

# The Cubit

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## These are the Generations of Noah

Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.

Bid Jerusalem take heart, and proclaim unto her,

that her time of service is accomplished,

that her time of service is accomplished,  
that her guilt is paid off : Isaiah 40:1-2

### From The Editors

B"H

*Included in this month is an article called Brainstorming with Baars – thoughts on one of this month's weekly Torah Portions.*

*I have included this in order to help those of you interested in studying the portions – of interest are the questions at the end of the article to help provoke your thoughts on the portion.*

*Liṣṣ* ❖

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### BRAINSTORMING WITH BAARS

Thoughts on PARSHAT SHOFTIM ~ Deut 16:18 - 21:9 by Rabbi Stephen Baars ~ Aish HaTorah Washington

Provided by the Aish HaTorah mailing list details at <http://www.aish.edu/>

The reading, Parashat Shoftim falls on Aug 25<sup>th</sup>, this year



### "OBJECTIVITY IS RELATIVE"

"Many pens have been broken and seas of ink consumed to describe things that never happened." - Maimonides



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Catholics, Moslems, Jews. Democrats, Feminists, Socialists, Liberals, Human Rights Activists, Civil Rights Activists, Environmentalists, Anti-Nuclear groups. United Nations, NATO, The Peace Corps, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, Big Brothers. Therapists, Doctors and Social Workers!

I want to know: If all these people claim to be saving the world, then who's causing all the problems?!



## THE HIDDEN AGENDA

Joe: "Please forgive me for even suggesting such a ridiculous notion, but could it possibly be now and again (and ever so rarely) that people may in the slightest way be influenced to one side and sometimes just a little bit subjective?"

Bill: "You're 100 percent right. People can in fact be quite subjective. But not me!"

Objectivity is relative. I claim to see more of the truth than you, you see more than him, and we both see more than everyone else!

Clarity on a situation is often proportional to how far you are emotionally removed from it. It's hard to be objective about any situation which involves your child or spouse, or when the person criticising you is a close relative or a bad enemy.

How often have you been in a situation where the other guy is blatantly wrong, but somehow he's determined to defend himself? He obviously has some stake in being right: Maybe his pride on the line, or money is in question.

What about us? Do we always see the truth so clearly?

Or is it just everyone else who's mistaken?!

Surely, if there's an honest bone in our bodies, we have to admit that not only are we subjective part of the time, but in all likelihood, most of the time. And how could it not be so? We are constantly influenced by personal concerns, pettiness, desires and subconscious wants.

Of course the world is going to be viewed through the tint in our glasses!



## BRIBERY COMES IN MANY SHADES

Bribery doesn't just mean a brown paper bag stuffed with cash, delivered in the middle of the night. Bribery can take many forms:

- 1) "Should I string the girl along or not? It's fair. I made no commitments."

Are you sure? Would you accept this line of reasoning from your sister's boyfriend?

- 2) "It's obvious my partner cheated me. He only claims that I cheated him in order to defend himself from my accusations against him. He's not as honest as I thought he was. It's too bad there aren't more people like me."

If you want to be objective, take your dispute to an impartial third party whom you both trust, and let him adjudicate.

- 3) "Should I keep kosher? Of course not. Judaism is nice but it's not for me."

If Judaism is not for Jews, then who is it for – the pygmies? Just possibly, is there a subconscious bribe taking place here? What's getting in your way? Is it more comfortable NOT to keep kosher?



## BRIBERY AND BLINDNESS

In this week's parsha, the Torah tells us:

"Do not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous." – Deut 16:19

If you were to discover that the mayor of your city owned stock in a company that just acquired a major municipal contract, wouldn't you be just a little suspicious?

Of course the mayor is acting with bias! Yet he claims: "I was objective. We awarded the contract based solely on the fact that this is the best company with the finest product."

Rashi (11th century French rabbi) comments on this verse by saying: When a judge accepts a bribe from one of the claimants, it is impossible that he will not be inclined to turn the judgment in his favor. No matter who you are, no matter how wise you may be, bribery will affect your decisions.

Once you start taking bribes it affects everything in your life. The shutters of your eyes close and all becomes dark outside.

Decisions are often fine lines. In the final analysis, they are usually made in a person's mind, not on a spread - sheet. Perhaps our mayor doesn't realize he's being affected by self-interest.

