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The main objective of this thesis is to present some basic information on the Jewish family in the modern world. There is hardly a sense of life without the family, whether directly or indirectly, with the family. It should be made clear that every page concerning the family is by Joseph Melamed.

TOWARD A COURSE IN ADULT EDUCATION

ON THE JEWISH FAMILY

by Joseph Melamed

The concept of the Jewish family has been discussed, has been presented from two different points of view: that of Jewish tradition, and that of contemporary Jewish life.

In the past, the Jewish family was united by the integrity of its members and appeared to be a strong and holy institution. Whenever the family retained the highest degree of consideration by its members, as well as by external institutions, its integrity was maintained. In the present, the Jewish family is a center of religious life. In the past, the Jewish family was united by the integrity of its members and appeared to be a strong and holy institution. Whenever the family retained the highest degree of consideration by its members, as well as by external institutions, its integrity was maintained. In the present, the Jewish family is a center of religious life. In the past, the Jewish family was united by the integrity of its members and appeared to be a strong and holy institution. Whenever the family retained the highest degree of consideration by its members, as well as by external institutions, its integrity was maintained. In the present, the Jewish family is a center of religious life.

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

According to the current literature concerning the family, we have found agreement among the authors that the family today is facing a series of crises. These have come about as a result of the continuing influence of the society and culture in which Jews seem to have found a refuge. In addition to this, a number of authors indicate that many Jewish parents today no longer maintain their responsibility as parents. Some of these are the result of the lack of a model for the education. The children are not given the best of a model which to base their thinking and practices. This situation leads to a mutual frustration for parents and children.

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Referee, Professor Sylvan Schwartzman

1966

DIGEST

The main attempt of this thesis is to present some basic information on the Jewish family, for adult education. There is hardly a phase of life which is not related in some way, whether directly or indirectly, with the family. Thus, it should be made clear that every issue concerning the family has not been covered here.

Each aspect of the family which has been discussed, has been presented from two different points of view: that of Jewish tradition, and that of contemporary Jewish life.

In the past, the Jewish family was united by the integrity of its members and appeared to be a strong and holy institution. Whenever the family received the highest degree of consideration by its members, as well as by external institutions, its integrity was maintained. In Judaism, a special place is occupied by the home, as a center of religious life and worship. Throughout Jewish history, there have been attempts to reproduce in the home the order and mood of the place of worship.

According to the current literature concerning the family, we have found agreement among the authors that the family today is facing a series of crises. These have come about as a result of the continuing influence of the society and culture in which Jews seem to have found a refuge. In addition to this, a number of authors indicate that many Jewish parents today no longer maintain their responsibility as parents. Many of them lack the knowledge and interest in religious Jewish education. The children feel keenly the lack of a model upon which to base their thinking and practice. This situation leads to a mutual frustration for parents and children.

Nonetheless, many parents are eager to know about their Judaism, but they do not know how to go about it. Thus, the main goal of this thesis is to provide some knowledge on the subject for those who value it and desire to pursue it further. The topics discussed here are designed to be used for adult education discussion groups, as well as temple youth groups, as a beginning step.

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INTRODUCTION

because of their lack of Jewish knowledge.

I am asked why I am a Jew. It is to you, my grandson who are not yet born, that I would make my reply.

When will you be old enough to understand me? My eldest son is nineteen years old. My younger son is fourteen years old. When will you be born? In ten years, perhaps fifteen.... When will you read what I here set down? About 1950, 1960? Will people still read in 1960? What form will the world then take? Will the mechanical have suppressed the spiritual? Will the mind have created a new universe for itself? Will the problems that trouble me to-day exist for you? Will there be any Jews left?

I believe there will. They have survived the Pharaohs, Nebuchadnezzar, Constantine, Mohammed; they have survived the inquisition and assimilation; they will survive the automobile.¹

How many fathers and grandfathers like Mr. Edmond Fleg will be among us in two or three generations from now? How many Jewish parents will have the type of insight toward the Jewish future, and toward Jewish survival as a whole?

These are the questions which have concerned me during the last four years. The more I thought about the problem, the more I believed that something should be done, and soon. In the course of my thinking I realized also that the problems can be reduced to one basic topic,

namely, the Jewish family. In my opinion the core of our problem lies within this institution. We may have many religious schools, many institutions and many Jewish teachers, but we still need the family as our foundation. Unless we have a strong and healthy Jewish family, our endeavour to survive will account for very little.

We need Jewish parents who know thoroughly their roles and duties. Unfortunately, many parents do not know their roles and obligations. Children feel frustration for their lack of response to their parents.

because of their lack of Jewish knowledge.

In my experience in various congregations, as a teacher and student rabbi, I was shocked to find that many parents had even less knowledge of Judaism and its tenets than the small amount retained by their own children. It is a sad thing when even these children lose their interest in continuing Jewish studies, after they find out that their parents know less than they do. Why should they strive to be better than their parents?

One point must be made clear: not all parents who lack a knowledge of Judaism wish to keep it that way. Many of them were not fortunate enough to obtain a knowledge and understanding of Judaism because of a variety of reasons. Some, for instance, did not receive any Jewish background from their parents. They grew up with the mere knowledge that they are Jews, and yet they were not given instructions in what it means to be a Jew. These are the parents of our present time who know very little about Judaism, and yet they desire to give their children more than they have had. The difficult part is when the children, lacking an example, simply refuse to learn more than did their parents.

The children live in a different age than that of their parents, and, rightly or wrongly, they do not feel that their religion can help them. They feel keenly the lack of a model upon which to base their thinking and practice. This situation leads to a mutual frustration for both parents and children. The parents feel frustrated in not being able to accomplish the goals they had set for their children, and the children feel frustration for their lack of response to their parents.

Many parents are eager to know about their Judaism, more than we are completely aware of, but they do not know how to go about it. I have been approached by many parents on numerous occasions with questions such as: "Rabbi, my son simply refuses to study for his Bar Mitzvah. He does not have the time, and I do not know how to help him." This is a typical expression of feeling on the part of a father who feels guilty for not being able to teach his son about his Jewish heritage, and to present him the Jewish outlook with regard to learning and fulfilling the Divine command.

One day I was discussing youth activity at the temple with one of the temple officers. In the course of the conversation she said to me, "Rabbi, I must admit, I go to temple because I am afraid that, after all, there may be a God. If I don't go, I may be punished."

The questions are many and the problem is clear. Jewish parents need to be taught, since a great many of them are really ready to learn. In my bi-weekly congregation I was approached by a group of elderly people with the request that an adult education group be formed to learn Hebrew. After the first two sessions I discovered that the group was not really interested in learning Hebrew. They had some problems to discuss, and they wished to call them Hebrew. In our study group we learned very little Hebrew, and the discussions centered mainly around problems confronting the group, problems about home, children, marriage, grandchildren, etc. This is one of the main reasons why I chose to write my thesis on the Jewish family.

My second, but no less important reason, concerns Jewish survival. I believe that, unless we acquaint Jewish mothers and fathers with the

basic Jewish concept of the family, and family life, we will not be able to bring up children with a Jewish outlook toward life in general and toward the Jewish family in particular.

There are a variety of ways to educate adults. They may gain some Jewish knowledge through sermons given by the rabbi in the temple; they can teach themselves a great deal if the interest is high; they can attend lectures on Judaism given by university professors if they live near a university, and so forth. In my opinion, the main way to bring about meaningful learning is through consciously planned and organized programs in the temples. These programs can be the real sources of adult education.

I have no intention of solving any problems in this thesis. My attempt is to present a variety of Jewish experiences regarding the subject, with the hope that these will create a proper awareness, and consequently stimulate the reader to re-examine his position and come to some conclusions.

This thesis will probably be utilized most effectively by two groups: 1) those who are interested in gaining a general idea of what constitutes the Jewish family; 2) teachers or counselors or adult education groups. My main purpose, however, is to have it used, in either case, as a guide for group discussion. At the end of each chapter discussion questions are presented. These are only a brief beginning in the hope that many more will be raised by the teacher or leader of the group.

I have attempted to maintain a basic system throughout the thesis. Each chapter deals with basically one problem, or topic. My method is,

first of all, to present the problem in general, and discuss it from the standpoint of the Jewish tradition, and then re-state it as it confronts us today. I have concluded each chapter with some suggestions and questions.

Each chapter may be dealt with separately. In other words, if the reader is interested in some aspects of Jewish education, he may read only the chapter dealing with this subject. Thus, in utilizing the material to be found in this thesis, one need not follow the sequence which I have set forth. The needs and interests of the group will determine which chapters are to be dealt with in depth, and which can be surveyed less profoundly.

In order to do justice to the subject, I felt compelled to cover the main phases which constitute the family. Each chapter, however, could be treated as a thesis in itself. Since my main objective is to present a general view with regard to each topic, I felt it necessary to discuss only the major points of each topic, in order to enable myself to submit a more or less complete picture of the Jewish family. There are certain aspects, however, which I have chosen to omit at this time. These are such topics as the Jewish concept of the widow, Jewish orphans, illegitimate children, birth control, and so forth.

The vast material contained in the Bible and the Talmud are my main sources for the Jewish view on each of the problems presented herein. These works are the foundation upon which I have based the discussion of each topic. They provided a basis for comparison with the remainder of the source material which set forth the modern point of view.

In many cases I have quoted Biblical or Talmudic verses in order

to prove various points. These quotations can also prove valuable in the group discussions, making more convenient and available some of the sources needed.

Some of the Biblical and rabbinic quotations which originally appeared in Hebrew are my own translations. I refer primarily to quotations from Sefer Ha-Aggadah.

Regarding quotations from rabbinical sources found in secondary material, a footnote appears at the end of the quotation to indicate the various interpretations given by the authors of secondary material.

To sum up, the main purpose of this thesis is to illustrate, in a general way, the concept of the Jewish family in the past and present. It consists of a collection of materials written on the subject by Jewish and non-Jewish authors. The emphasis is upon the future of the Jewish family. It is written primarily for a program in adult education, or for group discussions. Several problems have been presented for the consideration of the group.

It is my hope that the issues put forth here will create an interest among leaders of group discussions to present their own questions and reach some valuable solutions.

In our Jewish tradition, a violation of one of the principles of

1. Plaut, Gunther W., The Growth of Reform Judaism, World Union For Progressive Judaism, New York, 1965.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH FAMILY

A. The Family: A Definition

Almost every definition of a family will indicate that it is a social group consisting of parents and their children, forming an important economic and biological unit.

There are broader definitions of family. The Bible, for instance, refers to the entire children of Israel as one big family. "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt." (Amos, 3.1)

In political science, too, the term family has been used to indicate a collection of nations. In many instances when a country violates the international law of the nations, it is most likely that this particular country will be condemned for the violation of the underlying law which has been accepted by all nations. The condemnation of that particular country will stress the fact that Country A does not deserve to dwell among the family of nations.

In our Jewish tradition, a violation of one of the principles of the Jewish family will result in either excommunication of that member of the family or the death penalty. The law of the rebellious son signifies that if a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not hearken to the voice of the father and the voice of his mother, then shall his father and his mother bring him unto the elders of the city;

and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he die.

(Deut. 2:18-21)

The concept of family in the past expressed a broad view. Every relative was included and belonged to the family. Elderly parents lived with their married children; the in-laws lived with their married son or daughter, self-supporting children lived with their parents and so forth. Modern sociologists stress the fact that this custom of maintaining a large family unit is unhealthy to the growth and development of the family. In our day and age, the modern man should realize the importance of the word family. The term family has come to mean fewer and fewer people. The ideal family unit should consist only of a husband, a wife and minor children. Therefore, for our purposes, we will discuss the small family unit, namely, husband and wife and their children.¹

¹ The increasing restlessness of man.
² Increasing family mobility, disrupting family life.
There are only a few aspects of the demanding problems confronting the Jewish family today. Many people have forgotten the basic concept and the fundamental principles constituting marriage and family life.²

For us as Jews the consequences are much more complicated. Misconceptions of marriage and family responsibilities have arisen, and even our survival as Jews has become questionable. In Jewish literature, marriage and family life were considered holy and sacred, but the ideas of sharing with one another and loving one another have lost their flavor in our present confused and restless society.³

People in general claim that they are liberals, and that the old concepts of Jewish life should be reinterpreted according to the demands of our

B. The Problem

Why is it so important to learn about the family today?

It is vitally important to study the problems confronting the family unit in general and the Jewish family in particular. Each and every one of us belongs to a family, or desires to belong to a family. It is an important subject, because the institutions of marriage and the family today are passing through a crisis. The symptoms of this crisis are:

- a) Increasing rebellion of children and youth against the authority of their parents.
- b) Revolt of women against the authority of the husband in marriage and family affairs.
- c) The increasing restlessness of men.
- d) Increasing family mobility, disrupting family life.

These are only a few symptoms of the deepening problem confronting the Jewish family today. Many people have forgotten the basic concept and the fundamental principles constituting marriage and family life.²

For us as Jews the consequences are much more complicated. Misconceptions of marriage and family responsibilities have arisen, and even our survival as Jews has become questionable. In Jewish literature, marriage and family life were considered holy and sacred, but the ideas of sharing with one another and loving one another have lost their flavor in our present confused and restless society.³

People in general claim that they are liberals, and that the old concept of family should be reinterpreted according to the demands of our

time. Liberalism in our time has given man unlimited power to choose and to act according to his reason. It has been taken for granted by many people that liberalism created a new image of man. Unfortunately, the new image did not solve our problem, the problem of family life based on love and mutual understanding. No matter how liberal men and women may think they are in theory, in reality they are emotionally limited and entirely unable to share the one they love. The results of this inability to share and love are the known facts of broken homes, unhappy marriages, and a total loss of family integrity.⁴

Some people among us claim that the democratic principle in politics must be applicable to family life. That is to say that each member in any family is given the freedom to decide and choose his own way. At the same time they neglect the idea that democracy in family organization means that each member of the family shall have a voice in family affairs and in determining family development.

The Jewish family has a special function. Jewish family life has been developed through customs and ceremonies in the home rather than in the school or the synagogue. These customs and ceremonies have made the Jewish home not only a refuge and defense in the time of trial and oppression, but a sanctuary and a source of joy and courage and inspiration in every period of Jewish life.⁵

Where is the integrity of Jewish families today? At every step of the way we are confronted with a problem. Children no longer share the common language with their parents; parent-child relationships are frequently no longer based on warmth and love; children who leave their

parents' home for a college education lose many ties with their family; their lack of profound Jewish education often leads them to marry out of their faith; parents are too busy to spend some time even with their minor children. Our rabbis no longer see their confirmands after their graduation from the religious school. Bar Mitzvah services and confirmation ceremonies have become mere social affairs and the criterion for their religious profundity is the amount of champagne served at the ceremony. Our children today are provided with every conceivable material thing and at the same time live in a spiritual vacuum. Have we, the parents, the teachers, the rabbis, the spiritual leaders, the counselors, asked ourselves what is happening to our Jewish home? To our Jewish family? Have we ever stopped in our daily routine to ask ourselves what is our direction and what we expect from life?

Our problem is deep; it is frightening and painful. Is there anyone to give us an answer? Are we waiting for the Messiah to bring us together again?

These are only a few examples of our present situation. Perhaps we as Jews should start looking back and discovering how our ancestors dealt with these problems. As Jews we ought to know our tradition. The knowledge of our tradition may not solve our problems, but we have to start somewhere! We have to begin our search with all our endeavor, at least to be able to understand our position and then ask ourselves: Where do we go now?

The Jewish family had become the spinal cord of the existence of the Jewish people. During the Greek and Roman periods, there was a natural influence between the Jewish culture and the

C. The Family in Jewish Tradition

In every historical survey or investigation, historians tend to prove the interaction in human history. In every treatise, the scholar's duty is to speculate and prove in depth the aims and destinies of our ancestors, in order to see how they went about building their homes. Without our past, there could be no knowledge at the present time.⁶ Without the Biblical period we cannot understand the Second Temple period. In our search through Jewish past history, we find the ideal structure of family life, during the period of the fathers.⁷ The Biblical period, according to some historians, laid the foundations of the religious and social life of the Jewish people. Similarly, we may assume that the family institution was the basis for this development.⁸

The Jewish family always had a very unique position in the emergence of the Jewish nation. The Jewish family has always been united by the integrity of its members. The influence of Jewish tradition, the customs, the laws and ordinances, perpetuated its structure and its strength from generation to generation. In that respect, the Jewish family is conservative by its nature and it has a strong tendency to maintain the precepts of the former generations. Our people went through a long series of rulers, and kings. Different nations and countries experienced a vast variety of cultures, but in spite of all this, the family kept its unity and maintained its uniqueness among the nations. Therefore, the Jewish family had become the spinal cord of the existence of the Jewish people.⁹ During the Greek and Roman periods, there was a natural influence between the Jewish culture and the

Hellenistic culture, but the Jewish family kept its purity. Our Jewish spiritual leaders in the past conceived of the family as the basic element to maintain their religion. Therefore, they considered marriage as one of the most important religious functions. For that reason they used all their influence to make the marriage ceremony a religious function, restricted by laws and given over to religious leaders. Consequently, everything which was directed to, or connected with marriage, received unusual treatment.

