

RITE OF PASSAGE: BAR/BAT MITZVAH  
IN THE SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLD

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

for

RABBIS AND TEMPLES

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

"One of the most significant changes in family composition over the last 15 years has been the substantial growth in the number of one-parent families." <sup>1</sup> As I have witnessed the effects of separation, divorce and death among friends and family, as well as the families in the religious schools with which I have been professionally associated, I have become increasingly concerned with the effects of the changing family lifestyles on these people. According to Cherlin and Celebuski in a 1982 study of people married between 1972-1980, 12% of Jews were divorced or separated at some time after their marriage as compared to the larger rate of 24% of Protestants and 17% of Catholics.<sup>2</sup> In 1985, Calvin Goldscheider concurred with the lower Jewish divorce rate in his book, Jewish Continuity and Change: Emerging Patterns In America.<sup>3</sup> However, one must not ignore the fact that the growing number of American Jewish single parent households is a crisis, one which we must acknowledge and address in our synagogues.

Moreover, Judaism is a family centered religion, a factor creating additional strife for the Jewish single parent. Genesis 2:24 reads, "A man leaves his father and cleaves unto his wife and they become one flesh." In more severe terms we read in Genesis Rabbah xvii 2, "He who has no wife lives without good, without help, without blessing...he is also without life... he is not a complete man... and some say that he also (thereby) diminishes the divine image." While Jewish divorce laws have historically been very

lenient, our tradition maintains a negative position toward the unmarried state. This position alienates single parents. Synagogues were not set up to cope with them. As a result, the need for community professionals such as rabbis, cantors and education directors, as well as congregants, to accept and welcome single parents, becomes all the more crucial.

Currently, there is a growing trend of these individuals toward re-establishing themselves to Jewish life through life cycle events such as Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Even if parents are in the process of separation or divorce they often do not wish to deprive their child of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Jewish "rite of passage."

A booklet used to teach families about Bar/Bat Mitzvah includes a page called, "Rites of Passage (Becoming an Adult)". Examples are given of these rites in other societies such as the Delaware Indian and the African Aruba tribe, and as well, the New Zealand Puka Puka which requires a boy to demonstrate how he can care for himself, procure food and handle a canoe before being accepted as an adult. These are then compared to the Bar and Bat Mitzvah as a "rite of passage".<sup>4</sup>

The phrase "rite of passage" is derived from The Rites of Passage, the classic book written in 1909 by the famous French anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep. The book was translated into English in 1960. "Rites of passage" is a cultural phenomena that takes place to move a person through the various stages of human experience. Van Gennep was the first to observe the universal significance of these events. He concluded that although the ceremonies may differ from one people to another, there were striking similarities between them, notably the general threefold pattern of separation, transition and incorporation.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, according to Orthodox Judaism, is the

time when the Jewish child moves into the realm of adult responsibility, which requires fasting and offers eligibility for the child to be included in a minyan. Liberal Jews view it as a time when a child must begin to seek its own God. No longer can the child follow what its parents believe, but like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, the child begins a search for God and a maturing connection with the Jewish people. This can be a time for the child to become part of the Jewish community with involvement in tzedakah projects, youth groups, and classes that challenge one's thinking about God, Judaism, and ethical and social issues.

In the chapter on initiation rites, Arnold van Gennep states that it is not physiological puberty, but social puberty that is the basis for the initiation rites.<sup>5</sup> Bar/Bat Mitzvah, similarly, is not based on physical puberty. One might see a tiny, young looking child becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah the same day as a tall, mature looking child whose voice has already changed to a deep bass. Although van Gennep analyzed these "life crises" ceremonies among primitive societies, there is much support in his book for the value of such initiation rites in our modern society as well.

In his writing about primitive societies, Frank W. Young concurs as he writes, "Initiation ceremonies are viewed as a mechanism for mainstreaming. If they were allowed to avoid it, the male definition of the situation might be distorted or weakened. It is for this reason that initiation is required of all boys in the community."<sup>6</sup> In support of this thesis one can assume parents find it very important to assure that their child become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah even when separation or divorce is in process. Young also believes that the essence of the rituals' function is for groups rather than individuals.<sup>7</sup> Even though the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a transition for the

individual child, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony also helps keep the Jewish people alive, and is a life cycle event attended by many friends and relatives.

An abstract of an article written in a French publication states that, "Despite their harshness ... puberty rites in primitive societies do not cause identity crises or psychic traumas. The adolescent suffers symbolic death as a child and rebirth as an adult with a definite place in his society..." <sup>8</sup> In his study of children of divorce, Cottle reported that today's children find that divorce tends to "age" them. <sup>9</sup> However, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in a divorced parent family can bring equilibrium to the tumultuous teenage years. While contemporary Western societies provide conflicting signals and no moorings to adolescents in their passage to adulthood, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may provide the child with a sense of stability and continuity. It may be the anchor for the child whose life is like a boat in a storm.

In the book, To Raise A Jewish Child, Donin notes the following,

The famed psychologist, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, emphasized that a child's awareness of his own ethnic group can be critical in his development in terms of his personality, his feeling of self worth and identity. A child deprived of the opportunity to grow up in his own specific ethnic atmosphere with its special customs and culture, harboring feelings that he never 'belonged', is in danger of spending his adult years self-consciously seeking an identity. <sup>10</sup>

Divorce is no longer a stigma, yet, parents and children interviewed for this study often feel alienated from friends and the synagogue. There is also a tremendous amount of stress on single parents and their children. According to the findings of a comparative study of two parent and female headed families, the latter is "more likely to experience acute stress in

major life events" ...and have a "negative self image" ...and hold "negative views of the future". <sup>11</sup>

"Every Bar Mitzvah situation is potentially explosive. It becomes actually explosive only when there are other problems lurking in the background like alimony or custody fights." <sup>12</sup> Bienstock notes, "Divorce is often the process of exchanging one set of problems for another. Divorce can be so traumatic that the individuals involved can find themselves incapacitated for months and sometimes years." <sup>13</sup> Denial, anger, guilt and idealization are in constant interplay in the background of legal, financial and child centered crises which must be dealt with daily when parents decide to divorce. How difficult it must be to plan for the upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah of a child during this time. Richard Gardner believes divorce may not necessarily cause psychologically harmful reactions in children. However, he states, "...stresses and traumas, occurring before, during and after the separation are likely sources of difficulty." <sup>14</sup> Therefore, the proximity of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to a separation, whether death or divorce, can affect the intensity of the problems and anxieties. In comparing the effects of death and divorce, "...new evidence suggests that divorce may be even more devastating to many people, since it is harder to accept that the relationship is really over. Indeed, divorced people have higher rates of cancer, heart disease, pneumonia, high blood pressure and accidental death than married, single or widowed persons." <sup>15</sup>

The devastation of divorce is poetically described ...

Divorce is a kind of death .

In many ways it is worse.

With death, there is a funeral.

There are

flowers,

words of sympathy,

hugs,

talk of happy memories.

Friends and family come together

They grieve with the survivor.

In divorce, one mourns alone. 16

Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, in an article about Jewish single parents, wrote, "The synagogue faced with this new reality (i.e. divorce) has the opportunity to become an important resource for caring and helping. In the past Jews turned to the synagogue in moments of pain and despair as well as in times of joy and happiness. Now the synagogue must turn to them, to the divorced, to their children and to all whose lives have been transformed by the end of a marriage." 17

Six years after this article was published this research began. It was based on interviewing single parents who had experienced or were anticipating a child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah . Over and over one could note the anguish of being a single Jewish parent and the lack of concern on the part of rabbis and temples. To what extent had Rabbi Seltzer's article been read and his suggestions been followed? One wonders.

This thesis will address the effects of the single parent household on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process, and will offer recommendations for the temple, the rabbis and other professionals as well as lay leaders, to help



ease the pain of these congregants and welcome them back into our synagogues and the larger Jewish family. As Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis noted ten years ago, "The primary task on the agenda of the synagogue is the humanization and personalization of the Temple...To experience true belonging is an imperative prerequisite for the cultivation of religious and moral sensibilities." <sup>18</sup> This research has been dedicated toward finding ways to achieve these objectives.

