

## Jewish Identity: Its Use for Clinical Purposes

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*"How rich a professional undertaking it can be if the Jewish is considered as part of the helping process of a clinical service! The dynamics of such helping are not thus denied, but are enriched and broadened, and our understanding of ourselves, of the client, of the process is enriched and broadened."*

AMONG a variety of activities on the theme of Jewish identity in the author's agency, there have been staff groups discussing and working on their own attitudes to Jewishness and their being Jewish, to the meaning of it for our clients and to the use of it in our services.

The following reports on one of these groups\* which was concerned with the impact of Jewish identity on clinical services. It is in the nature of a laboratory process in which the members of the group proceed from the specific of their clinical experience to the generic of Jewish significance and vice versa.

Before turning to case material the members wanted to look at themselves. Know thyself is a good clinical principle in all matters which require human understanding of human experience and feeling. And so it is in Jewish matters. It was characteristic of this group that the members stated their position in Jewish matters and its development forthrightly, clearly and positively. There was no holding back and no doubting, no denying of the Jewish and its place in personality and society. The quality of the affirmation was more impressive than its content. The group became concerned with its affirmation and positiveness and felt the need to "dig" deeper and into more stony ground where the negative of Jewish experience

\* Composed of Susanne Glaser, Betty Golombek, Helene Hirschler, Roberta Kahn, Beverly Nackman and Anne Saxe.

encountered us and we felt its bite. This discussion was most productive. Not only did it bring out again the personal sincerity and relevance of the members in getting to the "roots" of their being and facing the painful and challenging in their lives, they also, without intending to do so, created some models of possible utility for the use in clinical practice and for understanding deeper patterns of Jewish existence and experience.

The clinical model is concerned with the way Jewish experience significantly enters into the kind of problem and dilemma which come to us for clinical consideration.

The model which we used for a better understanding of our present Jewish life in our culture defined different patterns of Jewish existence and experience of the staff members themselves, which in turn had generic relevance beyond and were almost prototypical.

The patterns of Jewish adaptation, as they came out in the staff group, were:

1. This is the pattern of Jewish life that is emphatically strenuous. The member who presented her own experience in this connection referred to her early awareness that being Jewish requires you to be better and more if you want to be equal. Therefore it very early spurs getting ahead, hard work, discipline, achievement, success. There is and can be much satisfaction in this type of strenuous

existence. There are also many sources of tension in it. This pattern can be the source of considerable difficulties in living. The fact that Jewish life has a tendency to promote this pattern is of considerable clinical significance;

2. Another pattern centers on the response to being a member of a minority and feeling a sense of weakness, a sense of doubt about oneself. This sense of inferiority can assume a variety of expressions: a sense of doubt and insecurity about oneself, a lack of self-esteem, etc. A very important concomitant is the great desire to join the majority and the need to be included by the majority. This leads to an "identification with the aggressor" which may possibly result in self-destructive attitudes and behavior. It involves deep suffering, a sense of shame, of guilt, considerable insecurity and conflict about what one is, where one belongs and what one wants to be. One of the patterns of Jewish existence which is shared by many is this early experience and incorporation of one's own identity as something which is less worthwhile than one would want it to be.

3. Another pattern results from the fear-inducing early direction given the child by his parents. The child is warned to see the non-Jewish environment as representing danger and to keep away from it in order to protect oneself. This message of danger and this direction of avoidance may paralyze a child's given abilities to develop and to enter into his own exploration and uses of his environment and relationships. It thus can be handicapping. Another response of the child can take him to a counter-phobic defense, going full steam ahead in the opposite direction of the warning message. Need-

less to say, the counter-phobic is as paralyzing and prohibitive of one's own development of one's abilities and talents as is the phobic. One might question to what degree this pattern of behavior and feeling is disseminated in the Jewish group. It seems to exist often in more subtle forms, not recognizable in the brutal and open way in which it was revealed in our group.

