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"Toward a Course of Study for Young Adults on Preparation
for Jewish Marriage"

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TOWARD A COURSE OF STUDY FOR YOUNG ADULTS
ON PREPARATION FOR JEWISH MARRIAGE

by

Selig Salkowitz

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
the Master of Hebrew Letters
Degree and Ordination.

Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio
March, 1954

Referee:
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DIGEST

This thesis was undertaken as an attempt to create a single volume Jewish marriage manual for pre-marital couples. That such a volume is necessary can be seen from the results of a questionnaire which the author sent to the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in the active rabbinate requesting information regarding their practices in pre-marital counseling. The findings in brief showed that they spent an average of 1.68 hours per couple and discussed six major subjects: The Jewish concept of marriage, psychological and sociological adjustment of mate to mate, dealing with family and in-laws, handling of finances, religious responsibilities, the role of sex in marriage, and planning for children. This manual is based on these areas of marital adjustment.

The fivefold method of this manual is: one, to present a well rounded marriage manual to replace those currently suggested by rabbis - manuals which deal primarily with sex. This has been accomplished by dealing with all the areas of marital adjustment. Two, to present Judaism's concept of the normalcy and desirability of marriage and sexual relations as positive values for the individual and society. This has been shown through Biblical, Talmudic and modern Jewish sources. Three, to emphasize that marriage requires the adjustment of the newlyweds to each other within the marriage relationship, and to suggest ways of achieving adjustment in

the main problem areas. This has been done by presenting the statements of leading secular and religious authorities. Four, to present the importance of religion within the home, by showing that the family needs the values of religion to create a happy family life, well adjusted children, and family cohesion; and that religion needs the family for survival and progress. Five, to explain the procedure involved in establishing and maintaining a Jewish home through ethical living and the observance of the Jewish customs, ceremonies and holidays.

Dedicated To
MOTHER and DAD

and to

MARCIA

With Love and Devotion

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INTRODUCTION

The creation of a book in the field of pre-marital counseling for Jewish young men and women has been undertaken because of the need for such a volume. That this is the case will be seen shortly as we examine the results of a survey conducted by the author.

Meanwhile we may note that while there are a number of books and pamphlets of this nature, some with a Jewish orientation, none apparently fills the need for a brief but comprehensive popular presentation for the Jewish layman. Moreover, rabbis who do counsel pre-marital couples find it useful to provide additional information for more leisurely consideration by couples in this constantly expanding and delicate field. Since more and more pre-marital counseling is being undertaken today by rabbis whose time is limited, a book of this nature becomes a real asset. Therefore, the undertaking of such a volume was considered of value in meeting the needs of modern Jewish life; hence, this volume "Toward a Course of Study for Young Adults on Preparation for Jewish Marriage".

Before the decision was reached to prepare this material two basic problems arose: First, was there actually a need for such a volume? Secondly, what should it contain?

To ascertain the areas of marriage that such a volume should include, the following questionnaire, together with

this covering letter was sent to members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in the active rabbinate; that is, rabbis of congregations, Hillel directors, and Chaplains in all branches of military service.

Pre- Marital Counseling

1. Do you engage in any pre-marital counseling? _____
Amount of time devoted per couple? _____
2. What books and materials do you often suggest or require for pre-marital couples? Please list titles.

3. In your counseling, which of the following areas do you include? (aside from wedding arrangements) (please check)
 - a. sex technique and adjustment _____
 - b. psychological and sociological adjustments of mate to mate _____
 - c. handling of finances _____
 - d. acceptance of religious responsibilities _____
 - e. relationships to family and in-laws _____
 - f. planning for children _____
 - g. others (please list) __________

Rabbi _____

City and State _____

February, 1953

Selig Salkowitz
Hebrew Union College
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati 20, Ohio

Dear Rabbi,

I am presently engaged in writing a rabbinical thesis dealing with pre-marital counseling as carried on by the Reform Rabbinate.

I would very much appreciate having your help. Would you kindly fill out the attached post card and return it to me promptly? Naturally your reply will be held in confidence.

Your cooperation will be warmly appreciated.

With sincere thanks, I am

Cordially yours,

Selig Salkowitz, senior student
Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion

The purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain (1) whether there were sufficient rabbis in the field who engaged in pre-marital counseling to warrant the preparation of a manual for pre-marital couples; (2) areas touched upon in the pre-marital counseling sessions, and areas considered relatively unimportant and therefore ignored for the most part; (3) materials which rabbis consider valuable for themselves in their pre-marital counseling.

In the preparation of this questionnaire, the author consulted with Dr. Sylvan D. Schwartzman, and Dr. Robert L. Katz of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Of all the areas considered in the field of pre-marital counseling it was believed that those contained within this questionnaire were the most vital and widely considered by the American Reform Rabbinate. This was proven by the few additions made by the rabbis replying to the questionnaire in the space provided.

462 questionnaires were sent and 200 replies were received. Of the 200 rabbis replying to the questionnaire, 155 or 77.5% engaged in pre-marital counseling; the average time spent was 1.68 hours per couple. Those areas most generally discussed were: sex technique and adjustment, psychological and sociological adjustment of mate to mate, finances, religious responsibilities, relationships to family and in-laws, and planning for children. Since these are the prime considerations of our rabbinate in marriage counseling it was deemed proper that these general subjects should comprise the material contained in this manual. Those areas not discussed to any appreciable degree by the rabbis were divorce, community affiliations and activities, later life, and common interests. We can observe the total results of this survey in the following table:

TABULATED RESULTS OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

	No.	
Number of rabbis replying	200	43.3
Number who counseled	155	77.5
Number who specified amount of time	130	(av.) 1.68 hrs.

Areas

a. sex technique and adjustment	65	32.5
b. psychological and sociological adjustments of mate to mate	130	65.0
c. handling of finances	65	32.5
d. acceptance of religious responsibilities	110	70.0
e. relationships to family and in-laws	61	32.0
f. planning for children	85	42.5
g. others-		
1. Jewish laws of divorce	1	
2. Community relations and activities	6	
3. Jewish concept of marriage and sex	2	
4. Recommend post-marital counseling	3	
5. Mixed and inter-marriage	2	
6. Recommend talk with family doctor	1	
7. Satisfaction in later years	1	
8. Spiritual basis of happy living	2	
9. Common interests	2	

Books listed by more than 10 as recommended:

1. Marriage Manual - Stone & Stone	43
2. Meaning of Marriage - S. Goldstein	19
3. Marriage and Jewish Tradition - S. Brav	11
4. Ideal Marriage - Van de Velde	11

Thus we see, from the percentage of rabbis who engage in pre-marital counseling, from their general agreement on the areas covered, and from the diversified books suggested for additional reading that there is a need for a manual which incorporates material in all these specific areas. The purpose of such a manual is to eliminate the necessity of the rabbis recommending more than one volume to the pre-marital couple.

The foregoing material, therefore, represents the result of research and investigation into those areas listed by the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as subjects most often discussed with couples who have come to them for pre-marital counseling. Consequently this material should serve as the basis for an ultimate "marriage manual" for the Reform Jewish layman.

JUDAISM VIEWS MODERN MARRIAGE

The day of the wedding isn't too far off now. The date has been set. The necessary reservations have been made, the bridesmaids have been chosen and their dresses ordered, the attendants' gifts have already been wrapped, and the wedding gown is having its finishing touches added. Perhaps you've just left the rabbi's study after having made the final arrangements for the ceremony and you've received answers to your questions about the license and the necessary religious symbols which must be a part of the Jewish wedding. You may have talked with him about some of the aspects of your marriage and how to help insure its success.

Everything needed for the wedding, then, has been taken care of - or has it? Are the two people who are being married fully ready for marriage? Yes, how about you, Miss Bride, and you, Mr. Groom? Do you feel you are prepared for the married life which the two of you will lead after the final benediction has been pronounced?

No doubt you have thought and talked of how wonderful it will be living together as husband and wife, sharing not only each other but all the experiences that life has to offer. But have you stopped to look more closely into all the areas of married life which both of you will share?

Such an examination will help each of you prepare for your new role as husband or wife. To begin with, have you thought of what marriage really entails and what each of you must do to make your marriage a truly happy one? Have you discussed the matter of finances, for instance, of who will be the family treasurer, of whether you should have a budget? Have you talked over some of the more intimate relationships to come? Have you maturely considered the important role that sex must play in your new life, not only as a physical relationship, but as a spiritual one as well.

There are other things to consider, too. Each of you will be taking on a new set of parents. Stories about in-laws are usually humorous; but have you paused to consider just what your relationships will be not only to your new parents but to your new brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and cousins? What about your religious responsibilities? Will you become members of a synagogue? What kind of a religious home will you have? Will you ~~not~~ to have the lighting of the Friday evening Sabbath candles, or to observe the Jewish holidays in your home? Have you talked about having children? It is true that now you wish to live only for and with each other; but surely you recognize that a marriage also represents a potential family. Isn't it important, therefore, that a bride and groom know something of each other's feelings on the subject of their future family?

Now it shouldn't surprise you that your religion, Judaism, is interested in all these aspects of marriage, too. Long before the science of Sociology appeared on the scene, Judaism recognized that the family was the basis of all society, of all communal living, that without the foundation of stable marriages the structure of society would be in constant danger of collapse. In order to help each husband and wife, the Bible and the rabbis and sages throughout history developed certain views of marriage which they felt would help establish a better family life. And the ideas and ideals developed by our religion have stood the test of time. Rabbi Stanley Brav, in his recent article on marriage has shown that there is less divorce, and less marital problems among Jewish families than there are among any other religious group.¹

Now Judaism would like to talk to you in general about your marriage. First it would like to point out that marriage is a normal human relationship. Your religion has always frowned upon celibacy and condemned it as unnatural. An unmarried man is thought of as being incomplete and unable to attain his true moral stature. The rabbis of the Talmud phrased it this way; "A Jew who is without a wife lives without joy, blessing or good." (Yeb. 62b) How different this is from the viewpoint of other religions. To Christianity marriage appears to be a compromise with human

passion, a legalized form of propagating the race. Listen to Paul's view on the subject. "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion". (I Corin. 7: 8-9.) As a result isn't the highest form of Christian living that of the priest, who lives the life of a celibate?

Judaism has always exalted the marriage relationship. The Bible tells us that God created Eve so that Adam would not be alone on earth. "And the Lord God said: 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.'" (Gen. 2:18) The rabbis even fancifully said that God was the "best man" at the wedding of this first couple.² Implicit in the story of Adam and Eve is the attitude toward marriage which Judaism has professed throughout the ages. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24) The rabbis expressed this ideal in their own way. They declared that marriage was an institution blessed and ordained by God for securing the material and moral welfare of the individual, and for continuing the human race.³

If Judaism regarded marriage as a normal human relationship, its view of sex was similarly healthy. Sex is considered to be a normal human appetite to be satisfied in the proper manner, as all other basic drives are to be satisfied. It is

a wholesome part of married life, necessary for children, but essential for true married love. By speaking of marriage as joining husband and wife as one flesh, your religion speaks not only in physical terms but in spiritual terms as well. A man and a woman through reciprocal love and affection, which is stronger than any other, unite in heart and mind as well as in body and become one being.

