having their own source of bread and water cut off should have become more sensitive to others. Because they became completely insensitive, they were no longer considered eligible marriage partners.

Amon and Moav similarly were rejected for marriage because of a complete lack of middas hachessed. As descendants of Lot they should have followed his example of hachnosas orchim and ran to provide bread and water for Bani Yisroel. Chesed is so essential to a Jewish marriage that one who lacks it cannot possibly be eligible to marry into kahal Hashem.

Although the Torah only gives two explicit reasons for the prohibition to marry descendants of Amon and Moav, Rashi (Devarim 23:5) sees a third reason alluded to by the phrase "al dvar" - it was the attempt to seduce Bnai Yisroel into acts of immorality, as occurred with the daughters of Moav, that contributed to exclusion of Amon and Moav.

This reason should not be understood as distinct from the reason mentioned in the Torah explicitly. We read in Bamidbar 25:2 that the daughters of Moav seduced the Jewish men to participate in their feasts dedicated to avodah zarah and through this caused them to violate the prohibitions of avodah zarah and zenus. The Moavim couldn't bring bread and water to hungry travelers, yet they were able to invite others to their parties of idolatry and immorality.

It is not a coincidence that those who lacked kindness were steeped in immorality. In Vayikra 20:17 an act of immorality is referred to as chesed. Chesed can mean either kindness or a prohibited marriage because they both stem from the same desire to love and be close to others. Gemilus chasadim is the appropriate expression of this desire, whereas gilui arayos is the distorted expression. One who does not perform chesed may end up showing love in the most inappropriate manner. Amon and Moav who rejected chesed as a way of life, became synonymous with immorality.

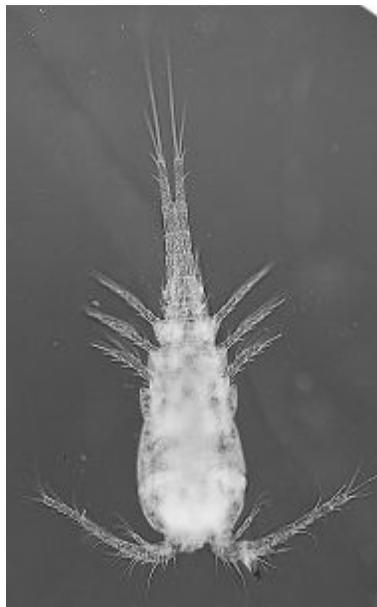
The inaction of Amon and Moav in providing Bani Yisroel with food and water indicated a fundamental flaw on two levels with these nations. The lack of consideration for others in and of itself was problematic; combined with the immorality that resulted from it, it rendered Amon and Moav unacceptable to marry into Bnai Yisroel.

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VARIOUS SOURCES FROM INTERNET RE KASHRUS OF WATER IN NYC

(As with any important shaila, please consult your Rav.)

(This is the Diacyclops thomasi)



<http://hirhurim.blogspot.com/2004/06/new-york-water-ii.html>
June 21, 2004

New York Water II

My source tells me that R. Hershel Schachter has reversed his opinion regarding water in New York. I have a copy of his in-house letter on the subject ... What R. Schachter says is that if you can see a speck in water and the speck is moving (i.e. from that movement you can tell that it is a bug) then that is sufficient to render it visible to the eye as a bug. As proof, R. Schachter cites Rashi, Eruvin 28a sv. tzir'ah: sheretz is from the language of shoretz (crawls) - something that moves on the

ground but is not visible due to its small size, except through its crawling and stirring

This would effectively prohibit unfiltered water. My source tells me that R. Yisrael Belsky is still ruling leniently on the water issue. But make sure to ask your local rabbi.

- posted by Simcha

<http://hirhurim.blogspot.com/2004/06/new-york-water-iii.html>
June 22, 2004

New York Water III

To clarify on R. Hershel Schachter's pesak:

In my haste, I left out some very important points.

1. The creatures in the water are dead. However, if, when alive, they were identifiable as creatures by their movement then, even when dead, they are still prohibited.

2. R. Shachter "heard" that the majority of specks in Boro Park and Flatbush water are these creatures and are, therefore, forbidden to be drunk.

3. R. Schachter ends with a "however". The water would be permitted if we are willing to rule based on the following innovative approach: Just like with a Torah scroll, we are not obligated to check each letter with our eyes right up to the parchment but, rather, from the distance of about a foot, perhaps with these creatures also, we should only rule based on observation from a distance. Since we would only have known that these are living creatures because of looking more closely than we are obligated, perhaps they are permitted anyway. R. Schachter leaves this with a "ve-ayen", because it is difficult to suggest that the Tanna'im and Amora'im did not drink similar water.

- posted by Simcha

<http://hirhurim.blogspot.com/2004/07/new-york-water-iv.html>

July 01, 2004

New York Water IV

I received this via e-mail from a source that claims it came from R. Zechariah Gelley of the Breuers community:

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE RABBINATE

As you most probably have heard, a Sha'aloh has recently been raised about the water in New York City. Initial reports indicated that this problem did not affect water in Manhattan. However, recent information indicates that water in Manhattan shares the same problem as the water in Brooklyn. At this time there still remain gaps in the information available – information that could affect the Heter or Issur of the water.

In the meantime, the Rabbinat is recommending that all drinking water (including ice cubes, tea, coffee, etc.) and cooking water be filtered either through the use of a water filter that can be attached to the faucet or some other device, or by using bottled water that has been filtered.

Before Shabbos one should prepare a sufficient amount of filtered water for use on Shabbos.

Water for rinsing or washing food or dishes need not be filtered. Also water for rinsing one's mouth need not be filtered.

As more information becomes available, this recommendation might change.

10 Tamuz 5764 June 29, '04

- posted by Simcha

<http://www.yikgh.org/torch004.html>

Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld

Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills

The Torch [YIKGH shul bulletin]

[Beg. of July, 2004]

Troubled Waters

Recently there have been a number of halachic issues which have been suddenly projected into the public arena. First there was the "Shebu" question pertaining to the kashruth of a certain species of cow found primarily in South America and an important source of meat for Israel and the United States. However, that was resolved in rather short order and the animal was determined to be kosher.

Next came the Indian hair tumult which affected women's wigs. Although most authorities agree it is not much of an issue in the United States in Israel the jury is still out.

Most recently here in good old New York we have our own "home grown" crisis, copopods! Tiny little creatures barely visible to the naked eye that are found in New York City's drinking water.

The problem is a potentially serious one. The Torah in Parshas Shemini (Vayikra 11:10) prohibits all living creatures that teem in the water. As the Sefer Chinuch explains (mitzvah 164) this includes even the most minute critters.

The fact is that New York water, famous for its high quality and clarity, is not filtered before it reaches our faucets. Ironically, the presence of copopods in the water is a sign that the water is healthy. In a bacteria laden environment these little creatures would not survive.

