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THE RABBINIC CONCEPTION OF THE FAMILY LIFE

based upon a study of the source  
material presented by R. Israel  
Ibn Al-Nakawa in his MENORAT HA-MAOR,  
Sections IX, X and XI.

Submitted by

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As a rabbinical thesis

Under the proctorship of Dr. Samuel S. Cohon

Hebrew Union College

1947

Rec. 12/79

# DIGEST OF THE RABBINICAL THESIS

of

Sanford E. Rosen, entitled,

"The Rabbinic Conception of the Family Life, based upon a study of the source material presented by R. Israel Ibn Al-Nakawa in his Menorat Ha-Maor, Sections IX, X and XI."

This Thesis is an exposition of the abundant rabbinic expressions on the family life found in Hyman G. Enelow's edition of Al-Nakawa's MENORAT HA\*MAOR. The work is divided into four parts, HONORING PARENTS, PRE\*MARITAL CONSIDERATIONS, MARRIED LIVING and REARING CHILDREN and contains three appendices entitled FOLKLORISTIC BELIEFS.

By tracing the individual's relationship to the other members of his household from the moment of his first conscious activity as a responsible social being, the following conclusions are reached.

The basic premise upon which the rabbinic conception of the family is based is that men's minds and bodies are instruments of God's will. Everything they do should be directed toward translating the divine mandate into every day living.

No human institution is more significant than the home for within it the first elements of ritual and ethical purity may be expressed-- lofty religious and social standards developed.

When two people enter holy union, assuming their active role as God's partners in the creation of a new personality and when they instill within their offspring fine ideals, they deserve esteem and honor. Thus children are obligated to return love for love and help for help to their parents.

But filial loyalty does not take precedence over other obligations. The future must be considered. God intended marriage to promote man's happiness and well-being, to elevate him morally and to insure continuation of the race. It is incumbent upon all, sacred and inviolate. Men are cautioned to consider well the choice of mate.

Each partner is to have equal status and is expected to demonstrate only noble and gentle traits in all aspects of marital life. Man and wife are to love and complement each other , striving to draw out the best that lies dormant within each. They are to share equally life's burdens and joys.

Children are to be viewed as a sacred trust. Working as one and being prompted by mutual devotion, parents may educate their children to be worthy reflections of themselves.

TO

M E L B A

A True *Sh* *helic*

This Work Is Lovingly Dedicated

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Samuel S.Cohon for leading me to this subject and for his helpful counsel as the work progressed. To my wife for her patient assistance in correcting the manuscript.

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## INTRODUCTION

R. Israel Ibn Al-Nakawa lived in Fourteenth Century Spain. We know little of his personal history, except that during the latter part of his life his people experienced one of the blackest periods in their long history of suffering. The Jews of Spain, as we know, had lived in peace and prosperity; their spiritual genius had blossomed and flourished until the dread year of 1369 when, under Enrique de Trastamara, an era of persecution was begun which culminated in the devastation and slaughter of 1391. It was in this slaughter that Al-Nakawa ended his sojourn upon the earth.

Living in so turbulent an age, which had so profound an effect upon all Israel, it is not surprising that this scion of a prominent and scholarly family should have been sorely troubled by the apparent need of his people for renewed religious direction. It was the desire to fill this need that prompted him to write his compendious work, *MENORAT HA-MAOR*, *THE LIGHTED CANDELABRUM*.<sup>1</sup> In it he has drawn upon numerous rabbinic works and has so arranged his material as to present a thorough picture of those ethical and ritual practices deemed most desirable by the rabbis.

It must be said here that the extent of Enelow's contribution cannot be over-emphasized. Not only has he copied from photographs obtained from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the only extant manuscript of the *MENORAT HA-MAOR*, but he has also corrected and edited it, tracing all of its varied sources. His work has made it possible for the first time in at least four centuries for those interested to bask in that spiritual

light, THE CANDELABRUM, which had been so long obscured.

Al-Nakawa, our study has disclosed, was not content with merely presenting his ideas authoritatively. The very nature of the illustrative material he employs, as we shall see, serves as a constant exhortation to his readers that they live in accord with the high ideals set forth.

The variety of his sources, the accuracy of his quotations and the thoroughness of his investigations, make us feel not a little of the spirit of the great tradition our author unfolds. The purpose of this thesis, as indicated by its title, is to synthesize the material presented in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 of the MENORAT HA-MAOR, as edited by H.G. Enelow.

It will be noted that the arrangement of the divisions of this paper follows, in a general way, that of the MENORAT HA-MAOR. Al-Nakawa's three chapters are entitled HONORING PARENTS, MARRIAGE And REARING CHILDREN, respectively.

## PART I. THE HONORING OF PARENTS

### Chapter 1. What "Honoring Parents" Implies

The expression *pkh k' qid* "honoring father and mother," like other terms frequently employed by the rabbis has varied facets and implications. It is for this reason that a suitable, all-inclusive, single sentence definition of the phrase cannot be formulated. But this does not mean that the rabbinic concept of honoring parents is beyond our comprehension. For if we succeed in answering the question, "How, according to the rabbis, may one most effectively honor his or her parents?" we will, in fact, have answered the other question, "What do the rabbis mean by 'honoring parents?'" With this in mind, we turn now to a consideration of the suggested techniques for the proper showing of respect and honor to parents.

#### A. Living Justly and Righteously.

One of the truly significant ideals of Judaism is the ideal of KIDDUSH HASHEM, the sanctification of God's name through action. The premise upon which such an ideal is based is that in the eyes of the world, the God of Israel is highly or lightly esteemed in direct proportion to the actions of those who profess Judaism. In other words, everything that a Jew does reflects, either for good or for bad, upon his faith.

If such a principle is valid in the life of the religious community, it is no less valid in the life of the family. To the rabbis the activities of the child are not isolated and individualistic. Whatever the son or daughter does casts a reflection upon his or her progenitors. That is the deeper meaning of Al-Nakawa's statement, "It is better that a man should die or that his eyes should become dim than that he bring up a wicked <sup>son</sup>,"<sup>2</sup> which is based upon

the Midrash concerning the dimming of Isaac's eyes in which God is reported as saying that when Isaac goes to the market place, people will say, "This is the father of that evil man (Esau)!" It is for this reason that God dimmed Isaac's eyes - so that he would not be able to go out and be thus disgraced.<sup>3</sup> And a similar idea is brought out elsewhere in the saying, "When a man acts contrary to the law, he curses his mother, for she is the transmitter of his characteristics..."<sup>4</sup>

Honoring parents, then, is not a one-time matter. It is something which must be done throughout one's life. The implication is that a person must always be mindful of the fact that what he does in business relations, in religious matters, etc. contributes either to <sup>the</sup> honor or to the ignominy of his parents.

#### B. Obedience

Another duty of a child toward his parents is that he obey their every command, regardless of his own reaction toward it, unless it be a request to transgress one or more of the serious MITZVOT.<sup>5</sup> Al-Nakawa seems to think, however, that a father will generally lead a youngster in the best path, out of his love for him, and that the parents' age and experience will make them good advisers and counselors. This, he tells us, is the reason why a son should obey his father and do nothing prohibited by him.<sup>6</sup> One of the best examples of such all-embracing obedience is to be seen in our author's report that R. Ishmael refused to let his mother wash his feet, despite her commandment that he permit it. Even though his reason for refusing was that he considered it too lowly a chore for his mother to perform, the sages reproached him for failing to obey.<sup>7</sup>

### C. Respect

In addition to the word אִכָּרָה "honor" the rabbis also apply the word יָרָא "fear, reverence, etc." to the conduct of children toward their parents. Since this latter word is more frequently employed to denote a human state of mind relative to God, it may be somewhat astonishing to find it used in our context. But in Chapter 2 when we take up the subject of the importance of honoring parents, we will see that such a use of <sup>אִכָּרָה</sup>~~יָרָא~~ is not at all surprising since honoring parents is in many ways, almost tantamount to honoring God Himself. The term, however, is more logically applicable to parents when we accept it in its sense of "respect."

By what means may a son show proper reverence or respect toward his father? Al-Nakawa sets forth four general rules as follows: "It is forbidden for a son (1) to sit in his father's place; (2) to speak in his presence without his permission; (3) to contradict his words; (4) or to correct his words (even) with good reason."<sup>8</sup> Like all rules, these too, have exceptions. We learn that Rabbenu Ha-Kodosh vocally disagreed with his father Rabban Simeon; and R. Eleazar with his father, Simeon b. Yohai - each of them on some scriptural matter. But they would not have voiced such disagreements on secular subjects.<sup>9</sup> In other words, a son is free to contradict his father only when by doing so, he acts for the sake of God on a point of Torah or ritual. To correct any other statement of a father is strictly prohibited. Even in making these allowable corrections of ritual or Torah errors, a son must always demonstrate the proper respect. If he must make the correction on religious grounds, he should do it only with the utmost of tact and consideration for his father's feelings; and it goes almost without saying that he

should do his best to refrain from embarrassing him.<sup>10</sup>

Another aspect of respecting parents, and one which is more obvious than the above, is to be seen in the talmudic account of Abimi who, even though he had five grown sons, would always run to the door to open it for his father himself.<sup>11</sup> We may imply from this, the truly great significance which was attached to this phase of living and that ordinary rules of etiquette were applied even more strenuously to parents. Further evidence of this is seen in the several stories about a gentile by the name of Dama ben Netina, who could have sold some merchandise at quite a profit, but who would not disturb his father's sleep to get the storage room key from under his pillow.<sup>12</sup> In another version of this story, we are told that this gentile made himself even more worthy by refusing to take a profit for performing the MITZVAH of honoring his father.<sup>13</sup>

The means by which a son (and we have no reason to doubt that these apply also to the daughter) may show honor to his mother, do not differ from those by which he may show respect to his father. Of course, it is less likely that the mother would be expounding words of Torah and therefore, the son would have little or no occasion to find his mother in error in interpreting or reading of scripture. But the following examples presented by Al-Nakawa serve to illustrate what a son (or daughter) is expected to do for a mother. R. Tarphon's mother thought her son was wonderful because when her shoe strap broke, he <sup>placed</sup> <sup>under her feet</sup> ~~used his hands as shoes for her~~ so that she did not have to step upon the ground with bare feet. Despite his mother's glee over this demonstration of esteem and respect, the rabbis seem to have been dissatisfied with it, for they said that if R. Tarphon had done twice as much for her, he still would not have fulfilled the command to honor his mother.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere,



we discover the men of the Beth Hamidrash telling R. Tarphon that he need not boast of honoring his mother properly merely because he let her step upon his back in order to reach fruit high in a tree. They inform him that if she were to throw money into the sea and he were to refrain from scolding her, then he would have cause to boast.<sup>15</sup> Of similar significance is the tale about the gentile whose mother does many unseemly things and who still does not chide her.<sup>16</sup> But R. Eliezer says that the gentile, Damah ben Nethina, exemplified the highest degree of honoring a mother, when, although he was a leading official of his community, his mother whipped him in the presence of certain nobles. When she dropped her stick, he picked it up and handed it to her.<sup>17</sup>

There is a phase of exemplifying respect for parents which is not referred to more than once by Al-Nakawa. This is probably because to the rabbis it goes almost without saying that no one should cause his parents undue worry or grief.<sup>18</sup>

It is, perhaps, to be expected that respect for parents is not to cease upon their death. Much of Jewish thought and practice is concerned with memorialization. A detailed discussion of this material has no place here, but we should note what Al-Nakawa reports on the subject of honoring parents after their demise. R. Hezekiah, for one, speaks in glowing terms of a gentile from Ashkelon who never sat where his father had sat, even after his father had died.<sup>19</sup> Al-Nakawa himself, using various talmudic passages informs us that one should always speak with respect of his deceased parent; refrain from changing his father's customs, etc.<sup>20</sup>

#### D. Caring for Parents

Not the least among the filial obligations enjoined by the rabbis is that of providing for parents when they are no longer able to provide for themselves. This responsibility rests equally upon both the son and the daughter, except when the daughter is married. If she is widowed, divorced, deserted or unmarried, though grown to maturity, then she and her brother are considered equals in this phase of honoring parents and she has no less compulsion than he has to attend to her share of whatever expense is involved.<sup>21</sup> This obligation is deemed so vital that the rabbis say, "A son is obligated to supply the needs of his father, even at his own personal loss."<sup>22</sup>

The specific minimum requirements in caring for parents consist of providing adequate food, drink and clothing, in addition to "leading them in and leading them out."<sup>23</sup> Our author takes it for granted that we know what he means by providing sufficient food and drink, but he elaborates on the latter items. He tells us that a son should buy his parents the type of raiment of which they need not be ashamed, see to it that they have outer garments which will protect them from frost, and also make certain that they sleep in a suitable bed.<sup>24</sup> By "leading them in" is meant that a son must give his parents (or rent for them) a fitting dwelling, and whenever a parent enters the son's house, he should be happy with him and offer him warm and hearty welcome.<sup>25</sup> And by "leading them out" is meant that a son is obligated to escort his parents wherever they wish to go and, in leaving, he should not turn his back upon them until they have gone out of sight.<sup>26</sup>

### E. The State of Mind in Honoring Parents

In the performing of any MITZVAH the rabbis consider the KAWWANAH (intention) behind it as of prime significance. Such consideration holds no less strongly in the various aspects of honoring parents. Here, however, they recognize that not all men are capable of doing for others, even their own parents, with a free and open heart and hand. One man may give, and in giving, may feel sorely burdened and oppressed, whereas another may feel joyful and care-free. That is why we are instructed to do all in our power to demonstrate kindness and consideration in whatever we may do for our parents<sup>27</sup> and that is why they say that a son should rejoice in spending to provide for his father. He should also be careful to appear at all times as though he wishes to do even more than enough.<sup>28</sup>

### F. The Sequence of Honoring Parents and Relatives

Our author informs us that a man should try to honor both of his parents equally, but if circumstances do not permit this, the father's honor should precede that of the mother. Al Nakawa's remark is based upon the reply of R. Eleazar to a query from a young man who wanted to know to whom he should serve water first, his father or his mother. R. Eleazar holds that the father is to be served first because both the child and the mother are enjoined to honor the father.<sup>29</sup> But in this connection we should take note of the attitude of R. Joseph who, "when he heard her (his mother's) footsteps, said, 'I will rise before the approach of the SHEKINA' (Divine Presence)"<sup>30</sup>

Upon the basis of what has preceded above in this chapter, it should be more or less obvious that deference (is to be shown to both parents equally. This idea is brought out beautifully in a Midrash which reads, in

part, "God is aware that a child tends to honor his mother more than his father, because the mother sways him with persuasive words. Therefore, he gave precedence to the honor of the father (by commanding)... 'Honor thy FATHER and thy MOTHER' (Ex. 20.12)... But God (is also) aware... that a son fears (respects, reveres) his father more than his mother, because he teaches him Torah; therefore, He gave precedence to the reverence of the mother.... (by commanding)... 'Ye shall fear every man his MOTHER and his FATHER...' (Lev. 19.3)<sup>31</sup> Even the Holy One tries to equate the two parents and to balance the offspring's attitudes toward them.

Regarding other relatives, we are told that a man should honor his older brothers,<sup>32</sup> his grandfather, whether maternal or paternal, but the honor of his own father is always to come before the honor of his grandparent.<sup>33</sup>

## Chapter 2. The Importance of Honoring Parents...

### A. The Role of God

There is no scriptural commandment more charged with meaning for the Jew than that which reads, "Honor thy father and thy mother..."<sup>34</sup> This, in essence, is the meaning of the statement of R. Abba bar Kahana in the Talmud that honoring parents is "the most weighty of the weighty commandments."<sup>35</sup> Were we to read this passage without reference to other rabbinic ideas on the subject, it would be difficult, indeed, for us to understand it, for with 612 other biblical decrees covering every phase of life, it would seem to us that R. Abba bar Kahana has put far greater emphasis upon the honor due parents than it perhaps rightfully deserves. Fortunately, Al-Nakawa presents the opinions of several other rabbis which both expand and explain the above quotation.

In a clever homily, Ulla Rabba says that the non-Israelitic nations, upon reading the first sentence of the Decalogue, believed God to be far too self-centered. But when they came to the ~~first~~<sup>fourth</sup> commandment which is the first to call for man's respecting of other beings than God Himself, they were moved to a more reverent feeling toward the Holy One. In other words, Ulla Rabba is saying that the ~~first~~<sup>fourth</sup> commandment gives fuller significance to the others.<sup>36</sup> This alone would be sufficient reason for saying that it is important, but other rabbis go further and put the honoring of parents on a par with the honoring of God,<sup>37</sup> while Simeon b. Yohai makes so bold as to deem the honor due parents even more important than that due God.<sup>38</sup>

When we realize that in the rabbis' concept of the world, every movement, every breath of air/<sup>is</sup> permeated with the divine, we can more readily

understand why they elevated and idealized parenthood. God, being the sole source of life, has in effect, they believed, given parents the exalted position of partnership with Him in the preservation and creation of life.<sup>39</sup> What is more logically to be expected, then, than expressions like these: "When a man honors his parents, the Divine Presence rests upon him, but when he troubles them, the Presence departs,"<sup>40</sup> or "God is troubled when a man grieves his father and mother"?<sup>41</sup> Al-Nakawa expands this concept by striking a warning note that one should show honor to his parents not so much out of fear of their punishing him, but rather out of the realization that he will incur the wrath of God if he fails in his filial duty.<sup>42</sup>

#### B. Rewards and Punishments

Of such great prominence was this fourth commandment in the minds of the rabbis that we find them taking literally and elaborating upon the latter part of it, i.e. upon "in order that thy days may be long, etc."<sup>43</sup> They give voice to the thought that the proper honor shown to parents constitutes life itself;<sup>44</sup> that its reward is not only the lengthening of one's days upon earth, but also peace and plenty both here and in the world to come; that early death is in store for him who fails to honor his parents;<sup>45</sup> and that the penalty for cursing parents is identical with that decreed for cursing God.<sup>46</sup> But with their usual keen insight, the rabbis also see more practical consequences of the matter. Observing that the bond between husband and wife is sometimes more strong

than that between parent and child, they say, "When one grieves his father, his mother flees from him."<sup>47</sup> And Al-Nakawa holds that one practical effect of providing adequately for one's parents is that they will bless their son "with a willing spirit in every goodness" and that God will supplement their blessings.<sup>48</sup> But even more than that, we are promised that he who honors his parents will live to behold his own children enjoying good position as leaders of their generation.<sup>49</sup>

### C. The Paucity of Exceptions

Further evidence of the exalted status of parents is to be found in the fact that the rabbis present very few exceptions to those enjoined to honor them. Obviously, an orphan is exempt from such a mandate,<sup>50</sup> as is he whose father gives him specific permission to refrain, from honoring him.<sup>51</sup> But despite the fact that the showing of proper respect for a parent takes precedence over the performing of other MITZVOT, R. Isaac b. R. Samuel says that the study of Torah is greater even than honoring parents.<sup>52</sup> The only other exception is the case of a woman, who, after marriage, is no longer obligated to provide for her father - unless she be divorced, widowed or deserted (in which cases her obligation still holds). The reason for this exemption is to be found in her dependence upon the permission of her husband in such monetary matters.<sup>53</sup> It may also be noted in this connection that a man is commanded to love his parents only until he is married. After that his love belongs to his wife, but his other filial obligations never change.<sup>54</sup>

#### D. The Parents' Responsibilities

Despite the fact that, as we have seen, the honoring of parents was placed among the highest rungs of ethical living and that parenthood was highly exalted, the rabbis never lost themselves in sentimental idealism. They recognized that parents could be both good and bad; that both fathers and mothers had to make themselves worthy of being honored and that they, in the last analysis, determine by the manner in which they train their offspring, whether the child will act properly toward them. The details of parents' responsibility are discussed in our section on Rearing Children below, but there are some aspects of it which have their place here.

If a man would have his child honor him, we are told, he must teach him obedience while he is still young and to do this most effectively, a father should not forget to bless the youngster frequently,<sup>55</sup> (presumably showing him reverence for God, by exemplifying it himself). And while the parent should chastise the child for misconduct, he should not indulge in over-punishment. It is suggested rather that he use pleasant and kindly words with him and never curse him, for the child is apt to rebel and sin against an abusive parent.<sup>56</sup>

But far more important, parents, in order to merit respect and honor from their children, must live morally and in accord with the finest Jewish practice. An adulterous woman, for example, actually contributes to her child's dishonoring of his father, because she may give birth to a son, who meeting his real (and unknown) father in the market place, may become angry with him for some reason or other and come to despise his own parent.<sup>57</sup>



And the man who begets a child by a non-Jewess may be certain that his offspring will be reared as a Gentile and will learn, eventually, to hate his Jewish father.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps the most significant responsibility of parents, by which they may most effectively make themselves deserving of proper honor, is that of seeing to it that their child is taught Torah. Indeed, some rabbis point out that the honor of a teacher should by rights take precedence over the honor of a parent, because the father merely helped bring the child into this world, while the teacher helps bring him into the world to come.<sup>59</sup> Al-Nakawa uses this idea to show how important it is for a parent to teach his offspring. He says further that a man should practice honor to his parents more because they taught him than because they brought him into the world - for they sought only their own pleasure in the latter case.<sup>60</sup> This thought is a reflection of a Midrash which presents this idea and then goes on to say - and this is most significant - that a son is obligated to listen to and obey only a father who has instructed him well; but a father who has neglected his duty of teaching (thereby leading his son into sin) should not only not be obeyed, but he should also be rebelled against.<sup>61</sup>

## PART II. PRE-MARITAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Chapter 1. The Value and Necessity of Marriage

#### A. The Religious Motive

The home is the most basic institution in Judaism, for upon the family life, every other phase of living depends. It is in the home that the child learns to take his first steps upon the road of life. Just how firm these steps will be and where they will lead is determined to no small extent upon the circumstances under which the infant comes into the world, the relationship between the father and mother, their attitude toward him, and the extent to which all concerned feel emotional and material security. In Part I, we have seen what the family means in terms of the child's obligations to his parents. We turn now to our next consideration, which is, perhaps, the most vital: namely, the establishment of the home itself.

