

they do not bring results with the passive guilt carrier; on the contrary, his already painful life might become more drastically painful.

The community was helpful in many ways to survivors after their arrival in Canada. Many institutions provided helping services, especially for resolving environmental problems.

Now the environmental problems are solved; in fact many concentration camp survivors have established secure financial situations and have taken on leadership positions in the community.

The psychological damages of concentration camp survivors are less visible and because of this and a lack of understanding, services for these damages have been scarce.

Perhaps this is the challenge that now stands before us.

Some such services are now being offered, e.g. The Jewish Family and Children's Service of Detroit have groups of survivors working on stages of life, which they have "missed" due to camp; in Norway they receive government pensions

so that they do not depend on the German restitution money. But in general, how little is being done to prevent at least the children of survivors from becoming "survivors" due to their parents' psychological damages!

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Today's Jewish Woman: The Challenge of Change*

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... if we update some of our Jewish traditional practices so that they are in harmony with the late twentieth century, if we reexamine and change our Jewish denominational and community organizational patterns to respond to today's Jewish woman who is asking for full participation, we will be contributing to an enriched personal Jewish life and to a stronger Jewish community.

THIS IS a time when community and family life are in the throes of unprecedented social change and social strain. Change is never a painless process. It imposes stress, tension, anxiety. We sense that somehow the old familiar patterns do not work, yet we lack mastery over the new or even conviction that the new is good. We worry that time is passing us by, that perhaps we are too set, too rigid and will be left behind. Ambivalence and guilt surface as we begin to question our social institutions, our families and, in the end, ourselves. Should we swing with the new? Hold on to the old? Play it neutral and cool, down the middle? Time crowds us and we find that we have not established ways of sharing ideas and concerns and that our very language is inadequate for talking about values.

Let me suggest a few important social changes which have had an impact on the way the contemporary woman leads her life and therefore on the many ways that family life is inexorably changed.

1. The Working Woman

The American woman today represents almost 40% of the labor force. She has had mixed success in integrating home, motherhood and the traditional feminine responsibilities with job and career. This has changed the marital balance between men and women in many

subtle ways, some helpful and enhancing, others problem-laden. Some men have become true partners in helping their wives fulfill a changed role. Some men have felt diminished and have, often unwittingly, sabotaged their wives. Some wives have used career and work to avoid dealing with their role in marriage and in the community.

2. Loss of Extended Family

Another change is the loss of the extended family, so important in Jewish life, where an assortment of grandpas and grandmas, cousins by the dozens, aunts and uncles used to be readily available for the *simchas* and the sufferings that are part of family life. Today the mobile, nuclear family, on its way up the corporate economic ladder, is on the move — often five or six times in nearly as many years. Oh, yes, because we care and love, we manage to get together for weddings and funerals, but our ongoing connectedness is often accomplished through the courtesy of the Bell Telephone System, thanks to its low evening rates. This robs us and our children of the opportunity for sustained involvement with parent substitutes, those alternative parental models whom we all need in order to learn the different ways to care and share, to be mad and glad, to trust and to risk. Again the question arises — how does this affect personal and family life? What are the deficits of this kind of loving pattern? What are the plusses? Are there ways that we, as Jews, can use our Jewish community to fill

* Presented at a meeting of the Jewish Women's Organizations of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 29, 1975.

some of the familial gaps? We have begun to see the development of *havurot* and the *Shabbaton* in synagogue life. These opportunities for individuals and family groups to come together in warm, sharing experiences around Jewish ceremonial occasions or for study, are a testimony to our hunger for intimacy in a mobile mass, urban environment.

3. Divorce

We confront today a challenge to the previously unchallenged idea of lifetime marriage. In 1972 there were 2,277,000¹ marriages in the United States and 913,000 divorces. In 1974 the number of divorces rose to 925,000.² For the first time, divorces are increasing at a faster rate than are marriages and the general growth of the population. In addition, the actual rate of marriage has slackened. This is reflected in selected surveys done among Jewish young people. As we seek explanations, we point to easier divorce laws, the relative affluence of the Jewish community, which permits men to take on increased financial responsibility and the growing independence, psychological, economic and sexual, of women. But somehow all the reasons do not adequately explain the soaring divorce statistics and the lessened willingness to work hard at marriage that they may imply.

4. Declining Jewish Population in the U.S.A.

A new phenomenon, revealed by the last census data, is the increase in the proportion of men and women who remain single well into their twenties. This has risen by one-third in the last ten years and certain surveys indicate that our young Jewish men and women are heavily represented in this pattern. The aver-

¹ U.S. News & World Report, August 14, 1972.