Perhaps we don't realize when we are being affected!

Our Sages say: "Be a judge, not a lawyer" (Pirkei Avot 1:8). In life, we are constantly required to make judgment calls. Our responsibility is to meet these situations as a judge who renders an impartial decision, and not as a lawyer who is paid to advocate for one side over the other.

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Be a judge who won't take a bribe. Judge the situation; don't defend it.



## BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS TO PONDER

**Question 1:** Do you secretly believe that the country would run better if the President phoned you regularly for advice?

**Question 2:** What was the last unresolved argument or dispute you were involved in? Did you seek any outside advice? In the future, how would you go about seeking an impartial opinion?

**Question 3:** When was the last time you admitted you were



# The Wealthy Man and the Wagon Driver

A story from Rabbi Yochanan Friedman

<http://www.RabbiFriedman.org>

There is a story told of a wealthy man and a wagon driver who were both traveling on a Friday afternoon to a particular village. On the way, the wealthy man found a stranded traveler on the side of the road. This traveler's wagon had slipped into the mud. The wealthy man tried to help get the wagon back on the road, but try as he may, was unable to move it.

So, dirtied and tired he continued on his way and arrived at his hotel just moments before Shabbat began.

In the meantime, the wagon driver, who had decided not to stop to help the stranded traveler, arrived with plenty of time to prepare for Shabbat.

The two men came to the synagogue that evening, the wealthy man was muddled and worn out while the wagon driver was dressed his best and rested. After the prayers, the wagon driver invited some of the beggars in town to join him in his hotel room for a small "festive" meal, while the wealthy man went off alone. So in the end, the stranded traveler remained stranded and the poor people had nothing more than another "poor" meal.

Many years later, when both had come before the heavenly court, it was decided that both souls would be sent back to the physical world to rectify their mistakes. The mistake of having done what was a good deed but a deed that not part of their soul's mission. The wagon driver was meant to help the stranded traveler and the wealthy man was meant to invite the poor in for a meal.

That's the story. I found it extremely thought-provoking and figured it might be a good starting point to some interesting conversation.

Very best wishes to all.

Rabbi Yochanan Friedman

## SHABBAT & HOLIDAY READINGS FOR AUGUST

Days start at sundown and end at sundown.

Thus Sat 5<sup>th</sup> XXX would start at sundown on Friday not midnight Friday night / Saturday morning.

Holiday	Date	Torah	Haf Torah
Shabbat	04-Aug	Deut. 3.23-7.11	Isaiah 40.1-26
Shabbat	11-Aug	Deut. 7.12-11.25	Isaiah 49.14-51.3
Shabbat	18-Aug	Deut. 11.26-16.17 Num. 28.9-15	Isaiah 54.11-55.5 Isaiah 66.1-24
Rosh Hodesh	19 -> 20-Aug	Num. 28.1-15	
Shabbat	25-Aug	Deut. 16.18-21.9	Isaiah 51.12-52.12

# "Gravitational Pull" from Jessica's Dating Journal

Archives of Jessica's Dating Journal:

<http://aish.com/dating/jessica/>

Yet again, I was at a loss for words.

I wondered, desperately, what expression was sitting on my face.

We'd had a lovely date thus far and now Amazingly Nice, Cute, Honest, Open Rick was searching my face to see why I looked stunned.

He had just quipped about himself as an altar boy.

-- Okay, I thought dryly, I know that some Jews take a "non-traditional" approach, but having altar boys is a little too over-the-top for even the most progressive temple!

"Jessica?" Rick asked, unaware of my calculations. "Uh, did I say something wrong?"

My mouth started speaking before my brain switched into gear. I had no idea what was coming out.

"Uh, Rick," the auto piloted mouth began, "uh... did you say you were an altar boy?"

He nodded.

I nodded, indicating that I understood.

Pause.

He was still looking at me, no doubt wondering what on earth had seized my brain.

"This is going to sound strange," I began, "but, uh... are you by any chance not Jewish?"

"Am I by any chance not Jewish?" Rick repeated, apparently not sure if the question was a joke of some sort.

I nodded.

"Well, uh, no," he said, looking confused. "I'm not. I'm not Jewish."

I KNEW IT!!!

-- Congratulations, Jessica, you've now managed to deduce the completely obvious. My brilliant career as a private investigator has begun.

"This is going to sound strange," Rick said, still staring, parroting me, "but does that matter?"