## Chapter 2

### PROCEDURE

#### METHOD

Personal interviews were conducted with 23 male and female single Jewish parents. The majority were referrals of congregants from Reform rabbis contacted in Nassau County, New York. A few were referred by the interviewees during their interview. All parents, single by separation, divorce or death, had experienced or were planning to experience the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of a child within a year of the interview.

Each parent who had agreed to participate in the research received a questionnaire developed by the Research Task Force of CCAR, HUC-JIR, UAHC called, "L'Chaim, Study of Jewish Identity, Religious Practices and Beliefs, and Marriage Patterns". (Appendix B) The questionnaire was obtained with permission to photocopy from Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, Director of the UAHC Task Force on the Jewish Family. Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter (Appendix A) introducing myself, thanking them for their participation, and explaining the procedure. After receiving a completed questionnaire, an appointment was arranged for a personal interview. The location was usually the person's home unless they chose differently. If the parent permitted, a tape recorder was used to record our conversation. In addition, notes were taken during the interview.

## OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW

### **Opening -**

- 1- Thanked the person again for participation in this research.
- 2- Explained that it was a requirement for completing a Masters in Religious Education degree at Hebrew Union College.
- 3- A brief explanation was given of how this topic was chosen.
- 4- Each participant was assured that any names of congregations or rabbis would remain anonymous.
- 5- It was hoped that their sharing could be useful to help others in the future.

### **Reference to the questionnaire**

- 1- A general opening question was asked such as how they felt answering the questionnaire. Reference was sometimes made to an unusual aspect of their answers in the questionnaire.
- 2- For the few who chose not to complete the written questionnaire, inquiry was made about the ages of their children or how long the parents were single. The purpose was to gain background information and establish rapport.

**Questions about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

- 1- Why did (will) your child become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
- 2- Who made (will make) the decisions about the ceremony?
- 3- Who made (will make) the decisions about the celebration?
- 4- Who covered (will cover) the expenses?
- 5- Did (do) you need emotional support and from where did (do) you derive it?
- 6- What were (are) your feelings during the year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
- 7- What were your feelings on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day?
- 8- How did (will) you word the invitation?
- 9- What kind of support did you receive from the Temple?
- 10- Would you volunteer to be part of a support group if it was created?

## Chapter 3

### RESULTS

#### **STATISTICS and VARIABLES**

This chapter reflects the interviews granted by 23 single Jewish parents.

Each rabbi provided me with one to four people to contact. Initially, I spoke with 27 people and interviewed 23. Several changed their minds about interviewing after they received the questionnaire and others just could not find the time for the interview. Of those interviewed, sixteen had a child who had become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah within the past year and seven had a child who would become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the coming year. Thirteen made references to one or more older children who had become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the past. Of the total interviewed, twenty were divorced, one was separated and two were widowed. There were nineteen mothers and four fathers. Two fathers were widowers, and two were divorced. I also interviewed two sets of divorced parents. Of the sixteen who had experienced a child becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, eight are planning for another within a few years. Of the seven planning for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah within the year, six had children who already had become Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

There were many variables in this project. First, there was a wide range of reactions to the task of completing the questionnaire. While some commented that the questionnaire was too lengthy, confusing or time consuming, others enjoyed filling it out and discussing their answers with

me during the interview.

Second, the same format was not used at each interview. The results, therefore, are qualitative, rather than quantitative. The client centered approach was chosen to allow a free flow of feelings and thoughts. The informal interview allowed the interviewees to say what they wanted rather than answer what they thought the interviewer might want to hear. Techniques of silence, restatement, clarification, reflection, interpretation and explanation, as appropriate responses and leads for active listening were used, as outlined in Alfred Benjamin's book, The Helping Interview. Benjamin states, "The ideal interviewer does not exist, but you do; and if the interviewee can sense the genuine, unplanned, spontaneous you, he will have an experience rare in our society. He might even dare to learn from this experience." <sup>19</sup> Helping some people move toward positive faith development was one of the side benefits of these interviews. The author continues, "If we can learn to rely on our spontaneity, sensitivity and common sense, we shall listen better and understand more. Our behavior influences that of the interviewee more than we know. Behaving openly ourselves, we shall encourage him to do likewise." <sup>20</sup> Additional variables follow:

**Variable: Composition of Sample** There were many more females interviewed than male. Generally children of divorced parents live with the mother. In most cases the mother maintained the membership with the temple where the child was to have the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. According to a survey called, "Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle," there are sexual differences when it comes to feelings, attitudes and actions in relation to faith and religion. <sup>21</sup> One example is that women are

more likely than men to report their thoughts about the effect of the death of a loved one. When faced with a problem, women will more likely turn to others for support than will men. Women, also, will give more thought to questions of faith and attach more importance to religion. All the women interviewed believed it important for their children to have a religious education and become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Furthermore, some had to go to great lengths to either pay for Temple membership on their own, ask for special financial consideration or begrudgingly permit their ex-husbands to pay for membership for themselves and their children.

**Variable:Death/Divorce** There are basic and subtle differences between parents who are single because of death or divorce. According to Rabbi Seltzer, the phrase "single parent household" unfortunately excludes the non-custodial parent in the child's life and "in essence actually denies the very existence of that parent".<sup>22</sup> That phrase should only be used when a parent dies or abandons the family. "The interaction of divorced parents with their children may vary in degree of frequency and intensity but the family unit remains whatever its configuration."<sup>23</sup> As one widower (parent # 9) said, the divorced parent has an "ongoing relationship, possibly of hate or resentment which affects the parenting, but death is final."

**Variable:Interview Location** Most interviews were held at the person's home as it was thought that would be their most comfortable and convenient place. However, one interviewee requested that we meet in a restaurant. Another took place, not only in the interviewee's home, but also in his car as he had to drive his child to the temple. The home of the

interviewer was another location for one parent.

**Variable: Privacy of Interview** Most interviews were private. However, sometimes there were children entering or leaving the house or in a nearby room. At other interviews there were housekeepers, lovers, pets of all sizes and shapes, and phone calls that would interrupt.

**Variable: Jewish background and identity of interviewee** Six parents had themselves become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, two as adults. From the questionnaire, it was ascertainable that thirteen had never become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Several people had very negative experiences either in religious school as a child or in a temple as an adult. Others had strong Jewish backgrounds and were deeply committed to the Jewish people and religion.

**Variable: Time of interview** The time varied from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM. There were interviews during the week and on weekends all depending on a mutually convenient time.

**Variable: Length of interview** Interviews were planned to last between 45 minutes and one hour. In fact, they ranged from 30 minutes to three hours. The average time was one hour and a half hours.

**Variable: Length of time parent was single** According to one of the widowers (parent # 9), "It takes three years to realize you're single." This is supported in an article saying some stress may be temporary for recently separated, widowed or divorced. It reduces after three years. 24



Generally, those who had been single for three or more years had an easier time handling the stress of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. For one father (parent # 22) who compared his daughter's Bat Mitzvah with his son's four years earlier, "There was more strain at my son's as I had just begun not living at home." One mother (parent # 20) believed her problems were "minimal" because the separation was "ongoing". She had been single for seven years, five as a divorcee.

**Variable:Relationship with ex-spouse** There was a wide spectrum of relationships. For example, in one case, the parents (parent # 11) are "good friends". The ex-husband is now remarried with a new baby and yet they are all together for the holidays and even an occasional Shabbat dinner. The mother said, "This is much easier for the children". On the extreme opposite is the case where the parents ( parent # 21) fought in court over the child's religious affiliation. The father was Jewish at the time of the child's birth but later remarried a non Jew and began following his wife's religion. During visits the father insisted the child go to church with him but the child refused. This led to a court ruling in 1984 that stated, "The boy's religious rearing should be determined by the parent who has custody" and the judge..." directed the father not to bring his son to Episcopal services during visitation periods." <sup>25</sup> In another court battle that was extended over several years, only two days before his becoming Bar Mitzvah, the State Supreme Court determined that the mother would retain custody of her son.