4. Yet another pattern is seen in the Jewish child who wants to have a Jewish experience and looks for it as a source of warmth, belonging, acceptance. However the child is not helped in this by his family and significant surroundings. The child feels deprived, possibly even abandoned by his culture. Something which is deeply important to him has not been given him and is missing in the nourishment out of which issue growth and creativity. We have learned recently about the fine tuning in of nature and nurture so that our "nature" incorporates dispositions which wait for their nurture from the outside "at their given time." If the given time passes, the creative spark contained in nature's disposition will shrink and lose its beautiful meaning as a potential of life. So it is with this child who has been waiting for a beautiful and warm experience and who has been left in the cold. We venture to postulate that this relationship between nature and nurture in Jewish matters often goes wrong in that the child is waiting for the Jewish to come to him from his parents and from his environment enveloped in beauty and warmth, and if this does not occur, his ability to experience it, to use it, to live it and give it will become reduced.

The group moved from this stage of

personal disclosure to that of presenting work with clients in which Jewish issues are involved. In our discussion we engaged in three directions: that of bias and subjective distortion, that of opening up vistas of theoretical significance, that of clinical skill which is alert to the usability of what has come forth in feeling, fact and theoretical significance.

There followed our discussions of three families: Family A represents what one could call a partially dysfunctional family, or a handicapped family with many sources of problem. Family B represents a normal American Jewish middle class family. In Family C the parents are separated and the children live with their mother. In each of these families the Jewish has a significant meaning in their experience of themselves, of their family, of their problem, and it becomes significantly represented in the clinical issues, considerations and experiences of giving help. It is also meaningfully represented in the worker's attitude and problem in understanding the client and functioning helpfully. These three "types" of family encompass a good deal of the problem brought to a Jewish agency.

What often stands out in Family A, as a type, is the lonesomeness of people who feel unwanted by their own group and find each other in marriage and found a family, often with numerous children, to create for each other the "community" which they have been missing and a "world" which tries to conquer loneliness. Immaturity in judgment and disorganization often characterize this family. Numerous specific problems stand out that are social, emotional and physical, and this kind of combination and interaction between problems represents what is meant by a "multi-problem type" of functioning and behavior. One of the most serious aspects of this family type is the generational carryover of the same or similar

problems. Families are powerful carriers of behavior patterns. Children take on what they developed in their family experience, and they will form their own family in the mirror of this early pattern. The so-called "repetition compulsion" functions not only for persons but also for families. It is one of our trying professional tasks not only to try to alleviate and reduce the many difficulties of such a family but also to enable the children to "get out from under" the yoke of this heritage. Thus, although this type of family is not numerically meaningful in the caseload of a family agency, it is meaningful for the future of the children and of the community; it is productive of much professional learning and tests to the utmost our professional resources and skill.

The specific "A" family we discussed consisted of parents in their early middle age who had six children of whom the oldest one came from a former marriage of the wife. There has been a long period of service and a variety of services given here, including therapy, family counseling, specific social services, planning, advocacy and reaching out. The issues in this experience which affected the worker and her attitude were the client's emphasis on his Jewishness and that of his family (his wife had not been Jewish but converted and sincerely so) and the agency's responsibility not only as a clinical agency and service but as a Jewish agency. (Clients face us with this kind of Jewish issue in relief giving where a "Jewish standard" of help should be different from that of the community, etc. There is often a clash here between the agency's policy which calls for avoiding duplication, use of public resources, acceptance of existing low standards of support, and the client's need and expectation. The client uses the Jewish often as a way of shaming and pressuring the agency, making the worker feel guilty, etc.)

This family brings the Jewish to us in a more subtle and complicated way. The family lives in public housing which is located in a non-Jewish environment, even anti-Jewish in its character, an environment which is far from offering children educational and other Jewish facilities which the parents want for them and for themselves. This demand and feeling of the client brings out a conflict in the worker: she wonders about how real the value of the Jewish is to the client. Do they use it for their own economic benefits? Even if the

Jewish is real to them, what is better for them: staying with the reality and its limitations (which means a denial of important Jewish values) — or setting up something special to modify economic and social realities in their situation for the sake of their Jewish values and strivings?