We are told that man is composed of two elements, the heavenly and the earthly. When he cleaves to a proper type of wife, in joy, happiness and love, acting for the sake of heaven by procreating, then he succeeds in uniting the two elements and is physically and spiritually complete. Only thus does he honor God in the most fitting manner.<sup>62</sup> Even though this idea is presented in a somewhat mystical manner, it still conveys the significant truth that marriage is desired by God.<sup>63</sup> In fact, there is a BARAITHA which places those who are unmarried (though of age) among the eight classes of men "excommunicated" by the Holy One.<sup>64</sup> The religious compulsion to marry is brought out further by R. Hama who speaks in the name of R. Hanina to the effect that when a man marries, his sins are covered up and forgiven.<sup>65</sup>

## B. Other Motives

But there are other reasons why the rabbis believe that marriage is important. Being realists they know that all men search for the highest form of comfort and happiness - and they believe that this cannot be attained without a compatible marriage. "He who has no wife rests without good, without help, without joy, ....blessing....peace....life."<sup>66</sup> In their opinion, to be married to a good woman is one of the most wonderful things that a man may experience in this life.<sup>67</sup>

By the same token, the rabbis frown upon celibacy and condemn the hermit's existence. They accept literally the scriptural statement, "It is not good for man to live alone." (Gen. 2.18)<sup>68</sup> R. Eleazar goes so far as to exclaim, "He who has no wife is not a man..."<sup>69</sup> And R. Simeon, so the ZOHAR reports, offers proof as follows, "The marriage of a man and woman is referred to as a unity - because a male without a female is only half a body - and a half is not a complete unit. Only when a man cleaves to his wife, can he be truly called 'one'; as it is written, 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become as one flesh.'" (Gen.2.24)<sup>70</sup> The Talmud presents a similar idea in a delightful parable, based on the notion that woman was created from the rib of man. It is because she is really a lost part of him, that a man needs a woman.<sup>71</sup>

But there are more practical aspects of marriage than these. We are told that when God created "a help-meet for him (Adam)" (Gen.2.18), He did so in order that he might have someone to grind the wheat he harvested and to spin the flax he grew. ..."Do you not find that she (a wife) brightens his (her husband's) eyes and stands him upon his feet?"<sup>72</sup> In other words, a man

can accomplish little of the world's work without an efficient wife.

We should note in passing that Al-Nakawa refers to wedlock as a "yoke"<sup>73</sup> but surely he could not, on the basis of the material he presents, have believed that such a yoke is an oppressive one. Indeed from the context in which he uses the word, we can see that what he really meant was that for a married man, there is far less temptation to sexual sin. To him, the "yoke of marriage" was the guiding rein which could help lead man to live the good life.

### C. When to Marry

Nowhere in all of the material presented in the MENORAT HA-MAOR are we told what is the most propitious age for women to marry. We are however, given some specific information on this subject with regard to men. As has been indicated above, marriage is thought by the rabbis to be one of the best means of salvation from sexual sin. Indeed, this notion underlies all of the suggestions concerning the age at which a man is enjoined to marry. R. Hisda boasts that he is "better off than...(his) fellows because...(he) married at sixteen (years of age)." He continues..."...and if I had married at fourteen, I should say, 'Satan, I defy you!'"<sup>74</sup> Our author explains that what R. Hisda was really trying to say was that he felt the impulse of the evil inclination at the age of fourteen and this would not have been the case had he married at that time.<sup>75</sup>

Early marriage is suggested not only as a preventive measure against the inclination toward sinfulness, but also in order to render ineffectual the "smooth talk" of non-Jewesses, harlots and strange women." This

Al-Nakawa believes, is the underlying principle of the phrase, "at eighteen (years man is ready) for the canopy."<sup>76</sup> Elsewhere we read that a man who has not married by his twentieth year is deemed sinful. R. Abba and a Tanna d'be R. Ishmael say of such a man, "Let his bones rot."<sup>77</sup>

## Chapter 2. Selecting A Mate

### A. Predestination Vs. Freedom of Choice

Are marriages made in heaven? Some of the rabbis seem to think so. We read in the Midrash that "...to wed couples is as difficult for God as was the Exodus from Egypt and the splitting of the Red Sea...God takes this one from his place and that one from her place and causes them to dwell in one house...etc."<sup>78</sup> Al-Nakawa reports the Talmud and another Midrash as saying that in all affairs man has freedom of will, but not in the choice of his mate, which is pre-determined by God.<sup>79</sup> And further, "If a man finds a good and pleasing wife, it is because of God's loving kindness."<sup>80</sup>

Now it is all well and good for us to believe that one should be grateful to God if he has been fortunate enough to have married a woman who manifests fine character and exceptional ability, etc; but it is quite another matter to infer that man has absolutely no choice in the matter of selecting a mate - that everything has been pre-arranged. Al-Nakawa is no less troubled by such an idea. He finds it all the more difficult to believe when he comes upon the lists of punishments decreed for those who do not marry women suitable for them,<sup>81</sup> for he cannot understand why a man should be punished for something beyond his control;<sup>82</sup> or when he reads that a man is given a wife according to his deeds,<sup>83</sup> and at the same time can recall many instances of a good man marrying an evil wife and vice versa.<sup>84</sup> Nor can he comprehend, he says, the meaning of the permission the rabbis grant to a man to become betrothed during MOED (the intervening days of a festival),<sup>85</sup> for the purpose of such permission is to prevent another man from betrothing the same girl - which may happen if the first waits too long before stating his request. If marriages are pre-arranged no one need be concerned about the above contin-

gency; a man will always marry the right girl anyway.<sup>86</sup>

Desiring to leave the impression that he is not quite willing to discard entirely the idea of predestination, Al-Nakawa sets forth the following possible explanations. When we read, for example, that while the child is still being formed in its mother's womb, they (the angels, presumably) say on high, "The daughter of so and so is destined for so and so," we must realize that this refers only to cases in which the girl is really suitable for the boy. God will rectify an erroneous match before the wedding.<sup>87</sup> Our author also tells us that there are three reasons why good wives are married to bad husbands and vice versa. They are: (1) a good wife, to a bad husband in order to reform the bad husband; (2) if she does not succeed in reforming him, he has the good wife as reward for whatever few good deeds he may have to his credit in this world, but he will lose completely his portion in the world to come; and (3) a good wife may be married to a bad husband so that she may be properly punished for her few evil deeds in this world and thus be prepared to inherit the world to come.<sup>88</sup>

Our author's efforts to solve the dilemma, as we can readily see, are rather feeble. He merely explains certain of its aspects, but he does not even attempt a complete and final refutation of the doctrine of predestination. Within the very text of his manuscript, however, we do find such a refutation. For those notions which are presented below in the last two sections of this chapter, <sup>offer</sup> proof that man is believed by the rabbis to be an unhindered free-will agent in the selection of his spouse, the opinion of a minority notwithstanding. Were this not so, then all the detailed admonitions set forth in what follows relative to courting and marrying the proper type of woman would be purposeless.

### B. Courtship

The rabbis explained almost every human activity on the basis of scripture. The disciples of R. Dostai b. Jannai noted the time-honored custom of letting the gentleman do all of the courting and asked their master why the man takes the active part in the wooing process and not the woman. R. Dostai replied with this parable, "It is comparable to a man who has lost something. Who searches for what? Doesn't the loser look for that which he has lost?" And he went on to say that since woman was formed from the rib of man, she is really a lost article and he engages in the attempt to recover what he has lost.<sup>89</sup>

The responsibility in selecting a proper mate rests almost entirely upon the man in the rabbinic conception and the rabbis look upon this responsibility as exceedingly grave. We are informed that the utmost caution should be exercised in the choice of wife, for if a man marries a woman who is not proper for him, he will suffer for it in the after life,<sup>90</sup> he is considered as though he had ploughed the whole world using salt as seed,<sup>91</sup> he defiles his progeny and discredits his family,<sup>92</sup> and he transgresses four scriptural commandments.<sup>93</sup> The Talmud points up the importance of using discretion in picking a life partner by commenting on *הִוְרֵיכְךָ בְּרִשְׁוֹן* "He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity" (Ps. 68.7) and dividing the word *הִוְרֵיכְךָ* "into prosperity" into *וְרֵיכְךָ* "weeping" and *הִוְרֵי* "songs" and interpreting "One marries a woman who is not fit for him and weeps, while the other marries a woman who is fit for him and sings."<sup>94</sup>



### C. Criteria

#### (1). Intermarriage

Marriage outside of the Jewish fold, is under all circumstances, to be avoided. So strongly do the rabbis believe this that they announce that those who "become mixed with the nations....are deserving that their land be ploughed over them."<sup>95</sup> But more than this, intermarriage incurs the wrath of God, Himself: "And when the people Israel intermix themselves among the nations, the Holy One, Blessed be He, forsakes them."<sup>96</sup> In fact, the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion are, according to Midrash and Talmud, directly traceable to marriages with non-Jewesses.<sup>97</sup>

The basis for the notions mentioned above is the idea that Judaism has not only grown out of the experience of the Jewish people, but that its future is dependent upon the preservation of the community. In the last analysis, the weakening of the Jewish household through intimate association with heathens, is equivalent in the eyes of the rabbis to idolatry. They say, "Everyone who has (sexual) relations with a gentile woman is considered as though he were betrothed to idol worship."<sup>98</sup> By marrying a gentile, a man defiles his own sanctity - in addition to that of his people.<sup>99</sup>

But if a person has "weakened" and married a foreign woman, he may still, in the view of one source, rectify his transgression by taking the following steps: (1) divorce his wife; (2) "put away" the offspring of his marriage, who are considered, MUMZERIM; and (3) confess his guilt and make atonement before God.<sup>100</sup>

## (2). Physical vs. Spiritual Qualities

Even to the beginning student one of the most striking things about the Hebrew language is that it uses relatively few adjectives. Most of its words are verbs or nouns derived from verbs. The reason for this is not difficult to discover, for throughout the Bible action, not appearance, is the essential consideration. It is not so much what a person looks like, but rather the thoughts he thinks, the ideas he speaks and the deeds he performs that render him worthy or unworthy to biblical writers.

Rabbinic views, springing as they do directly from the Bible, seem to be strongly influenced by the same criteria. In all the material Al-Nakawa presents in the section of his work under our study, we do not find a single reference to physical comeliness other than statements to the effect that it is of no account.

When the rabbis happen upon the verse in the Apocrypha, "Happy is the husband of a beautiful woman; his days, he counts two-fold," (Ben Sirā 26.3) they can interpret it in no other way than this: "The beauty of a woman is not in her face, but in her deeds."<sup>101</sup> The same idea is repeated several times by our author. He adds that the only true beauty that is praiseworthy in a woman consists of chastity, ritual purity and righteousness.<sup>102</sup> And he suggests, on the basis of "Grace is deceitful and beauty vain; a woman who fears the Lord, she is praiseworthy," (Pr. 31-30) that in contemplating marriage a man would do well to look to the propriety of his intended's way of living,<sup>103</sup> for the most comely maiden may in reality be highly undesirable.<sup>104</sup>

Sadly enough there are always men who can testify to the profound psychological insight evidenced by the rabbis in holding forth such ideas as that if a man marries a woman merely because of her physical attractiveness, "having her with him all the time, he will become sated with her; he will come to loathe her and she will appear in his eyes as a stranger; he will despise her - and the story of Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam. 13.15) will prove it."<sup>105</sup> Nachmanides brings us a similar thought from the Talmud<sup>106</sup> and Al-Nakawa presents another Midrash with the same implications.<sup>107</sup>

### (3). Wealth

What applies to marrying solely on the grounds of physical attractiveness also applies to marriage for money. The only real wealth of even the most affluent girl is her propriety in conduct and thought.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, "choose a daughter of good family and one of good deeds," is the advice of one sage, "Do not take a woman for her wealth, lest you be considered her slave. A wise woman who is poor is preferable to a simple woman who is rich, for the poor one builds her house with fine activities, while the "foolish plucks it down with her hands." (See Pr. 14.1)<sup>109</sup>

In this same connection, the sages tell us that "all love that depends upon some (material) thing will not in the end endure - because when the thing becomes useless, the love is apt to die."<sup>110</sup> Marriage is a permanent affair, based upon mutual companionship, affection and understanding. These ideals, when they spring into being, are of themselves lasting and imperishable. Wealth, on the other hand, is transitory. One may possess it

one day and lose it the next. With this in mind we are asked what is to happen in the case of a man who marries for riches, when those riches are gone?<sup>111</sup> The rabbis' rhetorical question is a significant one, for what, indeed, is the sum total of misery accumulated in the life of two people who enter matrimony without the basic emotion of love? The author of an obscure Midrash hits upon a significant truth, when he tells us that "he who marries for money, will experience poverty as his final lot."<sup>112</sup> For, though he meant it literally, we may take it also in its figurative sense. Is there any poverty worse than unhappiness?

#### (4). Family Background

Out of their perception and broad experience the sages of our people seem to take it for granted that the environment in which a person grows always leaves its mark. They knew that those who succeed in overcoming the detrimental influence of an unseemly family atmosphere are the exceptions to the rule. In our day, the rabbis' standards would not apply in all cases, because we have compulsory education for both boys and girls, which may enable children of the unschooled, as well as those of the educated, to learn. But in times when girls and women were not given formal education, and acquired almost all of their knowledge from their older relatives, the sages had every reason to warn men to seek their life partners from among the educated. They say, "A man should sell all he owns (in order to) marry the daughter of a scholar. If he does not find a daughter of a scholar, a daughter of a leader of the generation...leader of a congregation...collector of charity...teacher of children. But under no circumstances should he marry the daughter of an ignorant

man."<sup>113</sup>

A maiden's family background, however, offers other influences than scholarliness and is composed of other individuals than just the father. Therefore we are told that "if her family is pleasant and KOSHER, (observant of religious precepts), you may rest assured that she will be...like the rest of the women in her family."<sup>114</sup> And we are informed also that one contemplating marriage should be certain to inquire as to the character and traits of the brothers of his intended.<sup>115</sup>

A further caution in this matter concerns marrying solely for the reason that the woman's family possesses physical prowess. It is conceivable, so the Midrash has it, that a man would look for physical strength in the family of his bride-to-be in order to be able to dominate his fellows. In such cases, we are warned, might, like wealth, is perishable.<sup>116</sup>

#### (5). Considering Children

The last and by far the most vital criterion in selecting a wife is that of thinking in terms of the children that the marriage will produce. While marriage has other purposes, as we have seen, the most essential function of the husband and wife is procreation. Only a woman, therefore, who is capable of bearing children, who is not classed as an <sup>נדה</sup> (previously divorced because of failure to give birth), who is not too old to become a mother and who is generally worthy of having offspring, should be considered by a man in choosing his partner.<sup>117</sup>

Feeling that unless the home is built upon firm foundations, the children will not be of the proper type, the rabbis mention the various ef-

fects of overlooking the aforementioned criteria in picking a spouse. We learn that intermarriage produces stubborn, rebellious and wayward sons,<sup>118</sup> marriage for beauty alone, since it is only for sexual gratification, begets "strange children;"<sup>119</sup> and for money alone results in disreputable offspring.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, when a man exercises caution in courting the daughter of a good family, he may rest assured that his children will be fine, upstanding citizens. For example, entering wedlock with a girl of scholarly background, a youth will have scholarly children. If he does not live long enough to teach them himself, the proper type of wife will see to it that they are well schooled even after his death.<sup>121</sup>

Finally, our author says, "Every woman who is of religiously observant stock will always give birth to religiously observant offspring like her forefathers, as it is said, 'Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah that bore you.'" (Is. 51.2)<sup>122</sup>

### Chapter 3. Sexual Purity.

#### A. Chastity and Licentiousness

In the entire range of our study no ideal is ranked higher than sexual morality because chaste living is the most solid foundation upon which the home may be built. Indeed, pre-marital chastity is so essential to the rabbis that they equate it with holiness, saying, "Whenever you find a fence of chastity, you find holiness,"<sup>123</sup> and "He who fences himself in from  $\text{הוֹרָא}$  (sex sin) is called holy."<sup>124</sup> They go even further when they say that one who keeps himself from lewdness, even if he is not a  $\text{כֹּהֵן}$  deserves to perform the functions of the High Priest.<sup>125</sup>

Apparently it was assumed that women are less likely to engage in extra-marital sex relations than men, because these are the only absolute requirements for them, presented by Al-Nakawa: that they remain indoors as much as possible,<sup>126</sup> that they cover their heads when they go out<sup>127</sup> and that they wear breech-cloths as a matter of chastity.<sup>128</sup> It is toward the men, on the other hand, that most of the instructions on how to remain chaste are directed. Men are strictly forbidden to gaze at women (with the exception that they may look at a bride during the wedding in order to make her more beloved by her husband);<sup>129</sup> because lewdness may result from so doing.<sup>130</sup> With this prohibition in mind, we are not surprised to find that men are enjoined not to embrace a woman, even to kiss her hand or a portion of her clothing by way of paying respect. This restriction includes a sister, an aunt and any relative other than one's own wife.<sup>131</sup>

To safeguard oneself from immorality, it is suggested that a man avoid undue sexual excitement by being careful not to handle his flesh, even while urinating;<sup>132</sup> and that he refrain from the excessive use of alcoholic beverages.<sup>133</sup> And we are notified that the thought of fornication is just as bad as the sin itself,<sup>134</sup> because every illicit cohabitation may be traced directly to thoughts which preceded it.<sup>135</sup>

Just how heinous fornication was in the minds of the rabbis may be seen from the fact that they deemed such a practice as worse than murder.<sup>136</sup> It is the most grave transgression a man may commit because by having illicit sex contact he not only sins himself, but causes another to sin likewise.<sup>137</sup> Another indication of their disdain for immoral sex conduct is the series of legendary accounts concerning the effects of it, which the rabbis offer. They tell us that the flood was a consequence of this type of sin,<sup>138</sup> that God was long-suffering with all the false prophets but those who engaged in seducing women,<sup>139</sup> that immorality restrains the heavens from dropping dew and rain,<sup>140</sup> that licentiousness caused Israel to be exiled before Judah,<sup>141</sup> that lewdness inevitably causes the exile of all peoples from their respective lands,<sup>142</sup> and that because of their contemplating fornication, the women of Israel lost the use of the ornaments and cosmetics described in Is. 3.<sup>143</sup> And it is well to note here that although extra-marital intercourse with anyone is highly ~~undesirable~~ <sup>reprehensible</sup>, it is infinitely worse when indulged in with a non-Jewess.<sup>144</sup>

#### B. Perversion.

Only two kinds of sex perversion are mentioned in the MENORAT



HA-MAOR, namely, masturbabtion and homosexuality. On masturbation we read, "One who excites himself manually or with some instrument, he is as though he had spilled blood and is under penalty of death, as it is said, 'Your hands are full of blood,' (Is. 1.15) and 'For they have committed adultery and blood is upon their hands.'" (Ez.23.37)<sup>145</sup> Moreover, the masturbator is compared to a beast, for the beast is not particular about the type of thing it does and the beast has no portion in the world to come.<sup>146</sup>

On homosexual relations we are told that although fornication is the worst of all possible transgressions, man lying with man is worse than the whole lot of them put together, for it is tantamount to idolatry, uncovering of nakedness and murder (the three greatest sins).<sup>147</sup>

#### Chapter 4. The Wedding

Little reference is made in MENORAT HA-MAOR to the actual mechanics of the wedding. This is quite understandable since Al-Nakawa is not writing a codification of legal material. Hence we find that in our three chapters the only references to the KETUBA or marriage contract state that those of evil or unpleasant wives are more costly than <sup>they appear</sup> ~~their face values~~.<sup>148</sup>

We, are, however, told of the three steps to wedlock, which are (1) SHIDDUCH, or match; (2) ERUSIN, or betrothal; and (3) KIDDUSHIN, or sanctification (wedding). The SHIDDUCH is the time when it is first specifically stated that "Mr. So and So" will marry "Miss Such and So" at "Such and Such" a time. The ERUSIN and KIDDUSHIN (also referred to as CHUPPA or NISSUIN) are to take place as soon as possible after the match has been arranged.<sup>149</sup> The reason for having the wedding so soon after the match has been made is to be seen in this interesting Midrash: "'Hope deferred makes the heart sick,' (Pr. 13.12) this refers to one who betroths a woman and marries her after a time; 'But desire fulfilled is a tree of life' (ibid) refers to one who betroths a woman and marries her immediately."<sup>150</sup> And another Midrash applies the verse, "Thou shalt not take in pledge the mill and the upper mill stone" (Dt. 24.6) as meaning that the wedding should not be delayed after the match has been completed.<sup>151</sup>

PART IIIA. MARRIED LIVING - GENERAL.