Secondly, Judaism wants you to know that marriage is a sacred human relationship. To your religion, marriage is much more than a civil ceremony uniting two people. The very word which Judaism has for the wedding ceremony reveals the holiness which pervades a Jewish marriage. The word is Kiddushin, which means "sanctification". Moreover on your wedding day each of you will pronounce the words hallowed by Jewish tradition: "Be thou consecrated unto me." Your marriage takes on a threefold meaning; it is a civil ceremony requiring the consent of both of you; it is a religious ceremony necessitating the performance of certain formalities; and it is also the beginning of a spiritual relationship. Bride and groom emerge as husband and wife with an obligation to live not only by the law of man, but by the law of God.

To Judaism, marriage is a "spiritual relationship sanctioned by society and sanctified by religion."⁴ To your religion, entrance into the marriage relation becomes "an act of life's supremest consecration."⁵

Thirdly, to Judaism marriage is a permanent relationship. Cynics living in a world where three out of every five marriages end in divorce might laugh at this statement. They might say, "Could the rabbis of old envision a world like ours? They were only moralists whose conclusions may have fitted their times, but not ours."

Let us see. What advice did the rabbis give for making marriage something permanent? The rabbis of old tell us that a marriage based on transient values such as wealth and beauty will itself be a passing phase. But a marriage built on permanent values such as faith and trust and understanding; upon an ethical and moral way of living will be as lasting as the values themselves. This does not mean that the rabbis disapproved of a pretty bride or of a wealthy groom; they were far too human for that. It does mean that these alone cannot be the basis for an abiding marriage; for if they are, what will happen as the passing years remove some of a woman's beauty, or if the ways of time take with them a man's wealth? Perhaps this is what is wrong with marriage today. Perhaps we have failed to apply the values which are still as applicable today as they were in the time of the rabbis.

Not really old fashioned, after all, are they? The stronger the underlying values and the sturdier the structure, the longer it will last. This is as true in the building of marriage as it is in the construction of a house or a bridge.

Fourthly, your religion holds that marriage entails a relationship of mutual responsibility. Each newly married couple automatically takes on responsibilities which neither partner had when single. The new husband knows he must provide his wife with all of the necessities, and some of the luxuries of life. The new wife assumes the responsibilities of a home. It is she who keeps it clean and comfortable, who buys the food and runs the house efficiently. Each half of the pair, each of you, has the responsibility to make your marriage a mutually satisfying and creative experience, one which will be the core of your life. The rabbis tell us that to a worthy man a wife is a help meet; but to an unworthy man a wife is a hindrance. (Yeb. 63a) They say also that a noble woman is a blessing for she can influence her husband.

Not only are there new responsibilities which each of you will assume, but there are also responsibilities which both of you share as Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed. The Jewish family has continued to exist as the example of true unity only as a result of mutual cooperation on the part of all its members. Each Jewish family has four responsibilities; the responsibility of husband and wife towards each other; their responsibility toward their children; the responsibility of children toward their parents; and the common responsibility of all toward God.⁶

No matter what your obligations to parents or profession

or business, your responsibility to each other and to your family is primary. When the responsibilities of marriage are accepted willingly and wholesomely the joys of marriage are increased. For the sum total of the experiences of married life will help each of you to grow and develop into the beauty and vigor of manhood and womanhood; which is one of the goals of a successful marriage.

And now, Mr. Groom and Miss Bride, how do all these Jewish views of marriage relate to you? First of all, they tell you that in planning to get married you are doing a very normal thing. Part of your new adjustment will be sexual. Your expressions of your love for one another will take on new forms. Your physical relationship will not be only for mutual satisfaction, but a demonstration of your love which words cannot express. You will have to make adjustments, but love and understanding will ease the way. Your new relationship will be a healthy one for both of you, for in the rich atmosphere of such a marriage each of you will grow and mature.

Secondly, you will be devoting your lives to one another; you are dedicating your entire being, physical and spiritual, to each other. You will now be setting up a Jewish home together. Included in your new home will be the symbols of your faith, and within your home will be the religious spirit of love and devotion, of trust and fidelity,

of piety and reverence, which your religion was the first to expound centuries ago and continues to demand of its adherents today.

Thirdly, your marriage will be a permanent relationship. From the day of your wedding you will be husband and wife in the sight of God and man forever. But marriage is truly permanent in a much deeper sense. The impress of the marriage upon each of the individuals can never be erased. Besides love, there are many other developing bonds which make a marriage permanent. There are the myriad experiences you will share together, the buying of furniture, the building of a home, and the everyday decisions which will shape your life you will make together. But the strongest bond between you will be the children who will issue forth from your marriage. When they shall come and how they shall be reared must be decided by you two. and you two alone. Children inevitably make marriage permanent; the parents live on in their children both spiritually and physically. All these experiences are forever a part of your life; they can never be eradicated.

Lastly, you can expect your marriage to change the nature of the responsibilities you now have. No longer are you held accountable only to yourself and your family; now you are living with a new person, and each of you has acquired a new family. Hence different situations create

different types of responsibilities. Now you, Miss Bride, will have to cook dinner every night, and you will have to wash the breakfast dishes and sew buttons ~~and~~ clothes other than your own. And as for you, Mr. Groom, you're going to have to remember to hang up your pajamas; you may have to stop at the grocery store on your way home for that extra quart of milk, and you may have to help with the dinner dishes. There will be the additional responsibilities of paying the rent, and of increased insurance. You will come to realize that there is a possibility of children coming unexpectedly. Certain new responsibilities will require your mutual attention. Both of you will have to work out a budget together to make sure you end with at least a balance of income and expenditure each month, with possibly a little extra for the savings account. You will come to know that your community expects help from your family as a new unit; and you have a responsibility to your religion as a new Jewish family.

The following chapters are an attempt to give you an orientation to these areas of living, as individuals in a new relationship to each other, as a unit within society, and as the basic element in the Jewish family. They are chapters dealing with the major areas of a Jewish marriage: your adjustment to each other, your relationship to family and in-laws, the management of your finances, the role of

religion in your marriage, the place of sex in your new relationship, and the planning for children which will eventually come.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stanley R. Brav, Marriage and The Jewish Tradition, p. 102.
2. Solomon Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, p. 37.
3. Moses Mielziner, The Jewish Law of Marriage and Divorce, p. 13.
4. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and The Foundations of The Family, p. 18.
5. Kaufman Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 316.
6. Samuel Cohon, Judaism A Way of Life, p. 80.

ACHIEVING ADJUSTMENT

Married couples agree with marriage counselors that the first year of marriage is the most crucial. R. G. Foster, in his book, Marriage and Family Relationships gives some reasons for this by saying that during the first year the couple has to face all of the problems they will have to face during the subsequent years of their marriage; and that they have the greatest amount of adjustment to make during this period.¹ The Bible, too, recognized that difficulties exist in the early stages of marriage, and as a result exempted newly married men from military service. (Deut. 20:7) No doubt one of the reasons for the "deferment" was the realization that each new couple must go through a period of adjustment after they are married; and if the new husband were taken away from his bride adjustment would be all the more difficult to achieve.

Because two hitherto "independent" individuals must achieve a mutually satisfactory relationship within a new life-setting, marriage inevitably presents to each new pair of newlyweds new responsibilities, new problems, and new circumstances to which each must adjust during the first year or two of married life. These involve difficulties over personal habits, the acceptance of new responsibilities, the development of problems stemming from the new marital relationship. Resolving these problems is essential to the happiness of a marriage.

You recognize, of course, that up until now this process has been only in its beginning stages. There is good reason for that. Think of your own period of engagement. During courtship each of you has been "on your best behavior"; each has tried to impress the other with the most favorable aspects of your personality and behavior. You have succeeded in minimizing your individuality and emphasizing your resemblances to one another. Not that this is wrong; it is normal and expected of any person in love. But, by "putting your best foot forward" the areas in which you differ may have become less evident to the other, and complete adjustment, therefore, has not been achieved. Yet you must recognize that differences between you do exist. Each one of you is an individual, and you can expect to differ from each other just as you differ from any other human being in your physical, emotional, and psychological make-up.

Once you return from your honeymoon, each of you will become a little more relaxed in the presence of the other - this must indeed sound very strange, for you no doubt feel at perfect ease with each other now - and your true personality traits, habits, and value systems will become more apparent. You will no doubt discover that there are many areas in which agreement is not as complete as it seemed prior to the wedding ceremony. Recognition of these inevitably enters into the adjustments that must be made in marriage. The degree or

extent of their occurrence depends upon the people involved and the areas in which adjustment is to be made.

First we note that differences of personal habits is an area in which the couple must make adjustments. Now two people, who previously lived by themselves, are living together. Over the past twenty or more years they have developed certain behavior patterns and habits. Understandably, these are not easy to change. He likes coffee in the morning; without it he is grouchy and unpleasant; she is a hot chocolate girl herself, and has never made a pot of coffee. He likes to go to sleep early and awaken early; she likes to read in bed at night and enjoys an extra hour of sleep in the morning. He likes to put a little money into the savings account each week; she would rather spend it all now for furnishing their home. He wants a dog for a pet; she is afraid to have any four legged animal in the house. All of these small areas of disagreement are brought into the open only after the wedding ceremony; they require some adjustment, some common effort to achieve a workable solution.

Another source of difficulties during the first year is the new responsibilities stemming from the marriage relationship which each partner must now accept. Now the husband must provide for two instead of one; the wife must learn to manage a household; there is rent to be paid; they

must arrange for insurance in case of accident or death. Both must think in terms of "the other party" instead of just "myself alone".

Both husband and wife are also faced with the new problems that grow out of the marriage relationship itself. First there are basic decisions to make. They must choose where to live. Together they need answer the question of whether to live alone or with one set of parents. They must decide how much rent to pay. There is furniture to be bought, and a household organization to be set up and put into motion.

The questions here are legion. What should be the attitude of each partner toward the friends he or she has? Should they give up many of them and develop new ones among the married set? Should the husband go out with the "boys" for an evening every so often? Should the wife continue with her work or college career? Is there a need for the added income she could earn? How do both of them feel about her working? There can be no general answers to these problems; each couple must work out a pattern of married life which will be satisfactory to both members.

During the first year of married life, too, husband and wife must strive toward achieving a satisfying sexual relationship. Each couple must come to some understanding

on the frequency of intercourse, and during the early months of marriage they must work toward attaining the maximum satisfaction. The actual attainment, however, may actually take a longer time to achieve.

Added to these are questions of the place of religion in the home and religious affiliation in the community, areas and forms of recreation and amusement, and the rapport of each with their newly acquired relatives and in-laws.

Moreover, during the first year of marriage they will find that the early romantic forms of love will change, possibly without their knowing it. So many couples feel that "settling down" means the end of romance; and they constantly fight to maintain the romantic love they hold while courting. Actually, when a couple "settles down" romance does not end, but the love that went into raptures over a full moon will give way to a deeper and more significant affection that needs no moon for inspiration. "The first flush of ecstatic romance will depart, leaving in its place an appreciation of the myriad ways in which love and life together can be expressed."² This conjugal love thrives on companionship, common experience and the number of happy episodes which are connected with a successful marriage.

It should be clear, then, that the first year of marriage is indeed a difficult one. It poses new problems,

presents new responsibilities, and calls for a transition from romantic love to conjugal love. Most of all, it necessitates the adjustment of two individuals who were Mr. and Miss, and who are now Mr. and Mrs.