In the group discussion concerning the credibility of the Jewish values to the client we arrived at the belief that both economic and Jewish motivations were real and strong here. Their needing to be Jewish was reinforced because the psychological meaning of belonging to the Jewish group to these clients was connected with their experience of failure and their belief that being Jewish gave them more self-esteem and helped them overcome this sense of failure.

It also meant for them to see themselves as belonging to the middle-class. This opened up another conflict. There is a general bias which sees the Jewish and Jewish identity as identical with a middle-class standard. This bias was strong in this family. Again this opened up a conflict for the worker: she wondered whether striving or belonging to the middle-class was a true Jewish value. If not, is it still helpful to the family if the worker agrees with this definition of their Jewishness, and accepts it as the agency's? (There is also a strong American cultural emphasis on upward mobile striving and on the middle-class being the epitome of virtue.)

We thought in our discussions that the family's striving toward the middle-class was genuine and might possibly be a valuable dynamic and would need to be understood and used with them. Again, it also means their striving to overcome failure. They invested a good deal in a long-range serious plan toward that end. In this, education became the primary avenue toward social change. They also tried shortcuts — and the Jewish here becomes a primary expression of this wish for shortcuts. Indeed, this is a difficult situation for the worker: how to navigate between these long-range plans and shortcut methods.

The question of modifying economic realities for the sake of Jewish values or sacrificing the issue of Jewish values for the sake of reality and its meaning to the helping process was solved with a compromise in that the family applied for and was accepted for a position of houseparents in a group home of the agency for the aged. This was very beneficial for the family's association with a nearby temple. Not only were they good members of the congregation, but the head of the family was elected to be a member of the board of the congregation. Jewish education of the children became regular. This increased the family's sense of prestige and self-esteem.

However, this compromise neglected important elements of reality, and in the long run it did not

work out. There developed a bitter and acrimonious controversy between agency and family (a most difficult position for the worker to be in). The agency met demands of the family which it would not have met otherwise and which were clearly outside its policy.

The clinical issues here are: the family's sense of failure and their striving to overcome it; their belonging to the Jewish group bringing support to their self-esteem; the meaning of the Jewish as strengthening their fantasy of having a quick and easy way to change failure into prestige (board membership in the congregation and middle class status); the use of the Jewish to change the helping process from a slow, arduous, reality-oriented process (which had been started and had shown some progress) to achieving a different and easier solution.

We came out with the clinical importance of the reality principle and our need to integrate the Jewish values and striving into this. Reality means limitations, sacrifices, goals, methods. The Jewish cannot be exempted from this. Limitations and sacrifices need to be used thoughtfully and constructively and related to goals and methods.

A client often will have the need to impose his pattern on the worker and the agency. A major issue in the helping process is to recognize this strategy and to shift it to one which enables the client to experience a different pattern. This shift to a different pattern had been started with this family, and it was proceeding, although with many difficulties. However, this process of pattern change was interrupted, and the client was able to impose his pattern of failure on the agency which itself became involved in a process of failure. The meaning of the Jewish had an important part in this.

(Question: What made the worker use the client's self-image of Jewishness in this way? Did the worker want to serve

Jewish values, and was she convinced of the importance of such values? Or did she see this as a way to get special benefits for her clients who undoubtedly suffered from the injustice of our social system? Client and worker may have been caught in this mix-up about values and Jewish values in particular.)

Drawing some lessons from this family about the relationship between the Jewish and the clinical, we might say that it is important to understand the client as a human being and not only as a Jew. We can see how the feeling of failure which is general and human becomes reflected in the feeling about Jewishness. The Jewishness in this experience either makes the feeling of failure sharper, or it is used as a compensation. Being Jewish makes one be all right. We also can learn something about the tragedy of the gifted Jew because Mr. A's striving is that of a gifted person. He is a failure; he is a gifted person; he is a Jew. As a failure he experiences deep shame; as a gifted person he has the drive to overcome his failure; and as a Jew he is proud and has a symbol in his striving for overcoming his failure. The quandary for the Jewish agency is to accept and fulfill his claim of being "one of us." This is not in the agency's power really if one understands being "one of us" as something that comes from the community and often is affected by various injustices and prejudices which are particular to a community.

