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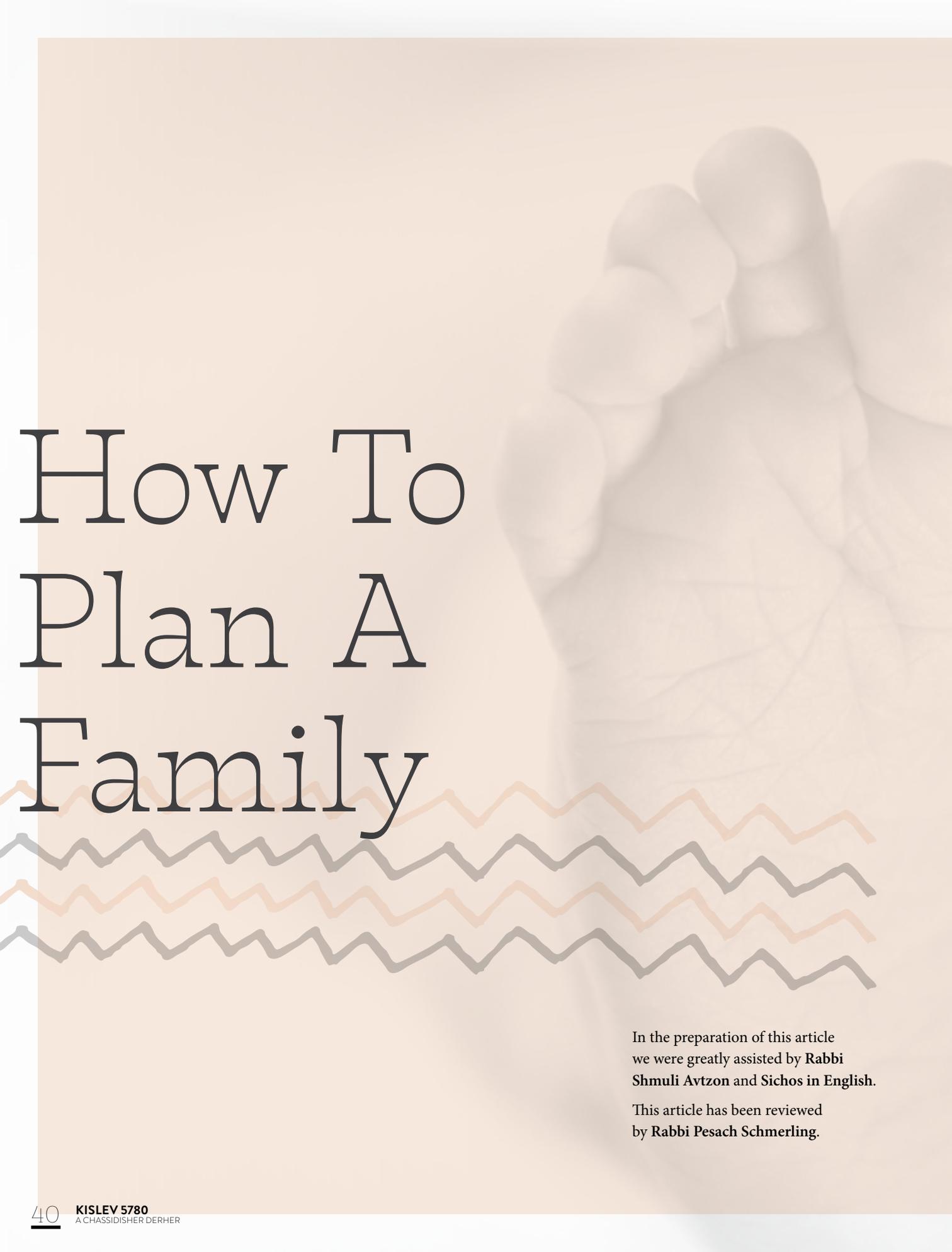
**“Are You
a Tankist?”**

HOW THE MITZVAH TANKS
TOOK THE FRONT LINES



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How To Plan A Family



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by **Rabbi Pesach Schmerling**.

