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## **The fetus and fertility**

**Jacob, Walter**

**Pittsburgh, [1995]**

"BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY"

**urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-vlib-10538**

## "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY"

Walter Jacob

"Be fruitful and multiply" is among the striking statements of the Creation Story in Genesis. It is repeated for fish and fowl and then for everything upon the earth including human beings in a blessing which is a little more sweeping, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth." A similar statement was made to Noah after the flood<sup>1</sup> and that was used by rabbinic Judaism as the basis for the commandment of procreation. The thesis of this paper is very simple: Reform Judaism and most modern Jews have rejected this commandment; it is time to change that and to see it in a different light.

The Genesis story called upon human beings to form a family: "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh."<sup>2</sup> These statements along with verses from Isaiah and Ecclesiastes<sup>3</sup> formed the basis of the first of the six hundred and thirteen commandments for the thirteenth century *Sefer Hahinukh* of Aaron of Barcelona. It was given as a positive commandment by Maimonides and other later writers, though in a different sequence.<sup>4</sup>

It was important for them and must be again for us. We will look at the various questions which this commandment has traditionally raised and then turn to our modern concerns which include women's rights, personal autonomy, birth control, and demography.

### THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS

The classical statement, "Be fruitful and multiply," from the beginning of the Book of Genesis, has been taken by Tradition as a Divine commandment which stipulates unrestricted human reproduction for Jews. There is some discussion in the Talmud about the nature of this obligation for males versus females, the minimum number of children required for the fulfillment of this obligation, particularly if there are health problems involved, and the general role which reproduction plays in marriage.

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The poetry of the creation story provides the basis for this sweeping statement and for the dominance of human beings over other creatures which accompanies it. A practical rationale was provided by the Talmudic discussions which deal with children as part of the labor force, so helping a family to prosper. They represented a way of transferring property from one generation to another and so an assurance that one's efforts would continue into the future. Children also provided care in old age and a safety net throughout life. Some of these concerns were already echoed in the Book of Proverbs, Job and Psalms.

A major issue was human survival in the often hostile natural world. The havoc caused to herdsmen and farmers by wild animals was real with dangers to people and livelihood. The more sweeping natural calamities brought total disaster to the whole population. A plague of locusts could devastate an entire farming area, as would floods, droughts, hailstorms, along with epidemics and much else. As long as the natural world was seen as hostile, it needed to be overcome or at least repressed. We, in the late twentieth century see all of this somewhat differently. The chief destructive force in the natural world now is humanity, and we have managed in one form or another to remove many, though by no means all, of the traditional scourges. This has caused us to take a second look at the natural world and to change our practical policies. Population control is one of those changes; it is now as necessary for human self-preservation as an expanding population was earlier. An interpretation of the Creation story led us in the direction of "Be fruitful and multiply" for a hundred generations. Now that the human condition has changed, we should look at this grand story again, and we will find that it may equally well take us in another direction.

The key element of the first chapters of Genesis is a balanced view of the universe with God as the creator. Every portion of the Creation has its own sphere. An orderly plan is laid out and executed; humanity plays the dominant role in it. Humanity is to rule over all of this, to dominate but not to destroy. Seen in that light, the principle role of the human population is to rule and preserve. During the initial stage, humanity needed to be placed in a sufficiently strong position so that this mandate could be carried out. Now that

this has been achieved, the considerations have become somewhat different. A high birthrate was originally necessary for human survival and the execution of its mandate; that is no longer so. We have increased and multiplied to such an extent that our survival as a species is assured, then we can say to ourselves that we must now understand the whole Creation story and its intent, not only the initial segment. In our age we are finally ready for the second step. We will dominate for the benefit of the entire world. These are the broad theological considerations under which we must operate.

Our tradition, of course, felt that all of the six hundred and thirteen commandments including the one, "Be fruitful and multiply," applied to Jews alone. This obligation along with others could be followed by other people, but was not mandatory for them, and this commandment was not included in the basic commandments to all the children of Noah which sought to establish a decent social order. We should, however, note that as the Hebrew Bible has been accepted by Christianity and in a somewhat different form by Islam, so the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply," has become a part of the broader religious context of the world in which we have lived. We would, therefore, see our interpretation of the entire Creation story as appropriate not only to Jews but to the broader Christian and Islamic world as well. We do, however, have some special Jewish considerations which we need to apply to birth control and reproductive rights. For us, and perhaps for other minority groups within the world, natural calamities have been augmented through the centuries by human oppression. Our numbers, which would normally have increased along with other people around us, have been diminished through continual persecutions. We, therefore, see our own position in the overextended human population.

