

דרישה DRISHA

“The Pain of Raising Children”: Using Care Ethics to Understand Jewish Leadership

Sarah Zager

I. Philosophical Background

Peter Abelard (1079–1142), *Historia Calamitatum*

Then, turning from the consideration of such hindrances to the study of philosophy, Heloise bade me observe what were the conditions of honourable wedlock. What possible concord could there be between scholars and domestics, between authors and cradles, between books or tablets and distaffs, between the stylus or the pen and the spindle? What man, intent on his religious or philosophical meditations, can possibly endure the whining of children, the lullabies of the nurse seeking to quiet them, or the noisy confusion of family life? Who can endure the continual untidiness of children?

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), *De Cive*

“Let us consider men...as if but even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kind of engagement to each other.”

Seyla Benhabib, (1950-), *Situating the Self*

[The world of the “sovereign self”] it is one in which individuals are grown up before they have been born; in which boys are men before they have been children; a world where neither mother, nor sister, nor wife exist”

...

[In the world of the “situated self”] There are norms of friendship, love and care. These norms require in various ways that I exhibit more than the simple assertion of my rights and duties in the face of your needs. In treating you in accordance with the norms of friendship, love and care, I confirm not your humanity but your human individuality. The moral categories that accompany such interactions are those of responsibility, bonding and sharing. The corresponding moral feelings are those of love, care and sympathy and solidarity.

Virginia Held (1929-), *The Ethics of Care*

Moralities built on the image of the independent, autonomous, rational individual largely overlook the reality of human dependence and the morality for which it calls. The ethics of care attends to this central concern of human life and delineates the moral values involved. It refuses to relegate care to a realm “outside morality.”

II. Sha”tz on a Fast Day

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Mishnah Ta'anit 2:2	משנה תענית ב:ב
When they stand and pray, they are led by an elder who is fluent [in the prayers], has children, and whose house is empty, so that his heart will be full in prayer....	עמד . תפלה, מ . ידין לפני התבה זקן ורגיל, ו ל . נים, . ית ריקם, כדי . יהא ל . לם תפלה....

Talmud Bavli, Ta'anit 16a	בבלי תענית טז.
When they stand and pray, they are led by an elder... Our rabbis taught: When they stand and pray, even if there is a wise elder, they should only be led by someone who is fluent in the prayers. Who is fluent? Rabbi Yehudah says, "he cares [for children], and does not have enough, so he has to go to work in the field, and his house is empty."	עמדו בתפלה מורידין לפני התיבה זקן כו': תנו רבנן: עמדו בתפלה אע"פ שיש שם זקן וחכם אין מורידין לפני התיבה אלא אדם הרגיל. (איזהו רגיל) ר' יהודה אומר מטופל ואין לו ויש לו יגיעה בשדה וביתו ריקם
And his youth is becoming, and he is humble, and loved by the people—and he knows melodies, and his voice is pleasant, and he is a knowledgeable reader of Torah and Prophets, and Writings, and Midrash and Halakhah. And he knows all of the blessings.	ופרקו נאה, ושפל ברך, ומרוצה לעם—ויש לו נעימה וקולו ערב ובקי לקרות בתורה ובנביאים ובכתובים ולשנות במדרש בהלכות ובאגדות ובקי בכל הברכות כולן....
He cares for children and does not have enough—Rav Hisda said: Someone whose house is empty from sin. And his youth is becoming—Abaye says, "That nothing bad was said about him in his childhood."	היינו מטופל ואין לו—היינו ביתו ריקם, אמר רב חסדא זהו שביתו ריקם מן העבירה: ופרקו נאה אמר אביי זה שלא יצא (לו) שם רע בילדותו

Talmud Yerushalmi, Demai 3:3	ירושלמי דמאי ג:ג
It was taught in a baraita: "He can swear into the chavurah, and his children and the children of his house may swear for	תני הוא נענה לחבורה ובניו ובני ביתו נענין לו. אית תני תני הוא ובניו ובני ביתו נענין לחבורה

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<p>him. But there is another baraita: "He and his children and the children of his house all swear into the chavurah." There is no dispute: Here it is talking about a case where the children are under their father's care, and there it is talking about a case where the children are not under their father's care.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ולא פליג כאן בטפולין לאביהן וכאן כשאין טפולין לאביה</p>
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<p>Talmud Yerushalmi, Ketubot 12:3</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ירושלמי כתובות יב:ג</p>
<p>It is written, "Abandoned [freed] among the dead," (Psalms 88:6), when a man dies he is made free from mitzvot. Rebi Tzvia [said] three things at the time when he was freed: "Do not move my widow from my house; do not mourn me in the cities, and the one who has cared for me in life will care for me when I die."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">כתיב במתים חפשי (תהילים פח) כיון שמת אדם נעשה חפשי מן המצות ר' ציוה שלשה דברים בשעת פטירתו אל תזוז אלמנתי מביתי ואל תספידוני בעיירות ומי שניטפל בי בחיי יטפל בי במותי</p>

III. Dayanut

<p>Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 36b</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">בבלי סנהדרין לו:</p>
<p>We learn in a baraita: An elder, eunuch, or someone who does not have children cannot serve on a Sanhedrin. Rabbi Yehudah adds, even a wicked person. And the reverse is true for a rebellious person, because the Torah says, "Show him no pity or compassion, and do not shield him" (Deut. 9:13).</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">דתניא אין מושיבין בסנהדרין זקן וסריס ומי שאין לו בנים ר' יהודה מוסיף אף אכזרי וחילופיהן במסית דרחמנא אמר (דברים יג, ט) לא תחמול ולא תכסה עליו:</p>