Even during the nineteenth century, when secularism came onto the horizon and the Jews gained emancipation, the family unit kept as it was, with responsibility and tremendous respect. Thus all marriages, according to the laws of Israel, were recognized by the governments of Eastern Europe and Asia. Keeping the family alive, healthy, and happy had a very strong emphasis in our Jewish tradition.¹⁰ One can find many "halachot" with regard to family life directed and focussed toward pursuing peace within the Jewish family. Some of these "halachot" were introduced in a very humanistic way. The rabbis called it 'for peace in the house.' (Shlom B'ayit). These "halachot" were introduced by the rabbis during and after a series of requests for divorce. The rabbis held the notion that any request for divorce was a result of misconceptions on the part of the couple.¹¹ Thus, they believed that guidance and direction should be given to those people before any divorce. Divorce was considered by the rabbis as the last resort in solving a marriage problem. The very term family was taken by many people to be identical with the word joy. The family, therefore, received the highest degree of consideration. It was recognized as a supreme factor in

the life of the individual. This highly recognized notion with regard to the family did not come about from nothing; it had substance and a Divine source.¹² The Old Testament is full of sources, information, and dialogues with respect to the high position of family integrity. We will indicate a few examples: When Jacob decided to leave his uncle Laban, he called his wives Rachel and Leah to consult upon the matter with him. (Gen. 31:4-16). David appeared to be faithful and conscientious to the needs of his family and household. (II. Sam. 13:6-7). When Jacob reached his old age he gathered his entire family to share with him his visions of the future.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: 'Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the end of days.'
(Gen. 49:1)

When Jacob's family were searching for food in Egypt during the famine period in the land of Canaan, they went to Egypt together, united as one family. These are just a few examples from the Biblical time; there are many more.

During the Middle Ages, the Jews attempted, as long as it was possible, to follow in the footsteps of their fathers from the Biblical period. Since they were persecuted almost everywhere, they needed to present something like a united front if they were to face the problems which raged around their homes and lives. Thus, their homes and families played a remarkable part in strengthening the power of the Jewish community. Our people were constantly facing the problem of survival. They were left with the heritage of the Fathers and wished to keep it wherever they dwelt. There is no doubt, however, that Jewish life at

home and the strength of the Jewish family contributed a great deal to Jewish survival.¹³

The communal organization regarded the family as one of its foremost cares. Jewish life felt at home more than in any other place besides the synagogue. The head of the family was the domestic figure. Judaism demanded devout attention to all the details of life. The father possessed the knowledge necessary for obeying the laws concerning home ritual, the family regulations for the Sabbath and more occasional household arrangements. The wife was respected and honored. On every step of the way, the Jewish family was the prime factor. We can speak of communities, of synagogues, schools, or any conceivable institution, but above and beyond any institution, the Jewish family was considered the basic dimension of Jewish life. Education does not grow on trees nor can apples grow on dry land. Every development in any phase of life must have its roots and foundations somewhere.¹⁴

In Judaism a special place is occupied by the home as a center of religious life and worship, almost co-ordinate with the synagogue itself. Throughout Jewish history, the attempt to reproduce in the home the order and mood of the place of worship has never been relaxed. The inter-relationship of sanctuary and home has been responsible for at least two important results. On the one hand, the Jew did not remain a stranger to the ceremonial and purpose of his sacred institutions. On the other hand, his home and home life were transfigured. His residence became a habitation of God. The sacred and secure feeling of the home was achieved by a religious discipline whose purpose was constantly to

prompt a remembrance of the past and the heritage of the fathers. Thus the Jewish home became a sanctuary in miniature, its table an altar, its furnishings instruments for sanctity. In a sense, every detail of family life is an expression of the pattern of sanctity. Jewish homes, for example, are generally expected to contain basic religious texts such as the Old Testament, Commentary of Rashi, and perhaps the abbreviated Talmud. It is not uncommon to find in a Jewish home an excellent library with volumes handed down from father to son. Similarly, the various family festival celebrations, with their rituals, constitute activities that bring the Divine message very close to the Jew. It was inconceivable to assume that the Jewish child would forget the beauty of the Seder at Passover, or the kindling of the light during Hannukah, or the sight of his mother kindling the Sabbath lamps.¹⁵

We have discussed briefly some aspects of Jewish family life. There is a vast amount of material on the subject which has not been included here. I have attempted to show very briefly the position of the Jewish family in the past.

Today we have lost sight of these principles, and we lack the insight to adopt new ones.

It is not altogether the fault of our generation. We were thrown into the situation partly because of the external pressure of the society around us, and partly because of internal problems for which we are directly responsible. Judaism, we have said, is a totally system of legislation. By such an act we ourselves are one of the products of the law, or question its validity, the authority of the entire system is

shall D.: The Problems Confronting the Jewish Family Today.

After discussing previously the concept of the Jewish family, from the traditional standpoint, one might ask what has happened to the Jewish family today. What has happened to the warmth and sanctity of the Jewish home? What has become of the integrity of the Jewish family? In short, where do we stand today?

One could ask many questions, but who among us could give the answers, or provide us with remedies for our desperate situation? We live in an age in which the machine plays a dominant role and influences our lives. The computers have all but taken over our reason and ability to think our own thoughts. We live in an age in which the old system of values has vanished like the snow of yesterday. The Jewish community opened its gates to new values and gave freedom to its members for self-expression and self-determination.

Our people fought for freedom all their lives! Now we have it, but unfortunately we do not know what to do with it. Throughout our history, we had a series of principles for which our ancestors gave their lives. Today we have lost sight of these principles, and we lack the insight to adopt new ones.

It is not altogether the fault of our generation. We were thrown into the situation partly because of the external pressure of the society around us, and partly because of internal problems for which we are directly responsible. Judaism, we have said, is a unitary system of legislation. As soon as we transgress one of the precepts of the law, or question its validity, the authority of the entire system is

challenged. As an elder Jew put it:

"If they (the children of Israel) have to work on the Sabbath, they also do other things they should not do."

Warner and Srole, in their book, The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups, presented the following story:

"When I first came over from the old country when I was eighteen, I was as religious as anybody. I did not do anything I was not supposed to do. But I had to get a job, and the only job I could get, I had to work on Saturday. So what could I do? The first Saturday I worked, I felt as if I was committing an awful sin. The next Saturday was bad, but not as bad as the first. So little by little, I got used to it. And now it doesn't bother me in the least. But that was only the beginning. Soon, because some boys made fun of me, I ate my first ham sandwich. The first bite I tried to swallow, but it would not go down. I tried again, and still it would not go down. The third time it slid down. I was sick all day. But I got over it, and now I like it. So I did not go to Shul on Saturday, I ate trehf, and I thought to myself: 'What is the use? If I have sinned so much, there is no use being a hypocrite.' So I gave up my ideas about trying to be orthodox, and my ideas about sin. I did what was necessary and what I wanted to do, and that was that. I may be a poor Jew, but say, I am honest. Still I am a Jew. I go to Shul on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur and go to the Passover Seder at my in-laws. This is not much, but say, it is better than nothing."¹⁶

It seems that many thousands of Jews have gone through the same process.

Many people among us grow up in a religious home, and in spite of the strictness of our fathers we have chosen our own way. Many of the changes that we took upon ourselves are undoubtedly inevitable. We challenged the entire system as a result of our society and its culture and the demands of the modern way of life. The question was, where do we stand? How far do we go? We responded to the inevitable needs of the modern society and now we are facing the inevitable assimilation.

We no longer have the same joy of family life based on our tradition. We lost the authority and respect for our educator's, as well as our father's authority. Many homes in our midst have become empty of any Jewish substance. Our sacred orientation toward religious and family life has been demolished and even our enthusiasm for learning has ceased to exist. The youth in our generation no longer take upon themselves to follow the norm presented by their families, teachers or religious leaders.¹⁷

We as Reform Jews realized the need for change long ago. We did challenge the authority of the past. At the same time none among the founders of the Reform movement meant to bring about a total annihilation of our Jewish religious system. Every society in any given period has different needs, but each society produced its own tools, its leaders to employ those tools, and its own philosophy to cope with their needs. Our problem, however, is not the revision which has been made by the founders of the movement, nor the modern approach held by many of our rabbis and religious leaders; the problem is among the followers who have lost interest and spiritual depth. The Jewish family was always tied in with religion. Religion by its essence must be dynamic, with a ceaseless desire for the betterment of human life, for a search to improve man's life and consequently to bring peace to every home and every family.¹⁸

We discussed the relationship between Jewish family life and religion in order to show the interdependence between the two. We cannot talk about the integrity of the Jewish family without the guidance of religion. Similarly, we cannot discuss religion without paying full

attention to the family unit. Most theologians will agree that religion meant unity and the ultimate goal of such unity is to give shelter to its members. The foundations of this unity start at home. If there is a lack of unity at home within the family, the unity cannot be achieved elsewhere, not even in the synagogue.¹⁹ The basic unit from which unity flows is the family. Juvenile Court workers indicate very clearly that many of their delinquent children get into trouble because they come from homes that have no unity, no real love, no true family life, even where they have not been broken by divorce. The pace of modern living, the necessity which sends mothers to work outside the home, our highly organized social life, allows less and less leisure hours for family living; family life with no roots in religion has undermined many a home.²⁰ Unfortunately, many among us today keep neglecting the basic concept, that home and family life has grown out of the long experience of the race. We as Jews have to realize this fact more than any other religion, since we were told and taught from generation to generation the purity of the family, the necessity to love and understand; and to share with our families without selfishness. We were exposed to the responsibilities concerning family life and the relationship between the members of the family. Perhaps we no longer realize that family life came out of the needs of men and women for each other, out of cooperation in life and work, without which human beings cannot survive.

On the one hand, we need social action to improve the life of the individual and the family. On the other hand, we need to improve the social system. It can be done through the spiritual development and the use of

E. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

Up to this point, I have outlined briefly the situation of the Jewish family. We indicated its position in the past, and dealt with the present situation. I must indicate, however, that in human history, as well as in family life, there is always a conflict between the past and the present. We long nostalgically for the past, and at the same time we adopt new ideas and new ways of life which are alien to our basic beliefs. The question is, where do we stand, and what will be our principles for the future?

It is a hard task to tell people what to do and how to live their lives. In the past this problem did not exist. The Jewish community maintained a tremendous power and authority, which ultimately affected and influenced the Jewish family life. We no longer have the same structure of the community in which every member was counted and known; that closeness left us as soon as we went out to the new world. We denied the past as being meaningless, but we did not provide a new system.

The sociologists who have studied the subject fall into two groups with regard to the solution of the problem of family life: those who look toward the improvement of family life within the present social framework, and those who advocate a change in the basic framework, particularly in the domestic institutions of courtship, marriage, and the family.²¹ On the one hand, we need social action to improve family life without radically changing or challenging the basic social system. It can be done through pre-marital counseling and the use of

tests of maturity; as well as with programs of education for marriage and parenthood. On the other hand, the improvements should be made from within. There will be no use for marriage counseling or maturity tests if the people involved do not live up to the high ideals and principles required by the marriage counselor or the religious leader. In the final analysis, the home plays a vital part by providing the individual with the basic needs and instructions for life.

"The ideals one forms of love and marriage represent a projection of the highest experiences which he knows and express the values which he puts upon the home and family life." ²²

This high value of family life requires among other things, solidarity and cohesiveness. Two major facts are determinants of family solidarity: the degree of attachments between family members; and the existence of a general sense of group loyalty. As Rabbi Brav states it: "When the former is discovered to be 'high' and the latter 'strong,' the strength of the solidarity is beyond dispute." ²³

Questions for Group Discussion

- 1) What constitutes a family in general and the Jewish family in particular?
- 2) What are the problems confronting the Jewish family today?
- 3) What are the differences and similarities between the Jewish family today and that of the past?
- 4) In what way do you think we can improve Jewish family life?

²² Weisbar, Willers, and Hill, *Brachon, The Family*, p. 500.

²³ Lander, *General J., Our Moral and Religious Education*, p. 21-24.

²⁴ Brav, *Walter Stanley, Jewish Tradition and Community*, p. 26.

Notes

Chapter I

1. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 326.
2. Goldstein, Sidney E., The Meaning of Marriage and Foundations of the Family, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 49.
5. Ibid., p. 85.
6. בער, יצחק, ישראל בעמים, עמ' 11.
7. בער, יצחק, ישראל בעמים, עמ' 12.
8. בער, יצחק, ישראל בעמים, עמ' 20.
9. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 24.
10. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 24.
11. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 33.
12. ברונשטיין, מנחם, התנ"ך במיונו הפסיכולוגי, עמ' 61.
13. Abrahams, Israel, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages, p. 39.
14. Ibid., p. 82.
15. Landis, Benson Y., Our Moral and Religious Resources, p. 46.
16. Warner, Lloyd, and Srole, L., The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups, p. 204 and after.
17. חמיאל, חיים, לדרכי החינוך הדתי, עמ' 19.
18. חמיאל, חיים, לדרכי החינוך הדתי, עמ' 79.
19. Landis, Benson Y., Our Moral and Religious Resources, p. 13.
20. Ibid., p. 13.
21. Waller, Willard, and Hill, Reuben, The Family, p. 566.
22. Landis, Benson Y., Our Moral and Religious Resources, p. 43-44.
23. Brav, Rabbi Stanley, Jewish Family Solidarity, p. 66.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE

A. Definition

The term marriage means many things to many people. Some consider marriage a means to an end, such as those who marry for money; some consider marriage a solution for an immediate problem; others marry with the intention of breaking the marriage up after a while, and so forth.

In Judaism, when we speak of marriage, we definitely do not refer to one of the above examples. By marriage, we mean that two persons of different sex undertake, for the time of their marriage: 1) to live together (common life); 2) to beget children and to bring them up; 3) to care for each other's welfare.¹ In Jewish codes the concept or definition of marriage is much more explicit. It is as follows: "When two people get married with the intention of being married for one day only, they are married for the whole of their lives."²

The underlying principle in Judaism with regard to marriage is the commitment. When two people decide to marry each other, they take upon themselves the commitment to live together for the rest of their lives. The interpretation given to this commitment by the rabbis is based on this: "... And that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes after which ye use to go astray." (Num. 15:39). The interpretation of this verse found in the Mishna was connected with the commitments of marriage. A married man should not go astray from his wife by seeking another woman.³

B. Historical Background

1. Biblical Data

In ancient times the concept of kidnapping was a common custom.

When a group of men sought marriage, they attacked the neighboring tribe and kidnapped their women.⁴ This custom was practiced even among our people. When the members of the tribe of Benjamin lost their women, "The children of Israel had sworn saying: 'Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.'" (Jud. 21:18) The tribe of Benjamin could not be content with the situation; therefore a decision was made by the tribe to obtain women for them by means of kidnapping:

And they commanded the children of Benjamin saying: 'Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.'" (Jud. 21:20-21)

Another custom practiced with regard to marriage is known as an agreement: when two people meet each other in the market-place and they both express their wish to marry each other. In a case like this it was the duty of the man to bring his chosen wife to his home and have intercourse with her.⁵

The marriage between Isaac and Rebekah indicates that this custom was practiced among our people: "And Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife." (Gen. 24:67)

In addition to this custom, the Bible tells us of yet another way to obtain a wife:

As we mentioned previously, polygamy was practiced only by a very few wealthy people, or men in power. But even these few instances were

When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God delivereth them into thy hands, and thou carriest them away captive, and seest among the captives a woman of goodly form, and thou hast a desire unto her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife; then thou shalt bring her home to thy house..." (Deut. 21:10-11)

2) Polygamy and Monogamy

There seems to have been no limit to the number of wives or concubines a man might have, except with regard to his ability to maintain them and their children. In reality, only men of wealth, chiefs or kings, had many wives. Gideon the Judge is known as a man who had many: "And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten; for he had many wives." (Jud. 9:30). King David's case is similar: "And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron..." (II Sam. 5:13). Solomon followed his father's path: "King Solomon loved many foreign women..." (I Kings 10:1).

The patriarchs, on the other hand, did not have many wives. Isaac appears to have been content with one. The custom of later times was designed to limit the practice and to change the custom of polygamy even among kings: "...Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away..." (Deut. 17:17).

