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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of what the rabbis taught about children. While it will in no way be exhaustive, it will attempt to find a structure for rabbinic thought on this topic. It will ask, for example, what were the important categories the rabbis concerned themselves with? Were they more interested in the behavior of parents or of children? What aspect of the relationship between parents and children most interested them? Did they emphasize the legal obligations, social expectations, the feelings and emotions which cement family bonds, or stories which revealed their perception of the nature and character of children? Did they see the child as a growing, developing human being, or as a small version of an adult? What was the different role expectation of boys and girls and what difference in value of the two did this point to? What value did the society give the children in general?

This study will further seek to determine whether the rabbis usually spoke in general terms about children, or whether they preferred to discuss the specific events of everyday life. And did they speak of childhood only in a literal sense, or did they also see it as some sort of special category? In other words, did children have a special relationship with God? Was childhood a religious category? And finally, how did the rabbis project the metaphor of "parent" upon God? Was God a sexless parent, or was He seen primarily as a mother or father?

What did God do in this metaphor--is He a "parent" in the way he feels about His children or in the way He behaves toward them? And in the end, having learned something about the rabbi's view of children, what does this teach us about the rabbis and their society?

It is helpful to begin a study of rabbinic thought by looking at how their topic was presented in the Bible. No matter how far the rabbinic teaching may develop from that of the Biblical antecedent, the rabbis almost always tried to link their teaching to the Biblical text. This was the surest way to give authority to any particular teaching.

But more than that, such a beginning is necessary to determine if what we learn subsequently was really an original teaching of the rabbis or wisdom derived from an earlier time. To determine just where the rabbis continued the Biblical teachings, where they modified them, where they developed them much more fully and where they changed them entirely, we must begin with an examination of the Biblical material. As will be noted below, this will be done primarily through the use of secondary sources, though my own knowledge of the Bible will be brought to bear on these sources.

The term <u>ben</u> occurs in its construct form in the Bible almost ten times more often than it occurs in the simple form.[1] And where the singular construct consumes nearly twenty columns of the Mendelkern <u>Concordance</u>, the plural construct form occurs half again as often. These special phrases are, in fact, so varied that the standard concordances do not distinguish among them. They merely group them all under the single heading of the construct form.

Too obvious, perhaps, even to be mentioned in the Encyclopedia Mikraeet's review of definitions, is the use of the term ben to form the patronymic. This use far outnumbers all other use of the construct form.

The next most common use of the singular construct has been shown elsewhere to mean simply "living thing" as in ben bakar (cow), or ben adam (human).[2] In the plural construct, bené- , most often means "citizen of", such as bene yerushalayim (Jerusalemites).[3] Examples of the idiomatic use of the term ben include phrases such as ben-followed by a number, meaning ("so many") years old,[4] and ben- followed by a noun, meaning "worthy of", such as ben-mavet ("worthy of death").[5] Finally, the word ben is employed in poetry as a general term of address.[6]

The rabbis, who always sought to anchor their statements in the Biblical text, use the term ben (and the female counterpart, bat) in the same variety of ways as the authors of the Bible. As the rabbis inherited the Torah, so they were also heirs to its language. Hebrew presents a possible difficulty in interpreting just what the user meant by the term banim because it employs the masculine plural to mean both "more than one male--", and also "group containing at least one male--". Simply put, this means that the plural banim can mean "sons", or it can mean "children". Surprisingly, this did not prove to be a great problem. It is almost always possible to tell the intended meaning of the rabbis from the context. When there is ambiguity, the rabbis often clarify the statement with the adjective "zecharim", "masculine".[7]

Any study of the treatment of children in the Rabbinical literature must start in the Bible itself. The laws and customs of child-raising form the basis of the later habkhic discussions in the rabbinic period. Out of these discussions one can begin to draw conclusions as to the value society had for its children. Unfortunately, there is very little secondary literature on the Biblical treatment of this subject.[8] What is available often distorts the Biblical evidence by shaping it into a thesis the modern author wished to think was in the mind of the ancient writer. For example, many Christian writers have devoted far more space to the importance of chastity within the family and the teaching of sexual mores than they have given to reconstructing the legal and moral obligations that existed between parents and children.[9]

The Encyclopedia Mikraeet structures the Biblical data on children according to the categories later defined in rabbinical literature.[10] Roland DeVaux[11] is equally influenced by his knowledge of the rabbinical material, but is far more comprehensive because he often gives the more general Near Eastern context in which a particular custom occurred. DeVaux also discusses the theories of various other scholars whose analysis has taken them beyond what the data will allow. For example, DeVaux shows quite convincingly that the Biblical family could not have been described as matrilocal.[12]

Relying primarily on these two latter sources, we see that the Bible shows that children were very important to their parents, to the Israelite nation and to God. This importance is stated

explicitly and is shown implicitly in the way the parents were required to raise their offspring. So great was the love between parents and their children that the Biblical authors projected this relationship as the model for the relationship between God and His people. This, too, is a theme which interested the rabbis, as was the question of the suffering of little children. It is common for the Bible to threaten children with punishment for the sins of their parents.[13] We shall see that the rabbis turned this around so that, in retrospect, they would say that if a child was seen to suffer, it was evident that its parents had sinned.

The Bible is the product of a largely agricultural society. As such, it is not surprising that to have many children was the greatest blessing a family could receive from God. Sons were especially valued for the work they would do to help their father, for the status they brought him, and for the way they would carry on his wealth and increase his name after his death. In this connection, the eldest son was held a special position over his brothers and received a double portion of the inheritance.[14] The first-born was also consecrated unto God as were the first fruits.

Girls did not bring the material benefits to a family that boys did, but the Bible nevertheless shows them to be important members of the family. Their primary function was, ultimately, to leave their father's home and to become the companion to another man in marriage and to bear his children. As a girl moved from childhood to adulthood she passed from the authority of her father to that of her husband. Although

she had little autonomy, the Bible does relate numerous incidents where their behavior was exceptional. Interestingly, the matriarchs do not serve the rabbis much material for their discussions about child-raising (as did the patriarchs). The rabbis were more likely to use such incidents as the story of the daughters of Zelophehad,[15] who argued successfully with Moses to obtain their father's inheritance since he had left no male heirs. The rabbis were always more interested in using the Bible to find precedents for doing things. Examples of filial affection found in the early chapters of Genesis are not so useful to them as later narratives which will affect the law.

The first person to see the child born in Biblical days was the mid-wife. She would wash it, rub it with salt, and wrap it in swathing clothes.[16] Usually, the mother chose the child's name, though sometimes that would be done by the father.[17] The child would then be nursed, perhaps for as long as three years.[18] Male children would be circumcised on the eighth day after birth by the father, who also circumcised all male children of his slaves.[19] The mother would perform the circumcision only in an emergency.[20] After the killing of the first-born in Egypt, the father, who already sacrificed all his first fruits and the first-born of his animals, found reason to place a first-born who was a male in this same category and then to redeem him.[21]

Nowhere in Judaism is there legislation that parents and children must love each other. From the earliest times, however, a child was commanded to "honor" his father and his mother.[22]

This was no abstract obligation. It meant to obey their orders, to fear them,[24] to follow their instruction, and to care for them in their old age as the parents had cared for their children when the latter were young. A son who struck his parent could be put to death.[25]

Both parents had a role to play in the education of a child. The daughters essentially remained at home and learned what was necessary to perform their role as wife and mother. Boys stayed with their mother for the early years and learned from them the proper conduct expected in the home as well as those basic customs which cemented the families, clans and regional groupings into a people with a national identity.

The father later took over the task of educating his sons. One of the most important duties of the father was the teaching of both national religio-political customs[26] as well as the general education he would need.[27] Possibly reading and writing were commonly known,[28] but education was generally by word of mouth. A teacher would tell a story and then ask questions about it.[29]

Besides the national-religious traditions, a child would be taught the divine commandments which related both to his national and his personal identity. He would also learn certain literary passages such as David's lament over Saul and Jonathan.[30] If his father was a tradesman, he would be taught these skills as well, and would be expected to inherit his father's trade. So important was this role of teacher, that anyone who fulfilled it was considered a "father" to his pupil.[31] Even Joseph, who was a counsellor to Pharaoh, was called "father".[32]

Fathers would also lead their entire family on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year where the children would learn of the national traditions and perhaps even recite certain liturgies. Certain priests were trained as teachers and were, therefore, called "fathers".[33] Their "instruction" came to be known as "torah".

As a father is obligated to educate his sons, he is also required to find mates for them.[34] The father would receive a price, called a mohar, for his daughter which would compensate for his loss of rights over her. It is very possible that this sum was often put away by the father for the benefit of his daughter should her husband die during her lifetime.[35] The custom of giving a dowry was absent from Biblical Israel,[36] nor is a marriage contract mentioned earlier than the apochryphal book of Tobit.

The Bible does not mention the age at which children married, but it was certainly early, probably soon after reaching puberty. An agreement to marry, known in rabbinic times as aras, more binding than today's "engagement" and having legal consequences, was arranged far ahead of the wedding itself.[37] Marriages were consummated on the first night, but a feast was held that could last anywhere from seven days to two weeks.[38] The sheets were naïvely saved in case later proof of the bride's virginity became necessary.[39]

Because women were not secluded, they were occasionally the victims of violence. But if they caught the perpetrator they would force him to marry the girl and to pay her father a higher mohar.[40] Such a person could never divorce his victim.[41]

Otherwise, there were few restrictions on a man divorcing his wife, though once a rejected wife married someone else, her previous husband could never remarry her, even if her new husband died.[42] Although it was preferred that a person marry a kinsman, (especially a first cousin,) this was never strictly enforced.

A father could sell his son as a bondsman to pay his debts, and his sons could even be claimed by his creditors after he died.[43] But this practice was not looked upon as proper, and Nehemiah rebuked the people for doing this.[44] A father could also sell his daughter as a maidservant. The person who received her could, if he wanted, give her over to his son in marriage, but he was then obligated to treat her as her father-in-law.[45]

Children were more, therefore, than a sign of good fortune and more than a blessing left to God to bestow. For a man to die childless was considered an unfair stroke of fate that was to be rectified wherever possible. The duty of levirate marriage fell upon the deceased's brother. The first son of this union was considered the child of the dead man. This son would then transfer his "father's" name and property to the next generation in Israel.[46]

The family group in the Bible was the basic building block of society. Family solidarity influenced the laws of heredity and established the link between generations which dominates much rabbinic discussion but which eludes precise definition.

Early, even guilt for sins was passed on from father to son, and an entire family was held accountable for the actions of one of its members.[47] But later the concept of individual responsibility for guilt emerged, so that it was understood that neither a father nor a son would be killed for the other's sin.[48]

More desirable things than guilt were passed on from father to son. Wills were not written during the days of the Bible, but a father would make his desires known before his death. Two passages of the Torah establish the basis for all future legal decisions regarding inheritance.[49] Under normal circumstances, only the sons had a right to a father's inheritance. The eldest received a double share, but with it came a double responsibility of caring for members of the family. After the incident concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, women were allowed to inherit their father's property in the absence of male heirs, but only if they married husbands from their father's kinsmen so that the inheritance remained within the father's family.[50]

The solidarity of the ancient Hebrew family was vested in one member, called a go-el who protected, defended and redeemed it.[51] There is little discussion of the go-el in the Bible, but his principal function seems to have been the maintaining of family property within the jurisdiction of the family. Ultimately, YHWH came to be depicted in the Bible as Israel's go-el.[52]

The importance of children in Biblical times was capsulized in God's commandment, first to Adam and then to Noah, "to

be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth".[53] That Abraham had an unlimited number of children was seen as the manifestation of God's blessing.[54] For a woman not to have children was, at first, as a test from God, and, if her barrenness continued, as a disgrace. Speaking in hyperbole, the Biblical author said, for a woman not to have children, she might as well not have lived.[55] The ideal of family life was seen in the most fecund images available to the man of the ancient Near East: "Your children are like olive branches around your table".[56] And the far-reaching messianic vision of Malachi also centered around children. He spoke of the day when Eli'ah shall "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers . . ."[57] In ancient Israel, both the status of parents and the strength of a family was enhanced by the number of children.

The question must now be asked, just how does one study what the rabbis had to say about children? The literature is vast. There are no comprehensive indices. No secondary sources are without fault. This is a major problem for any student of the aggada, and the way he solves it will, in some measure, determine the quality of his research. I propose to investigate the use of the terms ben and bat in the rabbinic literature. This will automatically limit the number and kinds of references I will find. A more comprehensive study, for example, would also trace the uses of other words for children and also such words as mother, father, education, teacher, circumcision, marriage, etc. But this is too large a task for the purpose of this project.

I must, therefore, necessarily restrict my investigation to terms above. Since they are, however, the ones most commonly used for "son", "daughter", "child", and "children", I expect that in tracing them I will learn a great deal about what the rabbis had to say about them. I will not be able to show all that the rabbis taught about education, or circumcision, but I may be able to say something about how relatively important each of these categories were to the rabbis based on their use of the common term for "son", etc.

To begin, I will utilize Moshe Gross' Otzar Ha-aggada.[58] Under the rubric "Banim u-vanot"he lists 180 references which are taken from a cross section of the Talmud as well as from the other major collections of midrash. The largest source of references, the Kusovsky Talmudic concordance[59] lists every single use of the term ben and its derivatives in the Talmud. There is too much material for it to be useful, at least in the beginning. Later, if I seek to determine a form of the term, it will become a valuable aid.

Other indices, however, may prove more helpful at the start. The Soncino translation of the Talmud has a subject index[60] as does the Soncino translation to the Midrash Rabba.[61] Subject indices also occur in translations of other midrashic collections, such as Midrash to Psalms[62] and Pirke d'Rabbi Natan.[63] These indices all contain the rubric "children".

Some English anthologies also serve as a source for original aggadic texts. Examples are A Rabbinic Anthology, by Montefiore and Loewe,[64] Talmudic Anthology, by Newman,[65] and Legends of Jews, by Ginzberg.[66] Such sources occasionally bring together fragments of a narrative from different sources, and also, in their

selection, can reflect the biases of their editors, but if used carefully, they can be helpful. Other secondary literature might also present helpful source material. Most comprehensive is a large volume, The Jewish Child, by W. M. Feldman.[67] Should I find certain Biblical passages recurring in the rabbinic material, I can trace them more thoroughly by using the various scriptural indices found in the Soncino translations and elsewhere, as well as the Torah Ha-Ketuva v'Ha-Mesora.[68] In addition, the Jewish Encyclopedia[69] and Encyclopedia Judaica[70] also have articles on children which provide the researcher with references to the rabbinic literature, and bibliographies of secondary literature.

The rabbis continued to support the Biblical requirements that a father circumcise, redeem, educate, and marry his sons. But in the rabbinic age, the emphasis shifted from the more symbolic acts, such as circumcision, to activities such as feeding and educating children which required more time and expense from parents. The importance of all the above requirements of parenthood is evidenced in both the Bible and the rabbinic literature, but the punishment for neglecting these duties often suggests the relative importance attributed to them. In rabbinic times, the rabbis, for whatever reasons, did not find it as necessary to threaten a parent for not circumcising his son as had the Biblical authors. But they did warn of a whole range of punishments, including the death of one's children for the neglect of Torah study (see chapter III). Developments and changes from the Biblical tradition made by the rabbis will emerge in the chapters that follow.

Evidence of the gradual shift in ancient Israel, from an agricultural society to one in which the city was also to play a major role, can be discerned in the unfolding of the Bible account. But it was not really until after the Persian period, not until the coming of Hellenism, that this demographic change affected the life of the average Israelite, or Judean, as he should here be called. The evolution of Jewish life moved first from village to town and to city, but then, with the destruction of the Romans, into exile and back to village life. Accompanying these changes in social and economic conditions came changes in the necessities of raising children. No longer was there a Temple, pilgrimages which had served to focus the national identity of the child. A growing body of Jewish literature was more accessible in the days of the rabbis than Torah had been in an earlier age. It was no longer sufficient to leave the education of sons in the hands of their fathers.

Life under foreign rule was often harsher than it had been in the past, and the Biblical presumption that parents would provide the basic necessities for their children's maintenance now needed the sanctions of law.

Most of the Biblical statements about children are either very harsh (in that they threaten severe punishment for failure to obey the law), very terse, or very general. It was left for the rabbis of the Tannaitic and then the Amoraic eras to develop these statements, to determine what was the minimal effort required to fulfill a Biblical precept and what was the maximal

compliance that could reasonably be expected of the people. The rabbis could, as well, succumb to teaching that ideal behavior which might characterize the most righteous person in a perfect world. The rabbis used the term ben and bat as an expression of relationship. Usually, a son or daughter was a person born of two parents. But most importantly, a son or daughter was called such for having been raised by specific parents. "He who brings up a child is called its father, not he who gives birth to him", said the rabbis[71]. This relationship also extends to one's teacher who not only calls his student "son", but is called "father in return". What was important to the rabbis was not the fact of birth, over which they had little control, but the legal obligations and moral expectations incumbent upon parents and children as the result of their relationship.

By living up to the requirements of the father-son relationship, the son grew in value to the father (see Chapter V). And a child, by living up to its parental obligations, came to confer merit on its father,[72] which the rabbis saw as saving him from punishment in this world or suffering in the world to come.

The term ben is also used by the rabbis in a more general sense to describe the lower status a person might have in relation to someone else. Sometimes this term was used in a neutral sense as when Abraham pleaded with God to institute the signs of aging so that strangers would distinguish between father and son, young and old, in order to know whom to honor with appropriate behavior and speech.[73] Sometimes the term was used to connote a negative status regarding a specific issue, such as when Rabbi Johanan labelled Balaam's father as

Balaam's son (in other words, as Balaam's inferior) in matters of prophecy.[74] After Israel made and worshipped the Golden Calf, God called them "sons not to be trusted" (Deut. 32:20). The rabbis interpreted this to mean that they were like children because they had no faith.[75] So the term was used also to confer negative status in an absolute sense as well as in comparison with others.

There is also an example of the rabbis using the term ben to apply a positive status. When in Scripture Jacob speaks to his brethren (Gen. 31:46), R. Huna interprets the verse to mean that he spoke to his "sons" who were "brethren in (speaking) the holy tongue".[76] The greatest figure drawn by the rabbis, however, was their referring to a man's good deeds as his children.[77] But here they were only offering a possible way that God might comfort a righteous man who approached death without leaving any real children. In a more abstract, but not unrelated, sense, the fruit of certain plants, such as the olive (and its oil) and the grape (and the wine it becomes) are also considered children of that plant.[78] This analogy was used to teach that children can confer merit upon their parents.

The aggadic discussions of the rabbis centered mainly around the halakhic requirements. This is not surprising since they were more concerned with the ever-changing realities of everyday life than they were with abstract theological speculation. Approximately eighty percent of all rabbinic statements about children are directly related to a category of halakha.[79] Of these statements, fully three quarters were directed to parents rather than to children. This is the natural result of

parents being the usual audience for the aggada. Of course, parents are also usually children at the same time.

If the chief concern of the rabbis, when speaking of children, was how a parent should raise them, their chief concern addressed to children was how the child should return the honor due his parents. It is interesting that in the majority of cases these statements were made to children who had already grown. The rabbis did not, apparently, address young children directly.

But the Rabbis came to halakhic discourse by a deep-seated desire to do what God required of His creatures. It was not uncommon, therefore, for them to lapse into speculation about the cosmological, eschatological and theological significance of children. If children linked the present generation to the next, then ultimately they linked Abraham to Sinai and to David and to Elijah. Usually, however, they were concerned with the simple daily activities that take up most of a Jew's life. But the occasional theological speculation broadens and balances this perspective which would not otherwise have lived to transcend their particular time and place.

I shall present, in the pages that follow, a structuring of the aggadic literature dealing with children which I hope is honest to the intent of the rabbis. This task is difficult because the rabbis made no attempt to structure their own thought. What makes it even more difficult is that while the halakha is rigidly controlled, the aggada is not. Any rabbi, once having

attained his status through education, was free to make nearly any statement he cared to. And any one was free to record it, no matter how peripheral this statement might be to common rabbinic opinion.

Others, notably Schechter,[80] have discussed the relevant aggada as if the rabbis were chiefly concerned with the developmental growth of children into adulthood. Such studies are influenced almost as much by Darwin as by the rabbis themselves.[81] In this project I find it appropriate to structure the aggadic material chronologically according to the corresponding halakha. Though I investigated this topic only through the terms ben and bat, neglecting such developmental terms as tinok, olel, na'ar, and gibbur, I found all these terms to occur in my material, but not in a way that would suggest the rabbis to be particularly conscious of a child's passing through clearly, or even roughly, defined stages.

