

# המוסד למען קדושת חיי אדם



## JPLF Q & A

### How many Jewish lives are lost through abortion?

- 1. Israel.** Abortion was legalized in Israel in 1977. The law allowed free or low-cost non-therapeutic abortion during all 9 months of pregnancy. Actual numbers of Jewish abortions in Israel have varied since before and after legalization, depending on the sources presenting the data, immigration patterns, periodic expansion of free access and fewer limits on the procedure. It is estimated *that 2 million Israeli children have died in this way since 1948.*<sup>1</sup>
- 2. In 2009, Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger and Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel Shlomo Amar announced plans to speak out about abortion in the Jewish State.** According to data presented to the Chief Rabbinate, some 50,000 abortions were being performed in Israel every year, 20,000 of which were legal, and the others through private doctors.<sup>2</sup>
- 3. In 2012, 21,104 applications for termination of pregnancy - out of 21,689 (97%) were approved.** 20,063 pregnancies were actually terminated, approximately 10% of all known pregnancies in Israel. Generally, 98% of all applications for abortion are approved by a government panel.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it is likely that more than 10,000 abortions were illegally performed in private doctors' clinics. The majority of these illegal abortions are performed on married women who are worried their applications may be rejected or take too long to process.<sup>4</sup> Approximate estimates, therefore, are **576 Jewish abortions per week in Israel.**
- 4. In 2014, a new health care law passed, expanding free abortion services to all women age 20-33.** With the newly amended health care package funding is now available for more than 6,000 additional women seeking to terminate their pregnancies, at the cost at some NIS 16 million (\$4.6 million). No medical reason for the abortion is required.<sup>5</sup>
- 5. United States.** Abortion was legalized in the US in 1973. Approximately 3,000 abortions are done every day, **23,000 abortions are done every week**, 1.2 million abortions every year, and a staggering 59 million since 1973.<sup>6</sup> It is conservatively estimated that 1.3 percent of all abortions done in the US are Jewish, resulting in nearly **300 Jewish deaths per week**, 15,600 per year, and at least 767,000 Jewish deaths since 1973.<sup>7</sup>
- 6. In 1920, the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to legalize abortion.** Today, the abortion rate in Russia is conservatively estimated at 60% of all pregnancies.<sup>8</sup> Government pressure to renounce Jewish faith and accept communist doctrine, as well as access to free, repeated abortion services impacted the Jewish population in Russia. We know this because Russian immigrants to Israel have brought their abortion patterns with

them, which has increased the use and demand of abortion services in Israel, a system already utilized at a high rate by native Israelis.<sup>9</sup>

7. **European abortion numbers are estimated at 41.6 million in 2003.**<sup>10</sup> Using a low estimate of 1.0% Jewish participation, the lives of approximately 540,800 Jewish unborn babies per year in Europe end through abortion.

### ❖ **How many Jews believe that abortion is legal in Judaism?**

1. A May 2016 Gallop Poll entitled US Religious Groups Disagree on Five Key Moral Issues found that 76% of Jews in America believe that abortion is morally acceptable.<sup>11</sup>
2. Israel now has nearly the most liberal abortion policy in the world, providing government funding for any abortion request from women ages 20-33.<sup>12</sup> No medical reason is required, abortions are legal throughout the entire pregnancy, with no limit on the number of abortions allowed. Passage of this mandate reflects Jewish majority support for the abortion option.

### ❖ **Exactly what is Jewish law regarding abortion?**

1. **Judaism is a pro-life religion.** It emphasizes the sanctity of human life from conception to unequivocal death. Human life is intrinsically valuable; preserving life is a moral imperative; all lives are equal; all life belongs to God. Essentially, abortion is judged to be the unwarranted taking of a life within a life. It is prohibited, just as murder is prohibited.<sup>13</sup>
2. **Jewish law prohibits killing another person, except in the case of self defense, where one's life is imminently threatened by an assailant.** The prohibition on abortion follows this reasoning. Historically, the only exception to the prohibition on abortion was in the case of a breech birth which placed the mother's life in imminent danger.<sup>14</sup> This exception is void thanks to cesarean section delivery, leaving only ectopic pregnancy as the primary legal exception. Other cases in which the mother's life is at great risk must be carefully thought through by rabbinic authority who is thoroughly educated in all aspects of abortion and its many negative effects. The vast majority of secular, assimilated, unaffiliated, and progressive Jews believe that Judaism allows elective non-therapeutic abortion for any reason.<sup>15</sup>