Years of egalitarianism-above-all training surged ahead, seizing control of my auto piloted mouth.

"No, of course not," my mouth said, brightly.

"Did he believe you?" Beth, my older sister, asked when I called her in Philly the instant he took me home. I poured out the story: seemingly perfect guy, only getting better as I get to know him more, but he's not Jewish.



"It was obvious that I'd behaved strangely. But I think he got over it," I said.

"At least he didn't ask about it after I changed the subject."

I was embarrassed that it mattered. I felt less liberal, less open-minded, less tolerant. Somehow, not being Jewish didn't seem an acceptable reason to stop seeing someone.

My mind kept falling back to a scene from an old Spike Lee movie where black women chided black men for always dating white women. Then there was my prideful thrill when Eddie Murphy told Oprah Winfrey that he only dates black women. I understood that, at the kishke-level, it was about preserving a heritage.

But doesn't there come a point at which loyalty to one's specific culture is trumped by a recognition of the beauty inherent in all cultures? Is there a reason why I can't be true to my own culture and love someone from another?

The very idea of eliminating someone simply because he's not Jewish sat uneasily in my conscious mind. Done subconsciously or by chance, it was fine. Done above board by deliberation, it seemed discriminatory. American education had taught me the all-important 11th commandment: Thou shalt not discriminate.

Moreover, I continued musing, Jews have no monopoly on virtues. There are plenty of wonderful, non-Jews in the world. What's so special about us anyway?

I thought about the automatic kinship I felt when I realised someone was Jewish, especially here in Phoenix where I didn't meet so many. The cultural references fit, the way we get "Seinfeld" on a deeper level. And, of course, the appreciation of a fine bagel, and the attendant understanding that it's a crime to do anything but boil them!

Is that it? A voice I didn't recognise in my head asked. Is that what has sustained the Jewish people for thousands of years? A yearning for the perfect breakfast item while reading the Sunday paper? Isn't there something deeper?

I didn't know.

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"What even made you think he was Jewish anyway?" Beth said a bit groggily, interrupting my thoughts. I'd woken her up.

"Well... uh, he... um," I stammered.

"Don't try to tell me that he 'looks Jewish.'"

"Well, he does! Plus his last name is Miller." Every synagogue I knew had a few Millers in it -- it's one of those names that Jews at Ellis Island used when Cheperchekoberg or Feinoskovitz seemed too cumbersome.

Plus, the night I met him, I was with a bunch of people who knew each other through the Federation Young Leadership group. I'd assumed, somehow, that he was a part of the group.

"To be honest," I admitted, "I guess I didn't really put much thought into it."

"Dad warned you," she said.

"Thank you, Beth," I said sarcastically. "That's very productive right now."

When I was trying to decide if I should take the job in Phoenix last year, my dad had pointed out -- with my mother nodding vigorously beside him -- that there wasn't as much of an established Jewish community here.

"You're going to have to find Jewish men to date," he had said. "They won't just fall into your lap. You'll have to make a conscious effort to be a part of the Jewish community and you'll have to seek out Jewish guys."

What I hadn't realized is that making an effort to find Jewish guys isn't enough. I'd made that effort already, even going so far as to join a plethora of Jewish Young Adults organizations. It had paid off to some extent. I had had one serious relationship and a few minor dates.

I had become marginally "known," as Alison said. She had assured me that I was "in the playbook." I didn't know what

that meant precisely, but apparently it was good.

But now, this.

I thought of Rick -- mature, sensitive, kind, caring, genuine, emotionally available and stable guy.

The proactive efforts were all well and good, but there was another level. I had to commit to dating Jews.

"Whatever you do, don't tell Mom or Dad until you're sure he's worth the headache," Beth said.

Our parents had been, suffice to say, less than supportive of Beth's relationships with non-Jewish guys. I'd briefly dated a sweet guy named Kevin Molesworth in high school who wasn't Jewish, but our teen romance had fizzled before Mom and Dad had a chance to react.

I never deliberately ruled out dating non-Jews, and my parents worried when I chose a WASPy liberal arts college. But even there, my serious boyfriends had all been Jewish. I'd always gravitated toward Jewish guys.

But now... here was Rick.

I'd already gravitated toward him. And he seemed gravitated toward me.

It's still early enough to reverse the gravitational pull, my Dad's voice answered.