Here is the halachic issue. As stated, any teeming critter in the water is prohibited-dead or alive. However, it must be visible to the naked eye. In the case of these copopods they can be best described as looking like tiny specks of dandruff. It is upon closer inspection i.e. by use of a microscope that they can be seen as a once living organism. Now there is no doubt that if an organism is only visible through use of a microscope then it is not prohibited to consume. (See Aruch Hashulchan Y.D. 84:36) However, in this case while it is true that the copopods cannot be determined without the use of a microscope or magnifying loop, they can be seen to the naked eye as tiny specks.

There are those who maintain that since they are visible as a speck, they are classified as visible creatures and are prohibited. It should also be noted that according to the DEP there are an average of four copopods per gallon of water.

On the other hand, Rav Herschel Schachter shlita maintains that since in the final analysis the copopods cannot be identified without the use of a microscope, an instrument not available to the generations of Chazal and beyond, they can not possibly be prohibited. [Note from editor - CS - Rav Schachter may have changed his psak in certain respects. See above.]

Rabbi Yisroel Belsky shlita feels that they are not prohibited for another reason. The Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 84:1) states that critters found in still bodies of water are permissible. Since copopods originate in reservoirs which unlike flowing rivers are considered still waters, they would remain permissible. As of this writing the OU follows the ruling of Rabbis Belsky and Schachter. [Note from editor - CS - Rav Schachter may have changed his psak in certain respects. See above.]

It should be noted that Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l in Igros Moshe (Y.D. II:146)

in dealing with a related issue of using microscopes to inspect for insects writes "such implements were never discussed in the Gemora and we must assume that all the subsequent generations of pious people did not consume anything not permissible even unwittingly" I believe the exact same holds true of our water issue.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and kosher summer.

From: Abby Leichman [mailto:AKL59@aol.com]

Sent: June 09, 2004

To: TeaneckShuls@yahoo.com

Subject: [TeaneckShuls] on crustaceans and drinking water

For anyone interested, an acquaintance of mine in the water-quality business sent me the following information in light of the "non-kosher water" crisis in NYC. Seems we don't have to worry about anything here.

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Greetings-

Teaneck's drinking water is supplied by United Water Co. (Formerly Hackensack Water Co.). United Water uses a combination of physical filtration and settling) and chemical (disinfection) processes to treat the water. These filters would not permit zooplankton (like the copepods; see attached photo if you'd like to see what NYC folks are drinking) to pass through to the drinking water distribution system. The attached link provides info regarding the United Water including the treatment process if you're interested in more info.

<http://www.unitedwater.com/uwnj/wtrsply.htm>

Copepods are a class of crustaceans whose members are generally quite small, usually only achieving lengths that range between 0.5 to 2 millimeters.

Nancy Palmstrom Program Manager

ENSR International 20 New England Drive Piscataway, NJ 08854

http://atowncrier.blogspot.com/2004_05_09_atowncrier_archive.html

Brooklyn's Tap Water Isn't Kosher

According to the following email:

Subject: Important Notice 18 Iyar 5764

Dear Chaver, It has been ascertained that the city water contains many bugs (Sheratzei Hamayim), and therefore one may not drink the water even though the sinks have strainers [the Water Department is aware of this, but since this does not pose a health hazard they allow it]. In order to drink the water one needs a filter which will pick up anything 30 microns or bigger. Washing dishes, doing laundry and showering are permitted without a filter. More information will be forthcoming bli neder in the coming days. Please pass this information on to others.

Rav Feivel Cohen

<http://ou.org/other/5764/water.htm>

OU Fact Sheet on New York City Water

The following report was written based on research conducted by Rabbi Yaakov Lach on behalf of the Orthodox Union Kashrut Division. The information is being made available by the OU for the benefit of the Jewish community. This report is not intended as a psak halacha and should not be taken as such. For a halachic decision, please consult with your local Orthodox Rabbi.

[OU Fact sheet on NYC water](#)

August 13, 2004

The creature:

- Crustaceans of the type called copepods (*Copepoda*) are appearing in NYC tap water. Several species are present.
- The primary species is *Diacyclops thomasi*, a very common type of copepod. It begins life measuring about 90 microns (.09 mm) and grows up to about 0.8 mm (males) and 1.4 mm (females) in about five weeks time. [1 inch = 25.4 mm]. [1 mm = 1000 microns].
- A second species, *Mesocyclops edax*, is also present. Studies have shown that *D. thomasi* and *M. edax* alternate in a cyclical fashion in dominating the copepods population of a habitat. Samples taken in June contained *D. thomasi* exclusively, while July's samples included a significant representation of *M. Edax*. [Both *D. thomasi* and *M. edax* are both of the same Order – *Cyclopoida*.]
- Another species, *Skistodiptomus pygmaeus*, is appearing in smaller quantities. They are slightly larger, measuring up to 1.2 mm (males), and are wider in diameter as well. [*S. pygmaeus* is of another Order of copepods – *Calanoida*.]
- Other species are likely present, but in small quantities.

The source of the infestation:

- The organisms that are found at the tap come from the reservoirs. [Research has shown that there is no basis to the initial suspicion that these creatures originate in the water mains.] Reservoirs are essentially man-made lakes, and contain a regular ecosystem, including algae, copepods (and other micro-organisms, such as water fleas (*Cladocera*), rotifers, nematodes, ostracodes, amphipods, etc.) and fish. These are not infestations, but rather essential components of a healthy ecosystem. Copepods feed on algae, which would otherwise multiply and deplete the water of dissolved oxygen. They in turn are food for the fish. Planktonic copepods are present in reservoirs, lakes, and other bodies of slowly moving water throughout the world.
- The reason they are turning up at the tap is that NYC is exempt from the federal and state requirements of municipal water supply filtration. Drinking water is drawn from the reservoirs at ~60 feet below surface level into large tunnels (~16 ft. \AA), and aside from the addition of chlorine and fluoride, arrives at the tap the way it left the reservoir. Therefore, organisms that are typically found in the open waters of a

lake (species that are planktonic or limnetic, such as the three mentioned above) are present.

- Copepods of the *Cyclops* variety do not lay eggs into the open water. Rather, the eggs hatch inside special sacs attached to the female, which concurrently disintegrate. These eggs are very delicate, and will not survive in the water distribution system. Although *Calanoid* species do lay "resting" eggs that are extremely durable (these eggs help the species survive draught or freezing conditions), the overwhelming majority of copepods in the reservoirs and distribution system are *Cyclops*. Therefore, there is little reason to be concerned that copepod eggs may bypass a home filtering system and create infestation downstream of the filter. [Egg size is typically 50-70 microns].
- Copepods are present the whole year, although their population varies somewhat over the seasons. Detailed information and photographs of copepods that are likely to be found in fresh water lakes and reservoirs in our area can be found at the following website: <http://www.glsc.usgs.gov/greatlakescopepods/>
- In 1994 and 1995 the DEP undertook detailed studies of the copepod (and other zooplankton) population of the reservoirs. These studies document the presence of copepods (and other zooplankton) in all the reservoirs. These studies are on file at the OU, and are available upon request.