But adjustments are required in the development of all human relationships because of the factor of individual differences and the demands of new situations. Just think of the days when you lived in a college dormitory, or in a "Greek" house, or the summers you spent at camp. In each instance you had to adjust to new situations and new companions. In this respect, marriage and family living are no different from any other human relationship. Discord between both partners during the early days and months of marriage is both natural and healthy. The rabbis of the Talmud went so far as to say, "There is no marriage adjustment wherein there is no quarrel." (Shab. 130^a) Marriage, then, is a learning process, and some conflict is inevitable. "Conflict merely indicates the presence of difficulties which occur as a couple explore new areas, and attempt new tasks."³ The more adjustment a couple makes in a given sphere of association, the less quarrels there will be in that area.

The big question here, then, is not how differences can be avoided or glossed over, but rather how can we promote satisfactory adjustment? There are four ways which

can aid us; they are the realization that marriage takes planning and work, the achieving of a modus operandi, the development of faith and trust in each other, and the striving toward mutuality. First, we must remember that successful marriages require planning and work. As Landis and Landis put it, there must be "a conscious recognition of the need for working at building a successful marriage."⁴ Judaism has always taken this view of marriage. It sees happiness in marriage not as a gift but an opportunity. Marriage "is a challenge to create a better life."⁵

Marriage is a vocation; and you must prepare for it in advance just as you would prepare for any other profession or business. Recognition of the need for preparation has shown to be a factor leading to successful marriages, while lack of its consciousness has often led to unsuccessful marriages.⁶ Advance preparation, however, must also be followed by the constant effort to improve yourself as a marriage partner, and strengthen your marriage relationship.

It is also wise to remember that you cannot wholly remake your spouse. Earlier in this chapter, mention was made of the difficulty of changing habit patterns; change in one's fundamental personality or character is even harder. Minor adjustments can be made; but you cannot reshape the whole personality of another individual. Even when a person

attempts a change in his personality pattern it is an arduous, and frequently an unsuccessful undertaking. Therefore, before marriage you must accept your mate for whatever he or she is, and do not expect any major changes.

Secondly, how can we achieve a *modus operandi* for achieving adjustment? There are at least four things that can help us here. One of the best is learning to talk things out with one's mate. It is good to talk things out, even heatedly if necessary; it is wiser to fight and make up than to brood over difficulties which are certain to arise. Once a disagreement has been discussed and settled it is no longer a point of contention; but if it is stifled, it is certain to appear again. Just as it is good to discuss areas of tension, it is important to learn something from each quarrel. Learn the cause of the conflict, and agree on ways of avoiding similar disagreements in the future. "The true marriage is not one without conflicts, but one that is ever reconciling its conflicts." 7

Another *modus operandi* is consideration for and patience with the other. For example, consider the other's feelings when making plans. Ask yourself, "Will David like this?", or, "What will Naomi think of this?" In the Jewish system of values, no person has the moral right to an exclusive concern purely with his own satisfaction without thought of its

affect on others. Remember the little things such as expressions of gratitude or courtesy or appreciation. Surely you mean to say them, but sometimes you forget. If you fail to remember too often, the other person will think that he or she is being taken for granted, and an unpleasant situation can possibly develop. On the other hand, understand that the little liberties which each of you will take, such as his coming to the breakfast table unshaven, or her with her hair in curlers, are not signs of lack of love, and do not seriously threaten your marriage. Stop to realize that a hasty word may be the result of a headache and what seems to be indifference for a moment may be pre-occupation with some problem. Moreover, since each of you is involved in a new set of activities, you are bound to make mistakes. She may go over her food allowance for the week, or he may forget to pay the rent once. Be patient with each other, and try to rectify your mistakes together.

"Patience and understanding come if two people really love each other deeply and have their eyes on the more important and nobler aspects of marriage and family life. When two people 'hitch their wagon to a star' the petty everyday misconduct becomes meaningless."⁸

Third, to weather the storm of marriage, the couple must build up a structure of complete faith and trust in one another. These are the ethical foundations of any successful

venture. Every marriage must be founded on a spirit of complete frankness, sincerity and truth. The Hebrew word for truth, Emeth, has three letters - the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The rabbis tell us that this is to teach that truth must be at the beginning, middle, and end of all things.⁹

Faith and trust are fundamental to enable husband and wife to make decisions which will guide their way on the "path of matrimony". In the matter of making decisions within the home, there must be an element of faith and trust. Decisions of a moment cannot be hard and fast; they should be flexible in terms of adjusting to whatever the future will bring.¹⁰ Such decisions require faith in each other's character and trust in each other's judgment.

A joint bank account is a good example of the application of ideals of faith and trust. Each partner feels that he or she can trust the other with the family finances; they have confidence in each other's discretion. This in turn leads to mutual respect through which their love for one another is constantly enlarged and strengthened. Their relations are warm, and their home runs smoothly. When this faith and trust exist within the home, peace will inevitably follow. The words of the prophet Isaiah can be applied to a marriage relation such as this; "The effect of righteousness shall be peace and tranquility in the relations of life."¹¹

Respect for each other's individuality and freedom within the marital relationship is another basic virtue which each should possess to help achieve a satisfactory relationship. Each person needs and should have a measure of freedom within the marriage bond to grow and develop, and pursue his own interests, but always with regard for the other's feelings and interests. A keen mind with its own individuality strikes fire in the thought of a partner increasing his mental ability and endeavor; each stimulates the other. Outside activities on the part of both husband and wife, such as book clubs, synagogue work, or community projects may enrich a couple's hours together, as each has something of his own to contribute to the conversation, and to the marriage relationship. As both partners grow through their varied activities and interests, the relationship itself becomes richer and more satisfying.

Fourth, to achieve a satisfactory relationship during the first, difficult and crucial year of marriage, a couple must strive toward developing mutuality. One way of doing this is by interest in the work and activities of the other. The wife should be concerned with her husband's daily work, discussing his problems with him, and possibly assuming certain duties in connection with it. The husband should take an interest in his wife's domestic life, sharing with her its problems and rewards. The husband should also seek

his wife's counsel in his business affairs, and not feel too superior to consider her suggestions. The rabbis of the Talmud gave this advice; "If your wife is short, bend down and whisper to her." (B.M. 59a) In other words, each should try to involve the other in his or her activities. 2

The first year of marriage should be the time when husband and wife start to build common experiences and values. Marriage is a partnership, the most significant joint enterprise in human life, and as in any other partnership it requires the work of both partners to be successful. It is at this period that both work at interweaving their separate lives into one pattern. Now two people share what previously they had separately, and also that which neither had before.

Sharing of course, also entails the sharing of friends and relatives, of interests and values, of problems, sharing everything in everyday life; this helps to make marriage more nearly perfect. First of all, when there is sharing of the good, it is easier to share the bad. When two people work together to establish a small business, they can enjoy the times when it prospers; and it is easier to take the blow of temporary setback or failure. Second, when two carry the burden, the load is easier to manage. There are many new problems and adjustments which must be made in the early days of marriage; but they are much easier to solve

when two work together. There is certainly a great deal of truth in the statement: "To be enduring and successful, marriage must not only be the parallel activities of two or more people; it must be the blending of individual activities into a common success and happiness."¹²

Sharing must also include the sharing of the common responsibilities of home making. "Simple evening chores are much more quickly done by two than by one, and make for companionship and sharing."¹³ This prevents the wife from feeling that she is a household servant working for a master; but creates in its stead an atmosphere of a working unit within the home. The basic Jewish value of "Sholom Bayit", the wholesomeness and unity of the household is well founded, for "unless the individual interests of all the members of a family... are coordinated, the essential requirement of unity is disrupted."¹⁴

One more question needs consideration in dealing with the subject of adjustment. Is adjustment ever permanent? No; permanent adjustment is never possible. Although major adjustments are made in the early months and years of marriage, adjustment is a constant process throughout all the changes in life. Husbands and wives must adjust when children are born, when youngsters mature and leave home, when grandparents move in with the family, and when death comes.¹⁵ Therefore, one must expect to continue working away at marriage not only

during the first year, but throughout. Further adjustments, however, are relatively easy if the couple has been able to make satisfying previous adjustments in the basic areas of married living. "If a good understanding exists between them, and mature affection, they will cope with the new developments that come, scarcely recognizing them as potential conflict sources."¹⁶

Actually, then, achieving adjustment in the first year of marriage requires the development of a mature love which recognizes that difficulties are certain to arise, and which consciously seeks ways of meeting and overcoming them. This mature love is the type which fits the definition of love given by F. A. Magoun in his book, Love and Marriage:

Love is the passionate desire on the part of two or more people to provide the conditions under which each can spontaneously express his real self; to produce together an intellectual soil and an emotional climate in which each can flourish, far superior to what either could achieve alone. It is an intimate relatedness based on mutual approval and affirmation of character and integrity of the personalities involved. It is not a situation where two parties think more of each other than they do of themselves... It is a situation where two partners think more of the partnership than they do of themselves. It is an interweaving of interests and a facing of sacrifice together for the sake of both, for love is not love unless it is expressed in action. It is the feeling of security and contentment that comes with the adequate satisfaction of each person's emotional needs through their mutual efforts. It is man's superlative method for self-realization and survival.¹⁷

Now that we have discussed some of the principal ways of achieving adjustment during the first crucial year, let

us turn to one of its more specific problems, that of the relation of the newly married couple to its family and in-laws.

FOOTNOTES

1. R. G. Foster, Marriage and Family Relationships, p. 107.
2. F. Brink, This Man and This Woman, p. 57.
3. E. M. Duvall & Hill, When You Marry, p. 187.
4. Judson T. Landis & Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 238.
5. Stanley R. Brav, Marriage and The Jewish Tradition, p. 182.
6. Judson T. Landis & Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 238.
7. T. Adams, Making Your Marriage Succeed, p. 121.
8. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, p. 96.
9. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, p. 90.
10. F. Brink, This Man and This Woman, p. 25.
11. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, pp. 98-99.
12. F. Brink, This Man and This Woman, p. 16.
13. L. R. Smith, This Love of Ours, p. 64.
14. Stanley R. Brav, Marriage and The Jewish Tradition, p. 22.
15. Judson T. Landis & Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 242.
16. Judson T. Landis & Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 242.
17. F. A. Magoun, Love and Marriage, pp. 4-5.

PARENT PROBLEMS

Mother-in-law jokes are usually good for a laugh.

Unfortunately, in real life misunderstandings between newlyweds and their in-laws can cause considerable difficulties between the families and the couple themselves, especially in the early years of marriage. Landis and Landis mention a study which revealed that in some cases these misunderstandings can result in either divorce or in a permanent state of friction with in-laws.¹ Thus we see that even though marriage is essentially a union of only two people, each bride and groom brings into the marriage relationship his and her own set of parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives.

There are two major reasons for in-law problems. The first is a natural one, stemming from the previous family life pattern. For the first twenty years of a person's life the family is a strong "we" group. The mother, being at home more than the father, is more intimately involved in the lives of her children and the children feel a measure of dependence upon their mother. In the closely knit Jewish family this is no doubt certainly true, and this is the pattern which the young husband and wife take into the marital situation. Since it is of such long duration, it cannot be changed by merely a wedding ceremony. After the wedding the mother will continue to give "suggestions" to her son or daughter, and the young adult will still come to counsel with his or her mother.

Here is where the problem begins for many marriages. Each spouse continues with his own accustomed relationship with his family, and yet may feel resentful of the attachment which the other spouse has to his or her family. Thus, unless both parent and child alter their previous patterns of association, in-law friction might develop.²

The second major reason for in-law problems is direct parental interference. Now this may be either real or imagined. Real parental interference is often caused by immature parents. The mother who is not mature herself will prevent her children from maturing. Moreover, such a mother can continue to be a source of friction to newlyweds. The man who marries the daughter of such a woman faces the possibility of difficulty with his wife and his in-laws as he encourages her to plan their life together without the aid of her parent. There is another way in which such a mother can be a source of friction. Before she "lost" her child through marriage her life was full; but now her days are somewhat empty and she has time on her hands. She starts to think of her children and feels as though the advice she has for them on how to run their marriage is in their best interest. Actually this may be construed as parental interference by one or both of the newlyweds.