² National Center of Health Statistics, Department of Health, Education & Welfare.

age size of Jewish households is now 3.1 persons. Jews in America are barely replacing themselves and if the trend continues, we will have a sharp drop in the proportion of Jewish population in our country. In 1937, Jews represented 3.7 percent³ of the total population of the United States. If present trends continue, by the year 2000 we will account for only 1.6 percent of the total population. In trying to understand the reason for the low birth rate of Jews, we need to consider the impact of new life styles and new patterns of sexual behavior, costly patterns of suburban life, the need for extended college education, the Master's degree, the Ph.D. and, of course, the Post Doctoral experience, the concentration of Jews in white collar occupations and professions. Jews have fewer children, not because of their Jewishness, but because of the secular values which they embrace in their eagerness to equip their children for success measured by the standards of a materialistic, mass society.

5. Compression of Child-Bearing Years

Along with the declining birth-rate, there has been a compression of the child-bearing period. The average American mother has her last child at a time when she is still relatively young and vigorous. Community institutions are available to share her tasks: the nursery school, the Jewish Community Center, the Y, the neighborhood play group. She is faced with a multitude of choices which a changing society imposes, but does not help her to resolve. If she is Jewish, she is likely to be a college graduate who finds herself, at a time when her major homemaking responsibilities are over, with an education that is rusty and out of tune with a radically changed technolog-

³ Victor D. Sanua, "The Contemporary Jewish Family," this *Journal*, Vol. L, No. 4 (1974), pp. 297-312.

ical environment. Should she go back to school? Retrain? Choose another profession? Be satisfied with a job far below her potential? Or should she throw her energy into community service? What does her husband think about her dilemma? Does he perceive it as a dilemma?

6. Intermarriage

Intermarriage has always been associated with acculturation. Although Jews in the United States in the past have had a fairly low intermarriage rate, this is fast changing. The last national Jewish population study shows an over-all intermarriage rate of about 17%, but highlights a dramatic rise in intermarriage of younger age groups. Just a little under half of recent marriages of young Jews involved a non-Jewish mate. The most frequent pattern is that of the Jewish husband and the non-Jewish wife. This occurs twice as frequently as marriage of a Jewish wife to a non-Jewish husband. The study also reveals that of non-Jewish husbands who married Jewish wives, 97.5% do not convert. There seems to be a subtle attitude change in the Jewish parent group of these young intermarrieds, who report they are encountering less parental opposition. In Chicago, a group of Reform and Conservative rabbis have formed an organization which reaches out to intermarried couples with a program of counseling, study and encouragement to stay connected with some aspect of synagogue life. Our response to the open society, to secularism, to humanism, compounds our difficulties in examining old values to determine how we can make use of them as Jews and as parents.

7. New Life Styles

Today we are asked to accommodate ourselves to a proliferation of new life styles. We are in the throes of a sexual revolution, whose exponents proclaim

sexual freedom without marriage. Our young people leave home during vulnerable and formative years to go to college. Perhaps to deal with the anonymity of the large university campus, with the anomie and rootlessness of urban life, they have developed the style we call "living in," a monogamous, caring, sharing relationship between a young man and a young woman, often long-term, sometimes, but not necessarily, leading to marriage.

We have the phenomenal rise of the single-parent family in a society that makes poor provision for the emotional and social needs of this group. There is also the growing segment of men and women who choose not to marry, with strong feelings that this traditional pattern, so important in the past in preserving the vitality and continuity of Judaism, should be truly optional.

8. The Liberated Jewish Woman

We confront the growing women's liberation movement, presently led by serious women who are helping us to see the discrimination and the sexism built into many of our social, economic and philanthropic institutions. A recent issue of *Response*, a contemporary Jewish periodical, affiliated with the Jewish Student Press Service, is devoted to the many ways Jewish women today are reviewing the history of Judaism, tracing the evolution of attitudes present in Jewish life and analyzing contemporary Jewish community life to expose its discriminatory practices, based on a long-vanished, ancient patriarchal culture.

In each of the three important Jewish denominations — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform — women are studying the law and suggesting changes that will permit women freedom of expression and participation in the life of the synagogue. There are women today, scholarly and informed, who are questioning why they cannot be included in

more religious observances in the synagogue and they point to literal reading and interpretation of *halachic* law, which is traditionally cited to uphold the bar to such full participation.