Other creatures:

- Water fleas (*Cladocera*) are also planktonic, but many species are present in large numbers for only several weeks a year. They are also much more delicate than copepods, and are less likely to survive the trip to the tap. They have appeared at the tap in large numbers only sporadically.
- Nematodes, amphipods, and ostracodes all live at the bottom of reservoirs and lakes, rather than in open waters. They are thus less likely to be sucked into the effluent of the reservoirs. Isolated discoveries of all these organisms have been found in NYC tap water, but in frequencies low enough to be halachically unimportant.
- Rotifers are common, but they are extremely small (~0.1mm) and are generally considered microscopic. They cannot be recognized with the unaided eye.

Level of infestation:

- DEP testing has confirmed that copepods are present in significant quantities throughout the five boroughs. Within each borough, the level of infestation varies from place to place. Out of 18 samples recently taken from throughout NYC by the DEP, the copepod count was, on average, 9 organisms per liter of water. [Note: there is no data on the size of the organisms counted. Also, the DEP count only represents the number of copepods of the *Cyclops* variety. "Cyclops was the dominant species in all complaint samples analyzed and therefore the only species counted." This means that there were a small amount of copepods of the *Calanoid* order present that were not counted.]
- Testing by the OU has documented some locations that consistently have copepods at the level of 5-15 large copepods per gallon, and double that amount of small ones. ['Large' refers to copepods whose antennae and tail is discernable to the unaided eye of an experienced tester with normal eyesight. 'Small' refers to organisms that are visible as a speck in the water, but whose detail is only visible with some magnification.] Other locations have had an occasional one or two large copepods per gallon, while often having a few small ones, and occasionally having no organisms at all.
- It may be that the flow rates of the delivery grid are the cause. Differences in water usage create a situation in which the flow of water in the distribution system is more rapid in some areas and gentler in others. This serves to sort and segregate the particles in the water by size and weight. Thus, some areas consistently receive larger copepods, and/or a greater number of organisms. This uneven distribution can be very pronounced. For example, locations have been discovered where homes on a street have no occurrence at all, and homes around the corner on the avenue have significant levels of copepods. In some areas, the level of incidence varies over time. In general, the dynamic nature of the NYC water delivery grid may make it impossible to rule out infestation in any given area. [Whatever the cause, this uneven distribution of copepod specimens is consistent with the findings of studies of occurrences in other municipalities.]

- Buildings with water tanks on their roof have less infestation, as the insects tend to settle to the bottom of the tank. Until further research is done on the design and consistency of water tanks, this can only be relied upon on a building-by-building basis.
- Water coming from hot water tanks does not contain the same level of infestation as cold water at the same location. It is likely that the reason is that the copepods settle to the bottom of the tank, and the hot water outlet is towards the top of the tank. During times of heavy usage of hot water, copepods will be found in hot water. Similarly, when the flame under the tank is on, currents are created that may propel the creatures upward. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the degree of infestation to expect in hot water, but it is definitely significantly less than normal.

How to view NYC tap water copepods:

- The copepods that come out of the tap are dead, in almost all cases. It is believed that the prolonged exposure to chlorine, along with the rigorous journey through the delivery system, is the cause. Their lack of movement contributes to the difficulty in finding them.
- All of the types of copepods in our water are translucent. This makes it virtually impossible to spot them in a cup of water.
- The fact that some areas generally receive only small copepods further contributes to the difficulty in spotting them. In general, the size of copepods starts at ~0.1mm length for the larvae, and ranges up to 1.4 mm for adults. The average length is 0.8mm. Their thickness ranges from ~0.1mm to ~0.3mm.
- They are best viewed in a shallow bowl of clear plastic, with black background behind it. The antennae and tails of the larger copepods are discernable without magnification.
- Copepods can be found more easily by inspecting a spent filter cartridge. Alternately, a cloth placed at the tap (unfiltered, of course) will catch the copepods of the water that passes through it. The cloth should be carefully inverted into a shallow bowl of water, and the copepods shaken off into the water.

Bitul in processed products: (note: solids are not batul in liquids which can be filtered – see YD 104)

- In many instances, the copepods are emerging from the tap intact. The *D. thomasi* variety appears, almost all of the time, with all four ‘antennas’, 5 sets of feet, and two ‘tails’. Of the other varieties, *S. pygmaeus* often are missing the antennae, and *M. edax* almost always are missing the tail.
- However, the sorting of the water system creates scenarios where some areas will receive only parts of copepods.
- In most cases, the amount of copepods in the water easily outnumbers the general dirt, flocculent, and detritus that is in the water. Localized problems with water pipes may introduce greater amounts of detritus, but then it is often brown in color.
- Cooking the copepods does not ensure that they will disintegrate, although prolonged cooking will cause a significant number to break apart. In controlled experiments by this writer, 10 minutes of cooking left the copepods 100% complete, while a half-hour of cooking caused 50-60% of the copepods to completely disappear. The remaining *D. thomasi* copepods were completely intact. In experiments that simulated cooking accompanied with agitation (stirring), 30 minutes of cooking with stirring caused 80 -90% of the copepods to disappear. This is consistent with the observations of Poskim as found in many responsa (see, for example, Sh’T Rav P’alim IV #8).

Filters:

- Placing a cloth around the faucet tap will reduce the amount of copepods. However, almost invariably, some will come through. Exactly how many depends on the type of cloth and the frequency with which it is cleaned or changed. Therefore, a regular cloth, even if layered, is an option that is difficult to recommend. If a cloth is used, it should be a tight weave, and changed or cleaned often. Several layers of cloth are more effective than one layer.
- Water filters are generally effective, at least in reducing the likelihood of finding creatures to a “miut shaino matzui”, unlikely occurrence. Filters are generally marketed by micron level [lower micron number = more filtration]. A micron rating of 50 microns or smaller has been found to be sufficient. It is noteworthy to mention that micron ratings supplied are typically “nominal”, not absolute. This means that a 30 micron filter (for example) will filter out most particles 30 microns or larger. Some

will get through. Typically, nominal ratings are for 85% efficiency, which means 15% of the particles that size do get through. Happily, as particle size increases, the efficiency increases as well, so that a 30-micron nominal is likely to be 99% effective for, say, 60-micron particles. Another issue with replaceable cartridges is the potential for bypass. This occurs when particulate passes between the filter cartridge and canister, bypassing filtration entirely. This is discussed in the following two points:

- The quality of design of the filter is more important than the micron rating of its filtering material. As with everything else, not all filters are constructed equally. As a case in point, some “canister” type filters (designed for installation under the sink or at the water main) were found, after a few weeks of use, to allow small numbers of whole copepods through. The filter cartridges inside these canisters were rated at 15 microns, but lacked rubber gaskets at the place where they join with the canister. This apparently allowed the ends of the filter material to soften, and copepods passed around the filter cartridge, rather than through it. Also, some filtering materials are stronger than others, and are less likely to rip. There are numerous brands available, and many options in types of materials.
- Mixing cartridges and canisters is not recommended. Each company’s canister can be slightly different in size. A filter cartridge from another company may not fit perfectly, and bypass might occur. Furthermore, even when using a cartridge and canister from the same company, it is critical to use items that are matched for each other. Experience has shown that in some instances, a 5 micron 10” cartridge meant for a slim housing (3/8” tread) will be virtually ineffective when placed in a wider housing (3/4” tread).
- Filter cartridges must be replaced promptly when clogged. This is indicated by a noticeable drop in water flow at the tap. If left in place, the increase in pressure on the clogged filter may rip the filtering material, resulting in bypass.
- Whole home (“point of entry”) filters are installed on the water main of the building. It is important to note that it takes a few days’ usage to flush out the copepods from the pipes. These copepods had been attached to the bio-film on the inside of the building’s pipes, downstream of the filter. Therefore, water should not be considered clean immediately upon installing a whole home filter. (For the same reason, these filters should not be bypassed on Shabbos). Upon filter installation, it is prudent to drain or flush the hot water tank, via the outage valve at the base of the tank. While it is difficult to completely clean a hot water tank, this will reduce the number of organisms present. [As an aside, in very infested areas, choosing a “better” brand of whole home filters is critical for another reason – some brands will become completely clogged within a week’s time! Better brands will last for months, even in infested areas.]
- Filters installed under the sink last for a very long time. As hot water is not used for cooking and drinking, it is sufficient to install a filter on the cold water supply. In this case, letting the cold water run for a short time before using it for drinking and cooking (to clear out the faucet from possible organisms deposited by hot water use) is recommended, but not required. If one would like to be absolutely certain that no copepods make it out of the tap, they should install filters (of a reputable company) on both the hot and cold water supply.
- If installing a filter for the hot water supply as well, care should be taken to install a filter cartridge rated for hot water.
- Filters that affix to the end of the tap generally require frequent maintenance, due to the small surface area available for filtration. They also produce a weak flow of water.
- For copepod filtration, a filter between 5 – 50 microns is appropriate. Filters that are rated below that (one micron or half micron filters) are significantly more expensive, and while they may offer health benefits, they are an overkill with regard to copepod filtration. [Filters that use a carbon block or ceramic disk generally fit into this category. All filters that claim to reduce microbial cysts such as *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* are in this category].

Practical issues:

- Copepods are water creatures, and tend to stay with the water rather than stick to surfaces. This is especially true regarding a strong current of water.

- Dishwashers may be used without any filtration. Even when fed with infested water, testing has shown that copepods do not remain on the dishes or cutlery.
- Dishes may be hand washed in unfiltered water if allowed to drip dry without pools of water on them. If dishes were left to dry with pools of water on them, rubbing the dish's surface with a towel will remove any residual organisms.
- Research is still being done on washing produce. It is noteworthy to mention that the original discovery of these water creatures by an individual who washed and checked his *Alei Katif* lettuce is not relevant to this question. The reason is that this individual checked the *rinse water* for bugs, not the lettuce.
- Cooking water for a short time has no effect on copepods. However, as the cooking time is prolonged, the amount of copepods that disintegrate and disappear increases. Cooking for half-hour generally eliminates half of them. Cooking accompanied by stirring or agitation significantly increases the reduction of copepods even more. See above, 'Bitul in processed products' for more details.

The reservoirs:

- The copepods have been found to live in all of the reservoirs that supply NYC, although some reservoirs have more than others. [Studies on the reservoir's zooplankton population were done by the DEP in 1994 and 1995, as well as recently].
- The fast moving rivers and creeks that supply the reservoirs do not harbor the copepods that are present in our water.
- The Croton reservoir system, located in Westchester, supplies parts of Manhattan (including all of lower Manhattan, East and West Villages, Gramercy Park, Kips Bay, Chelsea, Clinton, East Harlem, Harlem, and Inwood) and southern and eastern portions of the Bronx. Aside from crustaceans, it has a documented history of midge fly larvae infestation. NYC is required by Federal law to filter Croton water. However, construction of a filtration plant for Croton is still in the planning stages, and is not expected to be completed before 2010. [Source: DEP publication, May 23, 2003, by Salome Freud].
- The remaining sections of the city receive water from the Catskill and Delaware reservoir systems. These reservoir systems deposit water into Kensico reservoir, located near White Plains, NY. From there, some water is further deposited into Hillview reservoir, a man-made reservoir near Yonkers, while most water enters the city distribution tunnels directly from Kensico. A small section of Queens also receives groundwater, but it is mixed with water from Kensico.
- Kensico reservoir is almost entirely (>95%) filled with water supplied from the upstate aqueducts. It has its own endemic copepod population. Hillview is completely artificial (no natural intake of water), and may have an endemic copepod population as well.

Other municipalities:

- Municipalities obtain water either from surface water (i.e. reservoirs, lakes, and rivers) or groundwater (wells and aquifers). Groundwater lacks many of the organisms found in surface water. Copepods are found in groundwater, but their size and numbers are significantly smaller.
- There are 7,400 surface water systems in the United States, of which 7,310 have filtration plants. Municipal filtration, if properly maintained, will successfully remove copepods and related organisms from the water, to a level acceptable in halacha. Of the 90 systems that do not filter their water, most serve a very small population (<10,000). Aside from New York City, Boston and Seattle are examples of large cities whose water supplies are (at least in part) not filtered.

[Photos of NYC Tap Water Crustaceans at](http://ou.org/other/5764/copepod%20pictures.doc)
<http://ou.org/other/5764/copepod%20pictures.doc>

Other anecdotal sources re kashrus of NYC water -
http://www.forward.com/fiddish/archives/week_2004_06_20.php
http://www.thebronsteins.com/archives/2004_06.html
[http://shamash3.shamash.org/listarchives/mail-jewish/volume42/v42n71 & 72 & 75](http://shamash3.shamash.org/listarchives/mail-jewish/volume42/v42n71&72&75)
<http://www.aishdas.org/avodah/vol13/v13n024.shtml#16>

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com]
 Sent: Aug 26 2004
 PENINIM ON THE PARSHA
 BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
 - Parshas Ki Seitzei

Then his father and mother shall grasp him. (21:19) The parents demonstrate that their love for and commitment to the Almighty transcend the love they have for their child, as they together take him to Bais Din, Jewish court, to be brought to trial. Society's values must supercede human emotion. It must be a most difficult feat to take one's child and bring him to the trial that will probably cost him his life. A young Torah scholar once visited Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl. During the course of the conversation, the young man remarked that he was currently studying the laws of the ben sorer u'moreh, wayward and rebellious child. Immediately, Rav Abramsky said, "Let me share with you an incredible story that occurred when I was rav in Russia."

As rav in the city, it was not unusual to be besieged with more than just sheilos, questions, regarding Jewish law. Many times, people came over to ask him for a blessing, to supplicate Hashem on their behalf, or just simply to discuss a problem. One day, a woman came over and begged, "Rebbe, I entreat you to pray to Hashem that my son should die!" When Rav Abramsky heard this shocking request, he was understandably taken aback. Why would a sane woman want to see her son dead?

The distraught mother began to explain her predicament. It seems that her son, who was an only child, had recently been conscripted into the Russian Army. Everybody was acutely aware of the magnitude of this spiritual tragedy. Rarely did anyone leave the army as an observant Jew. Regardless of the Jewish soldier's status prior to entering the army, being confronted with challenges to the spirit on a regular basis -- coupled with exposure to a harsh, base environment -- destroyed whatever Yiddishkeit he had. Therefore, the mother said that it was preferable that her son leave this world as a committed, observant Jew, than grow to be an atheist who denigrated everything Judaism represented.