Failure on the part of one spouse to develop objectivity

toward his in-laws can be a source of imagined parental interference. Sometimes a parent may offer well meant advice to the young couple. The daughter-in-law, instead of considering the advice objectively, says: "Your mother is trying to run our lives for us." To which the husband may reply: "If you will be fair, you'll realize that in this case Mother is right. She is only trying to be helpful." Each has had twenty years or so in which to build up a relationship toward his own parents. It is only natural to accept their guidance. What each needs to learn is objectivity and understanding, seasoned with humor.

One couple found a way of meeting imagined parental interference during the early days of their marriage. Each time that one mate had a derogatory comment to make about the other's family, he or she was required to stand on a small "mother-in-law rug" purchased especially for such occasions. The introduction of this humorous way of handling a touchy problem objectively removed an area of tension and eased what otherwise might have been a difficult adjustment.

Now what can the newly-wed couple do about the family "problem"? Living alone, away from parents and in-laws, is one of the best ways to reduce the possibility of difficulties with them. Distance from parents helps a couple to become better acquainted, set up a household of their own in the manner they like best, and work out the problems of their

marriage that are certain to arise, without depending upon their parents to make decisions for them. "A man rejoices when he dwells in his own home," says Judaism;³ and this is true of a woman, too.

Jewish tradition has always favored the procedure of newlyweds establishing their own home after they are married. The first mention of marriage which occurs in the Bible says that a young man should leave his mother and his father and cleave unto his wife. (Gen. 2:24), the implication being that the new couple start a home of their own. Antidating modern sociologists and marriage counselors, the rabbis of the Talmud recommended that each new couple live by itself whenever possible. Hinting at the dangers of two families living together, the rabbis gave this analogy: "Can a goat live in the same barn with a tiger? In the same fashion, a daughter-in-law cannot live with her mother-in-law under the same roof."⁴ Another rabbi put it in an even more forceful way: "Two women in a house means quarrel in a house."⁵

But even this precaution does not mean that there will be no in-law problems, and when they arise steps must be taken to solve them. The first essential is for the young couple to sit down and talk over by themselves what they themselves have decided in the way of family routines, recreation, child education and training and other matters. It will then be the responsibility of the husband to talk

over with his parent or parents the decisions they have made, and for the wife to talk over with her mother or father these same decisions, if it is her folks who are interfering with their family happiness.⁶ It is vital that each couple plan in terms of their own future. Their marriage and life together are primary, and all other people and things are secondary. That is what the rabbis meant when they said, "Before a man marries, his love goes to his parents; after he marries his love goes to his wife."⁷

In transmitting decisions to parents, it is important that the couple be tactful. Young marrieds must let their parents understand that they appreciate the help and suggestions that are offered, and that they will turn to them when they feel the necessity for help and guidance. The primary point to emphasize is that the newlyweds appreciate their parents doing things with them; but not for them. Once this type of relationship is established, the richest type of companionship can emerge. The husband becomes proud of the relationship of his wife to his parents, and the wife is happy of the comradeship between her parents and husband. This in turn makes for a closer relationship between husband and wife.⁸

Being able to discuss matters with parents and arriving at a working arrangement with them requires, secondly, that the bride and groom realize the necessity of accepting his

and her in-laws for what they are. Judaism has preached honoring of parents ever since the time of the Bible. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is one of the basic tenets of Jewish family life. Members of different generations will differ on many aspects of marriage and family life; but it is for the younger generation to attempt to be a little more sympathetic when the "oldsters" try to show that their way is best. Ideas, habits, and attitudes develop over long periods of time. Just as husband and wife cannot hope to change each other's habits and personality patterns, they cannot hope to change those of their parents, which have developed over a period of more years than theirs. It is the wise couple that learns to accept their parents as they are.

It is also wise for a couple to remember that most of what parents do for their children is done out of a genuine love for them and concern for their best interests. A wedding ceremony does not change the feelings of parents toward their children. The oft repeated phrase, "We have not lost a son, but gained a daughter" generally expresses the interest of mature parents toward their children. It is the intelligent spouse who remembers that the habit and personality patterns of his or her in-laws were the atmosphere which produced the person he loves.

There is one other area which involves a basic

relationship between newlyweds and their parents and in-laws. Should the newly married couple, or the couple contemplating marriage, ask their families to contribute to their support during the first year or two of marriage. Although this has definite relevance to the general topic of in-law relationships, it is included in the following chapter under the broader heading of "Finances".

FOOTNOTES

1. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 288.
2. Ibid., pp. 290-291.
3. Louis I. Newman, The Talmudic Anthology, p. 121.
4. Ibid.
5. ~~MANA~~ Buber edition, p. 17a.
6. R. G. Foster, Marriage and Family Relationships, pp. 152-153.
7. Louis I. Newman, op. cit., p. 256.
8. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and the Foundations of the Family, p. 121.

MASTERING MONEY

In a study of marital adjustment, Landis and Landis found that family discord is frequently attributable to a failure to agree on the handling of the family finances. Second only to the matter of sex relations, the greatest marital adjustments were required in the area of finances; and here approximately twenty percent of the couples questioned never reached a satisfactory agreement.¹

It is wise, therefore, for a couple to agree as early as possible, even before marriage as to how they will manage their joint finances. An honest, objective discussion of this subject during the engagement period will be of immeasurable help to the couple after they are married. During their engagement a couple can still be objective in money matters, but in the early months of marriage even simple problems seem more baffling than they really are. Discussing feelings about money can aid each in obtaining a better insight into the other's attitudes on the subject, and can help both discover in which areas they agree and in which they differ.

The story of Frieda and Saul may serve as a good illustration. They are both in their twenties, and plan to be married in June when they graduate from college. Frieda comes from German stock. In her family money is never spent without a careful consideration of its value. Frieda is thrift conscious as a result. Saul is a third generation American. His family, though not improvident, has never

calculated costs too closely. While Frieda carefully accounts for everything she spends, Saul does not. It they are to be happy together, it will be wise for both of them to discuss their attitudes toward money even before they are married, so that they may arrive at a way to spend and save which will be acceptable to both of them.

There are a number of areas within the realm of finances which apply to a couple even before they are married. For example, discussing income and expenditure before marriage will help a couple think more realistically about the standard of living they will be able to maintain after they are married. You will probably realize that your dream home may have to wait until both of you finish school, or until the promotion you expect becomes a reality. You may find that if you are to buy the automobile you want, you will have to forgo the weekly visit to the theater.

One authority put it this way; "The couple who are ready to assume the responsibilities of working out a sound financial plan for their marriage have already taken the first big step in meeting their money problems. As they gain experience in making decisions together and in keeping within the plans agreed upon, they find that the money side of their marriage becomes a challenge rather than a burden."²

A couple may ask, "How much money do we need in order

to get married?" There is no arbitrary answer to the question. It is evident that a couple cannot marry and maintain a home without income, but the amount of money is not the decisive factor. The sages of old recognized that there must be a financial base to any marriage and were wise in their counsel, "First build a house and plant a vineyard, and then take a wife" (Sota 44a). The income a couple needs depends on the standard of living each is willing to accept. Is a mink coat a sine qua non? Then the girl will not be able to marry a struggling young lawyer. But, if each has the attitude that he will "make do" now in order to build for the future, such a couple is building upon a solid foundation. Not the amount of money a couple brings to the marriage, but the attitude toward the standard of living dictated by reality is the most important consideration.

Jewish lore gives no one answer to the question of whether the wife should engage in some gainful employment outside of the home. Such a problem existed only rarely in the days of our ancient forebearers. The duties of a good wife were exemplified by the "Woman of Valor" in the Book of Proverbs (31:10ff); and they centered primarily about the home. Yet in spite of the Talmudic warning, "He who looks for the earnings of his wife never sees a sign of blessing" (Pesachim 50), there developed in 17th and 18th century Europe the custom of the wife supporting the family

while her husband engaged in the study of Jewish law and tradition. And today, newlyweds in ever increasing numbers are faced with the necessity of making a decision in this area.

Naturally it is impossible to give an answer that will suit every situation. In seeking to resolve this problem, each couple must consider the following: Does the wife prefer to work, at least for a while, or does she wish to devote herself entirely to managing her home? Is there a need for her extra income, or can both of them manage on what he is earning? Can the wife work and still manage her home? Are there strong feelings on the part of the husband against her working?

The primary decision will have to be made by both of them. Once this is out of the way, should the couple decide that the wife should work, the question may then arise as to what should be done with her earnings. If there is a need for the additional income, the question answers itself. However, if the added income is more than is required to maintain the couple, to what use shall it be put? Here, once more, there is no definitive answer. It is for each couple to decide how they wish to allocate it. Shall they put it into a savings account and build up a backlog from which they can eventually draw to buy new furniture, or build a home, or plan for their children? Or do they want

to spend it now on more extravagant living, and let the future take care of itself? Whatever the plan which a given couple decides to follow, it is important that both partners arrive at their decision jointly, and live up to it jointly.³ Their money should be considered as owned in common, a single treasury which belongs to both; and both should plan the use of this common fund.

Now let us consider the couple that begins marriage on slim financial resources. For example, what of the two college seniors who wish to be married at the start of their senior year? They are able to earn a little money working part time, but not enough to support themselves. Should they request financial assistance from either or both sets of parents? Once again, it is necessary that each couple in such a situation answer the question as it affects them personally. A primary consideration is whether the parents can afford to help the new couple financially. If one or both sets of parents are in a position to render financial assistance, there is no reason why the couple should not turn to them.

The giving of a dowry, a gift of money, by the parents of the bride, and sometimes by the groom's family, is an old Jewish custom; in fact it was considered almost a commandment. So important was this aspect of communal living in olden times, that almost every Jewish community had a fund for providing

a dowry for the girls of poor families. The virtue of contributing to a bride's dowry is exemplified by one of the Hasidic rabbis:

The Alexander Rabbi was once reading the Talmudic enumeration of acts of kindness, among which are to be found the following three: visiting the sick, welcoming the bride, attending the funeral. He asked: 'Why does the Talmud interpose welcoming the bride between the sick and the dead?' The Rabbi replied: 'The Talmud seeks to teach us that when we visit the sick person dear to us, we should give charity toward the wedding expenses of a poor bride. By virtue of this good deed, the Lord will preserve us from the necessity of attending the funeral of the friend who is ill.'

The purpose of the dowry was to help newlyweds start their married life together by giving their marriage a more secure financial base. Even though Jewish tradition favors the custom of the dowry, and though it is agreed that parental aid for a definite period of time at the beginning of marriage may be accepted, yet it is wise for each new couple to plan ultimately to be self supporting.

After marriage there are two important areas of finances in which the young couple must strive for agreement and adjustment. They are saving and budgeting. First let us look at the area of saving. No one answer can be given to the question of how much a couple should spend of their income or what part they should save; but it might be wise to remember the philosophy of the rabbis of the Midrash; "Three things injure the body: heartache, stomach trouble,

and an empty purse, which is the worst." (Kohelet Rabbah, 7) Most marriage counselors and economists agree that every couple should save some money each week, or certainly each month; some go as far as to say that savings should be the first charge against the pay check.⁵ However, many young couples find it virtually impossible to save at the very outset. They have the expense of setting up a household, providing insurance, and paying rent for the first time. But, whether the joint savings account is opened immediately after marriage is unimportant. What is important is the realization that they must plan for the future by saving. When a couple attain the things for which they save together, they may proudly say, "This is ours". With each new addition, they will be drawn still closer together by the feeling of mutual striving and mutual accomplishment.