**Variable:Financial position** Some mothers were financially independent. However, others went to work full time and still found it

difficult to pay their temple dues. Therefore, paying for a celebration was an additional burden. One mother (parent #1) believed some problems relating to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah depended on money, that is, "who's paying." She planned the reception in her own mind to "get him to pay for it." She told me she had to "bite my tongue" and "let go on some things" in order to have the best celebration for her child. Another mother (parent # 17) reported how she had to "swallow my pride" and let the father help financially in order to have a reception. She will do the same for her next child's Bat Mitzvah, she said. Several interviewees told me how they were called by the temple on Friday, the day before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, to be informed that they owed money. This was most stressful and humiliating for these parents.

## **CHART - TABULATED RESULTS OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Each parent was given a number which corresponds to the numbers below and throughout the discussions.

### **MOTIVATION FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

Child - Parent #8,22

Mother - Parent # 1,2,3,4,6,8,11,14,15,20,21,23,25

Father - Parent # 5

Both Parents - Parent #12,13,17,24,26,27

Grandparents - None

Siblings - Parent # 1,8,9

Friends - Parent # 1,4,17

### **DECISION MAKING FOR CEREMONY**

Mother - Parent # 6,14,17,18,20,21,23,25

Father - Parent # 27

Both Parents - Parent # 1,3,11,12,13,15,16,22,24,26

Temple - Parent # 2,5

### **DECISION MAKING FOR CELEBRATION**

INTERVIEWEE - Parent # 4,5,6,9,11,14,16,17,21,23,24,25,26

EX-SPOUSE - Parent # 27

BOTH PARENTS - Parent # 1,3,12,13,15,22

WITH CHILD - Parent # 2,5,8,22,26

### **TYPE OF CELEBRATION**

Joint (Both parents host) - Parent # 1,3,11,12,13,15,16,22,24

Separate parties - Parent # 2,23,26

Party by parent interviewed - Parent # 5,6,8,9,14,17,25

Party by ex-spouse - Parent # 27

No party- None

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CELEBRATION**

Interviewee - Parent # 2,9,14,17,23,25,26

Ex-spouse - Parent # 16,26,27

Shared expenses with ex-spouse - Parent # 1,3,,11,12,13,15,22,24

Aid from grandparents - Parent #4,6,20,21

Aid from friend - Parent # 8

Aid from siblings - Parent # 3

Aid from Temple - Parent # 9

### **SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Independent - Parent # 1,5

Family - Parent # 4,21

Friends - Parent # 2,3,4,6,8,9,14,15,21,26,27

Temple - Parent # 17

### **WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO BE PART OF A TEMPLE SUPPORT GROUP?**

Yes - Parent # 22,24,25

No - Parent # 1,2,6,12,26 (This question was not asked of

Maybe - Parent # 5 everyone)

### **WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO BE PART OF A TEMPLE SUPPORT GROUP IF IT WERE CREATED?**

Yes - Parent # 1,2,4,5,8,9,12,13,16,17,20,21,23,24,25,26

No - None

Maybe - " (This question was not asked of everyone)

### **FEELINGS PRIOR TO BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

Dependent - Parent # 17

Guilty - Parent # 1,15

Ambivalent - Parent # 15,22

Stress - Parent # 2,3,6,11,14,17,21,23,25,27

Anxious - Parent # 3,6,20,24,25,26

Angry - Parent # 5,6,8,17,23,27

Alone - Parent # 5, 24

Ashamed - Parent #13

Positive - Parent # 4,9,12,13,16,20,21,26

### **FEELINGS ON THE DAY OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

Joyful - # 4,11,20,25,26

Comfortable - #22

Proud - # 1,9,11,20,24,26

Relief - # 3,14, 26

Guilty - # 3

Hatred - # 6,17,25

Sad - # 9

Tension - # 1,6,16,24

Love - # 2,14,20,26

Deprived - # 27

Successful - # 14

Awkward - # 2,16,22,23,27

Resentful- # 1,2,5,17

Happy for child - # 5, 22

### **INVITATION (As it appears who is inviting)**

Mother's name - Parent # 6

Father's name - Parent # 5,9

Child's name - Parent # 14,17,20,26

\_\_\_\_\_'s loving family - Parent # 8

Mother's/ Father's names - Parent # 11, 24, 27

Mother's/ Father's/New wife's names- Parent # 11,27

Mother's maiden name/Father's name - Parent # 12,13

"My family and I" - Parent # 16

Phone invitation - Parent # 9

Undecided - Parent # 15

Weren't asked the question - Parent # 1,3,4,22

## **AFFILIATION WITH TEMPLE**

Temple member (pays dues)

Parent # 1,3,5,6,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,20,21,24,25,26

Temple member (ex-spouse pays dues) Parent # 2,11,16,17

Non temple member (ex-spouse is member) Parent - # 4,22,24,27

Father pays dues/Mother pays religious school fees Parent # 11,16,26

## **TEMPLE SUPPORT**

Insensitivity (inappropriate act or lack of action) # 2,3,4,8,12,13,14

No acknowledgement by clergy/temple of single status - # 11,20,22

Routine involvement for Bar/Bat Mitzvah - # 8,15,26

Rabbi helpful when called by parent -# 3,6,17,23,25

Rabbi reached out to single parent by calling or writing - None

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

## **MOTIVATION FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

It is strongly noted that parents are the motivating factor in a child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In an article, "Are Jewish Families Different?" it is noted that Jewish families have a strong agenda to enhance their child's social, economic and intellectual (achievement) growth. <sup>26</sup> They stress the need for education and motivate their children to achieve and "delight in their child's achievements". <sup>27</sup> Because Jews have smaller families, they find it easier to invest money and emotions in the upbringing and education of their children. <sup>28</sup>

For most parents there was never a doubt. One father (parent # 5) feels strongly that his children must learn of their heritage and they will go on for Confirmation. A mother (parent # 11) expressed it this way, "Just as there was a bris, there is a Bar Mitzvah." Another (parent # 14) told me she lost many relatives in the Holocaust and "feels it is very important to continue the chain of tradition."

Twelve mothers answered that they were the motivating factor. One wonders, had the fathers of these same children been interviewed what their reaction would have been. Of the two widowers, one admitted it was his wife who had influenced the decision for their children to become Bar Mitzvah. The other indicated both he and his wife wanted their children to become Bar Mitzvah. Another possibility for this response is, "Women... attach more importance to religion" than do men. For example, 56% of women as compared to 42% of men believe religion is very important, and 47% of women and only 29% of men believe religion is a very positive experience.

While none answered that the grandparents were a motivating factor, I believe it is a hidden agenda item. In rating reasons to remain Jewish in the Jewish identity questionnaire, out of nineteen who answered,

seventeen chose "I owe it to my parents, grandparents and ancestors." Nine chose "extremely important" six, "very important" and two, "somewhat important". Only one circled "not very important" and another, "not at all important".

## **DECISION MAKING FOR CEREMONY**

In the majority of families both parents discussed the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony in the temple and agreed to the honors to be given to family and friends. However, in some cases the mothers made the decisions alone.

One mother ( parent # 14) fought with the rabbi over the issue of giving the father an aliyah. The father had been included in the ceremony of his older children. However, the parents had been engaged in an arduous custody battle that ended two days prior to the Bar Mitzvah. In addition, her older son left her home a year before to live with her ex-husband never to visit, write or call. This mother emphatically stated, "An aliyah is an honor. He didn't deserve the honor. I felt strong enough for the first time to stand up to him." She told the rabbi who argued the point with her, " I'll pull my son off the altar if you give the father an aliyah. I do not want him going up there."

In another situation, when a mother ( parent # 25) went to the rabbi to tell him she didn't want the father to receive an aliyah, the rabbi advised her to do as she thought best. Afterwards this rabbi received a call from the father's parents' rabbi from out of state to advise that the father should have an aliyah. Again the rabbi encouraged the mother to make the choice and it remained negative. The father ultimately came to the service, sat alone in the rear of the sanctuary and never participated. As the mother said, "this was a very bitter time."



There were unique situations when mothers tried to decide whether the father could attend the service. For example, during one mother's (parent # 6) four years of separation she was involved with litigation, harrassment, and thirteen months living alone while her three children lived with their father. She had to legally prove she was a fit mother in order to regain custody of her three young children. After finally getting her children back with her, this mother spent the day before her daughter's Bat Mitzvah in court. The father had been given visitation rights for three weeks prior to the Bat Mitzvah. Now the father was seeking a court order to allow him into the service the next day. He was using his parents (the grandparents) as an excuse to be allowed to be present. The mother told me she never intended to prevent the grandparents from attending. After the father threatened to disrupt the service, the mother hired private detectives and the rabbi alerted the local police. The results were that the father did attend but his parents did not.