לע"נ
האשה החשובה והצנועה הרבנית
מרת מינדל בת מו"ה ר' דוד ויענטא ע"ה
ז"ל פעלער
זכתה להיות שלוחה של
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
למעלה מיובל שנים וקירבה רבים
מאחב"י לתורה ומצוות ולחסידות
נלב"ע ערב ר"ה לחסידות
ח"י כסלו ה'תשע"ח
תנ"צ'בה'
נדבת בנה
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל ומשפחתו שיחיו
פעלער



The first mitzvah

Bearing children is the single most important thing that a person can do.¹ The very first mitzvah of the 613 mitzvos is—פרו ורבו—ומלאו את הארץ וכבשה—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. The fact that it's the first mitzvah in the Torah—even before “I am Hashem your G-d”—shows just how important it is.² The Midrash tells us that “the concept of Torah” came before the creation of the world, but “the concept of Yidden” came before everything, including Torah. The birth of another Jewish child comes before everything, even “the concept of Torah!”³

The mitzvah from the Torah is to have two children: a boy and a girl, but the mitzvah of *chachamim* is that one should continue having children as long as possible, “for anyone who adds a soul to the Jewish people is considered as if he built an entire world.”⁴

It is the first mitzvah in the Torah—and it's also the first *bracha* in the Torah, for it is the greatest *bracha* that one can be blessed with.⁵

Every individual is an *olam malei*, an entire world. When you bring a child into the world, you are bringing an entire world, and you are creating an infinite lineage of people that will come from that child. When you choose *not* to have another child, that is spiritually eliminating an entire lineage of people that could have resulted from this child.⁶

Yidden throughout all the generations—in Eretz Yisroel, as well as during all times of *galus*—always considered it to be the greatest *bracha* to have many children.⁷ This goes back to the earliest history of the Jewish people. The *Imhahos* were very different from one another: Sara performed outreach to women, which we don't find by the other *Imahos*; Rivka had unique qualities that the other *Imahos* didn't have, and so on—and we derive a lesson from each of their individual qualities. There is only one thing that we find by every single one of the *Imahos*—Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah—a yearning and striving to have children. “*Sara hut avekgelait a velt!*” (loosely: “She gave it her all”). She came with complaints to Avraham Avinu, and she didn't allow him to rest: she needed to have children! The same was true

with Rivka and Rochel. Even Leah, who merited to have children immediately after her marriage, did everything in her power to have more.⁸

Nachas

We see clearly that the greatest *nachas* that a person can have is from raising a family. By no means is it easy but when, after all the hardships, doubts and questions, you come out successfully on the other side with children and grandchildren who follow the ways of Torah and mitzvos, there is no greater feeling! *Lefum tzaara agra* (according to the pain is the gain).⁹ You can't receive this same *nachas* from a single child, for with every additional child comes a new world of *nachas*, each in their own unique way: One child gives *nachas* in the arena of Torah, another in *avoda*, and a third in *gemmilus chassadim*.¹⁰

When a person doesn't have as many children as they can, they are denying themselves the greatest *bracha*, light, and warmth that Hashem can give a person. It is only in the darkness of today's *galus* that people tragically consider children a burden.¹¹ It is not hard to find older people who regret the fact that they didn't raise large families—“They grab their heads that they let slip such a lofty and precious opportunity to have more children”—but it's too late...¹²

(This can be felt on a practical level: “When children grow up and move away to build their own families,” the Rebbe said, “the parents want to visit their children and grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. But if they have only one or two children, they can only visit every half a year or so... The parents can't sit in their children's homes all the time. Between trips, they are forced to be alone, without having someone to open themselves up to. Whereas parents who have many children can visit one child, stay for a while—and then move on to the next child. Similarly, the children and grandchildren come to visit their parents and grandparents from time to time, and everyone sits together—a *minyán* at the table—ושמחת לפני ה' אלוקיך אתה ובניך ובנותיך—and the grandfathers and grandmothers

receive much *nachas* from their children and grandchildren.”¹³)

The model family?

The mitzvah of having children was entrusted to every single couple—whether or not their home environment is ideal; whether or not they are confident in their ability to raise good children; and whether or not they believe that they have the financial resources to continue having children.¹⁴

It applies whether they already have two children (a boy and a girl), or they’ve already caught up with Yaakov Avinu, with twelve boys and a girl—they are still enjoined to have more.¹⁵

There are three partners in the creation of every child: the father, the mother, and Hashem. The father and mother can only control that they definitely *won’t* have children, but anything past that, in fact everything else—that the mother will become pregnant, that the child will be healthy, and how the child’s life will turn out—is controlled completely by the third partner, Hashem. And Hashem gave his opinion as to whether or not a person should try having children; He said *pru u’rvu*, be fruitful and multiply—without exceptions or quotas.¹⁶

The mitzvah applies until you’ve fulfilled the second part of the *possuk*, that you’ve *filled the world and conquered it*. If in fact there’s a situation when one is not meant to have children at that time, for whatever reason, then Hashem will ensure that you won’t.¹⁷

Population control

“One cannot argue that it suffices to have two children, a boy and a girl, for they are leaving a replacement for themselves and not reducing the amount of people in the world—because you weren’t created only *not to cause damage*, you were created to *build worlds* through having children and grandchildren, thereby becoming a partner with Hashem in creation.”

