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THE RABBINIC CONCEPTION OF THE FAMILY
BASED ON THE MENORAT HA-MAOR OF RABBI
ISRAEL IBN AL-NAKAWA

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Who was Rabbi Israel ibn Al-Nakawa and what type of man was he? Scholars tell us that outside of the gruesome details of his death we know nothing of his life. But purely in conjecture we might hazard that our author was born around the beginning of the second quarter of the fourteenth century in Toledo, Spain. He may have received his education at the hands of Isaac ibn Sid who edited the famous Alphonsine astronomical tables and who was reader at the synagogue at Toledo and may still have been alive and active in Al-Nakawa's early youth, or else at the hands of Shemtob ibn Shaprut, one of Toledo's contemporary scholars. Al-Nakawa's middle years came perhaps during the reign of Peter, under whom, although he was surnamed 'the Cruel' the Jews of Toledo "reached the zenith of their power".¹ As has been noted, all this, of course, is conjecture.

1. Margolis, Max L. and Marx, Alexander, A History of the Jewish People, p.440

Of somewhat stronger fibre is the picture we may draw of the personality of Israel Ibn Al-Nakawa. His Menorat Ha-Maor shows that he received full and excellent training in the Jewish learning of his day and we may further surmise that he lived to a mature age, for such wisdom and such an outlook on life as he demonstrates could only have come with the years. He loved the literature of his people and he loved his people. He conceived of Judaism not merely as a creed to believe but as a way of life to be lived to the full. He was demanding without being severe and principled without being a martinet. He loved mankind because mankind was the living testimony of One for whom he had a greater love. God existed for them and they for Him and the Torah was the path upon which they might approach each other.

Perhaps Al-Nakawa married early in life and his wife must have been a second Beruriah and their marriage possibly blessed with two sons. The family must have been a happy one, perhaps even an inspiring one if we are to judge by his ideas on and attitudes toward marriage as an institution. Pious, God-fearing and man-loving, he rejoiced in the Torah all his days until he died his martyr's death--martyr to the God he revered, to the people he loved, and to the Torah which had been to him throughout his life a Menorat Ha-Maor upon the paths he trod.

We know for a fact that Al-Nakawa died together with Judah ben Asher in the Toledo massacres of 1391. He was descended from a pious and learned family who were known for their hospitality and support of Jewish scholarship and who had been prominent in Toledo for many generations.

The latter years of the fourteenth century were not happy ones for the Jews of Spain and heralded the wretched misery which was to be their future lot in that once happy haven. The fratricidal war between Don Pedro the son of Alfonso XI and his illegitimate half-brother, Henry de Trastamara, in which the Jews had taken prominent part in favor of the former had exhausted both the material and spiritual energies of the Jewish community whose very existence was imperiled when Don Pedro was finally defeated.

"The unhappy war and the evils following in its trail had stunted the Jewish mind and diverted it from intellectual to material interests. Disorganization proceeded with great strides. Indifference to scientific work resulted in so general an ignorance that what formerly every tyro was familiar with now passes for transcendent wisdom." 1

It was such a situation which Al-Nakawa saw and bemoaned and it was the alleviation of such a condition which was his objective in writing the Menorat-

1. Graetz, H., History of the Jews, Vol. IV, p. 140

Ha-Maor. These reasons the author himself outlines in his Introduction which is written in rhymed prose:

"The congregation of the Lord is in exile and her majesty is broken. Her glory and her might are fallen. Troubles run wild and anguish is heavy. Knowledge is decreasing and learning is forgotten."¹ Or in the words of Enelow in the Introduction to his edition: "With so much darkness round about him he (Al-Nakawa) felt there was particular need for the diffusion and perpetuation of the light of Israel's religion, of the Torah."² Moreover there was a need for a new presentation of such material as Al-Nakawa produced. Not only were the older works rare because of the usual labor and difficulty involved in copying, but also we may assume that masses of Jewish books were burned and otherwise destroyed at the time by Judaism's fanatical enemies.

The title of the work Menorat Ha-Maor was suggested to Al-Nakawa, as he tells us in his introduction, by a figure who appeared to him in a dream and urged him to begin the task of writing. That he was qualified to

1. Israel ibn Al-Nakawa, Menorat Ha-Maor, edited by H.G. Enelow, Vol. I, p.11.

2. Ibid, Ibid, Introduction p.16.

engage in such an enterprise from the standpoint of piety we can only surmise but we may assume from the point of view of learning that he was excellently equipped for his work. When we note the wide scope of the sources he uses and the facility with which he uses them we can not help but feel that he was well at home in the vast literature of Judaism. The items of that literature which he used for the basis of his work as they are mentioned in his introduction are as follows: The Bible, the Mishnah and the Tosephta, the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, the Mekilta, the Siphra and the Siphre, Pirke R. Eliezer, the Pesikta, the Halakot Gedolot, the Sepher Hekalot, Midrash Hazit, Midrash Hashkem, Midrash Tanhuma, Midrash Yelammedenu, Midrash R. Nehunyah b. Ha-Kanah, Responsa of the Geonim, Hupat Eliyahu Rabba and Zuta, Midrash Rabba, various responsa, Pirke R. Meir, the works of Maimonides, the works of Nachmonides, the Turim of R. Jacob b. Yehiel, the Siddur of R. Saadya and the Siddur of R. Amram.

Besides these which Al-Nakawa himself mentions in his Introduction, there are, as Dr. Enelow points out, other sources which the author mentions when he quotes them but not in the Introduction. These are the Sepher Miswot Godol by R. Moses of Coucy, the Sha'are Teshubah and the Hayye Olam by R. Jonah Gerondi

the Hilkot Teshubah by R. Eleazar of Worms, the works of R. Isaac Al-Fasi, the works of R. Asher b. Yehiel, the works of R. Abraham b. David, the works of R. Israel Ibn Israel, R. Saadya Gaon's Emunot we-Deot, R. Bahya Ibn Pakudah's Hobot Ha-Lebabot, Orhot Saddikim, Sepher Ha Yashar, and Midrash Yehi Or. Some of these sources are not existant today except as they may be found quoted in this and other works.

There is very little material of an original nature in the book. It consists mainly of hundreds of maxims of a gnostic nature and many midrashim. The work as a whole is completely Aggadic. Menorat Ha-Maor is divided into twenty main sections each of which begins with a verse containing an acrostic of the author's name and each of which deals with certain phases of Judaism, its religion, ethics and ceremonial observance. The twenty chapters are on Charity, Prayer, Repentance, Humility, Fixed Hours of Study, the Commandments and Their Fulfillment, Acts of Mercy, Observance of Sabbath and Holy-Days, Honoring of Parents, Marriage, Education of Children, Upright Conduct in Business, Proper Administration of Justice, Contentment, Equanimity, Avoidance of Flattery and Deception, Love of Comrades and Their Considerate Treatment, Cleanness of Speech, Keeping a Friend's Secret, and Good Manners.

As we can see from these chapter headings,

there are few phases of human life and endeavor which our author neglects. In his treatment, Al-Nakawa brings home one inescapable point clearly and emphatically-- that the writings of the sages and Rabbis, their policies and attitudes were predominantly human and natural. They avoided extremes of severity in regard to religious excesses almost as zealously as they avoided evil. Indeed they regarded such excesses as evil. They were concerned with the task of forging implements of Judaism by which the masses of the people could shape their own lives. The Torah was a chart for life, the wisdom of which surpasses understanding, but the rewards and virtues of which were obvious and splendid. It was not enough to believe in God and Torah, it was enough only when submitting to God's plan for mankind one lived in the revealed light of the Torah. The practice of Judaism was not intended merely to please God; the practice and living of Judaism was intended, and this second purpose is not of lesser importance, to make man moral and his life happy. Judaism was not only the best way to worship; it was the best way to live.

The purpose of the Menorat Ha-Maor and all similar ethical works was to bring this concept home to the minds of the people. That they succeeded is proven by the continued life of the Jewish people. There is

no "miracle" of Jewish survival. Just as there is no miracle involved when a stout ship manned by a stout crew, guided by expert pilots and following a course charted by a Master navigator comes safely home to port despite the severest storms, so there is no 'miracle' to our survival. The only wonder that may exist is that the worth of ship, and men, pilots and Navigator are not more widely recognized.

One of the chief values of Al-Nakawa's work is his obvious attitude that the principles he exalts and the means for attaining them which he outlines are not high in the heavens nor far across some distant sea. That the people may be in some doubt as to what is right and as to the best means of achieving that right he admits and so his candelabrum is for the purpose of showing that right and its path. Once so shown mankind is perfectly capable of living the moral life. And so by proverb and story, by maxim and example Al-Nakawa tells us of what that morality consists. From the simple style and pleasant mood of his book we may assume that it was intended for what in his time constituted "popular consumption". The stories and maxims are woven together in a sort of loose but effective continuity. The work reveals a deep and loving insight into human nature and particularly into the Jewish heart and temperament.

Al-Nakawa seems never to have distributed his work to any extent but it seems to have been extensively studied in another form under the name of Sepher Ha-Musar published in the name of Judah Ibn Kaalatz by his grandson. Ibn Kaalatz is said to have come into contact with Al-Nakawa's work and made a copy of it for his own personal use. Later his grandson, thinking it was an original piece of writing had it published and it became very popular.

The one existing copy of Al-Nakawa's manuscript is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England which Dr. H.G. Enelow edited in four volumes during the years 1929-1932. The excellence of Dr. Enelow's edition has been praised time and time again and needs no further compliment from the present writer. Dr. Enelow's edition was published by the Bloch Publishing Company in New York.

This present work is based upon Chapters IX, X, and XI of Menorat Ha-Maor and these are the first three chapters of the fourth volume of the Enelow edition.

CHAPTER II

פרק נשתי עשה

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE

"Judaism regards the establishment of family life through marriage as a duty obligatory on mankind and sees in the entrance into the marriage relation an act of life's supremest consecration."¹ In such words does Dr. Kaufmann Kohler express the Jewish ideal of the institution of marriage, and we find this ideal stressed time and time again throughout the sections of Menorat Ha-maor under discussion.