### ❖ **Why do so many Jews think that Judaism is pro-abortion?**

1. **Historically, rabbinical opinions were heavily influenced by local custom and public pressure.** The abortion rulings followed suit. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jewish dispersion resulted in rabbi/judges who were far away and isolated from Jewish centers of thought and traditional ideas. They lost the clear teachings about unborn life and rendered opinions swayed by pagan practices in Roman and Greek culture; cultures that customarily regarded human life as expendable. Over time, these opinions became the basis for even more liberal opinions bringing us to the current situation where a vast number of Jews are counseled by their rabbis that abortion is legal in Judaism and practiced by many Jews as a acceptable form of birth control.

Some of these rabbinical opinions justify the exception on the basis that the child in the case of a breech birth is behaving as a threat to the Mother's life and that Judaism allows taking human life in self defense. This view has been used to justify elective abortion for any reason far beyond its original intent, that of a direct, life threatening situation. Today, many Jews

believe that emotional, mental or financial challenges are sufficient reason to terminate a Jewish child's life in the womb.

Some of these rabbinical opinions justify the exception on the basis that life inside the womb had less value and less human status than life outside the womb. These opinions have no scientific or factual basis, and have been proven wrong by modern science and medicine. The truth is that abortion kills human beings at early stages of development.<sup>16</sup>

2. **The Jews who were instrumental in working for legal abortion in America came from families who were very active and immersed in the Marxist movements in Europe.** The Socialist and Communist movements in 19th and 20th century Europe called for the rights of individuals for fair employment, housing, wages, etc. Some Jews, trying to survive in the midst of antisemitic environments, aligned with these movements as a way to safeguard their rights. These Jewish families gave up their religion and became atheists to join the Socialists and Communists, who were willing to give refuge to them. In giving up their Jewish faith, they gave up any allegiance to Torah. So, atheism was a common thread that ran through the lives of these families, and atheism does not recognize human unborn life as sacred. Their offspring became leaders in the Jewish community, positioning themselves to have much influence over the social views developing among Jews in the 20th century in The United States and Israel. Some of these US Jews became the founders of NARAL, the National Abortion Rights Action League, and others promoted abortion rights in Israel.
3. **In America, Jews found a home in the Democrat Party, which originally defended the rights of the unborn** but denied the civil rights of blacks and allowed violations of these rights among ethnic minorities. Later the Democrat Party advanced the civil rights of blacks and women, and adopted a pro-abortion platform. Secularized Jews who have no Jewish identity based in Torah or religious practice, find identification with politics. The result is that many Jews adopt personal beliefs consistent with their political affiliation rather than with their Jewish roots. Because the majority of American Jews are Democrats, they have adopted the pro-abortion views of the party. Pro-abortion Jews are now very active in Jewish organizations that have stellar reputations for good deeds, ie, Hadassah<sup>17</sup>, and the National Council of Jewish Women in alliance with the Jewish sorority Alpha Epsilon Phi.<sup>18</sup>
4. **sure to pro-abortion ideas and rhetoric in institutions of higher learning have resulted in the past three generations of Jewish men and women being thoroughly inculcated with the pro-abortion ideology.** The Jewish intellect has contributed so much to the world in the arts and sciences, and yet many Jews are discouraged by peer and family pressure from exploring the truth about unborn life. Ignorant of the science of growth and development of the human being from conception until birth, they justify the idea that personhood begins at birth by citing the primitive rabbinical opinion that "it's not alive until it's born." This may have been an acceptable conclusion in the first century, but it is inexcusable today.
5. **The language used by the abortion industry and political lobby conditions Jews to believe that abortion is healthcare,** it is good for women, it does not actually kill an innocent human being, and that fetal parts research is a legitimate use of fetal parts procured through abortion. Jews forget that this use of language is similar to the language used by Nazi propagandists to justify the persecution and extermination of Jews, including Jewish women and their children.<sup>19</sup>
6. **Rabbis are paid by congregations.** Rabbis in progressive congregations dare not speak against abortion or they lose their livelihood.