When a girl observes synagogue practice, she quickly notices that important ritual and professional functions are filled almost exclusively by men. Although the texts proclaim women's equality with men, she learns from experience that she may not represent her community in prayer. She is usually represented on synagogue boards by being the secretary rather than the president and she is called upon to pour the tea rather than to give an *aliyah* at the *bima*.

Orthodox Judaism physically separates the sexes in the synagogue. Women may not be counted in the *minyan* in Orthodox and many Conservative synagogues. And how about the blessing recited each morning by Orthodox men — "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman?" Women still have difficulty in initiating religious divorce, and the *agunah*, the deserted woman, in Orthodox Judaism may never remarry. The fact that Judaic culture was for a long time polygamous has deeply affected the Jewish legal concept of adultery. A married woman commits adultery when she has sexual relations with any man other than her husband,⁴ while a married man is an adulterer only when he becomes sexually involved with another man's wife. And what about the current stereotype put-downs of Jewish women created by men — "The Jewish American Princess" and that famous character, "The Jewish mother?"

Let's move to Jewish teaching materials, which are powerful influences on impressionable children. Textbooks our children use depict models for the

young girl that are rigidly defined in terms of role structure. Women do the domestic part, men do the spiritual and ritual part. Let's take the Shabbat. I quote from a textbook: "Long ago, as in Jewish homes today, the Shabbat was first the mother's. She prepared for it all through Friday, cleaning the house for Shabbat, cooking of the Shabbat feast, bathing the children, getting the entire family dressed in their best." And then, of course, papa takes over with *Kiddush*, *Ha'Motzi* and blessing the children. Susan Shevitz, who writes of this, tells of a student who said "Mothers should get to do the *good* stuff too!" The illustrations in the book show mother clearing the table and father studying with his sons. Mother and daughter bake the *challah*, but the son is being taught how to blow the Shofar. All the boys' enterprises wind up in public success and acclaim. I cite these because they show that even our Jewish teaching materials provide the girl with no alternative role models although boys are given very wide options. This presents girls with a monolithic picture of Jewish womanhood that is, for many, simplistic, unchallenging and untrue.

I'd like to touch on inequities in the Jewish student community. Vivian Salowitz, in talking to the National Jewish Women's Conference in New York in February, 1973, told of a press release sent out by the World Union of Jewish Students, advertising a Jewish college in Australia. Among some of the benefits the college had to offer, were "leggy Aussie beauties at the beaches." In writing to the Executive to complain, Mrs. Salowitz said "I understand by this phrase no one could be accused of male chauvinism, since we assume 'leggy Aussie beauties' describes Aussie men and kangaroos as well. Personally, I don't find men's legs particularly enticing, but each to one's own erotic fantasies." For writing this letter, Mrs. Salowitz, who

⁴ Paula E. Hyman, "The Other Half; Women in Jewish Tradition," *Response*, Summer 1973.

had been invited to address their International Conference in Antwerp on the topic of Jewish women, was uninvited, and only after many long-distance conversations, was invited again.

When the Jewish Agency sends *shlichot* to American Zionist Union movements, it pays a woman a single person's salary even if she is married, but pays a married man a salary which covers living expenses for his wife and family?

9. Volunteerism

In the past decades, many Jewish women have been content to use their leadership skills as volunteers and they have done a tremendous job, providing to organizations talent and creativity that could not possibly have been paid for. I hope this will continue and that our society will encourage and reward men and women who are able to make this kind of commitment. But an interesting pattern has emerged in the last two decades. Talented women, having served in the sisterhoods, the PTA, on the school board, and in any number of Jewish communal organizations, feel that they have run the gamut. Some vague restlessness that is responsive to our money-oriented world, some sense that they are not using their full potential in a disciplined way, has made them increasingly decide to return to school or to compete in the job market. Many women who go back to work take jobs far below their potential, so that both society and the Jewish community are the losers.

Women in Jewish community organizational work often feel misused or under-used by male Jewish community leaders. They wish to share as equals in the decision-making process that shapes their Jewish community. When properly qualified, they want to sit on the board of directors of the Jewish Federation, the synagogue and the board of Jewish education. Their talent and their experience as wives and mothers could add a tre-

mendous plus to the deliberations of such groups, expanding their horizons and perhaps changing their agendas.