(*Tzav, Shabbos Zachor, 5744*)

How to bring Moshiach

10 Shevat 5730 marked a special time by the Rebbe: the completion of Moshiach’s *sefer Torah*. The initiative had begun decades earlier by the Frieddiker Rebbe, but although the *sefer Torah* had nearly been completed at the time, for reasons unknown it was never brought to fruition. Finally, as the twentieth anniversary of the Rebbe’s *nesius* was approaching, the Rebbe announced that “all obstacles have been removed” and it was time to finish it. Chassidim from around the world flew in to celebrate this momentous occasion with the Rebbe, and the atmosphere of Moshiach was felt vividly in the air.

The Torah was completed on Friday, Erev Yud Shevat. At the farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos, with feelings of anticipation for Moshiach running high, the Rebbe spoke about a powerful way to bring him closer:

It says in the Gemara that “Ben Dovid [Moshiach] will not come until all souls in [the treasury of souls called] ‘guf’ will be finished...”

...There are those who are mistaken and want to debate about birth control and so on—but they are misinterpreting the Torah. Having children is not only a personal obligation to fulfill the first mitzvah of the Torah to “fill the world and conquer it,” but it is a matter that affects everyone—the geula of the entire Jewish nation depends on it.

This is a special shlichus that depends especially on women and girls, wherever they may be; how much more so regarding those who are already aware of the teachings, directives, and guidance of the [Frieddiker] Rebbe...

This would become a common theme in the *sichos* throughout the years, that especially now, in the final days of *galus*, it is vital to have children and thereby bring the *geula*.

Family planning: An imposter hiding in a kapote

The Rebbe truly felt that family planning was actively hurting families, and his language in the sichos on the topic were often quite sharp. Below, we bring the Rebbe's words as they were said, but we encourage our readers to watch and listen to the original sichos, where one can hear the compassion and care with which the Rebbe was speaking.

On the surface, the Rebbe said, “family planning” may sound like a sensible idea: If you plan everything else in your life, how much more so should you be organized in an endeavor as significant as child-bearing, to ensure that the children should come at the appropriate time and ideal circumstance.

In reality, however, it is a dangerous “plan,” concealed in a “silk *kapote*,” in holy clothing; it might have a fancy, politically correct name—*family planning*—but really it's a deceptive term for disrupting Hashem's natural order, the natural functions of our bodies.¹⁸ “One must know that when you disrupt Hashem's ways and prevent birth, you are damaging yourself and everyone around you.”¹⁹ And it has terrible effects on family life as well:

“...It causes tensions in the relationship between husband and wife, which, in turn, leads to spoiling, *r"l*, their life together—here there are precautions, here there are limitations, here comes a fight, and here there is a strain. When you disrupt the normal way that Hashem set up life in His Torah, and you start introducing changes, it hurts the relationship and *shalom bayis* between husband and wife, and it even hurts their health—both the wife's and the husband's.”²⁰ (See more on this below.)

What about getting a heter for health?

There is a scenario when it is permitted to hold off on having children—when it is dangerous for the mother.²¹ It is impossible for the parents to have unbiased judgement in

this matter, and a rav must be consulted. If, in fact, the situation calls for a *heter*, then it is *the Torah itself* that is directing the person to push off having children.²²

However, if a *heter* is not really necessary, and parents made the decision that they shouldn't be having children for other reasons, then even if they *do* manage to get a *heter* from a rav, they should know that the *yetzer hara* is behind it, he is concealed in holy clothing.²³ When one finds *heterim* for things that the *yetzer hara* wants, they are a *naval birshus haTorah*, a disgrace with the Torah's permission.²⁴

The plea of a child

A child comes home and tells his parents with excitement that he learned in Chumash that the Yidden in Mitzrayim “were fruitful and multiplied... very very much,” and, as children are wont to do, he asks his parents for more brothers and sisters. That causes the parents to do everything in their power to fulfill the mitzvah of bearing children without any calculations, so they shouldn't regret the fact that they missed this valuable opportunity.²⁵

Unstable home

In addition to teaching the general authentic Torah perspective on this topic, namely, that having children is *the* single most important goal and it overrides all other considerations, the Rebbe also expounded upon certain specific scenarios which are commonly brought up regarding this outlook:

Should a couple be encouraged to have more children if the *shalom bayis* is lacking, or when the level of *frumkeit* leaves ample room for improvement?