Their discussions clearly betray a preference for male children and give certain prescriptions for getting them. In addition, they sometimes mention specific ways in which a child is valuable to his parents, to Israel and to God. This paper will begin, then, with an analysis of the type of children the rabbis preferred, how they suggested one get them, and what they instructed be done or reflected was done to them once they were born.

The next chapter will deal with the great bulk of material which deals with how parents should, according to law and custom, raise their children. The organization of this chapter will be

first to list the legal obligation of parents toward their children, and then, to follow each topic with a discussion of the parameters, both attitudinal and behavioral, within which the rabbis expected these obligations to be carried out.

Accompanying this chapter I detail, in a similar way, the obligations and expectations which the rabbis imposed on children toward their parents. In this section the rabbis primarily answer the question: What does it mean to honor one's parents?

From the previous three chapters and from other statements to be gathered in chapter IV, I shall show the various ways in which the rabbis saw the child to be quite a valuable entity. Concluding this structuring of the aggada, I will discuss childhood as the rabbis perceived it to be a theological category.

After having done all this, I shall measure the ways in which the rabbis changed, developed, or ignored the Biblical heritage on which they tried to base all their teachings. Only after all this has been done can the modern researcher evaluate the teachings of the rabbis for his own day.

I

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The story was told of a rabbi who, during his travels, came upon an old man who asked him why children were so often withheld from the heads of Jewish homes. Though the questioner was, apparently, older than the rabbi himself, the rabbi began his response with the term "My son . . .", typical of the master/student relationship: "My son, it is because the Holy One, blessed be He, loves them with such a complete love, and rejoices in them and purifies them.[1] He withholds children from them so that they will increase their prayers before Him".[2] The rabbi then cited as examples Rebecca, Rachel and Hanna, whose barrenness lasted from fourteen to twenty years. In the end, all three rejoiced in children.[3]

There is a reason for barrenness, the rabbi had explained to the old man. But there is also a way to overcome it--by praying to God. God wants the prayers of his people, and He wants them to remember that He is the source of children, one of life's most cherished blessings.[4]

It seems that most people did not have a great deal of difficulty conceiving children, for the rabbis offered little advice that was recorded as to how to overcome infertility. Or, perhaps unable to solve the problem of barrenness, they could only recommend that after ten years of childless marriage, a man ought to divorce his wife and marry another who could allow him to fulfill the mitzvah of procreation.[5] But on the other hand, comparing children to olives, it was taught that as olives from a branch grafted to the tree are not "pure", so children from a mother of different stock will not be pure.[6]

This statement could mean many things, but the interpretation is that they did not want men to divorce their wives and continually remarry others. If possible, a man should have his children with one wife.

There is a great wealth of rabbinic instruction on the subject of conception. On the one hand, this advice told how a couple should proceed so that the result of their union would be male children. And on the other, they warned about the terrible dangers that would threaten the health of a baby, whether it was a boy or a girl, if the parents' sexual behavior was improper.

The commandment to have children fell only upon man.[7] The disciples of Shammai taught that having two male children was sufficient. For Hillel, it was enough that a man had two children, one son and one daughter. R. Joshua said that the requirement to have children never ceased.[8] This distinction had an important legal consequence. If a man's wife died before he had completed the mitzvah of procreation, then he would have to remarry a woman capable of bearing more children for him. But if this loss occurred after he had the prescribed number of offspring, then he was free also to marry a woman incapable of having children.[9]

There is a wide range of rabbinic advice intended to influence the process of conception in favor of males. R. Ḥama said in the name of R. Ḥanina who taught in the name of R. Yitzḥak that everyone who put his bed in a north-south direction would have male children.[10] Elsewhere, male children were described by R. Abba as the reward for giving <u>tzedakah</u> generously.[11]

R. Joshua saw male children as the just result of causing one's wife to enjoy their sexual union.[12] In a different context, it was taught that conducting oneself piously and with sanctity was the important principle which should govern sexual behavior. It was important previously, however, to have married a woman worth of you.[13] Yet all this would be to no avail unless it was accompanied by earnest prayer to God.[14]

Showing even more explicit concern for the wife, R. Isaac said in the name of R. Ami that if a man controlled himself during intercourse so that his wife was the first to "have seed", then he would be blessed with male children.[15] Rava added that he who wanted all his children to be sons would have intercourse with his wife twice in succession.[16] These statements about influencing conception in favor of males were not limited to one part of the rabbinic literature, nor to one period of rabbinic creativity, nor to one group of rabbis. They betray an unquestionable preference for sons.

The rabbis also made many suggestions for averting pregnancies doomed to catastrophy. To begin, it was taught that the manner in which a couple had intercourse would affect the child that was thus conceived. If a man forced his wife to have sexual relations, the resulting child would grow to be "unworthy".[17] If the woman solicited intercourse from her husband, then the child would be worse than the children of Moses' generation,[18] the children of the wilderness. This is an example of the rabbis' theodicy. One reason children go bad, they explained, was their parents' bad sex habits.

Unnatural intercourse seems to have been a concern only of some rabbis. While R. Johanan listed the tragedies (such as lameness, blindness and deafness) which would befall children whose parents engaged in such improper behavior as "making love in the reverse position", or "kissing an inappropriate place", he also recommended that midnight was the optimal time for intercourse if one wanted comely children.[19] This was apparently because it was wrong to have intercourse in the light[20] and midnight was equidistant from both sunset and sunrise. But the sages disagreed with all this. It was their opinion that "a man may do as he pleases during intercourse".[21] This latter statement was the final legal ruling on the matter, but from the aggada we learn the ideals of the rabbis, including R. Johanan.

Some rabbis also considered a parent's strength to be in his or her blood and that this was transferred to the embryo's blood at conception. One should not have intercourse with the intention of having a child, therefore, after being bled, lest the child that resulted grow up to be feeble, or, worse, to have a skin disease known to cause nervous trembling.[22] Rabbi R. Huna said that if a man returns from traveling and immediately has intercourse with his wife, then he will have weak children.[23] Thus, a parent's strength, or lack of it, was also thought to be passed on through the sperm. It was also taught that a bathroom demon would follow someone from the toilet and that it was, therefore, necessary to wait a prescribed length of time before engaging in intercourse, lest the demon bring epilepsy upon the child to be conceived.[24]

The pregnant woman enjoyed a special religious and legal status which has been amply discussed elsewhere.[25] While she was allowed to eat anything she wanted, including pork,[26] she was also taught that it was more beneficial to the embryo to eat light foods. The eating of such things as cress, fish brine, and mustard lead to children who would be blear-eyed, small-eyed, or intemperate, respectively; while the eating of such items as eggs, fish, parsley, or coriander caused a child to be large-eyed, graceful, beautiful, or tall.[27]

The rabbis knew of the many problems that could arise during pregnancy,[28] but Rava could still say to R. Nahman that most children were carried full term.[29] Whether or not labor would be difficult was in the hands of God,[30] according to R. Johanan, but difficult or not, the majority of women were said to give birth to healthy children.[31]

At birth, the normal child had its navel cut, was washed, rubbed with salt and swaddled.[32] This procedure seems to have satisfied midwives since the days of Ezekiel.[33] Various remedies were prescribed for some of the difficulties that might arise with birth. The rabbis knew of artificial respiration and would use this technique to try to revive a child born inanimate. Remedies such as the bringing of hot coals near the infant, or rubbing it with its afterbirth[34] illustrate other attempts to help a child to live.

A popular custom was the planting of a tree with the birth of a child, a cedar for a boy, and a pine for a girl.[35] When the child is married, the tree would be cut and used as the poles of the <u>huppah</u>.

A child was named, not at birth, but in connection with a religious rite. According to Feldman, a girl would receive her name during a blessing said by her father in the synagogue after she lived three days.[36] Perhaps because Abraham's name was changed at this time, a boy received his name in Israel while being blessed at the ceremony of circumcision.[37] Children were known as "son/daughter of (their parents)".[38] Their parents were urged to name their children after the heros of the Jewish past. "Have you ever heard of a child named after Pharaoh, Sennacherib, or Sisera?" asked one rabbi.[39] But it was common practice for Jews living outside of Israel to give their children non-Jewish names current in their adopted lands.[40]

Once born, the child was not seen to grow through various stages of cognitive development as have been described in the plethora of literature written in the two most recent decades, but was rather seen as progressing from one religious rite to another or from one religious duty to another. Certain stages, important more for their designation of a child's legal status than for their recognition of the cognitive changes which occur as a child grows to become an adult, were known to the rabbis by various terms which occur frequently in both the aggada and the halakha.

The infant was known as a tinok (feminine tinoket) from the verb meaning "to suckle". Once weaned, but no later than age three, the child was called a katan (f. ketannah),[41] "a minor". This is, in a sense, the second and final stage of childhood. All other designations really define stages or degrees of majority.

All earnings and findings of a katan belonged to its father. He could also annul its vows, so any legal contract signed by a katan also required witnessing by its father. A father could contract for the marriage of a ketannah, but at her majority she could, if she wished, refuse.[42] Although a katan could be punished for having illegal intercourse, a ketannah could not.[43]

A girl began to lose her status as minor the day after her twelfth birthday, a boy, the day after his thirteenth. For the next six months the child was considered a na'ar (f. na'arah). The vows of a na'ar and a na'arah were valid, but they must be checked. This stage was, in a sense, a transition to adulthood. The child was held responsible for its words, like an adult, though it was anticipated that lapses in trustworthiness would occur. An unmarried na'arah was still under full authority of her father, though this was the time he should arrange for her betrothal.

This stage was closely associated with the coming of puberty. If no signs of puberty came, a person was still considered a minor through the age of twenty. If, at twenty, no symptoms of puberty had occurred, then the person was considered impotent and given adult status. In any event, the bearing of children was the final definitive sign to establish a girl's majority.[44] That "majority" (the terms gibbur for a man and bogeret for a woman were commonly used) was seen to come in different stages, is made clear by the discussion in Baba Batra [45]

where it was stated that for betrothal, divorce, halitzah, or a declaration of refusal, age alone was insufficient to determine if a child were old enough to act for itself. A boy must be at least nine years and a day to perform halitzah, thirteen years and a day (twelve years and a day for a girl) to perform most legal matters, and at least twenty years old to be able to sell his family's real estate. This latter delay was a result of the rabbis' fear that a child is often tempted by the lure of money to sell the land of his dead father,[46] and land was their most precious item. The age at which a child could sell moveable property was defined less precisely. Those who showed an appreciation for business dealings could sell things he bought, or items he received as gifts, at as early an age as 6.[47]

The notion of stages was not critical to the aggadists who spoke about children. The individual living in rabbinic times knew only two basic and relatively clearly defined stages of life, pre-puberty--in which he or she knew no legal responsibility but was owed certain responsibilities by his or her parents, and post-puberty--in which an individual was held responsible for his actions, and was bound with obligations both to his parents and to his own children.

The importance of the onset of puberty as marking life's single major period of transition led R. Shimeon b. Gamliel and R. Shimeon b. Eliezar to note subtle differences in this development in women. R. Shimeon b. Gamliel observed that the lower marks of puberty were first discernible among townswomen because they were accustomed to bathing, while the upper signs

of puberty appeared first among village women because they ground with millstones. According to R. Shimeon b. Eliezar the right side of the body develops first among rich girls because it rubs against their scarves, and among the poor the left side develops earlier because they carry jars of water, or even their brothers, on the left side.[48]

At this point, before going on to the major concerns of the rabbis regarding children, it is worth discussing the different things they had to say about the relative value of boys and girls. After reading their advice on conception, one might wonder if a female child brought any joy at all to her parents. If this question is made more poignant today because of the growing awareness of the disparate role women have been relegated to in the history of most peoples, it is, nevertheless, raised here solely on the basis of the rabbis' own remarks, which were, at times, quite explicit.

Interpreting Psalm 127:13 "Behold, children (banim) are a heritage of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward", it was taught that banim really meant "sons", who were a "heritage" and a "reward", while daughters were merely a "reward". The glory of God, summarized this statement, was derived from males.[49] In an entirely unrelated context another Biblical statement[50] was shown to support the hypothesis that with the coming of male children into the world peace also came to the world. This was done by reading the Hebrew word for "gift" (kar) as the word for "male" (za-khar).[51]

In one of their classic disagreements, Hillel and Shammai argued over the minimum amount of money necessary to betroth a woman. Beit Shammai said a minimum of a denar was needed, while Beit Hillel required only a peruta.[52] (Whatever a denar was worth, a peruta had a lower valuation.) Rava, arguing for Beit Shammai's point of view, said that if a Hebrew bondswoman could not be bought for a peruta, surely a Hebrew bride ought not to be bought for so little.[53]

In another context we learn that no matter how poor a man found himself, he must not sell his daughter to another for a bondswoman. Although this was permitted by law, it was viewed by the rabbis as a wretched thing to do and they warned that anyone who did this would not have another moment of good fortune in his lifetime.[54] It is interesting that he is also warned here against selling a Torah. These two, sometimes antithetical, concepts, daughter and Torah, were here linked. Both are so important to a man that he is to hold on to them, even though he may starve by doing so. Both a daughter and a Torah had special value to a man.

In making an analogy unrelated to the topic of this paper, the Mishnah listed sons and daughters together as equally precious to a parent and thus worthy of being spared from the curse of leprosy.[55] Elsewhere, R. Hiyya explained in an interchange with R. Shimeon b. R. Ami[56] compares sons and daughters to wine and vinegar, wheat and barley. Although vinegar is as important as wine, and barley as important as wheat, a man nevertheless prefers the latter item in each pair.[56] This analogy teaches

that daughters were not worth less than sons, but that they didn't bring as much benefit to their father as sons. They were called here a blessing, specifically because they would bring increase to a man's home, but they were also recognized as a financial liability. For this reason a man was urged to marry off his daughter as soon as possible after she reached puberty.[57] Only in this context can we understand the bleak description of a female's plight: A woman is destitute; she comes into this world with nothing and nothing is given to her. She is entirely dependent on others for support.[58]

It is from this vantage point that the Tannaim discussed whether or not daughters were a blessing. In one interchange R. Shimeon b'Rabbi, disappointed at recently having a daughter, was "consoled" by his father who reminded him that he'd brought "increase" (r'viah--part of the first commandment in Gen. 1:28) to the world. But R. Shimeon was not consoled. Sons and daughters may both be necessary for the world to exist, but "blessed are they whose children are sons and woe to them whose children are daughters".[59]

Rabbi Meir, taking the position that daughters were not a blessing to their father, interpreted "And God blessed Abraham in all things (ba-kol)" Gen. 24:1) to mean that God's blessing was so great that He spared Abraham from having daughters. But R. Judah responded that to be blessed with all things meant he did have a daughter. And others hyperbolized that Abraham had a daughter whose name was "Kol". This statement read the passage, not as "And God blessed Abraham in all things",

but as "And God blessed Abraham with (a daughter) Kol."[60]

When R. Johanan insisted that daughters were good because they brought increase (r'viah) to the world, Resh Lakish responded that they were not good, for they brought strife (merivah) to the world.[61] R. Hisda said that it might be preferable to have a daughter first, because they would help rear future sons, they would prevent the evil eye of other mothers (who would be envious of sons), and they could marry great scholars.[62] All of R. Hisda's daughters did, according to this passage, marry great scholars.[63]

In order to explain certain legal provisions of the Mishnah, R. Johanan taught in the name of R. Shimeon bar Yohai that while a man preferred his sons over his daughters in matters of inheritance, he preferred his daughters in matters relating to sustenance.[64] A daughter could not provide for herself as could a son, so a father would want to see to her basic needs before seeing to his sons'. In discussing the obligation to provide food for one's children, R. Meir justified the requirement to feed a son only after one had provided for his daughters.[65] Daughters were to be taken care of, according to R. Meir, even though they did not learn Torah.

Certain daughters were singled out by the rabbis for meritorious deeds, but from the context in which they are discussed, we must conclude that they were mentioned as exceptions to the general attitude that daughters were a burden to their fathers and had no independent worth. R. Judah b. Zevina taught that Amram held the advice of his daughter in great esteem.[66] And the daughters of Zelophehad were known as wise,

as skillful interpreters of Torah, and as pious women for having convinced Moses to allow them to inherit the land of their dead father since he had left no male heirs.[67] Although the incident referred to had occurred in Biblical times, it was the rabbis who here mentioned them as models of behavior. In another statement of exceptional behavior, not to be considered as applying to all women, daughters were said to be more conscientious than sons in performing the mitzvot.[68]

The rabbis' attitude toward daughters was even betrayed in their messianic vision. In the future world, "they would search from Dan to Beer Sheva and would not find an ignorant person, even in Givatha or in Antiprus. They would not find a male infant nor a female infant, a man nor a wife, who was not expert in the laws of purity and impurity".[69] Wives, daughters, even infants--those who knew Torah least--would, in the messianic future, become educated.

II

OBLIGATIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF PARENTS

When the rabbis spoke about children they addressed themselves to parents who comprise, after all, the large part of their normal audience and who are therefore the target of their teaching. Since most adults are usually children and parents simultaneously, the rabbis, in addressing them, reveal their thinking from both points of view. That is, they informed parents regarding the raising of their children, and they instructed them with regard to the treatment of their own parents. This chapter and the next will show what the rabbis had to say to parents about raising children. Chapter four will discuss the rabbis' opinions about the corresponding responsibilities of children toward their parents.

The "obligations" of parents were those responsibilities based on the Torah and characterized by specific legal decisions. Their discussion is found concentrated especially in Tractate Kiddushin[1] but not confined there. The "expectations" of parents were those responsibilities related to the feeding, clothing and protection of children which had weaker legal sanctions behind them, but which were considered moral duties[2] and were enforced, with varying degrees of success, by the application of social pressure, as will be shown below. Discussion of these expectations are found chiefly in Tractate Ketuboth[3], but are also not confined to just this one section of the Talmud.

In addition to discussing the behavioral ties that bound parents to their children, the rabbis also revealed something of what parents thought and felt about children. These parental "attitudes" emerge along the entire spectrum of rabbinic literature. Where these attitudes relate to the particular duties of parents, they will be discussed in conjunction with those duties. These attitudes which do not fit into this structure will be presented immediately following.

A. Obligations and Expectations

A father was required by law to circumcise his son, to redeem him (if he was the first to open the womb), to teach him Torah, to take a wife for him and to teach him a trade.[4] By fulfilling these obligations a father brought his son from infancy to adulthood. A passage in Pirke Avot[5] outlined the progress of human growth and gives one possible timetable through childhood which represents what the rabbis might have considered normal or average progress towards maturity. The statement, attributed by the commentary Etz Yoseph to R. Judah b. Tema, says that a child learns Torah at five, Mishna at ten, is responsible for the mitzvot at thirteen, marries at eighteen, and at twenty engages in "pursuit", which probably meant "pursuit of a livelihood".[6]

The School of Menasseh taught[7] that making arrangements for the betrothal of young girls, for the education of young boys, and for teaching them a trade was to engage in the affairs of heaven and thus was allowed on the Sabbath when

discussions of one's personal affairs was forbidden. The obligations listed in Kiddushin 29a were more than just the "affairs of heaven", they were all activities which linked a son to his people and to his past. Perhaps for this reason they were considered the most important part of parenthood.

The only limitation imposed by the rabbis in carrying out these requirements for one's son was that a father first be responsible for himself. He must always consider his own interest first.[8] While a father might be expected to sacrifice a certain amount for the sake of his children, he should never do so at the expense of having to worry about his own well-being. One passage might be interpreted to mean that it were better a grandson be reduced to selling wax than that his grandfather suffer on his account.[9] A father's interest is not seen to be limited only to the next generation, though one rabbi saw a father's love extending only as far as his own grandchildren.[10]

If a father neglects to carry out any of his obligations, or if death or distance make it impossible for him to carry out his legal responsibilities, it is not the mother, but the court which must carry them out. The question arises whether the court acted in the public interest or in the interest of the father. If it acted as tzibbur, then anyone else, including the child's own relatives, could fulfill the legal obligations toward a child. Since the court is specifically designated with responsibility here, it seems to be acting as "father" rather than as "community". The court is, in fact, sometimes

referred to as avi-yi-tu-mim. "a father of orphans".[11]

1. Circumcision

The first obligation of the father with regard to his son was that he have him circumsized. This took place on the eighth day, counting the day of birth, after the child was born[12] even if this day were a Sabbath.[13] The procedure could be delayed for medical reasons,[14] in which case it could not be performed on the Sabbath or festival.[15] The rabbis explain why circumcision did not take place until the eighth day. The day of a son's circumcision was a day of great joy for the community as well as for the parents. But, with the birth of a boy, a mother was considered ritually impure for one week and was thus forbidden to have sexual relations with her husband.[16] This condition was seen as making the couple sad. Was it fair that neighbors rejoice while the parents were gloomy? So circumcision was delayed until the eighth day so that the parents could also participate fully in the rejoicing.[17] This statement also indicated a desire that the couple resume intercourse eight days after the birth of a child.