The balance suggested by the Creation story applies not only to the broader natural world but to each segment of humanity as well. We have been unable to maintain it for us as Jews. We must therefore increase our numbers and limit birth control and, within our own circles, correct this imbalance which will be almost negligible in the population of all humanity. This step is appropriate from a theological point of view and pragmatically as well. Discussions in the traditional literature, from the prophetic books onward,

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reflect personal and communal concerns about survival in times of persecution. Would there be more than a saving remnant? Would it be blessed and expand? We now ask the same questions in a time of prosperity and assimilation. The Holocaust decimated us and assimilation has not permitted sufficient recovery. There are various ways of correcting the imbalance. One of the easiest and most likely to succeed is an increased birth rate so that we will have numbers with which we can struggle against assimilation and guarantee survival and a blessed influence in the world.

Our theology sees the tradition in a broader light with primary emphasis on the balance of the Creation story; humanity is the caretaker which dominates the world but does not destroy it. Within that broader framework, balance applies not only to species of plants and animals but also to groups of people. What may be demanded of some groups as appropriate birth control measures for the sake of their future and well-being, as well as that of all of humanity, is the caretaker which dominates the world but does not destroy it. Within that broader framework, balance applies not only to species of plants and animals but also to groups of people. What may be demanded of some groups as appropriate birth control measures for the sake of their future and well-being as well as that of all humanity may not be appropriate for another group which needs to exercise its reproductive options in order to remain a significant part of the broader human equation. These thoughts are contained in the original Genesis story. The commentators and the rabbinic sources have elucidated the story from the vantage point of their generations and its problems. As they treated their issues, so we must deal with ours and see this wonderful story applying to us and to all generations.

## MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

Let us continue with sexuality and family considerations. Normal sexuality was considered as willed by God; was its sole purpose for procreation or could it be enjoyed for its own sake? Sexual pleasure as a positive good became the norm in Judaism which has been made clear through the *halakhah* and many stories which are more picturesque, for example, the tale of the *yetzer hara* given into the hands of the pious, who imprisoned it.

The result was no further procreation and not even an egg could be found anywhere. The pious knew that if they killed it, the world would come to an end. Therefore, they pleaded that its power be reduced by half, but heaven did not grant this wish. The pious then blinded it with the result that human beings are at least not infatuated by close relatives.<sup>5</sup> One of the Talmudic sages stated that everyone should be grateful to their parents for if they had not sinned, we would not exist. Another sage recommended that the *yetzer hara* always be pushed away with the left hand and befriended with the right.<sup>6</sup> Such statements occur often.

Sexuality was to be expressed through marriage and the debate was whether the obligation to marry applied only to men, or equally to women. Interestingly enough the statement "a man who has no wife, is not a human being" was changed by medieval Christian censorship to "A Jew who has no wife...." This may have been done with an eye toward monasticism.<sup>7</sup> Legislation promoted early marriage.<sup>8</sup> Every man was to marry and beget children as long as he was capable of doing so. Birth control was permitted only for specific health reasons, for example, if the wife was endangered by childbirth.<sup>9</sup> The obligation of marriage also included the obligation to engage in sexual intercourse.<sup>10</sup>

The detailed discussions of intercourse and its status as a religious duty for the husband emphasized the pleasurable aspects. The Talmudic regulations stipulated that men who have no work should cohabit daily, workmen, twice a week, those who need to be away from home, once a week or at least once a month. Sailors, only once each half year. Monetary penalties were provided for those who did not fulfill their obligations.<sup>11</sup> There were no restrictions on virtually anything connected with the sexual act, although the Talmud counselled modesty and that the purpose of procreation be remembered; this may have been influenced by the Christian environment. With the exception of the Essenes and the Qumram sect, there were few tendencies toward asceticism.