Family B in contrast to Family A is an epitome of normalcy, socially, emotionally, in family relationships; also Jewishly; it is a mildly orthodox family with three children who have done well and of whom the oldest, a daughter, goes to college with the support of her family. They represent middle-class standards and have lived in harmony and peace. They came to us with a crisis in that their 20-year-old daughter, the oldest child, is in love with a non-Jewish older boyfriend. The family had taken the problem to a rabbi who was able to be helpful for a while. However, the crisis flared

up again and the parents were referred here by the rabbi who called the director of the agency. In this one can gather the purpose of the parents to use the agency for re-establishing their control over their daughter as this would serve Jewish values, and a Jewish agency could be assumed to be in sympathy with their own purpose.

Seeing them as a family, the background history seemed peaceful and commonplace. There were no previous conflicts and troubles. This crisis then is the more upsetting. The oldest daughter has the financial support of the parents as long as she goes to college, but she lives by herself, and now she claims freedom for herself.

Her relationship with a non-Jewish veteran is her first close and intimate relationship. She has strong feelings about her right to her own life and her own choice. The parents have equally strong feelings about their rights. They also have a degree of worry and anxiety about their daughter's maturity and ability to make serious long range decisions. The parents' anxiety sharpens the conflict. The parents give an ultimatum to their daughter which is that they will stop their support if she marries her friend. The daughter answers this ultimatum with her own ultimatum, which is that her friend is more important to her than her Jewishness and their support. The worker helps them not to use ultimatums but to see that this conflict requires help. The daughter sees this need for help for herself, and the parents choose not to continue at this point.

From here on the helping process takes a turn. It moves into her identity conflicts and difficulties of separation from her parents. Her relationship to her friend becomes less encompassing and all-important to her. She continues it, but, for the time being at least, it decreases in intensity.

The intake worker struggles with her own bias. This comes out in her spontaneous identification with the parents and using Jewish values as the paramount issue here. The worker is aware of her bias, and it does not affect her clinical decision. The bias which may make a worker choose sides in a conflict instead of helping the clients who are involved in this conflict with resolving it in their own way is well known professionally. Our understanding of "counter-transference" has been helpful in our training and practice.

Does the Jewish as part of such conflict give this bias in the worker a special edge? It may do so. It would be

useful for us to review our own feelings and practice from this point of view when there is so much emphasis from the community and agency to stress Jewish values. Truly, this case shows that our holding on to good clinical method served Jewish values better than the worker siding with the parents concerning the need for Jewish values and her being used as a control. Had the worker used her authority as a Jewish worker and that of the agency as a Jewish agency in this way, the daughter's emphasis on her "ultimatum" would have been strengthened. We would have offended her pride, her striving for independence and maturity. No Jewish value is served if her own value is not maintained and recognized. Introducing Jewish values into the agency's service and ways of giving help means that we need to be watchful of our counter-transference.

Some issues: Jewish upbringing and personal identity formation: this is a good Jewish family, and the children had a good Jewish upbringing. What does "good" mean here? How meaningful and deep a value is the Jewish in this family in this upbringing? A good deal of our Jewish practice in living needs some critical questioning on our side. In addition, identity experiences of young people quite commonly involve a revision of past values and a striving for deepening their values. The personal identity crisis affects the Jewish too. How much freedom can a Jewish family give to its young member for such searching and striving, for such review and revision, for such coming out with her own and her difference from the family? This is a severe test for the family and its tolerance.