A. Marriage ordained by God

Of course any duty characterized as one 'obligatory on mankind' is of Divine origin. Perhaps the best illustration of the idea that marriage is ordained by God is the statement which tells us that forty days before a child is born the bas kol goes forth and announces: "The daughter of Soandso is destined to be married to Soandso!" And, thus, according to this authority, at least, marriages

1. Kohler, Kaufmann, Jewish Theology, p.316

are made in heaven.¹ Of course the statment is Haggadic but it is highly indicative of the attitudes toward marriage which permeated Rabbinic thinking. Marriage stemmed straight from God and must be regarded accordingly.

B. Necessity of Marriage

In the opening remarks of his tenth chapter Al-Nakawa reveals^{that} the basic Jewish reason for holding the family in such high regard and for maintaining the marriage is the moral destiny of every man. It is purely and simply because no man is in any way complete without a mate. Until a man has found and married his wife he is only half complete for when he has left his home and parents and has established his own home then he and his wife together are one flesh *וְהָיוּ בָּשָׂר וָחַד* (Gen, 2.24)²

As one reads through this section one becomes more and more convinced that what might at first appear to be nothing more than a clever piece of homiletics does in truth express a fundamental attitude of Judaism towards the importance and necessity of marriage. In the light of what we read in this material it becomes increasingly evident that Judaism regards a man as not

In this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, the references in numerals refer to page and line of the tenth chapter, Vol.IV of Menorat Ha-Maor.

1. 27.14; T.B. Sanh.22a
2. 37.13ff; Zohar,III, p 7a

truly a man, not truly developed spiritually and emotional-ly until he had matured in the rich and varied atmosphere of marriage and of all that marriage implies. The responsibilities, the pleasures, the conglomerate experiences of married life are vital in order that the individual's personality develop and grow into the full vigor and beauty of the blossom of manhood. It is interesting to note that in the larger sense Israel was not completely Israel, until she had been merged with God through the building of the Temple.¹ כן כש"ד"» מלכות אברהם ישראל וזו"ו ק"י

So vital to human welfare did God Himself hold marriage and the family to be that whoever does marry and beget children helps to keep the Shekina with Israel, while he who does not marry causes the Shekina to be re-² moved from Israel.

C. Qualities of the Worthy Wife

It is understood that marriage can fulfill these functions of enabling man to achieve his full stature and of uniting God with Israel only when the man has chosen his wife wisely and well. It is in an effort to aid the individual in making such a choice that Al-Nakawa and the authorities he cites direct a great deal of their wisdom. The terms most often used to denote a wise choice are כ"א"י" or כ"א"י" . An unseemly

1. 37.16

2. 36.17; T.B. Yeb. 63b-64a

choice would be ^{754e} 11'11c7 ~~11c7~~. We are told that one of the fundamental reasons for the importance of the choice of a worthy wife is so that the Torah will not be violated. For if a man is unwise in his choice he will violate four commandments of the Law, two positive and two negative. The two former are: Love thy brother as thyself" and "Thy brother shall live with thee". Substituting 'wife' for 'fellow' and 'brother' as does R. Nathan it is easily obvious that once a man has married unwisely and his folly begins to manifest itself to him, certainly he will be unable to love his wife and so he will divorce her and she will no longer live with him. As for the two negative commandments: "Thou shalt not take vengeance" and "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart", these two must be broken if a man has wed wrongly: he shall surely hate his wife and shall take vengeance by divorcing her. ¹

In order to avert such dire catastrophe from the vast household of Israel Al-Nakawa goes to much length to list the qualities which should attract a man to a woman as his prospective bride and to warn him from those attractions which are superficial and misleading. Above all, a man must sacrifice everything he has in order to marry the daughter of a "talmid hochom" ² for she was the true aristocracy of Jewish womanhood. For when a

1. 44.3ff; Abot d'R. Nathan, Vers. A. Chapt. 26
2. 41.7ff; Tal. B., Pes. 49a

Thus we see evidenced again, in the very human and natural matter of choosing one's wife, the same regard for human virtues and ethical excellences which find expression in every aspect of Jewish life and which is the very bedrock of Judaism. And once again we see that this regard is not merely for 'virtue's sake' but because the Rabbis realized that only through piety and ethical action and humility could real happiness for the family come about. Why should a man not marry for beauty? Not merely because beauty is vain but because once the beauty has gone with time, so also will his affection go; dissatisfaction will arise, resulting in the unhappiness of divorce or a long and endless period of bickering and misery with its resultant wretched effect upon the family and the community.

D. Duties of the wife and Husband toward each other.

Having once been favored with the choice of some fine young man, the duties of the wife begin. Now she must show her husband that he has done well in the matter of the selection of a wife. Her duties are many and demanding. Not only must she attend to the needs of the household and the training of the children, she must also be the guardian of the finances. She must adapt herself to her husband's every mood, cheer him, advise him, comfort him. She is required to take special care as to his

food, to respect his confidence and she is, of course, to love and guard her husband as the 'apple of her eye'. Moreover, she must have great respect for her husband's family and must be ready to forgo her own customs and habits if they do not conform to his, must, indeed, make his will hers to the extent that she becomes known as ¹ *בית אשה ואם דת אביה* "the daughter of her husband rather than the daughter of her father." She is to speak only when necessary and should leave her home but infrequently; and no matter how well-to-do her husband is and no matter how many servants there may be in the house it is her duty always to take a full part in the work to be done, for as ² is well known, idleness breeds iniquity.

The picture here presented seems rather a severe one and at first glance we might come to the conclusion that the wife, more than anything, is a servant to her husband. Nothing could be further from the truth. We must first understand that although it would seem that she has very little will of her own and must devote her every effort to the changing moods and desires of her husband, she will be such an ideal wife only to an ideal

1. 32.6ff

2. 69.5ff; Mishnah, Ketub. v.5

husband and that she will find herself happy to the direct ratio that she devotes herself to him. Al-Nakawa illustrates this by a very apt parable of a woman who was about to give her daughter in marriage. Just before she conducted her daughter to the home of the groom, she gave her the following advice:

"My daughter, stand before your husband continually and serve him with respect and reverence. Then he will humble himself before you and will be a servant to you and will honor you as a queen. But if you are arrogant, then he will be arrogant toward you, will think nothing of you, will conduct himself as your master and to him you will be no better than one of the serving girls." 1

The duties of a good wife are repeated and expanded upon several times in Al-Nakawa's chapter but the attitudes and duties of a man toward his wife ^{are} summed up in an admonition so significant as to be much more rich in meaning than the long lists of wifely obligations. We are told that if a man has a good wife, pious and modest, not given to ornament in her dress, and as faithful and loving to her husband when he is poor as well as when he is wealthy, when he has grown old as well as in his youth then concerning such a wife it is written:

אין דגכה מצינים אצק אן אדער אשה A man receives blessings only for the sake of his wife. If God is the source from whom all blessings flow, then surely

a worthy wife provides the channel through which they
come.¹ In such a light is a man to regard his wife
and in such a light must he conduct himself toward her,
continually showing her the highest honor. This is il-
lustrated by the injunction that a man must dress himself
worse than he can afford, his children as well as he can
afford,² and his wife better than he can afford. In all
ways he must accord her honor and respect. And even as
she is enjoined to hearken to her husband's advice so is
he expected to take her advice, especially if she is a
pious and virtuous woman. On this point there is a dif-
ference of opinion: Some say that this is to be true in
general while others insist that a wife's advice is useful
and of worth only in matters pertaining to the household
and he who heeds his wife in other, worldly matters will
rue it.³

Since the Menorat Ha-Maor is a collection
of opinions we cannot take one statement in it and say:
"This is Judaism's attitude". And so in this very impor-
tant problem of the position of the woman, the wife, in
Jewish society, we must try to sense the basic conception

1. 38.11; T.B. B. Mes. 59a

2. 39.4

3. 39.1ff. T.B. B. Mes. 59a

that lies beneath what appear to be differing attitudes. It is true that we have here a picture of a wife who must tend to her husband's every need and wish; who must answer promptly when he calls; who must subjugate her desires to his and her customs and habits to his so that she may come to be called "her husband's daughter." And although this is but one side of the coin we shall stop with it for the moment with this thought: What do men require of their deities. Is it not that the deity grant their wishes, hear their prayers, fill their needs? Granted that this is not the concept of theologians but that of the common man, we are concerned with the common man in this discussion. And because men require these things of their deities have we the right to say that the men consider their deities inferior to themselves? The idea is folly. Likewise, because a man may make certain demands upon his wife, because she too must know his needs and fulfill them, this does not mean that he conceives of her meanly but rather that she occupies an exalted status in his life and in his thinking. It is true that the position of the woman in Judaism may be different than that of the man,^{but} it is not necessarily less exalted.

"Both husband and wife have a sphere of their own in which they should rule. The outside world with its social obligations is man's, the domestic life, woman's. And only mutual understanding and mutual

consideration should guide each and not obsequiousness and lordliness. ¹

In such a way does Dr. Kaufmann Kohler characterize the Rabbinical conception of the relations between husband and wife. When we regard the obvious respect and honor in which a man must regard his wife we are convinced that in truth she is 'flesh of his flesh', their lives intertwinning in mutual love and respect so that each becomes a part of the other to the extent that it is almost foolish to make distinctions. A wife is one to be cherished, to be treasured, the merit by which her husband and her family receive the blessings of God. Thus the picture we get in these writings is a lovely and a wholesome one. So greatly is a man's wife to be cherished that should she die it is as great a catastrophe for him as though the Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed during his lifetime. ² To the Jewish mind and heart, of course, there is no greater tragedy.