There were two parents who reported that the temple made all decisions for the ceremony and they were each disappointed with the inflexibility. One noted that the rabbi had a very structured ceremony with little family involvement. However, he was more satisfied with his most recent Bar Mitzvah, officiated by a different rabbi, which allowed for the family to have honors and the father to help his son prepare his speech.

Another parent (parent # 2) was told by the rabbi that both parents would be on the bimah together which did not please her. As a divorced parent, she would have preferred to be on the bimah without her ex-husband. Moreover, there were additional difficulties which in a normal situation might not have been a source of conflict. For example, her

younger daughter was refused a part in the service, which the mother desired. However, on the day of the service, without telling the rabbi, she made sure this daughter accompanied her when she went up as well as when a close family friend went up for an honor. The mother wanted a different date for the Bar Mitzvah but was told there were no alternatives. As her son was sharing the day with another child, the number of honors was limited. The mother suggested she read an additional prayer but was refused. She decided then to give up her aliyah in order to allow someone else that honor. She felt very alienated by these events.

In another family, the mother (parent # 27) was not included in any way even though she had custody of the child. In this situation, it was the father who belonged to the temple and made all Bar Mitzvah decisions without her.

### **DECISION MAKING FOR CELEBRATION**

While divorced parents generally discussed the ceremony together, few planned for a joint celebration. In some cases the mother did all the planning. Even when two sets of parents shared the cost, it was the mother (parents #11 and #24) who was responsible for the planning. Making the decisions alone was stressful for them.

In an opposite situation, the father (parent # 15) was so involved that the mother claimed it was "a pain in the neck. It's one more person's opinion." She thought she would make the major decisions but, "He has a veto and he's really using it."

A different mother (parent #24) was given "free range to plan the reception". While it had been agreed that they would share the cost, she was apprehensive because she believed the father "not a responsible

person" and was afraid she would have to pay for it all in the end.

One father agreed to pay all the bills but allowed the mother (parent # 16) to make all the decisions, as he knew she "would not take advantage".

In another family there were two parties, one hosted by the father and one by the mother. Yet, it was the mother (parent # 26) who planned both. The story develops that the parents decided the mother was going to host one party immediately after the service and the father would have another, whatever his daughter wished. After the daughter told him what she wanted, he answered, "We'll see," and put the decision off. He then charged the mother and daughter to plan this party as well. "All he did was pay for it. He didn't put in any effort or time or himself. He signed the check," said the mother angrily.

One mother (parent # 20) asked the grandparents (her mother and stepfather) to help choose the party location as they were planning to cover the expenses.

While many made the final decisions alone, single parents did ask for advice and suggestions from friends and family. Several planned with their children as well. One mother (parent # 2) shared how she had fun planning and making decisions with her son. Another (parent #26) acknowledged that she and her daughter "developed a nice relationship during the year" they planned together.

## **TYPE OF CELEBRATION**

The celebrations covered a wide spectrum from small and simple to large and elaborate. One mother (parent # 20) remarked, "A small affair can be cozy and relaxed," while another (parent # 24) recalled she

became, "more involved as time went on, even hiring a party coordinator. I got crazy like everyone else."

A number of families had combined parties while some held separate receptions. One parent (parent # 2) said, "It was a little awkward" having the child spend some time after the ceremony with the father's guests before going to the mother's party. The father's party was held the next day. To ease the loneliness when her children went to that party the next day, the mother's friends spent time with her.

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CELEBRATION**

The chart is self explanatory and needs only one clarification. The wife of one of the interviewees (parent # 9) died two months prior to their son's Bar Mitzvah. At the same time of his wife's illness and death, the father lost his job. The ceremony was postponed for seven months. Women from the Temple Sisterhood graciously made the party in honor of his son becoming a Bar Mitzvah. The father is still most appreciative but feels fortunate to be planning and preparing the upcoming reception for his younger son's Bar Mitzvah.

### **SUPPORT SYSTEM**

The response to this question is notable. Most people turn to friends for emotional support. Only a few of the interviewees went to a rabbi. It was usually for a specific matter such as finances or in one case alerting the rabbi of the possible disruption of the service. Studies show that the role of informal social support is very important to the widowed. While it is complex, "There is well documented relationship between the

psychological well being (i.e. morale) and adjustment to widowhood." 30 One could surmise the implications are the same for the parent who is single by divorce or separation.

According to a Gallup survey, 88% of women share their problem with family and 75% share it with a friend. Only 46% seek help from a religious counselor and a mere 27% discuss it with a group at church/synagogue. "Men are more likely than women to report working things through on their own." 86% of the men share with family, 69% with a friend, 35% with a religious counselor and a mere 17% with a group at church/synagogue. 31

### **WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO BE PART OF A TEMPLE SUPPORT GROUP FOR SINGLE PARENTS ANTICIPATING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH?**

Not everyone was asked this question. However, some answered yes to this question. One father (parent # 22) answered, "It would have been nice if someone reached out from the temple." One mother (parent # 25) said she would have joined for the purpose of sharing and learning with others who were facing Bar/Bat Mitzvah. She, particularly, needed to know about the ceremony and temple customs.

Others were hesitant or negative about joining such a group. One (parent # 1) who wouldn't have joined, explained that she didn't seek the advice of others as she was an independent person. Another (parent # 2) said she didn't need it but would have liked to run such a group. Still another (parent #26) answered that she, "didn't want to open herself up."

### **WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO BE PART OF A TEMPLE GROUP IF IT WERE CREATED?**

An overwhelming number of people agreed to be part of a discussion group to help other single parents who were planning a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. That helping group included those who said they weren't interested in such a group for themselves. One (parent # 20 ) said she "would be willing to share if it would be helpful...and be very happy to do it." There appears to be a wonderful resource in these parents. One would hope rabbis will call upon single parent members who have experienced the life cycle event of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and ask them to help form or facilitate an informal support group or to work individually with another single parent planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **FEELINGS PRIOR TO BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a shared experience, evoking feelings of love and pride. Yet the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in a divorced family is more likely to be filled with possible stress, hatred and court battles. The following is a detailed discussion of reported feelings of those interviewed.

GUILT One mother (parent # 1) said she "operates on guilt", feeling her child is "deprived of not having a two parent household". Therefore, she didn't want to deprive the child of having a party. She had been advised against having a party so she wouldn't have to deal with her ex-husband.

Another (parent # 15) spoke of feeling guilty raising children without an intact family because "they love their father very much and we are not living together. There's always the feeling in the back of my mind I've deprived them...but I won't have all that 'stuff' at the Bar Mitzvah. Not that I'll do it, there's ambivalence in the back of my head. I'll feel guilty for not doing it. It (divorce) makes it harder in some ways."

A third parent (parent # 3) shared that the original questionnaire, received in the mail, aroused feelings of guilt. At our interview she expressed that she had the guilty feeling , "that I did something wrong." There was the added significant dimension of her living a lesbian lifestyle. It's difficult to interpret her reasons for feeling guilty, whether because of her divorce or her choice of an alternate lifestyle.

AMBIVALENT One father (parent #22) spoke of his ambivalence about his children going to religious school and becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. His personal background included family affiliation with a temple but not a Bar Mitzvah for himself. After the mother made the decision for the child to become Bar Mitzvah, the father "went along " with what he believed was "an assumption" that he would finance it. He "never balked" but was "not overjoyed" either. A mother (parent # 15) spoke of her ambivalent feelings of having and not having expensive "trimmings" at the party, all based on the guilt she carried of depriving her child of an intact family.

ASHAMED In one family the mother (parent #12) changed her last name back to her maiden name after the divorce. When she chose to put this "new name" on the invitation the father (parent #13) "felt ashamed in a way- that I had to be divorced, that it didn't work."

ALONE One mother (parent # 24) "felt alone" in the planning because she had to make all the decisions even though the father and she were hosting a joint party. Her son wasn't even interested in going to see the possible party locations.

One of the widowers (parent #5) expressed how he would love to have

someone share decision making, car pools and food shopping when he's sick or involved with business commitments or social engagements. Both widowers expressed this as the major difficulty of heading a single parent family.