Let us turn the question around and ask: What does the religious upbringing do to the capacity of the young person to have a genuine process of identity formation which requires fluidity and

freedom in behalf of it? If certain values and standards are meant to be unchallenged and unchanging in a person's character and removed from developmental identity struggle, how genuine and meaningful is such formative process? The relationship of cultural values and process to the identity formation of individual personality has not been opened up in our clinical theory. Anthropologists have brought to us the growing up to adulthood which is entirely steeped in cultural form and ritual. Becoming and being adult is a cultural identity process and not one of personal identity process. Our culture is different. It gives us a combination of the cultural and the individually personal, by no means a synthesis of it, but a rather casual assortment which is left to the individual and family to organize and to integrate. Conflict is an element in the process of such organization. We need to pay more attention to the theoretical significance of such loose assortments of the personal (and family) and cultural and its clinical significance.

The intake worker arranged for a transfer of the young woman to her own worker, and the worker's clinical decision to concentrate on the identity crisis of this young woman as the help best designed to answer her and her family's long range needs about who and where they are as a family, as persons and as Jews seemed to be well taken. Such decisions always require a continuing review.

Another issue which this case brings to us is the relationship of the Jewish to the non-Jewish world. This is the first significant experience which this young woman has with the non-Jewish world. Her falling in love with this man may well be encouraged by the fascination which to her the non-Jewish world carries. Her friend is a veteran, seasoned by war and matured in the grim risk of battle. He is a few years older than she.

His being non-Jewish adds to the fascination and the romance of the "unknown" which her family is not able to satisfy as her need. There is this fantasy element in her love, as is quite common in first love.

Jewish identity is not mature unless it includes a secure relationship to the non-Jewish world in a positive and realistic way. However, this inclusion requires a process of its own. In such a process the non-Jewish may take on different meanings and values to the Jewish child. It may be seen, experienced, defined, interpreted, suspected as a danger and painful, as one's being unwanted, rejected, pushed out, subject to arrogance, overbearing and prejudicial and at times vicious. It may also be seen, experienced, wanted as the "great world," as a source of experience, knowledge, insight, vast creative manifestations and involvements. The positive may easily outweigh the negative, and a reaction of anxiety on the Jewish side is felt by this strong pull of the positive in the non-Jewish direction. Jewish identity is vitally affected and deeply impregnated by its non-Jewish component.

This young woman is out into the "great world" for the first time in her life. Her attending college has opened the door to a new world for her; her meeting this man, experiencing in him romance, adventure, fascination strengthens the meaning of this new world to her. How very much she would feel like moving with a vengeance from the world of her parents, her former Jewish world. This is an immediate and impulsive response. We thought that there is at times a cyclical process for the young Jewish person: the being Jewish as a good and faithful member of the family, as a known and familiar solid value; then the fighting of the Jewish in the struggle for emancipation and independence and in this her experienc-

ing the non-Jewish world in a different way; finally, her coming back to the Jewish later as something in herself which she has retained and which has a valid and precious meaning which belongs to her life and herself.

This family brings to us a good deal about the problems and relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish world: the feeling of the non-Jewish becoming a danger to the Jewish, splitting up a Jewish family and denying Jewish identity; but the opposite also, that is, the Jewish as excluding the non-Jewish of which the Jews as a group have often been accused; the non-Jewish as the fascination to the Jewish, as the attraction of the forbidden, and as the symbol of the great world; finally, the non-Jewish used in one's very normal and regular rebellion against one's family in the process of forming and developing one's identity. It seems to offer the freedom which one strives for in such struggle. The Jewish — non-Jewish often is used not for resolving a conflict but for living out a conflict, constantly moving away from it and back to it.

The B family illustrates another significant issue for Jewish life and identity: the situational change which occurs in the lives of many young Jews when they begin to go to college. This brings about two major changes: the relaxation of the family's control and a vastly different and increased input of new ideas, persons, experiences. This new input brings influences which are often dynamic and transforming.

The C family situation was brought to the group to help us experience and think about issues of Jewish identity that arise in an intermarriage and which affect the clinical thinking and management in a significant way. To some degree it is arbitrary to select out the intermarriage as the strategic dynamic which organizes a whole host of significant facets of problem around it,

such as: family breakdown, personality problem, many social difficulties and questions. There is also no intention whatever to see this marriage as representative of intermarriage in general. Any conclusions to be drawn on intermarriage from this experience can only be modest, to be sure, and even then the individual determinants could well be seen as overshadowing generic meaning.