I said good night to Beth and got into bed, my head spinning with a recurring thought: I like Rick.



*"Jessica's Journal" is the diary of Jessica Shaeffer, a 27-year-old TV producer living in the sunny Southwest. She is regularly featured on the Aish Dating site, which includes an advice column, dating diaries by both men and women, and articles on love, dating and marriage. See it all at: <http://aish.com/dating/>*

There are people who claim to seek the truth, but mistakenly think that whatever they wish to be true should automatically be considered true.

-Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv

Anger deprives one, of his senses.

-Pesikta Zuta Yayera

"What we acquire easily is lost easily."

-Rashi Chulin 24

"Many are man's plans but only Hashem yields results."

Mishlei 21:19

"Whoever follows the advice of the elderly will be successful in his endeavours."

-Shemos Rabba

G-d acts towards individuals according to how they act toward other people. Thus if people are willing to forgive those of who have offended them, G-d will similarly overlook their misdeeds. If a person is very judgmental and acts with anger to every offense, G-d will be equally strict.

-Baal Shem Tov

The main way to gain wisdom is to remain silent and listen to the (Torah)thoughts of the wise.

-Vilna Gaon

"A blessing from a good friend is worth more than that of the Angel Gabriel."

-Baal Shem Tov

FROM CHOFETZ CHAIM HERITAGE FOUNDATION'S

# The Jewish Commandments & Noachidism

A few months ago we looked at how the 7 Universal laws could be seen as 7 categories and thus broken down further into 66 laws, below is a list of the 613 mitzvot (commandments) which are binding on the Jewish Nation.

I am grateful to Tracey Rich's Judaism 101 site for the list which is primarily based on the list compiled by Maimonides in the Mishneh Torah.

Tracey has also consulted other sources as well in order to offer a comprehensive list and reminds visitors to her site that Maimonides' list is probably the most widely accepted list, but it is not the only one. The order is her own.

Tracey has provided, for each mitzvah, a citation to the biblical passage or passages from which it is derived, based primarily on Maimonides. For commandments that can be observed today, she have also provided citations to the Chafetz Chayim's Concise Book of Mitzvot (CCA refers to affirmative commandments; CCN refers to negative commandments; CCI refers to commandments that only apply in Israel).

Commandments that cannot be observed today primarily relate to the Temple, its sacrifices and services (because the Temple does not exist) and criminal procedures (because the theocratic state of Israel does not exist).

How do the 613 Mitzvot apply to B'nei Noach?

## ASK AISH

QUESTIONS TO THE RABBIS AT AISH HATORAH

<http://aish.com>

THE BIG HURT

From: Luxembourg

How do I forgive somebody who hurt me deeply? I put all my trust in her. I don't wish her anything bad. I hope she finds the life I couldn't give her.

*The Aish Rabbi Replies:*

Please keep two things in mind:

- 1) The hurt we suffer is an atonement for the mistakes we make. If you would not have suffered at her hands, you would have suffered at the hands of someone else.
- 2) The valuable lessons about life that you learned from this experience will serve you well in the future.

May the Almighty give you strength and clarity.

In *The Path of the Righteous Gentile* by Chiam Clorfene and Yakov Rogalsky we are reminded that:

*Although the Children of Noah are commanded only concerning the Seven Universal Laws, they are permitted to observe any of the 613 commandments of the Torah for the sake of receiving divine reward.*

But there are exceptions to this ruling, which are detailed below (Please note that the numbered bullet points are summarized text from *The Path of the Righteous Gentile* whilst the notes below each point (*in italics*) are a commentary giving the stance of the both the World-wide Noachide Community and The Board of the UK B'nei Noach.

- 1) Observing the Sabbath or Jewish Holidays in the manner of the Jews (resting from the actions that were needed in the building Tabernacle during Exodus from Egypt)

*Remember that 'work' as defined here is not our occupation but as is said above, the work required for building the Tabernacle – see the section below on Work Prohibited on Shabbos*

- 2) Studying those parts of the Torah which do not apply to the Noachide's service of G-d.