ANGER A widower (parent # 5) said he has "felt anger at times having to make decisions alone." Many parents were angry with ex-spouses as their differences turned into court battles. Some divorcees were angry because they were financially dependent on ex-husbands. Others felt anger when their temples didn't even acknowledge their singleness and still others when rabbis did not reach out to them. "The first place



that smacks you in the face that you are a single parent family," said one mother, (parent # 8) "is the temple." Another mother, (parent # 23) planning for her daughter's Bat Mitzvah in the near future, felt angry with her ex-husband's new wife. The new wife's position in the divorce case was "unhonorable." Therefore, she angrily told the rabbi that she would not permit the new wife to have an honor at the ceremony, regardless of temple policy.

ANXIOUS Sometimes much anxiety is aroused in relation to the parent being with family members of ex-spouses or having a new "boyfriend meeting friends and family for the first time". In one case, however, the mother (parent # 8) is close with her mother-in-law and brother-in-law and expected them to be at the Bat Mitzvah. Nevertheless, she felt anxious because she didn't know whether the father would be coming.

A mother (parent # 24) felt "apprehensive" not knowing how much the party was going to cost and how much she could afford. Another (parent #26) became anxious after she allowed her daughter to make the decision to allow the father back to her house for the mother's backyard party. The mother initially didn't want him there. The daughter did. His presence was acceptable and the mother enjoyed the celebration she hosted.

A mother (parent # 3) who described herself as chronically anxious called the rabbi because she was "scared" and asked, "How are we going to work it out?" She didn't know what to expect in relation to the Bar Mitzvah ceremony for a child of divorced parents. In addition, some of her anxiety could have been attributed to the fact that she lived with her lesbian lover in her home. She had wanted to announce her lesbian lifestyle but had "never been

open" about it until then. She was " afraid to deal with it openly. I wanted to protect my own children. I compromised the situation." This situation led to great anxiety for her.

STRESS Most families anticipating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah will feel some stress. However, stress was felt in all cases of those parents that were interviewed. Those that I highlight are indeed very stressful situations. There were court cases over custody rights as well as one legal battle to determine the religion of the child.

Another cause of stress was when one of the parents remarries. Questions always arise when planning whose name should be shown on the invitation and where each one will sit in the temple. One parent (parent #15) was considering a joint celebration for her future husband's son and her son's Bar Mitzvah. However, her ex-husband turned down the idea. Another mother (parent # 17) whose ex-husband has remarried "allowed" him to come to a party in the house for the kids but did so with real "hatred".

Money was another major reason for stress. One mother (parent # 25) said her separation occurred when the family was planning the Bar Mitzvah which included a reception and a trip to Israel. Six months before the date the parents reached a "terrible impasse", when the father stopped seeing his children and sending money. This included money to help pay for the Bar Mitzvah. Becoming "resourceful to save money," the mother made a decision to have a small affordable luncheon in her home.

Many could not pay temple dues and were forced to request special fees and arrangements. Several explained how they received calls the day before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah saying they owed money. In one case support payments had stopped and, consequently, the mother (parent # 3) could not pay the

dues. In another family, the mother (parent # 4) was not even aware that the father, who had been responsible for temple dues and religious school tuition, had neglected to keep up with payments. The threat of not holding the Bar Mitzvah ceremony hung heavily over these families.

Illness created stress too. One mother (parent # 14) was "deathly ill for five weeks prior to the Bar Mitzvah. She had been bedridden much of the time with complications of flu. This made it extremely difficult to get her son to the temple for classes and lessons. Simultaneously, she was involved in a court battle for custody of her child. Another (parent # 3) shared how she felt great stress when her son's grandparent and greatgrandparent were ill prior to the Bar Mitzvah.

Uncomfortable feelings when going alone to temple was a fifth reason for feeling stress. "Most of the activities in temple are couple activities," remarked one mother. (parent # 15) At the beginning of her divorce, she found it very "difficult when you see families together - happy families."

POSITIVE While the majority of feelings were stress related, some parents were able to look forward to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on certain levels. One father, (parent #9) although alone for several years, and not financially "well off", was happy to say about the upcoming Bar Mitzvah of his youngest son, "I am looking forward to it." He planned to invite friends and family by telephone, as he was preparing a small scale party. Another (parent # 26) said the Bat Mitzvah "was a special day" and she had planned and looked forward to it for more than a year. In families where money is not a problem and communication between the parents is amiable then generally feelings toward the upcoming event were positive. One other factor was the parent's belief about their support system. One (parent # 4) said she felt "lucky" that

she was never alone. She has "always had a man" whom she could call anytime. Having friends with whom to share is crucial for the single parent throughout the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah process.

**FEELINGS ON THE DAY OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH** There was a variety of feelings described about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day, as is noted on the chart. The emotions shared by the single parent were overwhelmingly "nervous" and "uncomfortable". However, there were some who felt pure joy.

JOY One parent (parent # 4) showed me photos of a very "happy party". Another (parent # 11) told me, "It was a most incredible moment." Yet another (parent # 3 ) said, "It was everything I waited for my whole life."

SADNESS The death of a spouse, or any close relative or friend, evoked these feelings among the interviewees.

LOVE One parent (parent # 2) described an "overwhelming feeling - an aura of love for \_\_\_\_."

SUCCESSFUL During a custody battle that went on during the planning months prior to the Bar Mitzvah, one mother (parent # 14) said, "If I get this kid I'm going all out." Custody was granted two days before the Bar Mitzvah date. In addition, she wanted it to be a celebration for her oldest son's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. It was "the best affair I ever made. Everything fell in right. The kid was thrilled."

RESENTMENT A major reason for feeling resentment was having to stand on the bimah with an ex-spouse and/or his family. One mother (parent # 1) revealed, "I wanted to throw up on the rabbi and all over the bimah. I was nauseated," when she had to stand together with her parents alongside her ex-husband and his parents during a "Torah passing" ceremony. One parent (parent # 2) resented the rabbi telling her she had no choice about planning the ceremony. Not only did she have to go up with her ex-husband, but her younger child could not have a part in the service. One widower (parent # 5) didn't enjoy the parties because he "felt like a worker". He resented the position of being solely responsible for everything to go right.

HAPPY FOR CHILD The father (parent # 22), who was ambivalent about Bar/Bat Mitzvah for his children, was happy for his daughter on the day of her Bat Mitzvah because it was "something she wanted."

AWKWARD One found (parent # 2) it awkward when she encouraged her children to spend a little time after the service with their father's friends and family as his party wasn't until Sunday and hers was immediately following the Sabbath Service.

Many felt awkward sitting in temple with wives, husbands, girlfriends or boyfriends of their ex-spouses. One mother (parent # 16) was upset when her ex-husband brought his three week old baby unannounced. She also didn't believe it was appropriate for his non Jewish stepson to go up on the bimah to dress the Torah.

Some felt awkward at joint parties, even when they didn't sit together. One mother tried to eliminate awkwardness by choosing a particular physical environment for the party. This party was held in a dimly lit room and a buffet

lunch was served. The idea was to keep the spotlight off anyone in particular.

COMFORTABLE One father (parent #22) expressed feeling comfortable himself but believed that the guests are more strained than the parents because they don't know what to say. He did admit he wasn't that comfortable during his older child's Bar Mitzvah as it coincided with his separation. His reaction to the party situation described above (buffet, dim lighting and people spread out) was the opposite of the intent. If he had it to do over again, he would not choose that location. He thought it prevented socializing. He believed his first child's reception was more conducive to everyone mingling and celebrating. That is the way he would have liked it for the second as well.

GUILTY Only one parent (parent #3) expressed guilt on the day of the Bar Mitzvah. Even though she felt guilty, "...that I did something wrong," her relatives told her how comfortable they felt, just as if there was no divorce.

PROUD Many parents felt proud of their children. One (parent # 11) said she was "incredibly proud. His speech was awesome." Other phrases used were, "He shone," and "He was the hero."

RELIEF After months of anxiety, several expressed feeling relief when things worked out without problems on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day.

HATRED Feelings of hate remained on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for many parents.

