

## JEWISH SOURCES ON TRAFFICKING

*Prepared by Rina Cohen & Translated by Leah Aharonov for the Herczeg Seminar, May 2017*

### **Sources from the Torah:**

“Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand” (Deuteronomy 28:32).

“The Lord will send you back...There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you” (Deuteronomy 28:68).

In the Torah sexual exploitation of women is discussed mainly in the passages referring to “Marrying a Captive Woman” (Deuteronomy 21:10-14). The commentators say that it is permitted to sexually exploit a woman after a period of acclimatization in the home of the captor, although there are also those who say it can be done immediately. In any case marriages under duress are destined to fail.

### **Sources in Israeli Law**

Israeli legislation dating from 2000 increased the period of incarceration for trafficking from 7 to 10 years. The seller or buyer of a human being for the purpose of prostitution, or a mediator in these transactions is subject to 10 years' imprisonment. Israeli courts are very strict in their decisions regarding those who exploit another person's weakness in order to gain profit.

Former Supreme Court Justice Turkel has said: “Trafficking in humans for purposes of prostitution is one of the most despicable and deplorable offenses on our law books...”; “It involves horrible cruelty, degradation, and extortion...”

Prostitution is extremely injurious to human dignity. One seeing a person being turned into a “saleable commodity” could invoke the ancient saying: “Humans have no advantage over animals” (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

The basic Biblical source regarding trafficking and prostitution is that every person is created in the image of G-d; from this principle follows numerous obligations forbidding the negation of one's freedom, causing physical harm to one's body or to one's dignity or humiliation or degradation of any kind. The claim that a woman becomes involved in prostitution of her own free will is an unacceptable premise in Israeli courts.