The prophets condemned and discouraged polygamy. When they represent God's relations to Israel the configuration of marriage becomes a jealous husband choosing and betrothing to himself one beloved wife. (Hos. Chapter 11; Isa. 1:1)

As we mentioned previously, polygamy was practiced only by a very few wealthy people, or men in power. But even these few instances were

condemned. Monogamy, however, was exalted in the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiasties. The following quotations from these books show clearly that monogamy was the favored method of family living:

Say unto wisdom: 'Thou art my sister', and heed her; call understanding thy kinswoman; that they may keep thee from the stranger woman, from the alien woman that maketh smooth her words. (Prov. 7:4-5)

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers; but a prudent wife is from the Lord. (Prov. 19:14)

A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. (Prov. 31:10)

Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity. (Eccl. 9:9)

The military board which was present at the court that day is permitted to bring a copy of the law if the money is needed for the purpose of raising armies. (English 714)

Marriage was recommended by the rabbis for a variety of reasons. For our purpose we shall mention two main ones: 1) to settle the daughters of Israel; 2) to raise Jewish children in the world. With regard to the first reason, the verse "Thou shalt not make for thee a harlot" (Lev. 19:29) was applied by the rabbis to a man who delayed in arranging a marriage for his daughter with the result that she was of a suitable age. She was considered to have arrived at that stage, and

C. The Concept of Marriage in Jewish Tradition

Marriage in Jewish tradition is a religious command; the first command addressed by God to man.⁶ In the story of creation, after God had created man, He commanded him as follows: "And God blessed them; and God said unto them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,...'" (Gen. 1:28)

The Talmud stresses this view: "The unmarried lives without joy, without blessing, and without good." (Jeb. 62b). The passages in the Talmud concerning marriage signify that our rabbis approached the subject not only from a religious point of view, but also from a psychological standpoint. We of the twentieth century claim that man needs a home to fulfill his sense of belonging. For our rabbis, a wife meant a home; hence the saying: "A man's home is his wife." (Jona. I.1). And Rabbi Josi said: "Never have I called my wife by that word, but always 'my home!'" (Shab. 11.8b).

The attitude toward marriage was positive even to the extent that man is permitted to sell a Scroll of the Law if the money is needed for the purpose of getting married. (Megillah 27a)

Marriage was recommended by the rabbis for a variety of reasons. For our purposes we shall indicate two basic ones: 1) to secure the daughters of Israel; 2) to raise learned children in the Torah. With regard to the first reason, the verse "Profane not thy daughter to make her a harlot," (Lev. 19:29) was applied by the rabbis to a man who delayed in arranging a marriage for his daughter even though she was of a suitable age.⁷ She was considered to have arrived at this stage, and

ceased to be a minor, when she was twelve and a half years old. Therefore, in order to prevent the daughters of Israel from leaving, the rabbis made it a duty on the part of the father to have her married at the earliest time.

The rabbis were also concerned with the idea that the father should not give his daughter in marriage to an old man, nor should he betroth his young son to an old woman.⁸

As to the second point, the purpose of marriage is for the sake of the Torah. The rabbis regarded the aim of marriage as the rearing of a family, and the ideal was the training of sons to be learned in the Torah. Thus the belief in hereditary led to a strong desire to marry the daughter of a scholar. It was regarded as fulfilling a great commandment for he who married the daughter of a learned man, if he were to die or be exiled, he could be confident that his children would be learned in the Torah. (Pes. 49a)

A man, according to the Talmud, should hesitate in selecting a wife. A man is forbidden to take a woman to wife without having first seen her. (Kid. 41a).

This promise made by the couple prior to the wedding ceremony is the promise they look upon themselves for a lifetime. The promise is to build a family and to raise children and maintain them in accordance with the Jewish law handed down from generation to generation. This is what the rabbis meant by *Shiduch*.

Prior to building a family and raising children, the couple must know each other's position, they must be aware of each other's role in marriage. There are duties in the relationship between husband and wife.

D. The Marriage Ceremony

Not only are marriages made in heaven, but they are destined even before birth. Forty days before the formation of a child Bath Kol announces this person is to marry so and so's daughter..." (Sot. 2a)

The term "Kiddushim" (sanctification) by which the act of marriage is designated in rabbinical writings, points to the reverence in which this ceremony was held. "He (the husband) prohibits her to the whole world as a sacred object," (Kiddushim 2b) is the explanation given to that term.

The marriage ceremony was the symbol frequently employed by the prophets to designate the relation between God and Israel. (Jer. 3:1-20).

Jewish law does not recognize any marriage which has been performed only according to the civil law.⁹ However, Jewish law will recognize the validity of a civil marriage provided that the couple will arrange for a religious ceremony to follow it. Similarly, the civil marriage will be recognized if, prior to it, a religious engagement ceremony has taken place.

According to other Jewish sources the engagement is only a promise of marriage (Shiduchim). This promise made by the couple prior to the wedding ceremony is the commitment they took upon themselves for a lifetime. The promise is to build a family and to raise children and educate them in accordance with the Jewish law handed down from generation to generation. This is what the rabbis meant by Shiduchim.

Prior to building a family and raising children, the couple must know each other's position, they must be aware of each other's role in marriage. These are duties in the relationship between husband and wife.

E. The Nature of the Relationship Between Husband and Wife in Jewish Tradition.

We cannot deny the fact that, in a few instances, the Jewish law puts the woman in an inferior position to that of the man, although in principle the Torah declares that the two should be equal. As to the laws concerning reward and punishment, the Jewish law equalized man and woman and neither was given any privileges over the other.¹⁰ In general, the emphasis is upon a woman being equal to her husband, rather than being inferior to him.

In marriage the woman obtains the status of her husband. The rabbis added to this: Man's wife should be considered by him like his body. Thus the wife of a scholar should be treated like a scholar. Furthermore, a woman's equality to her husband regarding their relationship with their children was stressed many times in the Bible: "Honor thy father and thy mother." (Ex. 20:12); "And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death." (Ex. 21:15)

There are scholars who hold the position that in no way is the woman looked upon as inferior to man. Her sphere of activity is different from man's, but of no less significance. The woman is assigned credit if she uses her influence so that her husband and sons apply themselves to the acquisition of the more advanced knowledge of Torah from which her fully occupied life precludes her.¹¹ It is usually the woman's place to remain at home, and for man to go into the market-place and learn intelligence from other men. (Gen. R. 18:1).

The rabbis were very much concerned with man's behavior in his relationship to his wife. They stated their concern in the following

way: "Honor and respect your wives so that you will get rich.... He who loves his wife like himself will dwell in peace in his hours...."¹²

The entire system of laws of our people is rooted in a strong desire to protect the woman. The Jewish "halachah" is very much involved in the protection of the woman. Even when the woman has property of her own and has a secure income, she still has the right, according to the Jewish law, to demand support from her husband, even if the husband is very poor.¹³

This duty on the part of the husband seems to contradict the Biblical notion regarding the woman's position. (Ex. 20:17). The wife was regarded as the property of her husband. It seems clear that rabbis were aware of the woman's position. They knew that the woman was considered the property of her husband, and that her position was one of subordination to him. At the same time they were concerned with the happiness of marriage and the joy of family life. Therefore, they made it a duty on the part of the husband to love, honor, support and respect his wife. They believed that out of this mutualness and equality between the two, love and understanding would emerge.¹⁴ Thus, they attempted to limit the power of the husband over his wife. The rabbis admitted that the wife belonged to her husband and was in his power, but nevertheless she was a particular kind of "property," and received much more privileged treatment than the clear-cut notion of the law denoted. In the Talmud the rabbis stated: Man marries a woman, does not buy a woman. (Gitin 85b)

Later, in the Talmud, as a result of more developed ideas on

marriage, it is made clear that the husband received only certain rights over his wife.¹⁵

The attempts made by many scholars to prove the equality of the wife were based on Biblical sources. The Bible gives us many examples which prove that women were active and not passive, equal and not inferior. We find women who were prophetesses: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand..." (Jud. 4:4) and in II Kings we read: "So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Assiah went unto Huldah the prophetess..." (II Kings 22:14). We also find in the Bible women who played an important part in politics: "Deborah...the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time." (Jud. 4:4), and women who were honored in Israel: "And I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam." (Micah 6:4). There were women renowned for their wisdom: "Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail; and the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful form." (I Sam. 25:3) Again in II Samuel: "And Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a wise woman..." (II Sam. 14:2).

The conclusion can be drawn that the husband did not treat his wife as a chattel and dispose of her as a sheep.¹⁶ The husband's duty in almost every source which deals with the subject is to provide legal protection for his wife, to give her sufficient food, and to care for her constantly. The woman's duty, in return, according to the rabbis, is that she be a helpmeet for her husband, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. (Gen. 2:3).

The relationship between husband and wife flows out of their equal position. Although the Jewish law permits the husband to make decisions in every family matter, the same law advises the husband to consult his wife. (Sholchan Aruch Eben Ha-ezer 25:2).¹⁷

In the Biblical narrative concerning Abraham and Sarah, we can find a good example with regard to the relationship between husband and wife: "And God said unto Abraham... in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice." (Gen. 21:12).

In Sefer Ha-Aggadah we find a multitude of stories and Midrashin drawn from the Jewish past, which show clearly the ideal picture of the relationship. According to Rabbi Halboh, man must be very cautious in his relations with his wife, otherwise there will be no blessing in the home.¹⁸

Another example from the rabbis reads as follows: "A man dies only for his wife and a woman dies only for her husband." (Sanhedrin 22), and "When the husband goes on his way to work, the woman desires her husband to come back." (Yeb. 62).

I wish to conclude with the well-known Midrash: "A man cannot live without a woman, nor can a woman live without a man and they both cannot live together without the Shechimah. (Gen. R. 8:22). Thus, in order to have a good relationship between husband and wife, there is a need for the Divine Spirit.

F. The Problems Facing Marriage Today

There is no better way to illustrate the present situation with regard to marriage and family life than to quote the noted author, Margaret Mead:

How are man and woman to think about their maleness and their femaleness in this twentieth century, in which so many of our old ideas must be made new?

Have we overdomesticated men, denied their natural adventurousness, tied them down to machines that are after all only glorified spindles and looms, mortars and pestles and digging sticks, all of which were once woman's work?

Have we cut women off from their natural closeness to their children, taught them to look for a job instead of the touch of a child's hand, for status in a competitive world rather than a unique place by a glowing hearth?

In educating women like men, have we done something disastrous to both men and women alike, or have we only taken one further step in the recurrent task of building more and better on our original human nature? These are questions which are being asked in a hundred different ways in contemporary America.¹⁹

These are the questions which each and every one of us should be concerned about, if our future and the future of our children means anything to us. In many cases the holiness of marriage has become profane; the relationship between husband and wife has become confused and ultimately affects the children. We are preoccupied with our jobs and our membership in various social clubs and have no time for our families. We claim that we have to meet the demands of our modern society and at the same time we neglect the demands of our homes, our families and our children. It is true that we do not possess the power nor the right to change society and consequently we constantly struggle to cope with

society and its demands. The question is: do we really have to do it at the expense of our own families? As we previously stated, our institution of marriage and family life are passing through a crisis.²⁰ In the words of Mrs. Mead:

Today young people are still encouraged to marry as if they could count on marriage's being for life, and at the same time they are absorbing a knowledge of the great frequency of divorce and the ethics that may later enjoin divorce upon them.²¹

Marriage in our time is not taken seriously, partly because divorce has become a common thing, and partly because the attitude towards family life and happy marriages has become a secondary thing. If we are at all concerned about our identity as Jews and our Jewish heritage, we must do something about this terrifying situation and give it our full attention.

G. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

The task of the leader or the counselor in our time has become harder than ever before, and yet the need for guidance has grown stronger in our restless society. Nowadays people do not like to be told. In spite of the many obstacles in today's world, it is still the duty of the religious leaders to make people aware of the situation and attempt to do something for the betterment of society and the Jewish community.

Most marriage counselors indicate that misbehavior in marriage and family life has its roots in the home. As a result of this observation we must confront the problem before it starts growing too rapidly. Therefore, our first concern must be with the institution of marriage.

An early recognition of the importance of marriage and family life might solve many problems which develop later in the marriage. We need to establish a program of religious observance in the home. This program must be a selective and a creative process. It should be selective because it is unlikely that any two young people today have had identical Jewish religious experiences which they can adopt in their own home without some deliberation. Rabbi Folkman sees four criteria which will determine our decisions with regard to a family religious pattern. 1) Previous experience; 2) Balance, sanctifying both the joys and sorrows of life. It should become the constant expression of a love that sustains and soothes in sorrow even as it enriches the joy of living; 3) Appropriateness; 4) Effectiveness - effective observances in the expression and transmission of the values and ideals of Judaism.²²

In addition to these our program must include the Jewish attitude to sex and marriage - it must be presented as a healthy, natural and Divine relationship. Marriage itself has been always a Divine Command: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24). We must always remember that marriage is an expression of mutual love, not mere gratification of animal instincts. Perhaps we should practice one thing which our fathers did not, and that is the open discussion of sex. Only through a deep understanding of sexual relations can marriage be maintained as a Divine Command.²³

I will conclude this chapter with the suggestions given by Rabbi Sidney E. Goldstein, who recommends four ways to prepare for marriage: 1) Learn to keep house (home economics); 2) Learn what every man and woman should know about the structure and functions of the human body; 3) A study of attitudes, relationship and standards that constitute an essential meaning of marriage; 4) Study the factors that determine success or failure in marriage and family life.²⁴

He also indicates that men and women may find it difficult to maintain the integrity of their marriage throughout the years. But it will be less difficult if they keep in mind the fact that self-control counts for much in the development of character and that the desecration of marriage means not only unhappiness within the home but is a danger to every circle of activity without. Whatever happens in marriage has a tremendous influence on our conduct in every other phase of life.

Questions for Discussion

1. What constitutes the Jewish marriage?
2. How and what can we learn from the Jewish past?
3. How would you define marriage today?
 - a) Is it a holy institution?
 - b) Is it liberal? or secular?
 - c) Do you think that marriage and family life should be based on the Divine Command?
4. After you have defined marriage, discuss the relationship between husband and wife.
 - a) Do you think it should be based solely on economic factors?
 - b) Do you think it should be based, as in tradition, upon love and understanding?
 - c) Are there other factors of importance which should be considered?

12. Neufeld, E., Jewish Marriage, p. 21-22.

13. Ibid., p. 23.

14. Ibid., p. 24.

15. Ibid., p. 25.

16. Ibid., p. 26.

17. Neufeld, Margaret, Life and Family, p. 3.

18. Goldstein, Sidney M., The Meaning of Marriage and Family, p. 1.

19. Neufeld, Margaret, Life and Family, p. 25.

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3. ביאליק, חיים, נ., רבינצקי, ספר האגדה, חלק ה' עם' תצא'
4. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עם' 76
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11. Cohen, Rev. Dr. A., Everyman's Talmud, p. 160.
12. דייקן, פלטיאל, המצב המשפטי של האשה בישראל, עם' 14
13. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עם' 33
14. Neufeld, E., Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws, p. 232-233.
15. Ibid., p. 233.
16. Ibid., p. 236.
17. שפטלוביץ, אלחנן, רב, ד"ר., משפט המשפחה והירושה היהודי ע' 40
18. ביאליק, חיים, נ., רבינצקי, ספר האגדה, חלק ה' עם' תפ'
19. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 3.
20. Goldstein, Sidney E., The Meaning of Marriage and Foundations of the Family, p. 1.
21. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 355.

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Chapter II

22. Folkman, Rabbi Jerome D., Design for Living, p. 4-9.
23. Max, Rabbi Morris, The Jewish Concept of Marriage, p. 8-9
24. Goldstein, Sidney E., The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, p. 15.

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...and even to unity and of their faith? The
...believe that it comes
...of an attraction of one person to another type, from
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CHAPTER III

INTERMARRIAGE

A. A General View

Intermarriage is not new to our generation; the custom is as old as the world. The problem is inherent in human nature, like any other weakness which all human beings share. But the issue has never been neglected, and religious leaders in the past have strongly condemned intermarriage.

What constitutes intermarriage, or what are the factors which stimulate many young men and women to marry out of their faith? The reasons are numerous and varied. Some people believe that it comes about as a result of an attraction of one person to another type, from a different culture. Thus, they see intermarriage as a possibly harmonious relationship between two opposites. Sometimes the contrast between people does lead to a tendency to believe that intermarriage will help them to fulfill each other's needs.

Theoretically this system seems to work out at the beginning and both parties enjoy each other's presence. Some even succeed in living happy lives without any interference. Nonetheless, the majority of such marriages end with broken homes, unhappy children and constant guilt feelings among parents and children. Even those who seemed to be happy at the beginning, bring about the suffering of their children in later years. The harmony which the couple sought to bring about could not carry over to their children.

The problem of intermarriage for the Jews is complicated and difficult.¹ Judaism means much more than a religion. It is a way of

life, a culture and a history of a people." It is the totality of every Jewish experience, the heritage passed down from father to son. The very term Jew elicits a response which constitutes the very structure of our being. When a Jew marries out of his faith, he marries at the same time a guilt feeling which follows him all of his life.

We mentioned previously that we are a big family, and every member counts. When one of our fellow Jews goes astray it is painful for "Klall Israel."