TENSION Similarly, feelings of tension on the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah day were expressed by many parents. A situation that provoked these feelings was having to participate with ex-spouses on the bimah. Threats by an ex-husband to disrupt the service, requiring private detectives and local police on the scene, was another example. Then there was a case where each of the parents planned to have the boyfriend and girlfriend of each seated in the row behind the Bar Mitzvah family. This changed at the last minute when a seat became available next to the mother (parent # 24). Her boyfriend, seeing the empty seat, moved up next to her. Seeing this, the father's girlfriend became upset, had words and left in an emotional state. The mother claimed she felt "lots of tension" at that moment.

DEPRIVATION This feeling was expressed by the mother (parent #27) who had nothing to do with any part of her child's Bar Mitzvah. She had custody of the child but the father was the Temple member and together with his new wife made all the plans and payments for the party. There was a "sense of deprivation" for her. She felt like a "guest, an outsider." In addition, she felt hurt, angry, and alone.

## **INVITATIONS**

It is interesting to note the many options open to single parents. Only one item on the chart needs clarification. One parent had two styles printed depending to whom he was sending the invitation. To his family, friends and his daughter's friends, he sent the invitation signed by him and his new wife. On the invitations sent to his ex-wife's family and friends, he had added the mother's name to the original two. The mother of the Bat Mitzvah was only

included in two ways. She could invite whomever she pleased and she was asked to do the calligraphy on the invitations. When asked why she didn't say anything, she replied she "didn't want any hassle between my daughter and the new wife." She believed it "would be better if I weren't involved."

### **TEMPLE AFFILIATION**

My population was generated from rabbis' recommendations of congregants. Some, however, were referred by other interviewees. The majority of those interviewed were dues paying temple members. In most cases, the custodial parent retained membership in the temple after the divorce. There are some exceptions, however. In two of the families interviewed, both parents continued as members. In one family each parent held a single membership and paid separately. In the other family, the father paid the dues and the mother paid religious school fees. In a third family, the mother had remained a member of the family's first temple. In addition, her ex-husband paid for temple membership for her and her son in another synagogue in their new neighborhood.

### **TEMPLE SUPPORT**

It's of interest to note that not one of the single parents interviewed were contacted by the rabbi to acknowledge their single status or the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Some, however, were helpful when called upon by the congregant. That will be discussed later. When one mother (parent # received a call from her rabbi, she was "really delighted". She thought he was calling about her daughter's Bat Mitzvah and her single situation, but in truth he was calling asking if she were willing to participate in this research. "I thought he was calling about me." She surmised, "Well, we really made progress." She was



disappointed when she discovered the real reason. She continued, "It's avoidable. There is an awareness. It's obvious he knows I'm single. He put me in touch with you. But, it's not dealt with. If we don't talk about it, maybe it'll go away. But it doesn't."

Other parents shared disappointment that the temple or clergy hadn't acknowledged their single parent status. One (parent # 20) said, "The temple didn't approach me. "She had specific concerns, especially wanting to know to what extent her non Jewish ex-husband could participate in the service. A father (parent #22) commented, "It would have been nice if someone reached out and called. There was no recognition of the separation and divorce during either of his children's Bar/Bat Mitzvot. It was as though this was a "non event."

Another view (parent # 11) was, "There was no need" for the temple to address the issue of single parent in her case because, "no one had to play peacemaker or bring us together for the Bar Mitzvah. We didn't have any of that problem. We presented ourselves as an intact family. The only thing I would have liked is if there was more preparation. We didn't meet with the Rabbi until the last minute."

There were numerous stories of insensitive phone calls. Most were calls about money due and they were often from hired bookkeepers rather than from an officer of the temple. The timing of the calls was also a poor choice. They were received on the day before the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah rather than a few weeks or months before. "Friday night became horrible with that phone call from the temple," said one mother. This particular mother (parent # 3) shared her great need to belong to the temple even though she "doesn't feel accepted." She feels alienated from the community in general. She "can't deal with the people and doesn't find it a friendly place."

When another mother (parent # 2 ) received a 'money owing' phone call, she called the rabbi for help. After her call he got involved, but, according to this parent, he was a hinderance, not a help.

A third parent (parent #4) also received a call on Friday before her child's Bar Mitzvah. This was a call from the financial secretary informing her that dues was overdue. She was told, "no dues, no Bar Mitzvah." The mother was not aware that her ex-husband hadn't paid the money. It was his responsibility as he was the member. "This was very embarrassing." After lots of calls it was finally settled. However, her impression of the temple now is that money is all important. She felt the temple didn't care about her single position.

"The temple is a source of disappointment," remarked one parent. This mother (parent # 8 ) went to her rabbi but, "there was absolutely no follow through after that." She considered going again because she felt, "If the rabbi could speak with him (the father), then at least there could be peace in the temple. There is the possibility that he wouldn't come. If he didn't, it would be a void for my daughter. I believe he belongs here."

A father (parent #13) who had been very active prior to his divorce, explained, "There isn't a lot of communication about the Bat Mitzvah or the status of a single parent family." He feels "less close" to the Temple since his divorce. He believes there are only a few divorced parents in his temple and, "Because of that, they haven't paid as much attention as they could." An additional problem he encountered was the difficulty of maintaining the practice of family Shabbat dinner and attending Shabbat Services afterward. He tried to continue this practice, but found it very impractical. However, he did not blame the temple. Another mother (parent # 17) explained that "custodial parenting doesn't lend itself to celebrating Shabbat

on Friday night" because the mother doesn't have the children home. That was true in her situation.

A "hard time" was had by another parent. (parent # 14) She thought the rabbi was "cold and unfeeling" and the cantor "unduly inflexible." She spoke of several incidents in particular. One was when she had brought her son to the rabbi where he spent three hours receiving help in writing a sermonette. Knowing the mother had been seriously ill for several months, he kept her son this extended time while she lay ill on a bench outside his office. The second was when the rabbi hadn't informed her of a singles group at the temple when she became a new member. The third was when the mother argued with the rabbi about her ex-husband receiving an aliyah. She countered with an ultimatum, "I'll pull my son off the altar if you give the father an aliyah. I do not want him going up there." The fourth incident was when a few days before the Bar Mitzvah, this same woman was told her son was required to participate in the Friday night services as well as Saturday. Having been very sick, she didn't know if she would be up to it. She would have liked to have been told several weeks in advance. There were additional complaints. The final incident occurred on the Friday of the Bar Mitzvah when she received a call asking her to contribute to the Rabbi's and Cantor's Discretionary Funds. She told the caller, "They didn't do enough to deserve it."

However, she was pleased with the helpfulness of the tutor. One time the tutor picked up her son and took him to temple for a rehearsal because the mother was too ill. This mother had hoped that the temple would have been more understanding of a child under the pressure of a pending custody case. The child did not know from day to day with which parent he would be living and if he would become a Bar Mitzvah at all. Happily for this mother

and son, the decision was rendered the day before the Bar Mitzvah. The father attended the ceremony but sat in the rear of the sanctuary.

Another parent, (parent # 25) while very satisfied with the support of the rabbi and cantor, was disappointed with the teachers' reaction or lack of it. This mother went to the teachers because she knew her son had problems in regular school as well. She found, "There was no feedback or follow through. No teacher took any time to talk to the boy."

There are, however, several examples in which the rabbi or cantor was very helpful when called upon by the parent for support or advice. After a rabbi took time to discuss the service with her, one mother, (parent # 3) "felt safe." She remembered having no problems the day of the Bar Mitzvah.

After months of harrassment and litigation, another mother (parent # 6) went to the rabbis of her congregation to inform them of her situation and impending threats by the father to disrupt the service. She reports she received "incredible support." One of the rabbis called the local police to alert them to possible trouble. By doing so he basically said, "I do care," even though he couldn't change the situation. In addition, he gave the mother a copy of When Bad Things Happen To Good People , by Rabbi Kushner. She was very appreciative remarking, "It has been helpful."

Another parent (parent # 25) in this same congregation reported that the rabbi was very comforting when she went to him "in turmoil" because she couldn't pay her dues. She visited him often, frequently in tears, because of the pressure of the separation and upcoming Bar Mitzvah. She "had never felt close with a rabbi before," but this one was "always supportive." Not only was the rabbi helpful, but the cantor, was most compassionate. He once took her son to dinner and shared his own experience of becoming a Bar Mitzvah during the time of his parents' divorce. The mother expressed her

appreciation of this wonderful support and caring during the interview.