There were, however, efforts to build a stern sexual morality which was not to be relaxed for frivolous reasons as shown by the well-known story

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of a man who sought permission for intercourse with a woman with whom he had become infatuated. The physicians whom he consulted agreed, but the rabbis objected. The physicians then suggested that she simply stand naked before him, but they rejected this as well. Then the physicians asked that he simply be permitted to speak to her, but they rejected this also and said that it was preferable that he die.<sup>12</sup> One teacher claimed that the woman was married, while another stated that she was not, and so intercourse with her consent would be common-law marriage. The rabbis felt that such marriages needed to be discouraged through disciplinary means. Through homiletics the rabbis tried to apply similarly rigorous standards to women by stating that a woman who had intercourse with her husband while thinking of a man whom she had seen on the street was involved in adultery.<sup>13</sup> Similarly Resh Lakish (250 C.E.) stated "Do not consider only a man who sins with his body an adulterer, it applies even to one who sins only with his eyes."<sup>14</sup> We may compare this with the statement of Jesus "whoever looks at a woman and lusts after her, has already committed adultery in his heart."<sup>15</sup>

The legislation designed to maintain this morality went far and did not permit a man to walk behind a woman, to listen to her voice, or even to look at her hair.<sup>16</sup> In medieval times segregation of the sexes was also attempted, so Maimonides (1135-1204 C.E.) demanded that police be posted in public parks on festival days to keep men and women from eating and drinking together as that might lead to sin. Nor should men and women be permitted to mingle at parties in private homes.<sup>17</sup> Later rabbis asked for separate days for men and women to visit the cemetery.<sup>18</sup> Similarly segregation at public worship became a Jewish custom. The second Temple in Jerusalem already made special provision through a balcony built for women.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes similar segregation was enforced in schools, at weddings, funerals, or other public religious gatherings.<sup>20</sup>

There were enough responsa and sermons on the topics of sexual problems to demonstrate that the efforts to maintain these strictures were often in vain; real life often took a different road. Similarly unnatural sexual relations were condemned<sup>21</sup> and various types of sexual immorality were ascribed to Israel's enemies. Even that did not preclude similar behavior

among Jews and it was condemned at regular intervals.<sup>22</sup> All of this makes it more than clear that the rabbinic literature considered sexuality as more than an instrument for procreation. There were real protests only when sexuality was separated from procreation. This leads us to the topics of procreation and then birth control.

### PROCREATION

Alongside statements designed to restrain sexual behavior there were others which stressed the purpose of procreation. Clearly a reminder was necessary. The religious duty of procreation was mentioned often in the Talmudic literature. At times a theological argument was made, i.e. without procreation the Divine image would be diminished on earth, both because there would be fewer worshippers and because the pool of souls created by God would remain and so frustrate the fullness of creation.<sup>23</sup>

Children from Biblical times onward were considered a blessing. The Divine blessing to Abraham in the *Aqedah* along with the other patriarchal tales made this clear. It was most vividly expressed in the tale of Job; riches consist of numerous sons along with large herds and flocks. The rabbinic tradition continued these thoughts. It did not seem necessary to state that the uncertainties of life brought about by famine, disease, and war meant that only a large number of births would assure the survival of some children.

As procreation was seen in such a positive light, the discussions centered about the details. How many children, minimally, were necessary? How many of each sex? Was it mandatory in a second marriage? Could procreation be delayed for economic reasons or by a scholar too busy with studies?<sup>24</sup> Each of these questions was discussed at length in the early rabbinic literature and amplified in the later codes and responsa. Although a minimum of two children for each family was permitted, this remained the minimal number and there was never any discussion of a maximum.<sup>25</sup> This group of scholars permitted some of their own to postpone procreation or to avoid it altogether, but economic hardship was not permitted as a factor in not having children.



BIRTH CONTROL

The Talmudic discussion of birth control is limited to cases in which childbirth is difficult or the prospective mother is too young to safely have children; if lactation was still taking place was acceptable also. Birth control for other reasons was rejected.<sup>26</sup> The continued discussions indicate that birth control was, nevertheless, successfully practiced. As John Riddle has demonstrated, knowledge of various plants which successfully control ovulation or are early abortivants was widespread. There is considerable discussion of this in a papyrus dating to 1850 B.C.E. and a much broader discussion in the Hellenistic literature. The recipes provided were clear; of course we know almost nothing about the development of folk medicine, but statistics indicate that birth control was widely used by all segments of the ancient and medieval world.<sup>27</sup> There were clear indications that birth control was used in Jewish circles as well. This was true in the Talmudic period and later times. The responsa similarly indicated such usage for many periods of our history.<sup>28</sup> Efforts to broaden the legitimate use of birth control methods were undertaken by Solomon Luria in the fifteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, restrictive efforts were undertaken by Akiba Eger and others in the late 18th century. This reflected not only an innate conservatism, but also a perceived need to stave off all signs of modernity. Akiba Eger, Moses Sofer, and others were aware of the encroachment of the modern world and sought to insulate the community in every way possible. This meant rejecting apparently harmless changes in synagogue architecture, the more dangerous Bible translation of Moses Mendelssohn, and birth control.<sup>30</sup> I do not know whether these scholars were aware of Luria's earlier decisions, but it would have made little difference.

