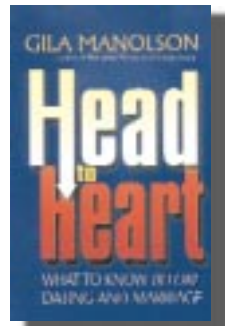


Head to Heart What To Know Before Dating and Marriage

By Gila Manolson



Targum Press, Inc.
Southfield, MI, 2002
175 pages

Reviewed by Bayla S. Brenner

For most of my adult years I lived as a single *frum* woman—a mountainous challenge. Some days I scaled the mountain, most days I hung on. Flicking the light switch off each night served the heftiest challenge. I dreaded that familiar face-to-face with the dark, and the black uncertainty of my future. Pulling in a thick breath, I summoned the strength to trust that Hashem would provide, if I just pushed on for another day. And He did. I made it to that long-awaited day this past year. I realize now that the “hanging on” proved to be the most critical part of the climb.

Over those grueling years of waiting, I sought vital avenues of inspiration and practical advice. Determined not to merely go through, but to *grow* through this life test, I turned to the

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guidance of rabbis, *shiurim* and friends. Delivering like all three is *Head to Heart*, Gila Manolson’s guide to the thousands in our community stuck in an endless cycle of directionless dating. Chock full of Torah wisdom and psychological breakthroughs, as well as the hard-earned pragmatic tool of learned insight, *Head to Heart* speaks directly to a generation finding marriage an increasingly elusive goal.

We live in an era unique to Jewish history, where no matter the individual’s age or particular community, so many potential *chattanim* and *kallot* find themselves pushing up against an impervious wall in the struggle to get together. “*Frum* society is no longer the cozy, idealistic little community it once was...we’ve grown into a vast, diverse population, but people often know little about one another or what marriage requires,” writes Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowitz of Aish HaTorah in Yerushalayim, in his letter of approbation.

Yet we must continue trying, and dating and dating and dating. Manolson sees the dating period as essential preparation for marriage, and challenges the secular view of “experiential dating” which has seeped into the community. “...Dating may teach you how to date, but won’t teach you how to be married, and the illusion that it does can be harmful.” She clearly lays out the requirements one must bring to a good marriage, starting with a “healthy, adult personality” which includes maturity, autonomy, self-esteem, trust, the capacity for emotional intimacy and self-knowledge. Manolson emphasizes that these traits need not be acquired through dating, but rather through active self-development. The book provides a character test that identifies the areas one needs to develop in order to have the necessary qualities for a healthy marriage.

Additionally, it provides methods to achieve growth including exploring ways to give of oneself, raising one’s self-esteem, opening up emotionally to others and truly “knowing oneself” by distinguishing between what one wants and what one needs.

Manolson moves on to explain how heightened self-knowledge helps couples learn how to most effectively know one another beyond infatuation. Her chapter “Behind the ‘Click’”

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explores the psychological dynamics behind the mysterious “unconscious connection” called attraction. The author draws from the renowned relationship theories of psychologist/author, Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., who introduced the idea that romantic attraction stems from an individual’s search for his or her imago—a Latin word meaning image. One’s imago is a composite picture of the people who influenced one’s life most strongly during his early years. According to the imago theory, people unconsciously choose spouses with the specific, familiar personality traits of their early caretakers, in order to return to the scene of the original childhood hurt and frustration. By doing so, they avail themselves of the opportunity to finally heal these old wounds.¹

With clarifying case scenarios, Manolson illustrates these hidden motivations behind a person’s choice of spouse. “God may even have created this ‘unconscious spouse choice’ to

encourage both marriage partners to confront their hurts and grow past them, so they can become more complete, not only as individuals, but as a couple,” the author explains.

Having demonstrated the deeper dynamics leading to landing one’s mate, the author presents the “how-to’s” of building a successful marital relationship. She defines lasting love as, “the attachment that results from deeply appreciating another’s goodness...goodness is what moves you to love.” The chapter quotes Rav Eliyahu Dessler’s, *zt”l*, famous teaching in *Michtav MeEliyahu* that it is through constant acts of giving that one engenders love. Manolson emphasizes that constant giving requires that one possess a strong identity as well as a keen awareness of one’s own needs. “Genuine love emerges not from a lack of self but from a desire to share all you are with another.” She explains that wholesome giving includes reciprocity. “In a healthy relationship, rather than losing yourself, you find yourself.”

