

nity. To them the issue of how electoral reform would adversely affect American Jewry may or may not be a legitimate consideration, incidental to their position based on more general principles.

Perhaps ironically, Stuart Eizenstat, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, once active in Atlanta's Jewish community and the father of a Jewish day school student, worked on the reform proposal with Vice President Mondale and David Rubinstein, another White House aide. Eizenstat jokingly says, "we outnumbered Mondale two to one" but after paying "particular attention" to the impact of minorities decided the loss was not substantial enough to warrant retention of the electoral college system.

There seems to be widespread support for direct vote, although it is one of those issues that lends itself more to philosophical platitudes than to practical action. A recent Gallup poll showed 81 percent of Americans surveyed in favor of direct election of the President. Major organizations, among them the American Bar Association, the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters, have endorsed the concept; most Jewish groups don't have

an official position except the American Jewish Congress, which is against it. Surveys of state legislators, to whom any constitutional amendment must be forwarded once past Congress, have indicated bipartisan support—though whether it would be enough for ratification is anybody's guess.

People up on Capitol Hill say there is a good chance Bayh's amendment will come up for a vote in the Senate, where it is expected to pass. There is no indication that the efforts of Senator William Proxmire, who for several years has inserted into the *Congressional Record* a daily item advocating electoral reform, has significantly molded public opinion. However, the issue is now a priority with Jimmy Carter, who is pushing for Senate approval.

Passage in the Senate would transfer the debate over electoral reform to each of the fifty states, three quarters of whose ratification is necessary to make direct vote the law of the land. The road will surely be a long one; rejection by only thirteen states will kill the proposal, while many more than that would theoretically lose influence under direct vote. The challenge to the Jewish community nevertheless exists, and must be addressed.

## How Many Jews in New York City?

Jack Diamond

Reams of paper have been used in the last few years to write about New York City's financial and economic plight but relatively little attention has been paid to the city's declining Jewish population. The decline in the number of Jews is certainly worthy of attention, and has had and will have far-reaching effects on the Jewish community and on the general population.

Let no one suppose that because New York has elected, as mayor, two Jews in succession, or that three of the major four

candidates for mayor in the last election were Jews, that the Jewish population of this city is at its acme. Far from it.

There are reasons to believe that there are only about 750,000 Jews living in the five boroughs of New York City in October 1977. This, of course, conflicts with the widespread impression that there are two million Jews in New York City, which may or may not have been true at the zenith of the city's Jewish population a few decades ago.

Statistics on the Jewish population of New York City (and elsewhere in the United States) are hard to come by because religion and/or ethnic groups are

not included in governmental decennial censuses and because Jewish organizations, on the whole, are reluctant to spend the money involved in making sampling surveys for demographic purposes. Before 1970, relatively few Jewish communities did gather demographic data using sampling methods. However, even in these communities the data was soon outdated.

Means other than sampling to obtain data on Jewish populations, particularly in large cities, are not trustworthy and do not obtain current information such as age, income, etc. Henrietta Szold, as editor of the *American Jewish Year Book*, was engaged in a project of finding the number of Jews in Baltimore in 1899-1901 by use of death rates. This method, which had its own complications, has been used on other occasions but, at best, it cannot give much useful demographic information on the living Jews. The Yom Kippur method, which gave an estimate of Jews by comparing attendance in public schools on Yom Kippur with an ordinary school day, had many drawbacks and was not very helpful as regards to other demographic information. Finally, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF) sponsored the National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) 1970-71. This national study included data on the New York Jewish population, encompassing the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester and Nassau-Suffolk, using sampling methods.

According to NJPS, the number of members of Jewish households in 1970-71 was distributed as follows:

Manhattan	171,000
Bronx	143,000
Brooklyn	514,000
Queens	379,000
Staten Island	21,000
Total NYC	1,228,000

Even this figure of 1.2 million for 1970-71 may be considered an overestimate if we consider NJPS definitions and totals. According to NJPS, a household is "Jewish" even if only one respondent is "Jewish." All other members of the household are included in the totals even though they may be brought up in another religion. The definition of a "Jew" is one who has or had at least one Jewish parent. Thus, a family of four which included a person who had only one Jewish parent and who married a non-Jew

would be included in the four. At this time there are about 2 million Jews who are in New York City.