The operation was performed by a special person acting for the father, called a mohel or a mo-hala.[18] During the ceremony[19] the child was placed on a special chair designated as Elijah's chair because, according to one account, this "Angel of the Covenant" fought for the continuance of the ceremony of circumcision at a time when the kingdom of Ephraim had given it up.[20] Because the Israelites circumcised themselves before entering the land of Canaan, and buried their foreskins and blood in the dust of the wilderness (Joshua 5:3) the custom arose of burying the foreskin in the earth.[21]

Over a thousand years before the research of Gregor Mendel on the mechanism of inheritance the rabbis had a vague sense of how genetic diseases were passed on to the next generation. If two children of the same mother, or one child of each of two sisters, died as a result of circumcision, the next child or the child of the third sister must not be circumcised.[22] The condition possibly refers to what is now known as hemophelia, a disease transmitted through females to males.[23]

The origins of the ceremony of circumcision have often been sought, but no one theory has been universally accepted. Morgenstern summarizes the most common ones, stressing that of Wellhausen and others that the rite was originally done at puberty and was associated with initiation into manhood and preparation for marriage.[24] Morgenstern then goes on to disprove this theory and argues that

> circumcision was in origin a rite of removal of taboo thought to rest upon every newborn child during at least the first seven days after birth, and continuously thereafter until redeemed. The underlying principle in the removal of all taboo was that the sacrifice of a part of the tabooed person or object redeemed the whole. By performance of this rite the child was redeemed from the power of threatening evil spirits, or of some evilly disposed deity, and thereby entered upon the second period of his existence, that of non-tabooed, ordinary, profane life.[25]

Speaking of the origin of the rite, Morgenstern sees it, then, as primarily the removal of a taboo, and secondarily as an initiation into a social group.

The rabbis referred to the use of candles associated with a feast for a son's circumcision.[26] This practice could point to the superstitious fear of demons which lingered from more

ancient times and to which Morgenstern gives notice. It also could refer to the practice of performing circumcisions secretly during the reign of Hadrian when circumcision was prohibited.[27]. But it could also mean a great many other things as well.

Since the days of the first Exile circumcision of Jewish males has been a characteristic symbol of Judaism.[28] Jeremiah, who never mentions the physical act of circumcision, echoes (4:4) the call of Moses that Israel "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked" (10:16). The NJV translates "Cut away the thickening about your hearts . . ." (cf. Deut. 30:6). The concept of circumcision could have an entirely spiritual meaning in the Bible. But I did not find the rabbis to use the term this way. When the rabbis discussed it they were more interested in linking the ceremony with the cosmic position of the Jew than in searching for the historical origins of the rite. It was told, for example,[29] that Turnus Rufus, the Roman general, once challenged R. Akiba on the issue of circumcision. Turnus Rufus asked R. Akiba which things were nicer, those made by God, or those made by human beings. Anticipating his next question, Akiba answered "those made by humans". Why do you circumcise? asked Turnus Rufus, trying to get Akiba to admit either that God did not make man properly to begin with or that Jews were tampering with the way man was meant by God to be. Akiba responded with examples of the acorn which man makes into cakes and of cotton which

man changes to garments. Unsatisfied, Turnus Rufus pressed on: Why do you circumcise? Why, if God wants you circumcised, aren't you born that way? To which R. Akiba responds that one is born with an umbilical cord, yet one's mother cuts that when one is born. And he then concludes that God gave Israel the mitzvot in order that she be purified by doing them. According to Akiba, man not only has the ability to make the acorn and the cotton plant into something better, he also can improve his own condition, and this is the purpose of circumcision.

The rabbis were not apologists for circumcision, seeking justification for it in reasons of health or fertility, as others have done.[30] They circumcised their sons because of the warning that "the uncircumcised male who does not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin--such a person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant".[31] Apparently, circumcision was so central to their existence and sense of identity that they felt no need to explain it.

2. Redemption

Morgenstern has claimed[32] that Genesis 22 and other historical and ceremonial evidence show that sacrifice of the firstborn "was regularly practised in the worship of Yahweh as late as the middle of the ninth century B.C." in the Northern Kingdom. He suggests that this practice evolved to a sacrifice of a part of the reproductive member (with the part redeeming the whole) and also to the practice, referred to in Numbers 18:15ff, where five shekels were given to the priest in exchange for the life of the "first born" of man (13:16)". Morgenstern is

vague on just how and in what order these other ceremonies substituted for child-sacrifice, so his reconstruction is open to serious question.

As with circumcision, the rabbis were not interested in the origins of the custom of redeeming the first to open its mother's womb.[33] Nor, in fact, did my sample of texts show them to be very interested in the actual carrying out of the ceremony. Nevertheless, all first-born sons were redeemed on the thirtieth day after birth unless their father or mother were descended from the Cohens or Levites, or unless they were born by caesarian section or its birth succeeded a miscarriage. A child eligible to be redeemed had to be redeemed, even if it was not circumcised. If his father did not redeem him by the age of majority, he had to redeem himself.[34] The matter of determining the first to open the womb was not determined for redemption in the same way it was for purposes of inheritance. If a man had five first-born sons by five different wives, he had to redeem all of them.[35]

Since the masculine language of Numbers 18:15 could be interpreted to refer generally to all first-born children, the rabbis do ask at one point why it is that daughters are not also redeemed if they are the first to open the womb. The answer was found in Psalm 127:3

> Lo, sons (lit: "children") are a heritage of the Lord,
> The fruit of the womb is a reward

Only sons are a heritage of God, only sons incorporate the glory of God, and so only sons need be redeemed.[36] The Torah made

it clear that God wanted only males.

While the rabbis were not particularly interested in the specific ceremony which took place when a "redeemable" male was thirty days old, they were concerned with another dimension of the concept of redemption closely tied to the question of merit. A child, through its actions, could redeem a parent from sins the latter incurred. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter V.

3. Providing for the Needs of Children

It was decreed at Usha, in Upper Galilee, that a man provide for his sons and daughters while they are young.[38] The ruling did not have the force of law. It merely described a moral obligation upon the father.[39] But though not halakhic (and thus not actionable in court), it was stated in such a way in the aggada as to be strong, imperative.

What the court could not enforce with sanctions it attempted to regulate with other pressures. When people came to R. Hisda [40] he would tell them to make a platform and suggest pubicly that even a raven cares for its young--but "that man does not care for his children".[41] Public embarrassment and social pressure were tools that the community could use effectively to exert its minimal standards.

R. Meir taught that it was a moral duty to feed one's daughters(who had no other way of providing for themselves), and thus how much the more must one provide for one's sons who study Torah. R. Judah taught from the opposite logic. One should feed one's sons (who study Torah) was the given.

Thus, how much the more one should feed one's daughters, to prevent their degradation.[42]

The court was freer to deal with a wealthy man because they could compel him to give tzadakah which would then be turned over to his children.[43] An example is given where Raba forced R. Nathan b. Ammi, who was apparently a wealthy man, to give four hundred zuz to charity.[44] The implication is that if a man of means could be forced to give to others, how much more could he be forced to provide for his own children. In fact, the rabbis at Yavneh (some say R. Eliezer) taught that Psalm 106:3, "Happy are they who keep justice, that do righteousness at all times", referred to those who maintained their sons and daughters.[45] Since they were not required to maintain them, their providing for them was considered the giving of charity.

There was at least one time when the court was at a loss for such subtle means of coercion. Once Mar Ukba was called before the court of R. Johanan for neglecting his children. When questioned about the matter, Mar Ukba responded "Where is it taught (that I am required to feed them)?" R. Johanan knew he had no answer. He merely boomed, "Ukba the wicked, support your children!" [46]

The text does not say whether or not R. Johanan's pressure tactic succeeded. But there were occasions when the court was at a loss to enforce its will. Once it was asked: If a father refuses to fulfill any of his obligations to his son, shall the Jewish court, where it has authority, compel him to do so?

The answer was given in the following case: "The son of Terumah came to R. Ammi and begged him to persuade his father to make it possible for him to become betrothed. The father refused but no penalty was inflicted upon him. Hence it is not in the province of an earthly court to enforce the parental obligations mentioned."[47] Here even the halakah has less immediate force than law enforced by a human court.

There are two examples where the support of children bore indirectly on other issues. In one instance, a butcher had his license withdrawn for not complying with the directive of Raba b. Hinena. Normally, the matter would have ended there, but in this case Mar Zutra and R. Ashi took it upon themselves to call on Raba b. Hinena and ask him to reopen the case because the butcher had small children who were dependent on him. But while the existence of children caused the desire for closer examination of the case, they did not present any reason for Mar Zutra or R. Ashi to request an exception be made in enforcing the law.[48]

In the second case, R. Hiyya was tormented by a wife who, though he brought her gifts whenver possible, caused him such problems that Rab was to take notice. But R. Hiyya would not accept Rab's sympathy. "It is enough", he said, "that they rear up our children and deliver us from sin".[49] In this possibly exaggerated picture the rearing of children is given as one reason a man remains with a wife with whom he finds no peace.

One role that was given almost entirely over to the mother was that of nursing the infant. I say "almost entirely" because there was an alleged case where a woman died while her child was nursing. Her husband's breasts miraculously grew to the point where he was able to nurse the child himself.[50] Mordecai was also said by R. Judan to have nursed Esther.[51]

A mother was expected to nurse her child until weaned,[52] usually between eighteen months[53] and two years.[54] She was viewed as owing this to her husband, rather than to her child.[55] A mother could not nurse more than one child at a time[56] and had to be very careful about what she ate while nursing, for certain foods were seen to have an adverse effect on her milk.[57] A nurse was required to eat a lot while nursing, even if her salary were small.[58] So close did nursing bring mother and child that R. Ashi claimed a blind child could distinguish its own mother from others by the taste and smell of her milk.[59]

As important and common as nursing was to the mother's role, a woman was, nevertheless, forbidden to breastfeed her children publicly.[60] According to R. Meir, anyone who did so was worth of being divorced.[61]

My research did not find the rabbis discussing the mother's role in childraising after a child was weaned. Nor did they speak of the father's role beyond the legal obligations basic to a child's existence. They left a good deal to the parents and their individual life style.

We have seen that, however weak the legal sanctions were, with regard to the maintenance of children, the rabbis sought to enforce paternal responsibility. This was a function of the aggada. The rabbis taught that, though the child is formed within its mother, it was the father who was responsible for the way it developed. An interesting statement linked a father's responsibilities for his son to the qualities of life he bestowed upon him. A father was said to transmit five things to his son: beauty, strength, wealth, wisdon and length of days.[62] I think it legitimate to read this as a list of degrees--where each quality mentioned is a degree of that particular characteristic. So, for example, "beauty" really means "degree of beauty". Because a father is responsible for the degree of his son's endowment in these five areas, he was said to be bound to provide his son with five things necessary to survival: food, drink, clothes, shoes and direction (man-heeg).[63] It is significant that each of these paternal obligations is listed in the hiph'il verb form. The father was more than just responsible for these necessities, he was to do them himself. Where one aggadist fantasized a father growing breasts to feed his otherwise helpless child, it is not inconsistent that another would view the role of the father in providing for his son's needs as being an active one. When the older Shammai refused to help in the feeding of his infant on the Sabbath, the rabbis decreed that he must do so, and with both hands.[64]

Even the Sabbath was no excuse to neglect an important obligation which, at times, fell equally upon both mother and father.

The kind of "direction" a father owes his son will be discussed below. It is worth noting here, however, that this statement understands the education a father was expected to provide his son as including more than just Torah.[65]

I have already shown, however, that this view of a father actively feeding and clothing his children made up only half the picture drawn by the rabbis. They also gave an example of a father who made himself "as black as a raven" by neglecting his children for the sake of building "mounds of expositions on every single stroke (of the letters of the Torah"). Although this picture shows the aggravated mother, in this case the wife of R.Adda b. Mattenah, to be one who expected her husband to provide for the children, it nevertheless withheld condemnation of his acting "cruel" for the sake of Torah. Though R. Adda had placed Torah as a higher priority than caring for his children, he seems to be acting within, at the limit of, the range of behavior accepted by his community.

In another example, R. Hama b. Bisa escaped the duties of family in an easier way. He simply went away to study for twelve years. When he returned, his own son, R. Oshaiyah, had become a great scholar as well--without, apparently any help from his father.[67] In this example, the father's neglect of family for the sake of study was presented in a style more characteristically positive toward one who sacrifices all else for the sake of the Torah. The rabbis present the example of

R. Hama as one worthy of emulation. Here there is a sense that children will grow up well, without the help of a father if the latter is engaged in Torah study.

While some fathers did not accept the responsibility for the raising of their children, others accepted it with regard even to their grandchildren. The example is given of R. Aha b. Jacob who raised R. Jacob, the son of his own daughter.[68] No mention is made in this midrash of the boy's father. It was perhaps not unusual for a grandfather to raise his grandson in cases where the boy's own father died or divorced his wife.

There were, as well, times when a mother died and the father was left with the children to raise. So important were their needs that one rabbi, offering Abraham as a model, taught that a man who became a widower should not remarry himself until all his children were married.[69]

R. Judah taught that shopkeepers should not give children presents of popcorn and nuts because they might thus be enticed to return to the store more frequently,[70] apparently giving them an unfair advantage over their competitors. This suggests that a father would give his children some sort of allowance, or perhaps just trusted him to do family shopping.

The one realm in which a father was required by law to provide for his children was in the participation of religious holidays. The Torah enjoined: "You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter . . ."[71] which the rabbis repeated.

How was this to be done? they asked. With wine.[73] But R. Judah distinguished between what was appropriate for men and for women. Wine was fitting for men, but women rejoiced in a festival through the wearing of special clothing. In Babylonia, taught R. Joseph, women wore colorful garments. In the land of Israel they wore ironed garments of linen.[74]

Though the rabbis taught that everyone was required to drink four cups of wine on Passover, R. Judah did not think wine was good for children and he gave them parched corn and nuts instead, so they would not fall asleep and miss out on asking (the questions).[75] R. Akiva also gave out parched corn and nuts to the children on the eve of Passover so they would remain awake to ask the questions.[76] R. Eliezar offered still another way of keeping the children awake during the seder. He distributed matzah to them.[77] In this same context it was said of R. Akiva that he never said in the House of Study "The time has come to rise" (conclude studying), except on the eve of Passover and on the eve of Yom Kippur. He did this on the eve of Passover in order to get home early enough to conduct a seder before the children fell asleep. And he did it on Yom Kippur in order to get home early enough to feed his children.[78] Rava said that a Sukkah should not be made improperly high. His reason is obscure, but his statement characterized children as being irresponsible.[79]

The final way in which a father provided for his children was through the mechanism of inheritance. The Mishna[80] gives a formula for a will, "From this day and after my death . . ."

which R. Judah required, but which R. Jose did not require for the will to stand.

Should a son die before his father, then the father inherits the son's estate, even when the son had children of his own.[81] When a man dies, inheritance is determined by the degree of kinship with the deceased. The first priority of inheritance went to the dead person's children and their descendents. The second priority went to the deceased's father and his descendents t· *he end of the line. The schedule of priority then continued in ascending order "that the estate may ultimately find its way to Reuben", Jacob's eldest son.[82] The general principle, therefore, is that the lineal descendents of anyone with a priority to succession take precedence over anyone else.[83]

A man could distribute his wealth any way he liked in his lifetime and it stood. But once dead, he lost control over it. It was given to his heirs as the law stipulated.[84] If a man left a great deal, his daughters received enough from *he inheritance to support themselv-s, and the sons received the rest. If the inheritance were small, the daughters still received maintenance, even though it meant the sons might have to go begging.[85] Admon protested that in such a case he would suffer on account of being male, and Rabban Gamliel agreed that this would not be fair.[86] R. Johanan said in the name of R. Shimeon b. Yohai that God swells with anger against a person who does not leave a male heir.[87] The gemara concludes that regarding maintenance, a daughter is preferred; regarding inheritance, a son is preferred.[88]

One Tanna was quoted in the gemara as considering the daughters of Zelophehad to be especially praiseworthy for the role they played in establishing the permissibility of a daughter inheriting her father's estate in the case where there were no male heirs.[89] Their father, Hepher, of the tribe of Menasseh, died in the wilderness without leaving any sons to inherit his property (Num. 26:33, 27:1). His five daughters requested that Moses recognize them as his legitimate heirs and grant them their father's inheritance of land. Moses consulted with God who saw their plea was just. From this case the general principle was established that if there are no male heirs, then a daughter inherits from her father before passing to the next priority (the father's brothers). The daughters of Zelophehad accepted one condition of this judgment: they agreed to marry their own kinsmen so that their father's land would not pass out of his tribe. (Num. 36:1-12).

In discussing another conflict which might arise over a man's inheritance, the rabbis judged that if the fruit attached to the land left to a son was disputed, one should assume that a father is favorably disposed toward his son over others.[90] However, this was not always a father's true disposition. Elsewhere it was taught that if a father willed his property to others, though he had sons, then what he did was done, that is, it was held to be legal, but such a person was not seen to have done a very good thing.[91] R. Shimeon b. Gamliel,

however, said that it was good to do this in cases where the sons didn't deserve to inherit, because it served as a warning to other wicked children.[92]

Once a man made out a will which specified, says a midrash, that his son would inherit nothing of his at all until he acted like a fool. R. Jose b. Judah and Rabbi went to R. Joshua b. Karḥa to obtain an opinion about this provision of the will. When they found him in the field, they saw that he was crawling on his hands and knees, that a reed was sticking out of his mouth, and that he was being pulled along by his son. Seeing this they withdrew and went to wait for him at his house. When they asked him about the provision in the will he began to laugh and said to them, "As you live, this business you ask about applied to me just now as well". He continued, "When a man lives to have children, he acts like a fool (in playing around with them").[93]

4. Instruction

The rabbis' discussion of a father's obligation to instruct his son dominates all other statements pertaining to parental responsibilities. Because of the centrality and magnitude of this material, Chapter III will be given over entirely to its description.

5. Marriage

The Halakha requires that a man take a wife for his son.[94] The rabbis' primary inquiry, therefore, was whether he was also bound by law to marry his daughter.[95] The answer was that he should give her a dowry, clothing and "adornments" so that men will be attracted to (lit. "spring upon") her.[96] The large body

of legal discussion regarding betrothal begins with the opening mishna of Tractate Kiddushin,[97] but it occupied much of the rabbi's attention and occurs in many other contexts as well.

Though a father was legally bound to find a wife for his son, it is possible that the court was unable to enforce the obligation.[98]

The purpose of marriage was twofold, procreation and companionship.[99] R. Huna added to this the purpose of keeping a man from engaging in sin.[100] Samuel said to R. Nahman that even if a man had several children it was forbidden that he be without a wife because "It is not good for man to live alone" (Gen. 2:18).[101] However, if a man had already fulfilled the commandment of procreation, he was permitted to marry a woman who was unable to bear children.[102]

The court met on the second and fifth day of the week. It was preferred that a virgin marry on the day preceding a court session in order that any question as to her virginity might be brought before the court immediately on the following morning.[103] R. Judah asked in the name of Samuel why virgins were only married on the fourth day (when, according to the considerations just mentioned, she might just as well be married on the first day of the week). The anonymously-given answer states that the sages were anxious about the marriages of Jewish daughters. They expected that three full days of preparation go into the wedding feast.[104]

The rabbis were concerned with the issue of when a person should marry. R. Judah said in the name of Rav, though some say R. Eleazar, that a man was forbidden to marry his daughter while she was a minor.

She should, according to this opinion, be old enough to specify that she wants to become betrothed to a specific man.[105] A daughter's protest against a betrothal contracted while she was a minor was called mi-un. R. Judah held such protest valid even after such a girl had been carried on the marriage seat in the wedding procession and had left her father's house and gone to the house of her "husband".[106] According to R. Judah, then, a woman whose betrothal was contracted while she was a minor could, at any time, dissolve the subsequent marriage through mi-un.

The generally accepted principle, though exceptions will be noted, was that a father should see to the betrothal of his daughter as soon as possible after she reached puberty.[107] In one example, a father was urged to train his children properly[108] and then marry them when they reach puberty and that in doing this he will know peace in his home.[109] The trainingreferred to here must be that which took place before the age of twelve or thirteen, though it is not explained whether this refers to general discipline or to the specific laws either of family purity or some other area. Peace here is associated with the proper training from the father that precedes (successful) married life of his children. Until age twelve betrothal required a daughter's agreement. From twelve to 12½ was the proper time for a father to arrange for her betrothal. After that she could technically act as her own agent.

