

## TORAH THOUGHTS – RAPE IN CYPRUS?

Twelve Israelis were arrested in Cyprus almost two weeks ago, on suspicion that they took part in an alleged gang rape. A British woman filed a police complaint a week and a half ago against the Israelis, ranging in age from 15 to 18. The tourist changed her testimony, saying the sex was consensual but that she filed the complaint because she felt humiliated by the fact that they filmed the act without her consent. The teens were released and returned to Israel on July 29.

It is true that the woman should not have lied, and it is true that the teens didn't break any laws in Cyprus. However, to film sex acts without consent is demeaning and anathema to Jewish values. Our tradition teaches, "In a place where there are no decent people, be one yourself." (Avot 2:6) To me, this means that if you're in a situation in which people are acting immorally, it is your duty to stand for what is good: to seek justice and to have compassion. After all, we believe that every individual is created in God's image.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. In response to the unapologetic behavior of the teens and others, educator Alden Solovy wrote, "There are crimes against the law. And there are crimes against humanity. Make no mistake, this was a crime against humanity ..." (TOI Blogs, 7/29/19). This is in line with what I wrote as well – do you agree?
2. The woman is being charged for lying to the police, which resulted in the teens being held in custody. If you were the judge in her case, how would you rule?
3. Solovy describes The global ManKind Project, which launched a campaign in response to the #MeToo movement called [#IamResponsible](#). Each man is asked to make this pledge:

"As men, we are committed to individual and collective evolution, we take responsibility for creating the society we want to live in and share for the generations to come. We are responsible for the GOLD and the SHADOW of masculinity, for the gentleness, fierce caring, and protection, AND for the abuse, violence, and domination. We are responsible as creators and as role models. We are responsible as victims and as perpetrators. We recognize the pervasive systemic factors that promote abuse of power and teach harmful gender roles to both boys and girls."

Would you take this pledge, with your sons? Why or why not?

4. Mr. Solovy lives in Israel and helped to start MKPIsrael. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/mkpisrael/> to learn more. For his full op-ed on this incident go to: <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/iamresponsible-for-a-world-of-healthy-masculinity/>. For more on this story go to <https://www.timesofisrael.com/returning-to-israel-teens-vow-to-sue-british-tourist-who-accused-them-of-rape/>

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Pont