The author stresses that the marital relationship will not remove emotional pain and make an unhappy person happy. She states clearly that if there are issues to work through, couples should address them together. A beautiful passage in the “Love and Marriage” chapter describes the infinite potential of marriage to cultivate closeness between two souls until they are one. “Love can...help you feel centered and at home in the world... With the right kind of work, it can heal. And while love has excitement and passion, there’s even greater pleasure in the quiet drama of two souls moving closer. This deeply peaceful sense of increasing oneness is perhaps the most wonderful reward of love.”

The author continues to blend the best of twenty-first century sensibilities with steadfast Torah tradition in her chapter, “Affirming Womanhood.” In this vein, bold “Ms.” Manolson addresses the controversial issue of the Jewish woman’s role in observant Judaism today, carefully culling her information from Torah sources and such respected

educators as Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller and Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *zt”l*. Purely out to celebrate the status of the Jewish woman, she begins with the Torah’s introduction to the creation of woman as Adam’s “helper,” quickly clarifying that this does not place woman beneath man, rather, it indicates that man needs (spiritual) help—help that only *she* can provide. This section sheds badly needed light—one that has tragically dimmed throughout the secular world—on the vital impact of Jewish women on the perpetuation of our values and our People since Sinai. Manolson urges single women to “know that you’re following in the footsteps of generations of Jewish women who shaped our destiny. ...Marry someone who appreciates you and wants you to grow into the best you possible.”

After placing the reader firmly on the track of personal growth and presenting a richer understanding of love and marriage, Manolson details an effective dating plan of action. Her advice on transforming the potentially tense, defensive dating atmosphere into one of mutual appreciation rang familiar. As did her recommendation to find an understanding mentor to provide an objective perspective and empathetic ear, and her urging to consciously pace each date, revealing more about oneself and one’s past in an effort to build more emotional intimacy. Shaya Ostrov, CSW, introduced these and other invaluable concepts in his excellent step-by-step guide to getting married, *The Inner Circle, Seven Gates to Marriage* (New York, 2000).

Manolson warns the buyer to beware of his own superficial biases. She stresses that true quality lies in the internal rather than the external. “You want to marry an essence, not an image” is one of my favorite lines in the book.

The closing chapters deal with recognizing and avoiding an abusive personality and take an innovative look at prenuptial agreements.

Head To Heart speaks to the single Jew in a tone free of condescension. The author demonstrates her desire to share her acquired wisdom with a voice of

compassion, concern and respect. The heart of her message beats throughout the book—grow as a person, build your character, intellect and emotion—embrace life and *shteig* (grow). Your soul mate will surely follow. “So, while continuing to work toward marriage, don’t put your life on hold. There’s...much to do in this world. Go out and give.”

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from my own struggle was not to give up—even when I’d given up. You *will* scale this mountain and once you get to the top, trust me—the view is well worth the climb. In the meantime, hang in there! **JA**

Notes

1. Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., *Getting The Love You Want, A Guide For Couples* (New York, 2001).

Meah Shearim

By Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali

Edited by Rabbi Avraham Shoshana



2 vol.
Ofeq Institute
Jerusalem, 5761 (2001)
114+764 pages Hebrew
Reviewed by Gerald Blidstein

A major frustration of mine while writing *Honor Thy Father and Mother: Filial Responsibility in Jewish Law and Ethics** was the inaccessibility of Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali’s *Meah Shearim*. The manuscript—which was 100-chapters long and devoted solely to *kibbud av v’eim*—had been reported on, but it was beyond my reach. So I was particularly pleased to find that the work has finally been published in a sumptuous edition by Rabbi Avraham Shoshana and his Ofeq Institute. I was also particularly

curious, my appetite whetted, as it were, by years of intellectual deprivation.

Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali, a communal leader and rabbi in 16th-century Crete (in the city of Candia), was an interesting figure. Of Greek stock, born to a family of noted Turkish Talmudists, he studied in Italy under Rabbi Meir Katzenellenbogen (Maharam of Padua). Rabbi Eliyahu combined two vocations usually kept distinct in our time: he was both a *lamdan* and a historian. Thus, he was head of the community, then *rav* in Candia. He wrote responsa, was involved in rabbinic correspondence with some of the leading figures of the time, engaged in more than the usual number of controversies, and compiled *Meah Shearim*. At the same time, he wrote a history of Venice (which ruled Crete at the time), and a history of the Turkish Empire until 1522 (*Seder Eliyahu Zuttah*). Both works paid special attention to the fortunes of the Jews.