"Special meetings with the Rabbi" were found to be "therapeutic" by another parent. (parent # 17) She had reached out to him when she felt distressed. Another parent, too, called her rabbi to tell him about her single parent status after it was encouraged at the general Bar/Bat Mitzvah group meeting. Nevertheless, she explained, "I would have liked a call from the Rabbi."

One mother (parent # 4) sat in the sanctuary together with her son, ex-husband and his fiancée. When it came time for her to ascend the bimah, the rabbi extended his hand for her. She appreciated that acknowledgement of her being a single parent.

## Chapter 4

### RECOMMENDATIONS

"Our good news is that the potentialities for helping people to find purpose and direction in their lives has never been greater. We know more about how man grows and learns than ever before...Our bad news is that so few look to the synagogue as the source for re'Jew'vination and as tools to combat the lonesomeness, uselessness, helplessness, and hopelessness which also abound today." 32

In the interviews parents often offered suggestions, both directly and indirectly, for improving the plight of the single parent. In response to a question about seeking help from a rabbi, Friedman and Rogers in their research recorded these replies. " ' It would never have occurred to me', said one woman. Another was more explicit: 'A rabbi? No -- I would run ten miles before I did that. Rabbis that I've come in contact with have alienated me. They're full of trite phrases and pat answers.' " 33

One mother (parent # 12) I interviewed was "very disappointed and angry" that neither the rabbi nor cantor ever called or even asked about the separation or divorce. She advises that a rabbi "should talk to the kids too. He should ask the kids to come in and talk. It is important to acknowledge that there is a separation or divorce." As she and her ex-husband both remained members of the same temple, it was very awkward for them both.

Another parent (parent # 8) suggested, "You have to court the single parent family. Make them feel they're not different; that they are recognized and there's a place for them. "

Studies show that adults develop their faith during times of crisis and

positive life cycle experiences, such as a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is our responsibility to make this occasion meaningful and relevant to their lives, no matter what the configuration of the family. According to the findings of the Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle Project, "There is a relationship between periods of transition, change and crisis in one's life and his or her faith development."<sup>34</sup> It is common knowledge that positive life experiences lead to increased faith. Crisis, however, can lead to either a stronger or weaker faith. According to the dictionary, 'crisis' means "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, esp. for better or for worse, is determined; turning point."<sup>35</sup> If the synagogue helps people deal with their crisis, whether separation, divorce or death, in conjunction with a potentially positive experience such as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, then it also may help them increase their faith. In addition to a stronger faith in God, it could also become the vehicle for more ritual and holiday observance and more temple or Jewish community involvement. Friedman and Rogers concluded, "Divorce does not necessarily result in erosion of Jewish identity and community involvement, but may, especially for families with young children, open the way for restoration or strengthening of Jewish affiliation."<sup>36</sup> It is the quality of the synagogue experience more than the regularity of attendance and/or degree of activity that is most important. We must address ourselves to answer the question of creating and increasing quality time for the single parent.

The temple must reach out to people in crisis. To begin, the rabbi must personally acknowledge the single parent. One of the most important findings of this research, is that the rabbi must make the initial phone call to assure the parents that they are important members of the synagogue and that people care. There are other recommendations for rabbis, cantors,

education directors and the lay leadership, but first note what authorities and research have recommended.

In his research, Divorce and the Jewish Child, Thomas J. Cottle concludes,

...one might see Jewish identity for some children almost as a symbolic transitional object, a series of rules, ceremonies, beliefs, attitudes which not only fill in aspects of the self that one now feels to be empty, but also provide a means for people to redefine their lives during a momentarily trying time. 37

Gerald Bubis advises "...to form small groups who may commit themselves to evolving a Jewish lifestyle related to their needs, drawing from the synagogue and its personnel and giving to the synagogue." 38

In their research findings, Friedman and Rogers offer,

The same sustained contact and assistance by the rabbi that often succeed in drawing bereaved members into active participation in the congregation may, in the case of divorce, be effective in attracting families to the synagogue. In the same way, greater reassurance and support in connection with a Bar Mitzvah may cut down the number of post Bar Mitzvah dropouts. 39

The following selected suggestions are based on conclusions drawn from the survey data by George Gallup, Jr. and his associates, but are not part of the original study on Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle.

Encourage the formation of small fellowship groups... Rabbi Harold Schulweis bemoans the fact that the 'impersonalism of the synagogue is by now a widely accepted truism', and suggests...'The synagogue must be ...divided into groups of families, into clusters of congregational families who pledge to celebrate Jewish life together, to learn together, to grow Jewishly together.'<sup>40</sup>... Elie Wiesel, in his book Souls On Fire stresses the concept of encounter...Let two human beings



become one and the world is no longer the same; let two human creatures accept one another and creation will have meaning...<sup>41</sup>

Encourage people to challenge their faith. The survey suggests that faith is strengthened if it is challenged...synagogues can create experiences in which persons have opportunities to explore their reasons, both of *mind* and *heart*, for belief or non belief.<sup>42</sup>

Stress growth in faith in service to others...experience has shown that those who begin working with persons in need soon find that they themselves receive, from the wisdom, patience, and endurance of the needy, far more than they can give. <sup>43</sup>

Reach people at a young age...In view of the fact that values, religious beliefs and patterns tend to be established during the pre-teen and teen years, the clergy and religious educators should examine carefully the status of religion in the home... What is called for is a 'team effort' between clergy and parents - to find out how religious institutions can complement and reinforce what is taught in the home, to educate parents, to educate youngsters and to aid in their spiritual formation. Such efforts are likely to be welcomed by parents, since both the religiously involved and uninvolved say they would like their children to receive religious training. Furthermore, this clergy - parent team effort would enrich the spiritual lives of families, improve relationships among family members and thereby combat the trend toward dissolution of the family unit in the U.S.  
44

Be more supportive in faith development. Many people do not seem to be finding support for their faith or help during life crises from their religious organizations...When unchurched persons...were asked what would bring them back to the church, one of the key answers given was 'if I can find a minister/priest/rabbi with whom I can discuss my religious doubts and needs.'<sup>45</sup>

Based on opinions, research, interviews and personal and professional experience, the following practical suggestions for rabbis, cantors, education directors, other Jewish professionals and lay leaders are

offered.

1- The rabbi must place a call to any single parent whose child will become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the next year. This opens the door for dialogue and support for the single parent. In addition, a call to the other parent, member or not, is equally important because it tells the non member parent he/she is the child's parent as well and is equally responsible for planning the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

2-The family should be asked, before assigning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, if they wish to be scheduled with another single parent household. One parent found the "silence deafening" and would have liked to have another family share the day. "The solace could have been another single family," she commented. While some had preferred the latter others wanted everything as 'normal' as possible.

3- A Bar/Bat Mitzvah family education program should be conducted in the sixth grade. This could raise the consciousness of all families to the relevance of this life cycle event. It should acknowledge the problems and anxieties of Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the intact family as well as the additional difficulties faced by the single parent.

4- The rabbi should plan early for the ceremony by meeting with both parents. Ideally, this should be at the same time, including the child in these planning sessions. If that's not possible, then meet privately with the child at another time. It is important to allow for individual situations by adding extra prayers, readings, or honors if necessary.

5- Support groups must be formed to help the single parents and their families. In 1984 Wendy Baltaxe, director of singles activities at the Greater Five Towns YM-YWHA in Cedarhurst, NY, organized a support

group for single parents planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or wedding. It's believed to be the first of its kind, at least on Long Island. This grew from her own experience the year before. In a newspaper article about this innovative activity, Ms. Baltaxe commented, "Though they try hard not to, rabbis frequently find it awkward dealing with divorced people'.

While the group was to address 'things' initially, at the first session the women decided they needed to not feel alone. Instead, they discussed feelings of guilt, anger and resentment of 'being one' in something that's so family oriented." 46

One of the mothers interviewed believes it is the temple, not the "Y", that should provide professionals to help. She said,

...it's the kind of place that you should ... always feel that you can turn to. It must help in crisis situations. The rabbi is always available for funerals and hospital visits. Why not speak to those who are in single situations. Just sit down and rap. It will help keep Judaism alive. The first place that 'smacks you in the face' that you are a single [parent family] is the temple. With each uncomfortable experience in the temple you lose members.