E. Adultery

One of the greatest problems to Jewish ethical thinkers was that of adultery. So heinous did they hold that evil to be that those who indulged in it were considered idolaters. ³ And when one realizes

1. Kohler, Kaufmann, paper on "Harmonization of the Jewish and Civil Laws of Marriage and Divorce", Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, V.25, P.335ff.
2. 68.4f; Pirke R. Eliezer, Chap.32
3. 53.15, Yemenite Fragment, Ch. 15

in what contempt and disgrace the idolaters were held one can easily see what an abomination adultery was considered to be. Furthermore we learn that not only do adulterers break the seventh commandment but when they commit that act they are actually transgressing against the whole decalogue.¹ One of the reasons that adultery is so terrible an offense is that while most other transgressions involve only the individual himself in their guilt, adultery involves not one but two people. Therefore how much more obnoxious is that crime which not only causes one person to sin but also causes him to lead some one else into the same sin.²

The punishment for adultery is certain and devastating. It is adultery which causes the great droughts of the world³ and it was because of adultery in the midst of the people of Israel which caused them to be scattered into exile among the nations. Adultery along with slander and evil government is one of the three offenses which call for certain punishment in Gehinnom. Such punishment is as certain to come as a man is certain to^{be} burnt by a fire in his bosom and to have his feet scorched were he to walk upon hot coals. And

1. 54.5; Nu. Rabbah 9.12

2. 57.7ff; Yem. Frag. Ch. 17

3. 61.12f; Ibid, Ch. 18

just as certainly *כל נדבא חר איהו אייל... לא ינקו מדינו לל ג' חנוך*
 no man who has intercourse with the wife of another will
 be saved from the decree of Gehinnom." ¹ Indeed so ter-
 rible is the transgression and so horrible the punish-
 ment that one of the especial duties of the soul which
 God created within man is to guard him against the evil
 of adultery.

F. Relations with heathens

Also greatly to be guarded against was mar-
 riage and intercourse with the heathen, as we may well ex-
 pect. It was feared that if a man married a heatheness
 she would lead him from his Judaism and from his people.
 Furthermore, since the tendency for the children of such
 a union was to adhere to the religion of the mother,
 Judaism and the Jewish people would suffer a loss in that
 respect also. Judaism, which has always made for a well-
 knit group and which has rarely engaged in missionary and
 conversionist activities, has always fought and legislated
 against those tendencies which would weaken the solidity
 of her group. Thus we learn that Solomon, traditionally
 the very essence of wisdom, brought about the eventual
 destruction of the Temple and the final dispersion of
 his people (so intense is the Jewish feeling of disapproval

1. 62.2f; T.B. Sot. 4b

2.

of intercourse with the heathen that not even its heroes are whitewashed if they have so sinned.) For at the moment when Solomon wedded the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt, the angel Gabriel threw a rod into the sea, the sea subsequently spewed up a sandbank which came to be the land upon which was built the great city of Rome, the powerful destructive enemy of the Jews.¹ Since the material presented by Al-Nakawa which deals with the problem of intermarriage and intercourse with non-Jews does not give us a picture of the families resulting from such marriages nor of the influence of such practices upon the Jewish family, to go into a further discussion of the problem here would be of little profit.

F. Marital Intercourse

By far the greater part of Al-Nakawa's chapter on marriage is devoted to the attitudes and intentions on the part of both husband and wife during the actual process of intercourse. He takes material from two main sources: Sepher Ha-Kedushah ("The Book of Holiness") by R. Abraham b. David, and Iggeret Ha-Kedushah ("The Letter of Holiness") by R. Moses b. Nahman. He also uses material from other sources to illustrate the sanctity of the marital relations in Jewish thinking.

In his opening remarks on the subject our

1. 50.2; T.B. Sanh.21b

author teaches us that intercourse with one's mate is not to be indulged in for the sake of mere pleasure nor in a spirit of abandon but both husband and wife must remember at all times that they are engaged in an act tinged with holiness, for with this realization always in their minds then the offspring of their union shall¹ always be sanctified to the service of God.

They must always remember that God created the world as He willed it, with man and woman, established an eternal love between them and charged them to be fruitful and multiply. This He did in order that His good earth might become populated with those who bear His image and share His spirit. Thus a man and his wife must always remember that whenever, in their God-given love, they engage in intercourse, they are following a Divine precept, a mitzvoh and must conduct themselves accordingly. Because this mitzvoh is so important God has continually admonished and taught Israel all through its history concerning the right manner of practice. Therefore, says our author, it is important to be able to distinguish between that which merits regard and that which brings about punishment. And so great and so splendid is the reward which comes from the proper practice in these matters that he who through ignorance or wickedness sac-

1. 72.1ff

rifices these rewards is not only evil but exceedingly
foolish.¹

In order to provide his readers with the means by which they can come to know correct practice Al-Nakawa goes to the Sepher Ha-Kedushah and lists the אורח חיים

the four intentions which are those most admirable for those who are engaging in marital intercourse, which will insure their fulfilling the mitzvoh correctly and their obtaining the subsequent merit.

The first of these correct intentions, we learn is for the sake of לדבר. When a couple engage in intercourse with this intention they fulfill not only one, but three commandments לדבר לדבר לדבר. Of all of the four intentions, this is by far the most important, the most proper, and the most pleasing in the eyes of the Lord.²

The second commendable intention is of almost equal rank and involves a physiological concept. we learn that it is praiseworthy if a couple approach intercourse with the idea of contributing to the good health of the woman and of the embryo. For according to the opinion of R. b.David intercourse during the three first months of pregnancy is detrimental both to the wel-

1. 72.7ff
2. 73.12f

fare of the woman and of the embryo. However, intercourse during the second three months, although still not good for the woman is now beneficial to the good health of the embryo and during the last three months of pregnancy then both embryo and the wife are benefited by the intercourse

»ג/י »ג/י »ג/י 1

Often we have cause to wonder at such evidences of physiological concepts in the minds of our ancients and of later writers such as b. David. But usually we are surprised at their accuracy. In this case, not so. For we find that modern medicine defines coitus during pregnancy as definitely harmful both to the woman and to the embryo not only during the first three months but during the entire period of pregnancy.

"The danger from coitus is greatest in the first three months, when usually the fact of pregnancy is not always sure and in the last three months when the abdominal tumor is large and the element of infection more prominent. It is wise to restrict the practice (coitus) to the intervening months or, better, to advise against it entirely. 2

It should be noted that the Talmud forbids intercourse during pregnancy conditionally. Thus b. David was wrong in his medical prescription but we shall see that his idea in all was in keeping with the general attitude

1. 73.14ff

2. Delee, Joseph B., The Principles and Practice of Obstetrics, p.245

toward intercourse.

The third of the four intentions which are praiseworthy in one's attitude toward intercourse is the satisfaction of the desire of the wife, especially when the husband is about to leave on or has just returned from a long journey. Under these circumstances when a man, realizing that he is blessed with a pious wife

¹
ואינו בקרה נקרא חסיד . Therefore, the third proper and approved intention is that of satisfying the natural desires of the wife, and he sins who withholds himself from her.

These first three intentions (חסיד) have been of almost equal merit with the first (to fulfill the commandment 'be fruitful and multiply') taking some precedence. There is, however, a distinct difference in the nature of the fourth intention and it is, although correct, less meritorious. This fourth intention is evidenced when a man feels the sexual urge within himself and is afraid that it might drive him to sin, such as adultery or intercourse with a prostitute or a heathen, and therefore, instead of conquering that urge by strength of will, he gives it play in legitimate fashion with his wife. Because such an act will have the same desirable effect as when the marital act is performed with one of the

1. 73.18ff

more praiseworthy intentions, there is a reward even for this fourth but because he was not primarily concerned with these beneficial effects, its reward will be much less than that of the first three intentions since:

In the first three the husband is intent upon the principle of the matter and in the fourth he is intent only upon guarding himself from transgression.¹

When we consider these (*כיוון*) which are to guard and guide man in his carrying out of the Divine commandment to perpetuate the species we are struck with the human, natural attitude with which they are conceived. Judaism is noted for its policy of bringing spirituality into everyday life by the process of convincing man that he is well able to live according to the dictates of his spirit; thus we are not surprised that such an attitude should permeate Judaism's conception of the family. But when we see how the Rabbinic writers took one of the most touchy problems of life, lifted from it the veil of mystery and near-degradation which had hidden it from many and invested it with dignity and Divine purpose, we must once again bow to their wisdom and far-sightedness. Following the

1. 77.15ff

line of Jewish tradition, the Rabbis did not seek to change or to legislate that which is basically human and necessary, nor did they seek to disdain it or put it in a dubious light. Still less did they adopt the attitude that such natural and human and vital functions of life such as marital intercourse were evil but must be suffered because they are 'part of man's sinfulness.' They were too honest and too practical for any such shilly-shallying compromise. And so they developed a different procedure. Rather than put intercourse in an unfavorable light, as something that a man must endure but in shame; they raised it to the nature of a Divine command, emphasizing the fact that when a man and wife so engaged they were carrying out the will of God, were working in the Divine pattern for the achievement of the God-ordained destiny of mankind. They made a very temple of man's home so that all that was done therein took on the aura of sanctity and holiness and through this attitude was man's life made dignified and holy. Naturally and in the full light of their ethical consciousness they did impose this discipline: That whenever those involved neglected the Divine implications of their actions and conducted themselves in abandon, then they were guilty of desecrating something holy and were transgressors deserving of punishment.

In still another sense were the Rabbis realists in their idealism. Realizing that it was vital for all peoples, including their own, to reproduce themselves, they permitted no philosophy which would tend to interfere with such a process. They understood that a healthy and open attitude toward the matter of intercourse was vital to the well-being of the people, of the parents involved and the children to come. Knowing that ignorance is the source of much misery in these matters they tried to dispel such ignorance and to eradicate the subsequent misery by the promulgation of correct attitudes and necessary information.

When we turn to the Iggeret Ha-Kodesh of Nachmanides, as presented in the Menorat-Ha-maor we are presented with a conception of the nature and intent of human intercourse the beauty of which is, even for us in this modern day, overwhelming. In his treatment, Nachmanides takes one aspect which ben David has discussed, namely, the Divine nature of intercourse, and elaborates upon it.

We learn first that it is completely wrong to consider marital intercourse in any way wicked.

טוול' יאמאד אדגס כי דחבור (וראוי יש גנאי וכי צור, חלילין, חלילין)

"Let not any man think that there is anything disgraceful or wicked in proper intercourse: Heaven forbid!"