Rabbi Eliyahu was strong-minded, willing to stand up vigorously for principles. Thus, he abolished the custom of auctioning *Chatan Torah* in Candia—a move occasioned by the arrival of foreign nouveaux riches—and declared that the honor was to be awarded to the leading scholar in the community. Then, as now, such interference by the *rav* in synagogue affairs (and economics) was not a light undertaking. Other *takkanot* for which he was responsible—and which went against established interests—regulated cheese production in Candia, protected brides from exploitation at the local *mikveh*, and limited the use of Gentile labor in Jewish homes, an effort which dovetailed with Venetian law. And when his ban on Jewish use of Gentile baking ovens was not abided by, he had two ovens built for public use at his own

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expense. Rabbi Eliyahu apparently thought of Candia as a model Jewish community in the making, and was eager to do his share, and more, to shape it. Many more of his *takkanot* which governed the Jews of Candia are preserved in a two-volume work, which reveals that the Jews in that community were not yet saints.

Rabbi Eliyahu was also embroiled in a number of rabbinic controversies. A notable instance emerges from his *Noam veChovelim*, written to defend Rabbi Benjamin of Orta, who had been severely censured by Rabbi David Vital and indeed threatened with loss of his *semichah*. The *sefer*, which consists of a single responsum and ranges

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energetically and magisterially over a number of issues—questions of *agunot*, *mikvaot*, marriages of converts to their erstwhile spouses, and the extent of the independence of ethnic congregations within the overall community—amounts to over 100 pages in modern print. Was there something contentious in Rabbi Eliyahu's personality? When Rabbi Moshe Alashkar supported Rabbi Eliyahu¹ in his dispute with Rabbi Judah del Medigo and wrote a stringent critique of the latter's view, Rabbi Katzenellenbogen, who had preferred to stay out of the fray, commented that the two antagonists were motivated by personal animus more than by a desire to reach the truth.

Meah Shearim represents dedication of a different sort. Here Rabbi Eliyahu's personality is effaced, and his independence muted; the materials themselves take center stage. Rabbi Eliyahu collected virtually everything that had been said (until his time) on the subject of *kibbud av ve'eim*—*halachah*, *aggadah*, *kabbalah*, and philosophy. The erudition is impressive

and serves the student well. Actually, *Meah Shearim* contains much more than what had been said explicitly, as it treats normatively many sources describing the relations of parents and children, fleshing out what could have been a rather narrow topic. Childless himself (at the time he wrote it), Rabbi Eliyahu thought of filial piety as a prime mitzvah, one which deserved expansive literary treatment. And, I would add, for a halachic work, *Meah Shearim* is an easy read.

Rabbi Eliyahu devotes a significant amount of discussion to Biblical sources—not because the Bible contains that much in the way of explicit normative instruction on the topic, but because parents and children are everywhere in the Bible, and their interaction is indicative of what the filial relationship could be. Thus, he points out that even when David is preoccupied with fleeing Saul, he remembers to find refuge for his parents with the King of Moab. And Rachav's primary loyalty to her parents brings her to extract a promise for their safety from Joshua. This same method is artfully used in reading midrash as well. Rabbinic parallels are read not only with an eye to their intended teaching (the *nimshal*) but also to the details of the story (the *mashal*), which often involve parents and children. I particularly enjoyed Rabbi Eliyahu's reading of the story of the Nazirite lad and Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach. The boy's tale begins with the fact that he was tending his father's flock. Rabbi Eliyahu points out that this is no superfluous detail—it serves to establish the character of the lad, and his credentials with Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach. *Meah Shearim* contains many such fine, delicate observations.

Naturally, *Meah Shearim* presents a comprehensive survey of the *halachot* of filial piety; all the classic sources are cited, beginning with the Talmud and proceeding through *Rishonim* and early *Acharonim*. Indeed, the bulk of the book is devoted to halachic issues. As we might expect of one who values filial piety so highly, Rabbi Eliyahu is a maximalist, extending the norm in

ways others might—and do—find debatable. Thus, he insists that one never leave one's parents, and that one visit them daily. This responsibility extends even to a situation where such devotion entails high risk (e.g. traveling on dangerous roads). Reverting to homiletics, Rabbi Eliyahu asserts that the ban on eating the thigh muscle (*gid hanasheh*) was a punishment for Jacob's children having left their father alone and vulnerable at the Yabok stream. Rabbi Eliyahu does not, however, discuss the situation of parents and children who do not get along, a situation which stimulated both *Sefer Chassidim* and Rabbi Elazar Pappo (*Pele Yoetz*) to urge their separation.