Chapter 1. The Husband

A. Duty as Provider

To theorize about the ideal family life is one thing, but actually to put that theory into practice is quite another matter. The rabbis never set forth for men a way of life that was impossible of achievement. They saw to it that their lofty theories were within the reach of everyone. In their utilitarian view of living, they were well aware that marriage was not all "love and kisses." They believed that a home had to be well provided for, before it could stand or before it could develop properly. To them, the most "undesirable wife (was) easier to bear than poverty."<sup>152</sup>

We have seen in PART II, Chapter 2, that money was not so highly esteemed that every other consideration could be put aside for it; certainly not! But experience taught the rabbis -as it has taught us - that the most perfect type of unity between husband and wife could be attained most readily where there was a sufficiency of life's necessities. In trying to impress upon husbands their duty to provide adequately for their families, our sages make such well phrased statements as, "A man should always take care to have grain in his house, for no strife is more frequent in the house than about grain."<sup>153</sup> Al-Nakawa explains the talmudic sentence, "When the barley is gone out of the pitcher, enmity knocks and quarrel comes in"<sup>154</sup> by saying, "When the morsel is gone out of the household, peace departs and quarrel enters."<sup>155</sup>

Merely to say, however, that a man should work hard and clothe and feed his family was not enough. Al-Nakawa tells us that in caring for his household a man should do so in the most unselfish manner possible. He says, "A man should always clothe himself less than he is able to; and he should clothe his children as well as he is able to; and his wife, more than he is able to,"<sup>156</sup> for loving one's wife as oneself and honoring her (by providing for her) more than for himself is one of the ways to insure a peaceful and happy home life.<sup>157</sup> And whatever a man offers to his family should be from the fruits of his own labors and not from the charity offerings of others.<sup>158</sup>

#### B. Other Duties

The rabbinic standard of chivalry is not always the same as ours. At least this obtains in the matter of reporting to others what type of woman a man, after marriage, has found his wife to be. We would not suggest that a man should relate to his fellows any of those things in married life which would reflect unpleasantly upon a woman, but the rabbis apparently consider such reports as perfectly legitimate.<sup>159</sup>

This, however, is by no means an indication that our sages did not sympathize - and even exalt - the sensitivity of women. The woman, though her household chores may have been quite heavy, was still looked upon as the emotionally weaker sex and husbands are constantly cautioned against hurting their wives' feelings or causing them undue suffering. Not only should a man not strike his wife, but he should never under any circumstances curse her, reproach her or oppress her - even verbally, for women are

extremely sensitive to wrong - and once tears begin to flow they cannot easily be stemmed.<sup>160</sup> When the husband does become angry with his wife, he should control himself and have compassion upon her, remembering that she is taken from his rib and is the flesh of his flesh.<sup>161</sup>

A wife should at all times be treated with honor and respect. Man must never forget that unless he cleaves to his wife, he is not a complete man and that she is his greatest blessing.<sup>162</sup> And should his mate exemplify the highest ideals of womanhood, the husband is not to act as though he has all this coming to him, rather he should have all the more love and compassion for her - because she looks to him in quite the same way as he looks to God for food and sustenance.<sup>163</sup>

Last but not least among the duties of the husband, is to be constantly aware that his marriage is a permanent affair. He may divorce her, of course, but he should never desert her (presumably without paying her the amount of the KETUBA so that she can live.)<sup>164</sup>

### C. Accepting a Wife's Counsel

Among the rabbis there is some disagreement on the question of whether a man should listen to the advice which his wife may offer him. The Mishna proscribes having too much conversation with any woman, "with his own wife, they (the sages) said, How much the more (does this apply) to another's wife." And Al-Nakawa adds that excessive chatting with women results in laxity in study of Torah and much evil.<sup>165</sup> In the Talmud, Rab says, "Everyone who follows the advice of his wife falls into GEHINNOM. But R. Papa suggests that "if your wife is a dwarf, bend down and listen to

her (counsel.')" These two views are reconciled with the idea that the former refers to all matters, while the latter only household business. Al-Nakawa, however, offers a more sound summary of the matter when he tells us that if a man observes that his wife's counsel is good and right, he should accept it; but that the husband is obligated to listen to his wife's suggestions only on matters pertaining to the household.<sup>166</sup>

## Chapter 2. The Wife

### A. Duties

When one thinks of the Jewish matron, one usually thinks immediately of her religious functions of kindling the Sabbath lights and of preparing the Sabbath Hallah. Al-Nakawa makes mention of these duties also but he cites in connection with the former a Midrashic explanation as to why the woman is commanded to light the candles. This Midrash says that Eve tempted her husband, thereby making him mortal, (i.e., extinguishing the light of his life). Her part in the Sabbath home service is an atonement for this first sin.<sup>167</sup> No, this thought is not a very elevating one and we know that the Sabbath candles and loaf have deeper meanings than this. I mention it here only in the attempt to give as accurate a picture as possible of the material contained in MENORAT HA-MAOR. We may rest assured that the majority of the rabbis would not have held to the implications

of the above reported Midrash. We know this beyond any doubt from the frequent praises and exaltations of womankind that we have presented in the first parts of this thesis.

Concerning the wife's other duties, Al-Nakawa gives us a fine summary description of the ESHES HAYYIL, the ideal wife, which because of its unique character as his own contribution, we present in full: "And a woman of valor is one who handles the affairs of her husband with discretion, takes care of his money, <sup>helps him with all her might,</sup> ~~attends to all his needs,~~ offers him sage counsel, and does not press him overmuch to <sup>spend</sup> ~~earn~~ more than <sup>necessary.</sup> ~~enough.~~ And she does her best with the needs of her household and with the rearing of her youngsters. She is modest, diligent and careful in serving her husband, she always greets him pleasantly and hastens to fulfill his wishes without laziness, she continually tries to make him happy and to comfort him, speaking unto his heart in order to remove ~~(the effects of)~~ his pain. She understands and knows all his ways, so that he does not even have to call ~~(her)~~. She loves him and looks after him like the apple of her eye; she reveres him even as she fears God....She watches his sitting down and his rising up and the time of his awaking and his sleeping. She dislikes whom he dislikes and loves whom he loves. She keeps his secrets and does not disclose them - even to her own father and mother. She respects his family, does not despise them nor lord it over them. She gives up her habits and customs and practices his. She does not despise him, even if he be the lowliest among the lowly. She tends constantly to <sup>the time of</sup> his food and drink and fixes <sup>foods</sup> ~~sweetmeats~~ that he likes...She despises no gift from him, whether it be little or much. She keeps to his schedule rather than her own. She ful-

fills his desire rather than hers. She is quiet and not a gossip; she remains at home and does not gadabout, possessing understanding and knowledge. She adheres always to the path of modesty, so that no fault is ever found in her. She tends her husband's needs by herself and not through others. Even if she has many servants and maids, she rises and takes care of him. She calls him, 'My lord'...She is sparing with her words to him and speaks to him only out of necessity. She requites him good and not evil. Her eye is ever upon him, like the eye of a handmaid upon her mistress. She tries not to make him angry. ..She keeps his clothes clean so that there be no spot on them, so that her husband need never be embarrassed or ashamed, so that he will be beloved and pleasant in the eyes of his fellows. And if a wayfarer should come, or some of his relatives, to eat in his house, she should greet them warmly, trying to do more than enough for them - so that her husband may be respected. And if she always acts according to the above mentioned directions, and the likes of them, then her husband will be honored in the eyes of all men. Thus she will become a crown to her husband. This is the type of woman who is called ESHES HAYYIL, as it is written, 'A woman of valor is her husband's crown.' (Pr. 12.4)<sup>168</sup>

With a few exceptions the above description includes the most essential activities and qualities of the finest type of wife in the rabbinic view. Most of the additional comments MENORAT HA-MAOR includes are nothing more than repetitions of the above. There are, however, a few items which shed more light upon the meaning of some of the matters mentioned in the quotation.



Concerning a wife's part in the rearing of children, the rabbis are obviously aware that hers is no easy task. They admit that a woman, shouldering as she does most of the responsibilities, knows much more hardship in the process of bringing up her youngsters - than does her mate, - and they sympathize.<sup>169</sup> But they do not for a moment suggest that just because her work is not simple, she may show laxity in it.

In addition to comforting her husband, we find that a wife should also rejoice in his joy and be pained by his sorrow.<sup>170</sup>

The fuller implications of a wife's loyalty to her spouse are that even when he angers her, loses his money or grows feeble with age, she should regard him and obey him the same as she would were he amenable, wealthy or young.<sup>171</sup> It is further recommended that she always act as though contented. Sometimes she may not in reality be satisfied, but she should never admit it.<sup>172</sup>

On the subject of providing food for her family, it is specifically suggested that a woman rise early in the morning and bake the day's bread.<sup>173</sup> And the reason for advising that she keep herself busy even when she has plenty of servants is that idleness may lead to foolish and evil thoughts.<sup>174</sup>

Our author tells of a mother who offers her daughter counsel just before the girl's wedding. She warns that if a woman loses her husband's love when he is young, she will never recapture it. Therefore, the mother suggests that if her daughter serves her husband with respect from the beginning, he will humble himself and be like a servant to her. On the other hand, if she acts haughtily with him, he will in time react unpleasantly toward

her.<sup>175</sup> Obviously the basis of this technique of holding a husband is humility. How highly the rabbis esteemed this virtue may be seen from the Midrash telling us that God chose the rib of Adam as a starting substance when He "built" Eve, because the rib, being unseen, is symbolic of humility.<sup>176</sup>

#### B. Effects of the Good Wife

"Never underestimate the power of a woman" - so reads a modern advertising slogan. The rabbis expressed the same thought in other ways. "R. Akiba taught that through the merit of the pious women of the age our fathers were redeemed from Egypt." This, we are told, was R. Akiba's way of saying that the Israelites enjoyed an extra portion of God's favor because the women were so efficient in their labors.<sup>177</sup> Al-Nakawa informs us that a good wife can bring honor to her husband in many ways.<sup>178</sup> The Midrash, brings out the idea by saying, "If she (a woman) is good, there is no limit to her goodness,"<sup>179</sup> and we may add that a woman's goodness has a great potential in worthwhile effects.

Not the least of these effects is that upon the mind and heart of her husband. If she is the proper type of partner, her husband's affection for her grows more strong as the days pass. Witness such statements as that a man who has a good wife not only does not lack for anything, but even if he be poor, he considers himself wealthy;<sup>180</sup> a man who marries a good wife wants no substitute and considers her a pearl that is beyond price;<sup>181</sup> and "when a woman is good, her husband delights in her; when she is bad, she squeezes the good out of him."<sup>182</sup>

Perhaps the most significant effect of the good wife is her power to reform her husband. That the rabbis believed she had this power may be seen <sup>belief that</sup> in Al-Nakawa's "Good wives are given to evil husbands often in order to teach their husbands to change their ways."<sup>183</sup>

#### C. Effects of the Evil Wife

"Any evil is better than an evil wife." With these words the Talmud summarizes the effects of marriage to an unworthy woman.<sup>184</sup> Apparently, the variety and scope of the damage to a household brought upon it by the improper kind of woman were so extensive that the rabbis felt little need for elaborating with details. They tell us bluntly that a wicked woman is the same as GEHINNOM,<sup>185</sup> that she causes the early death of her husband,<sup>186</sup> that marriage to her ilk is one of the twelve most severe sufferings that can be experienced in this life,<sup>187</sup> and that the deleterious consequences of living with such a person can never be overcome.<sup>188</sup>

### Chapter 3. Husband and Wife

#### A. Marriage, a Two-fold Responsibility

As we have already seen both the husband and the wife have duties and obligations to one another. While the nature of some of these responsibilities differs with each of the sexes, their seriousness does not. Marriage is looked upon by the rabbis as a partnership in which both parties are called upon to give freely and largely of themselves. Complete harmony and co-operation are essential materials in the building of the ideal home. A rabbinic parable says that if you have two seals, one embossed and the other engraved, they will fit together perfectly and make a fine impression on wax. But if both be embossed, then they clash and do not produce an image on the wax.<sup>189</sup> In other words the husband and his mate must learn to work as one - each must modify his own desires to suit his partner.

Only marriages in which both the man and the woman love one another and find a fitting line of agreement are truly blessed with God's spirit, for only such unions are comely, pleasant and for the sake of heaven.<sup>190</sup> Both parties should constantly bear in mind that they are limb of each other's limbs and flesh of each other's flesh.<sup>191</sup>

#### B. Adultery

We have seen in Part II, Chapter 3 that pre-marital sexual purity forms one of the most solid foundations for matrimonial success and that any form of licentiousness was contramanded. Adultery, however, was infinitely worse than other forms of sex sin in the rabbis estimation.

For love and understanding cannot proceed from disloyalty and deceit. It is because they loathe the very thought of infidelity that the rabbis deem it the most vile form of idolatry.<sup>192</sup> They say that one who is adulterous transgresses in turn each of the ten commandments. For example concerning, "Remember the Sabbath day..." (Ex. 20.8; Deut. 5.12) they say that if a priest's wife cohabits with a YISROEL and bears a son, the son will be erroneously taken as a COHEN and when he performs those functions exclusively relegated to COHANIM on the Sabbath, the Sabbath will be profaned.<sup>193</sup> This Midrash demonstrates how seriously our sages thought on the subject of adultery because it shows to what devious lengths of reasoning they went to discourage it. They also hold that God Himself becomes jealous for the offended spouse.<sup>194</sup> In fact He links His name with those who resist the temptation to extra-marital relations.<sup>195</sup>

Infidelity produces all of the consequences of fornication. But in addition adultery on the part of one partner, so the rabbis say, leads to the same practice on the part of the other.<sup>196</sup> It is because of this belief that the use of the "waters of jealousy" as a test for a woman's loyalty was done away with. We are told that Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai put an end to this test because there were so many adulterous husbands,<sup>197</sup> indicating further that a man is deserving of fidelity only when he, too, demonstrates it.

Our men of wisdom had trouble reconciling in their own minds the fact that God, Who is just, forms an embryo out of an adulterous relationship. As a solution to this problem, "Rabbi said, 'Were it not for the fact that he causes her to conceive, the one who has relations with a married woman would continue to sin. Therefore God forms (the embryo) and develops its limbs and

gives it a soul - in order to expose the affair... When the two of them become aware of... (the pregnancy), they separate from the illicit relationship!"<sup>198</sup>

Adultery is so grave a matter than men are cautioned to follow all of the rules set forth above in PART II, Chapter 3 in order to avoid falling into this sin. This thought, however, is added to the list of precautions by our author, "A man must be exceedingly careful not to engage in business transactions with women, lest he fall into adultery with them."<sup>199</sup>

## Chapter 4. The Parting of the Ways

### A. Divorce

In line with their practical view of life and in line with their firm belief that only that home is worthy of the divine blessing which is permeated with a spirit of love, harmony and mutual respect, our sages recommend divorce as a means of ending that which would only destroy the loftiness of the idea of marriage. Hatred, strife and discontent make a sham of this sacred institution. Better separation than misery and hypocrisy. Thus we are told that the only remedy for the plague which is a bad wife is divorce.<sup>200</sup>

In view of the fact that MENORAT HA-MAOR is not a law code, we do not find references to the legal technicalities of divorce, its reasons and conditions. All we have is the following list of those who may be divorced without receiving the amount set forth in their KETUBOT: (1) One who makes her husband eat untithed food, (2) lets him have intercourse with her while she is menstruating, (3) does not set aside the Priests' share of the bread dough, (4) swears deceitfully, (5) goes about with uncovered head, (6) spins yarn in the street, (7) is flirtatious, (8) curses her husband's children in his presence, (9) screams so that her neighbors hear her while she is engaged in the sex act.<sup>201</sup> It is readily seen that all of these reasons refer either to the breach of some serious ritual observance or behavior that puts the husband in an ugly light. One other legal regulation relative to divorce is mentioned by our author, to wit, a husband is forbidden to have intercourse with a woman whom he intends to divorce.<sup>202</sup>

Although the rabbis do permit divorce and, in fact, recommend it in certain cases, ~~they do not believe that it is the most desirable thing.~~

~~Far from it~~, they think much too much of the marriage bond and of the family to regard separation lightly. They tell us that "when one divorces his first wife, the altar drops tears for him,"<sup>203</sup> for they know how profoundly broken dreams upset the soul of man. They tell us moreover, that one of the five sounds that reverberate from one end of the earth to the other even though they are not heard, is "the time when a woman is divorced from her husband."<sup>204</sup>

### B. Death

Death of a loved one is always saddening, but when one or the other of a married couple passes on, it is accounted more sorrowfully than the passing of any other relative. The rabbis' remarks on this subject give us a picture of a man almost completely broken in spirit at the death of his wife. They say, "Every man whose first wife dies is as though the Temple had been destroyed during his lifetime;"<sup>205</sup> "...the world becomes dark for his sake... his steps are shortened...his counsel fails."<sup>206</sup> And they add, "For everything there is a substitute except for the wife of one's youth."<sup>207</sup> But as difficult as it may be for the husband to bear the passing of his wife, it is even more difficult for the wife to accept the passing of her husband.<sup>208</sup>

Despite their sympathy with the bereaved husband, our seers suggest that a man should always remarry regardless of his age - so that he may continue fulfilling the divine charge to reproduce.<sup>209</sup>



PART IIIB, MARRIED LIVING - SEXUAL UNION.<sup>210</sup>

Chapter 1. Divine Sanction and Purposes

Of all the miracles reported in the literature of man, none can be compared with the miracle of life. Indeed, men are compelled to bow their heads in humility, feeling their own littleness, when they reflect on the scientifically inexplicable phenomenon of vitality. For not even the greatest human scientific genius can explain the FORCE that compels the combination and multiplication of cells that produces both simple and complex forms of life. The best that man can do is describe the processes of fertilization, gestation and parturition - but science cannot answer the question WHY? This must be left to the ponderings of philosophers. We who believe that Omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Being, Whom men call God feel that the WHY of this miracle lies with Him.

It would have been out of consonance with the basis of their faith had the rabbis, endowed with spiritual greatness as they were, not looked upon the sexual relationship as the most sacred function of man.

The sages of our people took issue with the doctrine that sex is degrading and base. Nachmanides says, "And let man not think that proper (sex) union contains any shamefulness or ugliness. Far from it, for proper union is called DEAH (knowledge)."<sup>211</sup> He uses the talmudic statement, "Three keys were not entrusted to a deputy and one of them is pregnancy,"<sup>212</sup> and argues that if there were any disgrace in sexual contact, God Himself would not perform so direct a part in the matter of conception.<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, "God did not create anything that was repulsive or shameful." So men do not have the right to refer to the sex organs or the sex act as unseemly or containing shamefulness.<sup>214</sup>

Abraham Ben David presents concept of the world as a place which is meant by God to be peopled.<sup>215</sup> It is upon such a premise as this that the following notions are based: proper intercourse is like the Creative Act itself;<sup>216</sup> the commandment to "Be fruitful and multiply" is one of the most important.<sup>217</sup> But more than this, the Holy One, man, and his wife share a three way partnership in the creation of children<sup>218</sup> and although the father and mother are the source of the limbs of the body, God gives the soul.<sup>219</sup>

As we have seen, sexual intercourse is not only regarded as a lofty function by the rabbis, but it is also deemed one of the more mandatory commandments of God. Just how sincerely this was believed may be seen in such legends as the following. There were a man and his wife who had been married for some time and had no offspring. They said, "We are no profit to God;" were divorced - and the Midrash regards this action of theirs as true piety.<sup>220</sup> Also, the one who does not busy himself with the fulfilling of the commandments of PIRYAH V'RIVYAH (reproduction)"...causes the Divine Presence to depart from Israel."<sup>221</sup> The duty to have sexual intercourse for the purpose of having children is incumbent upon elderly men as well as youths.<sup>222</sup>

Of such significance was the divine mandate to multiply that failure to have children was listed among those short-comings for which God "excommunicates" a man,<sup>223</sup> and "R. Eleazar taught, 'One who does not engage in being fruitful....is as though he had spilled blood!..R. Akiba said, 'He is like one who has degraded the divine image...' and ben Azzai said, 'He is like both.'"<sup>224</sup> Even more strikingly severe is the statement that one not engaged in PIRYAH V'RIVYAH is guilty of a transgression punishable by

death, which is based upon scripture, "And Nadab and Abihu died; and they had no children." (Num. 3.4) The Talmud concludes from this verse that if they had had children they would not have perished.<sup>225</sup>

Al-Nakawa tells us that "Everyone who does not....have children is considered dead. And everyone who has fitting sons, even though he be dead is as though alive." And to prove his point he refers to the famous Midrash which asks why it is written, "And David rested with his fathers," while "Joab, the officer of the host, died." (1 Ki. 11.21) The explanation is that David had a son praiseworthy like himself, whereas Jab did not have a son like himself.<sup>226</sup>

## Chapter 2. Thoughts During Intercourse

The rabbinic attitude is that in everything a man does, the motive of and thought during the activity is of the utmost importance. Thus we find innumerable references to how essential it is that prayer, for example, consist of much more than lip-service. The KAWWANA or intention behind the prayer is just as significant - if not more so - than the recitation itself. Naturally the direction of a man's thoughts in all of his actions should be toward God on high.