For if one would consider intercourse (always remembering, of course, that the intercourse referred to in this case is that which is permitted by Jewish law) as having any indecent or wicked aspect then he must also think of the *אברות*, the organs and limbs involved in coitus as being of an indecent and wicked nature and to think thus is impossible because God created the *אברות* and it is impossible for Him to create anything in which there is any evil. Any evil attitude toward these *אברות* come from the mistaken or evil conceptions in the minds of men and women. Before they sinned Adam and Eve regarded the *אברות* in the same light and in the same freedom as their hands and ears and eyes. This was because until they had sinned their every action was *קדש* but when they became more concerned with mere pleasure and enjoyment and forgot the holy nature of their act then *קדש* *אברות* *אברות*. Then they attached some shame to the *אברות*. It is important to note that their 'sin' was not in the act involved but in the change in attitude with which they approached it. So, too, with other limbs such as the hands. They can be holy as when they are engaged in such work as writing a scroll of the Law; but when they are engaged in stealing, for example, they are indeed shamefull. Thus with intercourse and its organs. God created them in

purity and goodness; shame is the product of the use to which men put them. Thus it behooves men so to conduct themselves that they shall not bring disgrace to that whose source is Divine.¹

Those who indulge in intercourse *פנימי פנימי* cause the Schekina to dwell in their midst while those who do not have this attitude drive the Schekina from them.² Moreover, the first will be blessed with fine and righteous children who will serve the Lord in holiness while the latter will give birth to children destined to be rascals. The general principle is this: *כשינייניו נאדור*

למנוח whenever- intercourse is approached in the attitude of *פנימי פנימי*³ there is nothing more holy and pure than it." In other words, the most holy act a man and woman can perform, according to Rabbinic Judaism is that which is merely countenanced by other creeds. With such a bedrock of beauty and holiness upon which to build, it is no wonder that the Jewish people have continuously succeeded in constructing such a marvelous and such a sturdy edifice of the family.

Those who maintain that in Jewish thinking

1. 90.4ff
2. 104.8ff
3. 93.8f

the wife occupies a position of subservience to her husband would find themselves well refuted by the conception of the husband's attitude toward his wife in the matter of intercourse. No man is ever to force his attentions upon his wife but must restrain his desires until she is completely willing. All who neglect this precept are considered boors and sinners. Nachmanides depicts the correct attitude to be assumed during intercourse rather fully. One must not act light-headedly *דקלול* nor think of trifling and unworthy matters. He should speak but sparingly to his wife during these moments. At the very beginning he is *אין אהבה ופחד* to soothe her and to make her relaxed and mentally and emotionally disposed. Furthermore, in these remarks he is to mix words of love and affection with words of piety and righteousness so that they both may realize that they are engaged in the fulfillment of a Divine precept and not in idle pleasure. All intercourse should be begun in such a manner when the woman is completely willing and her intention is, with her husband, then their offspring will be fully worthy and all upright people. If, on the other hand, the husband is careless and brutal, with no regard either for the desires of his wife nor the state of mind in which she approaches the act, then will the children grow up to be

of no account and a source of much trouble to their pa-
rents and their people.¹

There were other influences, Nachmanides tells us, upon the offspring than those produced by the mental and spiritual attitude of the parents during intercourse. We learn that after eating the body is hot and in a state of agitation and the blood is racing. Therefore, it is inadvisable to engage in the *ענין נשמה* just after mealtime. Should one so indulge, then the chances are that the offspring will be unclean and troublesome, therefor it is best to wait a few hours after the meal before indulging in coitus.² Then again, the location of the bed is of importance. It is well known, we learn, that when the bed is facing north and south, that the children will be males. This location of the bed is vital also, in order that the wife shall not suffer a miscarriage!³

It is natural that concern for the nature of a couple's children should occupy a great deal of Nachmanides's attention. He tells us that in order to provide the greatest amount of protection against disappointment in one's children and in order to make certain that one's children are worthy and good, not only must

1. 109.3ff
2. 95.22ff
3. 96.14f

the couple be pious in their conduct during the marital act but must also be extremely careful in their eating habits for the following reason: There are several stages in natural existence ranging from the four basic elements earth, fire, air and water up to and including rational man. The intermediate two stages are the vegetable and the non-rational animal. All existence continually progresses

אשר יאכלו לא יאכלו

through all the stages until they become part of rational man. For example, when a human eats the flesh of a non-rational animal, say beef, then what had once formed the sinews and muscles of the beast now forms the sinews and muscles of the man and thus has the beast progressed. And because there is such progress and because what a man eats becomes part of that man, it behooves future parents to be very careful in their diet so that their children will not inherit from them undesirable characteristics which have come to them from their eating of unclean meat.¹ For not only are muscles and sinews affected, but also the heart and mind. The flesh of swine and similar animals "close the doors upon wisdom and understanding" and the flesh of crawling things produces all sorts of evil diseases. Therefore we must be careful and

1. 99.1ff

since it is for this reason that the Lord made a distinction between 'holy' flesh (flesh permitted to be eaten) and the various forbidden foods."¹

In leaving the "Iggeret-Hakodesh" we learn that mistaken physiological conceptions (mistaken from a modern medical point of view) are not limited to Nachmanides. Al-Nakawa reports that malformed children such as the crippled, blind, deaf and dumb are caused by certain excesses of the parents during intercourse.² There are many forbidden phases of intercourse, infract-
tion of which is reflected in the nature of the children born from such intercourse. We shall merely list them briefly: Intercourse is forbidden in a sitting or standing position, by the light of a lamp, in time of trouble, famine or other communal disasters. These prohibitions as to occasions are relaxed somewhat and exceptions are made in the cases of those couples who are as yet without children.³

These prohibitions were obviously called into being to preserve the dignity, as far as possible, of the family even as it affects and is affected by the marriage bed. We must always keep in mind the sacred nature of the act as it was conceived by the great ma-

1. 99.23ff

2. 80.23ff; T.B. Ned. 20a

3. 82.1ff; T.B. Git. 70a

majority of the Jewish thinkers and that this sanctity and the general spiritual and physical welfare of the family and through the family the whole of the Jewish people was the chief concern of their thinking and law making. When we realize that they are trying to elevate something which is basically animal in nature to a much higher and more exalted stage, we are not to be surprised if, in this effort, they sometimes overstep the bounds of logic and human limitations. Indeed, if we examine the material closely it becomes obvious that such regulations and restrictions with a heavy emphasis on moderation do lead to healthy attitudes and practices and so succeed in dignifying the very basic aspects of the family and of family life.

Before leaving this phase of our discussion it might be well to note the attitude of the Rabbis toward contraception. Contraception in the one passage mentioned in our work is frowned upon except in certain cases. These exceptions are in the case of the minor, in order that she may not conceive and die; in the case of a wet-nurse, so that she may not conceive and her child achieve partial growth and then die (perhaps from lack of nourishment); and in the case of a pregnant woman, in order¹ that she shall not have to suffer an abortion.

1. 64.19ff; T.B. Mid. 45a

G. Irregular sexual practices

It might be well to note the attitude of the Rabbis, particularly as it helps illustrate their ideal of the family, toward what were regarded then and, in most cases now, as unnatural and irregular expressions of the physical need. We learn that according to the Rabbis ¹ *»מחלח אדם זכר או נקבה ייכנסו ויואכזבין דאין דאין»* and is worthy of death. He who practices onanism is considered in the same category. Pederasty, too, is a sin of similar consequence and those who engage in any of these practices are considered as beasts. The main objection of the Rabbis both to contraception and to immoral practices of the sexual desire is not that these acts are in themselves wicked. Rather, since it is the duty of all men insofar as they are able to perpetuate the species and to reproduce the image of God upon earth, then it is a crime when they expend their strength and their energies *»אין דאין»* without so perpetuating and so reproducing. It is against this crime that the Rabbis inveigh.

Thus as we close our discussion of the sexual aspect and practices of the Jewish family we are struck once again by the theme of dignity and sanctity which pervades its every facet. We see that the reason for intercourse between man and wife is the multiplication

1. 63.14; T.B. Mid. 13b

of God's image in the world, as such it must be considered as a Divine mitzvah, perhaps the most important in the Jewish code. Any deviation from this theme in actual life is a transgression of the greatest magnitude and may be visited in sorry form if not upon the parents then upon the children, in this case, Ezekiel to the contrary notwithstanding.

When we attempt to come to any general conclusions as to the Rabbinic attitude concerning the relations between man and wife, which is the chief concern of this chapter we realize, of course, that such relations formed the basis of and set the mood for the family as a whole. This will be shown in succeeding chapters of this discussion but is mentioned here primarily because any virtues which accrue to the Jewish family in general are largely founded upon the attitude existing, as here demonstrated, between the man and wife in particular.

"Marriage is the most exalted state in the eyes of the Jew" ¹ says Dr. Felix ~~Asper~~ ^{LEVY}; but also in the eyes of the Jew, particularly in the views expressed in Al Nakawa's work, just to marry and beget is not sufficient. Man must approach marriage with the realization of the

¹ LEVY
1. ~~Asper~~, Felix, Judaism and Marriage, Tract No. 19, The Tract Commission, Union of American Hebrew Congregations p.15

holiness of the life he was entering and a sense of the sanctity of the new relationship. And that realization and that sense of the sacred was to be the keynote of his attitude toward his wife. The rather strict and severe point of view maintained by most of the Rabbinic authorities against intercourse with non-Jewish members of the opposite sex, not to mention the stringent laws against adultery and irregular sexual practices may well have been based upon the dominant desire upon the part of these authorities to keep the family and the attitude in which it was held by the masses of the people free from the slightest taint of degradation and to make marriage not only lovely and desirable but sacred and filled with the spirit of the Divine.

"Jewish men make marvelous husbands" is a popular saying with a great deal of truth. We have the reason. The laws and attitudes maintained by the Rabbis were such as could be lived by the people. And so lived they made for very good, if not 'the best' husbands. And the nobility of the husbands was matched by no less a nobility on the part of their wives. The wives, as we have learned were picked with an eye to virtue rather than to the vainer, more ephemeral qualities. She is the mortal staff and stay to her husband, the source of his blessing; without her he is not complete.