7. **The pro-life movement is seen as a Catholic/Christian activity** and to be avoided at all costs due to the threat of conversion or fear of antisemitic harassment.
8. **The Orthodox Jewish community has no voice in the public square or in the Jewish community on the subject of abortion**, so pro abortion Jews never hear any message to the contrary unless someone breaks rank or they hear from or about the Jewish Pro-Life Foundation!
9. **Social, professional, and familial standing often depends on strict loyalty to pro-abortion tenants.** Reputation, employment, charitable giving, and social acceptance can be lost by acknowledging the truth that elective abortion is prohibited in Judaism.

### ✦ Where in Judaism is there a prohibition against elective abortion?

**The Tanakh includes text prohibiting taking of human life and text encouraging life:**

1. **Noahide Law** - Do not murder.
2. **Ten Commandments** - Thou shalt not murder
3. **(Genesis IX: 6-7)** Whoso sheddeth man's blood, through man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. And you, be fruitful, and multiply; swarm in the earth, and multiply therein.
4. **(Deuteronomy 30:19)** I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed.
5. **(Leviticus 18:21)** And thou shalt not give any of thy seed or set them apart to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.

**And it includes text sanctifying unborn human life:**

6. **(Isaiah 49:1)** The Lord called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name.
7. **(Jeremiah 1:5)** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet of nations.
8. **(Psalm 139: 13-16)** For you created my inmost being: you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to me.
9. **(Eccles. 11:5)** As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, Nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; Even so thou knowest not the work of G-d Who doeth all things.

10. **(Zohar, Shemot 3b)** There are three [persons] who drive away the Skekhinah from the world, making it impossible for the Holy One, Blessed be He, to fix His abode in the universe and causing prayer to be unanswered....[The third is ] he who causes the fetus to be destroyed in the womb, for he destroys the artifice of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His workmanship....For these abominations the Spirit of Holiness weeps.
11. Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.<sup>20</sup>
12. A Jew is governed by such reverence for life that he trembles lest he tamper unmindfully with the greatest of all divine gifts, the bestowal or withholding of which is the prerogative of God alone. Although he be master over all within the world, there remain areas where man must fear to tread, acknowledging the limits of his sovereignty and the limitations of his understanding. In the unborn child lies the mystery and enigma of existence. Confronted by the miracle of life itself, man can only draw back in silence before the wonder of the Lord.<sup>21</sup>

### **Development of the Unborn Child and Abortion Pain.**

1. **Human life begins at conception. Every abortion kills a human being.**<sup>22</sup>
2. **First Trimester. Up to 13 weeks..**
  - a. **We now know that the unborn baby develops sensory perception and functioning abilities at early stages.** The unborn child can no longer be describes as a mass of tissue or mere water, as we were told by lawyers and abortion advocates when federal abortion laws were mandated. Most significant developmental milestones occur long before birth during the first eight weeks following conception, when most body parts and all body systems appear and begin to function. The heart beats at 22 days, the brainwaves can be measured at 6 weeks. At 9 weeks all internal organs are present and the baby is sensitive to touch. The fingers and toes and facial expression are present at 13 weeks.<sup>23</sup>
  - a. **Suction aspiration, or "vacuum curettage," is the abortion technique now used in most first trimester abortions.** A powerful suction tube with a sharp cutting edge is inserted into the womb through the dilated cervix. The suction dismembers the body of the developing baby and tears the placenta from the wall of the uterus, sucking blood, amniotic fluid, placental tissue, and fetal parts into a collection bottle.<sup>24</sup> Ultrasound guided 1st trimester abortions provide a window to the womb, showing very clearly a baby's attempts to avoid the instruments of death before dismemberment.<sup>25</sup>
2. **Second Trimester. 13-26 weeks.**
  - a. **Between 13 and 17 weeks, the fetus's "general sense organs" begin to differentiate into "free nerve terminations" responding to pain, temperature and chemicals,** The baby now responds to light and pressure. The vocal chords and auditory sense are now present, and the baby may cry if air bubbles get in the uterus.<sup>26</sup>
  - b. **After 14 weeks, the baby will cry, wiggle her body, or throw out her arms if her mother moves too suddenly or she hears a loud noise.** She must be sedated during surgery, just like any other patient. If she is irritated, her heartbeat will increase and she will move around, showing this sensation to be unpleasant.<sup>27</sup>