Economists and marriage counselors encourage newlyweds to plan their spending so that the sums which they allocate for their various needs stand in the proper proportion to one another, in other words, to plan a budget. It may not be possible to institute a budget immediately after the wedding because of the extraordinary expenses of setting up house and the augmented income from wedding checks, but a budget should be set up as soon after as possible. Its importance for those who are new at housekeeping cannot be over-estimated. One marriage counselor states it this way: "Thirty dollars a

week income and twenty-five dollars out-go is heaven. Thirty dollars a week income and thirty-one dollars out-go is hell."⁶ The rabbis of the Talmud had a more humorous way of expressing it; "Eat vegetables and fear no creditors, rather than eat duck and hide." (Pesachim 111a) The proper budgeting of the available income teaches the novice to lay aside enough of each week's income to pay bills such as rent and insurance which call for the outlay of lump sums of money at stated periods. The cartoon depicting a woman asking her husband, "What should we do this month, eat or pay the rent?", is amusing; but such a situation in real life is tragic.

As in other areas of life, a budget should be planned jointly by husband and wife so that it will not become a source of friction. If both agree on certain allotments and certain purchases, there is no chance for recrimination. A pair who work out their finances together are brought closer together, for this is another area in which they share, in which they can learn mutual respect and confidence.

Yet, there are instances where the implementation of a budget leads to conflict. For example, a couple had arrived at a budget together, and had set aside the necessary funds for their various expenditures. The wife took the money designated for her expenses, and the husband his. The husband was very scrupulous with his money; he kept an accurate

record of every penny he spent. The wife never exceeded the amount she was to spend, but her records were not as accurate. The husband felt that his wife should account for each sum she spent, as he did; and a considerable amount of friction resulted from this arrangement. In a case such as this, it is wiser for the couple to arrange another method of handling finances. But whatever the method of handling income and expenditure, it must be arrived at jointly. Both must plan for it, and both must adhere to it.

Mastering the problems of money requires complete frankness. Many women would spend much less if they knew the exact status of their husbands bank account; and a source of marital discord would be eliminated. A woman must make her husband feel that she loves him, not his salary. If she does that, he will not be tempted to lie about his true income, feeling that if she knew the truth, he might lose face. A happy marriage can exist only in an atmosphere of frankness and trust.

Agreement lies at the base of good financial adjustment. Together a couple must seek a satisfactory system of handling the monetary aspect of their life. "Money should smoothe the path, not serve as a provoker of family battles."⁷

Now that we have discussed some of the particular areas of marriage and family life, let us turn our attention to one which is all embracing, that of the role of religion.

FOOTNOTES

1. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, p. 313.
2. Evelyn M. Duvall, Facts of Live and Love For Teen-Agers, p. 247.
3. Ibid., p. 246.
4. Louis I. Newman, The Hasidic Anthology, p. 234.
5. L. R. Smith, This Love of Ours, p. 36.
6. Ibid.
7. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, op. cit., p. 323.

RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES

What is the role of religion in family life? Is it something which teaches the family from without? Or is it basic to the pattern of family living? Let us see first what we mean by religion within the home. It is certainly more than a series of formal observances, in many cases devoid of meaning. To attempt to limit the religious practices of the home to a few forms is to deaden it. But to feel that the best aims and efforts of all within the home are supported by a power from without and that the highest purposes of each member of the home are directed toward a common future is to put religious faith and trust at the very center of the home.¹

This type of religion provides for a happier family life; it does so in three ways. First of all, it brings husband and wife closer together, and completes their marriage. The rabbis expressed this idea in these words: "Man cannot exist without woman, nor woman without man, nor both of them without God's presence." (San. 74b) By this statement the rabbis meant that where God is involved people have a fundamental respect for one another, a sense of reverence. They share in a common experience of God, in a fundamental outlook which has a reverence for life. Reverence for life means not to hurt, not to disparage; it means having a fundamental kindness for one another. The base is God, religion. When God is not present in the

relationships between man and woman, they degenerate into disharmony and discord. The kind of love which involves God means that each can make sacrifices for the other. This is portrayed by the prophet, Hosea, to whom God is love. Strengthened by the feeling of the closeness of God within his home the prophet was willing to make the greatest sacrifices to rescue his wayward wife from a life of immorality. These ideals of love and devotion, of sharing and self-sacrifice, are contained within the wedding ceremony, which begins each Jewish marriage.

Secondly, religion is important to the children within the family. The framework of love and devotion which religion produces is necessary for the healthy physical and psychological development of the child. It is a generally accepted psychological principle that children derive a source of comfort when they can understand the meaning of things about them. The idea of the Fatherhood of God supplies them with a meaningful explanation of the pattern of their world, which in turn gives the child a greater sense of security. A meaningful religious home life also develops the roots for his being a positive Jew. The pleasant Jewish associations of childhood, and the satisfactions gained through ethical living and ceremonial observance are strong supports for living as a Jew even when he is attacked because of his religion.

Thirdly, religion makes for a happier family life by bringing the family closer together, especially through religious observances. The word "religion" itself is derived in part from the Latin, Religio meaning to bind together. It not only binds the community together, but it also unites the family through the practices and observances which are a necessary part of any religion. We have already seen how a husband and wife are bound to each other through reverence and love that have their roots in religion; here it is extended to all members of the family. Rabbi Jerome Folkman makes this observation: "In the modern world there are many centrifugal forces which seem to pull families apart. One of the strongest centripetal forces which holds families together is religious observance."² Let us look at an average week in the life of an average American Jewish family. Monday is bowling night for dad; Tuesday is David's boy scout meeting; Wednesday is bridge night, and Thursday Naomi has a sorority meeting. Each night someone else is away from home. Dad may not see the children for more than a quick hello or goodbye. But when Friday night comes, all is different. The whole family has a leisurely dinner together, Mother lights the candles, and Dad recites the Kiddush sanctifying the Sabbath day, separating it from all other days, blesses the children, and together they sing the traditional Sabbath melodies. After dinner they go to Temple to join with the other families of the congregation in prayer and thanksgiving

to God. This is true also of the various holidays throughout the year, each with its special foods and customs, each with its special decorations and observances.

Thus we observe the value of religion in family life. It brings husband and wife closer together; it helps in the psychological upbringing of the child; and it acts as a cohesive force in developing family unity.

Just as religion is necessary for the family, so the family is essential to Judaism. Here we have the statements of Rabbi Ignaz Maybaum, Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner, and Dr. Israel Cohen to attest to this fact. "The Jewish marriage was, and always will be the instrument for the survival of the Jewish people, and for the preservation of its faith... The continued existence of the Jewish people is closely connected with the safeguarding of Jewish family life."³ "It is the family that has preserved the Jew."⁴ The family possesses more than ordinary importance in Jewish life, for it is the bond of cohesion which has safeguarded the continuity of religious tradition. It is the stronghold of Jewish sentiment in which Jewish life unfolds itself in its most typical forms and intimate phases.⁵

The synagogue is the hub around which the Jewish community revolves, but without the family the synagogue cannot function, or even continue to exist. And as the

family is the mainstay of the synagogue, it is likewise the support of the religious school. "The most potent of the informal educational influences playing on the lives of our young people is the example set in the home," says Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner.⁶ No matter what organized religion and the religious school teach, it will be meaningless if what is taught is not practiced within the home. "If religious teaching is to be effective, it must be inculcated into children as a normal result of the process of living."⁷ Only within the home can such training be given.

The family is essential to Judaism, too, because it is the most intimate area of human association from which the whole of society stems. It is first and foremost, the microcosm of the larger Jewish world. In the family situation the basic forms of Jewish living are brought into play. Within the family the ethics, the ideals, and the observances of Judaism are practiced and thereby preserved. But, as such, the family is also basic to the world at large. The values of Jewish family life become the foundation stones for the building of the whole human family.

Once we have understood the interdependence of family and religion, we appreciate the benefits that the observance of Judaism in the home can provide. But we must consider the means by which religion is practiced in the home. One

way is through prayer, and there are two types of prayer in the home situation. One is formal prayer, such as Grace before and after meals, the Kiddush, or any of the traditional liturgical prayers. The other kind is the informal, those personal utterances expressed aloud or silently by which the individual brings himself into closer contact with his God.

The observance of the Jewish holidays and the use of Jewish ceremonials are two more avenues of religious practice in the home. Since Judaism is organically related to all the aspects of the life cycle, from birth to death; both the family and Judaism benefit through the observance of circumcision, Bar Mitzvah and Bas Mitzvah, Confirmation, Marriage, and even Death. Through the observance of these practices, the family is enriched by their warmth and beauty and by the meaning life gains through them. The celebration of the various Jewish holidays, each with its own message, its particular customs and ceremonies, and even its special foods, are integral, too, to the observance of Judaism within the home.

But Judaism is also practiced within the family through practical application of its ethical ideals. It is folly for a parent to think he can teach his child ethical behavior except through experience. Whether for good or bad, a child usually imitates his parents' actions. In the words of Dr. B. Bettelheim; "The process of growing up is largely a process of assimilating parental values."⁸ If a parent is good to his

family, if the home contains the love of the parents for each other and for their children, the children will maintain the same behavior patterns within their homes and in the outside community. "The problem is not the teaching of religion in the family; it is rather to make the family religious."⁹ Telling a child, "This is what Judaism teaches-- love your parents, love your fellow-men, be honest, do not steal, do not lie" is meaningless unless the child sees the day-to-day application of these values within his own family. "The Hebrew ideal of the home as a place where the desires and the knowledge of God would be graven on the hearts of the family, talked about at meals, and meditated upon in the night watches, still stands as the noblest yet conceived."¹⁰

Thirdly, Judaism can find expression in the home through Jewish symbols: Jewish ceremonial objects, Jewish books and magazines, Jewish art, and Jewish music. All of these impart a unique Jewish flavor to the home.

Two questions remain; When should these symbols be introduced into the home? And how? To the first question, the answer is---right from the beginning. There are two reasons for this. First: It is difficult to change a pattern, once it is set. So if it is set at the very start, it will become the habit of the household. Besides, when children are born into this environment, it will condition them

Jewishly; and, as we have seen, if religious training is to be effective, it must be a part of a child's normal living experience.

Second: The presence of Jewish symbols in the home identifies this man and this woman with Judaism. It gives them a Jewish consciousness. Every thought that is evoked by a M'zuzo, a Bible, a picture, a song that is Jewish, links them with the whole of Jewry---it's tradition, it's lore, it's yearnings and hopes. By this identification they gain a feeling of belongingness and of security that is basic to happiness. It gives them self-respect.

Rabbi Jerome Folkman has made the observation that "In a very real sense many young people of the Jewish faith have to pioneer in the development of a religious program for their homes."¹¹ Because they had no such experience when they grew up many young people feel that it is difficult and unrewarding to undertake a religious program in their own home. The best advice we can give them is to say: in religion as in art, doing comes first and appreciation later.