We have a lesson for this in Torah: in certain situations that a woman acts very inappropriately, she gains the status of a *sota*. She is brought to the *Beis Hamikdash* and tested with the *sota* water to determine as to whether she was indeed faithful to her husband. If she fails the test, she dies. But if she passes, the Torah promises her that, as repayment for all

the embarrassment and suffering she endured, she will be blessed in the realm of childbirth: if she was barren, she will have children; if she already has children, she will have more children, and more beautiful ones.

Think about it: Whether or not the woman actually sinned, this couple's *shalom bayis* is clearly not doing well, and this woman is obviously not *tzniusdik*. Yet the Torah says that the greatest *bracha* that can be given to this family is to have *more* children!

So in fact, the opposite is true. When you start disrupting the natural order that Hashem set up—by doing family planning—that *itself* causes tension and fights between the husband and wife.²⁶

Am I ready to be a parent?

Some people think that because raising children is such a serious responsibility, they will wait until they feel certain that they can be good parents and positively influence their children. Otherwise, it's too much of a risk that the children won't be brought up well.

Here, too, we have a lesson from the Torah. King Chizkiyahu saw with *ruach hakodesh* that he would have evil progeny, and he made the decision not to have children. Yet Hashem punished him for this. The *navi* told him: “בהדי כבשי דרחמנא למה לך מאי דמפקדת איבעי לך למעבד ומה דניחא קמיה קודשא בריך הוא לעביד—Why do you mix into Hashem's ways? That which you have been commanded [the mitzvah of procreation] you are required to perform, and that which is acceptable in the eyes of Hashem, blessed be He, let Him perform.”

Chizkiyahu was not simply *concerned* that his children would turn out bad—he knew it! In fact, he went on to have Menashe, one of the most evil kings in the history of the Jewish people. Yet—that wasn't his calculation to make: he needed to fulfill his obligation to have children, and the rest was up to Hashem. (Many of the later descendants of Chizkiyahu, it turns out, were in fact great *tzadikim*.)

How much more so is this true if you're only “worried” that your children *might* not come out right. You must nevertheless fulfill

your mitzvah of having children, with joy and *bitachon*, and Hashem will grant you success in educating them.²⁷

Financial Considerations

Beyond the considerations above, which seem to be of the more moral variety, there seem to be practical considerations.

The current mindset in America is that a responsible person only has children when he knows how he will cover the significant expenses involved. As much as it costs to raise children in the secular world, it costs even more to raise a Jewish family, especially with the high cost of tuition (for which we pay double: taxes for the public schools, and tuition for schooling).²⁸

The Rebbe spoke strongly about never allowing such considerations to get in the way of having children. How can you make such calculations when you're dealing with the greatest *bracha* that you can be blessed with?²⁹

Such a mindset means that you are a “weak believer.” It is a fundamental part of our faith that Hashem is the one who provides our *parnasa*, as we say in *benching*: הזן את העולם כולו... בחן ובחסד וברחמים—Hashem is the one who sustains the entire world! Hashem has the responsibility to sustain all of the billions of humans in the world, and also the animals, insects, and even vegetation—and he always comes through for each one of them.³⁰

When you bring a child into the world, Hashem is the one who has the responsibility of sustaining him, and a new channel of *parnasa* is created for each child. Later on, this channel will go directly to him, but for the first part of his life, the parents have the merit to serve as Hashem's messengers to bring the *parnasa*—Hashem's money—to the child.³¹ True, the parents need to create a vessel to receive Hashem's *parnasa*—but that's all it is, a vessel. If you choose not to have children—and, consequently, the new channels of *parnasa* they come with—you're harming your own *parnasa*!

“This person has been working hard to make a living, and he only made this-and-this

amount of money, which wouldn't be enough to support more children. So—he says—this proves that he was right [not to have more children]!

“*He was wrong!* The Gemara says that ‘a child is born together with his loaf of bread.’ When Hashem partners with parents and gives them a child—Hashem’s child—then He provides *parnasa because of the child*. If a person stops this process, he is hurting his own *parnasa!*”³² “The *bracha* of Hashem brings riches, not only bare necessities. So if you want riches—both physically and spiritually—you need to provide the vessels [through having children]. If there are no vessels, ‘the oil will stop flowing.’”³³

The Elephant in the Room: Peer Pressure

The most difficult challenge of all—the challenge that often lurks behind all the other excuses and considerations—is peer pressure, the fact that having a large family runs contrary to today’s culture, and can cause someone to feel ridiculed by their friends and neighbors.³⁴ This is especially true in today’s day and age, when women are out and about and meet other women with a non-Torah outlook on family building; some of those

A new flow of kindness

The birth of a new child brings a new flow of Hashem’s kindness. It was Hashem’s great kindness to bring this new life into being and Hashem’s kindness continues to sustain it. This new flow of kindness is not limited to the new child; once Hashem is in the spirit of flowing kindness—once Hashem is in a “good mood,” so to speak—it spreads to the entire family and truly to the entire world.