- c. **Medical experts agree that fetal pain begins at 14 weeks gestation, maybe even as early as 8 weeks.** But perhaps the best source for first hand experience with fetal pain is an abortionist. As early as 1976, those performing abortions realized that the procedure is painful for the dying fetus. Abortionist John Szenes describes an unborn baby fighting for its life during a saline injection, "All of a sudden one noticed that at the time of the saline infusion there was a lot of activity in the uterus. That's not fluid currents. That's obviously the fetus being distressed by swallowing the concentrated salt solution and kicking violently and that's, to all intents and purposes, the death trauma."<sup>28</sup>
- c. **Saline solution used in this type of abortion causes intense pain when injected under the skin.** This solution is injected into the fetus's sac, burning the fetus from the outside and poisoning her from the inside. During this slow death, which takes about two hours, the fetus thrashes around inside the womb. Her heart rate more than doubles as a response to the solution, in spite of the fact that her heart is not physically touched by the solution. She dies solely from the pain.<sup>29</sup>
- d. **At this point in her development, the baby weighs only about two ounces and is only about five inches long.** She is small enough to fit in the palm of her mother's hand, and yet she can react to outside stimuli just like a grown person can. And even with a developed response system, she can legally be killed by chemical burns, dismemberment, suffocation, starvation, and worse, while her mother is convinced by her killers that she feels nothing.<sup>30</sup>
- e. **At 16 weeks, the baby's heart is pumping six gallons of blood every day.** The baby grasps with hands, swims, kicks, turns, somersaults, exercising the muscles and lungs he will need to live outside his mother's womb. Rapid eye movement (REM) can be recorded while he's sleeping, indicating that he is dreaming. At 20 weeks, the baby can hear and responds to loud noises.<sup>31</sup>
- f. **An unborn child at 20 weeks gestation "is fully capable of experiencing pain...** Without question, abortion is a dreadfully painful experience for any infant subjected to such a surgical procedure."<sup>32</sup> No pain medication is given to the child. Dilatation (Dilation) and Evacuation (D&E) is the most common method used to abort a child at this stage of development. Used to abort unborn children as old as 24 weeks, this method is similar to the D&C. The difference is that forceps with sharp metal jaws are used to grasp parts of the developing baby, which are then twisted and torn away. This continues until the child's entire body is removed from the womb. Because the baby's skull has often hardened to bone by this time, the skull must sometimes be compressed or crushed to facilitate removal. If not carefully removed, sharp edges of the bones may cause cervical laceration. Bleeding from the procedure may be profuse.<sup>33</sup>
- g. **Second trimester premature birth viability rates:**  
At 23 weeks a baby has 15% chance of viability outside of womb if birth premature. At 24 weeks - 56% of babies survive premature birth. At 25 weeks - 79% of babies survive premature birth.<sup>34</sup>
- h. **Ten percent of US abortions are done in the second trimester, approximately 121,000 deaths per year.**<sup>35</sup> Although it is medically proven that these babies can feel the pain of their demise, no pain medication is given to them. Ultrasound guided 2nd trimester abortion video shows the grim reality of this method.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. Third Trimester. More than 27 weeks.

a. One percent of US abortions are done in the third trimester. 9000 - 12,000 per year.

b. The method is called "Dilation and Extraction" (D&X), or "intact D&E" (IDE).