She too shares in the same attitude of sanctity and dignity in regard to the marriage as does her husband and conducts herself accordingly. The theme of this section of Menorat Ha-Maor is לְבַיִת הַמִּשְׁכָּה הַזֶּה
וְהַזֶּה and it is the duty and privilege of the wife to make this statement a true one in her marriage. Husband and wife are bound together in a privileged duty to each other, to mankind, and to God; their attitude toward each other must always reflect a realization of the sacredness of this duty. The wife has her special and distinct obligations which she must fulfill and the husband his. Together they are to make of their marriage a sacred citadel and a shrine ever filled with the presence of God.

CHAPTER III

פרק גידול צינ

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

In his chapter on "Marriage" Al-Makawa has informed us that כָּל אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה חַיִּים וְנָתַתָּ לָהֶם בְּנִים וּבָנִים וְנָתַתָּ לָהֶם בָּנִים וְנָתַתָּ לָהֶם בָּנִים
פֶּן יִפְּחוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהָיָה כְּעֵשׂוֹן אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהָיָה כְּעֵשׂוֹן אֶת הָאָרֶץ
"Everyone who does not perpetuate the species is considered a murderer!"¹ In other words, he who fails to bring life into the world is as evil as he who takes life from the world. In the same passage we learn that he who is thus derelict in his duty is as though he were decreasing the image of God in the world. For man was created in God's image and he who does not bring forth children into the world is decreasing the number of the images of God. This is the opinion of Rabbi Akiba. However responsibility does not cease with reproduction. In the eleventh chapter of his Menorat Ha-Maor entitled "Education of Children" Al Makawa demonstrates the principle that such education was one of the most vital of the privileged duties of the Jewish parent.

1. Menorat Ha-Maor, Chap. X, p.67.3ff; T.B. Yeb. 63b

A. Necessity of Education

In the Pesikta we find the following pious observation addressed to the Lord:

"O Lord, when you give a son to the heathen, they let him go uncircumcized,....and when he is grown they bring him to the temples of their idolatries and from that time on he is a source of nothing but trouble to you. But Israel! Whenever you grant them a son he is circumcized after eight days, redeemed after thirty and as he grows he is brought into the schools and synagogues and from that time forth he blesses Thy name every day of his life." 1.

In the preceding chapter we noted that the main intention of marriage for the Jewish family was ultimately the sanctification of the name of God and we noted also that the spirit of that intention was to permeate every phase of married life. In a similar sense, as demonstrated by the passage quoted above, was the training and education of the young to be conducted. Learning was not important for itself or for any practical purpose to which it might be put; learning was necessary to the end that God be sanctified by it directly or insofar as it enabled man to sanctify God in other ways. With this as its theme, it is easily obvious that education was considered an obligation to God and as such was held in tremendous regard by the people of Israel. Moreover, such a spirit permeated the very

1. 128.7ff (In this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, the references in numerals refer to page and line of the eleventh chapter of Vol. IV, of Menorat Ha Maor

nature and content of such education and permeated it, as the vast majority of the phases of Jewish life were permeated, with an air of holiness.

There are four duties which a father must discharge in regard to his sons. The first of these is circumcision, the second is redemption, the third is education both in Torah and a trade, and the fourth is to secure a proper wife for his son.¹ The Jewish attitude

toward the necessity of leading one's children in the path of right is most vividly characterized by the following statement: *עוֹלָם הָיָה וְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה וְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה*

וְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה "It is better that a man die or lose the sight of his eyes rather than raise an evil son."² The reason for Isaac's going blind late in life was to prevent his seeing the wickedness of Esau. It is everywhere agreed in our study that the best time to start the prevention of such wickedness in one's son is in very early youth. If a man were to wait too long before educating his son in that which is right, he will follow his natural inclinations which may well lead him into evil since, by nature he is averse to study and instruction and as a result may fall into evil ways.

1. 135.10ff; T.B. Kid. 29a
2. 118.12

B. Method of Education

Although the sages stand agreed on the value of an early start in the education of the child, we are cautioned not to overdo it during the child's youth but to demand of the child כפי שיעורו יכול לסבול, as much as he can do according to his years." Just as when we break in an ox new to harness we do not press it to plow the whole field the first day, but begin by accustoming him to the harness and the field and to the task of plowing by easy stages; so with a child do we start with easy pleasant stages in order to accustom him to the task of studying Torah so that it will not be too difficult for him but will be pleasant and easy.¹

A glimpse into the possible pedagogic techniques of the times is revealed in the advice to those who are interested or engaged in the task of teaching the young. Whenever the child shows disinterest in his studies he is to be tempted with candy and cookies, such as children like, ~~and~~ⁱⁿ order to induce him to study. Whenever the child has matured sufficiently that these bribes have lost their appeal for him and his desires are different he is to be tempted with new clothes and the like. Thus the rewards progress as the young man matures. They progress from clothing to money and ritual

1. 120.15

ornaments, to the promise of being called a great scholar, then a Rabbi, then a *קובץ* then *אז כי דיין*. This continues until the scholar sees the speciousness of all of these inducements and realizing the *אמת ויחורר* rejects them and instead engages in the study of the Torah *אמת*.¹ Thus he will have progressed through all of these unworthy, albeit necessary, stages until he comes to see the real truth and value of what he is doing and in such a manner comes to the stage where *אמת ויחורר אמת ויחורר אמת ויחורר*

We have here in this idea much more than a pedagogic technique. We learn from it that the duty of a father to his son is not only to educate him, but to inculcate within him an appreciation of the Torah and of the vast treasures which are its unique wealth as the word and will of God. The education is complete only when the son realizes that the revelations of the Torah are the only true way of life.

But sweet bribes are not the only means by which a father might induce his son to study. The Proverbial admonition *אז כי דיין* was not frowned upon by the Rabbis whenever such means were necessary. We are assured that every wise man was chastised in his youth by his father and every evildoer or unbeliever was certainly the victim of the overindulgence on the

1. 121.8ff.

part of his father.¹ Even if a son is stupid the father should not despair of teaching him and, because of the difficulty involved, make no effort at all to educate him. Rather should he make every effort to overcome his son's handicap and to teach him Torah and ethical conduct. And if, in truth, he is too stupid to learn much then he must be educated at least to the extent that he is able to read the Bible and to pray so that he shall not fall into the category of *לוי נפר*² Indeed, a Jewish child needs only to be able to make the "Amen" response in order to enter the good life of the world to come,³ if he should die while yet a child.

However, the father was not limited to instruct by precept. He had also to teach by example. A father must be extremely careful, especially in the presence of his son, to guard himself from unseemly speech and, of course, from unseemly action. Any unworthy deed or act is doubly evil when in the presence of one's son. The reason is clear: that the son shall learn no evil from his father, and that so no occasion may arise in which the father will reproach his son for some misdeed and the reply will be *האן פוהן פוהן* Have you not done

1. 122.12ff

2. 117.15ff

3. 131.18ff; Tosephta, Sanh.13.1

likewise yourself." And whenever some third person acts wrongly and it comes to the attention of the father, it is his duty to call the attention of his son to the evil of the act, explain why it is evil, and that the deed will bring certain punishment to the offender. All this in order that, *"שילגנו נדבר דציני נה/ ויגלהק ממנו וכיוצא בזה"* the thing will be disgraceful in the eyes of the son and he will keep far from it and similar evils." Likewise, when the father hears of some especially meritorious act, he is to call attention to its merit and explain wherein lies its virtue and assure his son that such actions bring certain blessing to him who so acted.

"כדי שישמח נה/ וילכוו אחריו" in order that the son will hearken and come to love to do similarly ethical acts." In such a way will the son come to hate evil and to do what is right. Moreover, the father must take his son to the synagogue in order to encourage his son's attendance, and he should also go with his son on errands of mercy so that his son shall become accustomed to these things and shall seek to do them himself. As a result of this instruction the father will bring blessing to himself¹ and his son.

C. Rewards to parents for education of children in Torah

The Rabbis in their wisdom realized that

not only the children but the fathers had to be motivated in this task of education and thus they enumerated the delights and pleasures accruing to the parents who were diligent in this duty and contrasted them with the penalties that might fall to their lot if they were lax. To us this ~~not may~~ seem to be a very exalted technique but it is necessary that we remember that one of the chief reasons for the tremendous value of the Jewish contributions to family life and, for that matter, life and religion in general, is that it approached the situations which grew out of its religious teachings realistically, made allowance for human limitations and shaped its doctrines accordingly. Just as a child had to be appealed to in terms of its growing and changing desires, many of which in the early stages were not particularly exalted so that וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב
וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב so the father, too, has to be influenced by things which are important to him, in order that he might be eager to teach his son diligently and to lead him in the right paths.

Consequently we find the promise of happiness in both this world and the world to come extended to him who is careful to teach his son. On the other hand he who neglects the education of his sons not only is not included ^{among} the fortunate ones who will have a portion in the וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב
וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב וְהָיָה הָאָבִיב but even his life in this world will be filled with

worry and trouble because of his ignorant and wicked sons.¹ We learn also that a child who has studied Torah and who has lived a good life may redeem the soul of his father from endless wanderings and laborings in Gehinnom as a result of his (the father's) misdeeds:

וְכֵן יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת הַנְּשָׁמוֹת הַזֵּוֹת לְעוֹלָם הַחַיִּים
 "וְכֵן יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת הַנְּשָׁמוֹת הַזֵּוֹת לְעוֹלָם הַחַיִּים"

If the fathers are wicked and the sons are righteous, (their righteousness) brings the fathers to share in the portion of their children in Heaven.²

In a rather vivid illustration of this point Al-Hakawa tells the story concerning Rabbi Akiba and a sinner whom he found doomed to eternal slavery in a graveyard as his portion in Gehinnom because of the fact that he had committed every possible crime among which was intercourse with a betrothed woman on Yom Kippur. Because of the magnitude of his sins he held no hope for his future. Upon questioning him Akiba ascertained that he had left the woman pregnant. Akiba searched out the child, found him to be ignorant and uncircumcized; whereupon he had the boy circumcized; taught him Torah until he was able to recite the Bor'chu; whereupon the boy's evil father was released from Gehinnom's evil de-

1. 121.1ff
 2. 130.15ff

¹
 cree. Moreover, a man may be redeemed from Gehinnom by
 a worthy descendant of even four generations later, as
 the Rabbis interpret the verse:

בְּיוֹם הַקִּיּוּם אֵלֶּיךָ יָשׁוּבִים אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם
 "פ' אר"ל

"פ' אר"ל We cannot interpret the
 verse to mean that God would punish all the way to the
 third and fourth generations for the sins of another man
 for this would not be in accord with His attribute of
 justice. However, His mercy would permit Him to re-
 lease a man from an evil decree because of the virtue
 of some great, great, grandson.²

Of course these theories seem far-fetched
 and extreme but they were the terms in which our fore-
 fathers thought and it is not necessary to elaborate upon
 the obvious deduction that training of the children and
 right living and education were of sufficient importance
 as to extend their influence out of this world into that
 mysterious and wonderful "World to Come" which was the
 hope of the Jewish heart, and to its counterpart, Gehinnom,
 which was the mystical 'bogey-man' of Jewish thinking in
 that it involved an absence from that future world.