(*Shabbos Parshas Yisro 5744*)

secular views on families may rub off on them as well.

We must always remember, the Rebbe said, that it might not be considered “cultured” and “modern” and “in style” to have a large family—but the same “modernity” and “culture” that brought Hitler and the Nazis *yemach shemam* is what’s creating the atmosphere that it’s not cultural to have children—thus fulfilling Hitler’s goal.³⁵

When one takes an objective view and compares the family life of these “peers” to that of those who lead a family in accordance with Torah—that itself should be enough to put this issue to rest.³⁶ [More on this in the following article “The Rebbe’s View On Spacing”]

One More Child

When Pharaoh decreed that every newborn boy should be drowned in the Nile, Amram, the leader of the generation, said: *Should we toil in vain?* Why should we continue having children when they will be immediately thrown into the river? He proceeded to divorce his wife Yocheved, and he was followed by the rest of the Jewish people.

His young daughter told him that he was making a mistake. Hashem told us to have children, so how can you consider what Pharaoh says?! He immediately listened to his daughter and reunited with his wife.

Now, his calculation seems to have made eminent sense: As soon as a boy is born, he would be murdered in accordance Pharaoh’s decree, so what’s the point of having children? The world isn’t being filled by these children anyway! Why shouldn’t we wait until the decree passes?

What happened as a result of the fact that Amram ignored the odds and reunited with his wife? Moshe, the savior of the entire Jewish nation, was born. Not only was he not drowned, but his birth brought about a swift end to the decree against baby boys, and ultimately he was the one who brought the redemption for the entire nation!

Today, the considerations are much less substantial than they were then. And when someone considers pushing off children for considerations of *parnasa* and so forth, they must know that they are holding up the *geula*! אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף—Moshiach will come when all the *neshamos* that were destined to be born in *galus* are born.

(*Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 25 Iyar 5743*)



The Rebbe's View on Spacing

In the early days of the Rebbe's campaign against family planning, Rabbi Nachman Bernhard, a *rav* in Johannesburg, South Africa, was asked to address a group of women who were on the *taharas hamishpacha* committee, a group especially devoted to the Rebbe's *mitzvot* for women, on the subject of "How to Present Taharat Hamishpacha to the Uncommitted." Before his scheduled talk, he wrote to the Rebbe for guidance:

"...One of the young women active in this field told me that she, as well as all of her colleagues (both contemporaries and older), are having great difficulty in presenting convincingly one particular aspect of... family planning. Many people are willing to accept all the points about the ongoing obligation of פרייה ורבייה, as well as the observance of טהרת המשפחה, but nevertheless they (and this includes very many frum couples) tend to indulge in a limited degree and kind of 'family planning' by 'spacing' or spreading out their children over several years, instead of having one right after the other without a break.

"It is very hard to persuade them that this is wrong. They are able to cite numerous seemingly reasonable and impressive arguments in favor of this practice. These are based on personal, psychological, physiological, and (to a much lesser extent) financial considerations. They

revolve around the physical and mental health of the mother, claiming that the average woman simply needs a rest of a year or 2 or 3 between pregnancies, especially after she has already been through a few.

"...If, in fact, the position of the Rebbe שליט"א is being correctly interpreted as being opposed to even this above-mentioned kind of limited "family planning," then we are in need of, and respectfully request, his guidance and help in how to convey this successfully to frum and non-frum alike... Since it is considered likely that this subject will be raised at this session on Sunday morning, it would be very helpful if it were possible to have the views of the Rebbe שליט"א by then."

The Rebbe responded:

ע"ד "ספייסינג וכו" –

שייך בדבר התלוי בבחירת האדם, ונמצא ברשות האדם רק בנוגע למניעת הריון – אבל ההריון ושיהי' הולד בתכלית השלימות – תלוי רק בהשם. ואפשר שאם לא עכשיו אימתי. ולד"ה [ולדברי הכל] (ע"פ טבע) כל שהאשה צעירה יותר הולד מושלם יותר.