*Reading the Torah, Prophets & Writings and Talmud outside of the sections that apply to Noachidism is acceptable. What should be understood here is the term Studying. This doesn't mean reading passages and either discussing them or using commentaries – studying here refers to the type of study undertaken at a Yeshiva or college.*

*Noachides do not have the years of study in Jewish law to allow them to definitive statements on the Tanach or Talmud and certainly should not make halachaic (law) decisions. Where a point of Noachide law needs to be either set or explained they should take this to a good Rabbinical authority on Noachidism. That said, we would strongly recommend that they go to such an authority with an idea of the possible outcomes and discuss with them their understanding of the law in order to make sure that any decision given is understood.*

- 3) Writing a Torah scroll (the Five Books of Moses) or receiving an aliyah to the Torah (reading a portion of the Torah at a public gathering).

*Reading the Torah portion at public gatherings includes being asked to Daven (pray) in shul. Ben Noach (Male Noachides), on attending Shul, must make it completely clear that they are not Jewish and therefore must not be called to read. Obviously this is not a problem for Bat Noach (Female Noachides) as female Jews are never called to read in Orthodox Shuls.*

- 4) Making, writing, or wearing Tefillin, which are the phylacteries worn during prayer that contain portions of

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the Torah.

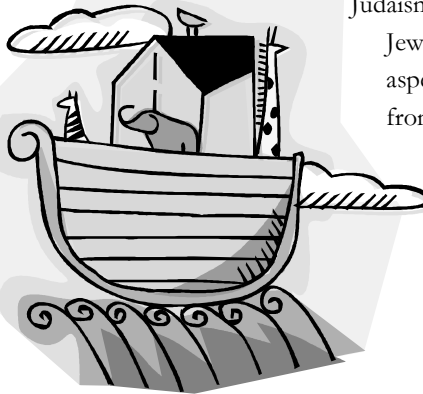
*Under no circumstances should a Noachide use Tefillin.*

- 5) Writing or affixing a mezuzah, the parchment containing portions of the Torah, to one's doorposts or gateposts.

*This commandment is solely for Jews but there is some discussion as to whether Noachides who have Orthodox Jews to stay, or visit, often may wish to have Mezuzah's affixed to the doorway of the visitor's room for their benefit. Unfortunately, the Jury is still out on this one.*

- 6) If one of the Children of Noah wishes to accept the full responsibility of the Torah and the 613 commandments, he or she can convert and become a Jew in every respect. One who elects to do this is called a Ger Tzedek - a Righteous Proselyte.

*There is nothing wrong with observing any of the 613 commandments (apart from the exceptions stated here) for the sake of receiving divine reward but there has to come a point where if you take on more and more of the commandments you are starting to move more towards Judaism and away from Noachidism. This is the point that a person must accept conversion*



- 7) It is incorrect to think that since the Children of Israel have 613 commandments and the Children of Noah have seven commandments, that the ratio of spiritual worth is proportionally 613 to seven.

The truth is that the Seven Universal Laws are general commandments, each containing many parts and details, whereas the 613 Commandments of the Torah are specific, each relating to one basic detail of the Divine Law. Therefore, the numerical disparity in no way reflects the relative spiritual worth of the two systems of commandments.

This is a very important point to remember. Many Orthodox Jews believe that the 7 Universal Laws are a harder path than Judaism simply because Noachidism is not codified to the extent that Judaism.

- 8) Besides the Seven Universal Laws, the Children of Noah have traditionally taken it upon themselves to fulfil the commandment of honouring mother and father. Also, some are of the opinion that the Children of Noah are obligated to fulfil the commandment of giving charity. Others state that it is proper and meritorious for the Children of Noah to give charity but that it is not actually commanded of them.
- 9) In accord with the Seven Universal Laws, man is enjoined against creating any religion based on his own intellect.

He either develops religion based on these Divine Laws or becomes a Righteous Proselyte, a Jew, and accepts all 613 commandments of the Torah.

The last of these prohibitions is the most commonly misrepresented of all the writings on Noachidism. Noachides are *not prohibited* to develop a religion based on the 7 Universal Laws (re-read the passage above and you will see).

What they are prohibited in doing is taking aspects of Judaism and using them for themselves (hence the term *in the manner of the Jews* which is commonly used to refer to the work prohibited on Shabbos). Yes, there are aspects of Judaism which are universal and apply to both Jew and Noachide but there will also be aspects of Noachidism which are distinct from Judaism.

One further point should be made, predominately the Jewish dietary laws are not binding on Noachides as they have their own law. We strongly recommend that the chapter on *Eating the Limb of a Live Animal* from *Path of the Righteous Gentile* for further information on this subject.