This procedure is used to abort women who are 20 to 32 weeks pregnant -- or even later into pregnancy.\* Guided by ultrasound, the abortionist reaches into the uterus, grabs the unborn baby's leg with forceps, and pulls the baby into the birth canal, except for the head, which is deliberately kept just inside the womb. (At this point in a partial-birth abortion, the baby is alive.) Then the abortionist jams scissors into the back of the baby's skull and spreads the tips of the scissors apart to enlarge the wound. After removing the scissors, a suction catheter is inserted into the skull and the baby's brains are sucked out. The collapsed head is then removed from the uterus.<sup>37</sup>

c. These babies are given no pain medication before termination. They are given no burial.<sup>38</sup>

d. This method of abortion is preferred when harvesting fetal parts for sale.<sup>39</sup>

### Should we use sex education and birth control to minimize the use of abortion?

1. **This hasn't worked very well, as seen by the endemic loss of children due to abortion since birth control started being taught as a means of preventing pregnancy.** Especially now, this generation of young sexually active adults and teens are not known for their commitment to responsible behavior in many areas.
2. **93% of all abortions are for birth control.**<sup>40</sup> This reflects the unfortunate prevailing attitude about abortion as a normal and common method of birth control. Abortion is now viewed as an acceptable and normal part of health care. Also, abortion providers profit handsomely from the services they provide. The prices vary depending on gestational age of the baby, residency, and insurance coverage. The increases in the price are especially steep in the second trimester, with the cost increasing by more than \$100 with each week past the 12th week. Abortion in the first trimester generally ranges from about \$300-\$500, while abortion in the second trimester range from about \$450-\$3,000.<sup>41</sup> Because this industry is profit driven and because the abortion yields a much higher profit than merely a unit of birth control pills, abortion providers encourage the use of abortion as a solution to unplanned pregnancy.
3. **The use of traditional methods of birth control, such as chemical or barrier methods, encourages more sexual activity which invariably leads to conception because of the frequent ineffective use of these methods.** Condoms fail due to inherent manufacturing defects or the tendency to minimize the need to use them. The discomfort and toxicity of internal barrier methods discourage many couples from using this type of pregnancy prevention. The current widespread medical treatment of many illnesses with a variety of prescription drugs causes unknown chemical interactions within the body, some of which may compromise the effectiveness of hormonal birth control. We do know that birth control pills sometimes fail due to the simultaneous use of antibiotics,<sup>42</sup> as well as the tendency for inconsistent compliance or inadequate dosage amounts. Also, the link between hormone therapy and cancer discourages many couples from using the Pill.<sup>43</sup>
4. **We have had more and more sex education teaching and recommending chemical and barrier methods of birth control over the years, but abortion rates have dramatically increased.** The US has now exceeded 59 million abortions since 1973. In Israel.

approximately one quarter of the Jewish population has perished via abortion since the 1948.<sup>44</sup> Obviously the idea that sex education recommending chemical and barrier methods of birth control have failed.

### **What about reproductive rights?**

- 1. The question should be about reproductive responsibility.** As Jews, we are given the responsibility to maintain purity and holiness in our sexual activities, so that the natural and predictable consequence of our sexual activity is a child that is wanted, not destroyed.
- 2. The question is also about the right to life of the child.** Jews have the moral responsibility to sanctify human life at all stages of development and uphold the right of all people to life and liberty. We have a responsibility to the most vulnerable and innocent of all - the unborn.
- 3. The National Socialist Party (NAZI) in Germany legislated forced abortion on Jewish women.** As part of the scheme to eliminate the Jewish population, Jewish women were encouraged to use contraception, and pregnant Jewish women were forced to terminate their pregnancies, and sterilized.<sup>45</sup> Pregnant Jewish women who resided in the concentration camps became subjects of abortion experiments or were immediately killed.<sup>46</sup>

In the name of reproductive rights, must we voluntarily subject ourselves to this horror?