This negative stance was rejected by Jews in the West. To the best of my knowledge none of the Reformers felt impelled to deal with the subject. Nothing was written on it from a Reform point of view until Jacob Z. Lauterbach's responsum of 1927. He made it clear that birth control was permissible from a Reform point of view.<sup>31</sup> Our view of the *halakhah* and our understanding of personal autonomy have led to the widespread use of birth

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control. Two children have become the norm rather than the minimum. This has raised issues of communal survival for us.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Our problems are not the justification of birth control or the issues of sexuality. We must consider a major question which is modern and twentieth century - the problem of the population explosion, first generally and then how it has affected us as Jews.

The world population has grown and then diminished through the millennia. It remained within some reasonable boundaries until the eighteenth century when the Industrial Revolution and changes in medical technology led to a population explosion first in Europe and later in the remainder of the world. The statistics are staggering with approximately one billion people at the beginning of the nineteenth century, three billion at the end, five billion people in 1980, and thirteen billion people by 2020.

Liberals have discussed the need for population control and Jews have been vocal in these circles. We have played a leading role in favoring birth control and applied it generously to ourselves.

The limitation on family size accompanied the rise in the economic status of western Jews. In addition, the struggle for women's rights and the desire to be liberated from child-care, has limited the number of children in Jewish families. This has been true of all but the most Orthodox circles. We have continued this pattern although the population in western lands has stabilized and the rapid growth continues only in Third World lands.

We must address these issues first and see whether we as liberal Jews should accept without further question the efforts at population control. After all, in this century, we have lost six million Jews, so a third of the world Jewish population, never larger than eighteen million, has disappeared. In addition, assimilation has taken its toll. If the American Jewish population has remained at six million since 1940, then we are not replacing ourselves and

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certainly not growing as is the rest of the population. In all Western lands we face a diminution of the Jewish population. Fifty years after the Holocaust we have not regained the population which we lost.

The ancient commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply", must be seen in a proper theological perspective as demonstrated in the opening section of this essay. In addition, we must face the demographic realities. The commandment needs to be taken seriously as incumbent upon all Jews. We Liberal Jews can no longer support birth control for ourselves even if we do so for the broader world.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

There are specific issues which played no role earlier but are important for us as Reform Jews. We are concerned with the role of women and the issues raised by the Women's Liberation movement. If women are to realize their full potential, then we cannot burden them with decades of child raising. If we advocate larger families, are we able to do so in a context which will permit women to exercise their new freedom and to establish themselves appropriately in the broader world? How is this to be accomplished? We should begin by stating that we reject the traditional rabbinic interpretation which saw this commandment incumbent upon men alone. There is certainly nothing in the original text of Genesis to indicate that; rabbinic tradition interprets the verse in this fashion because of the statement to Noah, and more directly due to the general male orientation of the entire Bible. If we see this commandment as equally important for men and women, we must address the practical consequences and difficulties which will stand in the way of its fulfillment in the modern Jewish community.

Although the commandment addresses individuals, there is also a communal factor. The community can not only encourage larger families, but must provide for their well-being and education. Neither the community nor the synagogue has seen this as a communal task. However, we can establish by analogy that this is appropriate.

When earlier communities were troubled by large numbers of orphans, the community did not leave them to their own devices but took care of them. In the unstable conditions of the Middle Ages, foster families were emphasized; there are responsa which deal with this. It became a major *mitzvah* for those with means to provide a home for a number of children who otherwise would have been abandoned. This was the preferred way in the smaller communities of the Middle Ages<sup>32</sup> in which Jews constantly moved because of persecution or debilitating legislation. It would have been impossible to establish orphanages. They would have been seized by the dominant churches and the children converted.

In the nineteenth century, when Jewish life became more stable and communities became larger and more anonymous, communal orphanages were established to deal with abandoned or orphaned children.

We can cite as examples the communal responsibility of providing an education for all children to the age of *Bar Mitzvah*. Communities fostered the education of abler students through subsidized *Yeshivot* found in virtually every community in Central and Eastern Europe; room and board was provided by the community. In other words, a system of caring for a large number of children was established and has been part of the Jewish community for many centuries.<sup>33</sup> With us, this should translate itself into heavily subsidized day care and religious education, be it on weekends or in Day School. It should extend to scholarship aid for appropriate training at the college level.