## PRAYER FOR PERSONAL REQUEST

Almighty, Master of the Universe, who has given me my life, my health, my family, my friends, my potential to develop as a human being to grow and to come close to You, please

(ask here for the thing you need)

Thank you, Almighty, for this and for everything that You have given me; Amen

## PRAYER FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

May He who blessed our forefathers, Abraham, and those of the Jewish People; Isaac and Jacob, bless every holy congregation - the men, the women, their sons, their daughters, and all that is theirs.

May He bless those who dedicate synagogues for prayer and those who enter them to pray, those who give lamps of illumination, wine for Kiddush and Havdallah, bread for guests, charity for the poor, and all who faithfully work for the needs of the community.

May the Almighty reward them and remove from them all afflictions! May He heal their bodies, forgive their mistakes, and send them blessing and success for their every endeavor, along with the whole Jewish people, their brothers; Amen



*Giving people the benefit of the doubt applies to children too. In fact judging our children favorably is the*

***most effective tool for teaching them this powerful commandment.***

*by Sarah Chana Radcliffe, M.Ed., C.Psych.Assoc.*

*Aish Spiritual Issues – Family*

Money is missing from your wallet. Your daughter says "I saw Josh take it out of your wallet." What are your immediate thoughts? Do you first give him the benefit of the doubt - maybe someone came collecting charity, or the paperboy came to be paid, or do you assume the worst?

Judging others favorably is a mitzvah. Instead of jumping to conclusions that your son is the culprit, look for possible positive explanations for the seemingly incorrect behavior.

Since we want others to give us the benefit of the doubt, we should try not to be quick to make negative judgments about our fellow humans and come up with "escape clauses" -- possible, reasonable, favorable explanations for their behavior. The Torah teaches that the way we behave toward others is the way that God will behave toward us.

## **THE FAIR FAMILY**

The obligation to judge favorably applies to our children too. In fact, it applies first and foremost to the members of our family circle.

Fulfilling this commandment varies according to who is being judged. There are three categories to consider:

### ***Category 1***

The first category concerns a person who has demonstrated a good track record in the behavior that is being judged. For example, we may have a child who has always been honest. Now, at age 12, this child has been caught shoplifting. Since it is the child's first offence, the parent should not think "What a little thief he is!" or "What an ingrate, after all we've done for him!" Don't ignore his excellent track record. In this case, the Torah commands us to judge him favorably -- to search for good, reasonable explanations for his misbehavior, not farfetched excuses.

The parent could think that the child was suffering from undue peer pressure, or he was impulsive and not thinking about the consequences of his actions, or he just forgot to pay for the item, etc.

Positive judgment does not preclude taking action that will help the child to remember not to steal in the future. The parent can certainly create a logical consequence -- having the child write an apology to the store, do some community

service, pay back the value of the item.

### ***Category 2***

The second category concerns a person who has a mixed track record. The child is generally honest, but who has been known on occasion to do some questionable things -- perhaps he's told small lies sometimes or he has taken small change found in the house without permission. Now he has been found shoplifting.

In this category, we are obligated to make a favorable judgment if it's fairly easy to do. There is no reason for us to assume the worst. Only in cases where it would be very difficult to come up with a positive explanation would we be exempt from judging favorably.

### ***Category 3***

If the child has a poor track record in this specific area, let's say he's been caught shoplifting twice before, we are not obligated to try to come up with positive explanations.

Nonetheless, if we choose to try to find a favorable judgment it is considered meritorious on our part.

Seeing the good does not preclude taking steps to discipline our children. Understanding that our son shoplifts because he may be suffering from very low self-esteem, or a biologically based impulse control problem, does not stop us from instituting punishment for this behavior. There is still an enormous difference between condemning the child as a no-good thief and trying to understand his behavior in the light of personal or physical challenges.

## **HOW TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THE ART OF JUDGING**

The most powerful technique for teaching this essential attitude is for the parent to model this attitude and demonstrate it his dealings with his child and others.

When the child misbehaves, how do you react? Do you jump to hasty conclusions, loudly reprimanding without asking him about his behavior first? Do you start punishing before finding out exactly what happened?

When a child does something that seems incorrect, the parent should first question the child in a non-accusatory manner, giving the child the benefit of the doubt.