### **Isn't Planned Parenthood a great organization?**

- 1. Planned Parenthood markets its services to women as healthcare, advertising that they offer a wide range of options, including abortion.** However, the actual numbers show that abortion now makes up 23% of its income making activities,<sup>47</sup> but breast cancer screenings and prenatal care have been phased out.<sup>48</sup>
- 2. The founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, was primarily interested in culling the populations of inferior minorities, including Jews.** She was a friend of Adolf Hitler and a supporter of the eugenics movement.<sup>49</sup> Jews who condone, support, or use the services of PP are participating in their own demise.
- 3. Many young women are first introduced to Planned Parenthood when a representative of Planned Parenthood is invited into a school setting to talk about adolescence and human sexuality.** These young adults then go there for their birth control pills. When the pills fail they readily return for their abortion. Planned Parenthood offers little counseling about alternatives to abortion, discourages ultrasound tests that show the actual living child in the womb, and is not responsible for follow-up care in the case of an emergency after the procedure.<sup>50</sup>
- 4. PP has been implicated in illegal and criminal activity,** including the failure to report evidence of sexual assault,<sup>51</sup> sex trafficking,<sup>52</sup> the failure to provide informed consent to patients, failure to counsel patients on alternatives to the abortion procedure or possible long term negative consequences of the procedure.<sup>53</sup> Recent undercover videos show illegal sales of body parts and the extreme violation of basic moral standards regarding dismemberment of born alive babies.<sup>54</sup>



## Embryos aren't people, so why shouldn't these be aborted?

- 1. The embryonic period is the first 8 weeks of human development starting with fertilization and is characterized by the formation of most major body systems.**<sup>55</sup>  
We were all embryos at one time. According to scientific criteria, the embryo is defined as a human life at an early stage of development, having its own blood type, unique genetic make up, and all the materials needed for human growth and development.<sup>56</sup> Each of us were once an embryo and were allowed to progress through each stage of human development. We need not arbitrarily decide that human life at this early stage should not be protected.
- 2. Making a judgement that the embryo is not human and therefore excluded from civil liberty protections including the right to life, reminds us of the judgments by German scientists and government officials that Jews were not human and denied these same protections.** The German media and legal campaigns spreading these lies was very effective, just as the current pro-abortion campaigns are effective in spreading misinformation about the unborn.<sup>57</sup>
- 3. RU486 - Mifepristone, also known as the Abortion Pill,** is the abortion method of choice approved for use in women during the embryonic stage, up to the 49th day after the Last Menstrual Period (LMP). The procedure usually requires three office visits. The RU 486 procedure requires at least three trips to the abortion facility. In the first visit, the woman swallows the RU 486 pills. RU 486 blocks the action of progesterone, the natural hormone vital to maintaining the rich nutrient lining of the uterus. The developing baby starves as the nutrient lining disintegrates.

At a second visit 36 to 48 hours later, the woman is given a dose of artificial prostaglandins, usually misoprostol, which initiates uterine contractions and usually causes the embryonic baby to be expelled from the uterus. Most women abort during the 4-hour waiting period at the clinic, but about 30% abort later at home, work, etc. as many as 5 days later. A third visit about 2 weeks later determines whether the abortion has occurred or a surgical abortion is necessary to complete the procedure (5 to 10% of all cases).<sup>58</sup>

- 4. Jews need to know that RU486 is manufactured by Hoechst AG, a subsidiary of the same German company that manufactured Zyklon-B, the gas used to exterminate Jews in WWII.**<sup>59</sup> When Jews ingest these drugs, we are unknowingly perpetuating the holocaust. The genocide continues.....

## What about aborting imperfect babies?

- 1. The eugenics movement popularized and implemented by the National Socialist Party ( NAZI ) in Germany first targeted the physically and mentally disabled.** Killing these people in order to improve the gene pool found legitimacy in the courts and in public opinion. Once this activity was approved, the legalized killing of Jews followed suit.<sup>60</sup>
- 2. Condoning abortions of babies with genetic defects starts us down that path again.** Determining that any innocent human person should die is outside of Jewish moral teachings. Considering that Jews have historically been categorized as subhuman and exterminated, Jewish justification for aborting due to imperfection defies common sense.