The appropriate time for a man to be married was sometimes given in relative, rather than in absolute terms. One Baraita taught that if a man was bound simultaneously to study Torah

and to get married, he should first study and then marry.[110] But R. Judah said in the name of Samuel that the halakha was just the reverse, that one should first marry and then study Torah. But R. Johanan said that a married man studies with a millstone around his neck. The response to this was that R. Judah and R. Johanan were both right. For some marriage was a hindrance to study and to others it was an aid.[111]

One hyperbolic midrash suggests either that marriage at puberty was an ideal which contemporary Israel fell short of, or that such marriages really did occur in an earlier day. How did Israel use to be fertile and increase? asked the author of a midrash. And he answered, A man would marry his son off when he was twelve years old to a woman capable of bearing children. Then he would return and marry off his grandson when the latter was twelve. By the time the author's son had reached the age of twenty-six he would have seen his children have children, thereby fulfilling the hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm: "When your children have children there will be peace upon Israel" (v.6).[112]

R. Hisda attributed his superiority to his colleagues to the fact that he married at the age of sixteen. Had he married at fourteen he could have challenged Satan.[113] The implication was that the earlier one married, the more time one had to study and the less chance there was of becoming the victim of Satan. This was either an idealization or hyperbole. That Hisda married at sixteen and was superior to his colleagues suggests that they married even later. Raba said to R. Nathan b. Ammi that a man should marry his son "while your hand is yet

upon your son's neck",[114] that is, between the age of sixteen and twenty-two. Others said between eighteen and twenty-four.[115]

Another statement suggesting that children were not actually married at the "ideal" age of puberty came from Raba, who taught in the name of R. Ishmael that God sits and watches man for twenty years, waiting for him to marry. When twenty years pass and he has not found a wife, God said about him "Blasted be his bones".[116]

My sample of citations shows the rabbis to be more concerned about the question of when a person should marry than they are about how the mechanism of contracting a marriage took place. For a daughter, the important matter was the size of the dowry her father gave her. R. Ammi said that a father should not be miserly towards his daughter.[117] If a father's generosity influenced the determination of a daughter's spouse, so his authority could influence whom his sons married. A case is given where the High Priest Joshua was saved from Nebuchadnezzar's furnace through his merit, though his garments were singed. Why even this (minor) punishment? asked the rabbis. R. Papa said that his sons married women who were not fitting for the priesthood and he didn't protest.[118] Though I found no example of a father's influence preventing a marriage he thought unworthy of his son, this example suggests that R. Papa expected such authority to be exerted where necessary. Since the father normally arranged for his son's marriage, this authority was taken for granted.

Once a daughter was married, her father's affection was,

at times, seen as being transferred to his daughters-in-law. If, however, his daughters were unmarried and lived in his home with his sons and their wives, the unmarried daughters should take precedence in receiving their father's affection.[119] When R. Gamliel's daughter was to be married she asked her father to pray for her. His prayer was "May you never return here". When his daughter protested that that was no blessing, but was rather a curse, he responded that what he meant was that she live at peace in her home. Later she had a son and asked her father to pray for her again. This time he said "May 'woe' never leave your mouth." Again she protested. "This blessing," he explained, "meant May you never say 'Woe that my son has not eaten; woe that my son has nothing to drink; woe that my son has not gone to synagogue'."[120] This was a father's blessing to his daughter: not that she have happiness, but that she live in peace with her husband, that she be able to provide for her children, and that her sons be observant Jews.

The aggada also takes note of cases where a marriage is ended because of the death of a spouse. I have already discussed the case where a woman dies leaving a man with children.[121] When a husband died leaving a wife behind, or when a wife was divorced by her husband, she was called an "orphan in her father's lifetime".[122] Her father was not responsible for her and she was left to survive on her own.[123] This was why settlement of the marriage contract was so important and took precedence over distribution of the father's estate.

6. Teaching a Craft

Some rabbis taught that it was very important for a father to teach his son a trade. They taught this through the verse in Ecclesiastes, "See to a livelihood with the wife whom thou lovest."[124] If wife was meant literally, said this rabbi, then the duty to teach one's son a trade is equal to that of finding him a wife. But if wife is a metaphor for Torah, then the passage meant that as he is bound to teach him Torah, so he is bound to teach him a craft.[125]

But if the rabbis' concern for the teaching of a trade is to be measured by the relative number of statements made on the subject, then we find it to be quite secondary to their concern for both marriage and studying Torah. There is an exchange between Rab and his son Aibu, where the latter did not succeed in learning Torah, so his father taught him "worldly wisdom" instead. His advice dealth essentially with how and when to sell his wares.[126] It is significant that the teaching of a trade here is linked with the inability to learn Torah. This puts it on a secondary priority compared to Torah. But also it informs us that a father was expected to teach his son what was necessary for the son to survive in the world. The study of Torah brought knowledge which was the basis of authority in the rabbinic world. Lacking that, a man could achieve a place in society through commercial enterprise.

While Rab saw the teaching of business to be an endeavor which would follow the failure to teach Torah, R. Judah saw the teaching of how to earn one's livelihood[127] as something

all sons need from their fathers. R. Judah taught that to neglect the teaching of a craft to one's son was to teach him robbery.[128] Since he would have no way to earn an honest living, he would have to steal in order to eat.

It was recorded in this discussion that other unnamed sages also taught that a father should teach his son how to swim.[129] Though this was not established as a legal responsibility of a father, this opinion gains a measure of importance by its very position at the end of the list of paternal obligations. Swimming is a skill which could help to save the life of someone who is often at sea. This opinion, if taken in a more general sense, suggests that a father should teach his son whatever might be necessary for his survival in the world he will grow up in. In chapter three I shall examine more fully what kind of education the rabbis thought a child should have.

B. Attitudes

If the first hope of a parent was to have children, the second was that their children grow up to be just like them.[130] A father, for example, was said to transmit his looks, strength, wealth, knowledge and longevity to his son.[131] That a child came to emulate its parents was used to encourage moral conduct. R. Aba said in the name of R. Oshaiyah that a man should not even look at women when they are considered ritually impure because of menstruation.[133] A daughter could emulate her mother as could a son his father. "Like mother, like daughter", went a common saying,[134] and a mother's own behavior was not proven to be immoral, at least by one rabbi, until it was reflected in the behavior of her daughter.[135]

R. Judah b. Levi said that all who regularly give charity will have children who are wise, wealthy and masters of aggada.[136] Wealth and wisdom were the greatest blessing R. Judah wished upon children of the righteous. He did not mention wealth. According to Schechter, a special name was given to the general category of childhood illnesses which commonly threatened a child's life: tza-ar gee-dool ba-neem ("the pain of bringing up children").[137] Though this suggests that childhood disease was a great problem, the desire for good health was absent from my sample of aggadic statements concerning children. There are several instances where a rabbi's advice to his son was recorded in the Talmud. In one interesting example, Rav warned his son, R. Ḥiyya, against doing things which all seem to be physically strenuous and might injure his health, such as leaping in great jumps or having a tooth extracted.[138]

There was no end to the success a father would wish upon his son, especially in that most important realm, the study of Torah. R. Jose b. Honi said that a man could envy anyone except his son (or his student).[139] But whether a son surpassed, or merely met, the learning of his father, it was sometimes considered necessary that his achievment progress at a socially acceptable pace. To be singled out as an exception risked attracting the "evil eye"--a cursing glance which was the product of others' envy.[140] An example was given of Rabban Shimeon b. Gamliel and R. Joshua b. Karḥah who sat on benches at the Sanhedrin while their sons, R. Eleazar and Rabbi, who

could contribute to the legal discussions, sat on the ground. When someone suggested that the sons be promoted to be seated with their fathers, Rabban Shimeon b. Gamliel protested, exclaiming that his son would be lost to him (because of the evil eye) if this were done.[141] This attitude contrasts with the suggestion, not often made, that a son could never become the equal of his father. Thanks to the patronage of Rabbi, his father's and colleague, R. Jose b. R. Eleazar b. Issi b. Lakonia became a great scholar as great in learning as his father. But when he died, he was carried to his father's sepulchre which was surrounded by a snake which would not uncoil and allow the son to enter and join his father. When the people thought that this meant the son to be less than his father's equal in learning, a bat kol proclaimed that it wasn't for lack of learning that the son could not enter unto his father, but that the son had not experienced the same kind of suffering in his lifetime as had the father.[142]

Just what was the nature of the relationship between a child and its parent? R. Johanan caused Gen. 31:16(Truly, all the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us . . .") to inform an understanding of the following verse: "Thereupon Jacob put his children and wives on camels", in order to teach the wisdom the patriarch demonstrated by "loading" his children, who were more important to him, before loading his wives, who were less important. This was compared to Esau, who soon after demonstrated his foolishness because he moved his wife first, then his sons, and then his daughters (Gen.36:6).[143]

Were daughters more important to R. Johanan than wives? The passage does not answer that question. But Esau, about whom it is said that he took his daughter after he took his wives, was described as having a "foolish heart".[144]

The important affective ties which bound parent and child have been discussed by Golub elsewhere.[145] He states that the rabbis did not commonly refer to the "love" between parent and child, but rather focused more attention on the actual day-to-day activities which cemented their relationship. I, too, have found the use of the term "love" (a-hav, ha-viv, ra-ham) occasionally to occur in the rabbis' discussion of children, though a parents' affection was usually observed in more concrete ways, such as a father's generosity in giving his daughter a dowry.[146]

An example of the use of the abstraction "love" was given by R. Jonathan when he interpreted Eccl. 3:2, "He has set the world in their heart", to refer to the love of children which God put in the hearts of men. So great, in fact, was this love that a man could love one son, though he be corrupt, over another son, though he be the first-born and give him greater honor than the younger.[147] Rav taught that a man should never single out one son from the others, for because of two measures of fine wool which Jacob gave to Joseph (i.e., the striped coat) his brothers became jealous and the entire nation ended up in Egypt.[148]) Elsewhere children were said to be more valuable to a man than his "dearest treasure".[149] The rabbis also observed that a father's "love" extends no further than to his own grandson.[150]

It is my tentative feeling, however, that despite these examples of the use of the terms for love, the verb sameah b', meaning "to find joy in . . .",[151] more appropriately describes a parent's feeling for his or her son than does a verb meaning "love". Love is an abstract emotion often felt irrationally. But joy results from something concrete, most usually from achievment. It is worth separate investigation to determine if the rabbis, who were primarily concerned with the things parents and children ought to do, were also more likely to use such terms as "joy" to describe one's feelings when a son has accomplished a prescribed task.

In this area of parent-child relations the rabbis added a great deal to the sketchy picture painted in the Bible. Proverb 13:24, for example, warned a parent that

> He that spares his rod, hates his son
> But he who loves him, disciplines him betimes.

The rabbis repeated this teaching,[152] but Isaac added that a man need not force his son to study before the age of twelve[153] --that when the son acts in an undesirable way, the father should "roll with him".[154] It was also taught that a parent should not threaten his son. One should strike him immediately for his wrongdoing, or hold one's peace forever.[155] Furthermore, they warned against a man's striking his grownup son lest the son be tempted to strike back, verbally or otherwise, and thus show disrepect for his father.[156] To strike a grown son was seen as one example of putting a stumbling block in front of the blind (Lev. 19:14). It was expected that even the worst kinds of children would be forgiven by their parents.[157]

This statement is in contrast to the statement in the Bible, never, so far as we know, carried out, that a stubborn and rebellious son be killed (Deut. 21:18,20).

In the rabbinic literature we have countless examples of the range of attitudes and emotions which found expression in the Jewish family. A father rises from his seat to show respect for his own son's knowledge of Torah,[158] a son reverses his father's food requests to his contrarily disposed mother (only to learn later that he is not permitted to do this--it is lying),[159] and a father is found on his hands and knees being led around by his son who holds a reed protruding from the father's mouth.[160] In the words of R. Joshua b. Karḥa: "For a man to enjoy his children, he must fool around with them".[161] Another father scowls at his wife to keep the children busy, by sending them to the marsh to collect herbs if necessary, so that he needn't be bothered by them and can, instead, spend all his waking hours at the house of study.[162] Rabbinic insights into family life are laced with humor and pathos, love and anxiety, and are gleaned along the entire spectrum of rabbinic literature.

III

EDUCATION

The requirement that a father teach his son the laws of Torah was first verbalized by the Deuteronomist who instructed Israel: "You shall teach them to your children . . ." This statement became the basis of the rabbis' teaching that a father was obligated to teach his son Torah.[2] The rabbis went a step further, however, and required a son whose father neglected to teach him Torah, to teach himself.[3]

But the discussion did not end with this final clarification of legal responsibility. The author then went on to establish, by use of rabbinic hermeneutics, that a mother did not have an obligation to teach her son, that a woman did not have to teach herself, and that others were not required to teach woman.[4] Formal instruction was the domain of men alone.

It was a man's responsibility to educate both himself and his son. If both needed to be educated simultaneously, then he was required to teach himself first, and only afterwards to teach his son[5]. This followed the principle that a law regarding oneself takes precedence over a law regarding others.[6] R. Judah, however, said that if one's son were highly motivated and especially intelligent, then the father ought to see to his son's education before educating himself.[7]

Unlike circumcision and redemption, which were performed without the constant cajoling of the rabbis, education required a commitment sustained over a long period of time. On the one hand, fathers may have wanted their sons to go to work as soon as possible, while on the other, the rabbis could be expected

to encourage their own special interest, the study of Torah and oral traditions. The rabbis, therefore, continually sought ways of convincing fathers to teach Torah to their sons. "Who is illiterate (am ha-aretz)?" R. Nathan b. Joseph answered "He who has sons, but does not raise them to know Torah".[8] The usual understanding of the term is one who is ignorant and unobservant. But R. Nathan exaggerated the meaning of the phrase as a way to get the listener to go beyond self-education and teach his sons as well.

Elsewhere it was taught that raising one's sons to know Torah was one of six mitzvot which brings a man a two-fold reward. He enjoys benefit in this world and the principle in the world to come.[9] Possibly the "benefit" refers to the improved quality of life education will bring. And the "principle" refers to the merit gained from having done an important mitzvah. The reward for this merit would be assurance of a place in the world to come. The same reward was promised to the man who rose early to go to the house of study, as was promised the man who educated his sons.[10] Here, too, teaching oneself precedes teaching one's sons in this particular list of things a man ought to do. This idea was given negative expression where it was taught that "he who has sons but does not raise them to know Torah" was one of seven negligent acts which would ban him from heaven[11].

It was taught that R. Shimeon b. Yohai explained that all those who had a son who studied Torah were considered as if they were not dead.[12] R. Shimeon "proved" his point by quoting God speaking to Abraham: ("For I have singled him out, that he may

instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right,) in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him".[13] The text says that the reward would be brought "upon Abraham", and not "upon Abraham's children". Since Abraham died before he was granted all that God had promised to him, it must be, suggests R. Shimeon, that it is as if he were still alive.

There are also examples in the literature which show that father and son grow closer to each other as a result of the son's learning Torah. R. Levi said that a father is filled with love for a son who studies Torah. And R. Shimeon b. Menasiah added that even God had the heart of an earthly father, for He, too, swells with love for His children at the time they study Torah. God, in fact, was even said to love the mistakes of school children, and He overlooked it when they skipped His name.[14] R. Jose b. Honi said that a man may be jealous of all people except his son and his student.[15] Just as it was not improper for David's servants to wish that Solomon's reputation and power exceed his own, so it was not a violation of the requirement to show honor to parents when one wished greater learning or other accomplishment upon the son. A son's accomplishment, especially in learning, brought greater honor to the father, not less.

The rabbis not only discussed the realm of education in terms of father and son, but also in terms of daughters, grandsons, children of colleagues, and even the rich and the poor. In the context of examing the legal consequences of taking a vow, the Mishnah states that a person under a vow not to benefit

from his fellow man may not be taught midrash, halakha, etc. but that his sons and daughters may be taught Scripture.[16] This is a very unusual statement, and Danby[17] points out that it is missing in some texts. I do not know whether the phrase "and daughters" was later added to, or dropped from, the text, but it is fairly evident that the teaching of Torah to one's daughter, though not beyond possibility, was an extremely rare occurence in the rabbinic world.

Though women were not taught Torah as a rule, it is interesting that those who did were considered to gain merit for this study just as would a man. In the context of discussing the test given to a suspected adulteress, Ben Azai said that one should teach one's daughter Torah so that the resulting merit would, if necessary, suspend the effects of an adultery test. R. Eliezar, whose opinion was the one generally accepted by the rabbis, replied that, knowing she had such merit, a woman would be all the more tempted to promiscuity. For that reason, one should not teach Torah to one's daughter.[18] R. Joshua went on to observe that a woman preferred one measure (of food) and lechery to nine measures (of food) and modesty.[19] But here, the authorities were speaking of women and not of children. The halakhic discussion gives the operative opinion about the teaching of Torah to girls: one should teach one's sons, and even one's grandsons, but not one's daughters.[20] This statement went beyond saying that a man was not commanded to teach his daughter Torah; it says he doesn't teach her Torah. It was not a statement of law, but of a norm.

Actually, the statement that a man should teach not only his sons, but his grandsons as well, was meant to stress the importance of a man's teaching his own sons. This becomes evident when the text goes on to relate that a man who teaches Torah to his own son is ascribed merit as though he had taught his grandson and great-grandson, etc. to the end of time.[21] R. Joshua b. Levi taught that when a man taught Torah to his grandson, Scripture regarded him as if he himself had heard it at Mount Sinai.[22] In both these examples the speaker has linked the teaching of Torah to the connecting of an individual with his nation. In the first case he is connected with his nation's destiny, and in the second he is connected with his nation's birth. The rabbis saw the act of teaching as a manifestation of the content of Torah. As Torah is a history of the relationship between Israel and God, the teaching of Torah acted to establish this relationship for the student as well as to insure the future of the people.

Not everyone agreed with this vision of universal male education. The disciples of Shammai taught that one should only teach a man who was intelligent, meek, came from a distinguished family, and was wealthy.[23] Shammai not only saw education as the task for only an elite few, but one of the qualitifications was that the student be meek. The dialectical process of the Talmud generally required, if not an agressive response, surely one that was more ambitious than "meek".[24] A student should be humble and acquiescent with his teacher and aggressive with his <u>haver</u>, his classmate.

The disciples of Hillel disagreed with Shammai altogether. They taught that everyone (meaning all males) should receive an education. For Hillel this was not said to be a concession to the masses. He was said by his followers to believe that many sinners in ancient Israel were brought close to Torah and as a result that their descendents were righteous, pious and worthy people.[25] Where Shammai saw the Torah as a privilege of the elite, Hillel saw it as the equalizer of society. Anyone, by studying Torah, could achieve the highest status the community had to offer.

At another time it was taught to be careful not to neglect the children of the poor, because it is through them that Torah is transmitted.[26] Following this statement several rabbis offered theodicies as to why scholars did not have children who were scholars. R. Joseph explained that this was to insure that no one would declare Torah to be their exclusive legacy and thereby exempt someone else from study. R. Sheshet b. R. Idi said that it was in order that scholars not be arrogant toward the community. Mar Zutra said that it was because they act high-handedly against the community. And R. Asi said it was because they call the people asses.[27] R. Joseph's response was consistent with the teaching of Hillel. Torah should remain in the domain of all the people. R. Sheshet's answer admitted to the possibility that those who did learn Torah formed an elite who required checks over their use of authority. And the final two responses actually point to feelings of animosity between scholars and the masses.

Since all these statements were made by rabbis, at least one of whom was the son of a rabbi, none of them could have been meant to be universal or exclusive of the others.

The final category of people the rabbis discussed regarding who should be taught Torah was children of one's neighbors, and the illiterate. To illustrate this point the Talmud gives examples of how Rabbi would chance to visit various towns and inquire about the sons of his colleagues who had died. In one case he found the son of R. Eleazar b. R. Shimeon. This lad was very popular among the harlots, so Rabbi brought him out of the town, ordained him, and turned him over to R. Shimeon b. Issi b. Lakonia, the child's uncle. The boy grew to be a scholar the equal of his father.[28] It is not insignificant that the boy was turned over to his uncle. Where no father or grandfather existed who should educate a boy, an uncle would be a next logical person upon whom the burden would fall.

In another example, Rabbi found the son of R. Tarphon's daughter also to be popular with harlots. Rabbi offered his own daughter to the boy on condition that he repent. Versions differ as to whether he actually married Rabbi's daughter (some said he didn't last his repentance be said to be on her account) or not, but the narrative does have the boy repenting and becoming an example of a person taught Torah by his neighbor who gains a seat in the heavenly academy for having done this.[29] It seems that there existed a sort of professional etiquette among the rabbis. In both cases, Rabbi took care

of children (one was actually the grandchild) of his colleagues--neither of whom were neighbors since neither lived in his own town.