Well, then, by what practical steps can we convert the new home into a religious one? A good beginning is to provide for a religious trousseau. Many relatives and friends ask the couple what they would prefer as a wedding gift; this is an excellent opportunity for securing the necessary

religious items. These would include a Mezuzah for the new home, religious and ceremonial objects such as Sabbath candlesticks, a Kiddush cup, a Challo cover, a Chanuko Menorah, and a Pesach Seder plate. They might also provide the basic Jewish library of a Bible, the Union Prayer Book volumes one and two, the Union Home Prayer Book, the Union Haggadah, and S. Markowitz, Leading a Jewish Life in the Modern World- an attempt to answer some of the disturbing questions in the process of the adjustment of the Jew to the modern American environment. A helpful guide to home observances. Other worthwhile books of Jewish interest that one might have are:

- P. Bernstein, What The Jews Believe- a description of the Jewish practices and beliefs based on the cycle of calendar holidays.
- S. Cohon, Judaism a Way of Life- a description of Judaism in its varied aspects of modern religious living.
- S. Freehof, Reform Jewish Practice- a description of present day Reform Jewish practices, and the traditional rabbinic laws from which they are derived.

The Small Sanctuary- a popular work on the prayer book and its development.

- L. Leonard, Jewish Cookery- a guide to Jewish cooking with its traditional recipes for all notable Jewish dishes, suggested menus, and special holiday foods.
- H. Schauss, The Jewish Festivals- The historical and religious significance of each of the Jewish festivals and fast days, and their observance and celebration throughout the centuries.

The Lifetime of a Jew- a discussion of the life cycle of the Jew from birth to death, the historical and religious significance of life and their observance throughout Jewish history.

M. Steinberg, Basic Judaism- a non-partisan treatment of the Jewish religion and the beliefs, ideals and practices which make up the historic Jewish faith.

Beginning marriage with such a religious trousseau is the ideal way for a couple to start their Jewish home life.

Each newly married couple must realize that after the honeymoon it becomes necessary to descend from the emotional heaven to the regulated path of life, to leave their lover's solitude and enter into the community to share the life of others as a married couple. A family cannot remain within itself, it must reach out into the community for wholesome and constructive activities. Hence the second step a newly married couple may take in establishing a Jewish home is affiliation with a synagogue. In addition both may join the Young Marrieds Group; or the wife can join the Sisterhood, and the husband the Brotherhood. In this way they not only meet new friends, but they also become active participants within the Jewish community and strengthen the Jewish religious foundations of their home.

A third step toward the beginning of a Jewish home is the consecration of the home when the couple is finally settled and they affix the Mezuzah, the symbol of a Jewish home, to the doorpost, with the appropriate blessings, and symbolism. This can be followed by a housewarming (see Union Home Prayer Book pages 7-12) By this means the couple

publicly affirms their intention to establish a Jewish home and asks God's help in their resolve.

The next step calls for the regular observance of the Jewish holidays. We may mention each briefly here. For additional information the couple is referred to appropriate references.

The Sabbath- Shabbos is the most frequently recurring Jewish holiday. Its presence once each week, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday brings welcome relief from the cares of the week. In the Reform Jewish home it is observed by the traditional Sabbath meal at which the mother lights the candles, and the father recites the Kiddush and blesses the children. The service is found in the Union Home Prayer Book, pp. 13-18. In a number of Jewish homes, the departure of the Sabbath is observed on Saturday night with the Havdalah ceremony, bidding the "Queen of Days" farewell until the following week. This service may be found in Markowitz, pp. 135-138.

The High Holydays- The observance of Rosh Hashono and Yom Kippur, New Year and the Day of Atonement, centers primarily about the worship within the synagogue; but the worship in the synagogue has its counterpart in the home. Rosh Hashono

is ushered in with a festive note. The candles are lit, and the holiday Kiddush is recited. All present partake of a little honey spread on bread as an omen for a sweet year. Yom Kippur eve is not festive; the mother lights the candles, and the family eats dinner together before going to Temple. For details see Markowitz, pp. 151-155; 171-172.

Sukos- This holiday is the counterpart of Thanksgiving, occurring five days after Yom Kippur. The Jew thanks God for the bounty of the harvest which he has received, and he pauses to remember how dependent man is upon nature. Many Jews celebrate this holiday by constructing a Suko in their backyard or even a miniature one within the home, as a remembrance of how our ancestors dwelt in tents while they wandered through the desert. In addition, the holiday candles are kindled, and the Kiddush recited. As on Rosh Hashono, each person eats a small piece of bread dipped in honey, an omen for a sweet year. A detailed description of how to observe this holiday is given in Markowitz, pp. 180-192.

Chanuko- The Feast of Lights - Although in the past this was not considered a major Jewish holiday, in the sense that its observance is not mentioned

in the Bible, it has assumed more and more importance within the life of the modern Jew in recent years. It is a joyous holiday with serious undertones, commemorating the first victory in history of the forces of idealism and religious freedom over those of tyranny and oppression. It reminds the modern Jew that it is not always easy to be a Jew, that at times he must fight for his rights. Chanuko is a time for gift-giving, a time to decorate the home in the spirit of the festival, and to recall the story of the first Chanuko by lighting the candles in the menorah and chanting the blessings. The Chanuko service for the home and instructions for making home decorations are contained in Markowitz, pp. 213-224.

Purim- The Feast of Lots - The story of this holiday is similar to that of Chanuko. It, too, relates how the Jew triumphed over a tyrannical foe. It is recorded in the Bible in the Book of Esther. The holiday is celebrated with feasting and rejoicing both in the synagogue and at home. In the synagogue the Book of Esther is read aloud, with cheers from all for Mordecai and Esther, the hero and heroine, with boos and hisses for Haman the villain. In the home, Purim is celebrated.

with the exchange of gifts, and by eating of the special food for the occasion, Hamantaschen. Descriptions of how to observe Purim within the home are contained in Markowitz, pp. 237-242.

Pesach- Passover - Commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and expresses the hope that some day human beings everywhere will be free from the chains of bondage, both physical and spiritual. The holiday centers primarily around the family Seder - which combines family prayer and festive eating. The ritual for the Seder is contained in the Union Haggadah, along with descriptions of all the Passover symbols necessary for the Seder service. Recipes for the holiday dishes can be found in any Jewish cook book. In Jewish Cookery suggested preparations and recipes for Passover are found on pp. 37-38.

Shovuous- The festival of weeks - This holiday comes seven weeks after Pesach and brings to a close the yearly cycle of Jewish holidays. Traditionally, it celebrates the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Today Jews ~~have~~ marked this holiday by confirming their children in the faith of their fathers. In the home, dairy foods are eaten to symbolize the land of Israel, described in the Bible as "Flowing with milk and honey."

For more ^{suggestions on} ~~suggested~~ observance, see Markowitz,
pp. 284-289.

In addition to holiday observance the couple can also observe their religion in the home through daily prayer, in the morning, at meals, in the evening before retiring, or at any time in the day when a person wishes to pray to his God. These prayers can be the formal ones contained in the liturgy, such as the Shema in the morning and evening, or the blessing over the bread or Grace at meals, and prayers for many specific occasions are contained within the Union Home Prayer Book. They can also be the informal type, as the heart may prompt when an individual wishes to commune with God.

For the couple that has not grown up in a religious home many of these practices and customs may at first seem strange. Some may even question their ability to perform these rites. The best suggestion that can be given these individuals is that they try. They may feel self-conscious at first, but repetition will breed confidence, and instill a feeling of understanding and joy in performing the ceremonies of the Jewish faith.

Moreover the couple is not thrown solely upon its own resources. There are many sources to which they can profitably turn for explicit assistance. First there is the temple. Many congregations hold workshops before each of the holidays,

to demonstrate how to decorate the home and even how to prepare the special dishes. Such workshops are designed especially for young people who are celebrating holidays in their own home for the first time. The community of interest among those present creates a camaraderie which renders the experience a joyful one.

A second source of information and help is the rabbi, who is always willing to assist a couple in such matters. It might be wise for the couple, in a pre-marital interview, to ask the rabbi for some suggestions on how to start their Jewish home.

Thirdly, there are a number of books, in addition to those listed above, which contain the very information which such couples will need, for celebrating the Jewish holidays. The rabbi will be happy to make them available.

There is one final source for information, and that is neighbors, friends, and family. Next door neighbors are always happy to aid newlyweds in starting their home, and Jewish neighbors who observe the Jewish holidays in their own homes can be an excellent resource for the young bride and groom.

We have seen that Judaism and the Jewish family are inextricably linked together. The ideals and values of Judaism

such as love, understanding, cooperation, a will to sacrifice, trust, and reverence for the individual are essential to a happy family life. We have also seen that without the family Judaism cannot survive, for "It is the family that has preserved the Jew" and Judaism throughout the centuries.¹² It is for each couple to live their lives Jewishly so that they can benefit from the values that Judaism has to offer, and so that they can do their share to perpetuate those values for their children and for generations yet unborn.

Both husbands and wives come to marriage with a vast amount of misinformation concerning the place and function of sex. Let us examine the role of sex in the total marriage relationship.

FOOTNOTES

1. F. Brink, This Man and This Woman, p. 25.
2. Jerome D. Folkman, Democracy and Religion Begin At Home, p. 9.
3. Stanley R. Brav, Marriage and The Jewish Tradition, p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 179.
5. Israel Cohen, Jewish Life In Modern Times, p. 37.
6. Stanley R. Brav, op. cit., p. 175.
7. E. M. Duvall & Hill, When You Marry, p. 356.
8. Bruno Bettelheim, "How Arm Our Children Against Anti-Semitism", Commentary, September, 1951.
9. E. M. Duvall & Hill, op. cit., p. 356.
10. F. Brink, op. cit., p. 60.
11. Jerome D. Folkman, op. cit., p. 9.
12. Stanley R. Brav, op. cit., p. 179.

THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

A mutually satisfactory sex relationship is one of the most vital factors contributing to marital happiness.

Landis and Landis put it this way:

A satisfying sex relationship is one of the positive elements contributing to the well-being of the individual and of the married pair. The couple who find satisfaction together in the sexual relationship are most likely to have well integrated personalities and to have a home in which children will find happiness. They will also be able to condition their children to look upon sex as one of the normal and desirable satisfactions of human living. Just as we appreciate good food and comfortable shelter, a workable philosophy of life, and the security of religion, so we recognize sex fulfillment in marriage as a positive good. Its value consists not only in its function of reproducing the race, but in a constructive force for the happiness of individuals. It can be the most complete form of love expression, contributing to the mental, emotional, and physical balance which is necessary if two people are to have a happy and successful marriage.¹

Thus we need to consider the role of sex in marriage and the attendant matters of having children and contraception. Sex is not, however, the basic and all-important factor upon which a marriage succeeds or fails. "Sexual union is but one of a complicated set of relationships and activities which make up the whole interactional pattern of a marriage."² Let us examine this area of marriage and its role in the complete pattern of marital adjustment.