It is not surprising, then, that we find the rabbis quite deeply concerned with the thinking that one should engage in during so holy an act as sexual union. Nachmanides reminds us that in the performance of all bodily functions, it is essential that thoughts be directed toward God - and not waver from Him even for an instant. He tells us that because Jacob followed this rule, he became worthy of siring the twelve righteous tribes. Even at intercourse he meditated upon the Holy One.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, only holy things should be permitted to enter the minds of husband and wife during the sex act. Then the pair will be united spiritually as well as physically and God's Presence will be with them.<sup>228</sup> Nachmanides does not seem to feel that he can ever stress too much the necessity of the foregoing and to impress upon us the need for spiritual unity, he tells us that when thinking is directed on high, a "brilliant light" descends from above and rests upon the drop of semen, consecrating it to its holy function.<sup>229</sup>

It is apparent that what lies behind this entire idea is the elevating concept that intercourse can be truly holy in nature only when the partners act out of love and complete dedication to things loftier than mere sexual gratification. Men are enjoined to do all things more for the sake

of heaven than for bodily pleasure. Because they realize that cohabitation can be intensely physical, the rabbis lay tremendous emphasis upon considerations of the spirit. They tell us that one who "disgraces himself through immorality or by thinking loathesome thoughts (during the sex act) deserves to be called a boor, a fool, a dolt."<sup>230</sup>

But our sages were realistic in their attitude toward this matter. R. Hiyya holds that engaging in sexual congress with one's wife at a time when the physical urge is strong - and as a means of keeping oneself from some sinful relationship - is perfectly legitimate so long as physical gratification is not the sole motive. He says that if one seeks only the sensual pleasure to be derived from the act, then he will in fact inevitably go from that which is permitted to that which is prohibited, (i.e., to an adulterous affair).<sup>231</sup>

Most interesting is the statement that even if a man has two legally-permitted wives, he must not have intercourse with one while thinking of the other.<sup>232</sup>

The following list of the four KAWWANOT placed before us by Abraham ben David yields a few additional notions of the rabbis. The first and most important thought during intercourse is, of course, performing the act for the sake of fulfilling the commandment of PIRYAH V'RIVYAH.<sup>233</sup> The second is to act in order to establish the foetus according to the talmudic statement relative to the strengthening of the embryo by intercourse during pregnancy.<sup>234</sup> The third is in order to satisfy the woman. Here we are told that a husband should initiate sex union upon noticing that his wife desires him - when she makes herself particularly attractive, etc. He should go to her both before and after a journey or other period of separation. This is in

accord with scripture, "her food, raiment and conjugal rights ( a man must supply)." (Ex. 21.10) These are a woman's needs and her pleasures.<sup>235</sup> The fourth and final KAWWANA is to cohabit as a precaution against the desire to have an illicit affair.<sup>236</sup>

### Chapter 3. Physical Considerations

#### A. Time of Intercourse and Frequency

Sexual relations during the daylight hours are prohibited according to all the rabbis, but some of them permit intercourse during the day to childless husbands; upon the condition, however, that the pair engage in the act in darkened rooms.<sup>237</sup> The part of the night most propitious for sex union is the middle or third watch,<sup>238</sup> while the most ideal night is that of the Sabbath. The latter recommendation is based upon the spiritual significance of the Day of Rest.<sup>239</sup>

Men are cautioned not to have intercourse too soon after leaving the privy<sup>240</sup> and the same applies to the period following the letting of blood for medical purposes.<sup>241</sup> Finally, it is suggested that in sex matters, as in all other matters, a path of temperance should be followed. Too frequent intercourse is proscribed,<sup>242</sup> but for a married man to practice excessive abstinence is also undesirable as we may see from R. Joshua b. Levi's saying, "He who knows that ~~it is~~ his wife is God-fearing and fails to have relations with her is called a sinner." He also said that a man is obligated to have intercourse just before he departs on a long journey.<sup>243</sup>

#### B. The Menstrual Period

One of the strongest taboos in both biblical and rabbinic literature is that relating to the menstruant woman. To the rabbis it was not only forbidden actually to have sexual contact either during the period itself<sup>244</sup> or the days immediately following it,<sup>245</sup> but the husband was expected to refrain from acting frivolously with his wife, from touching even her little

finger, from giving or receiving anything into or from her hand until such time as she had taken the ritual bath. While menstruating, the wife could perform her regular household tasks, but she was not permitted to make her husband's bed in his presence. She was allowed to fill his glass for him, but she had to give it to him on a chair or stool. She was advised not to adorn herself more than just enough to appear respectable. And the two of them could not lie side by side either with or without being dressed.<sup>246</sup>

The Cabbalists made even more ado about this matter. They said that at the conclusion of her menstrual period a woman must cut all her hair and nails that grew during her flux.<sup>247</sup>

Just how much meaning was attached to the restrictions of menstruation may be seen from the story of the woman whose husband had been wholly righteous. He studied diligently and raised up many disciples - and yet he died young. His wife went about asking one scholar after another how this could have been possible. She received no satisfactory answer until she met Abba Eliahu. Upon his query, she stated that her husband never came near her when she was menstruating. Then he asked, "Did he come near you during the days following your period (and before your trip to the MIKVEH?)" She replied, "He ate and drank with me; slept unclad with me, but it never entered his mind to do anything else." Thereupon, Abba Eliahu exclaimed, "Blessed is the All Present, Who slew him...for the Torah says, 'And you shall not come near a woman during her impurity.'" (Lev. 18.19)<sup>248</sup>

### C. Food and Drink

The rabbis tell us that one of the ways of sanctifying oneself for the most proper kind of sexual relations is by being careful to eat no



other than KOSHER foods, and these neither too warm nor too cold.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, a man should never over eat, particularly before engaging in the sex act,<sup>250</sup> and he should not have intercourse too soon after having partaken of food.<sup>251</sup> On another phase of this same subject, "R. Simeon b. Lakish said, 'It is forbidden for a man to use his bed (for sex relations) in years of famine, according to (scripture), 'And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine had come.'" (Gen. 41.50)<sup>252</sup> Elsewhere the Talmud adds, "If you see that dearth has come into the world, make your wife lonely."<sup>253</sup>

Excessive use of alcoholic beverages prior to sexual intercourse is prohibited.<sup>254</sup> Perhaps one of the reasons, in addition to those set forth in Appendix B below, is that few of the lofty ideals of directing thoughts on high during the act are possible when one or both of the partners are intoxicated.

#### D. Place

The most important matter relative to the place in which intercourse should be performed is that it not be done in the presence of others.<sup>255</sup> So intimate is this relationship that it should be entered into only in seclusion. We are told that a couple should refrain from the act even if only a scorpion is within view,<sup>256</sup> and some, who were exceedingly pious, even removed flies and gnats before sexual union.<sup>257</sup>

Cohabitation out of doors is also forbidden, but when a tent is set up in the field, it may be used for the purpose. In this connection, there is a story about a man who 'stretched out' his wife under a fig tree and he was given stripes (i.e., was flogged) by the sages."<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, the

rabbis caution that intercourse in the presence of a child - whether he is sleeping or awake - has deleterious effects on the child.<sup>259</sup> And finally, some rabbis do not permit the performance of the act by candle-light (i.e., any artificial light.)<sup>260</sup>

## Chapter 4. Techniques

### A. Position

There is only one physical attitude, according to the material presented by Al-Nakawa, which the sex partners may assume during their bodily union, namely the male lying upon the female. When the disciples of R. Joshua asked him why it was that during intercourse, this is the position used, he replied that a man looks down toward the earth from which he was formed, while a woman looks up toward the rib of man from whence she was fashioned.<sup>259</sup>

We are told specifically that the reversal of this attitude (i.e., the man lying beneath his wife) is definitely ~~contra-indicated~~ <sup>forbidden:</sup> <sup>260</sup>

Other positions proscribed by the rabbis are lying sideways,<sup>261</sup> sitting,<sup>262</sup> and standing.<sup>263</sup> In this connection, we are told further that the bed upon which the sex act is to take place should be facing North and South.<sup>264</sup> In short any variation from the normal attitude during actual coitus is not desirable.<sup>265</sup>

### B. Other Considerations of Technique

In analyzing the rabbinic ideas on the actual techniques to be utilized in the approach to and culmination of the sexual union, we discover that the rabbis possess not only remarkable insight into the human psyche, but demonstrate a marked sensitivity to the feelings of others. This will be seen in the thoughts reported below.

The first prerequisite to sex communion is a combination of love and harmony. The act is not only meaningless, but base and degrading if it is performed when the two hearts as well as the two bodies are not in

perfect accord.<sup>268</sup> That is why it is prohibited to the man who intends to divorce his wife.<sup>269</sup>

One of the beautiful things about the sexual relationship ~~is~~ is that it may, in the ideal marriage, become the spontaneous expression of that tender affection which a husband and wife should feel toward each other. This may well be the thought underlying the talmudic opinion that "he who willfully produces an erection deserves to be excommunicated."<sup>270</sup> In other words intercourse is not a mere machine-like function to be contemplated and planned in advance.

But it is conceivable that at times the desire for physical union is not as strong in one partner as in the other. It is upon these occasions that a certain amount of enticing must be used as a prelude to the act. It is not only permissible, but commendable as well, for a woman to entreat her husband to approach her.<sup>271</sup> Enticing on the part of the wife is not taken as bold effrontery. On the contrary it is deemed quite natural for women to initiate the love-making activities.<sup>272</sup> But the woman is not to entreat with words; rather she is to "entreat with her heart;" That is to say, "....(by making) herself attractive to him."<sup>273</sup>

Taking cognizance of the fact that a woman is not aroused to sexual desire as easily as her partner and recognizing further that she is ordinarily the more readily embarrassed, the husband is specifically cautioned to act with the utmost tenderness and modesty.<sup>274</sup> He is advised... "not to be too hasty in arousing desire in her, so that she will be relaxed."<sup>275</sup> He should try so to act as to make her thoughts coincide with his.<sup>276</sup>

Because "...a man is not permitted to have intercourse until he has (properly) prepared her (his spouse)"<sup>277</sup> and because his initial activities in this preparation are generally verbal, the rabbis offer some counsel on the nature of his conversation. They tell us that his words should be restricted to the act itself (i.e., to persuasion by flattery and thoughts of love) and that they should not deal with other matters - lest the sacred function itself become mundane.<sup>278</sup> Moreover, men should manifest humility and be soft-spoken in everything they do - intercourse being no different. Meaningless, frivolous or obscene conversation is highly undesirable and detracts from the lofty significance of the union.<sup>279</sup>

Nachmanides recommends this process; to begin the act with words that "draw her heart" and "set her mind at ease (i.e., cause her to relax) and make her joyful;" relating little things, like words of love and desire. And he adds that it is advisable to speak of God and the virtues of piety and modesty - as well as of pious and chaste women, who being worthy, brought forth pure and clean children.<sup>280</sup>

A Midrash relates that men are more easily aroused and relieved than women because earth (Adam's prime substance) becomes soft and pliable quickly; while bone (Eve's prime substance) may be immersed in water days on end without becoming soft.<sup>281</sup> The very fact that an attempt was made to explain this difference in the respective temperaments of man and woman shows us how perceptive our sages were. But we have further, more significant evidence of this in the repeated admonitions that a man should not force his wife to sexual communion against her will. We are told that the Divine Presence does not rest upon a forced union or one which has been pre-

ceded by a quarrel over sexual matters.<sup>282</sup> "R. Assi said, 'A man is prohibited from forcing his wife (to the sex act), even for the sake of fulfilling the commandment, as it is said: And he who presses with his legs, is a sinner.'" (Pr. 19.2)<sup>283</sup> Elsewhere in the Talmud we are told that "just as a lion tramples and eats and is unashamed, so the ignorant person, strikes and has intercourse and is not ashamed."<sup>284</sup>

Both Abraham ben David and Nachmanides, in emphasizing the consideration due a woman, mention that it is altogether improper and undesirable for a husband to approach his wife sexually while she is sleeping.<sup>285</sup> The latter, however, suggests that if the husband exercises restraint and arouses his wife gently by speaking softly to her, he may gradually cause her desire to be united with his.<sup>286</sup>

A minority of the rabbis deem it improper for the couple to kiss during sexual contact. They suggest also that a husband should certainly not kiss, or "talk" in a playful way to, his wife's pudenda.<sup>287</sup> But the majority do not accept these opinions, holding rather that a man may act with his wife in any way he pleases, kissing her wherever he wishes to - the only requirement being that she be clean at the time.<sup>288</sup>

We are given the following additional thoughts relative to intercourse; the upper parts of the bodies of both husband and wife should be covered during the act;<sup>289</sup> under certain conditions cohabitation may be performed twice in succession;<sup>290</sup> and it may be engaged in during pregnancy.<sup>291</sup>

And finally, as an indirect bit of advice to the new bridegroom, we are told that one of the five sounds that reverberate from one end of the

earth to the other without being heard is at "the time when a virgin begins her sexual relations with her husband."<sup>292</sup> Realizing the momentousness of the occasion, the groom, it is hoped (by implication), will attend to all of the rabbinic regulations and enter the bridal chamber with humility, gentleness and tenderness.

## Chapter 5, Birth Control

As has been indicated in PART II, Chapter 3 and elsewhere above, one of the prime obligations of the husband is to continually engage in the fulfillment of the commandment PIRYAHV'RIVYAH and that such practices as masturbation or perversion are considered *נפילת זרע* (spilling seed in vain) - which is strictly forbidden. In fact R. Assi said, "He who causes the ejaculation of semen in vain is as though he had worshipped idols."<sup>293</sup>

This attitude, if it were the sole basis for our decision, would lead us to the conclusion that the rabbis do not permit sexual relations in which it is utterly impossible for conception to take place. We would feel all the more impelled to believe that birth control is a severe infringement of the religious law, if we were to read next the statement from Al-Nakawa to the effect that "he who has intercourse and emits 'outside' - even with his wife - deserves to die," which is based upon a Midrashic interpretation of Gen. 38.10 telling of Onan and his relations with Tamar.<sup>294</sup> At least we would have to admit that coitus abruptus was not an acceptable practice.

We note, however, that the rabbis do not consider it "wasting seed" to have normal intercourse with a girl under nine years of age, a pregnant woman, a nursing woman or a woman (too) old (to bear children).<sup>295</sup> With the exception of one case (i.e., the nursing woman), these are women who are unlikely to conceive. In other words, the rabbis permit sex relations with one's wife under circumstances which make conception unlikely! This is an admission of the validity of the principle underlying birth control.

But we have a more direct statement; one which sheds more light upon the specific subject. "Three classes of women may insert a re-



resorbent (into the vagina): a child (under nine years) a nursing mother, or a pregnant woman."<sup>296</sup> That this resorbent is to be used as a means of preventing fertilization may be seen from what follows, namely, that if pregnancy ensues in these cases the child may die, the nursing mother may be forced to wean her child before the normal two year period is over and the pregnant woman may abort.<sup>297</sup> In short, birth control is not contrary to rabbinic thought.<sup>298</sup>

We should remember, however, that coitus abruptus, mentioned above, as well as other practices which do not result in the discharge of the seminal fluid directly into the vaginal passage, are rigidly prohibited.

## PART IV. REARING CHILDREN

### Chapter 1. Parental Responsibilities

Unlike most other members of the Animal Kingdom, man is completely dependent for his very existence upon the care shown him in his early years. He comes into the world as a helpless infant, possessing manifold needs, which he is not able to fulfill by himself. When proper attention is not forthcoming from those around him as he lies in his crib, he perishes. Long after he has acquired the use of his limbs for walking and of his tongue and mouth for conversing, he is still unable to provide his own necessities. He needs love and devotion; he needs guidance and help throughout his childhood.

In pursuing the rabbinic attitude toward the rearing of children, it is well that we bear this in mind, for the rabbis believe it no easy task to rear a child well.<sup>299</sup> Al-Nakawa quotes the Midrash, "It is less difficult for a man to grow large quantities of olives in Galilee than to rear one child in Palestine." He then explains that olives do not grow readily in Galilee because of the cold weather and that the climatic conditions in Palestine are conducive to a child's health. And he interprets the Midrash to mean that there is much trouble involved in bringing up a youngster.<sup>300</sup>

But there is a great difference between recognizing the hardship involved in the performance of a task and encouraging laxity in it. Although the rabbis are well aware of how much toil - and perhaps also, heartache - is often involved in rearing a child, they never for an instant excuse the failure to do so properly. Each parent has solemn obligations in the care, growth and development of the child. A home falls short of its purpose when these obligations are not met adequately.

#### A. The Mother

Most of the problems of early child care rest upon the shoulders of the mother. It is she who gives birth and it is with her that the youngster spends most of his time. The Midrash takes cognizance of this fact when it comments on the verse, "Unto the woman He (God) said, 'I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children,'" (Gen. 3.16) for it applies each of the Hebrew words in the verse to the various stages in the conception and development of the embryo, in the birth itself and in the rearing of children, showing that each of these stages involve parental hardship.<sup>301</sup> In PART II, Chapter 2, we have seen how pronounced an effect the rabbis believed the mother to have upon her children. Another Midrashic proof of this is based upon the story of the pious couple who were divorced because they had no children. Each then married an evil partner. The pious woman made the evil man good; the evil woman made the pious man evil. The Midrash concludes from this that everything depends upon the woman and that a son always derives his characteristics from his mother.<sup>302</sup> This is the reason why the rabbis hold the mother primarily responsible for the deeds of her child. They tell us that "when a man acts contrary to the Law, he curses his mother, for she is the transmitter of his traits of character, as it is said, 'Thou son of perverse rebellion, do I not know that Thou has chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness.' (1 Sam. 20.30) All the sins a man commits are dependent upon his mother."<sup>303</sup> On the other hand, a mother deserves the greater share of the credit, if the child leads an honorable life.<sup>304</sup>

Of such great significance did the rabbis deem the mother's role in the rearing of children that they believed it possible to tell what type of woman the mother was, by observing only the actions of the son.<sup>305</sup>

In addition to guiding the youngster and looking after him generally during his first years, the mother was expected to nurse her own babe, rather than turn him over to a wet nurse, because the milk of a wet nurse was considered harmful to the infant.<sup>306</sup>

### B. The Father

Some of the obligations incumbent upon the father have been presented in PART IIIA, Chapter 1. These concern his duties as provider of the necessities of his household in general. With regard to the specific responsibilities toward his children, we learn that a father must: (1) have his sons circumcized, (2) redeem him if he is the first born (PIDYON HA-BEN), (3) teach him Torah, (4) see to it that he marries, (5) teach him a trade, and (6) (some add) teach him to swim.<sup>307</sup> The fourth obligation above applies equally to son and daughter. A father must find mates for all his children as soon as they are of the proper age (near puberty).<sup>308</sup> Moreover, he must be certain that the intended spouses of his children are of the right type.<sup>309</sup>

We find repeated admonitions that the father do his best to cause his children to "walk in proper paths." Some of the means of achieving this end are discussed below in the chapters on education. Suffice it to recall here that the paternal blessing is highly regarded by the rabbis. They believe a father should bless his children because it is efficacious (and probably also, by implication, because it helps teach the children to be religious.)<sup>310</sup>

## Chapter 2. The Importance of Education

Because rearing good and righteous children is looked upon as one of the main means of becoming holy and of sanctifying God's name,<sup>311</sup> the rabbis attach the utmost significance to the particular parental duty to teach. So much so that they say it is better that a man die or become blind than that he bring up an evil son.<sup>312</sup> We have noted in PART I how a son's actions may reflect for good or bad upon his parents. Upon such a sentiment is based the dictum, "Happy is the man whose parents see him engaged in a respectable occupation; woe to the man whose parents see him engaged in a disreputable occupation."<sup>313</sup> The Talmud also reports by means of a parable that the greatest blessing that can rest upon a righteous man is that his children be righteous like him.<sup>314</sup>

Living a godly life meant to the rabbis subduing the evil inclination, which they believed present in everyone. Human beings do not grow into the pursuit of paths of goodness naturally and without guidance. They must be taught what is right and what is wrong. Education, from the moment a child begins to comprehend the world around him, is, therefore, of first significance. To impress the gravity of the responsibility to educate a youngster in the Laws of God, our author tells us that "everyone who tries to teach his son Torah, wisdom and knowledge inherits this world and the world to come." The basis in scripture for "this world" is "He that begets a fool does it to his sorrow; and the father of a churl has no joy," (Pr. 17.21) which is interpreted, "He who has a foolish son, who does not learn Torah all his....days are (filled with) pain and worry in this world..." And using the verse, "My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart will be glad..." (Pr. 23.15) he

says that when a man goes to the synagogue or to the house of study with his son and sees the young man's wisdom, he rejoices.<sup>315</sup>

As important as it is to fulfill the commandment to have children, bringing children into the world is not as noteworthy as edifying them spiritually.<sup>316</sup> Those who train their children well are compared to Abraham of whom it is said, "For I (God) have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him that they keep the way of the Lord, etc." (Gen.18.19)<sup>317</sup> "R. Joshua b. Levi said, 'Everyone who teaches his son Torah, Scripture accounts it to him as though he had himself received it from Mt. Sinai...(because the commandment to teach Deut. 4.9 is followed by the words): the day that thou stood before the Lord, thy God, etc.'" (Deut.4.10)<sup>318</sup> We read also of two rabbis, one of whom, R. Hiyya bar Abba, would not eat anything (in the morning) until he had taken a child to the synagogue; while the other, R. Huna, would not eat until he had taught a child something new.<sup>319</sup>

To train a child is a commandment so difficult and so serious that we are specifically cautioned that a man is not to become lax in its fulfillment even if the task becomes exceedingly troublesome.<sup>320</sup> Nevertheless, a man is bound to teach himself first, but one rabbi has it that "if... (the) son is more eager...(to learn), his son takes precedence in learning."<sup>321</sup>

The rabbis believed that progress was not possible unless the rising generation was well informed. Thus we read, "The world is established only by the breath that emanates from the mouths of children at school."<sup>322</sup> Children's study was viewed as but one more way in which the Holy One could be exalted.<sup>323</sup> We are told further that "Jerusalem was destroyed only because the children did not attend school....and loitered in the streets,"<sup>324</sup>

and that children's study should not be interrupted even for the building of the Temple.<sup>325</sup>

Granted that all children are not equally capable of learning, still the attempt to teach every child should be made, for "even though they (youngsters) skip a sentence (while reading Torah) because they do not know how to read (it), the Holy One, Blessed be He, loves them."<sup>326</sup> And the fate of the unguided child is an evil life which may well end in his execution as a criminal.<sup>327</sup>

### Chapter 3. What the Child Should Be Taught

#### A. Torah

MENORAT HA-MAOR gives us a fine over-all picture of the type of training every child should be given. As we have seen, the main objective in education is to prepare the youth for life. This to the rabbis means that by the time he is ready to strike out on his own, a young person should have learned the essential requirements of his faith. Possessing such knowledge, it is assumed that he will follow both the ritual and ethical precepts of Judaism. In addition, he will have attained that peace of mind and overpowering sense of security which "knowing God" implies - so that he will be able to face courageously and steadfastly any of life's sorrows and to accept gratefully its joys.