נידס רעסט וכו" –

קשה להאמין שאשה שכבר טעמה וקיבלה בפועל התענוג ונח"ר [ונחת רוח] בהולדת ילד ובגידולו לנגד עיני' והתקדמותו ע"י חינוכה ומסנ"פ [ומסירות נפש] שלה וכו' – תסכים (ועאכו"כ – שתראה) לשלול מעצמה כ"ז מטעמים הנ"ל. ובפרט בהתבוננות ב(1) והטעם הפנימי (סוב-קאנשיס) "ראת" צער העיבור והלידה

וטורח הגידול, אי אפשריות להשתתף בכמה אירועים במשך זמן זה וטעמים כיו"ב, והעיקר—ע"פ יסוד והתחלת כל השו"ע—מה תאמרנה המלעיגות! וכשיבארו שזוהי המניעה האמיתית—הרי בשמחה ימסרו להשם ההחלטה ע"ד זמן הטוב להתברך בעוד זחור"ק. יש להאריך בכהג"ל וגם להוסיף עוד—ולדכותי בודאי יספיק ועפמש"נ: תן לחכם ויחכם עוד. והקב"ה יהי עם פיהו וכו'.

“Regarding “Spacing etc.”—

[Such logic] can only be applied to something that is a person's choice. But a person can only choose not to get pregnant—it is up to only Hashem as to whether a person will actually get pregnant and whether the infant will be completely healthy. It's possible that “if not now, then when?”

According to everyone (in the natural order), the younger a woman is, the healthier the baby will be.

“Needs rest etc.”—

It is difficult to believe that a woman who has already tasted and actually received the enjoyment and *nachas* from giving birth to a child and seeing him grow up before her eyes, and [seeing] his progress through her educating him and her *mesiras nefesh* [for him] and so on

—[it is difficult to believe] that she would agree to deny herself this enjoyment for reasons mentioned above [in Rabbi Bernhard's letter] (and she certainly wouldn't want to deny this enjoyment from herself). Especially after contemplating the first point mentioned above.

The inner (subconscious) reason for this [—their interest in spacing—] is their “fear” of: the pains of pregnancy and childbirth, the burdens of child-rearing, the fact that they won't be able to participate in events during this time period, and other such reasons.

The main [subconscious] reason—based on the founding principle and beginning of the entire Shulchan Aruch—is that people will scoff at them!

When you explain to them that this is the true obstacle—then they will joyfully hand over the decision of the best time to have more children to Hashem.

Much more can be elaborated on this, and additional points can be made—for you this

will surely suffice, following the dictum: give to the wise and he will increase wisdom.

May Hashem be with your tongue etc.”

At the meeting, Rabbi Bernhard presented the Rebbe's response, and the Rebbe also spoke about the subject in the following farbrengen, on 24 Teves 5741*. But still there were questions. In a report to the Rebbe following the meeting, he writes:

...The vast majority, however, felt that a big problem remained unresolved... namely, the sheer unrelieved physical and emotional strain of attending to the endless and urgent needs and demands of a number of small children simultaneously. This, they claim, can be so exhausting and nerve wracking that it takes much of the joy, תענוג ונחת out of motherhood. These women are committed to תורה ומצוות and the Rebbe שליט"א... but they do feel that the genuine טורח הגידול of numerous small children at the same time, as well as the wearying and weakening effects of continuous pregnancies, is being underestimated.

It is, of course, well known to them that in extreme cases, where the mother's physical or psychological health are being seriously jeopardized, the Rebbe agrees that some permissible form of contraception may be legitimately resorted to. But these women are not talking in cases of literal or very likely סכנת נפשות. Nevertheless, in their desperation they can often become absolutely frantic, highly irritable, with a general constant tiredness, loss of vitality, and even severe depression. Naturally, all this usually has very undesirable effects upon the husband and children, and may even undermine the entire marriage.

Another factor is that these women are caught up in the הפצה work. This is for them a vital expression of their loyal support of the Rebbe שליט"א... Although they are quite prepared to miss out on many things for the sake of family building, much of their sense of joy and verve and self-image, as well as their whole status as Lubavitchers, are impaired by their having to drop out of הפצה work for lack of time and/or energy, perhaps for quite a few years.

They further contend that it can make a significant difference for the development and raising of each child if some “time off” between babies were to allow the mother to concentrate

better—both in terms of actual time available, as well as in terms of her calmer nerves and mental composure—on the new baby. This would also enable her, for the same reasons, to relate better to her own children.

At the farbrengen of Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5741*, the Rebbe addressed the issue at length, going through each question point by point.

The Rebbe began by saying that some general societal norms have unfortunately rubbed off on many Jewish homes. Just a few generations ago, parents would never have considered interfering with Hashem's business, especially when it comes to something as important as having children. Now, because parents do have a small say in the matter, this was misinterpreted (in recent times) as an invitation to mix into Hashem's affairs. It was forgotten that Hashem gives the parents the choice only to prevent themselves from becoming pregnant—but to become pregnant, and to have healthy children, depends only on Hashem, and He will surely choose the best time for the mother and father.

