

## **When you will go out to war against your enemies...And you will see among its captivity a woman who is beautiful of form, and you will desire her, you may take her to yourself for a wife. (21:10, 11)**

The law concerning the *yefas toar*, captive woman, whose physical beauty captivates the Jewish soldier, is not to be taken lightly. If the Torah permits what is considered a prohibited liaison, it is for a specific reason: It is responding to the inflamed passion of the Jewish soldier while in battle. War affects the mind and heart of a soldier. Leaving home, family and friends--relegated to fighting an enemy in which one wrong move means serious injury and even death--can have an adverse effect upon even the most rational mind, causing it to think irrationally. The Torah recognizes that the surrounding events can weigh heavily on the soldier's mind. Seeing a beautiful woman under such circumstances can drive the soldier to act in such a manner that restraint and caution will simply not hold him back. Rather than say no, rather than risk the complete breakdown of the soldier's moral/spiritual compass, the Torah provides an avenue for satisfying the soldier's lust, so that it limits his estrangement from Judaism.

*Rashi* quotes *Chazal*, who describe this dispensation as the Torah speaking in response to the evil inclination. The *yetzer hora* is having a field day with this poor soldier's mind, so that, if he is not permitted to marry her, he will do so anyway – without the dispensation. *Rashi* adds that the juxtaposition of the first three passages of the *parsha* are in their own right an argument, a warning against such a liaison – despite the fact that the Torah permits it. One who marries for the wrong reason will end up hating his wife and producing a rebellious child. It may be hard for some to believe and more difficult to accept, but Hashem, Who created us, knows what will work and what will not. The Torah is our blueprint for life. When we follow the Torah, we are at least ensuring that we have done all of the “right things.” Even then, circumstances prevail, causing problems concerning marital harmony and children that are not responsive. How much more so is one taking a chance when he does not follow the Torah's guidelines. In this case, the soldier has followed a Biblical dispensation, which is more or less like saying, “This is not the way to enter into holy matrimony.”

The rebellious boy, the *ben sorer u'moreh*, does not listen to his parents. Thus, we say *yamus zakai v'al yamus chayav*, “Let him be put to death while he is still innocent (and has not yet killed anyone to satisfy his gluttonous desires), rather than execute him once he is found guilty.” Why wait until he becomes a serial killer to satisfy his passions, to extinguish the hatred he harbors for his parents, his teachers, society in general? The Torah does not wait until this boy makes headline news across the front page of every major newspaper. We already know exactly where he is headed.

The boy does not listen to his parents. Why? What did they do to him to deserve such errant

behavior from the child who used to be their sweet boy? The answer is simple, explains **Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl**. Did his father listen to his father when he decided to marry a *yefas toar*? Clearly, the boy's father, who had once been a soldier, did not exactly make his parents happy when he announced that he was bringing home their future daughter-in-law – from battle. True, she is a pagan, but we are working it out. The Torah understands that, if the answer is no, he will do it anyway. So, the Jewish soldier told his parents that he was marrying the pagan: “Too bad – I am sorry – but I am in love.” Now, years later, the father wonders why his son has rebelled against him. Perhaps he should go back a few years to the time in which he rebelled against his parents. What goes around comes around. It has just come around!

In *Krias Shema* we say, *V'shinantam l'vanecha v'dibarta bam, b'shivtecha b'veisecha u'b'lechtecha vaderech u'v'shachbecha u'v'kumecha*. “And you shall teach them thoroughly to your children and you shall speak of them while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise.” (*Devarim* 6:7) Why does the Torah say *v'dibarta bam*, “and you shall speak of them?” Should it not be, *v'dibru bam*, “and they (your children) shall speak of them?” The answer is obvious. The only hope that we have of seeing our children adopt the Torah as their way of life is if we show them how much it means to us. When we speak in words of Torah at every juncture of our daily endeavors, when our children see that Torah permeates every nook and cranny of our life, then we can hope that they will follow suit.

Ask a child what is more important than Torah, and he might reply watching the football game in the winter and baseball in the summer. Or, the child may observe that, while his father is learning with him, suddenly his eyes light up when the *cholent* and *kugel* are served.

*Rabbi Paysach Krohn* tells a story of a certain playgroup in Antwerp that has a *Shabbos* play every *Erev Shabbos*. There is a *Shabbos* mommy, a *Shabbos tatty* and a table set with all of the *Shabbos* rituals. The mommy lights the candles; the *tatty* recites *Kiddush*. Each week, the children switch roles, enjoying themselves immensely. The children are inspired with a spirit of *Shabbos*.

One week, it was Yankele's turn to be the *Shabbos tatty*. He was all excited to participate and demonstrate what he had learned. First, the *Shabbos* mommy lit the candles; then it was time for Yankele to get up and recite *Kiddush*. The *rebbe* poured the grape juice into the *Kiddush* cup and said, “Yankele, it's your turn. Please recite *Kiddush*.”

Yankele walked up to the head of the table, squeezed his eyes shut and began to shake back and forth. “Oy,” he cried out, “did I have such a hard week!” He then began to recite *Kiddush*. The child enacted what he had seen weekly at home. He was used to *Kiddush* being a drag, something negative, a ritual that one must get over with. Yankele did not see a radiant smile, a happy face, excitement and exuberance for having the opportunity to once again welcome *Shabbos* into their home. A child does what he sees at home. The values and good deeds which his parents exhibit will quite possibly remain with him. Sometimes, however, these values are of a negative nature. They, too, will remain with them.