However, in New York City, the data is not as accurate as it is in other parts of the country. The American Jewish Archives, which has been prepared by the CJFWF, lists 1,836,000 through the year, the total for the five boroughs was 1,228,000 (although state totals). NJPS was used for the total for New York City. The Yom Kippur method, which gave an estimate of Jews by comparing attendance in public schools on Yom Kippur with an ordinary school day, had many drawbacks and was not very helpful as regards to other demographic information. Finally, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF) sponsored the National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) 1970-71. This national study included data on the New York Jewish population, encompassing the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester and Nassau-Suffolk, using sampling methods.

Meanwhile, the ethnic composition of the city has changed. Large numbers of Jews from other parts of the country have moved to New York City, and it holds its own families.

Bureau of the City of New York in population statistics for Brooklyn, 1,157,000 in 1970. However, this figure, which may have been unbalanced.

There is a population rate of about 1.2 million in New York City. The Center for Graduate Studies of CUNY, in their survey, used a total number of 80,000 in 1970.

If we assume a decline in New York City

JACK DIAMOND writes on demography and related subjects.

decennial  
organiza-  
tant to  
n making  
phic pur-  
vely few  
er demo-  
methods  
munities.  
  
to obtain  
articularly  
thy and do  
n such as  
old, as an  
ish Year  
of finding  
timore in  
ates. This  
complica-  
occasions,  
uch useful  
the living  
od, which  
comparing  
s on Yom  
l day, had  
very help-  
graphic in-  
l of Jewish  
s (CJFWF)  
sh Popula-  
This na-  
i the New  
ompassing  
ork City  
olk, using  
  
number of  
ls in 1970-  
:  
  
171,000  
143,000  
114,000  
179,000  
21,000  
228,000  
  
million for  
n overesti-  
mations and  
household  
respondent  
bers of the  
totals even  
o in another  
"Jew" is  
one Jewish  
r which in-  
one Jewish  
non-Jew.

would be included in the Jewish total as four. At this writing, the number of non-Jews who are part of the total of 1.2 million is not available.

However, the total of 1,228,000 Jews in New York City in 1970-71 was questioned by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies as being too low. After all, the *American Jewish Year Book*, which has had an annual article and tables on the American Jewish population prepared by Alvin Chenkin of the CJFWF, had used the figure of 1,836,000 from Volume 63 (1962) through Volume 74 (1973). So, for one year, the totals of New York City and its boroughs were not indicated in the *Year Book* (although used for national and state totals) while the methodology of NJPS was being checked.

The *American Jewish Year Book* has used the total of 1,228,000 households for New York City since then and will continue to use it until there is another sampling of New York City's Jewish population, which is nowhere in sight.

Meanwhile, vast changes have taken place in New York City's racial/ethnic composition, with Jews greatly affected. Large "Jewish" neighborhoods of the recent past have very few Jews left. There has been no great movement of Jews from one section of the city to another. A Jewish community is happy if it holds its own in the number of Jewish families.

Bureau of Census studies of the New York City area have shown heavy losses in population between 1970 and 1974 in Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx. In this period, for example, Brooklyn lost 157,000 or 6% of its total residents. However, 157,000 represents a "net" figure, which means that many more than that may have departed but were counterbalanced somewhat by new arrivals.

There is evidence that the Jewish population of New York City fell at the rate of about 80,000 a year in the two years between 1968 and 1970. The Center for Social Research of the Graduate School and University Center of CUNY, as part of a Population Health Survey, used "Religious Background" in their sampling in 1968 and 1970. The total number of Jews in their samples declined by 159,430 or at an average rate of 80,000 per year.

If we assume an average annual rate of decline in Jewish population in New York City of 75,000 from mid-1971 to

October 1, 1977, which seems reasonable, we come to a round figure of about 750,000 at the October date.

But this bleak number of 750,000 Jews in New York City at present, does not tell the full story. We must anticipate further large declines because of the make-up of the present Jewish population and some ongoing trends among Jews.