In these two cases discussed above, the study of Torah did not begin until after the boy had reached puberty and established his sexual prowess. It turns out that this was not such an unusual age for "children" to begin to study, though the literature is far from unanimous on the subject.

On the one hand, children were expected to learn to do rituals associated with the religious life of the community at a pace that paralleled their physical development. A child who no longer needed his mother (to nurse?) was obligated to live in the sukkah. If he knew how to "shake" he was obligated with respect to the lulav. If he knew how to "wrap" he had to wear the fringed prayer shawl. When he knew how to observe the custom of wearing the tephillin, his father had to purchase a pair for him. When he knew how to speak, his father taught him the Sh'ma, Torah, Hebrew, and so on.[30] This passage states that as soon as he was ready, the child was required to participate in the mitzvah. It is also to be noted here that it was not, apparently, until after a child began to speak Aramaic that he was taught Hebrew. Even at this early date, the learning of Hebrew came after the learning of the vernacular and was associated with the religious training of a child.

One exception to this principle of waiting until a child was ready before requiring him to participate in a mitzvah

was with regard to fasting on Yom Kippur. Although children were not legally required to fast, they were expected to be educated to fast a year or two before their majority, through partial fasting, in order that they be accustomed to a full day's fast when they did reach the age of responsibility.[31]

The rabbis taught that if one had to study Torah and to marry a wife, he should first study and then get married.[32] But if the individual could not study without a wife, it was permitted that he get married first. R. Judah said in the name of Samuel that the halakha says a man should first marry and then study, but R. Johanan felt that marriage presented a great obstacle to study.[33] R. Isaac said that it was legislated at Usha that a man should "roll" with his son until he reached the age of twelve. From that point on the father must force him to study.[34]

Elsewhere, it was narrated that children used to begin attending school when they were sixteen or seventeen, and that whenever a teacher would discipline them they would leave. Then Joshua b. Gamla set up schools in every town where children would begin attending at the age of six or seven.[35] Rab said to R. Samuel b. Shilath that he should not accept a child in school before he'd reached the age of six, but after that he could "fill him like an ox". Rab continued that if one had to punish a child, it should be done with a shoe lace.[36] This was perhaps in response to the earlier situation where students would simply leave the schoolhouse when reprimanded harshly.

How was the legislation at Usha reconciled with the teaching of Rab that a child could attend school at six? Rab himself answered that the first referred to Mishnah and the second to Torah.[37] Abayye said that his nurse told him that age six was proper to begin learning Torah, age ten for Mishnah and age thirteen (twelve for girls) to begin a full day's fast.[38]

And in another place children were compared to trees originally planted in Israel for food. The first three years they were forbidden to be harvested (arelim), that is, they were not taught Torah. The fourth year all its fruit was holy, sacred. Similarly, a father sanctified his son through discussion of Torah. And finally, in the fifth year, as the fruit of the tree could be eaten, so could a child enjoy the "fruits" of Torah--by beginning to read from it. From then on the "fruits" would only increase. And so, according to this passage, the rabbis taught that age five was appropriate for beginning the study of Scripture, and age ten for Mishnah.[39]

R. Joshua b. Levi said that in the days of Saul and David, even infants knew how to interpret Torah in ways so subtle and elaborate that they could give forty-nine arguments in favor of an object's being ritually clean, and then forty-nine arguments to prove it ritually unclean.[40] The intention of R. Joshua is that children used to be better students in the "good old days".

The concern for proper discipline is always the primary educational concern of a parent, for it is crucial for the physical well-being of a child. But the rabbis spoke about

discipline in a more general, a more moral sense.[41] Speaking of the general behavior of a boy, R. Isaac observed that the things he does in his youth "darken his face" in his old age.[42] The phrase probably means that a man comes to be either embarrassed of, or ashamed for, the things he did when he was young. This is not so much a threat of punishment as it is a warning of accountability.

Improper behavior was thought to be the result of the "evil impulse" to which everyone was susceptible.[43] Referring to it as "this repulsive (thing)", the School of R. Ishmael taught, "My son, if (it) should grip you, take it to the school house".[44] There, continues the narrative, it will be destroyed, no matter what its substance, because the words of Torah are "like fire" (Jer. 23:29), "like a hammer" (ibid.), and as "the waters" that wear stones (Job 14:19). Torah was the best antidote to the evil urge.

More commonly used by the rabbis[45] than the above-cited verse from Proverbs was the warning that

> He that spares his rod, hates his son
> But he who loves him, disciplines him betimes.
> (13:24)

This point of view required that a son be strictly disciplined, with a corporal punishment if necessary,[46] in order that he not grow up to become degenerate.[47]

The rabbis did not always insist upon strict discipline, however. Perhaps because, as the context suggests, children were leaving school in rebellion against teachers who reproached them, Rab told Samuel b. Shilath (only) to strike a child with

a shoe lace[48] if discipline became necessary.

It was also taught that a child from B'nei B'rak once broke a glass for which his father threatened him excessively. The child became frightened , fled, fell in a hole and was killed. The sages concluded from this incident that a man should not threaten a child. He should either spank him immediately, or not say anything at all.[49] This dialectical tension between being strict with one's children or being forgiving was summarized by R. Shimeon b. Eleazar who said "It is the nature of a child and a woman that one pushes away with the right hand as one draws near with the left."[50]

When a child finally did begin to study Torah formally, he began with the portions of Leviticus dealing with the sacrifices offered in the Temple. Noting that this might be seen as odd, R. Jose said that it would appear at first that a child should study from the beginning of the Torah, but they begin, instead, with Leviticus because "they are pure and the sacrifices were pure. Let the pure come and study the pure".[51]

Through the observation of Rabbi Akiva we learn that children learned to sing the <u>hallel</u>. He said that the Israelites sang, when they arose from the Sea of Reeds, "like a child who reads the <u>hallel</u> in school", and that this singing caused "the holy spirit to dwell upon them".[52]

R. Judah taught in Samuel's name that the obligation of a man to teach his son Torah extended, as with the example of Zebulun b. Dan who was taught by his grandfather, to the

teaching of Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, halakhot and aggadot. When Raba asked if Scripture referred only to Torah, they told him that it meant all the other subjects as well in the case of Zebulun b. Dan, but that it could also be interpreted to mean only Scripture.[53]

But R. Safra said in the name of R. Joshua b. Hanania that the text of Deut. 6:7, "Impress them upon your children" (y'shinantem) should be read "You shall divide (them) into thirds" (y'shilashtem). By this he meant that a person should spend a third of his time studying Scripture, a third studying Mishnah, and a third studying Talmud.[54]

Although talmud torah and lil-mod torah were the two most common phrases used by the rabbis to refer to a child's formal education, they used other terms which add to our understanding of what was considered appropriate education. For example, a father was said to owe his son man-heeg[55] in a list that included food, drink, clothing and shoes. This word comes from the root na-hag, meaning "to lead, conduct". Jastrow[56] shows the word to be associated with general, or secular activities. Both the etymology of the verb and its context point to a sense of "worldly wisdom" intended in by its use. This passage required that a father teach his son how to get along in the world.

Similarly, a father was urged to rear his children in the "proper way" (derekh y'shara) before marrying them at the arrival of puberty.[57] The term used here to mean "rear" or "train" was mad-rikh. Jastrow[58] also associated this word with

secular learning. In context, it most likely meant "to discipline" in a general sense.

When they listed the legal requirements of fatherhood, the rabbis added the opinion of some that a son ought to be taught to swim.[59] Later in the text, when asked what the reason for this could be, the answer was that it could save his life.[60]

There were also limits to what a father might teach his son, no matter how useful such knowledge could be to him. Once they asked R. Joshua if a man could teach his son Greek. He answered that "You may teach him when it is neither evening nor day, as it is written: 'This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth) but you shall meditate therein day and night' (Joshua 1:8). It was asked if the teaching of a trade was also forbidden by this statement. R. Ishmael responded with the verse "therefore choose life"--that is, a trade. R. Abbahu, in the name of R. Johanan, said that a man could allow his daughter to learn Greek because for her it was an ornament.[61] No Jew concerned with the study of Torah should spend time studying Greek.

I have already discussed the question raised by the rabbis as to when a child should be trained to fast on Yom Kippur. What was not pointed out there was the use of the verb <u>hanokh</u> to mean "train", "to initiate", "to inaugurate".[62] This verb was not used by the rabbis in the <u>kal</u> form as it was in the Bible,[63] but it was used in the <u>hiph'il</u> form to mean "train".

This kind of preparing, associated with the preparing of the priests for their Yom Kippur duties,[64] had to do with religious activities rather than secular ones. The rabbis gave no reasons to their children for fasting, they simply set an age, usually two years before their majority, at which point they would begin delaying meals, or even withholding them entirely during the Day of Atonement.

Children also learned to participate in the religious life of the community by taking on a role in the morning and evening service at the synagogue. R. Huna taught that twice a day the children said Psalm 106:47, "Save us O Lord our God." God was so touched by this plea that He responded each time He heard it, said R. Huna, with "Oh that the time would approach when I could cause your redemption to draw near" (Psalm 14:7).[65] Another example of children receiving religious education comes from the instruction that they were to thank God and bless him for sustenance, even when there was not enough food for them to have their hunger sated. If there were so much as an olive's amount of food to eat, a father would lead his children and the entire household in thanking God.[66] Finally, it should be mentioned that children were seen by the rabbis to get a moral education by example as well as by doing. More accurately, they learned to do what was right, as in the examples above, by doing; but they could learn to do what was wrong just by watching others.[67] R. Zeira taught that a person should not offer something to a child only to change his mind later on, for this teaches a child to lie.[68]

One extreme example of how one should educate his children came from a priest who had ten children, six boys and four girls. Every day he would pray as hard as he could that his children would not come to sin. He would first put them in the "inner house" and then guard them in the "outer house", all the time praying that they neither sin nor do any ugly thing. He did this until he saw his sons and his grandsons for fifty years become high priests and reap the fruits of the priesthood, and then he died. About him was applied Psalm 37:3, "Trust in the Lord and do good".[69] It is not clear exactly what was meant by "inner house" and "outer house", but the sense of the narrative is not obstructed by this gap of clarity. Here was an individual who essentially locked his children up in his home, allowing them to move (according to a schedule which he set) only from the inner part to the outer part, but never out into the world. And for doing this he saw his children become high priests and was made an example to all of Israel by God.

The father who sent his sons to school was closer to the norm. R. Judah told in the name of Rab about the rise of a system of schools in the land.[70] This system, without which it was said Torah would have been forgotten, was attributed to Joshua b. Gamla. Before he came, a child would learn from his father, if he had one, or not at all. Then they legislated that teachers be appointed in Jerusalem. Then some children would study there, but only if their fathers brought them. Next schools were set up in different geo-political

areas for boys who had reached the age of sixteen or seventeen. But there were problems here, apparently related to the fact that boys this age were difficult to discipline. Finally, Joshua b. Gamla came and appointed teachers in every district of every town so that boys could attend school at age six or seven. Once these schools were set up, said Raba, boys were not sent to Jerusalem any more, or even to another town, to attend school. They had to go to school in their own town, although it was permitted that they be assigned to different synagogues, provided they did not have to cross a river witnout a secure bridge.[71]

Raba also said that class size was limited to twenty-five as a rule. If there were fifty students, a second teacher was hired. If forty, they hired an assistant teacher at the expense of the town.[72]

Raba further stated that if there were two teachers, one of whom was more skillful than the other, the less skillful one should not be replaced by the more skillful one for fear that the latter would become lazy. R. Dimi, however, disagreed, saying that such competition would increase knowledge, that is, it would make for better teaching.[73]

These two rabbis further disagreed on the matter of which quality was most important in a teacher, speed (of reading?) or accuracy. Raba preferred the teacher who could read fast, though he made mistakes, because the mistakes would, in time, come to be corrected. But R. Dimi said that a mistake, once set, could not be erased. He would appoint the slow but accurate teacher.[74]

Perhaps the most widely known statement of methodology for the teaching of Jewish children follows the reciting of the four questions in the Passover Haggadah. The reading of the Haggadah itself at the Passover seder was an important aspect of the education of the Jewish child, for it was here that he was made to relive the exodus from Egypt as if he, too, had been there. But after the Four Questions the rabbis defined the different types of children and gave specific instructions as to how each was to be answered. These different kinds of sons are defined in three different sources,[75] each of which lists four sons, but each lists them differently. The Jerusalem Talmud[76] names sons who are wise, evil, stupid, and who don't know how to ask. The Mekhilta[77] reverses the order of the stupid and the evil son. And the traditional Haggadah substitutes "simple" for the "stupid" son in the Jerusalem Talmud. Despite the different order and slight difference in designation of the stupid/simple son, there is relative agreement among these texts.

The rabbis seem to have established an ideal type, the wise son, and then given three different foils with suggestions as to how to respond to them. The wise son was to be given a full and comprehensive answer. The evil son was seen as being evil specifically for stating his response in such a way as to separate himself from the rest of the family. The appropriate response to his rejection of the family, says the Haggadah, was for the family to reject him in return. He should be told that had he been in Egypt at the time of the Exodus, he would not have known redemption.[78]

Where the wise son knows how to ask the questions and understands all the answers, the simple son does not understand a thing. The response to him is to summarize the entire Haggadah into a single sentence which, it is hoped, he will understand. The silent son does not how to ask at all. For this child the father goes back one additional step and reads "You shall tell your child on that day . . ." (Ex.13:8). This child could then be taught the answer without ever having asked the question.

Besides answering these archtypical students, the rabbis discussed certain very specific ways in which different pupils might be taught. Some children, they noted, will read on their own. Those who won't should be seated next to one who does in order that he be influenced by his more highly motivated classmate.[79] One authority taught that a person should discourage his sons from memorization and public recitation of the Bible[80] because it would merely be a parading of superficial knowledge.[81]

The rabbis related that a person who was not very wise once walked into the synagogue where everyone was busy studying Torah. He asked them how it was possible for someone to begin learning Torah. They answered that you begin with the scroll, then with the Torah, then you study the Prophets, then the Writings. He who finishes Scripture goes on to Talmud, and then to the halakhot, and then to the aggadot. When the intruder heard all this he said to himself "When would I learn all that?" and he left without saying a word. Compared

to him, what does a clever person do? He learns a chapter a day until he has completed the entire Torah.[82]

This passage reveals that there were "scrolls" from which children learned something prior to learning Torah. It is likely that such scrolls would be some sort of "primer" from which a child learned to read, but there is no evidence here even to suggest that the scroll referred to was in Hebrew. At the other end of the curriculum students reached the level of halakha and aggada in that order. It is worth noting that the aggada was the last subject listed to be studied. Either it was seen as being less important than the halakha, or it was viewed as being more difficult and worthy of only the most keenly trained minds.

R. Ḥiyya b. Abba taught that the education of his son was so important that he did not eat a thing in the morning until he had taught his son his lesson. First he reviewed the previous day's material, and then he added on to it.[83] Rabba b. R. Huna merely did not eat until he took his son to school.[84] In both cases the author intended to stress the importance of education.

R. Ḥiyya b. Abba also said that a father and son who study together (lit. "at the same gate") become enemies of each other. But they do not leave that spot until they come to love each other.[85] This seems to be a metaphor for the talmudic dialectic itself.

We have seen that the rabbis gave a great deal of attention to the subject of learning. In rabbinic society, education

was the surest means of achieving a position of status and authority. Those who had succeeded in this system, the rabbis, would be expected to support it. They did support it, explicitly as well as implicitly. One fatalistic observation recorded that "the means of support (for the coming year) are assigned to a man between Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur, except the amount he will spend for the Sabbaths, for the festivals and for the education of his children. If he spends less, it will be decreased on his account, and if he spends more, it will be increased on his account".[86]

Raba spoke of how a person could even make himself cruel to his children and his household for the sake of studying Torah.[87] He recognized that to become truly dedicated to Torah, to become a great scholar, required a certain neglect of family. The importance of studying Torah was usually put in more positive terms,[88] but this view was, nevertheless, part of the accepted tradition.

R. Joshua b. Levi said that he who taught his grandson Torah was regarded by Scripture as if he had received it himself at Mt. Sinai. So important was education to R. Joshua that R. Ḥiyya b. Abba once found him wearing a plain cloth on his head and taking a child to school.[89] R. Joshua was stressing the importance of seeing to the education, not only of one's sons, but of their sons and also of one's neighbor's sons. Education is the concern of everyone, he taught.

This same statement occurs in the Jerusalem Talmud,[90] that "Everyone who hears a verse (of Torah) from his grandson, is considered as if he heard it from Mr. Sinai". The passing on of revelation from God to father to son and grandson served to establish Sinaitic revelation for all time.

R. Hamnuna went so far as to say that Jerusalem was destroyed only because school children wasted their time in the streets.[91] This kind of exaggeration was common, but it nevertheless points to the importance the rabbis gave to the education of children.

Resh Lakish said in the name of the Nesiah that the world endured only for the breath of school children. He furthermore added that school children may not be made to neglect (their studies) even for the building of the Temple. And finally, he said that he had a tradition from his fathers--"others state from your fathers"--that every town in which there are no school children shall be destroyed. Rabina said that it would be laid totally desolate.[92] When Resh Lakish connected children to the building of the Temple he was playing on the word for builders (bonim) which is similar to the word for sons (banim). Rebuilding the Temple was the most important "building" that Resh Lakish could imagine, yet even this task was not to be done by children. Children should spend all their time in study.

R. Abba b. Kahana said that there never were philosophers among the other nations like Balaam b. Beor and Avanimus the weaver. Once they were asked if the inquirers were a match for

Israel. Balaam and Avanimus replied that to find out they should go look at their synagogues. If the children were "chirping", then they could not defeat them, but if not, they could.[93] This prophecy was based on the verse (Gen. 27:22) "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau". When Jacob's voice could be heard in the synagogue and schools, the hands were not the hands of Esau. (i.e., Israel's enemies would not prevail). But when there was no voice chirping in the synagogues and schools, the hands were the hands of Esau (i.e., Israel's enemies would succeed)[94]. The nation's strength was here dependent upon the quality of its education.

IV

RESPONSIBLITIES OF CHILDREN: THE HONOR AND FEAR OF PARENTS

We have already seen that sons were obligated to circumcise, redeem, educate and marry themselves if their father did not do this for them.[1] But these events occurred at specific times in the life of a child. The rabbis, however, were concerned less with chronological age in designating childhood than with the relationship between parent and child. And so their teaching dealt more with a child's responsibilities to his parents than with his doing the requirements of a particular age level. In the midrashic collection Pesikta Rabbati the Kings of the earth were seen reacting to the giving of the Ten Commandments. With the hearing of each commandment they responded that the demands of God were consonant with the demands any king would ask of his people. But when He commanded Israel to honor (thy father and thy mother), they said "In our codes of law it is set down that he who has himself inscribed by a sacred oath as belonging to the king must renounce his parents; but Israel's Lawgiver decrees: 'Honor thy father and thy mother'". On hearing this, therefore, the kings rose from their thrones and themselves praised the God of Israel.[2] God's authority did not require the absence of honoring parents.

The honoring of one's parents was considered by the rabbis to be one of the most important and the most difficult of all

the mitzvot. R. Judah b. Betera taught that Israel had to wait for redemption from exile until after Esau was rewarded for the great honor he gave his parents.[3] R. Nehunya, in the name of R. Tanhum b. Yudan, agreed, saying "In this world what delayed the honor due to Jacob? The great honor which Esau gave to his father.[4] The honoring of parents was viewed here as being so important that God would reward it in a non-Israelite, even at the expense of delaying the redemption of His chosen people.

R. Shimeon b. Yoḥai taught that God revealed the reward for only two of the mitzvot, the easiest and the most difficult. The easiest was the allowing a mother bird to escape while keeping her young for oneself (Deut. 22:7). And the most difficult was the honoring of one's parents (Ex. 20:12). In both cases the reward was a "lenghtening of days".[5] R. Abba b. Kahana regarded the honoring of parents as the paying of a debt. If lengthening of days was the reward for observing this commandment, how much greater, he said, must be the reward for doing a commandment which required personal expense or risk.[6] To him, therefore, this commandment was not the most difficult to observe. With R. Shimeon b. Yoḥai, R. Abba b. Kahana concluded that just as the reward for doing these two mitzvot was great, so would be the punishment for neglecting them. Citing Prov. 30:17, he said that such a person would have his eyes picked out by the raven and eaten by the eagle.[7]

There is a sense in the aggada that old age in parents is beautiful and that this beauty is connected with the

requirement that age be honored. This seems to have been in the mind of the aggadist who related that Abraham complained to God that, since everyone lived to be one hundred and two hundred years old, no one was able to distinguish between father and son, or even between young adult and the aged, and thus, older people were not being honored by others. God answered Abraham's prayer by agreeing to establish him as a precedent. The patriarch went on and lodged that night. When he awoke in the morning he saw that the hair on his head and beard had aged.[8] According to this passage, Abraham initiated, if not the concept of honoring one's parents, at least the possibility that this honoring be carried out.[9]

To honor one's father, therefore, was to recognize that he was older and to treat him accordingly. This passage does not teach how a parent or an older person should be honored, but there are many examples elsewhere that do.

