

Call for Articles: Our Bodies, Our Reproductivity, Ourselves

Our awareness of our human capacity for reproduction is a vital aspect of our view of our bodies and ourselves. Judaism provides unique approaches to the blessing of reproductivity through its valuing of *p'ru u'rvu*, its adherence to the laws of *taharat hamishpaha*, and its privileging of the life of the mother over that of the unborn fetus in allowing abortion in certain cases. These Jewish perspectives impact the lives of Orthodox Jewish women from menarche to menopause. New medical advances have expanded our choices and our questions. In recent years, learned Jewish women have acquired expertise in addressing these questions. This issue of *JOFA Journal* will examine reproductive issues faced by both men and women, looking at the halakhic, medical, personal, social, and political ramifications.

Fertility and infertility

1. Source texts defining, expanding, and suggesting exceptions to the *mitzvah* of *p'ru u'rvu*
2. The paradox of *p'ru u'rvu*: a *mitzvah* incumbent on men yet able to be carried out by women for a shorter period of their lives than by men
3. Women's rabbinic obligation of *shevet*, to populate the earth, contrasted with *p'ru u'rvu*.
4. Issues around freezing one's eggs or preserving a fertilized embryo for future fertility
5. Issues around halakhic infertility, the inability to conceive because ovulation occurs during the seven clean days.
6. Medical options such as in vitro fertilization, intrauterine insemination, surrogacy, etc.
7. Halakhic issues around treatment options, such as definition of maternity and paternity in surrogacy
8. Overcoming the silence and stigma attached to infertility
9. Choosing adoption; choosing not to have children

Birth control

1. What are the halakhic considerations and Jewish values around birth control?
2. How do halakhic parameters play out in the lives of Modern Orthodox couples?

Abortion

1. Medical issues around abortion—when is it required and when optional?
2. Halakhic issues around abortion: the primacy of the life of the mother over the life of an unborn fetus; considerations when a fetus will have a greatly diminished quality of life
3. Why the terms of the American debate about abortion—"pro-choice" vs. "pro-life" and "the right to abortion"—don't match the perspectives of *halakhah* on abortion
4. Political considerations for Orthodox feminists in participating in the abortion debate

Getting support

1. Finding help in dealing with infertility through prayer groups, support groups
2. Getting halakhic guidance from *yoatzot* who have specialized knowledge in this area
3. Seeking *teshuvot* from women scholars who have addressed these issues

Personal issues

1. Privacy issues around fertility/infertility and abortion
2. Approaching menopause—to be mourned or celebrated?
3. Approaching menarche: what do we tell our daughters (or our students) and when?
4. First-person accounts of dealing with these issues: Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, some personal essays may be published anonymously or under a pseudonym.

Submissions from the general public, including both men and women, are welcome. Please submit article ideas by February 28 and manuscripts by March 20. Word length may vary from 750 to 2,000 words. Send queries and submissions to jofa@jofa.org.