In a changing world, to achieve identity as a woman and as a Jew is a painful struggle. Male domination of our Jewish communities on the local and national level has developed a kind of exclusivity that pressures women to form separate, but not equal, women's divisions where they work on a successful but secondary level. We certainly have not yet come to terms in contemporary Judaism, with the attitude expressed by Maimonides — "The glory of women is in the home," or with the fact that in art, literature, thought and poetry, God is masculine — He is King, Shepherd, Father, Lord. We hear contradictory messages that put us in a bind:

- (a) This is a changing world in which women are now encouraged to work and share in the community, and
- (b) A woman, to fulfill herself, should focus on the care and nurture of her children and help her husband to fulfill his dominant male role.

If she is single, the message to a Jewish woman is clear — "Marry!"

Contradictory simultaneous messages create impossible dilemmas for the receiver. Which is the true message? To which shall I respond? What is the sender really telling me?

Societal problems are inexorably enmeshed in emotional and psychological problems. Our task is to encourage men and women to engage in "consciousness raising" and for Jews to do so about their Jewishness. This means that we must find ways to express, not only our common humanity but our individual uniqueness, so that creative self-awareness is available to aid in the development of each person's full potential.

Today we are talking specifically about the Jewish woman, who must first come to terms with herself as a *woman*. I am talking about self-esteem, authenticity, the need for closeness, the need for being separate and different. She must first belong to herself, so that she can truly share her heart and mind harmoniously and effectively with others. Knowing who we are helps us to know what we want and why we want it. This permits us, not only to have goals, but to postpone goals for good and valid reasons. There is, for example, the woman who needs, when her children are very young, to be easily available and deeply involved in the intimacies of home and family. To recognize, accept, enjoy, feel comfortable with this, fulfills such a woman and, because she is fulfilled, allows her options for change, should she later desire this. Her neighbor may march to a different tune, opting for day care for her young child so that she can work or participate to her heart's content in community activities. For her, an excellent day care center should exist and she should not be made to feel guilty about her choice. In both instances, it is vital that plans be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of both marriage partners. It is the quality of the mother-father-child relationship rather than the quantity that must be examined and enriched. There are mothers who achieve in two hours of evening or weekend time what a full-time, restless, resentful, unfulfilled home-bound mother cannot achieve in a month of child care.

To achieve self-awareness is not easy. For most of us it occurs in the context of intimate and personal relationships. After all, we learn about ourselves best through interaction with the important "others" in our lives. There is not space for me to touch on more than one kind of relationship to illustrate, so with apologies to the singles and the divor-

cees, let me refer to the marriage relationship, that difficult, wonderful, unpredictable, rewarding, baffling, endlessly complicated human relationship so laden with problems and possibilities. At its highest level, it is the most potent force I know for personal growth, because it provides stability, continuity and intimacy. It has an unparalleled, unbeatable system for transmission to our children of values, ethical and moral principles. It requires hard work on the part of each spouse, in which each struggles towards a marital balance that not only permits personal happiness, but requires the sharing of self with others. It demands that we not only recognize our own needs but how these impinge on other people. It means that we accept the need for closeness and intimacy, but also for separateness. It requires that we are open to the emotional messages of others and provide emotional feedback about our own feelings to the people around us. To make these flexible accommodations, means that each marital pair must work on the capacity for growth and change.

In our fast-changing society, this is not easy. We need all the supports and social institutions to help us with the work that goes into marital success. We know that shared religious and cultural backgrounds can be vital assets, because they provide important bonds that make living with another human being easier and warmer. They provide opportunities for communication and shared experience that occur easily, freely and unself-consciously. A family contract should not be, "I exist for my husband," or, "he exists for me," or, "I exist for my children," or, "they exist for me," but that each has a responsibility for self and for relationships with others, so that there is appropriate response to the family as a group and to individual members in accordance with the needs of each.

I do not see the current restless search

for self-fulfillment of women as necessarily threatening to or disruptive of family life or the life of the Jewish community if it evolves from a family agreement about values and goals. Here we face a dilemma. Many of us fear that to reveal our inner strivings, secret hopes and fears makes us vulnerable. What if we are misunderstood, rejected, ridiculed or denied? For many, it seems safer to remain silent, to give up, to cover up, to shift, delay or renounce goals and ambitions. I believe that honest communication that begins with husband and wife, and therefore is made easily available to children, contributes to a family agreement that permits each to seek and strive for what he really wants. This does not mean that there will not be frustration, postponement, even lost opportunity. But there will be open understanding of what the timetable can be, what the obstacles and the problems are. Cover-ups, fantasies, distortions will be minimized. The family will feel itself as a vital, communicating body, where respect for each individual's strengths and fallibilities is translated into a stronger, supportive family structure.