## ✳️ What about aborting babies who are conceived through insect or rape?

1. **Unfortunate circumstances of conception need not determine who lives or dies.** A healthy child in a healthy mother fails to meet the original criteria to abort. We recommend adherence to G-d's word in Deuteronomy 24:16: *Fathers shall not be put to death because of sons, nor shall sons be put to death because of fathers; each man shall be put to death for his own transgression.*
2. While the mother and her family reputation may be damaged, the baby does not present a direct threat to the mother's physical life. Well meaning Jewish authorities who recommend abortion in these cases fail to recognize that the abortion kills an innocent unborn child, and that abortion is a dangerous procedure that hurts women physically, mentally and emotionally far more than carrying a child to term. The emotional health of the mother and the reputation of the family can be better served through the life saving option of adoption rather than termination, allowing the child to live a productive life and the parents to live without the guilt after abortion.
3. **Although many well meaning Jewish authorities recommend abortion for children conceived through rape or incest, this recommendation does not meet the strict exception criterion for abortion.** According to the Mishneh Torah, a mamzer, a person conceived through incest or rape, is not allowed to marry a Jew or have a Jewish lifestyle. The death penalty is not the punishment for this unfortunate circumstance of birth.<sup>61</sup>
4. **Judaism demands a high respect and protection of life.** Our tradition teaches us to go to extraordinary lengths to save an innocent person. Capital punishment is nearly impossible to administer in our criminal justice system for fear of putting an innocent person to death. We invest great expense and effort to house, educate, and litigate appeals for death row inmates. Yet, a rapist or incest perpetrator may face little or no consequence while the innocent child in the womb becomes a criminal deserving of extermination through the painful methods of starvation, dismemberment, or poisoning.
5. Research shows that women who abort a pregnancy conceived in sexual assault reported that abortion had been the wrong solution. Most women who had abortions say that abortion only increased the trauma they were experiencing. In many cases, the victim faced strong pressure or demands to abort. In almost all the cases where the victim became pregnant through incest, abortion was chosen by the perpetrator to cover up the incest and the victim rarely, if ever, had a say in the matter. None of the women who gave birth to a child conceived in sexual assault expressed regret or wished they had aborted instead.<sup>62</sup>

## ✳️ Isn't maternal well being of utmost importance? Abortion usually improves the lives of women, right?

1. **The fallacy that women benefit from abortion has been proven inaccurate during the past 30 years.** Historically the discussions around abortion emphasized the potential benefits to women: legal, elective abortion would protect women from the physical risks of illegal abortions, save women from the consequences of sexually abusive relationships, and improve the lives of women by giving them reproductive choice. Many men also approved of safe access to abortion in order to avoid parental responsibilities.
2. **These discussions did not, however, address the down side of abortion for women - or men.** Research that confirms the real negative after effects of abortion sheds light on this

problem.<sup>63</sup> Post-abortion syndrome is identifiable and predictable. This problem is now addressed by therapeutic programs that offer healing opportunities for men and women suffering physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual damage due to their abortion experience. To meet this need for Jews, the Jewish Pro-Life Foundation has developed Tikvat Rachel, a post abortion healing program specifically for Jewish men and women.<sup>64</sup>

3. **Tragically, many post abortive men and women regret their decisions to end the lives of their unborn children.** It turns out that abortion, in many cases, does nothing to improve the lives of many women, in fact, abortion still physically harms and kills women, and perpetuates many sexually abusive relationships. Instead of improving the lives of women through the exercise of reproductive choice, many women's lives take a turn for the worse after their abortion as they struggle with a variety of personal problems, including guilt, depression, anxiety, anger, and social isolation. Many women experience reproductive health problems after their abortions, and the incidence of breast cancer rises after abortion. For many women, these problems undermine whatever positive career or life improvements that may have been possible after exercising their reproductive choices.<sup>65</sup> And let us remember that millions of unborn female babies have perished as a result of abortion. Their lives are lost, not improved.
4. **Traditional Judaism grants Jewish women many rights and privileges, which reflects a respect and appreciation for women's health and well being.** Jews can best promote the health and lives of Jewish women by discontinuing support for abortion services and by avoiding the use of abortion. Instead, we can support and encourage Jewish women facing unplanned pregnancy. We can improve the lives of Jewish women by personally reaching out to Jewish women who we know are dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. We can introduce pregnancy support programming into our established organizations such as Hadassah, Jewish Family & Children's Services, Hillel, and Rosh Chodesh groups. Jewish women and men can avoid the damage of the abortion experience and the babies can be delivered safely out of the womb and into the loving arms of their mothers and fathers, relatives or Jewish adoptive parents.