First let us look at the place of sex in marriage. Judaism realizes that man has desires and passions. It does not seek to stifle them, but to govern them. "The Jew approached the matter of sex relationship neither with the

horror of the prude, nor with the passionate eagerness of the pagan, but with the sane and sound attitude of the far-seeing prophet. His goal was the creation of the ideal home which to him meant the abode of purity and happiness, the source of strength and vigor for body and mind."³ Hence sex has always been considered by Judaism to be a normal and natural part of the marriage relationship. The rabbis of the Talmud advocating this attitude, raised sex to the nature of a Divine Commandment emphasizing the fact that "When a man and wife so engaged they were carrying out the will of God, were working in the Divine pattern for the achievement of the God ordained destiny of mankind."⁴ So we see that the marital relationship was something holy in Jewish thinking. The rabbis felt that God founded His world with both man and woman in it. He established an eternal love within them and charged them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28) so that the earth would always be filled with creatures that bear his image. Thus Judaism has always felt that when husband and wife engage in intercourse through their God-given love, they are following a divine precept, and must conduct themselves accordingly.⁵

This view of sex in marriage is quite different from the Christian attitude, which is expressed in the writings of St. Paul; "It is better to marry than to burn." (I Corin. 7:9) Christianity views sexual intercourse in marriage as something

to be discouraged, to be used only for physical relief, so as to make it easier to avoid illicit relations.⁶ This view of marriage "is based on the ideas of male domination, the unworthiness of sex relations, and the inferiority of women."⁷ Christianity realizes the need for propagation if the race is to survive, and as a result has modified its concept of the place of sex in marriage. "But the assumption has been that while it is desirable for women to have children, they should participate in sexual activity as little as possible, and that they can gain the heights of grace only by turning their backs upon sex and everything connected with it."⁸

Modern marriage counselors view the role of sex in marriage in the same perspective as Judaism. They agree that sex is important, that it is only a part of the total marriage relationship, and that a proper attitude toward sex is necessary to provide for sound marital adjustment. As one marriage counselor put it; "To use the ability to demonstrate affection as a bridge over the differences in opinion and as a healing agency for the breaks in harmony, to use it as an agency to establish a home with children at the center, is to lift the act of physical love out of the realm of the purely romantic and bring it into the realm of the realistic."⁹ The sex act can be satisfying not only physically, that is by relieving physical tension; but also mentally and spiritually. A couple feels that they can bring harmony and beauty into

their marriage through the physical union of their bodies. This approach to sexual adjustment has as its basis the deep love of two people for each other, and the underlying feeling that both man and woman are equal, participating jointly in an action which expresses their love in a way far more beautiful than any words.

The attitudes toward sex which a person brings to marriage are a most important factor in satisfactory sex adjustment. The couple planning their marriage must realize that sex is only one part of marriage; and that the success or failure of their marriage does not hinge only on a satisfactory sex adjustment. They must realize that sex is not a mechanism for releasing their own physical tensions, but the expression of a true love. They must view sexual relations as a normal and healthy part of marriage, something to be enjoyed. With this healthy attitude that can enter the marriage relationship knowing that it will make them more fit to achieve a successful marriage.

Most every young person preparing for marriage with the proper attitude toward sex views this new aspect of his or her life as a most pleasurable experience. But sex can be a problem as well as a pleasure. The problems, for the most part, fall into three main areas; one, experience is needed to supplement reading knowledge; two, marriage partners have different personality patterns; and three, sex is a technique.

Though many young people attempt to learn about sexual adjustment before marriage, by reading books and consulting with physicians, they find the situation totally different when they come face to face with it. They have failed to understand that experience - not just knowledge - is necessary; and experience can only come with marriage. Landis and Landis reveal in their study of sexual adjustment that satisfactory adjustment may take anywhere from one to twenty years to attain.¹⁰

Personality traits contribute to sexual problems, too; they have much to do with the degree of sexual mutuality achieved. People who are cooperative, perceptive of the reactions of others, and considerate of the needs of others are the ones who seek to share the joys of marriage rather than having as their goal only self-gratification. Those who are selfish, impatient, unaware of the needs of others, and unwilling to learn from others, will have far less to contribute toward the achievement of a rewarding sex relationship in marriage. These personality factors are of far greater importance in sex adjustment than is simple biological adequacy.¹¹ Physical factors have proved to be only a minor matter in the overall pattern of sexual adjustment. Personal tensions and maladjustments may also manifest themselves in sexual relations. A man with a sense of general inadequacy may bring to the marriage relationship the feeling that he

is unable to satisfy his wife sexually; this may in turn result in temporary impotence, which only increases his anxiety. A woman who fears pregnancy may react frigidly sexually, which can add to her own anxiety, and also disturb the marriage relationship. Hypersexuality may also create difficulty in marriage, since it, like frigidity and impotence is a source of frustration, conflict, disagreement and tension.

The young couple must enter marriage realizing that the sex act requires a definite technique. It is a skill which must be acquired, and as in the case of all other skills it requires practice and patience. Unless a couple realizes that proficiency in the sexual side of their marriage is a matter of practice and adjustment, the possible failures in the early days of their marriage may become a very real problem. Only when they have realized that sex technique is not learned overnight will they have found a means for working out a mutually satisfactory relationship.

The success of early sex experience in marriage depends upon two things; each partner's attitude toward sex, and his knowledge of sex. There are six helpful hints which may ease the sexual adjustment of a newly married couple. First, it is wise to recognize that it takes patience and time to arrive at satisfactory sexual adjustment, and that it is possible that first attempts at intercourse may result in failure. Many young wives will not experience full climactic experience

in the early weeks of marriage even though they are well informed and their husbands are successful lovers. Previous upbringing may have conditioned the new bride negatively toward sex, and although marriage breaks down the physical barrier to coitus, it does not necessarily break down the psychic barrier. As a result, it will take the woman longer to be aroused during the early days of marriage. Conversely, a man will usually reach his orgasm very quickly during the early attempts at coitus. With practice and restraint, the couple will eventually reach a time when both will understand each other's reactions, and when they will be able to achieve their climax together. Then their sex experience will offer them all the joys they expect. Time is required for the new conditioned responses to be substituted for old ones.¹²

The sex act is the most intimate relation between two people, and in order to achieve full expression it must involve the heart and the mind as well as the body.¹³ Therefore, secondly, there is a need for privacy. Fear or anxiety that they may be interrupted, or that someone is nearby will distract one or both partners and result in the inability to participate in the act completely.

Thirdly, to be successful intercourse must be a mutual act, with both partners fully participating. This means that a man should not force his attentions upon his wife, but must restrain his desires until she is willing. It also

implies that it is not the place of the wife to be passive during coitus. The two must work together to reach the peak of excitement and then experience their climax together; this is the mutual goal toward which all lovers strive.

Fourth, successful sexual adjustment can be achieved if the couple remembers that men and women respond to sex differently. The average man finds that he can enjoy sexual gratification regardless of how the other phases of marriage are going. He may be at odds with his wife and critical of nearly everything she does, yet desire coitus. The woman's viewpoint and feeling is that coitus is the ultimate expression of a love that includes the whole personality. If personality clashes or antagonisms develop over other things in the daily association, she is much less interested in coitus. The husband must attempt to realize that his wife's ability to respond sexually is often dependent upon her whole general response to his personality, and must therefore refrain from forcing himself upon her when she is not entirely ready to receive him.¹⁴

In our culture there is a significant difference also between men and women in regard to the duration of the sex act itself. Men are more easily aroused and can be more quickly satisfied; women are capable of response of a longer duration. Hence, fifthly, the young husband must take cognizance of this difference in timing so that he can be

certain that his wife is both aroused and then receives emotional relief through orgasm.¹⁵ "It is important for couples to realize that the difference in timing is due to the fact that men's sex desire and response are more specific and localized than are women's. Women reach a climax more slowly, their reaction is more diffuse, the emotional reaction is of longer duration and slower to subside. Men's response ends more abruptly with the climax of the sex act. If the partners are aware that these differences exist, the difference need not be a barrier to mutuality."¹⁶

A sixth helpful hint regards the frequency of intercourse for the newly married couple. This area of a couple's sex life is an individual matter. Robert Foster tells us that "At first couples usually want to be together more often, and it is not uncommon for them to engage in intercourse daily or oftener. As a rule, however, as they become more accustomed to living together intercourse is practiced from one to two times a week."¹⁷ Studies have shown that as a rule husbands desire coitus more frequently than do wives.¹⁸ When this situation exists, two people who love each other can work out a satisfactory solution; sometimes the one will abstain, sometimes the other will give in. One marriage counselor gives some good advice: The best rule to judge the amount of intercourse is - as little or as much as both partners enjoy.¹⁹ The fact that husbands usually desire

coitus more frequently than wives again reveals the importance of cooperation and willingness to compromise on the part of both partners in marriage.

Having considered the attitude and knowledge necessary for satisfactory sexual adjustment, let us turn our attention to the sex act. The sex act itself has three distinct phases, generally referred to as fore-play, coitus, and after-play. Fore-play includes everything that leads up to coitus, that is the actual insertion of the erect phallos into the vagina. It is the general preparation for arousing a high degree of sexual desire, especially in the woman. This is done through tender words of love, affection and reassurance, by kisses and caresses of the body, and of the genitals in particular. The wife's sufficient arousal is generally indicated physically through the appearance of a mucoid secretion around the genitals, ✓ which permits the entry of the male organ.

Coitus begins with the insertion of the erect phallos into the vagina, followed by a series of in and out movements resulting in the spasmodic ejaculation of semen from the male organ into the vagina, and the orgasm, or spasmodic contraction of the muscles around the genitals, of the female. The importance of the husband aiding his wife to achieve an orgasm cannot be overemphasized. One marriage counselor warns, "Failure to reach an orgasm may leave a woman with ✓ upset emotions, unnatural body fatigue from internal rebellion,

headaches, backache, and over a period of time perhaps a nervous breakdown."²⁰ The husband must do his best to hold himself in check, "while he brings his wife to her nervous peak at the same time he approaches his own, stimulating her by the caresses of his hands and lips until both are ready to experience their climax simultaneously."²¹

The third part of the sex act, after-play, or epilogue, is as important as the first two, and should not be overlooked. The intense physical and mental excitement which usually precedes and accompanies the sex act is generally followed by a period of languor and at times fatigue and exhaustion, which generally leaves the individual with a sense of repose and well-being. "When a couple are physically, emotionally, and sexually well-attuned, the sexual embrace should be succeeded by a sense of closeness and intimacy."²² It is at this time that the husband must be extremely careful. You will recall we observed that a man is more easily aroused than a woman, and that he subsides more quickly. "The husband must, therefore, if he is a true partner in her experience, be ready to help (his wife) gradually taper down her emotions in much the same way as he has gradually aroused them."²³ Then both will slip back into physical quiescence and a desire for rest.

It is not within the purview of this volume to deal with the detailed and complicated aspects of the physical

marriage relationship. The couple reading this manual are urged to visit a competent physician or gynecologist for full information relating to the sex act, and for a physical examination to assure preparedness to engage in coitus.