Then the Rebbe added something else:

The best time

The Chumash tells us that when Moshe Rabeinu was on the mountain, he asked Hashem to “show me Your face.” Hashem responded that “you will see My back, but My face must not be seen.” The Gemara explains that Hashem was telling him the following:

When I wanted [to show you My glory at the burning bush], **you did not want** [to see it, as it is stated: “And Moshe concealed his face, fearing to gaze upon Hashem”]. **But now that you want, I do not want** [to show it to you].”

This teaches us a lesson. Obviously, Hashem wasn't getting “even” with Moshe Rabeinu. But when Hashem gives us a *bracha*, He doesn't want it to be free and underserved; He wants us to be *partners* with Him.

How can we be good partners with Hashem? By letting Him call the shots—by depending on Him fully as a partner and letting Him make the decision as to when the best time to have a child is. When the decision is left up to Hashem, it happens at the best time for all parties involved.

But as soon as the person gets involved, and he *doesn't* allow Hashem to make the decision—he doesn't allow it when *Hashem wanted it*—then even when the person decides that, according to his calculations, he is ready—*you want*—he lacks the vessel that brings Hashem's *brachos*.

(The Rebbe said that certainly Hashem is *maarich af* [slow to anger], especially since these people have good intentions, and added that, “I don't want to scare people, but simply to give over what it says in the Torah.”)

Furthermore: the timing when a child is conceived, born, and grows up is pivotal, and it will impact his entire lifetime. Not only does it affect the child himself, but all the future generations that will come from him. When a parent considers the best time for the child to be born, the calculation is bound to be limited to the foresight they have. Whereas the parents are thinking a few months ahead, Hashem is planning decades and generations ahead. Only He knows the future generations and the unlimited factors that must go into such a decision—so such a decision must be left up to Him, and He will decide when it is best.³⁷

What about Mivtzoim?

Regarding the argument that having children would affect the *mivtzoim* work, the Rebbe said that if Hashem chooses to bless you with a child, then he obviously believes that this is more important—much more important—than *mivtzoim*. As discussed above, having children is the single most important thing that a person can do—“the concept of the Yidden preceded the Torah!”

In the long run, the *mivtzoim* work itself will likely benefit. When you have a child, that child can go on to accomplish tremendous things in *mivtzoim*, possibly even more than you. So, in effect, having another child is better for the *mivtzoim* work, too. Furthermore: Hashem gives the mother success in the free time that she does have, so that in the time she does do *mivtzoim*, her work is successful.

[The Rebbe also addressed concerns that constant child bearing would take its toll on

the mothers physical appearance (see the farbrengen at length).^{38]}

What is the reality?

But what about the argument that having many consecutive children hurts one's ability to raise them? Can you focus on each child when there are so many one after the other?

First of all, the Rebbe said, Hashem is the one who has the responsibility to take care of the children—in all areas. Even if one believes that their ability to raise children may be

hampered by the difficulties of continuous pregnancy and childbirth, and the difficulties of raising children—the reality is that Hashem is well aware of all this, and if He chooses to give the parents another child, He will certainly provide the children with healthy parents and a healthy home.

Beyond that, all these arguments might *sound* nice, but reality tells a different story.

Theories can always be argued, the Rebbe said. You can argue and argue and argue, but if someone perceives the issue differently, they will act based on their perception. But when

Billions More

Several times during this campaign, the Rebbe made clear that the mitzvah of having children is as relevant to non-Jews as it is to Yidden. In one farbrengen, the Rebbe said: “This *bracha* was given to Adam Harishon and Chava and to all succeeding generations, that they should have children and grandchildren, to the point that they will ‘fill the entire world and subdue it.’ Mankind will take over the **entire** world, fill it and take it over, so that the world will be a refined world—not a world of anarchy or lack of morality. For this, the world must be filled with people; people educated in a way that they can be recognized as creations of Hashem.⁴²

In a fascinating *yechidus*⁴³ with the Sadigerer Rebbe which took place during the first few weeks of the Rebbe's campaign against family planning, we can see just how unrelenting the Rebbe was on this point.

The Sadigerer Rebbe raised the issue that doctors in Israel were disparaging towards the idea of having large families.

The Rebbe responded that, indeed, we must especially try to influence the doctors in this area, since they lead the opposition to having large families; all who oppose having large families use the doctors as their justification.

The Rebbe then spoke of the irony of the situation. “The government spends \$30,000 dollars to bring a new family to Israel, while spending—I have no idea how much—to encourage small families and decrease the birth rate.”