D. Vocational Training

It was noted at the beginning of this chap-

1. 127.1ff
 2. 128.13ff

ter that not only was the father obligated to teach his son Torah, but also, a trade. For *מי שנין מלאך אין קנין אומנות* "

מי שנין מלאך אין קנין אומנות Everyone who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him thievery." ¹ This is a rather practical observation and substantiates the oft made contention that Judaism deals with the realities of human existence as well as with its ideals. However, we are warned that emphasis must not be put on learning a trade at the expense of learning Torah. For a man's use in a trade and the profit it may bring to him are subject to such vagaries of human existence as loss of strength and sickness and old age while Torah serves him in good stead during all of these emergencies. ²

The rabbis made a distinction between trades that are worthy for Jewish fathers to teach their sons and those that are not. It is interesting to note that some of the trades frowned upon are those of the donkey driver, the camel tender, sailor, shepherd, and shopkeeper, since the majority of those who engaged in these trades often lacked good character. ³ In those trades which are permitted we learn *שלא צריך מן האומנות ולא צריך מן* "

שלא צריך מן האומנות ולא צריך מן There are no trades which in themselves make a man poor or rich, but all comes ac-

1. 135.15f
2. 137.10ff; Mishnah, Kid. 4.14
3. 136.21ff; Ibid

according to the merit of the individual"¹ and further-
more

אין אדם אומנות אין דין ארנ"ק / ארש"ק

Every trade has its wealthy and its poor." All this to warn the father that if he teaches his son a trade, it is his duty to teach him well in order that he might earn a living from it. It is important that a man have a trade and do well in it for one of those factors which avert the evil decree of Gehinnom is for a man to work hard and to burden himself in order to be able to support his family through his own labor that he shall not have to resort to charity.² We are not, however, to deduce from this statement that those families who were the recipients of charity were considered unworthy and placed in an unfavorable light. And by no means were they to be punished for having depended upon charity. The Rabbinic conception of charity both in regard to those who gave and those who received was most exalted and dignified and, in some respects, has yet to be improved upon. It is only that a man must make every effort to provide for his family through his own efforts and then, after having made such an effort he is, through force of circumstances out of his control, unable to provide sufficiently, he may in full dignity request outside help.

1. 136.13; Ibid

2. 133.18

However, Judaism, frowned on slackers and held as particularly contemptible those who made a "good thing" of public support. This, too was one of the concepts which the father was to impress upon the mind of his son. First, that self reliance was best, but that it was not unworthy to seek help when absolutely necessary in order to maintain the health and well-being of his family. Indeed, were he not to do so, he would be guilty of transgressing God's law for men.

Thus Jewish education, the training of one's children embraced many fields. It was not limited to the Torah but was to include the teaching of all that would help the children lead a full, good, and worthy life. In all of this, however, there was one precept which the father himself had to heed: *ואין אדם יכול ללמד אחרים עד שיאמרו* " "

אדם חייב ללמוד קודם שילמד אחרים Since a father is obliged to instruct his son in the Torah, it is vital that the father first had to educate himself.¹ And we have seen that the father was expected to be well versed in the trade he taught his son, also. It is obvious, also, that no father could instruct his family in moral conduct who did not have an exalted conception of

1. 142.17ff; T.B. Kid. 29b.

cating them into the minds and hearts of the children. There is tremendous significance in the above statement for us today when we find so much emphasis upon the external forms and molds of religion and something of a neglect of the spiritual ingredients which must first fill those forms and without which the externals may grow to be something worse than useless.

Joshua ben Gamala enjoys an enviable place in Jewish tradition and the part he played in establishing a type of Jewish school system is, traditionally,

one of the reasons for his fame. " *בבבא ורבי יהושע גמלא ורבי יהושע בן גמלא*
יהושע בן גמלא ורבי יהושע בן גמלא

remember this man in honor for were it not for Joshua ben Gamala, the Torah would be forgotten in Israel.¹

It seems that Joshua ben Gamala, realizing the tremendous disadvantage of those children whose fathers were unable to teach them or who had no father living, decreed that in every city, town, and village schools be established for public instruction of children. Originally the entrance age was sixteen or seventeen. However, when it was found that this was not practicable, ben Gamala lowered the age of entrance so that the boys entered at six or seven and were thus more amenable to the teacher's educational techniques.

1. 143.1ff; T.B. B. Batra, 21a

If there were many children it was the duty of the community to hire sufficient teachers that all would be adequately instructed. According to one authority, the ideal class should consist of twenty-five pupils.¹ It was deemed necessary that the children should attend school not only all day, but also some part of the night in order to fulfill the injunction "וְלַיִל כִּי יִלְמְדוּ" "and at night they shall study."²

It is interesting to note that only a married man is qualified to teach children for, in some cases the children's mother brings them to the school and the teacher, if unmarried, might be led to unseemly thoughts. For the same reason it was thought best that no woman be appointed teacher for in some cases the fathers brought the children to the school.³

Our author has none but the highest praise and promise of reward for those who undertake to teach those children who would, otherwise, not be taught. Indeed "כֹּהן נִמְשָׁךְ דְּחִדְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּאִלּוּ אֶשְׁרֵי" "as if a priest were of the house of Torah."

All who teach the children of others is considered as though he had created them." Moreover "וְכֹל מֵמַלְמֵד דְּחִדְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּאִלּוּ בָרָא" "and every one who teaches in the house of Torah as if he had created them." "וְכֹל מֵמַלְמֵד דְּחִדְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּאִלּוּ בָרָא" "and every one who teaches in the house of Torah as if he had created them." "וְכֹל מֵמַלְמֵד דְּחִדְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּאִלּוּ בָרָא" "and every one who teaches in the house of Torah as if he had created them."

1. 139.6ff
2. 139.14ff; T.B. B. Batra 21a
3. 140.1ff; Mishnah Kid. 4,13

though the Lord has made an evil decree against the world, the decree will be voided for their sake." ¹ Thus we see that the responsibility of the Jewish family was not limited within the bounds of that family, and "familyhood" could be extended to all of the congregation of Israel when necessity demanded. Furthermore, we are not to assume that the responsibility of the father to one outside of his family was limited merely to education. For we learn also: *כל ייטבדל יתום דיתום מיתום מיתום ייתום* "Everyone who raises an orphan within his family, it is accounted to him as though he had given birth to the orphan." ² And we have seen that giving birth is one of the greatest Mitzvos in which the Jewish people may participate.

Here again we have another remarkable concept of the Jewish family. We have this picture of a father engaged in teaching not only his own children but also those whose father is unable to teach them either because he is incapable or because he passed away. But more than this, we have the picture of the family welcoming the orphan not alone to the privileges of education but to full membership in the family. If we had no other material upon which to base a conjecture as

1. 141.10f
2. Ibid. 14f

to what the nature of the Jewish family might be, we could derive enough from this one principle, welcoming the orphan, to bring us to the conclusion that the family was of a moral nature, motivated and guided by principles of the most exalted character. It is not normal for a culture to be moral in one respect and dissolute in another and such interest in and consideration for those who would usually be strangers to the family cannot but indicate a high regard both for the members of the family themselves and for the concept of the family as an institution.

We have seen that the education of the Jewish child falls into two separate, although not unrelated categories. The first, naturally, is instruction in Judaism, morals, tradition, and the proper observance of its ceremonials and rituals. Josephus has said: "Our principle care of all is this--to educate our children well." We have learned the truth of this statement from Al Nakawa's discussions. The reason for such interest in education is obvious: No one could be a true Jew unless he knew how to worship his God. worshipping God sincerely and consistently and well involves a tremendous amount of learning, for the whole of one's life was a continuous act of worship. Asleep

and awake *הכלל* every action was enhanced and given Divine implication by blessing and prayer. Naturally to know the best and most dignified manner of conducting every action required much learning and was very important. Education was our "principle care" for thus every one learned that life is Divine and must be lived accordingly. To this end was education dedicated. The aforementioned "riddle of Jewish survival" in the light of this is not so difficult as the modern riddle of Jewish disinterest and, in many cases of Jewish scorn, for Jewish learning and values. Today and for some decades we have been more concerned with anti-Jewishness and the problems it presents, than with Judaism and the values for which it stands.

Reinforcing, as ever, the spiritual and the ethical with the practical Jewish tradition insists the son be taught an honorable means by which he may make sufficient to support himself and his family. Judaism, except in the stated few cases on grounds of morality, makes no distinctions between trades. All are equal. Hitler is right when he labels the democratic ideal as Jewish. Nowhere are there passages urging men to garner wealth for its sake alone. Realizing that want makes for misery and that the needs satisfied makes for happiness, the Rabbis taught that the

children be supplied with the means and techniques of satisfying those needs. The morality taught was not distinct from the trades taught and the ethical implications of one were to find practical application in the other and in every phase and aspect of the life of the individual.