Rav Abramsky was both shocked and impressed by her request. This was no ordinary woman. Here was a woman who was prepared to see her only child die prematurely, as long as he died as an observant Jew. It was mind-boggling. If this boy died, she would be left in the world alone, with no future: No Kaddish, no one to carry on her name. Yet, it was all worth it, as long as her son would not have to contend with the spiritual trials and challenges that were so integral to the army way of life.

They both began to cry: the mother for her son; Rav Abramsky for the mother and her son. At the end, the rav said, "No, we will not pray for him to die. We will pray that he lives and withstands the challenges and emerges triumphant from the army wholly committed to Yiddishkeit. Their prayers were answered, and the young man completed his tour of duty as an observant Jew.

Rav Abramsky looked at the young scholar and said, "At that moment, I was able to visualize the type of individual, the strength of character the parents must possess in order to be prepared to grasp their son and bring him to Bais Din. These parents truly love their son and they know that if he is allowed to live he will desecrate the Torah and lose his portion in the Eternal world. They would rather he loses his life than forfeit eternity."

You shall surely stand them up, with him. (22:4)

The Midrash states an interesting halachah. If the owner of the animal decides to sit beside his animal and say to his would-be benefactor, "Since you have a mitzvah to unload my animal, do it and I will watch," the halachah is clear: he is not obligated to do a thing. The Torah states, Hakeim takeim imo, "You shall surely stand them up, with him." It must be performed with the owner sharing in the endeavor. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, suggests a practical application to this halachah. We may ask

Hashem to assist us in our endeavor to ascend the ladder of spiritual success only if we share in the activity. If we ask Hashem to protect us from speaking lashon hora, slanderous speech, and we do everything within our power to watch what we say, then we can expect Hashem's Divine assistance. If we sit back, however, and expect Hashem to act for us, then we are demonstrating gross chutzpah. Hashem will assist us in our endeavor. The first step, however, must be made by us.

The Chafetz Chaim gives the following analogy. A poor man meets one of the wealthier citizens of the town and pours out his heart filled with woe to him. The wealthy man listens intently and says, "I will see you tomorrow at 4:00PM at my home, and I will have a check waiting for you." The next day rolls around, and the poor man does not appear. It is already 6:00PM and the poor man, who was in such dire need, is still absent. Another hour goes by, and the-would-be benefactor decides to go home.

The next day, the wealthy man walks down the street to be greeted once again by the poor man: "Please help me. I am starving. My family is starving. We cannot go on like this." He continues pouring out his tale of woe: "If you could only lend me a few gold coins, I could repay my debts and support my family."

The wealthy man looks into the poor man's eyes and says, "I do not understand you. We had made up to meet yesterday at 4:00PM. What happened to you? I waited until 7:00PM, and you did not show up, so I went home. Come again tomorrow, and I will bring the money."

The next day, the wealthy man waits at the appointed time for the poor man to appear. He does not show up until the following day, when they once again met on the street and the poor man once again starts to delineate his litany of woes. Finally, the wealthy man says to him, "I do not think you are serious. Twice we have met, and you have poured out your heart to me, only not to appear the next day to retrieve the funds. You just want to beg, but you do not want to follow through!"

This analogy applies to us. Every day, we entreat Hashem during the Ahavah Rabbah Tefillah of Shacharis, "May You be equally gracious to us and teach us... instill in our hearts to understand and elucidate, to listen, learn... Enlighten our eyes to Your Torah..." We recite these and many other supplications daily. There is no doubt that Hashem is prepared to grant us our entreaty. After all, why not? It will certainly enhance our mitzvah performance and enable us to achieve profundity and understanding in Torah knowledge. There is only one thing that Hashem asks of us: to appear at the bais hamedrash and learn.

Regrettably, our entreaties are only lip service which we pay to Hashem. We say the words; we talk the talk, but refuse to walk the walk. And even when we do go to the bais hamedrash, do we apply ourselves to the learning -- or do we spend our time bickering and indulging in other forms of idle conversation? This goes on until the next day, when we once again turn to Hashem with more requests.

If you encounter a bird's nest on the road... with young birds... and the mother is roosting on the birds... you shall not take the mother with the young. You shall surely send away the mother and take the young for yourself. (22:6,7)

If the Torah's goal is to spare the mother bird, it would be more sensible to prohibit taking the young altogether. Surely when the mother returns, she will be anguished to discover that her chicks are no longer in the nest. What is the rationale for this mitzvah? Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl, explains that the Torah is teaching us a powerful lesson in *menchlichkeit*, humanness and ethics: It is forbidden to take advantage of a mother bird's love for her children in order to catch her more easily. Usually, when a predator approaches a nest, the bird will immediately fly away. This bird did not leave, because she is a mother protecting her young. Her survival instinct is superceded by her motherly love, as she prefers remaining in the nest to protect her young over the option of escaping for her personal safety.

The Torah enjoins us to respect this motherly instinct and not take advantage of making an easy catch of a devoted mother bird. The reward for obeying this command is *arichas yamim*, longevity. The lesson is clear and simple: When someone demonstrates sensitivity towards Hashem's creatures, Hashem reciprocates towards him.

Rav Yosef Chaim substantiates this thesis with the words of the Rambam, *Hilchos Shechitah* 13:7 who writes: "If a person sent away the mother, but she came back, and after this he took her, this is permitted." The Torah forbids catching the mother only if she is incapable of flying away from her young, over whom she hovers to protect them from being taken. The halachah is applicable only if the mother remains out of love. The mother who does not place her young before her own safety does not necessarily deserve our protection. We may add that this idea should apply equally to the human arena. A child comes first. If we bring children into this world, we have a moral obligation to care for them - even if it might put us out. This problem often emerges with decisions concerning education. A parent chooses what is best for the parent, or what he believes is best for his child. What the parent thinks and the reality of what is, do not necessarily coincide. We may be so bold to suggest that this applies also to the surrogate parent, the rebbe, whose decisions concerning the student are critical to his growth and development.

Sponsored in loving memory of HERMAN SCHLESINGER by his children and grandchildren Richard and Barbara Schlesinger and Family
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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

[From last year]

Ki Tetse Stubborn and Rebellious Sons

THE LAW OF THE STUBBORN AND REBELLIOUS SON is one that generated considerable debate among the sages. What was its logic? How was it to be applied? Was it, in fact, ever applied? What does it teach us about the nature of justice, human and divine? Here is the law as it appears in this week's sedra:

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard. Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

The apparent harshness of the law led R. Shimon bar Yochai to conclude that "there never was nor ever will be a stubborn and rebellious son" [i.e. a situation in which the law was applied]. Why then was it written? So that we should expound the law and receive reward." The law was, in his view, a matter of theory rather than practice - a way of signalling the gravity of the case rather than specifying action to be taken. (Perhaps the law was meant to be recited to such a child in order to persuade him to mend his ways).