For example, the rabbis delineated the Biblical distinction between "honor" and "fear". R. Joshua of Sikhnim pointed out in the name of R. Levi that in the commandment to honor, the father is mentioned before the mother. But in the commandment to fear (Lev. 19:3) the mother is mentioned before the father. The reason he gives for this reversal, however, is cryptic and difficult to understand.[10] Elsewhere, however, it was taught that Rabbi said that a son honors his mother more than his father because she teaches him orally (lit. "with words"). Therefore, God compensated for this by placing the

father first in the commandment to honor. But a son fears (or "reveres") his father more than his mother because he teaches him Torah, so God in this case put fear (or "reverence") of the mother first.[11]

What did the rabbis interpret the word "reverence" to mean? R. Joshua of Sikhnim said that a son should not sit in his father's place, nor should he even stand in it, and that he should not contradict his father.[12] Rabbi further qualified this final point by adding that a son should not "tip the scales" against his father. By this he most likely meant that a son should not side with another in an argument with his father.[13]

And what was meant by "honor"? R. Joshua of Sikhnim interpreted it to mean that a son should provide food and drink for his father, that he should shower him, bathe him and anoint him, that he should put his sandals on for him, and that he should escort him about.[14]

R. Shimeon b. Gamliel said that he used to honor his father by wearing handsome clothes when he travelled abroad. But Esau, who was also a model for the honoring of one's father, waited on him in royal garments.[15]

An example of what is meant to honor one's mother was given by Rabbi at the time of his death. He called his sons to him and told them to be careful to honor their mother. The light should be burned in its usual place, the table should be set in its usual place, and the bed should be spread in its usual place. Rabbi then specified that the two sons who had

attended him most during his life should be the ones to attend him at his death.[16]

In the above quoted passage, the question was asked, Is there the same torahitic basis for honoring a step-mother and step-father as there is for honoring one's own real parents? The answer given was that to honor one's father meant honoring his wife. And to honor one's mother meant honoring her husband.[17] The passage even went on to include one's older brother among those deserving a person's honor.[18]

Elsewhere there was also the implicit understanding that a son should honor his uncle/father-in-law. In talking about Jacob's getting angry at Laban, R. Azariah said in the name of R. Haggai that in this case the anger of the Patriarchs was preferable to the meekness of sons.[19] In relation to Laban, Jacob was both a son-in-law and a Patriarch at the same time, each with its own role expectations. What R. Haggai taught was that where the two roles came in conflict, it was the role of Patriarch that required assertion. But by implication, Jacob should have acted "meekly" toward his father-in-law in any other situation, thus showing him honor.

Another example shows the neglect of a child to honor his grandfather, even when the latter raised him. R. Aba b. Jacob reared R. Jacob, his daughter's son. When the boy grew up the grandfather asked him for some water, but the boy refused to bring it, saying "I am not your son". Thus was illustrated the popular saying "Rear me. Rear me". (Yet I have no reciprocal duty as a son.) I am your daughter's son".[20] The sense of this passage is that one ought to honor one's

grandparents, but that this commonly was not done.

The obligation to honor one's parents also did not extend beyond their death. R. Abun said that he was exempted from honoring his parents because his father died before he was born and his mother died shortly thereafter.[21]

Sometimes the duty to honor parents could result in conflict. A widow's son once asked R. Eliezer what to do if both one's mother and father asked for a drink of water at the same time. R. Eliezer responded that a father should be served first because both mother and son were bound to honor the father.[22] This does not say that a father did not honor his wife, but only that a wife must obey her husband just as a son should.

The obligation to honor one's parents fell equally upon men and women, though married women were not expected to have the means to observe this mitzvah. If, however, a woman became a widow or was divorced, she was considered able to honor them.[23]

Could a person be compelled by law to honor (lit."maintain") his parents? Apparently, he could, but not from the beginning of the Tannaitic era. R. Jonathan once suggested to a man whose son would not provide for him that he shame him publicly by slamming the synagogue door in his face. But R. Yannai was surprised to hear that, and asked why R. Jonathan did not just have the boy forced to feed his father. R. Jonathan did not know this could be done, but R. Yannai assured him that there was such a law. From then on R. Jonathan taught in the house of study that the law was as R. Yannai had said.[24]

When he thought a son could not be compelled to maintain his father, R. Jonathan taught Huna b. Ḥiyya's interpretation of the Baraita, that the son could use the father's money to do this. But once he realized that the son could be forced to take care of his father, he taught that the son had to do it out of his own account. This became the authoritative view and ultimately came to be attributed to R. Jonathan.[25]

Although there was a strong societal pressure which would work to coerce children to provide for their parents, the obligation probably had a legal status similar to the requirement of a parent to provide food for his children. This is evidenced by a Tannaitic tradition which taught that there were three people who had a (legitimate) grievance in court but for whom there was no legal recourse: he who lends without witnesses, he who acquires a master for himself, and a husband who is dominated by his wife. One interpretation of "he who acquires a master for himself" was the person who transferred his property to his children in his own lifetime.[26]

R. Abbahu was said to have taught in the name of R. Johanan "One can go as far as to say that even if a son is told by his father, 'Throw your purse into the sea', the son must obey".[27] The rabbis considered whether this passage meant that a son must honor his father no matter what the personal cost. But they concluded that it rather had to do only with the special case of a father who had several purses, (with one of which he intended to compensate his son).

And so the teaching was really concerned, not with the cost to the son, but with the extent to which the son was expected to give peace of mind to his father.[28]

The honoring of parents, therefore, included a recognition of their seniority, treating them with respect, providing them with the basic human necessities, obeying their wishes and doing what was necessary, even the unusual, to insure their peace of mind.

Since Scripture uses the terms "honor", "revere", and "curse" to apply both to the relationship between an individual and his parents as well as to that between the individual and God, the rabbis equated the honoring, etc. of one with the honoring, etc. of the other.[29] This, they said, was logical, since all three, father, mother and God, had an equal part in the making of the child.[30] And because of this partnership, when a man honored his father and his mother, God was said to consider it as if He had lived among them and they had honored Him.[31] And one Tanna said to R. Naḥman that when a man brings anxiety to his parents, God said that He was right not to have lived among them, for had He, they would have troubled Him as well.[32] The honoring of parents brought God near so that He, too, felt honored. But the neglect of parents acted only to keep God away (or, in a more passive sense, did not bring Him near) so that He would not feel neglected as well.

Having compared the honoring of parents with the honoring of God, the rabbis went on to show how much more difficult it

was to honor parents. In the presence of R. Ḥiyya b. Abba, R. Judah b. Dudati explained the teaching of R. Shimeon b. Yohai. The honor due one's parents was even greater than that due to God himself, because God was to be honored with one's substance (Prov.3:9). If a person had no means of carrying out the prescribed methods of honoring God, then he was exempt from doing them. For example, one honored God by setting aside gleanings, overlooked sheaves, and the corners of one's field, by giving the first tithe, the second tithe and the priests' share of the dough, by making a shofar, a sukkah and a lulav, by feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty and clothing the naked. All these acts required some minimal amount of wealth. Without it, they could not be done. But with parents, one was to honor them even if it meant begging at peoples' doorways.[33]

The rabbis illustrated their teaching about the honoring of parents with several anecdotes.[34] R. Ḥanina taught that the spirit with which one showed honor to one's parents was more important than the external manifestation of such honoring. For example, he continued, a miller in Sepphoris, when the authorities issued a work-summons for millers, told his father to continue the grinding at his mill while he went to answer the summons. In that way, any harm that might come from their dissatisfaction with the work would fall on him, the son, rather than on the father. Some people even said that the son herded cattle around his father to hide him (from the authorities who might draft him to go to Rome.)

Though the son looked cruel by making his father grind at the mill, he wasn't, but rather served to inherit the garden of Eden.

On the other hand, there was a man who used to give his father fattened chickens to eat. Once the father asked his son where he got them, but the son only responded, "Old man, eat and shut up, even as dogs shut up when they eat". And so this person, who gave his father plenty to eat, looked generous, but deserved to inherit Gehenna.

Other stories, hyperbolic in nature, served to illustrate that there was no limit to the honor one owed his parents. Once R. Tarphon's mother went for a walk in her courtyard on the Sabbath, when her sandal split.[35] R. Tarphon stretched out his hands so that she could walk on them until she reached her couch. Once, when R. Tarphon became sick and the scholars came to visit him, his mother told them what he had done for her. They responded that even if he had done a thousand thousand times more, he would not have come half way toward showing the honor a son owes a parent.

R. Ishmael's mother was said to have complained that her son did not honor her because after he washes his feet she wants to drink the water he had used, but he would not let her. The scholars answered her that if that was her wish, then it was the duty of her son to fulfill it. R. Yannai summed the matter up by quoting a saying of the millers that "the luck of every man is in his own sleeve", which apparently meant that for some it was a great effort to show their parents honor, for they demanded much, and for others it was easy because they wanted only to serve their children.

There is also a case where serving one's mother and father came into conflict.[36] Rav was tormented by a contentious wife who, when he asked for lentils, would bring him peas, and when he asked for peas would bring him lentils. When his son Hiyya grew up the latter learned to reverse his father's requests to his mother so that he would get the dish he wanted. Although this was seen as a fulfillment of the popular proverb that one's children teach a parent reason, the son was, nevertheless, enjoined from continuing this deception, for it was a more serious consideration that he had lied to his mother. She was owed respect from her son despite the bad way she treated her husband.

But the classic case describing the extent to which one must show honor to parents was ascribed to the behavior of a non-Jew named Dama b. Netina.[37] This man, head of the city council of Ashkelon, sat silently while his mother publicly berated him, and when her sandal fell from her hand, he picked it up and handed it to her so she should not be further upset.

R. Hizkiah said that though he was a gentile, he never sat upon the stone his father used for a seat. And when his father died, he had the stone made into a relic. One time the jasper, the stone representing the tribe of Benjamin (in the breastplate of the High Priest), was lost. The sages were told that Dama b. Netina had a stone that could replace it, so they went to him and agreed on a price of a hundred denars. He went upstairs to get it for them but found his father and mother asleep. Some say the father's feet were on the box in which the jasper lay, and some say that the key to the box

was in his father's fingers. In any event, he returned to the sages and told them that he could not give them the stone. They discussed this among themselves, concluded that he wanted more money for it, and agreed to pay him a thousand denars. When his parents woke, Dama b. Netina went up and got the stone for the sages. When they offered him the higher price for the stone, he refused, saying that he would not accept profit for having honored his parents. God was said to have rewarded Dama b. Netina's behavior, said R. Jose b. Abin, by having his cow give birth to a red heifer, which the sages of Israel paid its weight in gold for.

The rabbis taught with this story that only good can come from the honoring of one's parents. And even if a person does not seek to benefit from exhibiting such honor, God would reward him anyway.

V

THE VALUE OF CHILDREN

The value of children, or more accurately of sons, has been implicit throughout the preceding chapters of this thesis. They increase a man's wealth, name and social position through their marriages. They increase his status through study of Torah. They continue his line and maintain his property through inheritance. They provide for both their mother and father when the latter become old. They link a man, through the doing of religious ritual, to the past and future of his people. In this chapter I will present examples in which the rabbis explicitly discuss the value of children.

There is a tannaitic tradition that relates how Amram, the father of Moses, learned wisdom from his daughter Miriam and as a result came to be known as one of the greats of his generation. When Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew males that were born should be thrown into the Nile, Amram declared that all his toil was in vain and divorced his wife (the purpose of marriage, to have sons, having been made impossible to fulfill). Everyone else then followed his example and divorced their wives. But Amram's daughter opposed her father's decision, arguing that while Pharaoh's decree was against only males, her father's decree (of divorce) was against all infants. Pharaoh's decree had effect only in this world, but Amram's decree was not certain to be fulfilled, but Amram's decree would of course be fulfilled since he was a tzaddik. On hearing that Amram took back his wife and everyone also did the same.[1] Miriam here taught her father what came to be handed down as "torah": that even in the worst of times it is

important to have children. The passage does not say why it was important to have children, but we know that after Amram returned to his wife she conceived Moses, the child who would ultimately come to deliver all Israel from the very oppression that caused Amram's original action. Children are vaulable to their parents and also to the nation Israel because one never knows what deeds they might achieve. Miriam taught her father that parents never know how history will end up unless they refrain from having children, in which case they determine not only that it will end, but that it will end no better than they knew it.

The psalmist taught that "children are a heritage the fruit of the womb is a reward" of the Lord,(Ps. 127:3), and the rabbis repeated this evaluation.[2] In one case the verse was made to show that sons were both a heritage and a reward, while daughters were a reward only.[3] Their value in this statement is twofold. That they are a reward suggests that a couple receives them from God for having done something meritorious. The precept of procreation is itself a mitzvah, so the reward might be seen as having been deserved by anyone who has children within the bounds of marriage. That sons are a "heritage" suggests that a couple receives them as an inheritance from God. Children belong to God in the same way that property ultimately belongs to Him. Both are merely given over to man to be taken care of. And having been cared for himself, the child will then come to "inherit" from God children of his own to care for.

Elsewhere this verse was interpreted, not to distinguish between males and females, but between God's nature and man's. It is the nature of flesh and blood, according to this account, that a laborer must work for the master of the house. He plows for him, sows for him, hoes for him and only then does he get a coin in payment. But with God, a man need only yearn for children and they are given him.[4] The emphasis on the term "heritage" here is that children are free. One doesn't have to work for them. It is not mentioned here that one must do mitzvot in order to receive children. They come to a man as easily as does the property of his father when the latter dies.

In both cases above, the value of children was seen in their being a manifestation of God's parenthood. When sons study Torah they also become a manifestation of God's law. They not only are a "heritage of the Lord", they pass on the heritage of the Lord, namely sinaitic revelation. If God gives man a son and that son comes to speak the holy word to his father (the text says to his grandfather), then the child becomes a vehicle through which his father can experience Sinai.[5]

In another place the ancient benediction of the Temple priests was interpreted to show that sons were a manifestation of God's Torah and also of His blessing and His grace.[6] "May the Lord bless you" (Num. 6:24) was interpreted "with children". "May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you" (Num. 6:25) meant "may the light of Torah (which sons study) shine . . ." And "May the Lord be gracious unto you" (ibid.) "May He grace you with children". R. Nathan taught that Judah Ha-nasi said, in interpreting "Oh that You would bless me" (Chron. 4:10) that procreation was God's blessing. The end of the verse, "and

enlarge my border", was taught to mean "with boys and girls".[7] On the literal level, sons and daughters increase a man's borders by marrying into other families and increasing the size of the father's family and expanding his influence. In a more general sense, however, children seem to have been viewed by Judah Ha-nasi as the ultimate blessing and wealth a man might have.

It was taught that the reward for observing the mitzvah of shiluah ha-ken was that the doer, if he did not have children, would receive them.[8] This passage says that the reward for doing some mitzvot is wealth, for some it is honor, and for this, the mitzvah elsewhere described as the easiest of all the mitzvot to perform,[9] it is children. In the case of Kimhit, who already had children, her reward for modesty was that all seven of her sons served in the High Priesthood.[10] Children, therefore, were occasionally described as a heritage, as a blessing, and as a reward (the latter either just by their being born or by the status their deeds brought) to their parents from God. One additional attribute given to children was that they were an "adornment" to the righteous and to the world.[11] R. Shimeon b. Judah taught in the name of R. Shimeon b. Yohai that beauty, strength, wealth, honor, wisdom, old age, grey hair and children are comely to the righteous and comely to the world.[12] This interpretation is based on Prov. 17:6, that "children's children are the crown of old men . . ."

R. Shimeon b. Yohai also taught that he who leaves a son who toils in Torah is as if he never died.[13] According to this

view, the single most important thing a man does in this life is to study and live Torah. Torah insures life. So long as one's progeny are engaged in Torah, therefore, a person's own assigned task is still being carried out as if he were alive.

And finally, the value of children was sometimes seen to extend beyond the boundaries of family. Sons were said to bring peace to Israel[14] and peace to the world.[15] And children were said to bring redemption nearer.[16] R. Huna taught in the name of R. Asi that the son of David would not come until all the souls that occupied (the realm of) Guph were emptied from there (i.e., born into this world). Each child brought Israel closer, therefore, to the final redemption. These valuations may not have teen taken literally then, but they were later. R. Huna also taught that children caused God to wish for Israel's speedy redemption.[17] He remarked that because the school children twice daily say in the synagogue "Save us, O Lord our God" Ps. 106:47), God answers, "O that the time would approach when I could cause your redemption to draw nigh" (Ps. 14:7). The force of the passage is that God is deeply moved by children at synagogues. In other words, the rabbis saw it as very important that children went and said psalm verses there. In stressing their point, they said that it moved Him so much (i.e., it was so important) that God Himself could not bear the fact that this people could not be redeemed. Of course, it was the people who could not stand this reality. But the midrash also teaches that the rabbis saw the behavior of children as having the capacity to bring God closer to Israel.

VI

SOME THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Among the several interpretations given to the opening of the sixth Proverb, "My son, thou art become surety for thy neighbor", was the explanation of one rabbi that it was a reminder to Israel that they had offered themselves as embryos as a perpetual surety for the Torah. At first, when God had asked for sureties that Israel would observe the Torah, He was offered the patriarchs. But they were unacceptible to God because they were, themselves, in debt to Him. When Israel asked who could it be that owed nothing to God, God responded, "infants". So Israel brought babies nursing at their mothers' breasts, and pregnant women whose wombs became transparent as glass so that the embryos in the wombs could see God and speak with Him. God asked them if they would guarantee that their fathers would follow the Torah, such that if they did not, the infants and embryos would be forfeited because of them. They answered that they would: they answered "yes" when God said "Thou shalt", and they answered "no" when God said "Thou shalt not". And so God said to the infants "Out of your mouths I give the Torah". When fathers in Israel reject the Torah, God, it was said, would force Himself to forget the children who had blessed Him.[1]

There are instances in the rabbinic literature, as in the midrash above, where children were seen as having a special religious status. They were exaggerating the importance of children, said at different times to bring God closer to Israel for their individual and collective sins. R. Judah said that

children were seen as having a special religious status. Exaggerating the importance of children, they were said at different times to bring God closer to Israel and also to be the means by which He punished Israel for their individual or collective sins. R. Judah said that when the Sanhedrin went into exile, the Shekhina did not go with it. And when the priestly watches went into exile, the Shekhina did not go with them. But when the children of Israel went into exile, the Shikhina did go with them.[2] B. Huna said that when children pray in the synagogue twice a day, "Save us O Lord our God"(Ps.106:47), God was moved Himself to yearn that Israel's redemption come soon.[3]

The Deuteronomist warned that "If you do not heed the word of the Lord your God to observe faithfully all His commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect (28:15): . . . your sons and daughters shall be delivered to another people (28:32)". This view that children would suffer for the nation's negligence found acceptance in the Talmud, but the statement there is cryptic. Since Rome was then seen as the "other people", this term (am sher) was modified to mean "step-mother".[4] For this one authority, turning Israel's children over to Rome might have been seen as too harsh a punishment for the God of Israel to execute against His children.

The death of children, while they were still young, was commonly used as a threat to get Jews to observe the mitzvot. The rabbis taught that children died young for (their parents') sin of vows. R. Judah Ha-nasi said it was for the neglect of

Torah. R. Meir and R. Judah disagreed. One said it was punishment for not having a mezuzah and the other said it was for not wearing fringes. R. Nehemia held that domestic strife would increase as the result of unjustified hatred, and that for this one's sons and daughters would die while young.[5] Elsewhere, a mother's neglecting the observance of niddah was blamed for her offspring's contracting leprosy.[6] We have here both a theodicy and a warning against the perils of not observing the mitzvot.