The first solution, the Rebbe said, was to increase the stipends to large families. The Sadigerer Rebbe, however, raised concerns that stipends for large families in Israel go to large Arab families as well. The Rebbe responded that discriminating solutions are simply untenable and would be interpreted as racism.

But would it be better not to provide family stipends at all? The Rebbe continued:

“All children of Noach are instructed to inhabit the world by having children. They, too, are instructed not to murder [through abortion]; it is one of the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*. Consequently, it is also incumbent upon the Yid to encourage the non-Jew to fulfill those mitzvahs in which they are obligated. I don't believe in an attitude of ‘Let me die with the *Pelishtim*’—to withhold support from Jewish families just so that Arabs will also not receive it.”

The Sadigerer Rebbe then asked, “If so, what will be with demographics?”

The Rebbe replied:

“...Since this is an approach based on Shulchan Aruch, we need to rely on Hashem; we can trust that things will work out. If we were deciding this on our own, in contradiction to the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*, or if we were doing something irrelevant to those laws—then matters would be different.

“However, by Torah law a Jew has an obligation (when he has the capacity) not to permit a non-Jew's transgression of his *mitzvos*.”

something has already been tried in the past, there is no room for argument: we need only to look at the results and follow them.

We have 3,000 years of Jewish history since *matan Torah*; we've seen people who kept the Torah to the fullest extent, and those who went other ways. The same is true in this area—people have been engaging in family planning for decades, and we can see the results of their behavior.

When comparing the families who didn't engage in any form of planning—relying completely on Hashem's judgment—with those who chose to interfere with Hashem's plans—you'll see that, percentage-wise:

The *shalom bayis* in these families is better and the children grow up in healthy, calm settings, instead of homes with marital fights and tensions and unharmonious relationships, which inevitably affect the children;

The parents are more healthy;

The *parnasa* is better, and, more importantly, the money is spent on positive things, not psychiatrists.³⁹

On the other hand, as the Rebbe put it in another farbrengen, those who engage in family planning, “are busy with psychotherapy, they are busy running to doctors to heal their nerves; running to doctors who will advise them on how the husband should get along with his wife and how the wife should get along with the husband; running to doctors who give them all kinds of hormones and pills that will change the normal order of things in the Jewish Family life.”⁴⁰

Olam Haba in your lifetime

“Ultimately, after a number of years have passed, and the children grow up, Hashem sends success and we get to see the fruits. ‘Your *olam haba* you will see during your lifetime,’ you literally see the world-to-come in this world—through true everlasting *nachas* from children and grandchildren. The *nachas* is so clear and indisputable, that even the neighbor and ‘peer’ must admit that she followed in the path of true *bracha begashmius uveruchnius*, physically and spiritually.”⁴¹ **T**

1. See farbrengen 6 Tishrei 5745.
2. Behar-Bechukosai 5731; *sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740. 6 Tishrei 5741; *sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 27 Elul 5744.
3. Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5740.
4. Rambam Hilchos Ishus 15:16.
5. *Sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad, 17 Sivan 5740.
6. Ibid. See Yevamos 63b כאילן שופך דמים.
7. Shabbos Naso 5740.
8. 1 Shevat 5741.
9. 24 Teves 5741.
10. Shabbos Naso 5740.
11. Shabbos Naso 5740.
12. Shabbos Shemos 5749. See also Shabbos Nasso 5740.
13. Shabbos Naso 5740.
14. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
15. Farbrengen 13 Tishrei 5744.
16. Farbrengen 6 Tishrei 5741.
17. Farbrengen 13 Tishrei 5744.
18. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740; 1 Shevat 5741.
19. Shabbos Korach 5740.
20. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 25 Sivan 5740.
21. Understandably every such case must be dealt with individually, and is beyond the scope of this article. A practicing rabbi must be consulted.
22. 24 Teves 5741.
23. *Sicha* to N'shei U'bnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
24. Shabbos Shelach 5740.
25. Shabbos Shemos 5749.
26. Shabbos Shelach 5740.
27. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 34.
28. 24 Teves 5741.
29. N'shei Ubnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
30. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 34.
31. *Sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 25 Iyar 5743.
32. 10 Shevat 5741.
33. 24 Teves 5741.
34. *Sicha* 1 Shevat 5741; See below, *maane* to Rabbi Bernhard.
35. N'shei U'bnos Chabad 5740.
36. 1 Shevat 5741.
37. 1 Shevat 5741.
38. See *ibid*.
39. 1 Shevat 5741.
40. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
41. 1 Shvat 5741.
42. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
43. Printed in Sichos Kodesh vol. 3 5740 p. 1152.