When Jacob was forty years old, he took to wife Leah the daughter of Laban the Syrian, and Rachel his daughter of Beniamin. Leah was a woman of spirit and Isaac and he Deborah. Jacob longed to fulfill his duty to his son and married a wife for his son Isaac as yoked his servants: "And Jacob said unto his servants, the elder of his house, that ruled over him of old: I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. For thou shalt go with my country and thy kindred, and take a wife for my son..." (Gen. 24: 1-5). This event took place even before the giving of the Torah, before the Jewish religion was given. The emphasis here was not on religion but rather on the kind of people among whom Abraham dwelt. When he called upon his servant he stressed the point: "go to my country and kindred..." and could make a case out of this particular event. If the religious factor was not the reason, then why did Abraham insist on preventing his son from marrying a Canaanite girl? During that time the Torah had not been given, there was no command against interfaith marriages, and yet Abraham desired to maintain his kinship with his people,

B. Intermarriage in the Bible

Intermarriage occurred in the Bible many times. It was practiced by many outstanding figures: Jewish kings, spiritual leaders, and even the most remarkable figure in all of Jewish history, Moses. We cannot attempt to ignore these facts, the only thing we can do is to show how they were condemned in the Bible and how they affected the people who were involved.

"And when Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite and they were a bitterness of spirit unto Isaac and to Rebekah." (Gen. 26:34-35). When Abraham wanted to fulfill his duty to his son and arrange a marriage for his son Isaac he called his servant: "And Abraham said unto his servant, the elder of his house, that ruled over all he had: '... I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my country and my kindred, and take a wife for my son...' (Gen. 24: 2-5). This event took place even before the giving of the Torah, before the Jewish religion came about. The emphasis here was not on religion but rather on the kind of people among whom Abraham dwelt. When he called upon his servant he stressed the point: 'go to my country and kindred.' One could make a case out of this particular event. If the religious factor was not the reason, then why did Abraham insist on preventing his son from marrying a Canaanite girl? During that time the Torah had not been given, there was no command against interfaith marriages, and yet Abraham desired to maintain his kinship with his people,

who shared his values, his world view. This was very important to him.

When Jacob grew up, Rebekah was already aware of the fact that intermarriage had almost become a habit in her family. She had already suffered a great deal after Esau, her son, had married a Canaanite girl: "And Rebekah said to Isaac: I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" (Gen. 27:46)

When Moses married a Cushite woman he was condemned by Aaron and Miriam: "And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married." (Num. 12:1) Even a great man such as Moses was not forgiven by his own relatives.

The laws regarding intermarriage were clear and precise: "Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go astray after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and they call thee, and thou eat of their sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons..." (Ex. 34:15-16). There was a constant fear of inter-faith marriages, and the quite possibly unhappy results, among the law givers in the Bible:

And the children of Israel, dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.
(Judg. 3:5-6)

This was the result: "Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He gave them over into the hand of Sushanrishathaim king of Aram-naharaim..." (Judg. 3:8)

The Jewish people cannot survive as a nation or as a distinctive group, unless intermarriage ceases to be practiced:

Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations... and make marriages with them... know you for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight ... until ye perish from off this good land.
(Joshua 23:12-13)

Some Jewish leaders opposed intermarriage because they wanted to keep the purity of the 'nation,' others opposed it because it meant mingling with different cultures, but Ezra and Nehemiah opposed it on religious grounds:

... For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the land.
(Ezra 9:2)

This accusation by Ezra occurred when the exiles returned from Babylonia to their land. Ezra, the religious leader at the time, considered these intermarriages as transgressions against God, the Torah, and as a violation of the concept of the Holy People.

The prophet Malachi used the same approach: "...For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loveth, and hath married the daughter of a strange God." (Malachi 2:11)

Nehemiah was very firm, he even cursed publically those who married out of their faith:

In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Amon, and of Moah... And I cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked of their hair... and made them swear by God: 'Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons...'
Nehemiah 13:23-24

The religious reformation of Ezra and Nehemiah prior to the rebuilding of the Second Temple almost did away with intermarriages. After the establishment of the Jewish state, there were hardly any cases of intermarriage. During the period of the Second Temple, the children of Israel were more of an exclusive group. "Ruling over their own land kept them from the tendency to intermingle with other religions."²

In the Talmud there are several indications of the fact that the zealots kept guard and issued the death penalty to those who had relations with strangers: "He who has relations with Aramaic women was stoned by the zealots." (San. Ch. 9)

It is interesting to note that the percentage of intermarriages in America is about 10%. This is the view of non-American writers who have expressed their opinions on the subject. Unfortunately, the view seems to be going from bad to worse. The situation is going from bad to worse. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has declared that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American rabbis.³

How can we prevent this? The frequency of interfaith marriages depends mainly on the fact that the parents do not prepare their children for religious affiliation. The parents should make the decision for the child, and make it before the child has reached the age of five. The attitude of many parents to wait until their children are old enough, and then give them formal religious affiliation, increases the number of interfaith marriages.⁴

Topic of C. Intermarriage in Modern Times Problem. Religious

affairs During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the establishment of freedom and liberalism, the Jews in Europe and America began a new cycle of assimilation. Conversion of Jews to other religions and intermarriages became more dangerous than ever before.³ According to statistics made in Switzerland in 1920, it was found that in every thousand marriages among the Jews, a hundred and forty-five were interfaith marriages.⁴

In the history of American Jewry it is hard to find many statistics with respect to intermarriage, since the law does not require applicants for a marriage license to indicate their religious preference. Nevertheless, it seems that the percentage of intermarriages in America is very high.⁵ This is the view of non-American writers who have expressed their opinions on the subject. Unfortunately, the view seems to be valid and true. The situation is going from bad to worse. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has declared that mixed marriages "... are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American rabbinate."⁶

Jessely Linn and Schwartz believe that the frequency of interfaith marriages depends mainly on the fact that the parents do not prepare their children for authentic religious affiliation. The parents should make the decision for the child, and make it before he has reached the age of five. The attitude of many parents to wait until their children are old enough, and then give them formal religious affiliation, increases the number of interfaith marriages. While their parents are concerned in theory, they do not want their own children exposed to the problems of intermarriage.

This, of course, is only one aspect of the problem. Religious affiliation, in my opinion, will not prevent interfaith marriages. Sometimes the mere affiliation with the temple can be very shallow and lack any depth. We must treat the issue from two directions at once. First, we must prepare Jewish parents for authentic Jewish family life. If the parents do not have the right attitude and a sufficient knowledge of their religion, the children will not have anyone to follow. Second, we must revise our methods in religious schools. We must endeavour to teach our children everything they need to know. Insights and attitudes cannot be taught in school, but the approach of our teachers along with that of Jewish parents can heighten the right insight and attitudes among our Jewish children. We deal with this subject in detail in the chapter on Jewish education.

At the present time we are confronted with confusions, and these confusions of ours affect our youth. At the most we give them partial answers to their questions. In the majority of cases, parents teach their children the concept of democracy, namely, that the person should be valued for what he really is, rather than what he has. As Irene Josselyn puts it, in her book, The Adolescent and His World:

He is (the child) taught to value persons, regardless of their race, creed or economic status. This point of view is considered practical while he mingles on the playgrounds and forms childhood friendships. However, when he approaches the time for choosing his permanent social group and his permanent life mate, he is confronted with a different set of values. He is then told that it is wiser to select one's social group and choose one's mate from persons with backgrounds and beliefs similar to one's own. Many adolescents discover that while their parents accept intermarriage in theory, they do not want their own children exposed to the problems of intermarriage.

The young people, therefore, were exposed to a contradiction between what they had been taught and what the parents really expected of them. 1. ~~is~~ ~~to marry out~~

of According to the above observation, we may conclude that the issue of interfaith marriage has many phases and varied reasons. However, in the final analysis we cannot deny the fact that the parents play an outstanding role in terms of increasing or decreasing it. The charge must be directed towards the parents. This is a unique challenge which every Jewish mother or father must accept and do something about. ~~and from~~ Accepting the facts does not change the situation. The charge should also be directed toward Jewish teachers in Jewish schools, along with rabbis, and all other religious persons.

D. Questions for Group Discussion

1. As Jewish parents, will you allow your son or daughter to marry out of ~~this~~ faith? If the answer is no, how will you go about preventing it?
2. What are the Jewish ceremonies and customs observed in your home?
3. How do you teach your children to be Jewish?
4. What constitutes Jewish life?
5. In what way do you think we can learn to cope with our problems from the examples of our ancestors?

7. ibid., p. 33.

8. Jesselyn, Irene, The Adolescent and His World, p. 29.

Notes

Chapter III

1. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 162
2. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 163-4
3. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 168
4. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 1168+92
5. רופין, ד"ר., סוציאולוגיה של היהודים, עמ' 179-192
6. Linn, Louis, and Schwarz, Leo W., Psychiatry and Religious Experience, p. 138.
7. Ibid., p. 33.
8. Josselyn, Irene, The Adolescent and His World, p. 29.

CHAPTER IV

DIVORCE

A. Brief Historical Background

Divorce has its roots in the pre-historic period. Like inter-marriage, divorce is a very old custom. It was practiced by the ancient nations, prior to the giving of the Torah.

During those days, divorce was treated as a free act and it did not have any systematic rules, nor did it involve any ceremony or formality. It mainly depended upon the freedom given to the husband. Thus, the husband could marry and divorce his wife at will. The practice during those days was that whenever a man wished to marry a woman, all he had to do was bring her to his tent and declare her as his wife. This act was socially and morally accepted by the people and constituted a marriage. Divorce was achieved in the same manner. Whenever the man did not desire his wife, for one reason or another, all he had to do in order to divorce her was to send her away from his home.¹

In later periods this custom was no longer acceptable. Apparently, leaders of certain tribes detected its effect on the society around them. They realized the great danger of having a tremendous amount of parentless children and many unhappy mothers. As a result, they instituted a new rule that no marriage would be acceptable without the consent of the woman. In establishing this rule, the agreement in marriage became a dominant factor and a fundamental principle until this day.

This agreement was established for two purposes: 1) to control

marriage; 2) to control divorce. But one thing remained the same: the initiative for marriage and divorce was given only to the husband.² of the patriarchal family. The fundamental principle of its government was the absolute authority of the husband, as the head of the family. The husband divorced his wife at his own will. The way in which Hagar was divorced by Abraham signifies the practice of this authority:

And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away.
(Gen. 21:14)

This ancient right of the husband to dismiss his wife at will constituted the central concept in the entire system of Jewish divorce.³

This unlimited freedom which was given to the husband was misused by many men. They sent their wives away at will, even without an adequate reason. Consequently, the Deuteronomic code put some restrictions on the husband:

If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and lay wicked charges against her, and bring up evil names upon her, and say: I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I found not in her the tokens of virginity...
(Deut. 22:13-14)

If the wife's relatives were able to prove before the elders of the city that the charge against their daughter was a false one, then: "...they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver... and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days." (Deut. 22:17)

Another Deuteronomic law reads as follows:

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, that is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man

B. Divorce in Biblical and Talmudic Times

The origin of the Jewish divorce is found in the constitution of the patriarchal family. The fundamental principle of its government was the absolute authority of the husband, as the head of the family. The husband divorced his wife at his own will. The way in which Hagar was divorced by Abraham signifies the practice of this authority:

And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away.

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If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and lay wanton charges against her, and bring up evil names upon her, and say: I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I found not in her the tokens of virginity... (Deut. 22:13-14)

If the wife's relatives were able to prove before the elders of the city that the charge against their daughter was a false one, then: "...they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver... and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days." (Deut. 22:19)

Another Deuteronomic law reads as follows:

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, that is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man

that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days. (Deut. 22:28-29)

Sometimes the Biblical law with regard to divorce is ambiguous:

When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it cometh to pass, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house. (Deut. 24:1)

This particular law does not specify precisely the meaning of 'unseemly thing.' The husband, therefore, could divorce his wife on the ground that he found in her any 'unseemly thing.'

This freedom was challenged by the School of Shammai.⁴ They interpreted the text of Deuteronomy 24:1 in such a manner that the husband could not divorce his wife except for a legitimate cause, and that the reason must be sexual immorality. (Talmud Jerushalmi, Sotah, 1, 16b). The School of Hillel, on the other hand, indicates that the husband does not need to present such a reason. (Gittin 1:b). This dispute between the Schools of Shammai and Hillel took place in the first century of the present era. Beth Shammai explained the term 'unseemly' to mean, "A man may not divorce his wife unless he discovers her to be unfaithful to him." The School of Hillel, on the other hand, understood the phrase in the sense of "anything unseemly" and declared: "He may divorce her even if she spoil his cooking." Rabbi Akiba agreed, "He may divorce her even if he found another woman more beautiful than she." (Gittin 9:11b)⁵ The more lenient opinion of the School of Hillel prevailed, and was adopted as law.

One point should be made clear. When the rabbis of both schools discussed the reasons and the procedures concerning divorce, they were not at all happy with the idea of divorce.

Whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears on her behalf; as it is said, 'And this again ye do; ye cover the altar of the Lord with tears... because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously.' (Gittin 90:b and Mal. 11:13)

The rabbis of the Talmud were very much concerned with the rights of the woman. They realized her position as being inferior to that of men. They claimed that the woman should also have the right to ask for a divorce.

The following are the circumstances under which a woman has the right to claim a divorce: 1) Refusal to consummate the marriage. (Keth. 8:5); 2) the husband's impotence; (Ned. 11:2); 3) Inability or unwillingness to support her properly (Keth 77:2).

In conclusion, we should indicate that the rabbis of the Talmudic time directed all their effort toward establishing a system of law by which the Jewish woman's rights would not be denied. Most of the laws dealing with divorce which were issued by the rabbis show that they were not against the woman's rights at all. However, they did attempt to make the divorce procedure difficult. The matter always required the assistance of one learned in the law. (Kid. 6:2).

Thus, the rabbinic practice was to prevent divorce as long as possible, unless sufficient reasons appeared. They refused to issue a divorce without good reasons. The idea was to raise the standard of Jewish marital relationship to a lofty plane.⁶

C. Divorce in Modern Times

The old notion that marriage is meant to be for a lifetime still exists among most people today. This is undoubtedly the ideal concept for all time and all people. But in reality this ideal notion does not hold true. Young people still marry with the hope that their marriage will last through life, with the knowledge that, if divorce comes about, they will not hesitate too much about it. Unfortunately, hopes and desires do not always correspond with reality. Our young people today are fully aware of the great frequency of divorce, and know that a divorce may free them at will and that they can have it at any time. With this idea in mind, many of our youngsters rush into marriage without any profound consideration for the future.⁷

How do we explain our present situation? What is the background for most divorces? Where do we, as Jews, stand? These are the questions that every parent must ask himself. They are difficult questions to answer, and no one answer can solve the problem completely.

According to one opinion: "The increase of divorce is symptomatic of wide social changes in the family, and these in turn derive from certain broader currents of change in our society."⁸ This opinion has been explained by the author as follows:

The family was once a center of economic processes and was closely interrelated with other economic activities carried on outside the home, with community processes, religious processes, and political processes, from those interrelations the family derived additional strength... The family today is a center of consumption but not of production... it has only partial authority over the rearing of children.⁹

In other words, the parents today no longer have the same authority over their children. It is true that parents in our generation have very little to say to their children. They try to give them good clothes, food, and a nice home, but they often do not give them warmth and love and understanding. Consequently, parent-child relationships of today lack the spiritual guidance and real preparation for life. In this respect the statement quoted above is true.

Perhaps, the key word for understanding our present situation is change. Our society faces changes on every step of the way. Somehow we do not seem to be able to control it. In the past when we used to speak of a family, we meant a mother in the home, taking care of her children, a father who came home after a day of work and added security and warmth by spending some time with his children.

All this is very different today. The things which women used to do in the home have been taken over by outside agencies. As Waller and Hill state:

As woman's work has gone outside the home, women have often followed it, assuming many new tasks in business and industry. Instead of the solidarity and interdependence produced within the family by the older familial economy, we now have a real opposition of interests in the family.

The result is a very simple one. The children learn the facts of life outside their home. They learn about sexual morality and the concept of marriage and family life in the most superficial way, with no real depth and sense of value. With this knowledge they start to build their own families and some of them end with broken homes.

D. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

If we are at all concerned about our future and the future of our younger generation, we must come to the realization that something has to be done. When a divorce occurs in a Jewish family, or intermarriage takes place, very often the parents react with a question such as:

"What have I done to deserve it?" Perhaps this question should be asked in a different way: "What have I not done to deserve this?" Our purpose is not just to blame the parents. There are many factors involved in which parents can help the situation a great deal.

Questions for Group Discussion

Read the following paragraph:

There is no reason why we cannot develop manners and customs appropriate to the greater fragility of marriage in the United States; they are very badly needed. For it seems unlikely that the other solution, tightening up on divorce laws, is likely to occur. Once freedom of divorce has become part of our ethics, as it has for many segments of the United States, simply going back becomes a genuinely retrogressive step. The very reasons that made divorce necessary, the enormous heterogeneity of our population and the great changes of maladjustments under our system of free marital choice, would remain. Rather the more likely development would seem to be forward to a new pattern of behavior that fits the new conditions. And there are signs that such a new pattern of behavior is developing.