It was taught that God said to Judah that he would take a wife, but bury his children and know the pain of childhood disease (tza-ar gee-dool banim) as punishment for his having brought anxiety to his father Jacob by deceiving him and having Joseph captured.[7] R. Isaac b. Avadimi said that none of Avashalom's three sons were fitting to be priests as a punishment for his sins. R. Ḥisda said that he knew a tradition that taught that anyone who burned his fellow's produce (the sin of Avahalom) would not leave an heir.[8] A parallel was seen here between the fruit, or produce, of a field, and children who were the "produce" of a family, and thus the punishment was seen to be appropriate. Such a view would help to explain the suffering which "innocent" children experienced. But the passage could also be but another warning that if you sin, your children will suffer for it.

The rabbi's sense of justice applied to the children of Gentiles as well. Haman's punishment was said by R. Levi to have been multiplied thirty fold because he had thirty children.

Ten died an unspecified death; ten were hanged; and ten were reduced to penury.[9] There is a harsh view of God where He was seen as happily dashing the children of Israel's conquerors against the rocks to punish these nations for destroying the Temple, through which Israel had established Torah. Since Israel's children were the guarantors of the Torah, their forfeiture would be paid for by the children of the victors.[10]

What has so far characterized these passages is that they point to the death or suffering of unspecified children. My research found one incident in which this theodicy was applied to a specific individual who had just lost hisson. When the infant of R. Ḥiyya b. Abba died, Resh Lakish would not go to him on the first day. On the second day he went and took with him his translator (meturgeman), R. Juda b. Naḥmani who, on R. Ḥiyya's command, rose and pronounced "The Lord saw and was vexed and spurned His sons and daughters" (Deut. 32:19). This was interpreted to mean that God's anger at a generation which spurned Him would be taken out against its children through their premature death.[11] In this very direct passage, the guilt is borne, not by the family, but by the generation.

The Talmud asked why it could be that sometimes a righteous person was rewarded and sometimes he suffered. In the first case, the Talmud answered, the tzaddik was the son of a tzaddik. In the second he was the son of rasha', an evil person.[12] This explanation of the rabbis had its roots in the Torahitic statement (Ex. 34:7) that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon children and children's children, upon the

third and four generations". However, within the Torah itself, an opposing view arose that stated (Deut. 24:16) "Parents shall not be put to death for children, nor children be put to death for parents: a person shall be put to death only for his own crime." [13] Both of these views found expression in rabbinic times. In contrast to the examples above, we are also told that children suffer for their parents' sins only when they embrace those sins themselves.[14]

But in speaking of the connection which linked generations, the rabbis introduced a new concept, that a child could, by its own action, confer merit and even atone for, its own father. In discussing the mitzvah of shiluah-ha-ken, R. Ḥiyya taught that, though the mother bird had no covenant or "merit of the fathers" or oaths from God (i.e., covenant) it was atoned for by its children in their death at the hands of the person who came across the nest. If this were so, R. Ḥiyya said, then how much more would the sins of the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who did have "merit of the fathers", be atoned for by their children.[15] With the help of a grammatical construction resembling what we would call a "misplaced modifier" in English (though acceptable in Hebrew) R. Judah interpreted the statement (Is. 29:22), "Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob . . ."[16] to mean that Jacob redeemed Abraham, his grandfather, from the pain of childhood disease. Another authority generalized that children confer merit upon fathers, but that fathers do not confer merit upon children. [18] This was another way of valuing children.

But elsewhere this statement was contradicted" "Blessed are the tzaddikim." It is not enough that they have merit, but also they confer merit upon their children and grandchildren unto every succeeding generation."[19] And it was also taught that if a father was righteous, he protected his son from punishment which would otherwise have been deserved.[20] Here we see the usual rabbinic high valuation of good deeds and their effect.

It was also taught that fathers would be ascribed honor for the meritorious deeds of their sons. A common metaphor for this was the practice of sparing the wood of the olive and the vine from use on the altar. The reason for this was that the "children" (i.e., produce) of these "trees" were praiseworthy. Similarly, praiseworthy children bring honor to their parents.[21] By this same principle, Moses prayed to God on behalf of Aaron that the latter benefit from the merit of his children. God answered that not only would he be reinstated, but he would be considered primary and his sons as secondary.[22] Although God responded favorably to Abraham's prayer, it is possible to read the text as saying that God reinstated Aaron because of Moses, rather than because of Aaron's children.[23]

In contrast to this discussion of merit, Raba said that the life of his children and the amount of food he would have depended not upon merit, but rather on the influence of the stars and planets.[24]

In one final twist on the theme of merit, R. Samuel said in the name of R. Isaac that once a man was sentenced by the court to be burned. An astrologer foresaw that he was destined to have a daughter who would come to marry the king, and for

that reason he ought to be saved.[25] As this man was saved by the merit which an as yet unborn daughter would earn for having married a king, so Abraham was saved from the fiery furnace (where Nimrod had him thrown for having destroyed his father's idols[26]) by the merit of Jacob.[27]

While the sins of parents were given as an explanation of why the righteous suffer, the merit of children was used to explain why it was possible that the wicked could prosper.

The rabbis also spoke of the relationship between Israel and God as an extension of that between a child and its parent.[28] It was taught that as it was an honor for children to visit the home of their father, and an honor for fathers to visit the home of their children, so Israel made a house (i.e., the Temple) that God might come and live with His children.[29] Similarly, it was taught that when God heard His name praised in the synagogues and schools, he nodded His head and said: "Blessed is the king who is so praised in his home. What has a father who has banished his children? And woe to the children who were banished from their father's table.[30] Israel suffered exile for her sins, but God, in His role as punishing parent, was also seen to suffer. Similarly, a parent must effect justice (i.e., punish) a child, though it will bring suffering to the parent as well as the child.

The punishment of God was elsewhere seen as cause for Israel's rejoicing. "For whom the Lord loves, He corrects even as a father, the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:12). R. Meir added "Bear in mind that the Lordyour God disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son" (Deut. 8:5).[31]

Shimeon ben Shetaḥ once sent Honi a message saying that if he were not Honi he would have placed him under the ban. But he could do nothing because he was arrogant toward God as a son is arrogant toward his father; yet both grant the wish of their child (rather than punish him).[32] There is also a certain boldness which a child may express and which a parent will occasionally accept.

Isaac was depicted as arguing with God. At one point God said "Your children sinned against Me". But Isaac answered: Master of the universe, 'my' children and not 'yours'? When they are good, You call them 'My first-born son' (Ex. 4:22) but now (when they are bad), they are my children and not Yours".[33]

After Hosea had two sons and a daughter, God told him to divorce his wife because she had committed adultery. But Hosea responded that he had children by her and thus could not send her out. God responded that if Hosea could not reject his wife, who had given him children who were possibly illegitimate, then He could not reject the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.[34] This illustrates the special rights of a child.

R. Meir taught that Israel would be God's children both when they were foolish and when they were unfaithful. Israel would be the children of the 'living God' for all time.[35] R. Ḥanina said that Israel yearned for God to have dominion over them as a father has power over his son. In that way, no human would rule over Israel.[36] Rabbi Akiva made the distinction that when Israel did the will of God, He called them His children, but when they didn't, He called them his Servants.[37] As a father would want his hungry children to be fed, so God wanted Israel's poor to be given <u>tzadakah</u>.[38]

R. Joseph taught that when he heard his mother's footsteps, he said, "I will rise before the approaching shekhina".[39] This example is the closest one I found to viewing a feminine aspect of God.

R. Ḥanina told how idolaters once asked God how he knew that Israel, who had received the Torah, actually lived by it. God responded that He was a witness that they observed it entirely. But the idolaters responded that no father may testify on behalf of his children.[40] In most of the cases where God was described as a father, the metaphor dealt with God's feelings for Israel, with His Love, His joy, His tolerance and with the permanence of the bond between Him and Israel. Here, however, the metaphor was used in terms of behavior that a parent was not permitted to perrorm for its child. But the point is that while God may defend the Jews, they must really defend themselves through their own behavior.

We do not have here an abundance of rabbinic statements applying the child-parent metaphor to the relationship between Israel and God. And many of the passages we have are hyperbolic. Nevertheless, we can draw some conclusions from this material about the rabbis' use of this figure of speech.

The rabbis, to begin with, were leaders who sought to get the people to do things such as study Torah, participate in religions observances, and give <u>tzadakah</u>. The problem they confronted was how to make an individual feel obligated to do certain things which were not especially necessary for the immediate benefit or well-being of his family. The answer they found was to extract from the reality of the people the

strongly felt obligation of honoring parents, and transpose it to their relationship with God. Just as you owe your parents honor and reverence (even at personal expense) so you (Israel) owe God certain obligations which the rabbis spelled out. On the one hand, God is one of three partners in the making of an individual. On the other, God is responsible for everything, including your parents. If a person owes honor to his parents, how much the more so he owes it to God.

But there is another aspect to this metaphor. If God is like a parent, He is close and caring. And yet as Master of the Universe He has the power to give His child all that a parent would want. So why does Israel suffer so? The rabbis answered: When we suffer, God suffers,, too. He suffers like you, Israel, suffer when you punish your children. The implication is that the suffering is for Israel's own good. In fact, if God's punishment was like that of a parent, then the people must have found great consolation in the thought that it otherwise would have been much worse.[41]

Often the mere threat of punishment is sufficient for a parent to enforce his will. So, too, the rabbis used the threat of God's justice to extract proper behavior from Israel, the people whom they described as God's children. Failure to observe the mitzvot would result in one's child contracting leprosy, or even dying. Such a threat would be very effective among people who valued children so highly, yet for whom infant mortality was not uncommon.

VII
CONCLUSION

The theological view of the rabbis, that man's suffering in this life was the result of God's parent-like punishing, teaches us a good deal about the rabbis' view of childraising. Children were seen to have both an inflated sense of self-importance and a poor sense of judgment. The remedy to these deficiencies, that is, the proper path to maturity, was through the teaching of torah (in the more general sense of the word.) The key tool of the parent in this endeavor was discipline. Yet, although the rabbis stressed the importance of disciplining one's children, they avoided discussing the specific ways in which this was to be done. They seem to have left the daily decisions of child-raising up to the individual styles and tastes of the parents.

However, when it came to the formal education of a boy, the rabbis offered very special advice. Education no longer lay in the realm of the parent; it was the specialty of the rabbis. Since these teachers had achieved a particular status in the community through mastery of Scripture and the oral traditions, they would be expected to promote and sustain that status by establishing Torah study as the most important activity a man could engage in.

For this reason, the rabbis devoted much discussion to the proper age at which the study of different subjects should begin. They discussed the relative priority of education and betrothal. They discussed the importance of establishing a system of public schools. And they offered suggestions for

educational methodology: how to encourage a "slow" child to read, how to strike a child misbehaving in the classroom (with a shoe lace), and even which types of teachers were most suitable.

An important question still in need of study is the degree to which the rabbis' stressing of the importance of education was effective in establishing a literate and observant population. Were the rabbis and students a select class within the larger society? Or were varying degrees of education available and utilized by all? The controversy between beit hillel and beit shammai over who was to be educated raised this issue, but left the matter unanswered.

The rabbis were also interested in other aspects of child-rearing as well. Primarily, they stressed those requirements of parenthood which stemmed from Scripture. The Torah was the basis of their entire system of teaching, so it was the specific Torahitic duties that dominated much of what they had to say both to parents and to children.

But the emphases of the Torah were not those of the rabbis. In Biblical Israel, circumcision and redemption were the powerful religious/national symbols which established a male's place in the society. But in rabbinic times these activities were taken more for granted and needed little attention from the rabbis to be carried out. Rather the requirements of education and marriage emerged as the dominant concerns. Though girls were married, as in Biblical times, soon after puberty, boys married in the later teens. A father's will in arranging for the betrothal of his children was said to be supreme,

but as his sons grew older, their own preference would be stronger (or at least more stongly felt). The rabbis had to remind fathers, therefore, to be careful that sons married "fitting" wives.

Love was not mentioned as a prerequisite to marriage, but it was occasionally discussed as an element of the parent-child relationship. Though the emotion is usually thought of in terms of reciprocity, the ultimate return for loving one's children, according to one rabbi, was to see them, in turn, love their own children.

The feeling of joy, an emotion resulting from an external event, and not requiring reciprocity, also bonded family relationships. A parent derived joy from a child's participation in religious observances and from his study of torah.

It is interesting that the term love did not occur in discussions of the relationship between siblings. Golub has suggested[1] that this might indicate the rabbis' awareness of the more potent feeling of sibling rivalry. This argument is supported by the unusual statement that the duty to honor one's parents extended also to one's older brother.

The honoring of parents was the most important duty of children. Honor was defined, not only in general terms of showing respect and reverence, but also by the specific requirements of taking care of an aged parent. As a specific point this duty became a court-enforceable law which had to be carried out at the child's expense. In addition, a child had to see to his own circumcision, redemption (if he were a

male and the first to open the womb), education and marriage, if his father had not. No child could blame his parents for not fulfilling the duties that came along the way to achieving adult status. He was equally liable for them himself.

Children, specifically sons, were considered a gift, a blessing, and a heritage of God. These characteristic examples of rabbinic hyperbole were all ways of saying merely that children were very important. They increased a man's name, his wealth and his status. According to the rabbis, when a child came to study Torah he became especially beloved in the eyes of his father and of God. When sons studied Torah, they became a link in the chain which connected their parents to Sinai.

A girl, however, had only the opportunity to become a wife and mother, roles considered very important but having very little status in the society. The rabbis did show a development in the Torahitic legislation concerning women. A minor or an unmarried daughter was entitled to be supported from the estate of her dead father, even if the latter left no provision for his sons.[2] And a dowry for an unmarried minor could be taken from this estate equal in size to that given her older sisters.[3]

But, in the words of the rabbis themselves, the general situation of a girl was bleak. A girl remained under the authority, first of her father, and then of her husband. She had little independent value, and no independent status. The exceptional illustration of a daughter teaching her father

Torah serves mainly to emphasize the more prevalent attitude which categorized women with children and slaves.

At different occasions it was taught that a man should sell neither his daughter (for a bondswoman) nor a Torah. These both had, therefore, a certain status from which their "owner" derived value. Elsewhere, it was taught that a man should sell a Torah, if he had to, in order to arrange for his daughter's betrothal. In this instance a daughter's welfare was high in the hierarchy of a father's concerns.

One important, if not the important expectation of children, from the rabbis' point of view, was that they conform to the will of an external agent. Children in the literal sense were supposed to become just like their parents[4] (only to the degree, of course, that the parents lived a life of Torah). And Israel, when described as the children of God, was expected to follow His will. Perhaps this is one reason that the rabbis did not view childhood as a series of real stages leading to adulthood. Such stages, in the modern conception, represent a certain progression leading to autonomy. But autonomy was not the goal of the rabbis. Submission to the will of one's parents and to God was. It was a manifestation of this submission, therefore, that most often preoccupied them.

NOTES

(Although standard abbreviations are used for both Biblical and rabbinic works, in the case of the rabbinic sources I generally give the complete name of a source the first time it is cited.)

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1]Solomon Mandelkern, Concordantiae, Schocken (Tel Aviv, 1971), pp. 206 ff.

[2]Encyclopedia Mikraeet, Mosad Bialik (Jerusalem, 1950), vol. I col. 14.

[3]Ibid.

[4]For a girl or woman, the feminine bat is used in place of ben- in this construct.

[5]I Sam 20:31; II Sam 12:5. This idiom is also found in the plural in I Sam 26:16.

[6]Encyclopedia Mikraeet, vol. I, col. 14.

[7]Niddah 31b; Yer. Maaser Sheni 5; Pesahim 65a; Baba Batra 16b; Numbers Rabba 3:6 and elsewhere.

[8]There is no article on the subject in either the Jewish Encyclopedia or in the more recently published Encyclopedia Judaica on the raising of Jewish children before the rabbinic period.

[9]James A. Hastings, ed., A Dictionary of the Bible, Scribner's (New York 1901), vol. I, pp. 381 ff.; George Buttrick, ed., Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon Press (New York 1962), vol. I, pp. 558 ff.; Paul Heimsch, Theology of the Old Testament, Liturgical Press (Collegeville, Minn. 1950); Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, Basil Blackwell (Oxford 1950).

[10]Encyclopedia Mikraeet, op. cit.

[11]Roland DeVaux, Ancient Israel, McGraw Hill, (New York 1961), Part I.

[12]DeVaux, p. 20.

[13]Ex 20:5.

[14]Gen 43:33

[15]Nu 27:1-11

[16]Ezek 16:4; Job 38:8-9

[17]DeVaux gives over three full pages to the different types of names given to children in the Bible, pp. 43ff.

[18]II Macc 7:27

[19]Gen 17:12,23, 21:4; Lev 12:3

[20]Ex 4:23

[21]Ex 13:13, 34:20; Nu 18:19

[22]Ex 20:12

[23]Deut 21:18,20

[24]Lev 19:3

[25]Ex 21:15; Deut 2716. The mere cursing of a parent could theoretically precipitate this drastic measure (Ex 20:17; Lev 20:9).

[26]Ex 10:2, 12:26, 13:8; Deut 4:9, 6:7, 20 ff., 32:7, 46. This discussion follows Devaux, op. cit.

[27]Prov 1:8, 6:20; Ben Sira 30:1-13

[28]This is suggested by Deut 6:9, 11:20.

[29]Ex 13:8; Deut 6:7, 20 ff.; Ps 78:3-4

[30]II Sam 1:18. This was still recited in the days of the Maccabbees (II Macc 9:20-21).

[31]II Kings 2:2

[32]Gen 45:8

[33]Judges 17:10, 18:19

[34]Ben Sira 7:24 joins these two requirements in a manner which anticipates a rabbinic discussion (see chapter II) as to which of the two should be done first.

[35]DeVaux, p. 27.

[36]DeVaux, p. 28.

[37]DeVaux, p. 32.

[38]DeVaux, p. 34.

[39]DeVaux, p. 34.

[40]DeVaux, p. 30.

[41]Ex 22:15; Deut 22:28-29.

[42]Deut 24:3-4

[43]II Kings 4:1; Is 50:1

[44]Neh 5:1-9

[45]DeVaux, p. 16.

[46]Deut 25:5-10

[47]Ex 20:5-6; Deut 5:9-10, 7:9-10

[48]Lev 26:39; Lam 5:7; Jer 31:28-29; Ezek 18:20

[49]Deut 21:15-17; Nu 27:1-11

[50]Nu 21:1-8

[51]Lev 25:25; Ruth 4:3

[52]Ps 19:15 is one of many examples.

[53]Gen 1:28

[54]Gen 13:14, 16:5, 17:2-4, 22:17.

[55]Gen 30:1

[56]Ps 128:3

[57]Mal 3:24

[58]Mosad HaRav Kuk (Jerusalem 1954), pp. 126 ff.

[59]Hayim Kasavski, Otzar Lashon HaTalmud, (Jerusalem 1959), vol. VII, pp. 475 ff.

[60]The Talmud, Soncino (London 1952), pp. 76 ff.

[61]The Midrash, Soncino (London 1939), Index Volume, pp. 31 ff.

[62]The Midrash on Psalms, William G. Braude, ed., Yale Univ. Press (New Haven 1959), vol. II, p. 590.

[63]The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, Judah Goldin, ed., Yale Univ. Press (New Haven 1955), pp. 264 ff.

[64]Schocken (New York 1974), chapters XXII and XXIV.

[65]Behrman House (New York 1945), pp. 46 ff.

[66]Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia 1967).

[67]Bloch (New York 1918).

[68]Sefer Torah Ha-Ketuva v'Ha-Masora, M. Heineman, Dvir (Tel Aviv 1936-39), 3 vols.

[69]Jewish Encyclopedia, KTAV reprint (no date), vol. 4, pp. 27 ff.

[70]Encyclopedia Judaica, Macmillan (New York 1971), vol. 5, pp. 473 ff.

[71]Ex R 46:5

[72]In no case did the rabbis speak of a mother receiving merit from the actions of a child.

[73]Tan, Haye Sara 1 and parallel passages elsewhere.

[74]San 105a. This use of the term ben (Nu 24:3,15) occurs only one other time in Scripture, Nu 23:18. It is not surprising, therefore, that the rabbis would seek to enrich its original meaning.

[75]Sifre Ha-azinu 320

[76]Gen R 74:11

[77]Tan, Noah 2

[78]Tan, Vayikra 5

[79]This figure is based on a survey of the research done for this project. It represents an analysis of all statements found through the sources listed above.

[80]Studies in Judaism, First Series, Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia 1911), pp. 287-312, and the source of the Jewish Encyclopedia article, "The Child," vol. 4.

[81]For a remarkable example of Darwin's influence on the study of child rearing in rabbinic times, see W.M. Feldman, The Jewish Child, especially chapter VI, Bloch (New York 1918).

NOTES TO CHAPTER I
Initial Considerations

[1]through the trial of temporary childlessness.