That imparting an understanding of Torah is a basic requirement in education maybe seen from the frequent references to it. We are told that one of the sources for the parental obligation to instruct a child in Torah is "And you shall teach them (God's words) to your children..." (Deut. 11.19)<sup>328</sup> Those who fail to bring up their offspring in the study of Torah are among those "excommunicated" by God.<sup>329</sup> And recognizing that in a materialistic environment, it is often difficult to refrain from instilling in a growing child the desire for material wealth, we are pointedly informed that "a man should always try to teach his son Torah, wisdom and knowledge and not to hasten after (material) wealth, for there is no wealth in the world comparable to the wealth of Torah, as it is said, 'It is more precious than pearls, etc.' (Pr.3.15) And if the son learns Torah while he is young, he will eventually possess riches."<sup>330</sup> So strong was the need for this type of instruction that the Talmud tells us that it is prohibited for anyone to show mercy to one not possessed of knowledge,



or to give him even a morsel of food - and such a person will experience exile.<sup>331</sup>

More specifically, it rests with the parent to bring his offspring up to be trustworthy. This is obvious from the Midrashic comment on "...thy children like olive plants..." (Ps. 128.3) to the effect that just as olive wood cannot take grafting from another type of tree, so "your children should have no blemish, nor welsh on a pledge."<sup>332</sup>

Naturally the extent of the instruction depends in some measure upon the child's capacities. Therefore, it is suggested that as a minimum, at least some Torah and the liturgy should be taught.<sup>333</sup>

#### B. Vocation

"He who does not teach his son a vocation, teaches him thievery."<sup>334</sup>  
With these words R. Judah expresses the necessity of giving one's son the security of a useful occupation and tells us that since a man must live, if he has no means of earning a livelihood, he is subjected to the temptation to plunder and rob. Upon a similar attitude is based the following interpretation of the verse, "Behold life with the wife whom thou lovest..." (Eccl. 9.9) The word, "wife" is not to be taken literally. It is used, rather, we are told, to show that just as one is obligated to see to it that his son marries, so he is obligated to teach him a vocation. By the same token, a man is bound to give such vocational guidance just as he is bound to teach his son Torah.<sup>335</sup>

Just what kind of occupation for which a man should prepare his son is of no consequence to the rabbis, for they believe that there are rich and poor in every calling; that wealth and poverty are the results of relative

merit and not of the nature of the vocation. Thus both R. Meier and Bar Kappara say, "Let a man always have his son taught a respectable and easy handicraft..."<sup>336</sup> - letting us know that the only thing that matters is that the trade or profession be a respectable one.

Some of the rabbis, however, categorize certain trades and compare them with others. For example, R. Judah believes that needlework (embroidery) is the ideal respectable and easy handicraft and we are apprised that while both druggists and tanners are necessary in the performance of the world's work, the druggist's profession is more desirable than the tanner's.<sup>337</sup> The Talmud suggests further that a man not teach his son to become an ass-driver, a camel-driver, a sailor, a shepherd or a tavern-keeper, "because their trade is a trade of robbers."<sup>338</sup>

R. Nehorai does not like the general emphasis of his colleagues upon material pursuits and exclaims that he will teach his son only Torah, because a man enjoys its reward or interest in this world and gains the principle of it in the world to come. He adds that all ordinary occupations are of value only in youth, while a man still possesses bodily vigor, but are meaningless when he is old and sick and ailing. Torah, however, will never forsake him.<sup>339</sup>

Besides offering a solid groundwork in Torah and in vocational training, the rabbis tell us that a man should teach his son to swim, because swimming may enable him to save his life sometime.<sup>340</sup>

## Chapter 4. Techniques in Teaching

### A. Affection

The inherent need of all human beings for love and affection in their early years is recognized by the rabbis. Al-Nakawa tells us that love for one's children should be like love for oneself.<sup>341</sup> Our sages believe that overt display of this emotion in the form of kissing and embracing is necessary, but only when the child is very young. They specify that a woman may kiss her son until he reaches his twelfth year and a man, his daughter until she is nine.<sup>342</sup> By acknowledging the need for tenderness, the rabbis fulfill one of the first requirements of educational psychology, for no child possesses the desire to follow the precepts of one who has cast him aside. If parents are to teach well, they must establish a mutual relationship of admiration between themselves and their children.

But there is such a thing as showing too much affection. Parents are warned to retain a certain amount of their love for their offspring within the inner recesses of their hearts. Overbearing love usually leads to excessive dependence upon the parent and makes impossible the full maturity which self-reliance produces. With this in mind, Al-Nakawa advises that parental love be somewhat subdued so that the child will not experience excessive longing - (if he should be separated from his parents).<sup>343</sup>

Because jealousy and rivalry can often prove a block to the learning process in childhood, our author tells us that all children should be treated equally in all matters: in food, clothing, gifts and inheritance. He even relates that one man who transferred his inheritance from one son to another was excommunicated by the sages.<sup>344</sup>

### B. Teaching By Example

The effects of background and environment upon the psychological make-up of men and women were given considerable attention by our sages. We have seen in PART II, Chapter 2 what large significance was attached to this aspect of life in the selecting of a mate. And relative to the methods of educating children along the proper paths, those things which a child sees about him during his formative years were also deemed of great importance.

We have already noted the possible consequences of having sex relations within the sight or hearing of a youngster.<sup>345</sup> It is evident that the type of conduct a child observes in his elders plays no small role in the molding of his own character. This is the reasoning underlying such comments<sup>as</sup> the following. "...Thy children like olive plants..." (Ps. 128.3) which the Midrash interprets to mean that just as the olive tree does not drop its leaves, so the God-fearing man's children will not cause him grief.<sup>346</sup> Stated more concisely, the most effective teaching technique is instruction through example.

Thus, our author proposes that whenever a man arises to go to the synagogue, he should take his child with him; likewise when he goes out to distribute charity and in the performing of all the MITZVOT. What is more, the parent should not leave the fulfilling of commandments to another. He should do them himself, so that these practices will become dear and respectable in the eyes of the youngster.<sup>347</sup> A father should not forget to use only fitting language; his words should be carefully chosen. "How much the more so should he not act indecently." For the son may follow his bad example and later, if the father tries to correct the son, the lad will be in a position

to say, "But didn't you do such and such?" This point, the Talmud illustrates with a comment on the verse, "Gather yourself together; yea, gather.."

לעצמך לעצמך (Zeph. 2.1) We are told to read these words as though they are from the root *Ge* (to correct) and to interpret, first correct yourself, then correct others.<sup>348</sup> Furthermore a man should try to refrain from becoming jealous, hateful or enraged against any of his fellows. Nor should he curse another in the presence of his son. For seeing these things, a son may feel compelled to defend his father's honor and be led to sin against a fellow human being. Al-Nakawa, therefore, advises that if a man become angry with another, he should do his utmost to conceal his ire from his son.<sup>349</sup>

The suggestions presented above apply equally to the mother. More specifically, a woman is warned not to curse her husband's children in his presence and she is assured that if she lives in purity and righteousness, her children will live in the same fashion.<sup>351</sup>

### C. Corporal Punishment

The opening acrostic poem to Al-Nakawa's chapter on rearing children strikes the keynote of one widely held rabbinic view on corporal punishment, for the poem advises that "the rod of correction" should not be spared.<sup>352</sup> Indeed this seems to be the most popular view among the rabbis - although there is another opinion as we shall see here and in Section D of this chapter.

Physical punishment is necessary according to a Midrash which uses the verse, "Chasten thy son for there is hope..." (Pr. 19.18) as an im-

plication that if he is not "properly" trained he may grow evil and be put to death by a BETH DIN.<sup>353</sup> Other Midrashic sources present similar ideas.<sup>354</sup>

Furthermore, the Midrash takes literally the scriptural verse, "He who withholds his rod, hates his son; but he who loves him chastens him earnestly." (Pr 13.24) It explains that if one fails to punish his child when the lad is young, he will eventually come to despise him. Later in life the lad will engage in evil doing, will disgrace his father and his father will be compelled to dislike him. As proof of this the Midrash cites these examples: Abraham liked Ishmael and failed to chasten him. Later Ishmael engaged in idolatry and was sent away. (Gen. 21.9-11). Isaac loved Esau because he provided him with venison. He was not strict enough with the lad and later the son became evil, despising his birthright, wishing his father dead, and seeking to slay his brother, etc. (Gen. 25.28; 28.9) So his father hated him. A similar case was David and Absalom. (I Ki. 1.6)<sup>355</sup>

A father is actually imitating God when he whips his youngster, for God chastises all whom He really loves. To demonstrate this our author reminds us of the Midrash which relates that Torah, Palestine and the world to come were given Israel only through "chastisements of love."<sup>356</sup> On the other hand, a son who is adequately punished comes to love his father all the more. To prove this the following examples are cited: Abraham took Isaac to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him when he was thirty-seven years old. Later Isaac displayed great love for Abraham and took after him in good deeds, etc. (Gen. 24.1; 25.5, 19; 26.5) Isaac chastised Jacob earnestly and forced him to study Torah. Jacob thereupon loved his father because he inherited the land of his fathers. (Gen. 25.27; 37.1) Jacob chastised all twelve of his

of his sons and taught them proper ways. They took after their father and loved him. (Based upon Ex. 1.1)<sup>357</sup>

When a father is engaged in whipping his son, he should not listen to the lad's cries and weeping. Nor should he take pity upon him.<sup>358</sup> But our author makes a significant remark. He says, "...a father should not punish or chastise his son more than is sufficient. Rather he should speak pleasantly with him and refrain from cursing him...for the son is apt to sin against him (the father)...and concerning this it is said, 'Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind.'" (Lev. 19.14)<sup>359</sup> It would seem from this statement that Al-Nakawa disagrees somewhat with the foregoing. And, indeed, in the next section we shall see other techniques for educating children which indicate that perhaps there are, to the rabbis, equally effective means of teaching youngsters.

#### D. Other Techniques.

In order for the educational process to have the most lasting effects and to be the most complete, it must be started early in the child's life, at that period of development when the child's mind is most pliable.<sup>360</sup> In support of this idea we find a number of parables, such as: "...one who learns Torah when he is young is like warm dough being kneaded; ...one who learns in his childhood is like a surgeon who has a knife with which to operate and medicine with which to heal, but he who learns in his old age is like a surgeon who has a scalpel for operating and no medicine." When one learns while young, the words of the Torah are absorbed by his blood and interpretations proceed

from his mouth, but for the old learner neither happens. Learning while young is like eating ripe grapes and drinking old wine, whereas learning while old is like eating sour grapes and drinking new wine.<sup>361</sup> The ideal age for the beginning of formal schooling is between six and seven years as older children are considered to be less controllable.<sup>362</sup>

Expounding the verse, "Train a child in the way that he should go and even when he is old, he will not turn aside from it," (Pr. 22.6) Al-Nakawa reports that a child's innate nature is merely to sit idly and pursue his own desires and not study or pray. This trait of idleness, he continues, the lad will carry throughout his life if he is not trained otherwise. Therefore, scripture is informing us that if a child is well educated, he will acquire good habits and never forsake them.<sup>363</sup> Another comment upon, "...thy children like olive plants..." (Ps. 128.3) puts it in a different way. It reads, "Just as olives at first are bitter, but after they are picked, ground and worked, they become very sweet and give oil for the honor of God and man; so children are bitter at first, as it is said, 'For the imagination of the heart of man is evil from his youth,' (Gen. 8.21) and out of great trouble they (children) learn the Torah and MITZVOT, which are sweet."<sup>364</sup>

In view of the necessity of overcoming the original inertia to shiftlessness in children, the early training should be both steady and gradual. A youngster should be taught only what he can readily absorb according to his age. As proof our author offers the Mishna, "at fives years to read (Torah), at ten years, advanced work (Mishna), etc." and the talmudic passage, "Until he is six do not teach him, but from then on, teach and add to him like an ox." Al-Nakawa does not take the latter quotation literally, but explains



that when the child is little he should be expected to learn only little. After his sixth year, he may receive more - so that in successive stages knowledge will be built up within his growing mind. This is similar to the method of breaking oxen to the plow. The first day oxen are walked over the field; the next, they are yoked; etc. until they have finally learned their work. The important thing is that the child learn something new every day - but it should be only as much as his undeveloped mind and body can achieve.<sup>365</sup>

It would be interesting were we to compare some of the so-called modern religious educational techniques and suggested curricula with that presented by Al-Nakawa as part of the rabbinic conception of child-training. We may be certain that whether the suggestions of Al-Nakawa are accepted in "higher pedagogical circles" or not, they are still being followed by large numbers of people. Here are the most efficacious steps as our author sees them: (1) When the youngster begins to speak, teach him, "Moses commanded us the Torah, etc." (Deut. 33.4) plus the first line of the SHEMA. (2) When he is a little older teach him to memorize a few verses of Torah. (3) At three years, begin teaching him the letters of the alphabet. (4) A little later hire him a teacher and purchase books for him. (5) In order to make him more diligent, give him goodies and speak to him in a manner pleasing to him, as "Here, this is for you because you go to school and learn." (6) When he is too old to appreciate this, his father should tell him that if he goes to school, he will bring him nice clothing or a new pair of shoes. (7) When still older, his father should offer him money if he learns the grace after meals and other prayers - and he should buy him TSITSITH and TERPHILIN to help him in the performance of the commandments. (8) Later his

father should inspire him to earn the title, TALMID HAHAM (worthy student). And as he progresses he should be inspired to become RAB, HAHAM, DAYAN and AB BETH DIN. (9) This process should continue until he has really acquired Torah and busies himself in study LISEMA (for its own sake).<sup>366</sup> We should note here that the above outline of procedure nowhere calls for corporal punishment in any form! This is to be contrasted with some of the ideas presented in the preceding section.

Additional suggestions on teaching include such notes as that a father should be extremely vociferous in condemning actions of evil persons and in praising the good deeds of others - in order to impress his offspring not to do the evil and to strive after the good.<sup>367</sup> A parent should also refrain from giving instruction to any of his children in the presence of brothers. Doing so may lead to jealousy on the part of the observers and make it more difficult to instruct them when it is their turn.<sup>368</sup> And regardless of how dull a youngster may appear to be, an attempt should be made to teach him at least something.<sup>369</sup>

## Chapter 5. The Role of the Community

### A. The Responsibility

Prior to the time of ~~the~~ Joshua b. Gamla, a boy who had no father had no opportunity to learn Torah, for even when there were teachers in Jerusalem, a boy who had a father would be brought there to study, whereas one who was orphaned would not be brought. It is because ~~the~~ Joshua b. Gamla ordered that teachers should be publicly appointed in every city and province that he should be well remembered.<sup>370</sup> With this information the Talmud explains the importance of schools and enunciates a principle which has remained a vital part of Jewish life from talmudic times to our own; that one of the prime obligations of the community is to share with parents in providing educational facilities. Such a concept is certainly not strange to a people which has through the centuries prized learning so highly!

Indeed, without an informed youth, the very future of the entire community as a religious group is in jeopardy. Thus R. Simeon b. Lakish tells us that every city that does not have children learning from a teacher is destined for destruction.<sup>371</sup> While he may have meant us to take this idea literally, we cannot help sensing the broader truth it conveys. It is upon the basis of comparable reasoning that we are told that funds for teachers' salaries are to be raised in the general community.<sup>372</sup>

### B. School Management.

Certain standards and general rules are set forth by the rabbis for what they believe to be the most efficient mode of conducting a school. They tell us that teachers should be married men<sup>373</sup> and that women should not

be allowed to serve in this capacity.<sup>374</sup>

We are told also that if the children have become accustomed to one teacher, they should be permitted to continue working with him even if the community has found a more proficient instructor.<sup>375</sup> Being fully aware that as a class grows larger, the efficiency of the teacher diminishes, our author advises that "if there are many youngsters, they (the community) should hire enough teachers to teach them well." Specifically, this means that there should be at least one instructor for every twenty-five children.<sup>376</sup> The Talmud suggests the following: one teacher for every twenty-five pupils; two, for fifty; and one teacher and an assistant for forty.<sup>377</sup>

Vacations from school are to be given on the afternoons of Fridays and the days preceding holidays as well as all day on Sabbaths, Festivals and Tisha B'ab. At all other times, instructions should begin early in the morning and continue into part of the evening to establish the verse, "And thou shalt meditate upon it (Torah) day and night." (Josh.1.8)<sup>378</sup>

### C. Teaching as a Profession

Our rabbis esteemed highly the honored profession of teaching. MENORAT HA-MAOR includes several rabbinic quotations which serve to show how teaching a child was considered tantamount to being his father or mother. For example, R. Simeon b. Lakish is reported as having said, "Everyone who teaches another's son is as though he had (actually) begotten him, as it is said, 'And the souls they made in Haran,' (Gen. 12.5) which is translated in Targum Onkelos as 'the souls to whom they taught Torah in Haran.'<sup>379</sup> And elsewhere, R. Joshua b. Karha said, "It is written, 'And the five sons of Michal,'

(2 Sam. 21.8) And did Michal really give birth to them? Was it not Merab? (See 1 Sam. 14.49, etc) Rather Merab gave birth and Michael reared them, therefore they (the children) were called by her (Michal's) name -to teach you that one who rears an orphan...is considered as though he had begotten him."<sup>380</sup>

Helping another's child to learn makes one worthy of acceptance in the Academy on High.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, the Talmud applies the verse, "And they that turn the many to righteousness (are) as the stars for ever and ever," (Dan. 12.3) to those who undertake to teach children.<sup>382</sup> We are told also that for the sake of one who teaches the son of an ignorant man, even a decree of God is annulled.<sup>383</sup> A notion which approaches this is to be observed in the story of Rab, who decreed a fast in a town in order to bring rain. Despite fasting, rain did not fall. When the Reader of the congregation prayed, however, the wind began to blow and rain descended. It was later discovered that this Reader was a teacher of children and that he taught them whether they could pay for instruction or not. He also used to "bribe" the youngsters with fish as an incentive to study.<sup>384</sup> Such a man is indeed worthy that the Holy One should heed his prayer.

### Conclusions.

Although Al-Nakawa does not place before us every rabbinic utterance on our subject and although he uses very little of the legal material relative to it, nevertheless we are, on the basis of MENORAT HA-MAOR, enabled to perceive quite vividly the rabbis' conception of the family life.

In the foregoing we have more or less traced the relationship of the individual to the rest of the members of his household from the moment of his first conscious activity as a responsible social being. We have seen what the rabbis had to say about the child's attitude and action toward his parents; his preparation for marriage; his conduct in that relationship; and his duties toward his own children and those of others. Our survey leads us to certain conclusions, which we now consider.

To the rabbis, religion divorced from life is no religion at all. Belief is important; but belief alone is not enough. God created the world and its manifold creatures, placing man at the summit so that men could work as His partner in building and improving. It is essential that men bear this in mind as they walk the road of life. Everything that they do should be an attempt to translate the impelling mandate of the divine into every day living; to look upon their minds and their bodies as instruments of God's will. These are the basic premises upon which the rabbinic conception of the family depends.

Among all human institutions none is of greater religious significance than the home. The family is the compact unit in which the first elements of ritual and ethical purity may be expressed. Indeed, every essential concept of Judaism is rooted in the family life. It is, as it were, a miniature world - a proving ground for the development of lofty social standards.

But it is more than that. It is a safeguard against immorality of every kind and it is, in a manner of speaking, a sanctuary.

All life emanates from God. When two people have joined together in holy and pure union, assuming their active role as co-workers with the Holy One in the creation of a new personality - when they have done their best to instill within that new personality the finest ideals they are capable of transmitting, it is only right that they be esteemed and honored. For such as these, who help assure a finer future for mankind, there should be only joy and happiness in their later years. The rising generation owes the passing one - the one that is responsible for its existence spiritually as well as physically - a debt of gratitude. This debt may be paid by returning love for love and help for help.

Filial loyalty, however, cannot take precedence over other obligations. The past is to be revered; not lived in. The future also is to be contemplated. Were it not for marriage - monogamous marriage, it is quite obvious - - the home would be impossible. Marriage as a divine ordinance was intended to promote man's happiness and well-being, to elevate his standards of morality and to insure the continuation of the race. Because it is divine in origin, it is incumbent upon all. Because it is the fulfillment of the divine will, it is sacred and inviolate. Because its functions are so all-embracing and so permanent, men are enjoined to consider well the choice of mate and once the choice has been made, to dedicate themselves completely to their partners. Each partner is to have equal status and is expected in living with the other to demonstrate only the most noble and gentle traits in all aspects of marital life. That union which is

most fully permeated by love and harmony is the most blessed.

In marriage both man and woman are to complement each other and to draw out the best that lies dormant within each. They are to share equally the burdens of life as well as its joys.