If we recognize that we live in a society where marriage is terminable, and in some cases should be terminable, we can then give every newly married pair, and every old married pair, a chance to recognize the hazards they face, and to make genuine efforts to survive them.

Marriage was once a harbor from which marriages set sail safely, some lay in it and rotted, some were simply wrecked on the shore. It is now a voyage in the open sea, with no harbor at

any point, and each partner is committed to vigilance and deep concern if the ship is to sail at all.

Each form of marriage can be dignified and rewarding, if man chooses to make it so.

1. As long as divorce is something disgraceful, for which however no one is punished,
2. something to be hidden and yet something available to anyone, we may expect an increasing
3. number of irresponsible marriage in which one or both partners simply say, "Oh, well, if it
4. does not work, we will get a divorce."¹⁰

After you have read this paragraph, discuss the following questions:

1. What are the reasons which have lead to the present situation?
2. In what way can we prevent divorces? 355-357.
3. Is it necessary to reexamine the Jewish past and adopt some of its teachings? 357.
4. Shall we let the situation continue the way it is and say simply: we can't do anything about it? p. 358-360.

Notes

Chapter IV

1. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 101
2. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 102
3. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 624-626.
4. Ibid., p. 624-626.
5. Cohen, Rev. Dr. A., Everyman's Talmud, p. 162-163.
6. Ibid., p. 163-170.
7. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 355-357.
8. Waller, Willard, and Hill, Reuben, The Family, p. 507.
9. Ibid., p. 507.
10. Ibid., p. 507-508.
11. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 358-366.

The following is yet CHAPTER V of the love and longing for

children:

PARENT - CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

After these things the word of the Lord came A. The need and desire for a child

reward: Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord.

The fruit of the womb is a reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of one's youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; They shall not be put to shame, when they speak with their enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5)

The Jews always had a very high regard for children. Children were looked upon as gifts of God which colored and influenced their whole lives.¹ When Eve gave birth to Cain, she said: "I have gotten a man from the Lord." (Gen. 4:1) The desire for children signifies a unique human need. It also indicates growth and the remarkable will to share one's love with his child.

The following Biblical passages will illustrate very clearly our statement:

And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and she said unto Jacob: 'Give me children, or else I die.' (Gen. 30:1)

Rachel considered her life unworthy and unfulfilled without a child.

When Isaac found that Rebekah was barren, he appealed to God:

And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord let Himself be entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (Gen. 25:21)

The following is yet another example of the love and longing for children:

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying: 'Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, thy reward shall be exceeding great. And Abram said: 'O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go hence childless... (Gen. 15:1-2)

To Abraham the possession of a child was always considered the greatest blessing God could bestow, and to be without children was regarded as the greatest curse. (Gen. R. LXXI.6)²

It appears, then, that the only way man can honor God is through his response to God's commandment. And since honoring one's parents is God's commandment, obeying the commandment means honoring God.

The question is, in what way does one honor his parents? The Talmud tells the following story:

There was a person who fed his father of fat poultry and yet inherited Gehinnom, whereas another person made his father grind at the mill and inherited Paradise. How could this be? With regard to the former, his father said to him, 'My son, where did you get this poultry?' And he answered, 'Old man, eat and be quiet, because dogs eat and are quiet.' With regard to the latter, he was grinding at the mill when an order came from the king to conscript grinders. He said to his father, 'You take my place here and I will grind for the king, so that if there is to be any insult it will be better for it to fall upon me, and if there is to be any beating, it will be better that I should suffer it.' (Pesa. 15a)³

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B. The Duties of Children Toward Their Parents

The duty to honor one's parents is a religious obligation to which the Talmud assigns a supremely important place. Scripture places the honoring of parents on an equal basis with the honoring of the Omnipresent; it is said, "Honor thy father and thy mother." (Ex. 20:12). In the Book of Proverbs we read: "Honor the Lord with thy substance." (Prov. 3:9) It likewise places the fear (fear being interpreted as respect) of parents on an equal basis with the fear of the Omnipresent: "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." (Lev. 19:3); and also: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God." (Deut. 6:3)³ It appears, then, that the only way man can honor God is through his response to God's commandment. And since honoring one's parents is God's command, obeying the commandment means honoring God.

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Honoring the parents has a tremendous importance in Jewish history and culture. Our rabbis attempted to tie it in with the Jewish concept of God. Thus, we find a special law in the Torah, concerning the

reward and punishment in the world to come:

The following deeds are the things
for which man will be rewarded in
the world to come:

- 1) Honoring father and mother
- 2) Charity
- 3) To make peace between people.⁵

The respect for parents has no limits. When Rabbi Joseph used to hear
the sound of his mother's footstep, he would say: "Now I must stand,
because the Divine spirit is coming."⁶

The author of Proverbs condemns the children who mock their
parents:

The eye that mocketh at his father,
And despiseth to obey his mother,

The ravens of the valley shall pick
it out,

And the young vultures shall eat it.
(Prov. 30:17)

The author was fully aware of the unlimited authority that parents had
over their children. He attempted to show this to achieve the awareness
among the children:

My son, keep thy father's commandments,
and forsake not the law of thy mother:
Bind them continually upon thy heart,
and tie them about thy neck. When thou
goest it shall lead thee; when thou
 sleepest, it shall talk with thee.
(Prov. 6:20-22)

He that wasteth (shows lack of respect
toward, is contemptuous toward) his
father and chaseth away his mother, is a
son that causeth shame, and bringeth
reproach.
(Prov. 19:26)

The law-giver made it abundantly clear that this particular command-
ment had to be obeyed. Any attempt to violate it was regarded as a
crime. Thus, we find a special law in the Torah, concerning the

rebellious son:

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not hearken to the voice of the father and the voice of his mother, then shall his father and his mother bring him unto the elders of the city... and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die.⁷

In the rabbinic view, every human being who has a mind of his own is responsible for his actions before a court of man, no one can be held legally responsible for an act except he who performs it... It is in this light too, that we can understand the relationship between parents and children, and their mutual responsibilities.⁸

We have indicated previously the tendency among some of our Jewish law-givers to present the woman as inferior to the man. However, in the ethical relation involving the reverence due to her from the children, she stood in the same place as the father:

And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.
(Ex. 21:15)

And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.
(Ex. 21:17)

For whatsoever man there be that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death...
(Lev. 20:9)

Cursed be he that dishonoreth his father or his mother...
(Deut. 27:16)

In Talmudic times the mother's place as equal to that of the father's is clear from the dying injunction of Rabbi Judah Ha Nasi to his sons: "Be careful of the honor due your mother. Let the lamp be lit in its place, the table be set in its place, the couch be spread in its place."

(Ket. 10, 3:2) This was the same rabbi who interpreted the command 'Honor thy father and thy mother' (Ex. 20:12), in the following manner: "And ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father." It is clear that the mother was given an equal importance with the father. For further references, see also: Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Lev. 19:2; Deut. 21:18-19; I Kings 19:20; Jer. 16:7; Prov. 30:17.

In earlier Biblical times, there was in ancient Israel a joint responsibility of father and son for each other's obligations. This responsibility covered a man's conduct both towards man and God. In spite of the fact that parents had unlimited authority over their children, they also had very definite obligations and duties toward them. The five most important duties were:

- 1) To give a name to the child
- 2) To circumcise a male child
- 3) To maintain and bring up children
- 4) To marry them, especially the daughters
- 5) To observe the laws of inheritance

These were the pillars on which the strength of the Jewish family rested. They contained a clear-cut notion of the responsibility of the father in teaching his children, mainly his son, the Jewish laws, and indicated a constant awareness of the father toward his children.

It is known in Jewish tradition that, under the laws of man, the father had no legal responsibility for the action of his children, but under the laws of heaven, as the head of the family he was fully responsible for the action of his children. ¹¹ Therefore, the duties of the father toward his children are imposed upon him by the Divine command. The underlying principle behind this Divine command is to give the legal

C. The Duties and Responsibilities of Parents Toward Their Children

1. The Father

According to Jewish law, the child was legally considered the property of the parents, and in particular of the father. The father could sell his son as a bondsman and his daughter as a servant.⁹ (see also: Ex. 21:7; Neh. 5:5-8, and Isa. 50:1) children. In earlier Biblical times, there was in ancient Israel a joint responsibility of father and son for each other's obligations. This responsibility covered a man's conduct both towards man and God. In spite of the fact that parents had unlimited authority over their children, they also had very definite obligations and duties toward them. The five most important duties were:

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guardianship to parents over their minor children to protect them against abuses.¹²

Several wise warnings are addressed to parents on the right and wrong method of dealing with children. The evil result of favoritism which Jacob displayed toward Joseph gave rise to the advice: "A man should never make distinctions between his children." (Shab. 10b) A happy medium is recommended between overindulging a child and not correcting his faults, and being too firm with him: "If one refrains from punishing a child, he will end by becoming utterly depraved." (Exod. R. 1:1). The proper course to adopt with children is "to push away with the left hand and draw them near with the right hand." (Sema. 11:6). Parents were also advised by our sages to maintain and develop the sense of responsibility for one's commitments and promises: "A person should never tell a child that he will give him something and not keep his promise, because he thereby teaches the child to tell lies." (Sub. 46b)

2. The Mother

The Jewish mother occupies a special role with regard to children. She was presented in Jewish teaching as a unique figure. Many songs and poems have been dedicated to the Jewish woman. She has been represented as the symbol of love, understanding, and warmth. Thus, the role of the Jewish mother became extremely important in the building of the Jewish family. The most tender relationships are pictured by the Biblical writers with illustrations of a mother's love.

When Isaac married Rebekah, she is said to have comforted him for the loss of his mother. (Gen. 24:67) When Jeremiah describes his grief

over the people of his time who were facing the fear of destruction, he employs the figure of a mother weeping for her children: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are not." (Jer. 31:14)

When the prophet of the exile wishes to delineate God as the comforter of His people, he says: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." (Isa. 66:13). The author of Psalm thirty-five describes his deep love to the mother. He uses mother's love to illustrate his concern: "I went about as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down mournful, as one that mourneth for his mother." (Ps. 35:14)

The change in the structure of the Jewish family started coming place since the great Jewish immigration of 1881 to the United States. The children of the new immigrants adjusted themselves to the language and the culture of the new land. The parents, on the other hand, still spoke Yiddish and maintained the old-time traditions. In the course of this change the children either forgot the Yiddish language or refused to speak it. The result was that parents and children did not speak the same language. The lack of common language between father and son brought about the first step on the part of the children to break away from the tradition of the Jewish home, and gradually the parents lost their supreme authority and influence which has descended from generation to generation. The second step was that the children not only lost respect for their parents, but they began looking them

D. Parent-Child Relationships in Modern Times

The old certainties of the past are gone, and everywhere there are signs of an attempt to build a new tradition, which, like the old traditions that have been cast aside, will again safely enfold growing boys and girls, so that they may grow up to choose each other, marry and have children.¹³

Thus far we have attempted to show parent-child relationships according to Biblical and Talmudic data. The transition from Biblical and Talmudic times to the modern situation will prove a great change, and in some instances a total change. The ideal picture of the past has been denied by many people today. What is the power behind this radical change? How can we explain it? The reasons are many, and an attempt will be made to indicate some of them. The change in the structure of the Jewish family started taking place since the great Jewish immigration of 1881 to the United States. The children of the new immigrants adjusted themselves to the language and the culture of the new land. The parents, on the other hand, still spoke Yiddish and maintained the old-time traditions. In the course of this change the children either forgot the Yiddish language or refused to speak it. The result was that parents and children did not speak the same language. The lack of common language between father and son brought about the first step on the part of the children to do away with the tradition of the Jewish home, and gradually the parents lost their supreme authority and influence which the Jewish tradition handed down from generation to generation. The second step was that the children not only lost respect for their parents, but they began mocking them.¹⁴

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Thus, the old notions of family life which rested upon a common language, common customs and religious ceremonies, and constant association with one another, began to break down. This is only one opinion based on a single aspect, but if its assumption is true, then it will not be difficult for us to understand the later developments.

In the past, parent-child relationships were based, first of all, on the Divine Commandment to honor and respect one's parents. There have been duties for each member of the family to fulfill. Having children meant security for the parents and mutual love and understanding between parents and children.

Today the needs are different. Going to Cheder or to an all day Jewish school will not prepare any of our children, nor will it enable them to meet the needs and demands of our society. Today, to prepare a child for life means to send him to college and perhaps later on to a graduate school. This means investment on the part of the parents. The most unfortunate thing in this situation is that children today do not seem to need their parents for other than material reasons; the parents give, the children take, and nothing is given in return. Consequently, the parents find themselves in the position of 'being used'; they give, but they do not receive the honor and respect that they think they deserve. The question is how honor and respect can be obtained if parents and children are living in two different worlds.

How do we solve the dilemma of parent-child relationships and bring to it a level of mutual understanding? How can we make it Jewish? The task is harder than one might think, and the problem is much more complicated than it appears to be. We start with the young couple whose

first child is ready to go to school. Their religious background is often superficial and their knowledge of Judaism is limited. In order for them to repent for their sins, they wish to give their child the opportunity to learn about his Judaism. They send their son or daughter to a Sunday School with the expectation that he or she will be a better Jew than they are. The child goes to school and learns about Hanukkah, then he goes home and sees no Hanukkah candles, (in some cases he finds a Christmas tree). He asks his parents, and often they give him a superficial answer. Several years later his desire to learn about Judaism slows down. After all, he is not any better than his parents. His second step will be that his attendance at Sunday school will not be for the sake of learning, but merely to satisfy his parents. And once he reaches the age of Bar Mitzvah or Confirmation, off he goes. His religious life will end right then and there.

Then the child starts going through the terror of his adolescent years and a new problem enters his horizon. At that time his parents will start questioning his behavior, and their immediate reaction will be, 'What have we done wrong? Have we not sent him to school?' Then their child's confusion will add to theirs, and the entire family becomes confused and dissatisfied. As Irene Josselyn puts it:

They want their child to develop into a heterosexual adult, yet they are fearful that he cannot avoid the pitfalls of that development. They wish him to be independent but they are fearful that he cannot handle independence without their guidance. Most parents, consciously at least, wish their child to grow up to be a happy adult. They are frightened by their own roles in the process.

It is equally true that many parents, while they consciously wish their child to grow up, actually are resistant to this process. Perhaps they cannot face the vacuum that will exist when the child is no longer dependent upon them. Sometimes they are jealous of the child entering early adulthood with all its apparent glamour when their own adulthood seems tarnished. Many of them express their own neuroses in handling their adolescent son or daughter...

They see their child as an extension of themselves, growing they hope, into a more nearly adequate adult than either of them is. Their wish derives not only from pride in their own child but also from an honest desire that their child should have a happier adult life than they themselves have had...

Whatever may be the hidden conflict in the relationship with the child, the unconscious motivation of parental behavior toward the child is often in contrast to the conscious motivation. Regardless of what produced the conflict, parents as well as adolescents are confused, and the confusion of each adds to the confusion of the other.¹⁵

We need unconfused parents to help their confused children. We need parents whose Jewish upbringing and outlook is healthy enough to raise a generation of healthy youth. Parents must know that material things alone will never accomplish all the good things in life. Parents are directly responsible for shaping the image of their children. In education as in art, one needs a model to follow. Children follow the model presented to them by their parents. When the parents grow to hate their model, they begin to hate themselves as well as their children.

A healthy relationship must be based on limited freedom between parents and children. Parents should, and must, bring their children to the realization that they are free entities in the world, and at the same

time they belong to the family. The sense of belonging is inherent in our natures, and it follows us wherever we go. When our 'belonging' to the family does not satisfy us, we strive to find a new source of belonging. But when we think back about our parents and grandparents, remembering the ideals for which they stood, we should look back at ourselves and say, 'Their endeavour was not in vain, and we certainly expect our children to look upon us with the same perspective.' In short, whatever takes place during childhood at home reflects our entire outlook toward life, friendship, love and understanding of our fellow men. Even if we wanted to do away with the Divine Command, we still have a problem to solve - the emotional problem which constitutes almost every type of relationship.

The following are suggestions presented by Dr. Spurgeon and Dr. Finch:

Emotions are valuable assets to the personality; emotions get things done in the world; emotions are powerful forces for good or for evil.

Emotional maturity is the goal for our children. It is to help children learn to use their emotions constructively and to handle their problems effectively.

The emotionally mature person has these characteristics:

1. He is realistic. He judges a situation as it exists, not as he wants it to be. When problems arise, he takes the best of them, instead of running away from them or fighting them...

2. First and foremost of the basic needs for healthy emotional development is love. If a child's need for love is met, all his other emotional needs are taken care of - his need for security, his need to feel he belongs, his need for companionship...

E. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

One could list here under suggestions for improvement, many of the ideas from the Book of Proverbs, from the Talmud, Sefer Ha-Aggadah, Midrash, and many other Jewish sources. We cited a few examples from these sources when we dealt with the subject, at the beginning of this chapter. Lack of power and the physical and psychological stresses that it brings. The parent and given

When the law-givers spoke of parent-child relationships, they meant Divine relations. A kind of relation that man owes his God and his parents. Unfortunately, we no longer speak of the Divine Command in the same sense as did our ancestors. Even if we wanted to do away with the Divine Command, we still have a problem to solve - the emotional problem which constitutes almost every type of relationship.

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2. Emotional maturity is the goal for our children. It is to help children learn to use their emotions constructively and to handle their problems effectively.

3. The emotionally mature person has these characteristics:

1. He is realistic. He judges a situation as it exists, not as he wants it to be. When problems arise, he makes the best of them, instead of running away from them or fighting them...

2. First and foremost of the basic needs for healthy emotional development is love. If a child's need for love is met, all his other emotional needs are taken care of - his need for security, his need to feel he belongs, his need for companionship...

3. The kind of love the child needs can be given freely only by people who are themselves emotionally mature, who sense the varying needs of the growing child, and who are able to do all the giving in the early years. From their giving, the child will learn to give later on, when his turn comes...

4. The child who is brought up in an atmosphere of mature love is ready to meet the emotional impact of puberty and the physical and psychological changes that it brings. The parent who gives mature love is ready to help his child over the hurdles of adolescence, with patience and understanding and with more love...

5. Courtship, marriage and parenthood lie just ahead for teenagers. To live together satisfactorily and happily as man and wife, they must have learned earlier how to get along with the other sex.

6. Home environment counts. The child absorbs his first feelings about work from the atmosphere at home and the feelings of his parents.¹⁶

Are these not problems which have always concerned religion? We were commanded to love and share; to respect and honor, to give and take; to teach our children a trade, and so forth.

This is our heritage. These are our teachings and these are our Jewish contributions to the civilized world. The only difference, however, is that these factors regarding the foundations of parent-child relations received a modern label. We refer to them with the use of psychological terminology and we call them emotions and maturity, true love and understanding. All of these 'modern' ideas are written in the Book that many of us do not bother to read - our Bible.

How can we then divorce ourselves from the teachings of the Bible, and its values? We leave this question to the reader to answer.

Let us now examine another opinion dealing with our subject,

perhaps we can draw some conclusions ourselves:

Young parents who wish their children to have the best opportunities for physical, mental, and spiritual development will begin before marriage to work to solve their own emotional problems, to improve their own education regarding child development, and to clarify their own points of view on how character grows...

Considering the whole range of childrens' development, physiological and psychological, we realize that security involves not only wholesome food, shelter, and nursery care, but the nourishment of children's ideas, interests, and feelings of self-importance. Specifically it implies that they be surrounded by adults who like them, who maintain for them some stability of routine, who expect well of them, and who have time to plan for them and with them.¹⁷

These are precisely Jewish ideas. They are spread throughout the Bible, and the Talmud, the Midrash and the Mishnah. We presented some of them in the beginning of this chapter.

Questions for Group Discussion

Chapter V

1. After you have read the chapter, compare and discuss parent-child
 1. relationships in the past and present. Jews, p. 17-18.
 2. Do you see any difference in approaching the problem, between tradi-
 3. tion and modern psychology?
 3. In what way do you think we can improve parent-child relationships
 5. today? 102 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 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One must understand rabbinic psychology in order to comprehend their approach properly. When the rabbis wished to approve a certain

CHAPTER VI
GRANDPARENTS AND OLD AGE

A. The Rabbinic Concept of Old Age

Although this chapter will be dealing primarily with grandparents, it seems necessary to use the term old age in order to discuss the subject from the rabbinic point of view. In rabbinic teachings there is no reference to grandparents per se, as we understand the meaning in modern times. Thus, in dealing with the subject in rabbinic literature, we will be referring to people of old age. The reason for presenting the rabbinic views about old age is to draw some conclusions in the latter part of this chapter concerning grandparents.

It is self-evident, however, that old age does not always mean grandparents, nor does the word grandparents necessarily mean old age. At any rate, when the rabbis mentioned old age, they did not mean precisely that. The term old age was associated with wisdom or understanding.¹ In the Bible we find reference to the above statement: "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with thee.'" (Mun. 11:16) Rabbi Jose the Galilaean says: "By old man is meant a man who has acquired wisdom... What is honoring? It means that one should not sit in the seat of the old man, or speak before he has spoken, or contradict him." (Kid. 32b)²

One must understand rabbinic psychology in order to comprehend their approach properly. When the rabbis wished to approve a certain

law or to interpret the meaning of a commandment, they always associated the commandment, the giver of the commandment, and man. Hence, whenever a man dealt wrongly with another man, he not only committed a sin against his fellow man, but also against God, the Giver of law. Thus, every commandment was directed and related to God. We read in the Bible: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God." (Lev. 19:32) The commandment is clear: 'Honor the face of the old man,' but why the addition: "... and thou shalt fear thy God.'? The answer given by the failure to fulfill the commandment is directly related to God. On that basis, one must understand the rabbinic outlook by its interpretation of the law.³

The rabbis were never satisfied with one interpretation of any given law. Many opinions were brought up for the consideration of the reader. If old age was meant to be regarded as a sign of wisdom and knowledge, one might think that the honor should be only given to those who obtained these qualifications in his lifetime. But this is not so according to the rabbinic account. It is said about Rabbi Meir that when he saw even an old Am Ha-Aretz, he would rise up, for he said: "It is not for nothing that has prolonged his days - long life is a Divine blessing, therefore, the man, however ignorant, must have done some good deeds in the course of his life." (Talmud J. Bik. 3,3) Thus, in Midrash Gen. R. the rabbis went even further in their emphasis: "He who welcomes an old man is as if he welcomed the Shechinah." (Gen. R. Tolidot, LXIII, 6).

As a result of these ordinances, any violation of the law was followed by punishment. A man once insulted Rabbi Judah Ben Hanina

(who was old); the fact was reported to Resh Lakish who fined the man a pound weight of gold. (Talmud J. Bab. K. 8,8)⁴

These are some of the rabbinic interpretations and views regarding old age. The rabbis did not call elderly people grandparents. Nevertheless, their attitudes are important for us. They teach us a lesson and contribute to our topic some examples to follow in dealing with the problem of grandparents. In my opinion, the teachings of the rabbis with respect to old age is applicable to our subject.

Seeing their children grow. When the children grow and build their own families, they go through a new stage in life. At this stage they live with the hope of seeing their grandchildren grow. In some cases when the foundation of the family is healthy and strong, grandparents, parents and grandchildren maintain strong family ties and the article is not noticeable. Unfortunately, the sense of family responsibility and close relationships are not to be found among many families.

The majority of grandparents today are confronted with the question of what to do with the leisure time left. Couples whose children have gone off and married while they themselves are still comparatively young, are a prime example. In some cases the wife (grandmother) gets a job, or occupies herself with some community work, whereas the husband (grandfather) does not even have such a thing to look forward to. As Margaret Reed states the case: "In a country that gives so few rewards to age, who wants to be a grandfather?"

The young married sons and daughters live in their own small houses and try to do something about father and mother. When young

B. Grandparents in Modern Society

Modern society, with all the marvelous things that it has given us, has left us alone. We go through life from childhood to old age wrestling with one crisis or another, and when we reach the stage of being old, or grandparents, somehow we find ourselves facing loneliness. It is very painful for grandparents to realize that all they have to do is sit and wait for their death. As parents who are raising children, they find their life worthwhile and they live with the expectation of seeing their children grow. When the children grow and build their own families, they go through a new stage in life. At this stage they live with the hope of seeing their grandchildren grow. In some cases when the foundation of the family is healthy and strong, grandparents, parents and grandchildren maintain strong family ties and the crisis is not noticeable. Unfortunately, the sense of family responsibility and close relationships are not to be found among many families.

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The young married sons and daughters live in their own small homes and try to do something about father and mother. When young

couples think of mother and father they do not mean to solve the problem via an old method, namely, to bring them closer to them emotionally, but rather to find them something they can be interested in. Sad as this sounds, it is what most people believe is the ideal situation. It is sorrowful to realize that the 'ideal' situation of grandparents in modern society is to live somehow independently from their married children except in grave emergencies. They spend their old age acting as sitters, which means they go in as their children go out, and those who can afford it retire to a cottage in Florida.⁶

We must not forget that these are the grandparents who are not dependent upon their children for their livelihood. These are the "lucky" ones who are able to support themselves. This is the so-called "ideal" situation, as we have mentioned. I happen to know personally one of these lucky grandparents. He is the father of a well-to-do man, and he has four lovely grandchildren. His wife passed away a few years ago, and he became very lonely. He was not able to stand the grief, and seemed to just be waiting for his own turn to die. One day he decided to try and chase away his melancholy by leaving his home town and following his married son and grandchildren. He rented an apartment in the same city where they lived. He went to see his young grandchildren who made his life worth living, and suddenly he felt that he was beginning to live again. All went well until one day his family decided that they were too close and sent him to an old age home in Florida. The poor man had nothing to say about the matter, since he had used up all of his savings by that time. With a broken heart he took the plane to Florida. His

family felt that he should spend his time with people of his own age.

In Florida his life was empty, there was nothing to look forward to. One day he decided to go back to his family. He knew that they were spending money on him in Florida, and his request was for them to give him the same amount of money so that he could rent an apartment again. The family refused. They insisted that his place was in Florida among people of his age. The man is now in a mental hospital. This was the last time I saw him.

The rejection of grandparents by their married children reflects one of the symptoms of unhealthy relationships in families. There is a correlation between parent-child relationships and grandparents. The problem is inherent in the value system of today's families. One of the reasons for this sad situation was expressed by Waller and Hill as follows: "In recent years grandparents who were at first welcomed have been rejected and on occasion ejected from homes as interfering and contentious influences. In many homes, neither the norms of respect for the aged nor the commandment to honor one's father and mother are sufficient to maintain working relations between grandparents and their married adult offspring."⁷

If we accept these opinions, we have to assume that the nature of the problem rests upon disagreement between grandparents and their offspring. It seems, though, that the source of this disagreement stemmed from a lack of unity in the family as a whole.

How can we reunite the family? We suggest two possible directions:
1) Perhaps we should reconsider some of the teachings of our ancestors.

C. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

Now that we have stated the problem, we should search for some answers. We must understand that today's parents are the future grandparents. It involves each and every one of us. How do we explain the present situation in which many men and women are desperately struggling in their old age for warmth, for love, for company?

There have been various attempts to explain the problem. For our purpose we will present the result of a study made of fifty families in Minnesota by Dinkel. It reads as follows:

Dinkel found ample evidence that the conflict between grandparents and their offspring was due neither to the psychological characteristics of the aged as a group nor to their struggle for status with younger age groups, but stemmed in each case from the historical and cultural setting of family life.

Dinkel found that the specific disputes were the end part of a process of opposition that had its beginning in the early parent-child relations of the specific family.⁸

In many of the cases studied, concerning the conflict between grandparents and married children, the crisis emerged as a result of different mores. Grandparents and their children were in disagreement on the role of the elders in advising and correcting the young parents.⁹

If we accept these opinions, we have to assume then that the nature of the problem rests upon disagreement between grandparents and their offspring. It seems, though, that the source of this disagreement stemmed from a lack of unity in the family as a whole.

How can we reunite the family? We suggest two possible directions:

- 1) Perhaps we should reconsider some of the teachings of our ancestors.

This might give us at least a guiding principle and help us to re-examine our value system; 2) As Margaret Mead suggests, "It is probable that society will recognize this period (old age) as a period in which professional counselling is needed as much as in adolescence."¹⁰

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. After you read the first paragraph of this chapter, discuss the rabbinic concept of old age.
2. Discuss the various factors which unite families.
3. Can we as children or parents be held responsible for the welfare of our parents or grandparents?

Notes VII

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9. Ibid., p. 444.
10. Mead, Margaret, Male and Female, p. 340.

CHAPTER VII

SEX

A. Some Biblical and Talmudic Views of Sex

There were two different opinions concerning sex among the sages. One opinion maintained that man should restrict himself from any sexual relations. Restriction was considered to lead man to holiness. Samuel, Elijah and Elisha were mentioned as examples. They kept themselves from any sexual relations so that they could serve God in the most effective and holy manner.¹

In the Talmud, also, there were some references to the restriction of sexual relations. "Purity leads to restriction, restriction leads to holiness." (Brittah, Sotah). The sages of the Talmud used to say about Rabban Gamaliel: "When Rabbi Gamaliel died, holiness died with him." (Mishnah Sotah, 9:15).²

The second opinion viewed sexual relations as a positive force: "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, He is God; that formed the earth and made it, He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited." (Is. 45:18). The author claims that the above sentence from the Book of Isaiah was interpreted as being against the restriction of sex.³

Albo, the author of Ikkarim, viewed sex as something to be controlled by man. Man, according to Albo, must maintain a moderate way in eating habits, in drinking, and in sexual relations. In other words, sex was not restricted by Albo, but it was meant to be controlled.⁴

The Jewish religion as a way of life for the entire descendants

of Israel insisted upon the principle of multiplication. This principle was regarded as a Divine Command.⁵

Nevertheless, the Bible does not consider sex as a function of the body only, but rather "The ego in its concrete entirety."⁶ Thus, according to the Bible, sexual sins affect the total being, because sex constitutes man's total self. In Piper's view, the Bible gives a clear view with respect to sex, that no separation can be made between the person, his sexual nature, and God. Any attempt to separate the nature of sexual behavior from the person himself is impossible. In the author's words:

The Biblical view of sex revolves about two fundamental ideas: reverence for the mystery of sex and sanctification of marriage as the God-appointed goal of the sexual relationship.

These fundamental Biblical ideas retain their essential meaning even though we now use modern psychology to describe it.⁷

This influence affected man's sexual behavior and challenged his basic views of sex.⁸

Waller and Hill explain the situation from a different standpoint. They believe that men and women attract each other by the mysterious drive of sex. They claim that because of sex differences hostility comes about between the two sexes. They indicate that psychoanalysts interpret sexual morality and sexual behavior on the basis of adolescence. Love and hate are mingled together and as a result it affects the family.¹⁰

In order for us to understand the lack of stability in the relations between man and women in the present, we must see how the relationships

are presented with B. Sex in Modern Times

It is impossible to overlook the change that has taken place in our society. In almost every sphere of life, change has become a dominant factor. Change is taking place in political, economic and social life. But above and beyond all these changes, sex is going through not only change, but revolutionary stages. Just two generations ago, sexual behavior was controlled by the strong rules of Puritan morality which protected and restricted it.⁸

How do we explain this change? According to Piper, it came about as a result of man's understanding of himself. He believes that the life of modern man is largely determined by the mass character of our social life. He indicates that the mighty forces of modern industry and the tremendous urban population, plus the uniformity of public opinion, as it has been presented by radio and television, influenced a great deal the life of modern man. This influence affected man's sexual behavior and challenged his basic views of sex.⁹

Waller and Hill explain the situation from a different standpoint. They believe that men and women attract each other by the mysterious drive of sex. They claim that because of sex differences hostility comes about between the two sexes. They indicate that psychoanalysts interpret sexual morality and sexual behavior on the basis of ambivalence. Love and hate are mingled together and as a result it affects the family.¹⁰

In order for us to understand the lack of stability, in the relations between men and women in the present, we must see how the teenagers

are presented with the problem of sexual morality. It is rather easy to talk about the present unhappy marriages, many divorces, and so forth, but our main interest should be to discover the symptoms which have brought about the present upheaval in standards and values of sexual behavior. We must, therefore, analyze the relationship between parents and children in an attempt to see what type of sex education they receive in their homes, and how their parents treat each other. There is an old saying: 'Tell me who is your friend, and then I can tell who you are.' This thought is applicable to us as well. 'Tell me who your parents are and then I can tell who you are.'

C. Teenagers and Sex

We have noted previously that sex in modern society is going through revolutionary stages. Never in the past did the issue occupy the minds of the people as it does in our present time. Like religion, sex was looked upon as a sanctified factor in man's life. Furthermore, sex was regarded as part of religion, and was controlled mainly by religious institutions and religious leaders. People married, and raised children, and did not seem to be bothered by the lack of sex education. We must also indicate that the past lacked awareness of the needs of adolescents and teenagers.

Today, the situation is radically different. There is an awareness of the adolescent world and the teenager's problems. This awareness is mainly apparent on the part of psychologists and sociologists, rather than parents. Parents who grew up with the old notions of the past seem to be unable to cope with their young children.