In concluding this chapter concerning the Jewish attitude toward the education of the child, perhaps no more significant statement could be found that tells us:

כל עמל אביו חינוכו מאלו חינוכי משה ואהרן

"(כיון) כאילו קבלו מנביא" Everyone who teaches

his son Torah, Scripture accounts it to him as though he had himself received it at Mt. Sinai.¹ We can see how easily this is true. In the spirit of the statement quoted above, which certainly all of the thinkers in Judaism share, each father who so teaches his children is a Moses fashioned small and every son, so taught, a microcosm of the holy congregation of the children of Israel. Each home is a living Sinai and in the sacred act of teaching Torah, father revealing to son, is the divine drama of that elder Sinai, elder Moses, elder חינוך מן reenacted. Thus is that destiny laden moment in Israel's eternal history, the חינוך מן

1. 136.2f; T.B. Kid. 30a

kept ever living and glowing in Israel's heart and mind. And if this drama had not been repeated down through the generations of Israel in every Jewish home and Jewish community worthy of the name, then would the original *דער חורבן* have lost its vital force for the world, and Israel would have been derelict in her destiny and mankind the worse.

CHAPTER IV

END OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER IV

RESPECT FOR PARENTS

Until the present we have been concerned in this discussion first with the responsibilities of the husband and wife to each other in their family relationships and secondly with their responsibility in regard to the education of the children. It has been discovered that the responsibilities in both cases are great and they are conceived in no light fashion. It has been further discovered that these responsibilities, if they have been approached in a conscientious manner and executed to the best abilities of all of the parties involved, serve to make the family a very vital and holy institution in Jewish life. The discussion now concerns itself with the duties which fall to the lot of the children in the family the execution of which duties indicates, to some extent, just how successful the parents have been in the discharge of their duties and in maintaining a proper attitude and atmosphere in the home. For we may safely

In this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, the numerical references refer to page and line of the ninth chapter of Menorat Ha-Maor

assure that the virtues and faults of the parents are, to a large extent found to be reflected in the actions and attitudes of the children.

A. Reasons for Honoring Parents

Al Hakawa begins his discussion concerning the honor due to parents with a most startling assertion: "כִּי דָאֵל קִי אֵל קִי דָאֵל" God considers it (honoring one's father and mother) more important than honoring Him." ¹ The evidence for such an assertion being that since men honor God, so far as sacrifices were concerned, from their possessions such as crops and herds, if they have no possessions they are not obligated to such forms of honor, but whether a man has any material possessions or no, he must honor his parents. We cannot be sure that this voices general rabbinic sentiment and is not a bit of homiletical extravagance, but we can be certain that if God saw fit to make the honoring of parents one of the Ten Commandments, it must certainly have been of tremendous importance to Him and to His people whom He chose.

The reason for such honor and respect is stated in the well known midrash which tells us that the mother and father and God are partners in the creation of the child and therefore, "וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ" "and he shall bow to his father and mother."

וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ the honor due to father and

mother is equal to that due the Shekina.¹ The reverse also is true, all who do not so honor their parents sin against God Himself. Therefore those who treat their parents with proper respect and thus show honor to God, cause the Shekina to dwell amongst them while those who do not so conduct themselves, cause the Shekina to depart from them.

However, we learn that the mere fact that the parents brought the children into the world is not the main reason for their deserving honor and respect:

"כי שלש מצוות נאמרו להם כשהביאם אל העולם ואין להם חלק בהן" (אבות ד' א')

For when they brought them into the world, they were intent only upon their own pleasure."² (Our previous discussion to the contrary notwithstanding, see above p.10ff.)

But the main reason for the injunction to honor our parents is because they teach us the ethical way of life by which we merit coming into אמאל "קצ"א. This is

vital for אמאל "קצ"א "עכ"ל"א אמאל "קצ"א אמאל "קצ"א אמאל "קצ"א

it were better for a man never to have been born if he does not merit life in the world to come."³ For this reason, also, the Rabbis are of the opinion that if one

1. 13.14ffT.B. Kid. 30b

2. 18.4

3. Ibid.2

must make a choice between honoring one's parents who brought him into this world and his teacher (when not his parent) whose instruction brings him into the world to come. *לכבוד פרוה* honoring the teacher takes precedence.

All this is not strange when we remember that the goal of every Jew worthy of the name was that ethical life through which he could come to enter the *לכבוד פרוה*, and thus any person who helped him live that life was deserving of his highest regard. Moreover, if the son perceives that his father is evil and is seeking to lead him (the son) in his own evil ways *לכבוד פרוה* "לכבוד פרוה

לכבוד פרוה for example, if the father seeks to teach his son to steal or to murder or similar crimes," then the son must not observe the commandment concerning respect for his father but must forsake his father and his father's teachings. ¹ However, we may assume that this last is a phenomenon rare not only in Israel, but in most of the families of humanity.

B. Support of Parents

Perhaps the most material expression of parental regard on the part of children was evidenced by the fact that the children were, when the circumstances demanded, expected to support or to contribute

to the support of their parents. Not only was such support expected, but it had to be rendered in the proper spirit and manner. Whenever the parents were in such circumstances as to require the financial help of their children, the children were expected to provide food, clothing, and a home for ¹ *לפיכך* "for these were the essence of honor" when rendered in the proper spirit. This support was never to be given grudgingly but always cheerfully, remembering that it is a true pleasure and privilege to be able so to serve one's parents. The food and clothing were always to be the best that the children could afford and according to that to which the parents had been accustomed all of their lives, whenever possible. Their own particular desires were to be heeded and supplied. For example, if one's father was old and in the habit of eating early in the morning before the sun had risen and was to ask his son to feed him, the son was not to respond "How can you be hungry while it is still dark"? but must immediately procure food for his father, preferably his father's favorite dish.² The children's attitude must always be one of respect and happiness to serve in these things

1. 14.11ff
2. 16.11ff

One so honored his parents not only for the love and regard he had for them but, as a Divine commandment, such honor was worship of God and must be carried out in a manner befitting that worship, gladly and with dignity and not meanly in such a way as to make the parents feel humiliated and shamed because of the circumstances that made them dependent upon daughter and son.

Although daughters received no mention in the chapter concerning the education of children, yet here they share equally with the sons in the responsibility of supporting the parents. If the daughter is unmarried, or widowed or divorced, *אין אדם חייב לה* son and daughter share equally in this manner of honoring their parents.¹ However, if the daughter is married, then she is freed of this responsibility, but this exemption does not hold in the case of the married son.

In case the parents did not live with the children, whenever they wished to pay their children a visit, the children are expected to receive them cheer-²fully and to stand the expense of the journey.

So important did the Rabbis hold the proper support of the parents to be, and so realistic were they in their conception of human nature that they took

1. 16.3ff; T.Y., Kid. 61b
2. 15.13ff

ticular act of honoring parents, if it is possible to get another to perform the Mitzvoh for him the child should do so and concern himself with the act of parental respect. However, if a substitute is not available, the Mitzvoh must be performed first and after it has been correctly discharged, then comes the act which is in respect of parents.¹

We find that there were other choices which might confront the individual in this matter and concerning one such choice the Rabbis taught that if one must choose between showing honor to father or mother, he must first show respect to his father. If it is possible to show respect to both together, fine; but if not, the father takes precedence. It is natural for the child to show more honor to his mother since it is she who bore him; but it is his duty to give precedence to his father since it is the father who instructs the child in Torah and brings him to the ² (C2) *plink*. For this reason is he to be shown honor first. (See above pp.68f) However, we are to be certain that this sentiment implies no disrespect nor lack of concern for the mother. She is always the object of the tenderest love and regard. Al-kakawa tells the story of Rabbi Tarphon who

1. 19.23ff
2. 23.12ff

was wont to carry his mother on his back when she became very aged and, at one time, when her shoes became unloosed, permitted her to walk on his hands until she had reached her bed.¹ This is only one story but it illustrates the universal attitude for we can be sure that such an attitude on the part of the Jewish sages were not exceptional but were shared by the great rank and file of the Jewish people. From the tremendous regard shown for women in the vast majority of cases in both Biblical and Rabbinic writings, we cannot think otherwise.

So important and vital did the Rabbis hold the commandment of *קראתיו קרי* to be that if a man was so evil as to be the greatest sinner imaginable, yet he was assured of a portion in the world to come if he but observed the commandment in regard to honoring parents.

"וְאִם אִישׁ יִהְיֶה עֹשֶׂה כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת וְלֹא יִקְרֵא אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אִמּוֹ כִּי כֹהֵן יִהְיֶה אֲדָמָה יִהְיֶה וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ חֵלֶק בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּיִת וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ חֵלֶק בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּיִת" (Deut. 21:17-18)

A sinner, even though he commit every possible transgression, because of the fact that he honored his parents, shall achieve a suitable reward.² From

this perhaps extravagant statement it is easy to see that the problem of parental honor and regard was one

1. 21.2ff; T.Y. Peah I.1
2. 17.9ff.

which was of great concern to the Rabbis and because of this concern on their part there has come to us one of the very noblest aspects of their conception of the family. The Jewish family has become rightly famous for the strength of its family ties, part of the reason for which is this stress upon and high regard for its stress on filial piety and respect and honor in which the parents are to be eternally held.

In this chapter of the Menorat Ha-Maor, the shortest of the three chapters under discussion, we come to a concept rather unique for its time. In the Jewish family we see discipline and order, but not a discipline and order which imposed from the top down but is a result of a healthy attitude emanating from all of the members of the family as a result of, and guided by Jewish religious thinking. By no means do we get the idea from the material presented that the father was the absolute lord and master the natural object of reverence and obedience. Rather are we shown that the parents are deserving of honor because of their acquired merit which makes them ~~אבות~~ ^{אבות} / ^{אבות} partners with God. Parents are not to be respected and obeyed merely because they are the heads of the house but because of their adherence to right, they deserve consideration. we have learned that if they do not so adhere to right

they are not to be accorded such respect and their children are justified in withholding it from them; indeed they are warned against such parents lest they follow in their ways.