And when the home has been gladdened with a child, the parents are to look upon their offspring as a gift from God, a sacred trust. Working together in rearing him, they may, if they act out of devotion, bring their child up as a worthy reflection of themselves.

This is the rabbinic conception of the family life. Though the centuries since it first began to evolve are many and though some of what Al-Nakawa has reported to us may have become outmoded, the rabbis, for the most part, have enunciated truths that will last forever. If ours and succeeding generations capture even a small portion of the spirit of our sages and live our lives in accord with it, then not only will our forebears not have lived and labored in vain, but our own lot will have been incalculably enriched.



APPENDICES: FOLKLORISTIC BELIEFS

APPENDIX A: On How Parents May "Mark" Their Children Before Birth.

There are numerous references in MENORAT HA-MAOR, which in trying to convince couples that they should act in a certain manner before and during intercourse, present ideas totally folkloristic in nature. All of these superstitious beliefs deal with the possible effects of parents' actions upon their unborn children. We have no reason to doubt that the rabbis who uttered such notions actually believed them. This, however, does not detract from the general loftiness of their thinking, for they were children of their times and with little of what we know as Science at their disposal, it was quite natural that they should have been heir to some superstitions. It should only surprise us that the rabbis had, relatively speaking, so few.

Al-Nakawa tells us, "The children a man begets in his youth, while his strength is full, will be strong and sturdy." This notion is, he says, proved by scripture, "Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youths." (Ps. 127.4)<sup>385</sup>

The thoughts of man and woman during their sexual union have a profound effect upon the child who results from the union. Nachmanides informs us that the couple should purify their meditations at that time and not think of lewd transgressions. He holds that it is a divine law that when a man's imagination is set upon "matters of wisdom, understanding and good and worthy deeds, such thinking...has the power to fashion the form of the drop of semen."<sup>386</sup> Furthermore, when thoughts are directed on high, a "brilliant light" emanates from above and rests upon the drop (of semen), thus consecrating it to its divine task.<sup>387</sup> Although modern science would not bear this out completely, there is still much wisdom in such an attitude. We dare not under-

estimate the real meaning underlying the profound thought that man has the power of elevating himself in the performance of consecrated service to God.

Much more primitive in character is the belief derived from a literal interpretation of the story of Jacob's setting up the poplar rods and the effect of his doing so upon the coloring of the offspring of Laban's flocks. (Gen. 30.37,39) R. Jochanan was certain that if women beheld him upon leaving the MIKVEH, they would be assured of having righteous offspring like himself. These stories lead Nachmanides to conclude that "the offspring is according to the imagining that a woman has." He continues, "The thought (or mental image) is of considerable consequence to the form of the offspring and its attributes" and he concludes that not only the physical appearance will be thus affected, but the spiritual qualities as well.<sup>388</sup> Realizing that many of his readers may find such a concept astonishing and difficult to accept, Nachmanides offers further proof from the Midrash. He repeats an old tale about a white couple who had a colored son. They were told by a sage that the black figures (presumably pictures or images of negroes), which decorated the marital chamber, were the objects of their thought during intercourse - thus the consequence.<sup>389</sup>

It was believed that a child's sex could be pre-determined by several factors. Males would be born to couples having intercourse twice in immediate succession;<sup>390</sup> to parents at whose sexual contact, the woman was first to experience orgasm;<sup>391</sup> and to those who placed their beds in North and South positions.<sup>392</sup> Nachmanides, however, says that the instruction to place the bed North and South is in reality a Q/0, by which we are being informed that the sex partners should not be too warm or too cold, for "from a drop (of semen) that is cold an idiot and fool is usually born, whereas from a drop that

is too warm an irate, hot-headed child is produced. But he that is conceived from a moderately temperatured drop will be wise and understanding."<sup>393</sup>

There was also a belief that the time of the parents' sex contact exerts an influence upon the character of their baby. If the child is conceived on a Sabbath night, it will be righteous, healthy and wise.<sup>394</sup> The bodily turmoil produced by the digestive process may upset the seminal fluid and if intercourse is had too soon after eating, the infant conceived from the union will be sickly.<sup>395</sup> Too frequent sex relations may produce a weak child.<sup>396</sup> Intercourse by candlelight will result in blemished offspring;<sup>397</sup> immediately after leaving the privy, epileptic children;<sup>398</sup> after blood-letting and before taking of food, youngsters with diseased, scaly skins.<sup>399</sup>

Concerning the type of food one eats, the rabbis held that foods determine the nature of the blood, which in turn produces the "seed" and the "seed" is "the foundation of the child." Therefore, if the parent's food is not pure and KOSHER, the child begotten by him will be unclean; "...the food determines whether the offspring will be wise or foolish, righteous or wicked."<sup>400</sup> But proper food alone is not sufficient to insure the proper kind of children; the prospective parent must also eat only moderate quantities of food in order to have the kind of blood which will have beneficent effects upon the offspring.<sup>401</sup>

Obscene conversation during the sex act will result in "afflicted" children<sup>402</sup> and forcing a wife to act against her wishes will produce "unworthy" ones.<sup>403</sup>

Other specific afflictions brought upon children by their parents' actions at the time of sexual contact are: lameness, produced by "turning over their table"<sup>404</sup> and some say because the wife wanted to be beneath her husband and did not obtain her wish;<sup>405</sup> blindness, produced by looking upon the wife's

membrum<sup>406</sup> and some say because the wife tells her husband that she is an outraged woman (i.e., he is using compulsion);<sup>407</sup> deafness, produced by talking to the wife's membrum<sup>408</sup> and some say because the couple speaks "causeless hatred;"<sup>409</sup> dumbness, produced by kissing during intercourse.<sup>410</sup> As one Rabbi put it God's attribute is *נָקָם נָקָם נָקָם* (measure for measure). That is, according to that which the couple does wrongly, their offspring will be afflicted.<sup>411</sup>

Finally it was a common belief, apparently, that intercourse during pregnancy aids in nourishing and building the embryo.<sup>412</sup>

## APPENDIX B: On Reproductive Physiology

In the material presented by Al-Nakawa, many rabbinic notions on the reproductive process may be perceived. Those beliefs which are wholly or in part folkloristic are set forth below.

To begin with, the digestive process, according to some rabbis, consists of four stages, the last being the formation of the seminal fluid, which Nachmanides, for example, calls "white blood." This fluid actually nourishes the body in which it is generated.<sup>413</sup> "The seed of man is the life of the body and the light of his splendor, because it is the choice and most pure blood of his body." It contains the image of the man and is culled from the various parts of the body, i.e., "an eye is not begotten from an ear, etc." but each limb of the offspring is derived from the corresponding part of the parent. It is for these reasons that "the blind man has no opportunity whereby he may beget a clear-sighted (child)."<sup>414</sup>

Not only is the baby's sex determined by which of the parents experiences orgasm first (i.e., the embryo taking the sex opposite that of the first partner reaching a climax in intercourse), but the woman produces the *7N1H* matter contained in the body of the embryo, whereas the man produces the *7713* form which the embryo will assume.<sup>415</sup> Conception is most likely to take place at night.<sup>416</sup>

Intercourse during the first three months after conception has taken place is harmful to the expectant mother; during the middle months it is harmful to the mother, but good for the development of the embryo; and during the last months it is beneficial to both.<sup>417</sup> A contrary opinion on this subject is that sex relations during pregnancy may cause a miscarriage.<sup>418</sup>

If, after the baby has been born, the mother becomes pregnant again, this is likely to cause her flow of milk to cease.<sup>419</sup>

One who engages in sexual union while under the influence of alcohol will become sterile. This applies to both men and women.<sup>420</sup> Chills and diarrhoea (or madness) will plague those who stand, or sit, respectively during intercourse.<sup>421</sup>

APPENDIX C: On How Parents and Children May  
Be Saved from GEHINNOM.

The sources in MENORAT HA-MAOR contradict the doctrine of the saving power of *היורש* *היורש*. An unknown Midrash specifically states that deceased ancestors have no power to save men from the decree of GEHINNOM.<sup>422</sup> This idea is echoed by other Midrashic statements to the effect that a father can help make his children worthy of wealth, life and strength, but that he cannot actually save them from suffering in the after-life.<sup>423</sup> He may, however, help put them on the path that will lead to their own salvation by chastising them and training them properly.<sup>424</sup>

A slightly different view is to be found in the answers to the talmudic question, dying at what age will children enter the world to come? "R. Meir says from the time when they (are old enough) to know how to respond, 'Amen' as it is said, 'Open the gates that the righteous nation that keeps faithfulness (taken as meaning: to say, 'Amen') may enter.' (Is. 26.2) But there are some who say that it is from the hour that circumcision takes place, as it is said, 'I am afflicted and at the point of death from youth, I have borne Thy terrors, I am distracted.'" (Ps. 88.16)<sup>425</sup> In other words, R. Meir holds by implication that a father may help save his child by teaching him the prayers and the others hold that a father may save his offspring by having him circumcised. But still another opinion is that of R. Akiba to the effect that young Israelites who die enter the life of the world to come immediately upon death and regardless of whether their ancestors are righteous or wicked.<sup>426</sup>

Our material seems to consider much more plausible the idea that children may save their fathers from the decree of GEHINNOM and cause them to inherit a portion of GAN EDEN. This salvation may be brought about in several ways. The first of these is that when a young child dies, his bereaved father is forgiven all his sins committed up to the time of the child's passing.

The anguish he suffers at the loss of a child is sufficient punishment for any transgression.<sup>427</sup>

As a matter of fact, it is impossible that a man, irrespective of his own merits and righteousness, may be spared the torture of GEHINNOM without having righteous children.<sup>428</sup>

On the otherhand, if a man is wicked himself and has good children, he will be saved from GEHINNOM. In short, parents are brought to GAN EDEN, not by their own merit but rather by the merit of their descendants. We find several statements to this effect.

R. Joshua maintains that if the fathers are wicked and the sons righteous, the fathers are brought to GAN EDEN by the merit of their sons. He uses as proof, "...and like a father, the son who delights him," (Pr.3.12) explaining that there is no delight equal to that of GAN EDEN.<sup>429</sup> God acts in the same manner as he has decreed that man act, says R. Hanina. We are told in Deut. 22.6 that if one chance upon a nest and take the young therefrom, he must let the parent bird go free. In a like manner, if God takes the children (to Himself), he lets the fathers go free from the decree of GEHINNOM.<sup>430</sup>

R. Meir follows the same line of reasoning when he uses, "Honor thy father and thy mother," (Ex. 20.12) He tells us that if the children were to dwell in GAN EDEN, it would never do to have the parents in a less desirable place because this would not be honoring parents.<sup>431</sup>

Still another Midrash relates how R. Akiba came upon a man in a cemetery. He was chopping wood and carrying it to a fire. Akiba learned from the man (who was really an incarnation) that during his lifetime he was exceedingly sinful and that if he had a son who would recite כִּי כִּי כִּי "כי כי כי", he would be saved from the decree of eternal labor. Thereupon, Akiba went to the home town of the condemned and found his son. He taught the lad how to



read Torah, took him to the synagogue and when the son recited the blessing, his father was liberated from servitude.<sup>432</sup>

There is also a Midrash which informs us that the saving, if it is to come at all, must come within four generations. Citing, "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generations," (Ex. 20.5) it says that this does not mean that a son suffers for the sin of his father - for such an idea would be contrary to God's MIDDAT HA-DIN (attribute of Justice). Nor does it mean that the son may be held responsible for a father's debt - for such an idea would be contrary to the concept of God's MIDDAT HA-RAHAMIN (attributes of Mercy). Rather, we are told, take it to mean that if a father is wicked, his final fate hangs in the balance for four generations. If in any one of these there is a righteous descendant, the father is saved from GEHINNOM. If in that time there is none who is righteous, then all are held responsible for the misdeeds of the ancestor.<sup>433</sup>

### ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used in these notes are, for the most part, standard. The few symbols I have coined for use here are as follows:

BH.....references so marked are to be found in that portion of his material which Al-Nakawa has taken from R. Abraham Ibn David, BA'ALE HA-NEPESH, SHA'AR HA-KEDUSHA (ed. Prague, 1811) pp. 24a ff.

IH.....references so marked are to be found in that portion of his material which Al-Nakawa has taken from R. Moses ben Nahman (Nachmanides), IGERET HA-KODESH.

MH.....denotes Hyman G. Enelow's edition of Al-Nakawa, MENORAT HA-MAOR, The Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1932 (Vol.IV). All references are to Vol. IV unless otherwise indicated.

L.....the capital "L" is used as an abbreviation for "line" to prevent confusion with the digit "one," which on the typewriter is the same as the small "l".

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, TALMUDIC-RABBINIC VIEW ON BIRTH CONTROL in C.C.A.R. YEARBOOK, Vol. 37, 1927, pp. 369-384.
2. M. Mielziner, THE JEWISH LAW OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, Bloch Publishing Company, New York, 1901.
3. Talmud, Midrash and other rabbinic sources referred to in the notes.

NOTES

THE INTRODUCTION

1. For these and other interesting facts relating to Al-Nakawa and his work,  
see MH Vol. I, Introduc., pp. 11-22

PART I, Chapter 1.

2. MH. p. 118, L.12.
3. MH ibid., LL. 13-18; Gen. R. 65.10 based upon Genesis 27.1.
4. MH p. 41, L. 17 to p. 42, L. 3; Lev. R. 14.9
5. See MH p. 18, LL. 11-23
6. MH p. 17, L. 13 to p. 18, L. 3
7. MH p. 21, LL. 10-14; We are not told the source for this.
8. MH p. 19, LL. 3-5; Based upon Mishneh Torah, Hilkot Mammerim VI, 3.
9. MH ibid., LL. 16-19.
10. MH ibid., LL. 19-22.
11. MH p.21, LL. 15-22; Cf. T.B. Kid. 31b top
12. MH p. 20, LL. 5-8; Cf. T.B. Kid. 31a; T.B. Aboda Zarah 23b bot.; T.Y. Pe'ah I, 1 (15c), etc.; The same story with another article for sale is told in MH ibid., LL. 9-17 and still another in MH p. 22, LL. 7-19
13. Cf. MH ibid.
14. MH p. 21, LL. 2-9; Cf. T.Y. ibid. loc. cit. and T.Y. Kid. I, 7 (61b).
15. MH p. 20, LL 20 to p. 21, L. 1; T.B. Kid 31b.
16. MH p.20, LL. 17-18; see note 11 above for rabbinic references.
17. MH p. 21, L. 23 to p. 22, L. 5; Cf T.Y. loc.cit. and T.Y. Pe'ah I, 1 (15c).
18. MH p. 20, LL 2-4.
19. MH p. 22, LL. 5-7; see note 17 above for references.
20. MH p. 23, LL. 1-11; Cf. T.B. Kid, 31b bot.; Halakot Gedolot (ed.Hoffmann p. 478).

21. MH p.16, LL.2-6; T.Y. Kid. 61c top and 61b bot; T.B. Kid. 30b bot.
22. MH p.15, L.15 to p. 16, L.1; For a similar statement see T.B. Kid. 32a top; Cf. also Al-Fasi (ed. Vienna 218a-b); R. Aaron Ha-Kohen of Lunel, Orhot Hayyim, II, 5 (ed. Schlesinger, p.37f)
23. MH p. 14, LL.10-13; T.B. Kid. 31b-32a.
24. MH p.15, LL.10-12.
25. MH ibid., LL, 13-15
26. MH ibid., LL. 12-13.
27. MH p.16, L.9 to p. 17, L.12; Cf. T.B. ibid. 31a bot.; T.Y. ibid. 61b; also Gaster, Exempla of the Rabbis, p. 131f. No. 192f and Introdu., p. 224. etc.
28. MH ibid., LL. 7-9
29. MH p.23, LL. 12-17; Cf. T.B. Kid. 31a.
30. MH p.21, LL. 14-15; Cf. T.B. ibid., 31b top.
31. MH p.23, L. 17 to p.24, L. 2; Cf. Mekilta מִשְׁכַּן מֹשֶׁה Mas. עֲרֵיכָה , 8; T.B. ibid. 30b-31a.
32. MH p.24, LL.2-6; Cf. T.B. Ket. 103a bot.; also Midrash Ha-Gadol, Ex., (ed. Hoffmann, p. 231.)
33. MH ibid., LL. 6-7; see note 32 for references.

PART I. Chapter 2

34. Ex. 20.12; Deut. 5.16.
35. MH p.11<sup>L.</sup>10; cf. T.Y. Pe'ah I,1 (15 d).
36. MH p.14<sup>LL</sup>5-9; T.B. Kid. 31b. Here we find one of the few errors in our manuscript. In line 5 our text reads '7N/CN', whereas the Talmud reads the singular 7N/CN. As our text stands, the homily is meaningless.
37. MH p. 12, L. 10; Mekilta 12<sup>b</sup> Mas. 27<sup>b</sup>2, 8 T.Y. Kid. I, 7(61b); Pe'ah 15c bot.; T.B. Kid. 30b bot.
38. ME.p. 11, LL.4-8; cf. T.Y. Kid. ibid.; Pe'ah I, 1 (15d).
39. MH p.12, L.14 p. 13, L.13 contains a discourse proving the partnership of man and God in creation of children, based upon T.B. Nid., 31a; cf. Kohelet Raba 5,10 (ed. Wilna p. 16a); cf. also Gen. R. 22,2 (ed.p.49c). Also see below PARTIII b.
40. MH p. 13, LL.14-17; T.B. Kid.30b bot.
41. MH ibid. LL. 17-20; T.B. ibid. 31a top.
42. MH p. 19, LL. 1-3; cf. Mishneh Torah, Hilcot Mammerim VI, 3.
43. Ex. 20.12; Deut. 5.16
44. MH p. 12, L. 3; T.Y. Pe'ah I, 1 (15d).
45. MH p. 24, LL. 8-16; cf. Mekilta, 12<sup>b</sup> Mas. 27<sup>b</sup>2, 8; T.B. Hul. 142.a
46. MH p.12, LL. 11-12; Mekilta V loc.cit.; T.Y.Kid. loc.cit.; T.Y. Pe'ah 15 c bot. T.B. Kid. 30b bot.
47. MH p.13, LL.20-22; T.B. ibid. 31a top.
48. MH p.14, LL.13-18.
49. MH ibid. LL.1-3.
50. MH p.22, LL.23-25; 'Perhaps this fact was not as obvious to the rabbis as it is to us, for we find in T.Y. Kid. loc.cit. the specific statement that R. Aban was exempted from honoring his parents because he was an orphan, but see p.7 below where we report how honoring parents may be done even after their death.
51. MH <sup>P.10</sup>ibid. L. 2; T.B. ibid. 32a bot.
52. MH p.19, L. 22 to p.20, L.2; Cf. T.B. Meg. 16b bot.

53. MH p. 16, LL.2-6; T.Y. loc. cit. and 61c top; T.B. ibid. 30b bot.
54. MH p.66, LL.9-10 and p.67, LL.9-13; Pirke R. 'Eliezer, ch.32 on both.
55. MH p.121, L.23-p.122, L.1.
56. MH p.146, LL.13-16.
57. MH p.54, L.5; Cf.Nu. R., 9,12 .
58. MH p.49,LL.18-19; Cf. T.B. Sotah 37b.
59. MH p.18,LL.9-11; Mishna B. Mes. II, 11; T.B. Kid.32a bot.
60. MH ibid. LL.4-6.
61. MH ibid. LL. '11-23; Gen. R. 39,14.

PART II, Chapter 1.

62. MH p. 37, L. 21 to p. 38, L. 8; Cf. Zohar, III, p. 7a.
63. For more details on the divine sanction of the marriage relationship, see below, Part IIIB, Chapter 1.
64. MH p. 36, L. 13; T.B. Pes. 113b bot.
65. MH p. 30, L. 14 to P. 31, L. 1; Cf. T.B. Yeb. 63b top and Rashi here.
66. MH p. 36, LL. 5-6; T.B. ibid. 62b; Gen.R. 17.2.
67. MH p. 27, LL. 1-5; T.B. ibid. 63b; see also MH p. 35, LL. 15-19; T.B. Ber. 8a.
68. MH ibid.; Cf. Midr. Tehillim 59, 2.; Cf. also MH p. 30, LL. 10-13 where same Midr. quotation appears.
69. MH p. 36, LL. 10-11; T.B. Yeb. 63a top; Gen. R. 17,2. based upon Gen.5.2.
70. MH p. 37, LL. 13-16; Cf. Zohar, III, p.7b.
71. MH p. 74, L. 21 to p. 75, L. 4; Cf. T.B. Nid131b.
72. MH p.35, L.20 to p.36, L. 3; T.B. Yeb. 63a top.
73. MH p.65, LL. 14-16.
74. MH ibid. L. 21 to p. 66, L.3; T.B. Kid. 29b-30a
75. ibid.,ibid.
76. MH p. 65, LL.11-16; the latter quotation is from Abot V, 24. Note here that we have another of the few cases of error in our edition. The reference given above is erroneously reported to be from Abot V, 21.
77. MH ibid.. LL. 17-21; Cf. T.B. loc. cit.