<p>Rashi ad loc.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">רש"י שם</p>
<p>Elder—One who has already forgotten the pain of raising children and will not be merciful. And the same for a eunuch.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">זקן - ששכח כבר צער גדול בנים ואינו רחמני וכן סריס:</p>

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Bavli Shabbat 89b	בבלי שבת פט:
<p>Shmuel Bar Nachmani said that Rabbi Yonatan said, What does it mean when it is written, "Surely You are our Father: Though Abraham regard us not, And Israel recognize us not, You, O LORD, are our Father; From of old, Your name is 'Our Redeemer.'" In the future, God will say to Abraham, "Your children have sinned against me," And Abraham will say before him "Master of the universe, erase them, for the sanctification of your name." He [God] said, "I will say it to Jacob," because Jacob had the pain of raising children, and he may ask for mercy on their behalf. And God said to him, "Your children have sinned against me." And Jacob said, "Master of the universe, erase them, for the sanctification of your name." And God said, "Elders have no reason, and youths have no counsel." And God said to Isaac, "Your children have sinned against me." And Isaac said, "Master of the universe, are they my children and not yours? At the time that they put 'we will do,' before 'we will hear,' the verse was said about them, 'My first born son' (Exodus 4:22). Now, are they my children and not yours?"</p>	<p>א"ר שמואל בר נחמני א"ר יונתן מ"ד (ישעיה סג, טז) כי אתה אבינו כי אברהם לא ידענו וישראל לא יכירו אתה ה' אבינו גואלנו מעולם שמך לעתיד לבא יאמר לו הקב"ה לאברהם בניך חטאו לי אמר לפניו רבש"ע ימחו על קדושת שמך אמר אימר ליה ליעקב דהוה ליה צער גידול בנים אפשר דבעי רחמי עלייהו אמר ליה בניך חטאו אמר לפניו רבש"ע ימחו על קדושת שמך אמר לא בסבי טעמא ולא בדדקקי עצה אמר לו ליצחק בניך חטאו לי אמר לפניו רבש"ע בני ולא בניך בשעה שהקדימו לפניך נעשה לנשמע קראת להם (שמות ד, כב) בני בכורי עכשיו בני ולא בניך</p>

Bereshit Rabbah, Parashat Bereshit 20:6	בראשית רבה, פרשת בראשית כו:
<p>"Your travail," that is the pain of conception; "your childbearing," that is the pain of pregnancy; "in sadness," this is the pain of stillbirths; "you shall bear," this is the pain of giving birth; "children," this is the pain of raising children. Rabbi Elazar</p>	<p>עצבונך זה צער של עיבור, והרוגך זה צער העידוי, בעצב זה צער הנפלים, תלדי זה צער לידה, בנים זה צער גידול בנים, אמר ר' אלעזר בר' שמעון נוח לו לאדם לגדל ליגיון שלזיתים בגליל ולא לגדל תינוק אחד בארץ ישראל.</p>

<p>said in the name of Rabbi Shimon: It is better for a person to raise a grove of olive trees in the Galilee than to raise a single child in the land of Israel.</p>	
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IV. Other Kinds of Situatedness: Hope and Longing as Care?

Bavli Shabbat 66b	בבלי שבת סב:
<p>Mishnah: Boys may go out [into the public sphere on shabbat] with knots. And princes may go out with bells. And any person is permitted to go out [carrying these things]. They were merely speaking about things that were current practice.</p>	<p>מתני' הבנים יוצאין בקשרים ובני מלכים בזוגין וכל אדם אלא שדברו חכמים בהווה:...</p>
<p>... Our Rabbis taught "One may go out with a preservation stone on the sabbath, according to Rabbi Meir." They said "even with a counterweight to the preservation stone [that has the same weight]." And not only someone who has previously miscarried, but also in case she does miscarry; and not only someone who is pregnant, but also in case she becomes pregnant and miscarry. Rabbi Simlai said in the name of Abaye, "This applies only in a case where one finds a stone that is already the same weight [and not in a case where one cuts the stone to be the same weight]." Abaye asked, "And what about a counterweight of a counterweight?" Let this dilemma stand unresolved.</p>	<p>... תנו רבנן יוצאין באבן תקומה בשבת משום רבי מאיר אמרו אף במשקל אבן תקומה ולא שהפילה אלא שמא תפיל ולא שעבירה אלא שמא תתעבר ותפיל אמר רב יימר בר שלמיא משמיה דאביי והוא דאיכוון ואיתקל בעי אביי משקל דמשקל מאי תיקו</p>

Bavli Shabbat 66b	בבלי שבת סב:
<p>But what are these knots? They are like what Rabbi Avin bar Huna said that</p>	<p>אלא מאי קשרים כי הא דאמר אבין בר הונא אמר רבי חמא בר גוריא בן שיש געגועין על אביו נוטל</p>

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Rabbi Chama bar Gurya: a son who longs his father takes the shoelace from his right shoe, and then ties it to his left hand. Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak said: and you can remember this because of the *Tefillin* [which are worn on the left arm].

רצועה ממנעל של ימין וקושר לו בשמאלו אמר רב
נחמן בר יצחק וסימניך תפילין