In fact, the whole tendency of rabbinic interpretation was so restrictive as to make it difficult if not impossible for such a case to arise. The child must be within three months of attaining maturity (younger than that, he was still a minor; older, he was not still a child). He must have stolen

money from his parents, used it to buy a specific measure of meat and Italian wine, eaten and drunk it in one go, in a place other than his parent's house, and so on. The conditions that had to be satisfied for the law to be applied were so stringent that they could almost never have been met. Indeed some sages suggested conditions that in practice would never be fulfilled. For example, R. Judah held that "If his mother is not like his father in voice, appearance and stature, he does not become a rebellious son. Why? Because the Torah states, He will not obey our voice, and since they must be alike in voice, they must be alike in appearance and stature also."

Nevertheless, there were those who held that the law was intended to be, and actually was, applied. What, according to them, was the logic of the law? R. Jose the Galilean said: "The Torah foresaw the ultimate destiny of the stubborn and rebellious son. Having dissipated his father's wealth, he would seek to satisfy his wants and be unable to do so. He would then go to a crossroad and rob. Therefore the Torah ordained: Let him die innocent rather than die guilty - for the death of the wicked benefits both themselves [because they have no chance to commit further crimes] and the world."

On this view, the law of the stubborn and rebellious son is a form of pre-emptive punishment. He is deemed worthy of punishment not for what he has done but for what he is likely to do in the future. The equivalent nowadays would be preventive detention, that is to say, putting someone in prison because he or she is judged to be a danger to society. There is a concept in secular law of punishment as deterrence, not just punishment as retribution. That, according to R. Jose, is the logic of this law. Not only is the child himself sentenced, but the aim is also that "All Israel will hear of it and be afraid" - in other words that other potential criminals be discouraged by seeing the fate of this one. One explanation of the disagreement between Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Rabbi Jose is therefore that they differ as to whether punishment-as-deterrence is part of the Torah's view of justice.

One of the most significant post-enlightenment arguments about the nature of ethics was between Kantians and Benthamites. For Kant, ethics was a matter of duty. For Bentham it was a matter of consequences. Kant believed in justice as retribution. If a wrong had been done, it had to be set right by wrong being done to the wrongdoer. Justice is a matter of rectifying past wrong, restoring moral balance to the world.

Bentham, by contrast, developed the theory known as utilitarianism. An act is right if it produces the best consequences for society as a whole, sometimes summarised as "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." On this view, justice looks less to the past than to the future. If it deters wrongdoing and leads to less crime it is justified.

This is no mere theoretical disagreement. It leads to significant differences in practice. According to Bentham, a punishment might be justified even if it were out of proportion to the crime, so long as it deterred others (an "exemplary punishment"). A Kantian would disagree. If it is disproportionate to the crime (a Jewish principle: see Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, III, 41) it is unjust, and no utilitarian benefits can justify injustice. Conversely, Kant considered the hypothetical case of a man who had committed murder on a desert island where the remaining inhabitants were about to leave. Should they sentence him to death and carry out the punishment? There is no deterrence in such a case. There would be no one else on the island to murder. None the less, said Kant, sentence should be carried out, for if it were not, a past wrong would remain unrequited. There would be a failure of justice.

Some such disagreement seems to lie between R. Shimon and R. Jose. R. Jose believed that the Torah sometimes prescribes punishment-as-deterrence in order to protect society and reduce the incidence of serious crimes. R. Shimon holds that it does not, for punishment-as-deterrence offends against the principle of retributive justice. One should not commit an injustice, even if lives will be lost in future as a result.

Thus far, the legal debate. However, the Torah is a rich and complex document and does not confine itself to legal provisions alone. It also contains narrative. One narrative in particular has a bearing on the question of the stubborn and rebellious son - namely, the story of Ishmael. Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Sarah's handmaid Hagar, by whom Sarah proposed that Abraham have a child (what is nowadays called "surrogate motherhood"). When Sarah eventually had a child of her own, Isaac, she saw Ishmael metzachek - a difficult word to translate in this context. Literally it means "mocking" ; Rashi interprets it to mean "guilty of cardinal sins." Whatever Ishmael was doing, it was enough to convince Sarah that he was not fit company for her own son. (indeed G-d himself had told Hagar, several chapters earlier, that her son "will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility towards all his brothers" 16:126). Hagar and the young Ishmael were sent out into the desert in the blazing sun. Their water ran out, and Hagar put the child under a bush, saying "I cannot watch the boy die." We then read:

G-d heard the boy crying, and the angel of G-d called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; G-d has heard the voice of the lad there where he is [ba-asher hu sham]. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then G-d opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

The midrash adds the following commentary:

Rabbi Simon said, The ministering angels immediately began accusing him [Ishmael], saying, "Lord of the universe, will you bring up a well for an individual who will one day slay your children with thirst?" G-d said to them, "At this moment, what is he [righteous or guilty]?" "Righteous," they replied. "I judge man only as he is at the moment."

Similarly the Talmud states: "Individuals are judged only according to their acts at the time, as it says, 'G-d has heard the voice of the lad there where he is.'"

Ishmael was the first stubborn and rebellious son, rejected by his parents (father Abraham and step-mother Sarah) for what he might become ("a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him"). Yet the Torah, as interpreted by the midrash, rejects the argument of R. Jose in favour of the logic of R. Shimon. Punishment as deterrence against future crimes is not divine justice. G-d does not judge people for what they might become. He judges them as they are now. Beneath this principle of justice is a deeper idea still: the principle of human freedom. Only the certainty that a juvenile delinquent will grow into a murderer can justify punishing him now to prevent acts he may commit in the future. But because we are free, and because even the most hardened criminal can repent and change, there is and can be no such certainty in human affairs. A stubborn and rebellious child can grow into a responsible adult. (Indeed, according to the Talmud, Ishmael repented in the lifetime of Abraham)

The story of Ishmael in Bereishith is an important commentary on the law in Devarim, and incidentally tells us something not only about the nature of biblical justice but also about why the Torah contains narrative as well as law. Law deals in generalities. Narrative focuses on particularities: this person, that family, this time, that place. Without law, society becomes chaos. But without narrative, law itself loses contact with the realities of human life. It becomes impersonal and at times inhuman (an American philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, has written an interesting book on this theme, Poetic Justice). It is one thing to discuss justice-as-deterrence in the abstract, quite another to do so with the image of the young Ishmael about to die of thirst before us. When R. Shimon bar Yochai stated that "There never was nor ever will be a [case where the law of the] stubborn and rebellious son [was applied]" he was articulating one of the deepest instincts of biblical justice. We do not condemn people for what they may become. We judge them for what they are.

There is a custom at this time of the year to read, every day, Psalm 27. This contains a very arresting line: "Though my father and mother may reject me, the Lord will gather me in." Though there is no overt reference here to the law of the stubborn and rebellious son, the echoes are unmistakable. That is precisely what the law envisages, namely, parents coming to court and saying, We can no longer control our child. We reject him. It is also what Sarah (and, reluctantly, Abraham) did to Ishmael. The Psalm therefore expresses a tragic human possibility. There are cases in which the relationship between parents and a child can break down completely - when a child can feel completely rejected. Yet, says the Psalm, divine justice is something more than mere justice. G-d never rejects us. Precisely because the gates of repentance are never closed, G-d holds out his hand to all of us, and that relationship cannot break down. We may (G-d forbid) reject G-d but G-d never rejects us. We may be his stubborn and rebellious children, but he is our ever-accessible parent. Thus, in the Psalm, the narrow legal theme of the juvenile delinquent becomes a majestic truth about the human condition. G-d never abandons us or gives up on us, because He never ceases to believe that, whatever wrong we may have done in the past, we can mend and transcend in the future. More than we have faith in G-d, G-d has faith in us. In that knowledge we find a strength greater than ourselves lifting us when we fall, affirming us in the midst of rejection, believing in us more than we believe in ourselves.