PART II, Chapter 2

78. MH p. 43, LL. 16-21; Nu. R. 3, 6.
79. MH p.27, L. 7 to p. 28, L.13; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 22a bot; Gen.R. 68,3.
80. MH p.27, L. 5-7.
81. MH p.28, L. 20 to p. 29, L. 4; T.B. Kid. 70a.
82. MH ibid. L.4 .
83. ibid., L. 6; T.B. Sot. 2a.
84. MH ibid., LL. 5-15.
85. MH p.28, LL.17-19; Cf. T.B. Mo'ed Kat. 18b.
86. MH ibid. loc.cit.
87. MH p. 29, LL. 10-15.
88. MH ibid., LL. 15-22 .
89. MH p.74, L. 21 to p. 75, L.4; Cf. T.B. Nid 31b.
90. MH p.45, LL.11-14; Cf. T.B. Kid 70b.
91. MH ibid., LL. 14-17; Cf. T.B. ibid., 70a.
92. MH p.28, LL. 20, to p. 29, L. 4; T.B. loc. cit.
93. The commandments he will transgress are: "Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear a grudge," (Lev. 19.18) "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart," (Lev. 19.17) "...thou shalt love thy neighbor in thy heart," (Lev.19.18) "And thy brother shall live with thee." (lev. 25.36) Abot D'R. Nathan, Version A, ch. 26. This source explains that if the woman is not suitable for him, he will loathe her and sit and wait and hope for her death "and be separated from her and hate her" and he will eventually divorce her. Presented in MH p. 44, LL. 3-13.
94. MH ibid. LL. 1-2; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 22a bot.
95. MH p.45, LL. 18-20; The source for this is not Midr. Tehillim as Al-Nakawa reports, but rather the Yemenite Midrash Fragment discussed by Enelow in our edition, Introd. p. 39 .
96. MH p.46, LL.1-2; Cf. Yem. Fr., which adds that God becomes angry with Israelites who intermarry.



PART II, Chapter 2 (continued)

97. MH p. 50, LL. 2-5 where we read, "When Solomon married Pharoah's daughter, Gabriel stuck a reed into the sea and the sea brought forth a sand bank.... on which was founded the great city of Rome," (which was destined to destroy the Temple and cause the last exile.) Cf. T.B. Sanh. 21b.; MH p. 46 LL. 3-19 also informs us that Israel lost its position of honor, glory and leadership when the exiles returning from Babylon with Ezra married foreign women. Cf. Yem. Fr. which contains a paraphrased quotation from Gen. R. 18, 5.
98. MH p. 47, LL. 2-4; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 82a; similarly, Yem. Fr. quoted in MH p. 46, note to L. 14
99. MH ibid. L. 14 to p. 47, L.2.
100. MH p. 50, LL. 6-16; Seen from Yem. Fr., p. 17, report that this process was used by the men of the Babylonian diaspora to reinstate themselves.
101. MH p. 33, LL. 14-17; T.B. Yeb. 63b
102. MH p. 40, LL. 19-20.
103. MH ibid., LL. 16-18.
104. MH ibid. LL. 18-19; based upon "A pretty woman who turns aside from discretion, etc." (pr. 11.22).
105. MH p. 44, LL. 13-15; Cf. 'Abot d'R. Nathan, Version A, ch. 26.
106. MH p. 104, LL. 9-10; "If a man marries a woman (solely) for the sake of beauty, a month will end and a month will begin and a sword will consume him. Nachmanides Igeret Ha-Kodesh is presented in full in MH pp. 87-112. Cf. T.B. Kid. 70a; Derek 'Eres Zuta, X, etc. but the other texts read חַיִּי לֵב "money" or חַיִּי לֵב "lustfulness" for our עֵינַי "beauty."
107. MH p. 45, LL. 3-4, reading אֶשְׁדּוֹד "Ashdod" as אֶשְׁדּוֹד "fire of love," in the verse, "They shall drive out Ashdod at noon, אֶשְׁדּוֹד אֶשְׁדּוֹד אֶשְׁדּוֹד (Zeph. 2.4) a Midrash unknown to us outside of Al-Nakawa's manuscript comments, "that is to say, if a man marries for the purpose of embracing (sexually) his end will be that he will be sated of her (his wife), will loathe and divorce her."
108. MH p. 40, L. 21 to p. 41, L.2; Cf. Mishle 'Arab, Kebod Ha-Lebanon VI, p. 71 (1869).
109. MH p. 41, LL. 2-6; Cf. Mishle 'Arab, loc. cit.
110. MH p. 44, L. 21 to p. 45, L.1; Cf. 'Abot V, 16.
111. MH p. 44, LL. 15-16; Cf. 'Abot d'R. Nathan, Version A, ch. 26.

112. MH p. 45, LL. 1-2; The Midrash lost to us, but known to Al-Nakawa uses the verse, "And Ashkelon shall be a desolation, " (Zeph 2-4) reads *l'spek* as a term referring to *p'spe* "Shekels" and draws this conclusion.
113. MH p. 28, LL 14-15; p. 41, LL. 6-8; p.42, L. 21 to p.43, L.2; T.B. Pes. 49a-49b.
114. MH p.43, LL.3-5; Cf. Mish. Ta'an. IV, 8; T.B. Pes. 31a.
115. MH p.28, LL. 15-16; T.B. B. Batra 110a top.
116. MH p. 44, LL. 17-20; The Midrash Al-Nakawa takes this idea from is not extant, according to Enelow.
117. MH p. 45, LL. 5-6; The Midrash from which these ideas have come is unknown to us.
118. MH p. 104, LL. 16-20; I H.
119. MH ibid. LL. 11-15.
120. MH p. 45, LL. 7-11; T.B. Kid. 70a.
121. MH p. 40, LL. 6-9; T.B. Pes. 49a. bot. Same statement also in MH p. 28, LL. 16-17.
122. MH p.43, LL. 3-5; Cf. Midr. Ruth Zuta, 2, 11.

PART II, Chapter 3.

123. MH p. 65, LL. 5-6; Lev. R. 24,6.
124. MH ibid. LL. 6-8; Cf. T.Y. Yeb.II, 4 (3d)
125. MH p. 56, LL. 15-19; Cf. Mas. Kallah, (ed. Coronel), pp. 3b-4a. Another idea mentioned here is that "he who keeps himself from transgression is nourished from the countenance of the SHEKINA like the ministering angels."
126. MH p.69, L. 21 to p. 70, L. 7; Cf. T.B.B. Kam.82a.
127. MH p.75, LL. 16-19; Here we find an interesting sidelight. In explaining why women cover their heads, we are reminded that when any one commits a repulsive act, he covers his face and head. The first Woman not only sinned, but she also caused Adam to sin, thus bringing mortality into the world - sso nowawomankind covers her head when she goes out. (Note that Al-Nakawa presents this as though it is part of T.B. Nid. 31b, which is not the case)
128. MH p.69, LL. 20-21; Cf. T.B. B. Kam. 82a, which tells us that this requirement was decreed by Ezra.
129. MH p. 56, LL. 12-14; Cf. Abot D'r, Nathan, Versbn A, ch 2.
130. MH ibid., LL. 15-16; Cf. Mas. Kallah loc. cit.
131. MH ibid., L. 19 to p. 57, L. 6; Cf Mas. Kallah loc. cit.
132. MH p. 65, LL. 1-5; Cf. T.B. Nid, 13a; T.B. Shab. 118b bot.; and Mas. Kallah loc.cit. Note the tale of Rabbenu Ha-Kadosh, who was called HA-KADOSH (the holy) because he never put his hand below his belt.
133. MH p.33, L. 17 to p.34, L. 2 where Al-Nakawa culls material from Yeb. 63b; Ben Sira 9.8-9; 11.29-32.
134. "One who makes toilet by way of preparing to sin (even without committing the act itself)...(will be afflicted)" T.B.Shab.33a bot.
135. MH p.57, LL.10-12; Yem.Fr., ch. 17.
136. MH p.53, LL.13-14; Cf. Nu.R.21,4.
137. MH p.57, LL.12-14; Cf. Yem. Fr., loc.cit.
138. The sons of God admired the daughters of man and had relations with them (Gen. 6.2) and God decreed man's destruction (Gen.6.6.) for this sinfulness according to Gen.R.26, 5; MH p.62, L.18 to p.63 L. 3
139. Ahab, the son of Kaliah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah are the two false prophets in question. Using the report of scripture "Behold I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar King of Babylon and he shall slay them....(having them)roasted in fire...because they... have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives...etc." (Jer.20. 21-23) the Midrash goes on to describe how these two helped each other seduce women by promising them that if they (the women) gave themselves to the other (prophet), their children would be prophets. For this, God had Nebuchadrezzar slay them in the fiery furnace. MH p.59,L.1 to P.60, L.2; Cf.T.B.Sanh.93a;Midr.Tanhuma, VAYIKRA,9,also Yem.Fr.,ch.18.

140. This is proved by the proximity in scripture of "You have polluted the land with your harlotries..." (Jer. 3.2) to "Showers have been withheld and there has been no latter rain and you have a harlot's forehead..." (Jer. 3.3.). MH p.61, L.13-15; Yem.Fr..loc.cit. Cf.T.Y. Ta'an, III, 3 (66c).
141. See MH p.67, LL.10-17; Yem.Fr..loc.cit.; C.F.Lev.R.23,12
142. MH p.55, L.20 to p.56, L.2; Cf.T.B. Shab. 33a
143. Apparently the items listed in Is. 3. 18-23 were as un-understandable to the rabbis as they are to us. The Midrash gives as the reason for God's taking these ornaments away from the women as that they plotted before the invasion to captivate the enemy officers with their charms and be saved by giving themselves to them. MH p.57, L. 15 to p.58 L.23; Yem.Fr. loc.cit.; See also T.B. Shab. 62b bot.; etc.
144. See MHpp.47-49
145. MH p.63,LL.14-15; Cf. T.B. Nid. 13b top.
146. MH p.63, L. 15 to p.64, L.2; Cf. mas. Kallah loc.cit.,p.4a bot.and T.B. Nid. 13a, etc.
147. Proof of these things is brought on the basis of Mal. 2.11; Lev.18.22; 1 Ki. 14.24 and Is. 57. 3-5. MH p.63, LL.4-13; Cf. Yem. Fr.,/T.B. Sanh. 82a top. loc.cit.

PART II, Chapter 4.

148. MH p.35, LL.14-15; T.B. Yeb 63b and MH p.134, LL.17-20; T.B. 'Erub. 41b.
149. MH p.66, LL.3-6; Cf. T.B. Kid. 29b-30a .
150. MH ibid., LL.7-9; Cf. Pesikta Rab. 15.
151. The "mill" and the "upper mill stone" of Dt. 24-6 are taken symbolically by Targum Yer. loc.cit. for the female and male membra, respectively. This seems to be the basis of the Midrash, the source of which is unknown to us, which our author presents in MH ibid., LL. 9-11 in bringing out this idea.

PART IIIA, Chapter 1.

152. MH p.30, L.9; T.B. Shab. 11a.
153. MH p.38, LL. 13-16; T.B. B. Mes. 59a .
154. T.B. loc.cit.
155. MH ibid., LL. 16-18. The Talmud also says, "A man should always take care to have food in his house because Israel was referred to as 'lowly' only when they lacked grain." Quoted from T.B. loc.cit. in MH ibid., LL. 18-21.
156. MH p.39, LL.4-5.
157. MH p.38, L.21 to p.39, L.3; T.B. Yeb 62b bot.
158. MH p.133, LL.18-20.
159. MH p.30, LL.2ff; See this discussion on *לענין חכמים* in T.B. Ber. 8a and Yeb. 63b.
160. MH p.40, LL.8-11; Cf. T.B.B. Mes. 59a.
161. MH p.39, LL.7-9.
162. MH p.38, LL.9-12. T.B. loc. cit.
163. MH p.39, LL.5-7.
164. MH p.46, LL.13-14. Gen.R.18, 5.
165. MH-p.56, LL.4-7; Abot-I, 5.

165. MH p.56, LL.4-7; Abot I, 5.  
166. MH p.39, LL.12-19; T.B.B. Meg. 59a.

PART IIIA, Chapter 2

167. MH p.75, L.22 to p. 76, L.2; Cf. Gen.R.14, 1.  
168. MH p.32, L.6 to p.33, L.11. This is apparently Al-Nakawa writing here. Enelow tell us, however, that R. Isaiah Hurwitz, presents an abridged version of the same thing in Shne Luhot Ha-Berit, Sha'ar Ha-'Otiot (ed. W., I, p.143a).  
169. This idea Al-Nakawa, proves by citing from T.B. Ber. 17a where the greater burden of women in the performing of most family chores is mentioned. MH p.140, L.15 to p. 141, L.2 for more details see below, Part IV, Chapter 1.  
170. MH p.71, LL.12-15. Cf. Mishle 'Arab, Kebod Ha-Lebanon, VI, (1869) p.127.  
171. MH p.34, LL.14-16, Cf. Mishle 'Arab, loc.cit.  
172. MH ibid., L.21  
173. MH p.69, LL.18-19; Cf. T.B.B. Kam. 82a.  
174. MH ibid., LL. 5-17; Cf. Mishna Ketub, V.5.  
175. MH p.34, LL.3-10.  
176. From the rest of the Midrash we learn that God rejected, Adam's head, ear, mouth, heart, hand and foot to indicate that He did not want woman to be haughty, gossipy, jealous, theiving or gadding respectively. MH p.70, L.8 to p.71, L.4; Gen.R.18,2; 'Abot d'R. Nathan, Vemion B, ch.45 .  
177. MH p.51, L.12 to p.52, L.11; Cf. T.B. Sotah 11b.

- 178. MH p.32, LL.2-5.
- 179. MH p.29, L.23 to p.30, L.2; Midr. Tehillim 59, 2.
- 180. MH p.31, L.4 to p.32, L.1.
- 181. MH p 67, LL.12-14; Cf. Pirke R.'Eliezer, Ch.32.
- 182. MH p.32, LL.1-3; Midr. Tehillim loc.cit.
- 183. MH p.29, LL.18-21.
- 184. MH p.30, L.8; T.B. Shab. 11a.
- 185. MH p.35, LL.12-15; T.B. Yeb. 63b.
- 186. MH ibid., LL.8-12; Cf.T.B. Sanh. 110a; Yalk. Shim.,Pr.18, No.957.
- 187. MH p.134, LL.17-20; T.B. 'Erub. 41b.
- 188. MH p.35, LL.1-4.

PART IIIA, Chapter 3.

- 189. MH p.40, LL.3-7; source not known.
- 190. MH p.39, L.19 to p.40, L.2; Cf. T.Y.Ber. IX (12d).
- 191. MH ibid., LL.9-10.
- 192. MH p.53, L.15 to p.54, L.4; Yem.Fr.ch.18.
- 193. MH p.54, LL.5-7,; Cf.Nu.R.9,12.
- 194. MH ibid., LL.7-12; Cf.Nu.R.loc.cit.
- 195. MH p.52, L.12 to p.53, L.5; Cf.Lev.R.23, 10 where the spelling פֹּתִיפָר in Ps. 81.6 is explained as a linking of God's name to Joseph because he resisted both Potiphar's wife; and the name פֹּתִיפָר as a linking of God's name, פֹּתִיפָר to that of Palti ben Laish because he did not touch Michal, Saul's daughter.
- 196. MH p.62, LL.7-9; Cf. T.B. Sotah 10a.
- 197. MH p.60, LL.12-19; Cf. T.B. ibid., 47b.
- 198. MH p.61, L.17 to p.62, L.1; Lev.R.23, 12; Yem.Fr.,ch.18.
- 199. MH p.56, LL.3-7.

PART IIIA, Chapter 4

200. MH p.33, LL.2-3; T.B. Yeb.63b; It should be noted that there is no rabbinic reference to the possibility of a woman entering divorce proceedings against her husband.
201. MH p.75, LL.5-11; Cf. Mish. Ketub. VII, 6; T.B. Ket. 72a.
202. MH p.80, L.5; Cf.T.B. Nid.20b.
203. MH p.67, L.19 to p.68, L.2; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 22a; T.B. Git.90b.
204. MH p.68, LL.17-18; Pirke d'R.'Eliezer, ch.34.
205. MH ibid.,LL.2-7; Cf.T.B. Sanh.22a.
206. MH ibid.LL.7-12; Cf.T.B. loc.cit.
207. MH p.67, LL.14-17; Cf.T.B. ibid., 22a-22b.
208. This is seen from the Midrash which explains why women frequent cemeteries more than men. It is, the Midrash says, because woman (Eve) caused the mortality of the human race. Source unknown. Quoted in MH p.75,LL.19-21.
209. Implied from R. Dostai b. Yannai who speaks in the name of R. Ishmael, saying, "If you had sons in your youth, take a wife in your old age and bring up sons." Gen.R.61,3. Presented in MH p.66, L.17 to p.67, L.2.



PART IIIB, Chapter 1.

210. See appendix A for some of the rabbis' folkloristic notions on the subjects of "marking" children, determining sex, producing healthy stock, etc.
211. MH p.89, LL.16-21; IH.
212. Cf. T.B. Ta'an. 2a-b; Sanh. 113a bot.
213. MH p.92, LL.17 to p.93, L.1; IH.
214. MH p.90, L.1 to p.91 L.10 discusses the matter in detail; IH.
215. MH p.72, LL.7-12; R. Abraham b. David, Ba'ale, Ha-Nephesh, Sha'ar Ha-Kedusha, pp.24a ff. is presented in full in MH pp.72 to 86.
216. MH p.92, LL.12ff.; IH.
217. MH p.72, L.15 to p.73, L. 4; BH.
218. MH p.92, LL.8-11; Cf.T.B. Nid. 31a; IH.
219. MH p.93, LL.16-19; Cf.T.B. loc. cit.: IH.; Further proof for God's partnership with parents in the creation of children is to be seen in these biblical passages; Gen. 17.16; 25.21;29.31;30.22;I Sam.1.19; and Ex. 23.26....See MH p.92, LL.10-15; Cf.T.B. loc.cit.
220. MH p.40, LL.13-16; Cf. Gen.R,17,7.
221. MH p.36, L.17 to p.37,L.6; Cf. T.B. 63b-64a.
222. See Note 209.
223. MH p.36, L.13; T.B. Pes. 113b bot.
224. MH p.67, LL.3-8; Cf.T.B. Yeb. 63b.
225. MH p.37, LL.2-3; T.B. ibid., 63b-64a.
226. MH p.113, LL.1-8; T.B.B. Bathra, 116a.

PART IIIB, Chapter 2

227. MH p.106, L.5 to p.107 L.9; IH.
228. MH p.102, LL.19-21; IH.
229. MH p.105, L.20 to p.106, L.4; IH.; Nachmanides, Abraham ben David and other rabbis use, as a means of convincing their readers of the importance of KAWWANAH as well as of other significant activities and considerations in having sexual contact, the idea that these "mark" in some manner, the offspring. There is no question that these rabbis believed in the efficacy of such thought and action, for both good and evil, but because such ideas are in reality folk-lore and superstition, we have reported in our main text only the ethical ideals which such notions attempt to advance. The folkloristic elements are discussed below in Appendix A.
230. MH p.73, LL.5-6, BH; See also the similar idea in MH p.94, LL.1-7, IH; as well as MH p.110, LL.17-22 which is supplied by Enelow from Sepher Ha-Musar, p.82b.
231. MH p.78, LL.13-18; Cf. T.B. Yeb. 63a bot.; BH.
232. MH p.79, L 22 to p.80, L.2; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20b; BH.
233. MH p.73, LL.12-13; BH.
234. MH ibid., LL. 14-17; BH; Cf. T.B. Nid. 31a. Details of the talmudic statement will be found in Appendix B.
235. MH ibid., LL.17-23; BH.
236. MH p.77, LL.15-21; BH. For the fulfillment of these KAWWANOT there are rewards in the after life, but the reward for the fourth, we are told, is not as great as those for the first three.

PART IIIB, Chapter 3

237. MH p. 82, LL. 10-13; Cf. T.B. Nid. 17a; BH. For reasons for this and other ideas in this chapter see Appendix A.
238. MH p. 80, LL.9-10; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20a-b; BH. Also MH p.110, LL.2-4; T.B. Ber. 3a; IH.
239. MH p. 94, LL.8-13; Cf.T.B. Ket., 61b-62a, and 62b; and MH p.95, LL. 9-14 where Nachmanides uses Ex. 31-17 "And on the seventh day He (God) ceased from work and rested." He takes the word for "rested" עָנָה in its other possible meaning, "and He made souls." And calls upon men to imitate the Creator in this matter.
240. MH p.82, L.18 to p.83, L.2; Cf. Mas Kallah, p.3a; T.B. Git.70a; BH.
241. MH p.83, LL.2-5; Cf.T.B. Ned. 17a; BH.
242. MH p.94, L.20 to p.95, L.8; IH.
243. MH p.95 L.22 to P.96 L.9; IH.
244. See MH p.71, LL.5-11; Mish Ket. VII, 6; T.B. Ket. 72b. Also MH p.83, LL. 16-17; Cf.T.B. Shab.18b; BH.
245. MH p.84, LL.9-10; Cf.T.B. ibid., 13a bot.
246. MH p.83, L.16 to p.84 L. 11; Cf. T.B. Ket. 61a, T.B. Shab. loc.cit.; BH.
247. MH p.85, LL.1-24; Cf. Zohar III, 79a-b and 77a; BH. Their reasoning is based upon the verse וְעָנָה לְיָמֶיךָ אֵת וְעָנָה לְיָמֶיךָ "And there shall be enmity between you and the woman." The numerical value of וְעָנָה is 24, so they say that ~~they say~~ this refers to the following 24 impure places: the 2 axillae, the pubic hair, the head, and the 20 nails. They tell us also that since 798 "a halp" equals 177 (the number of days of purity in a year); and 1761 "against him" equals 83 days (the days of menstruation), if a man has intercourse during the permitted days it will help him, but if he indulges during the prohibited days it will be against him. MH p.86, LL.1-5;BH.
248. MH p.84, LL.12-22; Cf. T.B. Shab. 13a-b; Seder 'Eliyahu R., ch.16; 'Abot d'R. Nathan, Version A, ch. 2; and others; BH.
249. MH p.100, L.9 to P. 101, L.7; IH.
250. MH p.101, LL.8-15; IH.
251. MH p.73, L.23, to P.24, L.5; cf.T.B. Yeb. 62b bot; BH.
252. MH p.82, LL.13-16; Cf. T.B. Ta'an. 11a;BH.