There is, however, some degree of acceptance of the value of sex education among many parents. Those parents, however, teach children only half the truth, mainly because they lack the skills and the adequate knowledge to present to their children the whole truth. At the present time, says Josselyn: "Sex information has carried an implication that sex is desirable, acceptable, and something to be recognized without guilt, as a part of living."¹¹

When the child grows up, his sexual desire grows with him. At this stage of development the parents develop fear and begin to tell him not to gratify his sexual impulses. Consequently, says Josselyn:

"He is likely to see the new point of view as a contradiction of the earlier parental attitude rather than to recognize that now he is learning the whole truth, whereas before he learned only half of it."¹²

The parents start realizing their failure and inadequacy when their son or daughter starts dating. The truth of the matter is that in most cases we cannot blame the parents for their inadequacy. After all, most of them did not go through the same stages of development in their youth; certainly they knew very little about dating. In many instances dating is considered primarily a competitive game. Consequently, boys and girls who do not succeed in meeting the challenge, namely, dating, are not judged favorably by their age group.¹³

Many parents are not aware of the fact that patterns of behavior are learned and develop during dating. Furthermore, they are not fully aware that these patterns affect adult sex relations. Most parents encourage their young children to go out and date, but they disapprove of the results of dating. As Margaret Mead points out:

We bring girls up to be free and easy and unafraid, without the protections given by shyness and fear to girls of many other societies.

We bring our boys up to be just as free and easy, used to girls, demanding towards girls. We actually place our young people in a virtually intolerable situation, giving them the entire setting for behavior for which we then punish them whenever it occurs.¹⁴

As we have seen so far, the problem of sexual urges among adolescents and teenagers is important for many and various reasons. We must make it clear that we do not refer to sex as a biological factor only. It involves emotions and affects almost every phase of life.

As Dorothy Baruch states, "it is a desperate necessity to decry and deny fear. The pathetic wish to be liked and to have one's 'bad' parts accepted, and the deep and pervading need to like oneself... The teenager uses sex not only to satisfy sex impulses, he may turn to sex to satisfy other impulses as well."¹⁵

Linn and Schwarz expressed their view on the subject in the same manner: "All the chief problems are rooted in sexuality, and no serious explanation of adolescence can afford to overlook the fact."¹⁶

D. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

As parents we must realize that teenage restlessness is great, and complex. The teenager feels dissatisfied with adult values which have been handed down to him.

It is our duty as adults and parents to help our youngsters to control their sexual impulses. It is imperative that parents take a firm stand. Many parents would like to make it clear to their children, as Dorothy Baruch says, "It is better for you to wait to have intercourse until you are old enough to marry. And it is best to be married before you do."¹⁷

Perhaps this is the ideal desire of many parents for their children. Unfortunately, too, many parents request this from their children when it is too late to do anything. This desire cannot be obtained over night. We must begin teaching our children when they are young. They need to know that there is a heritage in their home, they need to know the principles of good behavior. These can be acquired only at an early age in the home with loving parents.

Parents must remember, when their children grow they leave their home and their family and become masters of their own lives. We must bear in mind that all the things which we gave them, and did not give them, are going to determine to a great extent the type of life they are going to choose for themselves. The only way is to shape the image and personality of our youngsters when they are still young. Sexual morality cannot be taught in one or two conversations with children. It has to grow along with them.

As Jewish parents we have a specific duty to teach our children

and prepare them for a healthy adult life. Therefore religion plays a vital part in educating the young. Integrity in the home between father and mother has a tremendous impact on children.

In addition to all of these we must constantly acquaint ourselves with the concepts of the teenage world. As adults, we are preoccupied with our problems - the problems of making a living in our competitive society. We live in the adult world and tend to forget that in our own homes there exists an entirely different world of the young. Sometimes, it would be worthwhile for us to re-examine our own standards and see in what area we are wrong. We must constantly strive to find a common language between our modes of life and those of our children. If we expect our children to do the same things we did during our teenage years, we will accomplish very little. It is a hard thing to bring two entirely different views together. Any reconciliation between two distinct methods will be hard on anyone. Unfortunately, this is the only remedy to better the present situation.

Questions for Group Discussion

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- 1) How did our ancestors conceive of sexual morality and how do we conceive of it today?
- 2) What are the major differences between our teenage life and those of our children?
- 3) In what way can we create a common language between the teenagers and ourselves as parents?
- 4) Can religious education contribute anything to our endeavor for a healthy teenage life?

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11. Josephyn, Irene, The Adolescent and His World, p. 20.

12. Ibid., p. 30.

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2. דייקן, פלטיאל, דיני נישואין וגירושין, עמ' 34
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CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION

A. Biblical Views on Education

No other religion in the entire history of the human race has such a strong emphasis on learning as does the Jewish religion. From the very beginning of the history of the Jews as a people, or as a religion, education has played a remarkable role in their development. The love and thirst for learning was inherent in their nature and followed them in every step of the way, from nomad tribes to civilized nation. How many religions can we count in the history of mankind which have as part of their creed a command for learning? If there is any uniqueness about the Jewish religion, it is to be found in the attitude toward learning. The moral and religious training of the Jewish people from childhood was regarded by the Jews from the very beginning of their history as one of the underlying principles of their lives. Although the stress was on religious education and moral behavior, the whole concept of learning developed because of the religious command. The duty to carry out this command was handed down from father to son. The obligation to fulfill it can be traced back even to the time of Abraham: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18:19)

The Deuteronomic law laid the foundation and made the duty to teach a Divine law: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy

children, and shalt talk of them..." (Deut. 6:7). The Deuteronomic law was to be written clearly, so that everyone might read, see, and act accordingly. (Deut. 27:1-8). Even kings and leaders were challenged by the charge of the law-givers. Each king and leader was commanded to keep a copy of the law and follow it. (Deut. 17:18)

Paul Kretzmann, in his book, Education Among the Jews,¹ divided the biblical data of Jewish education into several periods. His division, as follows, might help us to comprehend the vast Biblical material on the subject.

Jewish Education During the Native Period - 953 B.C.

During this period the Jews were given instructions. The foundation of the law and moral training was the basis of education. The Book of Proverbs speaks in general of instruction in wisdom, justice, judgment and equity.²

To know wisdom and instruction; to
comprehend the words of understanding...
(Prov. 1:2)

For wisdom shall enter into thy heart;
And knowledge shall be pleasant unto
thy soul...
(Prov. 2:10)

Get wisdom, get understanding; Forget
not, neither decline from the words of
thy mouth...
(Prov. 4:5)

How much better is it to get wisdom
than gold! Yea, to get understanding
is rather to be chosen than silver...
(Prov. 16:16)

How should we understand these texts? It is certain from the nature of their content that they include more than just the studying of the law.

They definitely convey a clear principle of learning. It is impossible, therefore, to limit them to a knowledge of the law alone. Perhaps the fear of the Lord was meant to be wisdom and understanding: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." (Ps. 3:10)

The nature of the teachings of the books of the Native Period set the tone of morality for the whole world. The principles that were emphasized were carried on and approved through the ages. Although the ancient Hebrews made religious training the basic principle of their education, they did not deny the teaching of general knowledge.

It is apparent that the arts of reading and writing were known to Abraham.³ There is much evidence throughout this period to prove that this accomplishment was achieved by a number of people. The following are some indications which will clarify this: According to Exodus 17:14; 24:4, and Deuteronomy 31:9,22, Moses wrote the words of the law at the command of God. The command, "Thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house..." (Deut. 11:20) indicates clearly that the art and knowledge of writing was already known among the ancient Hebrews. It is said that the men whom Joshua sent out to investigate the land of Canaan, described the land in a book. (Josh. 18:9). There are also references to the fact that Joshua himself wrote. (Josh. 24:26). In I Samuel 10:25, we find that Samuel wrote also. These sources signify that the art of writing was known among the ancient Hebrews. Our attempt is to prove that the Divine Command for learning was not limited only to religious morality, and that the tendency among the Jewish people was to a love of learning and a desire to obtain general knowledge along with

adhering to the religious laws and ordinances.

From the precise descriptions in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, it seems clear that there was even a knowledge of geography and arithmetic:⁴ "And Joseph laid up coin as the sand of the sea, very much, until they left off numbering; for it was without number."

(Gen. 41:49). Even the art of music was known: "And with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals, and with instruments for the songs of God." (I Chron. 16:42)

Practical training, however, was mainly in the hands of the parents. Outside the home, education was primarily in the hands of the priests. This fact is based on I Samuel 2:11, 21. In addition to this, there are some indications that even in this early period there were professional teachers. (Ps. 84:7; Ps. 141:6).⁵

Jewish Education During the Prophetic Period - 953-586 B.C.

During the prophetic period, Jewish education was not looked upon as favorably as during the Native Period. This period is known in biblical history mainly as a period of decline. We should note in this period the gradual disintegration of the Jewish people. Two kingdoms were established. This political and economic division among the Israelites affected education in a most severe manner. Even the schools of the prophets, which were established institutions, suffered a great deal.⁶

In spite of all the obstacles and the political tyranny of the rulers, Jewish parents maintained their responsibility for the education of their children. The emphasis on Jewish education and especially moral and religious training were stressed by the prophecies of this period:

"Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." (Joel, 1:3).

In the royal families of this period there were private teachers who tutored the children. Aside from the royal families and well-to-do people, the general practice given the most emphasis among the Jewish people was the teaching of the law.⁷

Jewish Education During the Exilic Period - 586-536 B.C.

During a period of exile, one might think that people would tend to lose their values and their sets of principles. This inclination did not take place among our ancestors; at least among the majority of them. The Jewish people succeeded in doing that which is beyond human imagination. In a period like the Exilic Period, when people were deprived of their homes, and had lost their political freedom and human rights, they were able to manage to maintain their way of life and their love of learning. The duties involved in bringing up children and educating them prevailed in spite of all the terrors of this period. Evidence of this can be found in the story of Daniel:

And the king spoke unto Ashpenaz his chief officer, that he should bring in certain of the children of Israel, and of the seed royal, and of the nobles; youth in whom was no blemish, but fair to look on, and skillful in all wisdom, and skillful in knowledge, and discerning in thought... (Dan. 1:4)

Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom... (Dan. 1:17)

It is also evident from the Book of Daniel that "They (teachers) that understood among the people shall instruct many." (Dan. 11:33)

Jewish Education During the Persian Period - 538-332 B.C.

Although the commandment was to observe the Jewish law through teaching and instructing the people, general subjects had never been entirely neglected. The Bible offers an abundance of material regarding the teaching and observing of the moral law.⁸

The Persian Period is known as the period in which a thorough and comprehensive system in education was developed. The authority of a parent over a child was practically unlimited. This authority manifested itself among other disciplines, in the field of education. The parents felt their moral and religious duty to carry on the system of teaching and learning.

During this period formal teaching was practiced. The two masters and teachers of this period were Ezra and Nehemiah. In the Biblical sources it is not clear whether or not they included in their teaching system any general subjects. We do know, however, that the Levites were the regular teachers for the people. (Ezra 7:10; Nehem. 8:7,8)⁹

We have attempted to discuss some aspects of Jewish education during the Biblical time. Only a few sources were discussed. The issue is clear: Jewish education appeared to be an indispensable factor throughout the Bible. For further Biblical sources, it is worthwhile for the reader to check the following sources in addition to the material which has been discussed so far: Ex. 24:12; Lev. 6:2; 7:1; 26:46; Mal. 11:7; Ps. 19:8; Prov. 3:1; 4:2; 6:23; 7:2; Deut. 31:9; 33:10; Jer. 11:8; 15:8; II Chron. 17:7; II Kings 10:1,5; II Sam. 7:25; Deut. 6:8.

B. Talmudic Views of Jewish Education

The sages of the Talmud carried on the old tradition handed down to them by their fathers. Their main sources at that time were the teachings of the Bible. In their special method they elaborated on these sources and made them available to the generations to come. The command, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." (Deut. 6:7) was taken by the sages very seriously. This was re-interpreted as follows: "He who rears his children in the Torah is among those who enjoy the fruit in this world while the capital remains for him in the world to come." (Shab. 12,72) Hence, the responsibility of the Jewish parents to train their children and prepare them for life was reinforced by the sages of the Talmud.¹⁰

These sages felt, as did the preceding generation, the sense of continuity, and gradually they made the teaching of the law their permanent practice. "Whoever has a son laboring in the Torah is as though he never dies." (Gen. R. 49:4)¹¹

As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, although education was originally a Divine Command for religious and moral study, it developed into love of learning for its own sake. The sages of the Talmud explained this point as follows: "If you have acquired knowledge, what do you lack? If you lack knowledge, what have you acquired?" (Lev. R. 1:16) The rabbis of the Talmud were very particular about learning. To acquire knowledge was considered by them as equal to life: "A city in which there are no school children will suffer destruction." (Shab. 2,9b)

Knowledge and love of knowledge was the most desirable occupation: "One reason for the extraordinary high value set upon education was love of learning for its own sake."¹² The rabbis expanded the Biblical command to teach the young the moral law, into a system. Under this system, every Jewish achievement in the field of education, which has been recognized as Jewish, was taught. Gradually, this system became almost the only Jewish weapon against their enemies.

In the Talmud, Esau was presented as a symbol of Israel's enemy, Jacob represented the power of learning: "... When Jacob's voice is heard in Houses of Assembly the hands of Esau are powerless." (Gen. R. 65:20). This keen desire for the instruction of children led to the establishment of schools. The attempt was made by Simeon Ben Shetach in the earlier half of the first century B.C. Another prominent figure in education was Joshua Ben Ganala. The sages used to say about him: "If it were not for him the Torah would have been forgotten from Israel."¹³ Before the school system came about the child was taught merely by his father. The school system, however, never freed the father from his duty to teach his children, even though, in some cases, the fathers did not have sufficient knowledge to teach their children. Teachers of children were appointed in Jerusalem, and even if the father lived outside the city, he would bring his child there and have him taught. This was a custom in a society where compulsory education did not exist. The motivation among the parents to teach their children came from within. It came out of an inner desire for learning. This is, perhaps, the earliest record of the adoption of universal education in any country. Even though the teachings of the Talmud cannot be entirely

applicable to the Jewish Reform system of education, we can still enjoy many of its ideas and even adapt them to our system. Some of the Talmudic narratives represent not only a unique approach toward education, but also toward religious acts and religious behavior. The following story was told by sages of the Talmud about Rabbi Chiyya who once made the statement which follows:

I work that the Torah shall not be forgotten from Israel. What do I do? I go and spin flax, weave nets and catch stags.

I feed orphans with the flesh, dress the skins into parchment, and write a copy of the Pentateuch.

I go to a place and instruct five children in the Five Books of Moses and six children in the Six Orders of the Mishnah; then I tell them, "By the time of my return, teach each other the Pentateuch and the Mishnah."

By this method I save the Torah from becoming forgotten from Israel.
(B.M. 85b) 14

This story is presented here to show some of the flavor of our heritage and the love of learning among the sages.

A great emphasis was placed by the rabbis on beginning the education of children at an early age. A boy's religious life began in his fourth year, as soon as he was able to speak distinctly. Although the child was not held responsible for fulfilling religious duties, it was required of the father to prepare him early to fulfill the commandments. (Ket. 49b). When the child reached the age of six he was sent to school: "Under the age of six we do not receive a child as a pupil; from six upwards accept him and stuff him with Torah." (B.B. 21a). Thus the child was exposed to knowledge from the age of four with the instruction of his father. Education at an early age was accepted by the sages as a

general rule: "Education must begin early and only study in youth... If one learns Torah in his youth, the words of Torah are absorbed in his blood and issue clear from his mouth." (Aboth 4:25)¹⁵

Some Views on Jewish Education From Sefer Ha-Aggadah

Behind the Talmudic methods on education, there was a concept of life. Our rabbis were not psychologists nor sociologists, but certainly they had the most profound insights into life and a deep understanding of the significance of learning. They laid down the foundations for the generations to come. Their endeavour was not in vain. Their principles were carried on, and the love of learning became a power. This was the power which protected our ancestors from assimilation.

In Sefer Ha-Aggadah, the various methods which were practiced by the sages of the Talmud were given a legendary flavor. In the Jewish legends, the desire to acquire knowledge was interpreted as a man's desire to learn a profession. The Biblical advice, "And thou shall choose life," was explained by the rabbis that 'choosing life' meant choosing a profession.¹⁶

Thus, the rabbis of the Jewish legends interpreted the Talmudic statement which said: "The father is obligated to circumcise his son; to redeem his son from the Cohen (Pidyon) and to teach him Torah," as follows: the father must fulfill all the above obligations, but he must also teach his son a trade, or a profession. "He who does not teach his son a trade, will be considered as though he lead him to go astray."¹⁷

The underlying principle in the teachings of the rabbis, both in the Talmud and in Sefer Ha-Aggadah, was the desire to dwell in peace and

harmony. He who instructs his sons and daughters in the right and honest path, the Scripture regards thus: "And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace." (Job 5:24 compare to Yeb. 62).