A striking departure from the maximalist perspective emerges from Rabbi Eliyahu's treatment of parental authority in determining children's future spouses, or more precisely, children's duty to accept their parents' preferences. The issue had been addressed directly by Rabbi Joseph Colon (Maharik), who concluded that a son was free to marry as he chose, though it was doubtless a fine thing to accept parental guidance. Maharik's rationale was dual: choice of a spouse was not in the bailiwick of parental privilege, and since marriage is a mitzvah, the child is obliged—and entitled—to perform it without parental interference. Though this position would be accepted by Rabbi Moshe Isserles in his *Mappah* (commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch*), it did not go unchallenged; in modern times, for example, it was rejected by the Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin) and Rabbi Yerucham Perlow (for a detailed discussion of this, see *Honor*, 85-94).

Despite his high valuation of filial piety, his regard for parental honor and his great sensitivity to parental pain, Rabbi Eliyahu agreed with Rabbi Colon and even elaborated on his arguments. In addition to the halachic discussion, Rabbi Eliyahu focused on two related points that were not included in Maharik's responsum, both of which relate to the significance of love in the marital relationship. Quoting liberally

(and non-allegorically) from the Song of Songs, Rabbi Eliyahu argued that it was folly to interfere with true love, which binds spouses together irresistibly. Moreover, he continued, a relationship not built on love would soon disintegrate into hostility and hatred, clearly destructive to the Jewish marital ethos. Thus, parents were well advised not to interfere with their children's choices, and the children were not obliged to accept parental preference.

Rabbi Avraham Shoshana's handsome edition of *Meah Shearim* is a pleasure to use. Indices are full, as are references. The introduction describes—if somewhat simplistically—Rabbi Eliyahu's life and times, and the major halachic issues raised are expanded on in informative excursions. All in all, *Meah Shearim* is a most valuable volume for anyone interested in pursuing the issue of parents and children in traditional Jewish materials. JA

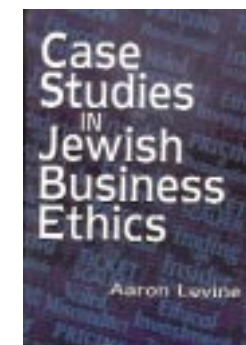
* (New York, 1975)

Notes

1. The claim has even been made that many of Rabbi Alashkar's responsa were written to Rabbi Eliyahu, of whom he seems to have been quite fond.

Case Studies in Jewish Business Ethics

By Professor Aaron Levine



Ktav Publishing House
Hoboken, 2000
419 pages

Reviewed by Chaim H. Schimmel

In the battle for the Jewish soul, there are at least two contestants: liberal (Reform and Conservative) and traditional (Orthodox) Jews. The first vociferously

lays claim to the moral high ground. Whereas, we, the Orthodox, rather more quietly take it for granted that we hold the title deeds.

A great deal of Jewish business law as it affects business dealings is based on *sevara*, generally translated as “logic,” but it often means what is morally right. If everything contained in the scholarly and enlightened volume, *Case Studies in Jewish Business Ethics*, is widely observed by all in our camp, we have every reason to rest on our laurels. If not, as I believe to be the case, this book is essential reading because it is on the field of ethical conduct that the battle for the Jewish soul is likely to be won by one side or the other.

In six chapters, Professor Aaron Levine, a renowned halachist and eminent economist, presents a scholarly exposition of business ethics which does not argue the case for ethical behavior, but rather takes it for granted. Because of this author's felicitous style and dramatic presentation, the reader is taken on a ride of principle and integrity without feeling the strain of the journey.

This book is never guilty of moralizing, or dry scholarship; on the contrary, it is replete with anecdotes, some made-up and others taken from the real business world. Here is an example of how the author deals with the problem of “trading on superior information” (i.e. having information the other party doesn't). After recounting how Nathan Rothschild, through his couriers, was the first to know of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in June 1815, Levine writes:

Rothschild entered the trading pit in the London Exchange. His name was already such that a single substantial move on his part sufficed to bear or bull an issue. Instead of sinking his worth in consoles [government bonds], as another man in his position would surely have done, Rothschild sold consoles. Rothschild's substantial trade triggered panic selling of British consoles. After the consoles had plummeted in value, Rothschild proceeded to buy a giant parcel of consoles “for a song.”¹

The author goes on to discuss the halachic implications of Rothschild's

stratagem. He concludes that concealing the news of Wellington's victory was not *middat Sedom* (morally reprehensible) since the news was of economic value to Rothschild. Levine writes:

*Characterizing the selling of consoles on the knowledge of Wellington's victory as sending a false signal to the market is valid only on the assumption that traders have a legitimate right to share gratis in Rothchild's "superior information." Since Halakhah recognizes no such right, Rothschild cannot be said to be guilty of geneivat da'at conduct.*²

In my view, the author is letting Rothschild off rather lightly. It is true that traders have no legitimate right to share in Rothschild's superior information, but to conclude that therefore his selling consoles for the sole purpose of misleading the market is not *geneivat da'at* is a non sequitur. The sole purpose Rothschild had in mind in selling consoles was to mislead the public—that is what is called *geneivat da'at*.