From: RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com Sent: Aug. 26, 2004 Subject: RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS
.Parsha August 27, 2004 KI TEITZEI

The parsha of Ki Teitzei contains a host of specific mitzvot. In this it resembles more the parsha of Kdoshim in Chumash Vayikra than it does the other parshiyot of Chumash Dvarim, which are more general and are devoted to national history and Jewish destiny. But the truth be said, the mitzvot in Ki Teitzei are the backbone of all Jewish history and are the tools of survival that insure that there will always be a Jewish destiny to pursue. It is undoubtedly with this in mind that the rabbinic commentators over the ages interpreted the opening verse of the parsha - "When you go out to war against your enemy" - in an allegorical and not merely a literal sense. The "war against your enemy" refers to the ongoing war of conscience and morality within ourselves in which we are constantly engaged all of our lives. "The enemy" lurks within us. It is a war between right and wrong, discipline and hedonism, instant gratification and long-term benefit. Every day of our lives we make these choices and fight these battles. The Torah, which always advises us to choose life and eternity, supplies us with these mitzvot - the material aid in our struggle. The rabbis taught us that the Lord wished to give Israel merit and strength and therefore He gave us many mitzvot. All of our lives, in all circumstances, we would be able to win the crucial battle of human morality because these mitzvot would always be at hand.

The example of "yefat toar" - the beautiful woman captured in war is an example. The Torah gave us a mitzvah to help moderate desires of lust. It is obvious, as Rashi points out, that the Jewish soldier's desire to marry such a woman, having no other commonality except for momentary physical passion is not really such a good idea. Passion and physical desire are part of marriage but they are certainly not all of marriage. The Torah, by emphasizing the legal and moral consequences, legal and moral, of his behavior attempts to put the entire matter in perspective before the actual liaison occurs. The mitzva serves as a brake on the passion and therefore mitigates an otherwise immoral and dangerous relationship. The rabbis taught us that, "the Torah spoke only regarding man's evil inclination." All of the mitzvot are intended to save us from ourselves, our weaknesses and foibles, our foolishness and unhealthy desires. From the outside, looking at Judaism with its 613 commandments and rituals, our faith may appear confining and

cumbersome. Yet any Jew experiencing and living Judaism from the inside, considers all of the rules, rituals and commandments to be mighty weapons in the war that we perform daily against wrongdoing and self-destruction. Impulse and passion are to be avoided. Perspective and understanding of the consequences of one's behavior are to be treasured and nurtured. Observance of mitzvot allows us to gain that necessary perspective and long view that can make life's struggles holy and worthwhile.

I wish to thank the many of you that expressed your condolences to me on the passing of my father, of blessed memory. May we only know good tidings one from another.

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein www.RabbiWein.com Please note our new address and phone number: 386 Route 59 Suite 13 Monsey, NY 10952 800-499-WEIN(9346) 845-368-1528 FAX info@jewishdestiny.com

From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: August 26, 2004 To: weekly@ohr.edu
Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Ki Teitzei
TORAH WEEKLY - For the week ending 28 August 2004 / 11 Elul 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu
Parshat Ki Teitzei <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1816>
Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

OVERVIEW The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son's right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father's desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women's clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads - tzitzit - on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master. Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. Bnei Yisrael are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to make rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease tzara'at is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers' pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother's widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The parsha concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for in spite of knowing about the Exodus, they ambushed the Jewish People.

INSIGHTS Skin Deep "And you will take her as a wife..." (21:11)
In recent years, our society has seen an enormous increase in anorexia and other food related diseases - diseases that were almost unheard of thirty years ago. Plastic surgery now accounts for a sizeable percent of all operations. More and more, we live in a world that stresses the

importance of appearance. The way things look is more important than what they are. Appearance is more important than essence.

Interestingly, this shift of focus from essence to appearance has been paralleled by a large increase in juvenile crime and teenage social dysfunction.

This should not surprise us, for the Torah taught us this connection some three thousand years ago.

In this week's portion, we learn that a Jewish soldier may marry a foreign woman captive taken in battle. The Torah then goes on to speak about the rebellious and wayward son. Rashi tells us that these two subjects are juxtaposed to teach us that even though it is permitted to marry a captive, the result of this union will be a rebellious and wayward son.

Ostensibly, a delinquent son would seem to be a punishment for taking this woman as a wife; however, we can also understand Rashi as a prediction rather than a punishment.

Someone who is so preoccupied with the external look of things that he is prepared to bring into his home a woman who is totally foreign to his culture and beliefs will be passing on to his son the message that the way things look is more important than the way things are; such a value system leads inevitably to producing offspring with a warped sense of what life is all about.

- Sources: Avnei Nezel in Mayana shel Torah; thanks to Rabbi C. Z. Senter

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From: Aish.com [newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: Aug 24, 2004

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/kolyaakov/>

Kol Yaakov

By RABBI BARUCH LEFF

Parsha Insights based on and inspired by the teachings of Rav Yaakov Weinberg of blessed memory

CHILDREN AND SACRIFICES

No, we will not be discussing child sacrifice, but rather, the sacrifices parents make for their children. If we had to link two commandments in the Torah, there are many that would come to mind easily. What about the commandments of honoring one's parents and of sending away the mother bird before you take her young? Not exactly on the top of your list, is it? Yet there is a strong connection between the directive of "shiluach hakain," sending away the mother bird before you take her young, which is discussed in Parshat Ki Tetzei, and "kibud av va'aim," honoring one's parents.

The Torah says that if one finds a bird's nest where the mother bird is sitting and watching the eggs or the chicks, the finder is not allowed to take both the mother and the eggs, but must first send away the mother and then take the eggs. The reward for this is "length of days" [Devarim 22:6-7]. As we may be aware, there is only one other place where the Torah uses the expression "you will have length of days" as a reward, and that is concerning the Mitzvah of honoring one's parents [Shemot 20:12, Devarim 5:16].

There must be some kind of common denominator between these two commandments which otherwise appear totally dissimilar and unrelated. That common denominator is self-sacrifice. The Torah recognizes and grants great reward for commandments which involve our recognition of mesirat nefesh (self-sacrifice). When the Torah instructs us to honor our parents, it is telling us that parents exhibit tremendous mesirat nefesh for their children. Beginning with being woken up at all hours of the night, during infancy and childhood, to the financial stresses of paying for the wedding, parenting by definition is about sacrificing your own comforts for your children. The Torah prescribed the great reward of "length of days" for honoring one's parents, in order to cause people to appreciate the mesirat nefesh that parents exhibit.