[2]Yalkut I Samuel 78

[3]The term sam-ha bo/bam ("she rejoiced in him/them") is significant and will be discussed in chapter II as the operative positive emotion parents demonstrate towards their children.

[4]Mid Ps 127:3

[5]Yev 64a

[6]Yer. Kilayim 27a middle

[7]Yev 61b

[8]Yev 61b; Yev 62b

[9]Yev 61b

[10]Ber 5b

[11]B.B. 10b

[12]B.B. 10b

[13]Niddah 70b

[14]Nid 70b

[15]Nid 70b

[16]Nid 31b

[17]Eruv 100b

[18]Eruv 100b

[19]Nedarim 20a-20b

[20]Pes 112b

[21]Ned 20a

[22]Ketuboth 77b

[23]Gittin 70a

[24]Git 70a

[25]W.M. Feldman, chapters VII, VIII, IX.

[26]*Yoma* 82a

[27]*Ket* 60b

[28]Feldman, chapter VII.

[29]*Yev* 37a

[30]*Ta'anit* 2a. God was said by R. Johanan to hold the "key" to the opening of the heavens, of wombs and of graves--all life-giving processes.

[31]*Yev* 36a

[32]*Shabbat* 129b

[33]16:4.

[34]*Shab* 134a

[35]*Git* 57a

[36]Feldman, pp. 218-19.

[37]*Ibid*.

[38]The custom of naming a child after a deceased relative was not known in the Talmud. The daughters of Ruth and Bithia were named after Naomi and Jochebed, the women who raised them (*San* 19b).

[39]*Mid I Samuel*, p. 3

[40]*Git* 11b

[41]The Talmud does not bring these terms into any organized and comprehensive discussion. I have, therefore, relied on the Jewish Encyclopedia (vol VIII, P. 270) whose discussion is sufficient for a topic not central to the sights of this project.

[42]The term for this is *mi-un*.

[43]*Nid* 44b. Virginity was thought to be something which, if lost before age three, would grow back in a girl. (It was "like putting a finger in the eye.")

[44]*Yev* 12b

[45]156a. Usually a girl was known as *boggeret* from age 12½ plus one day.

[46]*Ibid*. Where the Biblical law sought to keep real property within the family (Nu 27:1-11)the rabbis could only seek to delay, but not prevent, the selling of

family land holdings by an heir.

[47] Git 59b

[48] Nid 48b

[49] Nu R 3:6

[50] Isaiah 16:1. "They sent a gift (kar) to the ruler of the land."

[51] Nid 31b

[52] M. Kiddushin 1:1

[53] Kid 12a

[54] Megillah 27a

[55] Negaim 12:5

[56] Gen R 26:7

[57] Pes 113a

[58] Nid 31b. The interpretation of the midrash comes from reading nak-vah, "name (your wage)" as n'kevah, "a woman (is your wage)".

[59] B.B. 16b

[60] B.B. 16b and Gen R 59:10.

[61] B.B. 16b

[62] B.B. 141a

[63] B.B. 141a

[64] B.B. 141a

[65] Ket 49a

[66] Sotah 12a

[67] B.B. 119b

[68] Git 25a

[69] San 94b

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

Obligations, Expectations, and Attitudes of Parents

[1]Beginning on folio 29a.

[2]Ket 49b

[3]Beginning on folio 49a.

[4]Kid 29b

[5]5:24

[6]Etz Yoseph: a-har ma-zo-no-tav.

[7]Shab 150a

[8]B.B. 136b

[9]San 95a

[10]Gen R 54:2

[11]I owe my understanding of this distinction to a discussion with Rabbi Michael Chernick. Ket 88b, Git 52a, 52b.

[12]Nid 31b

[13]Shab 131b

[14]Shab 134a

[15]Shab 134b

[16]Lev 12:2-3

[17]Nid 31b

[18]Shab 133b, Shab 156a, and see Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 373. In Deut R 6:1 the delay until the eigth day is said to be so that the son has gained strength (to survive the operation).

[19]The details of both the operation and the ceremony of circumcision are discussed in chapter 19 of Tractate Shabbat.

[20]Pirke d'R. Eliezer, chapter 29.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Yev 64b

[23]Webster's Third New International Dictionary (unabridged), p. 1055.

[24]Julian Morgenstern, Rites of Birth, Marriage, Death, and Kindred Occasions among the Semites, Hebrew Union College Press, 1966, p. 50.

[25]Ibid. p. 63.

[26]San 32b

[27]Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. IV, p. 94.

[28]Ibid., p. 93

[29]Tan Tazria 7

[30]such as Philo and later Josephus as well as Saadya and Maimonides. See Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. IV, p. 93.

[31]Gen 17:14

[32]Op. cit. p. 65.

[33]Nu 18:15

[34]Jewish Encyclopedia vol. V, p. 396; Kid 29a.

[35]Kid 29a

[36]Nu R 3:6

[37]Ket 49b

[38]The term ketan (pl. ketanim), when used in a legal sense, as it was probably used here, meant "minor." This decree, then, enjoins a father to support his children until they reached puberty.

[39]The text does not use the term hayav, but states merely, "y'he adam zan . . .", "A man will feed, etc. . . ."

[40]The context leaves no doubt that they came to complain about a parent who did not support his or her children.

[41]Ket 49b

[42]Ket 49b

[43]Ket 49b

[44]Ket 49b

[45]Ket 50a

[46]Yer. Ket 4:8 folio 28b.

[47]Newman, A Talmudic Anthology cites Yen Kid, chap. 1, but I am unable to find this passage.

[48]Hullin 18a

[49]Yev 63a

[50]Shab 53b

[51]Gen R 30:8

[52]Ket 59b

[53]Ket 60b

[54]Ket 60a. R. Eliezer forbade nursing after two years, but R. Joshua allowed it up to four or even five years.

[55]Ket 59b

[56]Ket 60b

[57]Ket 60b

[58]Ket 60b

[59]Ket 60a

[60]Git 89a

[61]Git 89a

[62]Yer. Kid 1:7

[63]Yer. Kid 1:7

[64]Yoma 77b

[65]According to Jastrow (Dictionary, p. 880) the hiphil form of the verb nahag was used to refer to the "secular" or general way a person "conducted" himself.

[66]Eruvin 21b-22a

[67]Ket 62b

[68]Sotah 49a

[69] Tan Haye Sara 8. The usual custom was to wait for the passing of three festivals (R. Judah said two festivals) before remarrying, unless one had not fulfilled the mitzvah of procreation, or unless one needed help caring for children, in which case remarriage was permitted after the first thirty days of mourning (Moed Katan 23a).

[70] B.B. 21b

[71] Deut 16:14

[72] Pes 109a

[73] Pes 109a

[74] Pes 109a

[75] Pes 108b

[76] Pes 109a. These were popular treats with children. They were given to them as gifts when they visited the house of mourning, attended a feast, or celebrated a festival (Tosephta Betza 4:10).

[77] Pes 109a. Montefiore and Loewe (A Rabbinic Anthology) translate hot-phin matzot "eaten hastily" (i.e. taken away quickly so not too many are eaten because a heavy meal induces sleep--p. 522). But Jastrow (Dictionary, p. 490) defines the verb hot-phin in this very phrase "(matzah) is distributed," implying the opposite--that children were kept alert by an interest in eating the matzah.

[78] Pes 109a

[79] Sukkah 21a

[80] B.B. 8:7

[81] This discussion, based on B.B. 8:2, is very clearly outlined in the Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. XV, pp. 475-481, in the article "Succession".

[82] Encyclopedia Judaica, ibid.; B.B. 115a-115b.

[83] B.B. 8:2

[84] B.B. 8:5

[85] B.B. 9:1

[86] B.B. 9:1

[87] B.B. 116a

[88] B.B. 141a

[89] B.B. 119b. They were called "wise" (hakn-man-iot), "skillful (in their explanation of Torah)" (dar-shan-iot), and "righteous" (tzid-kan-iot).

[90] B.B. 139a

[91] B.B. 133b

[92] B.B. 133b

[93] Mid Ps 92:13

[94] Kid 29a

[95] Kid 30b

[96] Kid 30b

[97] "By three means is the woman acquired . . . by money, by writ, or by interccurse . . ." M. Kid. 1:1 (Danby The Mishnah, p. 321).

[98] Yer. Kid chapter 1

[99] Yev 61b. See also David M. Feldman, Birth Control in Jewish Law, N.Y.U. Press (N.Y. 1968), pp. 27-41 where the author discusses the relative importance of these purposes, concluding that "matrimony . . . is ordained by law; first for procreation; and second, for the holier state which comes with avoidance of sin . . . "It is not good for man to live alone" is not a commandment, only an observation . . ." (p. 33).

[100] Kid 29b

[101] Yev 61b

[102] Yev 61b

[103] Ket 2a

[104] Ket 2a

[105] Kid 41a

[106] Yev 108b

[107] Pes 113a; Yev 62b

[108] b'derekh y'shara.

[109] Yev 62b

[110] Kid 29b

[111] Kid 29b

[112] Lamentations R 1:2

[113] Kid 29b-30a

[114] Soncino translation.

[115] Kid 29b-30a

[116] Kid 29b. The actual meaning of God's humorous curse is in doubt, but Feldman, Birth Control in Jewish Law, p. 30, n. 48, gives an interesting interpretation of the Maharsha on this passage.

[117] Yer Ket 4:12

[118] San 93a

[119] B.B. 143b

[120] Gen R 26:7

[121] See note 69.

[122] Yev 13:6

[123] Ket 4:2

[124] 4:9 (Soncino translation). J.P.S. reads "See to a life with the wife . . ."

[125] Kid 30b

[126] Pes 113a

[127] Literally le-lam-do u-manut, "to teach him a'craft'".

[128] Kid 29a

[129] Kid 29a

[130] Baba Metzia 107a

[131] Eduyyot 2:9

[132] Nid 20a

[133] Nid 20a

[134] Gen R 80:1

[135] Gen R 80:1

[136] B.B. 9b

[137] Solomon Schecter, "The Child in Jewish Literature," Studies in Judaism, Series I, Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia 1911), p. 296. (The term occurs, for example, in Shab 119b.)

[138] Pes 113a

[139] San 105b

[140] See article "Evil Eye" in Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. V, p. 280.

[141] B.M. 84b

[142] B.M. 85a. Literally, "...one underwent the suffering of the cave and the other did not."

[143] Gen R 74:3

[144] Lev k'seel, ibid.

[145] Mark Golub, "The Rabbinic Connotations of a-hav and ha-vav," unpublished rabbinic thesis, H.U.C.-J.I.R. (New York 1972), pp. 45-48.

[146] Ket 4:12. The only occurance of the verb "to hate" (s'nee), the counterpart of a-hav, was in describing the feelings between a daughter and her step mother (Yev 117a).

[147] Eccl. R 3:15

[148] Shab 10b

[149] Neg 12:5

[150] Gen R 54:2. Mamono he-ha-viv. See also Sotah 49a where Rabbah taught his father R. Huna that a son returns his father's "love" (rahmei) by loving his own children.

[151] See, for example, Yalkut to I Samuel 78; Nid 31b; Tan Tazria 7; Gen R 63:1.

[152] Tan Shemot 1

[153] Ket 50a

[154] Ket 50a

[155] Semahot 2:5

[156] Moed Katan 17a

[157] Sotah 25a

[158] Ket 62b. This is a reversal of the normal procedure by which a son honors his father.

[159] Yev 63b

[160] Mid Ps 92:13

[161] Mid Ps 92:13. See also Ta'anit 19a.

[162] Eruv 21b-22a

NOTES TO CHAPTER III
Education

[1]Deut 11:19

[2]*Kid* 29b

[3]*Kid* 29b

[4]*Kid* 29b

[5]*Kid* 29b

[6]*Kid* 29b

[7]*Kid* 29b

[8]*Ber* 47b

[9]*Shab* 127a

[10]*Shab* 127a

[11]*Pes* 113b

[12]*Gen R* 49:8

[13]Gen 18:19

[14]*Gen R* 63:1

[15]*San* 105b

[16]*Ned* 4:3

[17]n. 6 to *Ned* 4:3.

[18]*Sotah* 20a

[19]*Sotah* 4:3

[20]*Kid* 30a

[21]*Kid* 30a

[22]*Kid* 30a

[23]*The Fathers According to R. Nathan* 2:9

[24]See, for example, *B.M.* 84b and *Kid* 30b.

[25]The Fathers According to R. Nathan 2:9

[26]Ned 81a

[27]Ned 81a

[28]B.M. 85a

[29]B.M. 85a

[30]Tos. Hagiga 1:2

[31]Yoma 8:4. The Talmud (Yoma 82a) shows that the rabbis could not agree on how to train a child to fast.

[32]Kid 29b

[33]Kid 29b

[34]Ket 50a. The text is obscure and reads literally, ". . . from age twelve on, (a father) goes down with him (his son) to his life." (yored i-mo l'hayav)

[35]B.B. 21a

[36]B.B. 21a

[37]Ket 50a

[38]Ket 50a

[39]Tan. Vayikra 14

[40]Mid Ps 12:4

[41]Prov 22:6 is a typical expression of the Biblical concern for disciplining a child. The exact meaning, however, of "train a boy al pi dar-ko" is not given.

[42]Shab 152a. R. Isaac reads "youth" (shaharut) as "darkness" (shaharut).

[43]See Montefiore and Loewe, A Rabbinic Anthology, chapter 11.

[44]Kid 30b

[45]Tan. Shemot 1; Ex R 1:1; and elsewhere.

[46]Tan. Shemot 1:1

[47]Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 1694. Tar-but ra' can mean a variety of behaviors ranging from "bad manners" to "degenerate".

[48]B.B. 21a

[49]Semahot 2:5

[50]Sem 2:5

[51]Lev R 7:3; Pesikhta Rabbati 16:46.

[52]Tos. Sotah VI:2

[53]Kid 30a

[54]Kid 30a.

[55]Yer. Kid I:7

[56]p. 880, i.e., Ber 35b (han-heg ba-hem derekh eretz); Yalkut Deut 863; Yer. B.K. VI:5c top.

[57]Yev 62b

[58]p. 323, as in San 76b and here. In its noun form the word is associated with a secular occupation or trade, as in Pirke Avot 2:2 and Tos. Sotah VII:20. The term darkei shalom, for example, demanded, according to Jastrow (ibid.), "equity, good manners, etc. though no specific law can be quoted for it."

[59]Kid 29a

[60]Kid 30b

[61]Yer. Peah 15c ll. 7 ff.

[62]Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 483.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Pes. Rab. 174a. Another example of children participating in prayer is found in Tan. Vayiggash, paragraph 2.

[66]Num R 11:14

[67]Ned 20a

[68]Suk 46b

[69]Tana D'vei Eliahu 18

[70]B.B. 21a. In all the rabbinic literature, this is the only significant mention made of Joshua b. Gamla.

[71]B.B. 21a. That synagogues served as schools for young children is made clear in Kid 30a and Deut R 8:3.

[72]B.B. 21a

[73]B.B. 21a

[74]B.B. 21a

[75]E. D. Goldschmidt, The Passover Haggadah (in Hebrew), Mosad Bialik (Jerusalem 1969), pp. 22-23.

[76]X:4 folio 37d.

[77]Bo 18

[78]All references cited in discussion of the four sons are taken from E. D. Goldschmidt, op. cit.

[79]B.B. 21a

[80]Ber 28b

[81]Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 331.

[82]Deut R 8:3 (Nitzavim).

[83]Kid 30a

[84]Kid 30a

[85]Kid 30b

[86]Betza 16a

[87]Eruv 21b-22a

[88]See Pes 113a, for example, where the reward for teaching Torah to one's children was the guarantee of a place in the world to come.

[89]Kid 30a

[90]Yer. Shab I:7

[91]Shab 119b

[92] *Shab* 119b

[93] *Lam R* Intro 2.

[94] *Lam R* Intro 2.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

Responsibilities of Children: The Honor of Parents

[1] Kid 29a. See Chapter III above.

[2] 23/24 par. 1. The translation is based on that of William G. Braude, Yale University Press (New Haven 1968), p. 494.

[3] Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 8.

[4] Ibid., par. 8. This is Braude's translation.

[5] Ibid., par. 2. See also Ibid., par. 3; Yer. Peah 15d; and Deut R 6:2.

[6] Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 2.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Tan. Haye Sara 1. Parallel passages include: Gen R 65:4; B.M. 65a; and San 107b.

[9] But see also Seder Eliahu Rabba, chapter 16 where the first ten generations cared for their fathers and Noah even cared for his grandfather. The term honor is not used in this passage, but the activity is an example of what the rabbis meant by the term.

[10] Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4.

[11] Kid 30b-31a

[12] Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4.

[13] Kid 31a

[14] Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4.

[15] Ibid., par. 8.

[16] Ket 103a

[17] Ket 103a

[18] Ket 103a

[19] Gen R 74:7

[20]Sotah 49a. The translation is based on Soncino. (one might note here a case where a son was named after his living grandfather.)

[21]Yer. Kid 60b. See also Ket 103a; and Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 6.

[22]Kid 31a.

[23]Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4.

[24]Ibid. See also Yer. Ned 9:1.

[25]Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4.

[26]B.M. 75b

[27]Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 4. I follow the translation of Braude here.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Kid 30b; Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 5.

[30]Kid. 30b; Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 5.

[31]Kid 30b

[32]Kid 31a

[33]Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 5; Yer. Peah 15c.

[34]These stories are told consecutively in Pes. Rab 23/24, par. 6 and Yer. Kid I:7 folio 60b. I need not, therefore, cite each one individually.

[35]It being the Sabbath, she could not repair it.

[36]Yev 63b

[37]Pes. Rab. 23/24, par. 7. Parallel passages include Deut R 1:15; and Yer. Pean I:1 folio 15c, l. 15.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

The Value of Children

[1]Sotah 12a

[2]Nu R 3:6; Mid Ps 127:3.

[3]Nu R 3:6

[4]Mid Ps 127:3

[5]Yer. Kid I:7

[6]Nu R 11:5,6,7.

[7]Temura 17a

[8]Deut R 6:6

[9]Deut R 6:2. Here the reward for doing this "easiest of the easy (mitzvot)" is given as the lengthening of days.

[10]Yoma 47a. It is not clear here whether the phrase v'kulan l'shim-sho b'cohen ha-gadol means that they served as high priest, or that they served someone else who was high priest. However, since the statement is hyperbole, the ambiguity becomes irrelevant.

[11]Pirke Avot 6:8.

[12]Pirke Avot 6:8.

[13]Gen R 49:8

[14]Ket 50a

[15]Nid 31b

[16]Yev 62a

[17]Pes. Rab. 174a

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

Some Theological Considerations

[1]Mid Ps 8:4; Song of Songs R 1:4:1.

[2]Lam R 1:33 on 1:6.

[3]Pes. Rab. 174a

[4]Yev 63b

[5]Shab 32b

[6]Lev R 15:5

[7]Tan. Vayigash 9

[8]Sotah 11a

[9]Meg 15b

[10]Mid Ps 17A:7. This passage is translated in Braude, The Midrash on Psalms, op. cit., but is not in the Buber edition of Midrash Tehillim.

[11]Ket 8b

[12]Ber 7a

[13]The eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel further developed the theme of individual responsibility for sin.

[14]San 27b

[15]Deut R 6:3. See also Tan Tetze 2 where this concept of atonement is given similar expression.

[16]In the Hebrew, the phrase "who redeemed Abraham" follows the phrase "concerning the house of Jacob," thus leading to R. Judah's reading.

[17]San 19b

[18]San 104a

[19]Yoma 87a

[20]Gen R 63:1

[21]Tan Vayikra 5; Lev R 7:1; and elsewhere.

[22]Lev R 7:1

[23]God tells Moses He'll do it bish-vil-kha.

[24]Moed Katan 28a

[25]Gen R 63:2; Lev R 36:4.

[26]Louis Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, short version, Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia 1968), pp. 94-95.

[27]Lev R 36:4

[28]For a fuller treatment of this theme, see Laura Geller, "The Metaphor of God as Parent and Israel as Child in the Aggada," to be completed 4/76, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (New York).

[29]Ex R 34:4

[30]Ber 3a

[31]Sifre Va-ethanan 32

[32]Ta'anit 19a

[33]Shab 89b

[34]Pes 87b

[35]Kid 36a

[36]Mid Ps 78:9

[37]B.B. 10a

[38]B.B. 10a

[39]Kid 31b

[40]Avodah Zara 3a

[41]Sifre va-ethanan 32

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII
Conclusion

[1]Golub, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[2]*M. Ket.* 13:3

[3]*M. Ket.* 6:6

[4]*Nu R* 2:11: *Ma yesh lo l'vrakha eleh kol banim she-atidim la-amod mim-kha vih'yu k'mo-tekna.*

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