In the NJPS of 1970-71, we find a very large proportion of Jewish aged. The Bronx had 33.6% of its total Jews at age 65 or older; Manhattan had 27.2% of its Jews in this age group; and Brooklyn had 18.7% of this age. It is clear that the proportion of Jewish aged in New York City exceeds the national Jewish population average and probably of most other religious, ethnic or racial groups. Unfortunately we may expect a high death rate for the Jews of New York City because of the age factor, even though Jews seem to have long life expectancy.

On the other hand, the proportion of children, particularly those between the ages of five and fourteen, in the 1970-71 study, was somewhat below the national Jewish norm. We have known for years that Jews have had low birth rates (to which the rest of the population seems to be catching up). The low proportion of "white" children attending public schools in New York City was given in the *New York Times* of November 20, 1977 which quoted Board of Education statistics that 71% of the students were "minority," mostly black and Puerto Rican, and only 29% were white. "Whites," of course, included many non-Jews. Lest someone raise the argument that many Jewish children in New York City attend all-day schools, the Board of Jewish Education reports that in 1973-74 only 43,942 children attended Jewish all-day schools in the city. We may deduce that it is unlikely that there will be a significant replenishment of Jews from births in this city.

From the high proportion of the Jewish aged in New York City and the low percentage of children, it seems likely that large numbers of middle-aged married couples have departed from the city leaving their parents behind.

Among the reasons for the low birth rates of Jews are the increasing divorce rates among Jews and the relatively new development of a large number of Jewish "singles." Though there is little "hard" information on divorces among Jews, there is little doubt that the incidence of divorce among Jewish couples has in-

creased sizably. As to "singles," the NJPS has published the amazing statistic that 47.4% of Jewish households in Manhattan in 1970-71 were one-person households. While a large number of these one-person households were of aged widows and widowers, it still indicates a high Jewish "singles" population. In the New York area, including Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester, Jewish one-person households were one-sixth of the total households.

Nor can replenishment of New York City's Jewish population be expected from migration from the rest of the United States or from foreign immigration. While there undoubtedly has been a large departure of Jews from New York City to the suburbs, to neighboring areas and states, to Florida, California and other states across the nation, there also has been a flow of Jews into New York City; but this in-migration has been relatively small. About 10,000 Russian Jews have resettled in New York City since Jews have emigrated from the Soviet Union. No one has reliable statistics on the Israeli Jews who have recently made their homes in the city but the number is not a major factor affecting the Jewish population.

We are thus faced with a Jewish population of New York City which has dwindled to about 750,000 and which will continue to decline drastically if present trends continue.

This demographic situation in the world center of Jewish communal and creative activity should jolt the Jewish community into at least confronting the problems involved, but, alas, the organizations and institutions go about their usual programs paying little heed to this enormous change.

Many fundamental questions need answers, or at least widespread discussion:

1. In the face of the dwindling numbers and the closing of institutions such as synagogues, Jewish schools, etc., do the living and sustaining Jews need a rationale, a theology or a philosophy to buoy their spirits or do we ignore the situation?

2. When will the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies change its old pattern of allocations and recognize the new demographic situation with the different needs of the Jewish community from what it was 20 or 30 years ago?

3. When will Jewish organizations, national and local, give priority to Jewish

demographic problems and their implications for the future, including to the organizations themselves?

4. Will the New York City government attempt to stem the tide of departing Jews and other ethnic groups which have contributed greatly to the city's economy

and culture?

5. Will the Jewish community set up an apparatus to get the information, follow the trends and analyze the "facts" as to what's going on as regards the Jewish population of the historically largest and perhaps greatest center of the Jews?

## Sex in Judaism

Robert Gordis

The Jewish attitude toward sex takes, as its point of departure, the fundamental principle that marriage and marriage alone is the proper framework for sexual experience. The marriage relationship between a man and a woman is not a concession to the lower instincts, but, on the contrary, the ideal human state, because it alone offers the opportunity for giving expression to all aspects of human nature. Speaking of his celibacy, Paul said, "I would that all men were as I." But when the sage Simeon ben Azzai did not marry, he felt constrained to apologize by saying, "My soul loves the Torah," explaining that he wished to dedicate himself wholeheartedly to study without worldly concerns. The difference in attitude is highlighted by the emergence of monastic orders in Christianity, which have no counterpart in Judaism.