We have put segments of such programs into place within our communities, but we need to do more if we intend to establish a policy of population growth. This means a broader sharing of income and wealth by the total Jewish community on a voluntary basis. It will necessitate not only a restructuring of various aspects of communal life but also establishing a different psychology and concept of *tzedakah* and a redirection of funds

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If young families see that there is appropriate support for a larger number of children in the community, then they may be encouraged to have more children.

### FAMILY LIFE

If we are going to encourage children by taking the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply," seriously, we need to concern ourselves with the stability of the Jewish family. In the American Jewish community the rate of divorce is fifty percent of all marriages. Perhaps twenty percent of our divorces take place late in life and will not affect the birth rate.

Judaism has always made divorces easy so that it was readily available.<sup>34</sup> Despite this, divorce was not a major problem in Jewish societies of the past and the numbers remained limited. This was true among the poor Jewish societies of medieval Eastern and Central Europe and of the more affluent communities of Spain and Italy. We cannot discuss this whole area in this paper, but we should recognize that if we take steps to increase the Jewish population we must take parallel steps to aid the stability of the Jewish family so that parents will feel at ease about having a large number of children and not face an uncertain and unpredictable future.

### PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY

We must address the issue of personal autonomy. We see it mainly as beneficial; it has provided us with the freedom to explore our world and to make enormous advances in virtually every field. Individuals have been creative without fetters or restrictions, ideas have flown freely. On the other hand, many of the ills of modern society such as the breakdown of the family, the drug culture, and the problems with law and order, are also in part a result of personal autonomy. A great deal has been written about personal autonomy; it remains especially problematic within the Jewish realm with our emphasis on *mitzvah* and a covenant with the God who is the ultimate source of the *mitzvah*.

What is the relationship of personal autonomy and the heteronomous view of Judaism? In other words, if we are obligated to live according to God's commandments, then our freedom is limited. As we look at this issue and others connected with it, we see that the following choices are available: we possess freedom and may obey or disobey the laws of Judaism; we can place ourselves within or outside that framework. The Biblical tales from the Garden of Eden onward deal with this basic choice and the freedom of the individual to make it.

The covenant which we as the people of Israel accepted at Sinai has bound us to the framework of Judaism and obligated us to Jewish law. The history of that covenant goes back to Abraham and the *Aqedah* and was reaffirmed at Sinai when our people responded "*na-aseh venishma* - we will listen and we will act." We are reminded of our covenant by the Book of Deuteronomy and our reading on Yom Kippur afternoon which states that this covenant was made with all Israelites for all times in the future.

However, within the framework of that covenant, there remain a large number of choices. They are reflected in the development of Judaism through the millennia and the debates of the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*. The best known is the statement *elu ve-elu hayu divrei elohim hayim* - "these and those are both words of the living God." This statement originally dealt with the conflict between the schools of Hillel and Shamai but soon became the way of viewing all major, well founded disagreements. Beyond that we have the numerous contradictory views of the Talmudic and rabbinic scholars (both *Rishonim* and *Aharonim*) and among the *Ashkenazim* and *Sephardim*, etc. Such differences, often of a substantial nature, continue to be expressed among Orthodox leaders to this day and, of course, between us and them.

Views diametrically opposed to each other have been expressed in the vast literature and often left without a final decision. For the sake of practical daily life, later generations, of course, had to establish a system of reaching decisions, and therefore indicated that we follow certain scholars in specific areas of Jewish life and practice while following the decision of others on other matters. For Orthodox Jews, these practical decisions are binding although not

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according to all Orthodox thinkers; they limit the scope of later discussion within their circles. For us, as Reform Jews, those decisions do not eliminate earlier opinions; furthermore, we agree with the traditional view that later generations possess greater knowledge than those which preceded; we have the freedom and our modern scientific, sociological, and economic insights which may lead to different decisions. We may follow these paths if we are sufficiently knowledgeable to defend our choice. We feel free to reopen old debates especially if our life has changed radically.

In some areas of Jewish life most issues have been thoroughly aired long ago and the conclusions have been universally accepted by all Jews, Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative. We agree on many matters of business ethics, medical procedures, marriage law, etc. We have reopened the debate with women's rights, birth control, Jewish status, conversion, euthanasia, as well as other issues.