This can mean that at some periods in her life, a woman would rather play tennis and bridge than do community service. It may even mean that if she plays tennis and bridge when she needs to, her contribution to community service may eventually be substantially greater. The same, I think, is true for the woman who chooses between general or Jewish communal activities. The key here is that options be expressed and evaluated, risks be understood and confronted. This is a process which takes time but which enhances the opportunity for thoughtful decision and thoughtful service. As Jews, we owe it to ourselves to be informed about the current status of our Jewish community, the hazards, the social and demographic problems I have described. To know this is not necessarily to choose

to work in the Jewish community. Free choice is not possible unless all options are considered. If a woman in Milwaukee chooses to work for the American Red Cross or the YWCA, while the Jewish community center or the board of Jewish education is fighting for its life, this should be free choice. But she should *know* that these Jewish institutions *are* fighting for their lives. She then has to grapple with conscience, with her feelings about herself as a Jew, with her heritage, with tradition and with her priorities.

I believe in the right and the *need* to question. Ideas, values and community patterns that are unexamined are never really our own. That which becomes our own is achieved through struggle and usually with some pain. Yes, I think it is a struggle for a woman to make a healthy and satisfying choice. We need to build into our own lives, and help our children to build into their lives, Jewish influences that are opted for, needed and valued by both spouses and expressed in a home where communication is open and where to question is not forbidden, but respected and responded to. Our children will be influenced by a home where values and commitments are not conveyed by lip service but are practiced by involved parents. They will be influenced by relevant Jewish education that comes alive as it instructs. This they will carry with them into adulthood. If at some point they elect to deny this heritage, as well as they might, they will have to deal with this personally and internally through the awesome struggle with conscience that all of us experience when we deny a warm and loving link with our past.

So I end with no easy answers, but with a recognition that each family has its own unique style. In any open society, which we value and which in the long run has been very good for the Jews, there will always be those who opt to serve in the

broader society. But if we dare to examine our Judaism and our Jewish institutions, if we update some of our Jewish traditional practices so that they are in harmony with the late twentieth century, if we reexamine and change our

Jewish denominational and community organizational patterns to respond to today's Jewish woman who is asking for full participation, we will be contributing to an enriched personal Jewish life and to a stronger Jewish community.

Opening Opportunities for Women in Jewish Communal Service*

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Panelists from each field (of Jewish Communal Service) confirmed that while there are considerable impediments to the progress of women into specific top level positions . . . there are fine opportunities; . . . the consciousness-raising brought on by the women's movement must not be regarded as a threat to Jewish communal life. . .

THE Women's Movement has begun to have its impact on various aspects of Jewish communal life. There is hardly a Jewish forum where some theological, ideological, psychological or practical reassessment of the condition of the contemporary Jewish woman or of her relationship with her own people does not take place. Challenging questions regarding equal access to Torah, differential treatment in the synagogue, limitations on exercise of power and the harmful effects of negative stereotype are beginning to be hurled with vehemence. Jewishly concerned young feminists decry the limitations on the full development of other human potential and on the enhancement of Jewish communal life through courageous change in the role and status of women.

Yet, despite these growing interests in the evolving role of the woman in the Jewish community, little discussion has been generated about the professional status of women and the opportunities open to them in Jewish communal service. A recent inquiry into current practice in seven fields, which represent the constituent member groups of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, has revealed that, while many women have attained positions of con-

siderable responsibility in their respective fields, few have achieved top echelon posts in agencies, institutions and organizations.

An ad-hoc NCJCS committee, formed in Philadelphia in 1973, was instrumental in passing a resolution on "Opening Opportunities to Women in Jewish Communal Service" at San Francisco in 1974. In 1975, having attained permanent status in the Conference, the NCJCS committee on Women attempted to focus more concretely upon the professional positions held by persons of achievement, who happen to be women, in the Jewish communal service profession.

Leading professionals, in each of the groups associated with the conference, were invited to share their impressions of the current conditions of women in their agencies, identify areas of inequity and point out the impediments to their progress, where such exist. The groups approached were the Association of Jewish Community Organization Personnel (AJCOP), the Association of Jewish Community Relations Workers (AJCRW), Association of Jewish Center Workers (AJCW), National Association of Jewish Family, Children's and Health Services (NAJFCHS), National Association of Jewish Homes for the Aged (NAJHA), National Association of Synagogue Administrators (NASA), National Council for Jewish Education (NCJE), and Jewish Vocational and Re-

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