The worker's contact is with the mother (age 46) of three children (ages 13, 11, 9) who is separated from her husband who lives in California and with whom there has been no contact. The father is born Jewish. The mother is converted Jewish, and the three children are brought up as Jewish children by the mother. At present the mother has a meaningful relationship with a non-Jewish man. She does not plan for marriage. The children are aware of her relationship with her friend. The father supports his children financially but has no contact or other form of relationship with them.

Help was given to the mother as a person who has struggled all her life to define her identity in a way which would not make her a slave to whatever problems and relationships she met in difficult life situations but which would assure her dignity and freedom and a new sense of values for which to use her unusual strength and capacity.

This strength and capacity stand out in the life experience of this woman. She was born in California, the youngest of eight, in a family of sharecroppers. She saw her father as an ineffectual man and her mother as the strong one. How early in her life did the impulse arise in her to overcome the sordidness and degradation which she witnessed in her family, to be different from her family, to make her own way, a way of success, respect, achievement? It was an early impulse, and it condensed to a determination and strength which were characteristic of her all her life and which she put into the service of striving for success — and which brought her such success but also brought her failure so that using help became a way of seeing herself as a person whose strength can be dangerous to herself. Much in this strength consisted of manipulation and the use of force which were destructive of her human relationships and happiness. She is now engaged in a therapeutic relationship with her worker which has been beneficial for herself and in which change of her values toward more limits, a modest share of happiness and human fulfillment, a different understanding of relationships as a mother and as a friend, an awareness of herself which assures her more mastery of her strength instead

of her being subservient to its control have been the meaningful themes.

Our discussion and thinking in the group picked up the loose strands of children and father in this family picture. What is Jewish here? To what degree did it make for the human and family problem? To what degree did it color it without causing it? Is the Jewish bound to be neglected in the process of therapy; or can it be free and strengthen the therapy? What kind of value was the Jewish? And to whom? What would the consideration of the Jewish issue require in the way of treatment planning? Just raising these questions was useful in defining directions of work, to highlight the obscure which required enlightenment, and to broaden the canvas of our involvement.

Here then is how this intermarriage came about. The client, a youngster, who was engrossed so fully in overcoming the pain and loneliness of her family, used two avenues with concentration and strength, work and education. All her life she has been a hard and good worker, whatever the nature of her work. In this she found valuable outlets for her aggression and a meaningful personal value. In her striving for higher education she discovered her good and able mind. All these being ego-qualities so valuable to balance and to give form to her considerable aggression. In the course of these early attempts there is also the reference to an early marriage, short in duration, not meaningful to her but having an implication which she missed at that time, i.e., that marriage confronted her with emotional demands which she could not meet and which frightened her. This was a straw in the wind of passion and greed for success which swept it away.

Soon marriage came her way again. In her educational pursuits she met a Jewish student who was bound on a medical career. This was the success which she had wanted so much. To be the wife of a Jewish doctor meant to be in a different class, to enjoy prestige, to overcome her background of shame and weakness. Little is known of the courtship, apart from her obvious ability to make herself valuable and indispensable to the student, to help him achieve his professional goal. They became married, and she converted to Judaism.

Was this a price to be paid for the marriage? Was the Jewish to her, the daughter of lowly par-

ents of strong religious Protestant convictions, a sign of superiority so that she chose it as part of her upward mobile striving? This conversion was not one which involved a testing of values, a genuine change in belonging and identification; it was a conversion from failure to success. There is nothing in her recalling her life story which indicates struggle or some disturbance for her and her husband in this conversion, nothing to indicate their having experienced it as a process in which questioning themselves and each other would help find the way toward something which was genuine and true for them.