Because this understanding is so important, the couple will desire more detailed information on how to achieve a mutually satisfying and successful sexual adjustment. The following books will be helpful in attaining this goal:

Ideal Marriage, Van De Velde

A Marriage Manual, Hannah and Abraham Stone

Love and Marriage, F. A. Magoun

Marriage and Sexual Harmony, O. M. Butterfield

All young couples contemplating marriage should plan, if possible, to have children. You will recall in the first chapter of this book we spoke of children as the strongest unifying element between a husband and wife. A child is the product of the closest relationship that exists between a man and a woman; it is the third life which they have created through the unity of their two beings. It is the one element which will continue the lives of parents both physically and spiritually. In the words of Dr. Felix Adler; "The child is the seal of the marriage compact. The responsibility to the child is the incentive that should incessantly draw out all that is best in either, in order that they may

transmit that best for prospective increase in their successors in life."²⁴ To Judaism the home is not considered complete if it does not contain a child. Just as an unmarried person is not regarded as a whole person, so a Jewish family without children is frowned upon. The rabbis of the Talmud were so insistent upon the presence of children within the family that they said; "He who does not contribute his share to the reproduction of the race causes the Divine Presence to depart from Israel." (Yeb. 64a) In the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve are commanded by God; "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 1:28) According to Dr. Jacob Lauterbach, the Talmud insisted that a family have two children, unless there is a good reason why the wife cannot bear children. After they have at least two children, a couple can practice intercourse in a way as not to have children; that is by using contraceptive measures. But these contraceptive measures can only be used with the consent of both the husband and the wife.²⁵ The simple and essential conditions of domestic bliss are picturesquely phrased by the Psalmist; "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine in the innermost parts of thy house; thy children like olive plants, round about thy table." (ps. 118:3) Yet Judaism did not view children as merely the product of a sex act; but as the living vehicle for the transmission and fulfillment of the entire religio-social culture of the Jewish people.²⁶

Society, too, encourages the bringing of children into the world, since from its point of view the chief function of marriage is reproduction.²⁷ Rearing children is healthy for marriage also, since the "parental instinct" within the couple tends to draw them even closer together, to make their marriage even more permanent.²⁸ It is beneficial for the couple also in that it brings out the best in each of them as they work together to build a pleasant and secure life for their children.

The building of a family is much too precious to be left to chance. We may list four reasons why it is better to plan a family than to leave it to accident. First, of all, each couple needs a certain amount of time for the partners to adjust to one another. We have observed that marriage unites two different personalities. They must become accustomed to one another before there can be true harmony within a home. A more successful adjustment can be achieved when a couple can cope with the problems and new responsibilities of their marriage as they arise without adding the additional responsibility of a child during the first year of their married life.

A second sound reason for choosing the time when children should come is a financial one. Most newlyweds are not in a financial position to rear children. In our discussion of mastering money we found that more and more

wives are employed at the time of their marriage, either by necessity, or because of the desire to accumulate additional funds for the family treasury before the couple attempts to have children. Here, as in planning for marriage, there can be no definite sum that a couple should have in the bank before they start their family. It depends entirely on the couple's feelings and desires. Of course, here, too, there must be some financial basis, since a child cannot be reared on love alone. Rabbi Sidney Goldstein has a helpful suggestion for people who are concerned with the problem of finances in relation to their having children. He recommends that a couple live on the husband's salary alone for a while, even if the wife works, so that when the wife enters the vocation of motherhood the loss of her income will not be as sorely felt.²⁹

A third consideration is the health of the mother. Pregnancy is always a drain upon the strength of a woman, and it is important that she be strong enough to endure the long period of confinement. Each woman must also remember that too many pregnancies and too frequent ones are a danger to even the strongest mother. It is wise, therefore, that parents-to-be ascertain the ability of the wife to have a child at a specified time to be sure that neither the mother nor the child suffers unnecessarily.

A fourth point worthy of consideration is that children

must be truly wanted. How can a happy family life be established when the parents consider the birth of their child a misfortune? There is nothing worse than the feeling on the part of an individual as he grows up that he is unwanted; the child, growing up with a feeling that he is unwanted, will never feel himself at home in the family circle. If the couple are able to plan their family, no child born of their marriage will feel the mental pain of being unwanted. These reasons show us that birth control is a necessary aspect of any modern marriage.

Judaism has always had a positive attitude toward birth control, since it considers sex a normal part of every marriage. Jewish religious law does not forbid birth control, but it does forbid birth suppression. It permits birth control by means of contraception when there is a chance of harm to either the mother or the child. In the case of a pregnant woman or a nursing mother, the rabbis of the Talmud went so far as to demand the use of contraception. (Yeb. 100b) In disagreeing with the Christian view toward sex, the rabbis insisted that "The companionship or mutual helpfulness in leading a pure, good, and useful life, achieved by a true marriage is also a noble purpose worthy of this divine institution."³⁰ In more recent times, both the Reform and the Conservative Rabbinate have expressed their endorsement of birth control. The Central Conference of American Rabbis

has this to say on the subject:

We are especially mindful of the noble tradition obtaining among the Jewish people with respect to the holiness of domestic relations. But, at the same time, we are keenly aware of the many serious evils caused by lack of birth regulation among those who by reason of health or of a reasonable measure of economic resources or intelligence, or all of these, are prevented from giving to their children that worthy heritage to which all children are entitled. We therefore urge the recognition of the importance of intelligent birth regulation as one of the methods of coping with social problems.³¹

The Rabbinical Assembly adopted the following resolution

(in part) regarding birth control:

Jewish tradition explicitly recognizes the desirability of the use of contraceptives when the health of the mother or the children is involved. It is obvious that there is an intimate connection between the economic status of the family and the physical and psychic health of its members. We therefore regard it as legitimate, and completely in consonance with the spirit of Jewish tradition, to permit the use of contraceptives, on economic grounds as well, where the earning capacity of the family makes the postponement of child bearing or limitation of the number of children socially wise and necessary... We maintain that proper education in contraception and birth control will not destroy, but rather enhance, the spiritual values inherent in the family and will make for the advancement of human happiness and welfare.³²

A young couple planning to marry, and to postpone the coming of children through contraception, must realize from the outset that no birth control method is 100 per cent safe; and that almost any act of sexual intercourse may result in pregnancy, and the coming of a child in the family before its planned time of arrival. As a result, the couple must be willing to accept an unexpected child with all the love and

care to which any human being is entitled.

Since birth control is so important in modern marriage, the reader who desires further information should consult a competent gynecologist, ^{or} and the Planned Parenthood Association, 501 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y., or one of its local branches.

The creation of a satisfactory sex relationship must be viewed in the perspective of the entire marriage relationship. This clearly indicates that sex serves two distinct functions: reproduction and the well-being of the individual. It is a normal function answering basic human needs.

In all the areas which we have explored, there are apparent certain recurring patterns which are reflected in every facet of married life. Let us scrutinize them.

FOOTNOTES

1. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, Building A Successful Marriage, pp. 285-286.
2. Ibid., p. 265.
3. Stanley R. Brav, Marriage and The Jewish Tradition, pp. 14-15.
4. Byron Rubenstein, The Rabbinic Conception of the Family Based on the Menorat Ha-Maor of Rabbi Israel Ibn Al-Nakava, p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 25.
6. Eustace Chessier, Sexual Behavior: Normal and Abnormal, p. 24.
7. Ibid., p. 23.
8. Ibid., p. 26.
9. F. Brink, This Man and This Woman, p. 55.
10. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, op. cit., p. 270.
11. Ibid., p. 267.
12. Ibid., p. 281.
13. L. R. Smith, This Love of Ours, p. 41.
14. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, op. cit., p. 274.
15. Ibid., p. 277.
16. Ibid., p. 278.
17. R. G. Foster, Marriage and Family Relationships, p. 146.
18. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, op. cit., p. 280.
19. John Levy and Ruth Munroe, The Happy Family, p. 116.
20. F. A. Magoun, Love and Marriage, p. 217.
21. F. Brink, op. cit., p. 52.
22. H. Stone and A. Stone, A Marriage Manual, p. 193.
23. F. Brink, op. cit., p. 53.

24. Stanley R. Brav, op. cit., p. 162.
25. Jacob Lauterbach, Talmudic, Rabbinic View on Birth Control, p. ~~384~~
26. Stanley R. Brav, op cit., p. 16.
27. Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, op. cit., p. 367.
28. Stanley R. Brav, op. cit., p. 16.
29. Sidney Goldstein, Marriage and Family Counseling, p. 89.
30. Jacob Lauterbach, op. cit., p. 38.
31. Sidney Goldstein, The Meaning of Marriage and The Foundations of the Family, p. 121.
32. Ibid., p. 122.

SUMMING UP

What are the essentials for married contentment? We have examined each phase of day to day conjugal living: in-laws, finances, religion, and sex. What is the key to matrimonial happiness? It is implicit in one word, "adjustment". It is important to recognize that the new life which each is leading requires adjustment in every area. Successful marriages don't just happen.

First, two different personalities, each with its conditioning of heredity and background, must consciously work toward harmonious living. A satisfying sexual relationship can be reached only by the same kind of striving for adjustment of the one partner to the other. A realistic handling of finances can be arrived at only when both partners adjust their individual patterns so that the new one is acceptable to both. Attitudes towards one another's parents and relatives must likewise be the result of mutual consideration.

Following upon the ~~principle~~^{principle} that adjustment is basic, ✓ is the realization that adjustment takes time. Two people who come together to live under the same roof for the first time cannot expect to know and accept each other's habits in a day or a week; nor to effect changes in a moment. Even though a pair have agreed upon a plan for handling the family finances, it is not easy for one or the other, or both, to function within the framework without practice.

Accepting each other's parents, even in so small a matter as by what name to call them, takes time and doing. A pre-marital decision to practice certain religious ceremonies within the new home does not guarantee that this will come naturally, especially when it is new and strange to one or both of the partners. It is the repetition which establishes the pattern. We have seen that it takes months and sometimes years for a couple to adjust sexually. In each area of family life, it is the day by day, week by week, living together that is woven into the warp and woof of a truly harmonious adjustment. Time is the indispensable element.

Cooperation and sharing are basic to marital adjustment; and the time required for adjustment can be reduced if these two principles are practiced from the beginning. Matrimonial adjustment is not one sided; it requires a reciprocal give-and-take which is not easy. The kind of security which is achieved by a nest egg in the bank, must be the result of cooperation and mutual striving. Each of the partners must forego some short term value so that both may enjoy the results of their financial self-sacrifice and forethought. Achieving a satisfactory sexual relation requires cooperation in its highest sense - the sense in which each desires the satisfaction of the other as much as his own. The establishment of a Jewish home is a cooperative endeavor which necessitates the participation of both members.

Sharing, too, is an important foundation stone in the structure of marriage. The two people who come together as husband and wife must learn to share a dwelling, to share their possessions and earnings; to share their families; to share their experiences; to participate in each other's hopes and aspirations - each other's very being.

It is impossible to conceive of cooperation and sharing without the prerequisites of faith and trust. If two people are to pool the results of their work and their earnings, so that, together, they may build for the future, each must be able to trust the other. Each must have faith in the integrity of his partner. Sharing a life can only be done on the basis of mutual trust. Confidence in each other's love and care must exist if a true sex adjustment is to be made. In the contacts with in-laws, conflicts between husband and wife can be kept to a minimum if each feels that his spouse can be trusted to put their marriage before any other consideration. Once such a trust is established, in-law tension is greatly eased. One cannot invest one's hopes and dreams in another unless one has confidence in him.

Even though each couple may realize that marriage requires adjustment, takes time, and needs cooperation and sharing; and even though each trusts the other, they should also know that there is no such thing as a marriage without problems. As a matter of fact, there are some

real advantages to facing these problems. First of all, in the effort to solve their difficulties a couple is drawn closer together. Secondly, it gives husband and wife a sense of mutual achievement when they are able together to find a satisfactory solution to their problem. What method can they use? The first is to sit down and talk the problem out between themselves. They can seek information from some of the books which deal with marriage problems. An alternative is to visit the rabbi or a marriage counselor and discuss their problem with an unbiased third person who has both the desire and the know-how to help them.

No marriage is perfect, especially at first. Each partner will make mistakes, because marriage presents new responsibilities, and both husband and wife must assume roles new to them. Yet, if both realize that the adjustment which must take place in marriage must take time, and if each is patient with the other, and understanding, and eager to help the other, and if both have the will to make their marriage a happy one, it will succeed.

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