This is exactly the same concept we find concerning shiluach hakain, sending away the mother bird before you take her young. Anyone who has ever tried to catch a bird knows that it is a virtually impossible task. So when does a person ever encounter a situation where he can catch a bird? Won't the bird fly away? The answer is that the bird is a mother. Like all mothers, she is willing to sacrifice and give over her own freedom in order to remain with her children. For one to grab the bird and take advantage of the self-sacrifice present in the maternal instinct of the mother to her offspring is prohibited. By granting the mother her freedom and sending her away, we avoid utilizing her attribute of self-sacrifice against her.

By not taking advantage of her mesirat nefesh, we show our appreciation for the concept of self-sacrifice for children. Therefore, here as well, as a reward for that recognition and appreciation of parents' love and concern towards offspring, one is entitled to "length of days."

One's students are described in the Torah as one's children (see Rashi Devarim 6:6, for example). Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, of blessed memory, treated his students as his children and exhibited tremendous self-sacrifice for them. Although he was the spiritual guide for thousands, constantly being called regarding life and death issues, and issues involving the well-being of the Jewish nation as a whole, he was able to live the maxim that a Jew must always be concerned for 'Klal Yisrael and Reb Yisrael' - meaning that a Jew must care deeply about the great issues and problems facing the Jewish nation, but he can't do so at the expense of ignoring the 'smaller' issues of his next door neighbor. Whether the issue was of grand, national scale or one where his students needed assistance with things of lesser significance, Rav Yaakov was always self-sacrificing. Let us cite a few examples from Rav Yaakov's life.

For a number of years, Rav Yaakov traveled every week to a small community in East Lexington, near Baltimore. A small band of young couples had invited him to expound on Judaism, secular and isolated though they were. The group eventually built a synagogue. Due to a lack of funds, they built it themselves. One of the members related that she remembered Rav Yaakov nailing shingles on the roof and stringing electric wire for the new Sanctuary. She further related that many of that group later had become Sabbath observant and sent their children to day schools. Rav Yaakov once went missing from the Yeshiva for two days because a student expressed an intent to divorce his wife. For two days, Rav Yaakov counseled them in an effort to save the marriage. Another time, a young teacher phoned from out-of-town because he was lacking success in his new position. Convinced that he could not help him over the phone, Rav Yaakov flew at his own expense to observe the teacher in action, met with the principal and the teacher, and made suggestions.

During the week of the shiva mourning for Rav Yaakov, an old woman phoned the house, apparently unaware of Rav Yaakov's passing. She inquired as to why she did not receive the money for her medicine that week. The family immediately surmised that their father must have been personally sending the money. Not wishing to burden her yet with the tragedy, they explained that perhaps the address had been lost. "For 20 years you have been sending money to the same place and now you lost the address?" she replied incredulously. There was a time when Rav Yaakov, at the frantic request of a small Yeshiva, spent a few months as its 'temporary Rosh Yeshiva, Dean'. Rav Yaakov slept in a house owned by the Yeshiva, but the house had no heat. An electric heater was installed in his room. The students became concerned when Rav Yaakov caught a winter cold that did not go away. One student went into Rav Yaakov's room to make sure the heater was working properly. When he checked, the heater was nowhere to be found.

The yeshiva's cooks, a Russian immigrant couple, slept in another part of the house, and for some unknown reason, no one had thought to take care of the heat in their quarters. Rav Yaakov had secretly moved the heater from his room to theirs because, "I didn't want them to catch a chill," he later explained.

Yitzchak studied with Rav Yaakov every Thursday night for many years. He would anxiously wait all week, gathering and saving all the his questions to ask Rav Yaakov. One Thursday, Rav Yaakov went to Atlanta for a family celebration and Yitzchak did not expect Rav Yaakov to be at the session so he didn't come to Rav Yaakov's house that night. On Friday night, Yitzchak wished Rav Yaakov his usual 'Good Shabbos'. Rav Yaakov asked him "Where were you last night? I was waiting for you." Yitzchak said, "I thought you were out of town." Rav Yaakov replied, "I was away but I left the celebration early and took an earlier flight so I could be back for our session." Rav Yaakov knew how much Yitzchak enjoyed their weekly study time together so he cut short his own pleasure for the sake of his student.

It was a hectic Friday afternoon and the Siyum Hashas (Sept. 1997), the grand celebration of the completion of the worldwide 7-1/2 year Daf Yomi - one page of Talmud daily - program held at Madison Square Garden, Nassau Coliseum, and broadcast live to numerous places around the world, was to be held on Sunday evening. David had tickets for his wife, himself and three kids at Nassau Coliseum. They had been talking about this all summer with their kids as a very special event to be a part of. They had plans to drive from Baltimore to New York on Sunday and drive back that night or the next morning. For three weeks leading up to the date, David was swamped by a major deadline at work and was probably averaging 3-5 hours of sleep per night. He was very tired. On Thursday night before the big event, Joanne, his wife said, "You're too tired to drive, it's not safe for you to make this trip. We can't do it." Joanne had a cast on her ankle at the time. Prospects of going to the celebration seemed dim. Yet, they had made a very big deal about it with the kids for the whole summer. They checked out plane flights, train, hotels etc. The best scenario they could come up with was significantly beyond their budget. They were agonizing. Should they spend money they can't really afford? What should they tell the kids? Finally, Friday afternoon, Joanne said something she had said so many times before, "Just call Rav Yaakov." Whatever advice he would recommend, they would follow with 100% confidence and serenity. David called Rav Yaakov, explained to him the scenario, and Rav Yaakov said, "Please hold on for a moment." Then David heard him call to his wife, the Rebbetzin, "The Goldman's need a ride to the Siyum Hashas on Sunday. Who can we find to help give them a ride?" When Rav Yaakov got back on phone, David was speechless. The last thing he had intended was to have Rav Yaakov spend time finding him a ride to New York. After a brief conversation Rav Yaakov said that it was worthwhile to spend the extra money to take the kids to the Siyum. He insisted, however, that if it was a financial hardship, David should call back and he would make sure we got a ride there and back.

Rav Yaakov had many other things on his mind that Friday afternoon. His own health, family needs, Yeshiva needs, national needs, many calling him for one pressing reason or another, and yet it was like he had nothing else to do with his time other than to find David a ride. That is an example of the love Rav Yaakov showed his students.

May we learn from the extraordinary sacrifices that our parents and teachers made for us, and do the same for our own children and students. http://www.aish.com/torahportion/kolyaakov/Children_and_Sacrifices.asp
p Author Biography: Rabbi Boruch Leff is assistant principal at RITSS High School in Cincinnati and is the author of the Kol Yaakov column at Aish.com. His book, "Forever His Students" (Targum/Feldheim) contains practical and powerful contemporary insights, inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, of blessed memory. The book has a brand new topical thematic arrangement designed to better your spiritual growth. It also includes some essays and many explanatory footnotes that do not appear at aish.com. Join Aish.com and help us continue to give daily inspiration to people like you around the world. Aish.com One Western Wall Plaza PO Box 14149 Jerusalem 91141 Israel © 2004 Aish.com