



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

## This Issue Contains:

1. Guilty of Jilting?
2. Yiddle Riddle



L wrote via the Internet:

*What does Orthodox Judaism say about how one is supposed to treat their future in-laws when the in-laws are not religious and have stated that they dislike you?*

*How is their son supposed to act when they tell him to either cancel the wedding or be disowned. Isn't the groom supposed to go against his parents and marry the girl?*

*In this case, the guy called and said his father says the wedding is off. He never said "I want to call the wedding off" just that "My father forbids me." His parents were upset that their son was becoming religious, and for a while they tried to get him to stop being religious. So how should he have responded to his parents when he became engaged? What about his obligation to me? Thanks.*

Dear L,

The fact that someone dislikes you can certainly be uncomfortable, especially if they are your future in-laws. The best thing is to tactfully avoid contact whenever possible.

However, you must treat everyone, whether they like you or not, and whether they are religious or not, with dignity and respect.

This is even more true for in-laws. Before the wedding, in-laws deserve respect as anyone does. But after the wedding, they are entitled to even more respect, similar to the respect which you show to your very own parents.

If, by some chance, he changes his mind and decides to marry you, it should be with the understanding that you will live far away from his parents, and that he will show his first loyalty to you. As the Torah says, "Therefore a man should leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife..."

You asked: "Isn't the groom supposed to go against his parents and marry the girl?" A child doesn't need to obey his parents if they protest against his choice of marriage partner. However, it's not *forbidden* for him to do so.

Let me ask you a question: Does this guy really want to marry you? Or is he just using his parents as an excuse?

And if he really does want to marry you but is so weak and spineless that he lets himself be intimidated by his father, are you sure he's the type of guy that you want for a husband?

Depending on how 'official' the engagement was, he may have certain financial obligations to you. Did you have an engagement party? Send out invitations? Who paid? In some cases, the party who cancels the engagement is required to pay expenses to the wronged party, plus a fine for embarrassment caused.

The following incident shows the seriousness of keeping one's word in such matters. Once a young man and woman swore to marry each other. "Who will bear witness to our oath?" they asked. Just then, they noticed a weasel passing a nearby hole in the ground. "This weasel and this hole will be our witnesses," they said.

Years passed, and the woman was faithful to the oath. The man, however, married someone else and had a son. Along came a weasel and bit the son, and he died. They had another son who fell into a hole and died. "Why are these strange things happening to us?" said his wife. Suddenly, he remembered his oath and he told the whole story to his wife. "If so, divorce me and go marry her." And so he did.

Sources:

- Rema Yoreh Deah 240:25
- Bereishit 2:24
- Tosefot in Ta'anit 8a

## Yiddle Riddle

Halachically, what do the following days have in common?

- 1) 21 Cheshvan
- 2) 3 January
- 3) 15 Iyar

Answer next week...

Thanks to Saul Behr <SBEHR@MCKQ.CO.ZA>

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to ohr@virtual.co.il. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

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