The Rabbis were obviously cognizant of the truth that such values as respect and honor cannot be achieved for a people by mere legislation. Since the honoring of what is good and moral had from Israel's birth, so to speak, been vital to her to the extent that it became inherent in her religious character, the Rabbis realized that parents could be worthy in the mind of the Jew only to the extent that goodness and morality were dominant in them. This implied a dual responsibility. One upon the children, of course, that when they recognized such good they were to respect it. And the other upon the parents which said that they must so conduct their lives as to be worthy of the respect of their children. The Rabbis were experts in many fields and not the least of these was the field of human nature. They well knew that those whom we sincerely honor and respect we come to emulate. Therefore, with children honoring virtuous parents and following in their ways would Jewish morality be strengthened within the Jewish people and preserved eternally through its children for generation after generation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

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"As no other factor, the pure and tender family ties helped to preserve the Jewish people and to keep them as a sane and healthy moral community."¹ As we have seen, the reason for this vital success of the family in Judaism is precisely because the Jewish authority has always preserved a sane, healthy moral attitude towards its conception of the family. From Al-Nakawa's work we have learned that there were four responsibilities involved in the model family. First, their responsibility of the husband and wife toward each other. Second, their responsibility towards their children; third, the responsibility of the children towards the parents; and, fourth, their common responsibility toward the Almighty. This fourth, which is, of course, their highest duty, can not, however, be fulfilled except insofar as the family succeeds in fulfilling the first three.

We are not, therefore, to wonder at the statement by Roth: "Notwithstanding his (the Jew's) physical degradation, there were certain specific values which the Jews succeeded in keeping alive even amid the

1. Cohon, Samuel S., Judaism as a Way of Living, p.81

squalor of the ghetto. There was in the first place the ideal of the family. His home life in the middle ages was generally on a plane distinctly higher than that of his neighbors....The monogamous ideal...was moreover considered more seriously than among the European Christians, for concubinage, adultery and prostitution were rare phenomena in the Judengasse at a time when the sexual life without was at its lowest level.¹" we are not to be surprised, for we may well assume that a people who took their religion seriously enough to die for it, better still, to live in wretched misery for it, would, naturally, cherish it and make the most of it. Their religion contained certain attitudes toward marriage and the family, and as the religion was lived and preserved, so were its implications for every aspect of their lives lived and preserved.

Now Al-Hakawa shows no record during or after Talmudic times of a period when knighthood was in flower in Jewish life. We have no record of plumed knights, daring dragons, demons, or dastardly ogres to win the smile of some beveled beauty. We never had nor laid claim to such; and let this statement silence those who accuse Jewish apologists of claiming for the Jewish people responsibility for everything of worth in the Middle Ages. Such manifestations of chivalrous

1. Roth, Cecil, The Jewish Contribution to Civilization, p.42f

love may have been nipped and stifled by the lesson learned from Delilah and her Sir Samson. Nor have we extravagant ballads of Jewish love and devotion, which were the products of knighthood among other peoples. Jewish love songs were directed to Zion, or Torah, or God; and whatever other poetry and romance remained, they translated into their lives so far as they were able under the limitations of the times, which means that they lived that poetry in their homes. We did not have romantic ballads as did the knights, yet "in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when wife-beating was not only customary among all classes but expressly permitted by Canon Law and by the statutes of some small towns, rabbis declared, 'this is a thing not done in Israel.'¹" Yet there was one love song we knew, and it was not the property of a few, corresponding to the knights and their princesses; it was the heritage of every man and wife in Israel, recited and sung in one of the holiest moments in Israel's continuous tradition, and rooted in her past and in her knowledge. It was sung when the only queen Israel ever bowed to came to grace their home once a week, when the *She* *had* returned from rendering homage to the One King he ever worshipped. Then, with a full heart, the happy, thankful notes of *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד* rang

through and sanctified the home. And there is a romance here, resplendant and sublime, to put to pale littleness the romance of knights with blooded armor and beautiful verses.

And just as Judaism has no knightly romance so also does she show no evidence, indeed she denies, as we learn from these chapters of Menoras Ha-Maor, such doctrines which declare marriage to be a necessary evil, a concession to the fleshy imperfections within man. Marriage for the Jew is no concession; it is at once a privilege and a duty. And indeed, we have learned that he who marries merely to satisfy those physical needs, in order that they may be silenced and not drive him to excesses, is regarded with much disdain. And even though he does through such a marriage fulfill the letter of the Mitzvah and is thus, according to our authority, deserving of some reward, his reward is least in worth, even as his motivation for marriage is least in merit.

From this we are not to suppose that the Rabbis exalted the passions that exist within man. They held that such passions are neither good nor evil in themselves. They are natural; part of man. What is evil or good is the uses to which they are put. We have learned that merely to engage in carnal pleasures with no thought or intent other than those pleasures, is definitely wrong, and in such cases man's natural passions

do lead him astray. But to bend those forces within him to the sanctification of his people and his God: this is good and in fulfillment of the first of the Divine precepts. It is not necessary for man to stifle his desires. It is necessary only that he govern them.

From this concept has evolved the Rabbinic Concept of the Family as we have found it. The basis of the family is, of course, the relationships between husband and wife. And the proper basis for their relationships is the realization on the part of both of them that they are, in every aspect of their married life, engaging in the sanctification of God. This attitude is to pervade all even in the very act of intercourse. Their attitude toward each other and to the relationships they enjoy is to be defined by the knowledge that they are acting in the fulfillment of a divinely ordained covenant. Remembering that according to one school of thought at least their marriage was indeed, if not made, then fore-ordained in heaven, and each partner of the marriage was appointed for the other by God himself. One can well imagine the high feelings of respect and regard in which the man and wife held each other when they came to this realization. It is no wonder that the Jewish family

has been held the paragon! Motivated and inspired as it was, how could it help but be? Two people loving and respecting each other in marriage that was regarded as the finest act of Divine worship could not but found a union and an ideal with the highest ethical and religious connotations. There are further implications: When a man and woman realize that those forces within themselves are capable of being bent to exalted purposes, then how much the more will they become confident of their own inherent dignity and worth, and in the light of this consciousness how much more of good and worth can they accomplish. It may well be said that the Jewish concept of the relations between man and wife was one of the chief factors contributing to the development of religious ethics. Man is not bad and carnal. He is good and capable of ethical living.

Of course, in order to preserve the purity of family life, the rabbis evolved stringent bounds, concepts concerning incest, prostitution, adultery, and irregular practices. These concepts were evolved and stringently enforced for two reasons. First, that the energies of the people would not be dissipated and the power of increasing and multiplying within the Jewish fold thus be lessened; and, secondly, that the ideal of marriage would not be held lightly,

disdained and sullied. For much the same reason that all intercourse with foreign faiths was rigidly prohibited, in order to protect the purity of Judaism, so was all intercourse with foreigners of the opposite sex prohibited, in order to protect the purity of the Jewish marriage ideal, which itself was one of Judaism's keystones.

But this ideal did not pertain only to the relations between husband and wife. There were also responsibilities to be discharged toward the offspring of such a marriage. Volumes have been written upon the Jewish principle of education, and upon their respect for and tenacity toward that principle. Both principle and respect and tenacity are amply illustrated in our work. Not only was Talmud, and deep reverence for the Talmud, taught by father to son, but also in this process the son was made to realize that it was not only his duty to learn and to study, but once having done so, it became no less a duty for him to teach his children after him, and the children of those who had no other teacher. Thus was the rich and varied tapestry of Judaism woven and rewoven, increasing, and growing strong in the increase; adapting itself to new and changing circumstances, and growing strong in the change.

But Torah was not to be used as a spade to dig with, yet man must dig and must, then, be provided with a spade. And so the sons had to be taught a trade in order to provide the necessities of life for him and his family. But he must always remember that, trade or no trade, if he were sincerely in want and unable to so provide, it was his privileged duty to accept help from those who by reason of circumstance were in a position to help him. The family was neither to feel want nor humbling of pride. Thus were the children to be taught both the ethical ideals of Torah and the practical techniques of life. The one so that Judaism should grow and live, and the other so that its people should be enabled to live and grow and perpetuate its vital message. It is true and cannot be denied that the daughters did not share in this education to the same extent as the sons, as was the practice in all of the contemporaneous cultures. But if we are to condemn Judaism for that we have also to condemn the people of the time for their lack of radio facilities.

Finally, we have learned of a third responsibility -- that of the children toward the parents. Not only was honoring parents, in the sight of God, more important than His own honor, but the greatest of sinners would be delivered from the evil decree if he did observe

the fifth commandment. This honor, in youth, was limited to obedience and courtesy the standards for which have hardly been improved upon in modern times; but in later life the duty towards parents had more serious implications. All children, sons and unmarried daughters, were bound to contribute to the parents' support willingly and cheerfully, nor was this contribution ever to lower the esteem of the parents in the eyes of the children.

It is perhaps worthy of note that this is the shortest of the chapters on family life. Perhaps it is because Al-Nakawa himself was least bothered by the problem. Perhaps because in the Jewish consciousness this ideal of parental respect was so ingrained that it was taken for granted; therefore no lengthy treatment of it as a virtue was felt to be necessary. In its conception, however, in the minds of the rabbis and in its practice in the lives of the Jewish people it was no less a virtue and no less exalted a virtue than the others treated.

Thus we have a Jewish conception of the family which makes of the family a temple dedicated to the worship of God in every phase of the life of that family. In the relationship of husband to wife, of parents to children and of children to parents, as outlined in our work, do we have this conception clearly

demonstrated.

Now the arguments may well be advanced that this conception as held in the minds of the rabbis was in truth exalted and inspiring and a hallowing of God. But did it not exist merely in the minds of the rabbis? Was it not merely an ideal far above the actuality achieved by the people? We know that this is not so. Judaism as a faith, a way of life, and the people of Judaism could never have withstood the constant bombardment of the ages had she not achieved this ideal of the family. It was bedrock, but it was more than bedrock. It was guiding star, but nearer to their hearts than star ever came. Judaism has lived because its life and its faith has been erected upon the staunch and immovable ideals expressed in their noblest in family life. In these ideals of the Jewish family ~~there~~ is a plan and a pattern. A plan and a pattern for the destined familyhood of all the peoples of all the earth. A plan and a pattern wherein the noble, tender ties of the family as we have come to know it shall hold all men together in mutual love and in the filial worship of the Almighty.

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