In other areas, little discussion occurred in the past; they were peripheral. Sometimes modern conditions and our level of knowledge is radically different from earlier ages. On still other matters, the underlying issues have never been resolved. A room for movement has remained and our discussions must continue. Even as we look at each of these issues we must ask how our autonomous position fits into the larger community? To what extent can we deal with major questions on an individual basis? When does the survival of the community become paramount? We have discussed autonomy thoroughly, but not yet dealt with the discipline necessary to create a community, and that must be our dominant concern now.

We must remember that the system of *mitzvot* has created the community in which we have experienced our autonomy. We can see the historic growth of our community in the progression from the patriarchal family units to the "people of Israel". We need to make a similar progression for ourselves. As we face this issue as well as some others, community must become more important than the wishes of the individual.

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## CONCLUSION

For us at the end of the twentieth century, personal considerations must give way to the broader theological considerations and needs. "Be fruitful and multiply" is necessary for us as in earlier ages as a matter of survival. The threat to us may come from assimilation rather than persecution, disease, or hunger, but it is just as real. We must therefore change our attitude toward birth control and larger families.

Birth control has been widely practiced among us; it has enabled women to achieve the same professional goals as men. It has led at best to a family with two children, the minimum mentioned by the Tradition. We understand that birth control is permissible within the traditional understanding of rabbinic Judaism. We can achieve the individual goals along with a larger number children if the community will play a positive role, and so place the ancient commandment, "be fruitful and multiply", into a different context.

## Notes

1. Genesis 1.22; 1.28; 9.1 and 7; 35:11.

2. Genesis 2.24.

3. Isaiah 45.18 and Ecc. 11:6.

4. Maimonides *Sefer Hamitzvot (Aseh)* 212; *Yad Hil. Ishut* 15; *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol (Aseh)*, 49; *Sefer Mitzvot Qatan* 284; *Tur, Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer* 1; We should note that various other listings of the six-hundred and thirteen commandments like those of Moses of Coucy thirteenth century, *Sefer Mitzvot Hagadol*, as well as the earlier listing of Saadiah Gaon (882-942), organized *mitzvot* in a somewhat different form, Saadiah according to the Decalogue and Moses of Coucy as well as his son Isaac of Corbey in the sequence of the *humash*.

5. *b. Sanhedrin* 63a.

6. *b. Avodah Zarah* 5 a, *Sotah* 47a.

7. *b. Yevamot* 65b, Strack and Billerbeck II p. 373.



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8. *b. Shabbat* 110b.
9. *Mishnah Ketubot* 5.6.
10. *Mekhilta Ex* 21.10; *Ket* 61b; *Tur, Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer* 76.
11. *Mishnah Ketubot* 5.7, *b. Nedarim* 20b.
12. *b. Sanhedrin* 75a.
13. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 9 commenting on Ezekiel 16.31.
14. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23.
15. *Matthew* 5.28.
16. *b. Berakhot* 61a, 24a, Epstein pp. 104-131.
17. *Yad, Hilkhot Yom Tov* 6.21.
18. Epstein, *Op. Cit.*, p. 76.
19. *b. Sukkah* 51b.
20. Epstein, *Op. Cit.*, pp 83-93.
21. *b. Kiddushin* 82a, *Ketubot* 6b, *Shabbat* 118a, *Avodah Zarah* 22b.
22. *b. Kiddushin* 82a, *Ketubot* 6b, *Shabbat* 118a, *Avodah Zarah* 22b.
23. *b. Yevamot* 63b
24. *b. Yeb* 36b.
25. The codes went beyond the requirements of two children *Yeb* 6.61; *Yad Hil. Isheret* 15.6; *Shulhan Arukh, Even Haezer* 1.5.
26. The thorough responsum of Jacob Z. Lauderbach "Birth Control," in *American Reform Responsa*, Walter Jacob, (ed), New York, 1983, pp 485 ff., discusses all the sources. *Yeb* 34b.
27. John M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1992.

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28. David M. Feldman, *Birth Control in Jewish Law*, New York, 1968.
29. Solomon Luria *Yom Shel Shelomo* Yeb. 1.8.
30. David Feldman *Op. Cit.* 213 ff.
31. See note 26.
32. W. Jacob, *Contemporary American Reform Responsa*, New York, 1987, pp 57 ff.
33. s. Goitein, *The Mediterranean Society*, Princeton, Vol. 3, *The Family*; *Geschichte des Erziehungsweser*, Moritz Güdemann, Vienna, 1880; I. Abrams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, pp 369 ff, London, 1938; J. R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, p 373 ff, Cincinnati, 1938.
34. Virtually any reason, even the most minor, could be used as a basis (*Git 90a*).

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