Ideally, every human being should live as a unit within a family, for the family is the ideal human group. The rabbis declare that he who has no wife is deprived of joy, of blessing, of all good, and lacks Torah, protection, and peace. Strictly speaking, the Hebrew legal term for betrothal, which was virtually tantamount to marriage, *kiddushin*, means "separation from all others." It was, however, popularly interpreted, quite in the spirit of the tradition, as "the state of

holiness."

From its inception, Judaism has always recognized two purposes in marriage, both spelled out in the opening pages of Scripture. The first is the fulfillment of the first commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28), which is as much a blessing as it is an imperative throughout the tradition. Children are uniformly regarded as a blessing. The Bible is replete with references to children as God's greatest boon. When the patriarch Abraham is assured, "Fear not, I am your shield; your reward will be very great," he responds, "What can You give me, if I die childless?" (Gen. 15:1,2). Rachel, Jacob's beautiful wife, knows that he loves her deeply, but she nevertheless cries out in pain, "Give me children, or otherwise I die" (Gen. 30:1). Psalm 128 paints an ideal picture of the family gathered around the table, with a consistent emphasis upon children as a good.

The commandment "Be fruitful and multiply" is defined by the Halakah with characteristic minuteness. The obligation is fulfilled as soon as two children are born, the only question being whether two boys are necessary, as the school of Shammai insists, or one boy and one girl, as Hillel avers.

To be sure, families at that time were generally larger, often substantially so. The reason is to be found in several factors, personal and social. Since sexual intercourse was a constant in the lives of married couples, the absence of contraceptive devices naturally led to regular pregnancies and the birth of larger numbers of children. The health of the mother and even the economic condition of the family were rarely, if ever, taken into

account. In part, this was due to the subservient position of women in society at large. But in the Jewish community, another factor, operating on both the conscious and the unconscious levels, was the powerful desire for group survival. In the ancient and medieval eras—and the Middle Ages continued for the bulk of Eastern European and Oriental Jewry well into the twentieth century—disease and malnutrition carried off many infants and children. In addition, there was the persistent prospect of expulsion and massacre threatening the physical preservation of the Jewish group. Obviously, the problem of overpopulation which confronts us in the twentieth century was not remotely dreamed of. Nevertheless, the minimal limits of the biblical commandment, as laid down by the Halakah, are clear.

The protection of children is a basic goal of marriage, but it is not the only one. It is noteworthy that, in the Bible, Eve is created for Adam before procreation is contemplated, while they are still in the Garden of Eden. The second function of marriage is that of companionship. Actually, it is the only motive assigned in the creation of a helpmate for Adam: "It is not good for man to dwell alone; I will make a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18).

The insight that companionship which includes sexual relations is a legitimate end in itself in marriage is not merely an implication of the biblical story but is explicitly spelled out in Jewish law. Moreover, the joy of sexual activity is a good in itself, distinct from procreation. The Halakah teaches that weak, old, and sterile persons should marry, even when there is no possibility of children. Thus the rabbis could endorse wholeheartedly the sentiment of a modern sociologist: "Sex exists not only for the propagation of the race, but for the increase of individual human happiness."

While a negative attitude toward sexual relations is sporadically encountered in Jewish literature, particularly under the impact of medieval asceticism and pietism, it is far from representing the normative view. Basically, sexual relations between husband and wife, while naturally private and intimate, are held to be a perfectly legitimate form of pleasure which justifies itself as such, even without the goal of procreation.

Indeed, Judaism holds fast to two complementary concepts in this area.

First is the rendered "modesty" "good ta govern m their spee licly and homes. A gards it n mandator derive pl which has that token establishe reading th eve, and man's cor are explic text. The ars and t tions on Rashi on "for plea ment." N mystical g be perfor

While irregular man and v in the cor they are favors the others bec

Until o that masculine that decen they were This myth titude tha Jewish tra of cant. I long bef psycholog the human ponent of Adam and Eden they the fruit o fers immo. other mira Tree of K pressly for have show represents ence with procreation tined to h Life and t would hav indicates,

*This article is drawn from Dr. Gordis' book, Love and Sex, to be published in February by Farrar Straus Giroux. (Copyright © 1978 by Robert Gordis.) Rabbi Gordis is Professor of Bible and Rapaport Professor in the Philosophies of Religion at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Editor of more than 20 books dealing with Jewish life.*