***Using a gentle tone of voice to question a child's behaviour is essential - it invites an honest response***

For example, if a father really wants to know who broke his new tool, he should not bellow, "WHO BROKE MY NEW TOOL?!" Nobody is going to walk themselves to the gallows! But if the father asks this same question in a reasonable, gentle tone of voice that invites an honest response, the perpetrator will most likely come forward.

After his son admits that he broke the new tool, the father can

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continue to demonstrate the attitude of judging favorably. The father might say, "I know you don't generally break things. What happened here today?"

The child sees right away that his father is judging him fairly. Feeling safe under the circumstances, the child will most likely tell the full truth: "I guess I just wasn't being careful and I knocked it off the table when I was walking by."

The father now has an opportunity to show more fair judgment: "That can happen to anyone sometimes. However, I'm sad that my new tool is ruined. Please try to look where you're going in the future." This may be all that is necessary for this child's education. The youngster may feel bad enough about the broken tool and his father's obvious disappointment, that he will indeed endeavor to be more careful in the future.

## ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES

A fun way to teach our children the art of judging positively is to read them stories that encourage them to think of plausible explanations for the questionable behaviour. The following stories can be tried for starters – you can make up your own and also look for real-life stories to add to the collection:

### 1. "Loud Neighbour"

*You know that Mrs. Gold is a very polite, quiet woman who never raises her voice. One day, you're about to knock on her front door to ask to borrow some milk and you hear shouting coming from inside the house. To your shock, Mrs. Gold is screaming loudly at her children.*

Ask your child: What's going on here? And encourage him to come up with possible explanations that present Mrs. Gold in a good light. Suggested explanation: It isn't Mrs. Gold -- it's her sister who has a very similar voice and who happens to be visiting with her young children.

### 2. "Camp Buddy"

*Twelve-year old Donna met many great kids at camp last summer. They came from all different cities. Imagine Donna's delight when one of her camp buddies appeared in town during winter vacation! She was shopping in the same department store as Donna. Donna waved excitedly across the aisle. Her friend smiled coolly and continued to pay for her items; she then turned and went out of the store! Donna was crushed.*

Suggested explanation: The girl Donna waved to wasn't actually her camp friend -- it was a close look-alike. The stranger had just smiled politely and left the store because she didn't actually know Donna.

### 3. "Long Wait"

*You're standing in a long line at the bank. You've been waiting twenty minutes already. There are still eight people ahead of you. Suddenly, a lady walks in and takes her place as second in line!*

Suggested explanation: The lady was actually there before you came in the bank, but had to go to the bathroom. The teller told her that she could go and then come back into her place in line.

### 4. "Overlooked?"

*Jaymie has a box of candy. At recess, he starts offering everyone a piece. You're standing with a bunch of kids in a group and Jaymie offers everyone a piece, except you. Then he moves on to the next group of kids and starts offering them candy. Why did he leave you out?*

Suggested explanation: It was a total mistake. Jaymie got confused and thought that he already offered you a piece of candy; he didn't realise he had overlooked you.

### 5. "No Show"

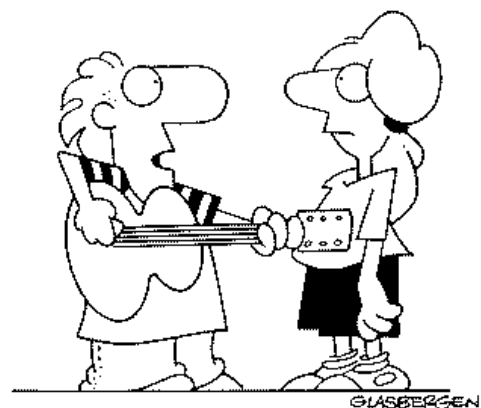
*It's Monday afternoon. You're supposed to meet Alice and Taylor at 5 o'clock at the corner store. It's already 5:30 and they still haven't come. You give up and go home, expecting that they'll at least telephone you to apologise for not showing up, but they never even call.*

Suggested explanation: There was a misunderstanding. They thought they were supposed to meet you on Tuesday at 5 o'clock whereas you thought the meeting was set for Monday. They didn't call because they didn't realise you were waiting for them.



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**"Writing hymns is harder than I thought!  
I can't think of anything that rhymes with  
'Hallelujah' except 'glad I knew ya'  
and 'we'll tattoo ya!'"**