253. MH ibid., LL.16-18; Cf. T.Y. Ta'an. I, 6 (64d); BH.
254. MH p.80, L.4; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20b; and MH p.83, LL.5-6; Cf. T.B. ibid., 17a; BH.
255. MH p.86, LL.11-14; Cf. T.B. Nid. 16b-17a; BH.
256. MH ibid., LL.14-15; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.; BH.
257. MH ibid., LL.15-17; Cf. T.B. ibid., 17a top; BH.
258. MH ibid. LL. 9-11; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 46a; BH.
259. The child will become epileptic. See Appendix A. MH p.82, LL.38; Cf. T.B. Pes. 112b; BH.
260. MH ibid., LL.8-10; Cf. T.B. Nid. 17a; BH.

#### PART IIIB, Chapter 4

261. MH p.75, LL.5-9; Cf. T.B. Nid. 31b; BH.
262. MH p.83; LL.7-15; Cf. Mas. Kallah p.2a and 3b. top; BH.
263. MH ibid. LL. 7-11; Mas. Kallah, p.3b top; BH.
264. MH p.82. LL.2-3; cf. T.B. Git. 70a; Mas. Kallah, p.3a bot; BH.
265. MH ibid. LL.1-2; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.; BH.
266. MH p.96, L.9 to p.97 L.11; Cf. T.B. Ber. 5b bot; IH.
267. See Appendices for details and reasons. Another "perverse" position is called *h'sien p'ot*, which so far as I have been able to ascertain, is similar in meaning to coitus a tergo; Cf. MH p.80 LL.11-14; Cf. Mas. Kallah p.2a; BH.
268. Implied in MH ibid., LL.2-4; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20b; BH.
269. MH ibid., L.5; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.; BH.
270. MH p.78, LL.18-21; Cf. T.B. Nid. 13b top; BH.

271. MH p.74, LL.6-13; Cf. T.B. 'Erub. 100b; BH.
272. MH ibid., LL. 14-21; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.; BH.
273. MH loc.cit.; Cf. T.B. loc cit.; Cf. also MH p.80 LL.6-7; T.B. Ned. loc. cit.; BH.
274. MH p.81, LL.21-22; BH.
275. MH p.110, LL.13-15; IH.
276. MH ibid., LL.12-13; IH.
277. MH p.80, LL.14-16; BH.
278. MH ibid., LL.16-19; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20a bot.; BH.
279. MH p.109, LL.6-15; IH; and MH p.80, LL.19-21; BH.
280. MH p.109, L.15 to p.110, L.2; IH.
281. MH p.75, LL.13-16; BH; the source of the Midrash is unknown.
282. MH p.110, LL.4-10; IH; (omitted in original manuscript, but supplied by Enelow from Sepher Ha-Musar, p.82b).
283. MH p.79, LL.10-11; Cf. T.B. 'Erub. 100b; BH.
284. MH p.86; LL.6-8; p.110, LL.7-9; Cf. T.B. Pes. 49b; BH and IH.
285. MH p.81, LL.22-23; BH; MH p.110, LL.10-12; IH in section omitted by Al-Nakawa, but supplied by Enelow from Sepher Ha-Musar p.82b.
286. MH loc.cit.; IH ibid.
287. MH p.80, L.23 to p.81, L.5; Cf. T.B. Ned. 20a bot.; Mas. Kallah pp.2a-b; BH.
288. MH p.81, LL.14-18; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.; Mas Kallah, loc.cit.; BH.
289. MH p.86, LL.8-9, 14; Cf. T.B. Pes. 49b; Sepher Ha-Musar p.78a; BH.
290. MH p.79, LL.18-20; Cf. T.B. 'Erub. 100b; BH; See Appendix A.
291. MH p.42, LL.13-20; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 70b top.
292. MH p.68, LL.18-19; Pirke d'R. Eliezer, ch.34 .

PART IIIB, Chapter 5

293. MH p. 64, LL.16-17; Cf. T.B. Nid. 13a; the Talmud attributes this saying to R. 'Assi as reported here, but Al-Nakawa erroneously ascribes this quotation to R. Jacob b. Eleazer.
294. MH ibid. LL.7-16; Cf. T.B. Yeb. 34b; Midr. Ha-Gadol, Gen.38.6,9; This Midrash says that Onan desired the pleasure of intercourse with Tamar, but he performed coitus abruptus so that she would not conceive. The reason he did not want her to conceive was that he did not wish to have his own son bear the name of his brother (Tamar's husband.)
295. MH ibid., LL.17-22; Based upon T.B. Nid. 45a. (Cf. Rashi to this).
296. MH ibid., LL. 19-21; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.
297. Ibid.
298. This conclusion is based upon the material from Al-Nakawa. Dr. J.Z. Lauterbach, however, has written a comprehensive Responsum on the subject, TALMUDIC-RABBINIC VIEW ON BIRTH CONTROL, C.C.A.R. Yearbook, Vol. XXXVII, pp.369-384. In this article he presents several other rabbinic references to birth control but he comes to the same conclusion as we have with our limited material. In fact, the passages quoted in MENORAT HA-MAOR are the same as those which form the basis for Dr. Lauterbach's presentation.

PART IV, Chapter 1.

299. "Your pain" in Gen. 3.16 is taken to refer to the rearing of children by R. Isaac b. R. Dimi. It is one of the curses pronounced upon woman. MH p.74, L.15; Cf. T.B. 'Erub. 106b;BH.
300. MH p.140, LL. 12-15; Cf. Gen. R. 20, 6.
301. MH ibid., LL.5-12; Cf. Gen.R. loc.cit.
302. MH p.41, LL.12-16; Cf. Gen.R.17,2.
303. MH p.41,L.17 to p.42 L.3; Lev. R. 14, 9.
304. See MH p.140, L.15 to p.141, L.2; Cf.T.B. Ber.17a.
305. MH p.42, LL.3-13; Cf. Mas.Kallah p.3b; Here we are told that R. Akiba was able to tell about a son's mother, merely by observing the son's activities.
306. MH p.34, LL.18-19.
307. MH p.135, LL.10-15; Cf. T.B. Kid. 29a.
308. MH p.38, L.21 to p.39, L.3
309. MH p.86, LL.6-8; Cf. T.B. Pes. 49b; BH: "One who gives his daughter to an AM HA-ARETZ (ignorant person) is as if he had bound her and put her before a lion."
310. "When a father places his hands upon his son's head, the child is blessed," because the fifteen bones of the hand correspond to the fifteen words of the priestly benediction. MH p.122, LL.1-7; Source unknown.

COMPANION IV, Chapter 2

311. MH p.89, LL.4-15; IH.
312. MH p.<sup>1</sup>118, <sup>LL.</sup>12-18; Cf. Gen.R. 65, 10.
313. MH p.137, LL.4-6; Cf. Mish.Kid.Iv, 14; T.B. Kid. 82a-b.
314. MH p.145, L.24 to p.146, L.12; Cf.T.B. Ta'an. 5b-6a.
315. MH p.126,LL.1-9.
316. Derived from the notion that the real purpose of bringing a child into the world is to enable it to have a portion in the world to come. Without full knowledge of the Law it is impossible for the youngster to inherit his share of the after-world. MH p.18, LL.6-10 and ff; Cf. Mish. Baba Mes. II, 11; T.B. Kid 32a bot.; For more rabbinic ideas on the effects of the relationship between parent and child upon their respective lives after death, see Appendix C.
317. MH p.147, L.11 to p.148, L.7; Cf. Gen R. 95,3.
318. MH p.136, LL.1-4; Cf. T.B. Kid.30a.
319. MH ibid.,LL.4-6; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.: Note that Al-Nakawa reads this passage as referring to Raba bar Rab Huna instead of the original R. Huna.
320. MH p.140 LL.4-6.
321. MH p.142, LL.17-20; Cf. T.B. ibid.:29b
322. MH p.138, LL.6-7; Cf. T.B. Shab. 119 b. bot.
323. MH p.121, LL.5-6; "When youngsters meditate on Torah, God is exalted as it is said,'From the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou founded strength...' (Ps. 8.3)
324. MH p.138, LL.12-15; Cf.T.B. Loc.cit.
325. MH ibid.,LL. 9-12; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.
326. Based upon scripture <sup>אברהם</sup> <sup>אברהם</sup> <sup>אברהם</sup> "His banner over me is love." (Cant 2.4) The Midrash suggests reading <sup>אברהם</sup> "His skipping" in place of <sup>אברהם</sup> "His banner."; MH p.121, LL.6-7; Cf.Cant.R.2,4.
327. MH p.123,LL.1-6; Cf.Midrash Mishle 13,24.; We may note, on the other hand, the blessedness of learning brought out in another Midrash which uses the verse, "A soft tongue breaks the bone." (Pr.25.15) It tells us that "a soft tongue" is really children at study and that "bone" means sorrows, because sorrows are strong as a bone. In other words, study by children keeps them from experiencing sorrows. As proof for this, the Midrash takes <sup>אברהם</sup> "breaks the bone" as capital letters in the abbreviation of <sup>אברהם</sup> "Children at their master's schoolhouse, annul evil decrees." - MH p.139,LL.2-5; source unknown,but quoted also byR.Isaiah Hurwits in Shne Lufot Ha-Berit,Mas. Shabu'ot (ed.Warsaw 1852) II,p.197b.



PART IV, Chapter 3

328. MH p.139, LL.19-20; Cf. T.B. Kid. 29b.
329. MH p.36, LL.13-14; T.B. Pes.113b bot.
330. The proof of this lies in the talmudic statement attributed to R. Eleazar, "Every man who has knowledge will eventually be wealthy, as it is said, 'And with knowledge rooms are filled with precious and pleasing wealth.'" (Pr. 24.4) - MH p.125, LL.14-18; Cf.T.B. Sanh.92a.
331. MH ibid. L.18 to p.126, L.1; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.
332. MH p.114, LL.8-10; Cf. Midr. Tanhuma *hSe'i*, 6; Seder 'Eliyahu Rab. ch.18
333. MH p.118, LL.8-10; Al-Nakawa says that this is from Midrash 32 Middot, but we do not find it in our edition. Enelow suggests that it may be contained in a larger Midrashic collection bearing the same name - which has been lost to us.
334. MH p.134, LL.15-16; Cf. T.B. Kid.29a.
335. MH p.136, LL.8-11; Cf. T.B. ibid. 30b.
336. R. Meir: MH p.136, LL.13-16 and p.137, LL.7-9; Bar Kappara: MH ibid. LL.2-3; Source for both: Mish. Kid.IV, 14; T.B. ibid. 82a-b.
337. MH ibid., LL.3-7; Mish. loc.cit.; T.B. loc.cit.
338. MH p.136, L. 21 to p.137, L.2; Cf. Mish. loc.cit.: T.B. loc.cit. Why shepherds and sailors should be included here, I do not know.
339. MH ibid., L. 10 to p.138, L.3; Cf. Mish.loc.cit. T.B. loc.cit.
340. MH ibid., LL.11-12; Cf. T.B. ibid., 30b.

PART IV, Chapter 4.

341. MH p.144, L.7.
342. MH p.57, LL.406; Cf. Mas. Kallah, (ed. Coronel) pp.3b-4a.
343. MH p.144, LL.7-8.
344. MH ibid., LL. 9-14; Al-Nakawa also says here that an evil son may be disinherited, but Enelow points out that this is the only instance in rabbinic literature where unqualified permission to do so is given. Everywhere else specific offenses for which one may lose his inheritance, are mentioned. See notes in MH p.144.
345. See PART IIIB, Chapter 3.
346. MH p.114, LL.10-11; Cf. Midr. Tanhuma *hse'*, 6; Seder 'Eliyahu Rab. ch. 18.
347. MH p.145, LL.15-23.
348. MH ibid. LL. 1-6; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 18a.
349. MH p.146, LL.17-22.
350. MH p.71, L.8; Cf. Mish. Ketub. VII, 6; T.B. Ket. 72b.
351. MH p.40, L.20.
352. MH p.117, LL.1-6.
353. MH p.118, LL.10-11; See Note 333.
354. MH p.119, L.15 to p.120, L.4; Cf. Joseph IbnNahmias, Commentary on Proverbs (ed. Bamberger, p.89 p.108); MH p.122, LL.12-16; Cf. Ibn Nahmias, ibid., p.68. In the latter reference we learn that when you behold a wise son, "you may be certain that his father chastised him when he was young and led him upon a righteous path ( in this manner); and when you see a scoffer, that his father failed to chasten him." This is based upon Pr. 13.1.
355. MH p.123, L.1 to p.124, L.11; Cf. Midr. Mishle 13, 24 and Ex.R.1,1; Cf.also Midr. Tanhuma 1.
356. This statement is based in the Midrash upon Ps.94.12;Deut.8.5,7; and Pr.6.23, respectively. Reported on MH p.124, LL.12-19, Cf. Ex. Raba 1, 1; also Mekilta *17h'* Mas. *29h2*, 19.
357. MH ibid., L. 19 to p. 125, L.13.
358. MH p.119, LL.13-15; Cf. R. Joseph Ibn Nahmias, ibid., p.105 bot.
359. MH p.146, LL.13-16.
360. MH p.117, LL.7-14; Seen from a Midrash attributed by Al-Nakawa to Midr. Mishle, but Enelow says that it does not occur there. The source therefore is unknown.

- 361. MH. p.143, L.12 to p. 144, L. 6; Abot. d'R. Nathan, Version A, ch.23-24.
- 362. MH p. 143, LL.7-11; Cf. T.B.B. Batra 21a top.
- 363. MH p. 120, LL.4-14.
- 364. MH p. 114, LL.3-8; Midr. Tanhuma *hse'6*, 6; Seder 'Eliyahu Rab. Ch.18.
- 365. MH p. 120, L. 15 to p. 121, L. 4; Abot V, 21; T.B.B. Batra 21a.
- 366. MH p. 121, LL.8-23.
- 367. MH p. 145, LL.6-15.
- 368. MH p. 144, LL. 14-18; Cf. T.B. Shab. 10b.
- 369. MH p. 118. 2-10.

#### PART IV, Chapter 5.

- 370. MH p.143, LL.1-11; Cf. T.B.B. Batra 21a top.
- 371. MH p.138, LL.9-12; Cf. T.B.B. Shab. 119b bot.
- 372. MH p.139, L.16; Cf. T.B. Batra *ibid*; also MH p.138, LL.4-5.
- 373. Single men should not teach children, because when the pupils' mothers come to fetch them, the teachers may fall heir to thoughts of evil relative to the women. MH p. 140, LL.1-2; Cf. Mish. Kid. IV, 13; T.B. Kid.82a.
- 374. Women should not teach because when the pupils' fathers come to fetch them, they will behold the teachers (and may be led to improper thoughts.) MH *ibid*. LL. 2-3; Cf. Mish.*loc.cit.*; T.B. *loc.cit.*
- 375. MH p.139, LL.12-14, 17-22; Cf. T.B.B. Batra *ibid*.
- 376. MH *ibid*., LL.9-12
- 377. MH *ibid*., LL.14-17; Cf. T.B. *loc. cit.*
- 378. MH *ibid*., LL.6-9.
- 379. MH p.141, LL.3-6; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 99b; Targum Onkelos Gen. 12.5.

- 380. Various rabbis apply similar ideas to other biblical characters. MH p.141, L.11 to p. 142, L.2; Cf. T.B. ibid.19b.
- 381. MH p. 141, LL.6-9; Cf. T.B.B. Mes. 85a.
- 382. MH p. 142, LL.14-16; Cf. T.B.B. Batra 8b bot.
- 383. MH p. 141, LL.10-11; Cf. T.B.B. Mes. loc.cit.
- 384. MH p. 142, LL.8-14; Cf. T.B. Ta'an. 24a bot.

#### APPENDIX A.

- 385. MH p.66, LL.12-13.
- 386. MH p. 101, L. 19 to p.102, L.5; IH; and MH p.102, LL.13-21; IH.
- 387. This is the meaning of "I knew you before I formed you in the womb." (Jer. 1.5) Cf. MH p.105, L.20 to p.106, L.4; IH
- 388. For the story of R. Jochanan, cf. T.B. Ber. 20a; Reported and discussed in MH p.102, LL 5-13; p. 107, L. 10 to p. 108, L.2; IH.
- 389. MH p.102, L.22 to p.103, L.11; Cf. Midr. Tanhuma 8; Nu. R.9, 34; IH.
- 390. MH p.79, LL.18-19; Cf. T.B. 'Erub.100b. BH.
- 391. MH p.96, LL.9-11; p.110, LL.13-16; IH.
- 392. MH loc.cit.; Cf. T.B. Ber. 5b bot.; IH.
- 393. MH ibid., LL.12-19; IH.
- 394. Because the Sabbath is a day of spirituality, whereas other days are corporeal. MH p.95, LL.3-14; IH.
- 395. MH p.95, L.22 to p.96, L.9; IH.

396. MH p.94, L.20 to p. 95, L.8; IH.
397. MH p.82, LL.8-10; Cf. T.B. Nid. 17a; BH.
398. MH ibid., L.18 to p. 83, L.2; Cf. T.B. Git. 70a; Mas.Kallah, p.3a; BH.
399. MH ibid., LL. 2-5; Cf. T.B. Nid. loc.cit.; BH
400. MH p.100, L.9 to p. 101, L.8; IH.
401. MH ibid., LL.8-k5; IH.
402. MH p.80, LL.19-21; T.B. Ned. 20a bot.; Mas. Kallah pp.2a-b; BH.
403. MH p.79, LL.11-12; Cf. T.B. 'Erub. 100b; BH.
404. MH p.80, L.23 to p. 81, L. 5; T.B. Ned. loc.cit.; Mas Kallah, loc. cit.; BH.
405. MH p. 83, LL.12-13; Cf. Mas,Kallah p.2a.; BH.
406. Note 404 ibid.
407. Note 405 ibid.
408. Note 404 ibid.
409. Note 405 ibid.
410. Note 404 ibid.
411. MH p.81. LL 5-14; Cf. Ned. loc.cit; Mas.Kallah pp.1a-b; BH.
412. MH p.42, LL.13-20; Cf. T.B. San. 70b; This matter is also discussed in Appendix B.

#### APPENDIX B.

413. MH P. 95, LL. 22-24; IH .
414. MH p.94, LL.13-20; p.89, L.21;IH.
415. MH p.110, LL.13-16; IH.
416. MH p.82, LL.10-13; Cf. T.B. Nid. 17a; BH.
417. MH p. 73, LL.14-17; BH.

- 418. MH p.64, L.22; Cf. T.B. ibid. 45a.
- 419. MH ibid., LL.21-22; Cf. T.B. loc.cit.
- 420. MH p.83, LL.5-6; Cf. T.B. Ned. 17a; BH.
- 421. MH p.82, LL.1-3; Cf. T.B. Git. 70a; BH.

#### APPENDIX C.

- 422. MH p. 130, LL. 3-7; Enelow suggests that this may be from a larger collection than our Midrash 32 Middot, bearing the same name.
- 423. Based upon the verse, "There is none that can deliver out of My (God's) hand." (Deut. 32.39) Examples given are: Abraham could not save Ishmael and Isaac could not save Esau. MH p.126, LL.14-18; Cf. Siphre, Deut. No. 329; Midr. Tannaim, ed. Hoffman, p. 202; etc.
- 424. Based upon scripture, "Thou beatest him with the rod, and wilt deliver his soul from the nether-world." (Pr. 23.14) MH p. 119, LL.13-15; Cf. R. Joseph Ibn Nahmias, Commentary on Proverbs (ed. Bamberger p.105 bot.)
- 425. "Thy terrors" in this verse, we are told refers to the terrors of circumcision. MH p.131, L.18 to p. 132, L. 1; Cf. Tosephta, Sanh. XIII, 1; T.B. Sanh. 110b bot.
- 426. MH p. 132, LL. 1-3; Cf. Tosephta, loc.cit.; T.B. loc.cit.
- 427. MH p.129, LL.1-2; p.134, LL.1-7; Cf. T.B. Sot. 48b-49a.
- 428. We are told that the verse, "Nadab and Abihu died and they had no children," (Nu.3.4) means that because they had no children, they were not saved in the after-life. MH p.129, LL.17-19; See comment on source in Note 422. The same Midrash applies the verse, "And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin." (Is. 27.9) and asks, "Indeed, can fruit remove one's sin?" The reply is that sons and daughters are fruit of one's belly. MH p.130, LL. 8-10.
- 429. MH ibid., LL. 10-19; Cf. T.B. Sanh. 100a bot.

430. MH ibid., L. 19 to p. 131, L.2; Cf. Deut. R. 6.5.
431. MH ibid., LL. 2-8; source unknown.
432. MH p. 126, L.21 to p.127 L. 6; Al-Nakawa erroneously attributes this story to Midr. Tanhuma. But there are texts that have allusions to it and to parts of it - as Seder 'Eliyahu Zuta, ed. Fr., pp. 22f; Gaster, Exempla of the Rabbis, pp. 92f, etc.; Similar thoughts and examples may be found in MH p. 129, L. 19 to p. 130 L. 3; p. 126, LL. 18-20.
433. MH p. 129, LL.2-14; See Comment on unknown Midrash in Note 422.