Far from dwelling on the past, Levine is very much in the 21st century. He goes on to discuss the halachic view on issues such as insider trading and comparative advertising—"advertising in which a named competitor's product is unfavorably compared." He also addresses invasion of privacy—"AT&T searched its electronic phone records for frequent callers ... AT&T was thus able to promise advertisers that this substantial directory would reach consumers with a guaranteed appetite for gift and catalogue phone services."³ He then proceeds to discuss salesmanship, pricing policies, advertising and marketing, labor relations and ethical investments.

Levine frequently reviews court decisions in the light of *halachah* and does not stop at that. He goes on to review the state of current US legislation and questions whether or not certain laws should be revised in the light of Jewish law. So we read that "Many arguments against legalizing insider dealing can be put in theological terms...."

This book is not only of interest to rabbinic scholars, there is much of interest to the general reader. For example, in a chapter on moral educa-

tion, the author deals with the following dilemma: K knocks on D's door and D does not want to see him. Is it better to say, "D is not in," or "D is not available"? Levine tells us that Rav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt"l*, decides that the latter has the implication that K is not important enough for D to bother with. Better a white lie, than an insult. We are also told that Rav Nachum Yavrov posits "that this instruction should not be given in the presence of a child."⁴

Incidentally, I know the person who received Rav Auerbach's *pesak*. Rav Auerbach knew that this individual had children at home and yet he never made the proviso which Rav Yavrov postulates.

Is it surprising to find such a divergence of views? It seems to me that we have here an ethical/legal problem rather than a purely legal one and therefore, a rigid form of conduct cannot be prescribed. In the case of a *pesak* of this nature, it must always depend upon the particular person involved and on the circumstance appertaining.

Sometimes it may be more correct to teach a child consideration for a fellow man's feelings (Rav Auerbach) rather than teach him never to tell a white lie (Rav Yavrov). In the case of a different child or circumstance, the reverse may be appropriate.

The *Shelah*⁵ remarks: "If the nature of all men were the same and all times were the same, then under the principle *kedoshim tihiyu* the Torah would have written 'eat the following measure of food'... But it is not so... It is what is excessive according to the circumstances."

It appears to this reviewer that Levine has not sufficiently emphasized the demarcation between Jewish law and Jewish ethics—and yet the distinction is critical.

It is true that some⁶ argue that Jewish ethics *is* Jewish law. In other words, once an ethical imperative has been identified requiring one to act in a certain way, then it is binding and not a matter of choice. But in many respects an ethical law still remains distinct from a law which has no particular ethical content. For example, the law can be plainly stated that meat must never be cooked together with

milk. A similar statement is not appropriate for the law requiring one to visit the sick. *Bikkur cholim* requires a great deal of discretion. There are people the invalid would rather not see and there are a number of sick persons who should not be visited at all.

The lack of a distinction between law and ethics is even more marked in Levine's treatment of *ribbit* (usury) and *hetter iska* (a device for overcoming the law of *ribbit*). This book has some 15 pages on the subject of *ribbit*, but there is not even a hint that it is frequently a violation of Jewish *law* and not of Jewish *ethics* (e.g. if a bank lends to a rich trader)—and that on the other hand, *hetter iska* is frequently good Jewish *law*, but poor Jewish *ethics* (e.g. in case of a loan to a poor man).

The Levush⁷ writes: "How can this [using a device to overcome usury with a poor man] be permitted when one considers the financial hardship that will afflict the borrower and the gain that will accrue to the lender? God forbid! The whole reason that the Torah forbids usury is 'so that your fellow Jew should live with you.'"

This lack of a clear demarcation between law and ethics is a minor complaint—and this is a major book—which is erudite, entertaining and highly relevant to our time and condition. In many ways it is the best read on this subject that has come my way—but perhaps I should not say that—it may fall foul of Levine's ruling on comparative advertising. **JA**

Notes

1. *Case Studies*, 161.
2. *Ibid*, 162.
3. *Ibid*, 68.
4. *Ibid*, 28.
5. *Shnei Luchot Habrit, Torah Shebichtav Kedoshim*, 58b.
6. Aharon Lichtenstein, "Does Jewish Tradition Recognize an Ethic Independent of Halachah? *Modern Jewish Ethics*, Fox, Ohio State University Press.
7. Levush (Rabbi Mordechai Yafeh, 16th century) commenting on Rema, *Yoreh Deah* 160:16 who allows a certain device (not a *hetter iska*) for overcoming usury.