## Why talk about abortion in the Jewish community?

1. **Our demographic survival may depend upon acknowledging and resolving this situation.**
  - a. **Studies on Jewish birth rates identify many contributing factors for the current replacement rate of 1.4%, a rate well below the necessary number of 2.1%.<sup>66</sup>** These factor include the reality that many Jewish women delay bearing children until later in life more than other groups, which effects fertility and number of children born to Jewish couples. The availability of birth control, high rates of intermarriage and every increasing non-identification as Jewish are all seen as reasons for so few Jewish children running around in our synagogues and temples.<sup>67</sup>
  - b. **The use of abortion in the Jewish community needs to be mentioned as a contributing factor in the low fertility and low birth rates.** The global Jewish population is estimated at 13.3 million.<sup>68</sup> Using accepted Jewish abortion participation in Israel ( 30,000 per year ), US - 1.3% (15,600 per year ), Europe - 1.0% ( 540,800 per year ), adds up to 586,400 Jewish unborn deaths per year. This number can be rounded up to 600,000 per year taking into account the remaining global Jewish population centers. Annual rates of Jewish abortion participation can be seen retroactively, too. These babies never grew up to bear their own Jewish children.

- c. **The Israeli observant Jewish community's high childbirth rate compensates for this deficit to some degree;** however, it can't match the flood of children being born in the Arab community. Every Jewish baby counts towards the survival of the Jewish state.
- d. **The phenomena of dramatically low birthrates around the world** is well described in the documentary *The Demographic Winter: The Decline of the Human Family*.<sup>69</sup>

**2. Our spiritual survival may depend upon acknowledging and resolving this situation.**

- a. **In 2009, Israel's Chief Rabbis, Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger and Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel Shlomo Amar, have publicly stated their concern.** In a letter sent out to rabbis throughout Israel, Metzger and Amar wrote: "The vast majority of abortions are unnecessary and forbidden by Halacha," adding the committee was already exploring ways to reduce the number of abortions approved. The two argue that according to data presented to the Chief Rabbinate, some 50,000 abortions are performed in Israel every year, 20,000 of which are legal. "Adding to the gravity of this transgression is the fact that it impedes the coming of redemption." "The public, said the rabbis, "Must be made to understand the gravity of the killing of fetuses, which is equal to the murder of souls," adding that community rabbis must include family planning and the abortion ban in their sermons.<sup>70</sup>
- b. **Dennis Prager's explanation of the emphasis on life principles in Judaism provides keen insight into the argument against abortion in the Jewish culture.** "If one can speak of Judaism's essence, it is contained in the Torah statement, "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse, and you shall choose life." Judaism affirms whatever enhances life, and it opposes or separates whatever represents death. Thus, a Jewish priest (cohen) is to concern himself only with life. Perhaps alone among world religions, Judaism forbade its priests to come into contact with the dead. To cite some other examples, meat (death) is separated from milk (life); menstruation (death) is separated from sexual intercourse (life); carnivorous animals (death) are separated from vegetarian, kosher, animals (life). This is probably why the Torah juxtaposes child sacrifice with male homosexuality. Though they are not morally analogous, both represent death: one deprives children of life, the other prevents their having life. This parallelism is present in the Talmud: "He who does not engage in propagation of the race is as though he had shed blood."<sup>71</sup>

## Notes

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