...of the Semitic nations in the field of education. He indicates that neither the Assyrians nor the Babylonians or Persians left any authentic contribution in the field of education. The Greeks and their descendants left some heritage to the world, but they know of any sense of pedagogy. The Arabs, according to Dittus, began their history of education in the Medieval Period and their influence took place, somehow, in an indirect way. Thus, Dittus says, by expressing that only the Jews from all the Semitic nations intervened in authentic pedagogy.¹⁸

They succeeded in maintaining their uniqueness in spite of all the disasters which befall them in their long history. They lived under the influence of different civilizations and cultures, but they kept the purity of their own. They were enslaved under the Egyptians, suffered under the Babylonian rulers, were released by the Persians, and persecuted by Muslims and Christians. In spite of all this, their dignity as a people was kept and protected. They lost political freedom, but gained religious practice. This has been the power of the Jewish faith through the ages.¹⁹

Every nation had a model to follow. The model motivated the philosophy of the nation as well as its method of education. For the Romans the courageous and disciplined soldier inspired their philosophy and method of education. Among the Athenians the motivation for their education was the harmony of physical and mental perfection. Among the

C. Some Historical Views of Jewish Education

Friedrich Dittes, a German author of the nineteenth century, wrote a historical survey on the contributions of the Semitic nations in the field of education. He indicates that neither the Assyrians nor the Babylonians left any authentic contributions in the field of education. The Canaanites and their descendants left some heritage to the world, but they lacked any sense of pedagogy. The Arabs, according to Dittes, began their history of education in the Medieval Period and their influence took place, somehow, in an indirect way. Thus, Dittes reaches the conclusion that only the Jews from all the Semitic nations introduced an authentic pedagogy.¹⁸

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Jews, however, the supreme principle which motivated their education was the perfect man who fears God and carries on the ideal Divine principle which was revealed by God to Israel: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them; Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. 19:2)²⁰

D. Jewish Education in Modern Times

The strength of Jewish education depended on the power and structure of the Jewish community. Authentic Jewish education was the product of the community. In Jewish history we refer to these communities as Shtetel. There was a Shtetel in Babylonia and in the State of Judah in Palestine.

The Eastern European Shtetel followed the norms of the Jewish past. In such integrated communities, the Jews lived totally Jewish lives. Jewish education was unquestionably available. The world of these people was literally the world of the Torah, with all its manifestations.

This situation did not last forever. The ghetto broke down, and the systematic method of Jewish education was kept only by a few. With the achievement of citizenship, all vestiges of the ghetto were lost. With emancipation, or part emancipation, the Jews found a new source of fulfilling their sense of belonging. As people moved to the big cities, Jewish education became tenuous.

With the vast Jewish immigration to the United States, Jewish education suffered a severe change. We will focus our discussion in this section primarily on Jewish education in the United States. At the turn of the century, Jewish education in the United States was in a very desperate state.²¹

This situation came about as a result of the great Jewish immigration of Russian Jews to the United States. After the arrival of one million Jews from Eastern Europe during the last decades of the nineteenth

century, and the additional million Jewish immigrants who came to this country during the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a desperate need for Jewish institutions and Jewish teachers.²²

During the first decade of the twentieth century, a number of efforts were made by all elements of the Jewish population to improve the conditions. These attempts led to the establishment of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City. During the thirties, Dr. Benderly, who was an outstanding figure in the field of education at the time, emphasized the need for Jewish education for the entire Jewish community.

Since 1910, forty community agencies have been organized in the United States and Canada. The following author indicates that "The growth of organized Jewish education may be ascribed to two major forces: 1) the influence of the Jewish tradition and the interpretation given by community leaders to the concept of community responsibility for Jewish education; 2) the development of Jewish community organizations."²³ Thus, Jewish community organizations in the United States came about because of the need for organized Jewish life inherent in Jewish tradition.

Principles and Goals in Jewish Education

Education, according to Oscar Janowsky, "is a life-long process, involving the interaction of the individual and his environment... In this process, the character, personality, intellect, and loyalties of the Jew are affected by home, the synagogue and Jewish organizations."²⁴

The main goal in Jewish education is to raise Jewish children in accordance with the essence of the Jewish tradition. The goal is to educate our youth for a moral and religious life; to teach them the

prophetic values of how to maintain their lives in society; to acquaint them with the ideals of perfect Jewish life according to the teachings of the Torah of Israel. These ideals must be taught with direct regard to the time, place, and type of society around them.²⁵

A complete Jewish life in modern society is almost impossible. We cannot neglect the need for general education, and at the same time we cannot ignore our tradition. The only way to achieve both Jewish religious education and formal education is by a combined effort of parents and teachers in the community. According to Grossman, "Jewish tradition is no longer a distinct current; it fuses with other cultural influences, and the distinctive Jewish character is fighting for life."²⁶

The problem of how to make Jewish religious education applicable to modern society, occupies the attention of many teachers and educators today. The problem is of common interest to the religious counselor, the religious school teacher, and the Jewish parents who are anxious to raise their children according to the Jewish tradition.²⁷

Grossman states that the problem of Jewish education must be handled as follows:

Modern Jews must reinforce their spiritual tradition by an effective religious pedagogy.

Upon the teacher and the school rests the obligation to secure the continuity of Jewish traditional spirit.

The Jewish people must meet the new condition... but we must not be willing to give up the ideal nor to shift the center of our moral genius, for we Jews have cultivated it under more trying circumstances and at some pains.²⁸

Our only remedy at the present time, to solve the dilemma of Jewish education, is through the Sunday School. Our endeavour must be to

raise this institution to the greatest effectiveness and efficiency. Since we want our children to be a part of modern society, we send them to public schools, colleges and universities. The only way we can acquaint our children with Jewish values is in the Sunday school and the Jewish home.²⁹

Others have approached religious education from a different point of view. Winchester, for instance, believes that religious education grows out of the social environment. He holds the notion that religion is not a subject, but rather an attitude. Therefore, he believes that religious attitudes can be acquired in public schools.³⁰

Winchester's view, in my opinion, violates the very principle of the division of church and state. Public schools are institutions of a secular government. Consequently, secular institutions do not have the right to interfere with the individual's beliefs. The principle of separation of church and state is especially important in a country of vast minority groups.

The only solution to the problem is to maintain a total separation between religious and non-religious institutions. If the religious goals are not reached in the religious schools, the public schools will probably not help the situation. In order to achieve the goals of religious education, the methods used in Sunday schools must be reorganized. As Grossman indicates, "Not only must the courses in all Sunday schools be reorganized, but the very principle of the reorganization must be agreed on... The course of study in all religious schools is to be determined not by the separate interest of denomination, but by the undeniable chains of life..."³¹

E. An Evaluation of the Present Jewish Religious Education

We are facing inevitable change. As a small minority spread out mainly in the big cities of this great nation, our position is a difficult one. In my opinion we cannot solve the problem of Jewish religious education with the all day school system. We must deal with the problem from a practical point of view. We live in a society which has put a strong emphasis on formal education. If we are at all interested in raising our children to cope with the demands and needs of modern society, then we must consider the all day Jewish school as impractical in a society such as ours. This does not mean that we are not interested in religious education, on the contrary, our prime concern should be to improve the present system of Sunday schools.

Some educators hold the notion that our religious education problem manifests itself in the lack of Hebrew instruction. Warner and Srole state:

The steadfastness of Hebrew throughout all the changes in the spoken tongue has served, first to keep the Jew bound to the long cultural tradition framed and preserved in the continuity of Hebrew as the ritual, literary, and scholastic language...

Without the Hebrew language we will become severed from the great tree which is life unto those that cling to it.³²

I beg to disagree with the authors, for the following reasons: the goals of religious education cannot be achieved solely by the student's mastery of Hebrew. There are many students who have mastered the Hebrew language, and yet they seem to have no particular religious convictions, and are without what could be called a religious outlook. The fact that many of the Jewish teachings are written in Hebrew does not mean that,

therefore the writings are religious. The Hebrew language is vitally important for the scholars, teachers, and religious leaders, but not for the laymen or the youngsters who attend religious school. In Jewish religious education we are interested mainly in religious values and religious attitudes, and to achieve these purposes we need not put the emphasis solely on the learning of Hebrew. From a practical point of view, it is pointless to spend the two precious hours every Sunday or Saturday on Hebrew instruction. Hebrew should be offered and taught to students who have achieved the basic knowledge in religious education. The core of this problem lies in the question raised by Philip Klutznick: "What kind or kinds of American Jew do we hope to have emerge in the generations ahead for whom an appropriate educational pattern or several such, can be intelligently devised?"³³ This problem should concern each and every Jewish teacher and rabbi. Above all, action must be taken by those who are responsible for the curriculum and method of religious education: "To shape a Jew for his own civilization, a Jew who could live fully and completely without division of sentiment, in a life apart from the non-Jewish world."³⁴

This must be our task for the future. Nonetheless, the religious school cannot be the only remedy. The schools need constant help from the parents. At the present time, most parents treat the school process as an atonement for their own alienation from Jewishness. The author claims that according to a study made on the subject, "one parent out of four cannot even name a single subject in the educational curricula."³⁵ It seems as though no real accomplishment can be brought about without

the constant help of parents. Thus, it is vitally important that every parent acquaint himself with all the necessary knowledge that constitutes religion, education, and the Jewish concept of the Jewish family.

Discipline for a Jewish value. The Jewish religion is not only among students, but among their parents. The parent must know his child best and is interested in all that he does. This discipline is also parents and children grow a part of the Jewish life of Judaism. Parents who have not received proper training in their youth cannot stand for their "minors" solely by teaching their son or daughter to a religious system. They will study Scripture and laws of Judaism, if not for the sake of learning, at least for their own sake.

For if our problem as parents is what we should teach our children. When the child finds out that his parents do not take their religion seriously, the chances are that the child will never go to synagogue. Every parent who is interested in the welfare of his children must give more than just food and shelter to them. Religion is not the dry words written in books. It is an act of doing. True religion must begin at home. Parents must endeavor to obtain Jewish knowledge in adult education available to all Jewish people, or in a school for Jewish studies. It is true that our religious schools need more teachers. But this is not the reason for the Jewish renaissance of religion today. Remember, the future of our holy heritage is in the hands of our parents.

F. Suggestions and Questions for Group Discussion

As parents, we cannot detach ourselves from the problem. Perhaps we should sometimes seek within ourselves to discover our failure. Self criticism must be our discipline. Discipline has a cosmic value.³⁶

Education requires discipline not only among students, but among their parents. The parent must show his child that he is interested in all that he learns. True education is when parents and children grow together in their knowledge of Judaism. Parents who have not received proper training in their youth cannot atone for their "sins" merely by sending their son or daughter to a religious school. They must study whatever they have missed, if not for the sake of learning, at least for their children's sake.

One of our problems as parents is that we underestimate our children. When the child finds out that his parents do not take their religion seriously, the chances are that the child will resent going to Sunday school. Every parent who is interested in the welfare of his children must give more than just food and shelter to them. Religion is not the dry words written in books, it is an act of being. Thus, religion must begin at home. Parents must endeavor to obtain Jewish knowledge in adult education available through their temple, or in a school for Jewish studies. It is true that our religious schools need some revision, but this is not the reason for the children's resentment of religious training. Remember, the future of our long heritage is in the hands of the parents.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Discuss the Biblical view of Jewish education.
2. How did the sages of the Talmud conceive of Jewish education?
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the all day religious school.
4. Outline some of the major reforms which you think should take place in Jewish religious education in the United States.

Notes

Chapter VIII

1. Kretzmann, Paul, Education Among the Jews, p. 24.
2. Ibid., p. 25.
3. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
5. Ibid., p. 28.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid., p. 37, 39.
8. Ibid., p. 49.
9. Ibid., pp. 49-51.
10. Cohen, Rev. Dr., Everyman's Talmud, p. 173.
11. Ibid., p. 173.
12. Ibid., p. 173.
13. Ibid., p. 174.
14. Ibid., p. 174-175.
15. Ibid., p. 175.
16. Bialik and Rawitzsky, Sefer Ha-Aggadah, part V, Chapter 114:29.
17. Ibid., Part V, Chapter 114:29.
18. מורים, נתן, ד"ר., חולדות החינוך של עם ישראל, חלק א' עם' 27
19. מורים, נתן, ד"ר., חולדות החינוך של עם ישראל, חלק א' עם' 31
20. מורים, נתן, ד"ר., חולדות החינוך של עם ישראל, חלק א' עם' 31
21. Gannes, Abraham, Central Community Agencies for Jewish Education, p. XI
22. נרדי, נח, בעיות החינוך בתפוצות הגולה, עם' 91-97

23. Gannes, Abraham, Central Community Agencies for Jewish Education, p. 1-7.
24. Janowsky, Oscar, The American Jew, p. 123.
25. חמיאל, חיים, לדרכי החינוך הדתי, עמ' 15
26. Grossman, Louis, Jewish Religious Education, p. 276.
27. חמיאל, חיים, לדרכי החינוך הדתי, עמ' 19
28. Grossman, Louis, Jewish Religious Education, p. 277.
29. Ibid., p. 277.
30. Winchester, Benjamin, The Religious Element in Public Education, p. 261, 264, 266.
31. Grossman, Louis, Jewish Religious Education, p. 280.
32. Srole, Warner, The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups, p. 229.
33. Klutznick, Philip, No Easy Answers, p. 52.
34. Ibid., p. 52.
35. Ibid., p. 56.
36. שיפמן, פ., בן-סירה, פרקים בחינוך, עמ' 8-177

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to present here some aspects of the Jewish family. The term family, simple as it may appear, encompasses a vast field of study and many aspects have to be taken into consideration to understand its numerous complexities. There is hardly a factor which is not connected or related in some way, whether directly or indirectly, with the family. It should be made clear that this thesis does not cover every issue concerned with the family. Furthermore, the various topics that have been treated are by no means the last word on the subject, nor do they include everything which has been written. The main purpose has been to select some ideas of primary importance and to prevent some thought-provoking material for the layman which can be used as a basis for group discussion.

The family plays a unique role in man's life. The source of our problems often lies in our misconception of the family unit. In the past, the Jewish family was united by the integrity of its members. The influence of Jewish teachings and ordinances perpetuated its structure and its strength from generation to generation.

The family is the basic social organization or institution. No other institution can serve as an adequate substitute. We may delegate to the school much of the formal education of children and adults, but the family will not cease to remain a potent instrument of education for both children and parents. No one can escape the educational influence of the home in the formation of habits, attitudes, and outlooks on life. We may transfer to the church and the synagogue the formal ritual of religion; but the home will continue to shape the religious life of men and women and children even more than religious institutions.¹

Whenever the family received the highest degree of consideration by its members as well as by external institutions, its integrity could be maintained. There is no doubt that Jewish life at home and the strength of the Jewish family has contributed a great deal to Jewish survival.

The family must be treated as a unit. We cannot know the source of children's problems unless we examine the pattern of behavior of their parents. In so doing we may discover, for example, that their parents were the victims of an unhappy marriage. This may lead us to consider the subject of divorce. Every crisis in the family usually affects all or most of its members. Lack of an authentic religious atmosphere in the home may affect and later on influence the child to marry out of his faith. Lack of a responsible parent-child relationship weakens the unity in the family and brings about a separation between its members.

One of the important truths which we have discovered is that the high value of family life requires, among other things, solidarity and cohesiveness. Two major factors determine family solidarity: the degree of attachment between family members, and existence of a general sense of group loyalty. Achieving family solidarity must rest on our concept of marriage. Early recognition of the importance of marriage and family life might solve many problems which develop later in the marriage, and may decrease the number of intermarriages a great deal. It is true in many cases that the parents play an outstanding role in terms of increasing or decreasing interfaith marriages, depending upon whether or not they succeed in conveying the insights and the Jewish attitudes toward a healthy marriage.

Achieving this goal will help to prevent not only intermarriages, but will also serve as a guideline in preventing divorces. Usually when a divorce occurs in a Jewish family, or intermarriage takes place, the parents react with bitterness and anxiety. They raise questions such as, "What have I done to deserve it?" Questions after the fact do not help to solve any human problems. The wisdom is to apply the right motivation at an early age and make it a discipline in the Jewish home. The fundamental idea behind this discipline is to create a normal parent-child relationship, based on mutual responsibility and understanding.

All of this can be accomplished through education. Everything is tied in with this important element. By education we mean not only teaching the children, but the parents as well. The need for authentic Jewish education must concern every parent, teacher, rabbi, and educational director.

This thesis is just a starting point for those who value the subject and desire to pursue it further. A great deal more research has to be done. In the meantime, the topics discussed here can be used for adult education groups as well as in temple youth group discussions as a beginning step. We suggest that each chapter be discussed separately. The leader of the discussion may decide how many sessions should be spent on each chapter. However, the following outline is presented to give the counselor some idea of how to use the material:

Each chapter contains three major sections:

1. The Jewish view regarding the subject
2. The view on the subject in modern times
3. The way in which Jewish tradition may be utilized.

It is our hope that the material will be of help, and stimulate interest to the betterment of Jewish family life, because, "The family is a covenant with posterity. It is out of the families of today that the world of tomorrow must come."²

Notes

Conclusion

1. Goldstein, Sidney E., The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, p. 83.

2. Ibid., p. 84.

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