However, although this change had no meaning as an experience of psychological change, it revealed the sterling quality of her taking responsibility for what she had undertaken. She was a Jewish wife, her children were to be Jewish. This was her responsibility, and she carried it out as she would fulfill a job responsibility, carrying out a promise she had made. The content was not there, could not be there, but the form was observed.

And how characteristic this has become of religious observance in general. This woman, whatever her unusual personal dynamics, is not the exception; she is more the rule. She is the rule in the context of our American culture in which the religious has lost passion and strength and has become decadent.

She felt good in her own conscience. Her conversion was not what Jewish tradition and law require, that is, a deep inner searching and testing of oneself, a genuine process of taking in new insights, values, and of incorporating them. The standard of Jewish tradition is a proud standard and a high standard. How real is it in our culture of personal comfort and evasion of struggle? The theory of what conversion should be is clear. But what is the practice? How different is this woman and her conversion from that of many, many others? This is a meaningful issue which comes to us from her life, a life which is so personal, so powerful and moving.

This marriage did not work out either. As the client represents it, her major complaint was that of the weakness of her husband. He turned out to be babyish, dependent upon her. She felt an increasing inability to meet his demand, make this renewed sacrifice, and so she decided on separation. It seems unreal to assume that her husband had no part in it. Possibly, his strength could not tolerate her control and her need for success, for him to be used for her need and to see himself fooled and disappointed in human terms. If we read her right in her enormous power and its uses for aggression and using other people for her ends, no marriage could well endure such abuses.

They agreed on separation. He went to California where he is practicing his profession, and she

is here, bringing up her three Jewish children who are being supported financially by their father. The client found a vocational career in the real estate field in which she is quite successful and which gives full vent to socializing her aggressive impulses. We already referred to her man friend, another step toward her human satisfaction.

The issues which we developed here as interlinking the Jewish and the clinical were the nature of the conversion and its meaning in our culture.

The chief issue which occupied us concerned the need for a family approach to the treatment and, in doing so, for freeing members of the family from false responsibilities and assuming those that were in agreement with their values and roles:

1. Does the mother want to be Jewish in a sense of honest belonging? If she does not want to and if she disregards her own feelings, what does she do to herself and to her children if she assumes responsibility for their Jewish bringing up? Here is a person whose deep hostility and fear of her own destructiveness make her sensitive to the arousal of guilt feelings. Do we add to her guilt feelings by letting her continue a responsibility which is false and artificial? Jewishness may mean more to her than we believe now. However, we need to help clarify her feeling and free her from being the "Jewish" mother if she is not it. Such freeing her from the burden of a false role goes hand in hand with the help which she needs for herself. It is not enough for her to find social channels for her aggression and supportive help for herself. Her fear of her self-destructiveness, so much an issue in her experience of marriage and in her present relationship to her man friend, needs to be focused on. This may require intensive help the specific nature of which needs to be evaluated;

2. The children need to be involved directly in the use of help. There need to be family meetings in which the mother brings to her children her relationship to her man friend, who is not Jewish, how it affects them or may affect them. What are their thoughts and feelings about it? How do they see their mother? Her friend? Are they afraid of abandonment? What about their own father? Do they feel he is to be betrayed?
3. The children need help individually, if mother cannot give them the Jewishness of a Jewish home and of a relationship in which their value and feelings as Jewish children are valued and nurtured. This is not the only help which they may need in such a complicated family situation. However, it is one — and a major one — that can be seen now. For the agency to take this responsibility would free the mother from something that is false and artificial in her life situation and help her to engage herself more freely in building the life for herself which she needs. It would also free the children from an awkward position and role into which they have been forced by their parents without their will and participation. Relating to them as Jewish children, as both parents want them to be, will be a meaningful point to consider with them in looking at what life was and is for them and how they see themselves, Jewishly and humanly, and how this is affected by the personal and family failure which their parents have bestowed upon them.
4. The father needs to be involved urgently. This will require an out-of-town service. There is so much of an enigma about him. He is supporting the children financially. This may mean more than money. They are Jewish because of him; and this may

mean something important. However, so much of his feeling about his children, his willing and wanting for them, his feeling about himself, his possible bitterness about what he believes has been done to him is unknown to us. Our goal is for the children to have a father with whom they can have a meaningful relationship.

Children are growing up as if they were in a human wilderness. Father and mother are carrying their own fate; and how much they have to carry; how burdened they feel and in need of love for themselves. What does growing up mean under such conditions? How can we help with it? What we see here is true so often in our work.

Let us re-emphasize that the issue for helping this client as a mother and as a woman is to become genuine and true to herself, for her values to be human and modest, not to sell her human birthright for earthly gain, not to make herself a slave to purposes, values, people and lose her freedom to be herself. Into this quest for a true self enters the Jewish. Is it a value to her? What does it give to her? What can she give to it? The situation of intermarriage and of a broken family, of children being dependent upon her on solutions for herself, lends more urgency to this search for the human truth and true value in Jewishness.

We encounter the human wasteland of fabricated values and the gradual loss and drain of our human inheritance in many of our clients. Does not the truth of the Jewish in ourselves arise in the quest for a truer and more genuine human self? And are we as helpers able to raise this question for ourselves, make this demand for an essential honesty on ourselves so that we can be helpers in a deeper sense, that of shar-

ing a problem with a client, searching a way with him together, transcending knowledge to commitment and engagement?

There has been more in our group's discussions and our experiences. This is only suggestive of some of the content and issues and our responses and thinking concerning them which evolved. However, it brings out how rich a professional undertaking it can be if the Jewish is considered as part of the helping process of a clinical service. The

dynamics of such helping are not thus denied, but are enriched and broadened, and our understanding of ourselves, of the client, of the process is enriched and broadened. We have begun to speculate that there may be a meaningful contribution to various elements of the theory of personality, personality development, of the family, family process, and of the process of helping. This, of course, will require further substantiation.

## What's Jewish About It?\*

### A Perspective on American Jewish Community Reactions to Public Issues

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*"... in the period of about a generation, roughly since 1945, American Jewry, in an institutional and organized manner, has 'gone public' on a range of issues which on the surface, at least, appear to have something less than a direct connection to our security and well-being as Jews. Beyond that, they are sometimes issues on which individuals, acting as citizens, might have legitimately differing views."*

THE phenomenon of Jewish organizational and community response to public issues on the general American scene, issues which seem to have no immediate or apparent connection with what we take as proper and conventional concerns *as Jews*, should some day be worth at least a chapter in the history of the American Jewish community and of its accommodation to American life. I want to direct my comments to this phenomenon, to the factual record and, with considerably less certainty, to elements of it that may be of interest to historians of the future.

There is, of course, a record, which I am not dealing with here, of the Jewish community — or at least of Jewish spokesmen — going before the American public to demand action or government support on problems that had a very direct connection with the well-being of Jews: the Damascus Incident in the 1840's, the abrogation of the 1832 trade treaty with Czarist Russia, the formation of a delegation to the Versailles Conference, the mass meetings and public response to the Kishinev pogrom. These, and I'm sure many other episodes, demonstrate the willingness and ability of American Jews to demon-

strate their particular and particularly personal concerns to the American and world publics.

The premise on which I want to base my remarks, however, is that in the period of about a generation, roughly since 1945, American Jewry, in an institutional and organized manner, has "gone public" on a range of issues which on the surface, at least, appear to have something less than a direct connection to our security and well-being as Jews. Beyond that, they are sometimes issues on which individuals, acting as citizens, might have legitimately differing views. Literally and figuratively, we have witnessed an "explosion" of organized Jewish involvement and position taking on such issues. Topsy-like it has grown; to the point, perhaps, where it might be speculated that an average and reasonably well informed member of a Jewish organization might not himself realize the positions on public issues to which his organizational affiliation commits him, in a theoretical sense in any event.

There is a qualitative difference, I submit, between a Jewish organization writing to a public official on behalf, say, of Soviet Jews, or Israel, an action we can easily understand, as compared with making representations, as a Jewish identified group, on, for example, the boycotting of California grapes or on

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