Those who have experienced Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a single parent are most willing to help others. A typical response was, ..."be willing to share if it would be helpful...be very happy to do it."

One temple's social worker, in an attempt to develop such support groups, sent the following letter to its congregants. 47 The letter began:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Divorce, like any other life cycle crisis, can be a time of great pain as well as a new opportunity for growth and change. Sharing with others can help you to build on your strengths and help shape the direction your future will take.

A different letter was sent to single parents whose children were to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah within the year. The initial letter was followed up

with phone calls to these parents. The response to both letters was very poor. The social worker confided that she has met with great resistance. However, it was indicated that a personal phone call from the rabbi might be more welcome as an icebreaker. She believes when the rabbi calls, people listen.

6-Single parent networking can become a very positive avenue of communication. One parent, sharing experiences with another parent, could be a very effective means of support. The rabbi could be the catalyst for these encounters.

7- DAY OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH It is incumbent for the rabbi and cantor to be aware of the single parents in relation to ritual, honors, choreography and acknowledgements on this day. One ceremony that has become very popular is "passing the Torah down from generation to generation". This may present complex problems in a divorced parent family. In one particular temple, the ceremony is held for all or none of the families participating on the same Shabbat. One parent explained that the other family was an intact family and long standing temple members. For the sake of the other family, she "gave in" to having the ceremony even though it would prove very painful for her to stand on the bimah together with her ex-husband and his parents. It may be possible to hold such a ceremony for one family privately in the rabbi's study prior to the regular worship service. Thus, the rabbi can satisfy the needs of individual families when children share a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

8- The school must address this phenomenon of changing family configurations. Teaching about single parents may help the child of divorced parents to accept this position and sensitize others to new family lifestyles. It

may be necessary to change or supplement the texts that are used. New materials and media are being produced to teach about Jewish life and the single parent. Two examples are the movie, "The Empty Chair" and the book, Who Will Lead Kiddush? by Barbara Pomerantz.

9- Letters addressed to parents must be written to "parents", not "mother" and "father". The latter would be insensitive as a mother or father may not be living in that particular home.

10- Lay leadership should meet with clergy and other temple professionals to assess the needs and plan appropriate programs to reduce the pain and problems of single parents. It must be determined by both lay members and professionals as to who will oversee the establishment and maintenance of such programs. Joint planning would address the spiritual, psychological, emotional, as well as the pragmatic needs of the single Jewish parent. Both groups should keep up with current material in this area and be aware of any innovative ideas that would help strengthen the ties of singles with the temple. One way is by attending conferences about the Jewish family.

Some suggestions of temple programming for single parents follow:

a) Shabbat dinners for single parents has been suggested by some. This might be held on the same night as a regular Shabbat dinner, but located in a different room. However, a parent disagreed about such a possibility. She said she wouldn't want to be singled out, nor would her son. She added that she does remember "feeling uncomfortable when going to temple alone, but this is the way we are and I go."

b) Parallel and/or joint family programs should be considered as worthy means of bringing the single parents into the temple and into the lives of their children. Very often, only one of a pair of parents is available for such a program. Bar/Bat Mitzvah may come without pressure when families are

enrolled together in school. Family education in upper intermediate grades, that is, pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah age, can help stem the tide of dropouts.

c) It is recommended that temples sponsor seders for singles. The Sutton Place Synagogue in Manhattan advertised a new event last year. It held a seder for single parents and their children up to the age of eighteen. This was planned as a separate private seder, different than the one for singles only.

d) Temples must offer single parent membership and financial arrangements for those who find it a burden to pay regular dues. This would be a great help to many single parents. Simultaneously, it is important to establish compassionate ways of handling these cases. Too many people have been hurt by the callousness of some hired bookkeeper or financial secretary.

e) Teachers and other temple professionals should be trained to be sensitive to the single parents and their families. This is essential for a caring temple.

There were several additional benefits to this research. The interview gave parents an arena for venting their feelings about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, rabbis and temples. Several parents shared that the opportunity for dialogue on these issues helped move them to higher levels of their faith development. Several families were encouraged to continue their children's education past Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Those rabbis who were supportive of single parents were acknowledged. Hope was given that others in the future would have the benefit of these interviews. One father strongly believed that this research could "raise the consciousness of rabbis, cantors, and lay leaders about the singles problem."

In 1980, Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, in his article, "Children of Divorced

Parent Households-Some Suggested Guidelines For School and Synagogue," noted that it then was too early to evaluate the success of these recommendations. Seven years later these findings suggest very little has been accomplished. One wonders if we must wait another seven years before we see results. Let our synagogues become a source of "re'Jew'vination".<sup>48</sup> Rabbi Schulweis's words of ten years ago remain relevant. "The primary task on the agenda of the synagogue is the humanization and personalization of the temple." <sup>49</sup>

*"Teach us more and more to share the pain of others, to heed Your call for justice, to pursue the blessing of peace. Help us, O God, to gain victory over evil, to bring nearer the day when all the world shall be one." 50*

## FOOTNOTES

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- 2 Newsletter , The William Petschek National Jewish Family Center of the American Jewish Committee, Winter 1986, p. 3.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 "Bar and Bat Mitzvah," A.R.E. Mini-course booklet, p. 11.
- 5 Arnold van Gennep. The Rites of Passage, p. 65.
- 6 Frank W. Young, "The Functions of Male Initiation Ceremonies," American Journal of Sociology, 1962, p. 391.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 Psychological Abstracts. Feb. 1985, p. 392.
- 9 Thomas J. Cottle. "Divorce and the Jewish Child," p. 25.
- 10 Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin. To Raise A Jewish Child, p. 171.
- 11 Sara S. McLonahan, "Family Structure and Stress," Journal of Marriage and the Family, p. 355.
- 12 Nathalie Friedman and Theresa Rogers, The Jewish Community and Children of Divorce, p. 13.
- 13 Marvin Bienstock, "Single Parent Families in the Jewish Community," Serving The Jewish Family, p. 215.
- 14 Richard Gardner, The Parents Book About Divorce, p. 356.
- 15 Dr. Bernie Siegel, Love Medicine and Miracles, p. 74.
- 16 Earl Grollman and Marjorie Sams, Living Through Your Divorce, p. 9.
- 17 Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, "Children of Divorce Parent Households-Some



- Suggested Guidelines for School and Synagogue." 1980, p. 8.
- 18 Rabbi Harold Schulweis, "Restructuring The Synagogue," Serving The Jewish Family, pp. 86,7.
  - 19 Alfred Benjamin, The Helping Interview, p. 109.
  - 20 *ibid.*, p. 110.
  - 21 Faith Development And Your Ministry, p. xi.
  - 22 Seltzer, p. 1.
  - 23 *ibid.*
  - 24 Sara McLonahan, p. 355.
  - 25 Martin Fox, "Court Role in Faith Dispute Faulted in Divorce Decree," New York Law Journal, p. 1.
  - 26 Andrew Cherlin and Carin Celebuski, "Are Jewish Families Different?" Journal Of Marriage and the Family, p. 903.
  - 27 *ibid.*, p. 906.
  - 28 *ibid.*, p. 908.
  - 29 Faith Development And Your Ministry, p. 41.
  - 30 E.A. Bankoff, "Social Support and Adaptation," Journal of Marriage and the Family, p. 837.
  - 31 Faith Development and Your Ministry, p. 40.
  - 32 Gerald Bubis, "Facing New Times:AResponse To Changing Needs," Serving The Jewish Family, pp. 94,5.
  - 33 Friedman and Rogers, The Divorced Parent and the Jewish Community, p. 24.
  - 34 "For Your Reflection," Handout, Faith Development Regional Conference, Oct. 1985.
  - 35 Random House Dictionary, p. 344.
  - 36 Friedman and Rogers, The Divorced Parent and the Jewish

Community, p. 53.

37 Cottle, p. 23.

38 Bubis, p.95.

39 Friedman and Rogers, The Jewish Community and the Children of Divorce, p. 26.

40 Faith Development and Your Ministry, p. 54.

41 *ibid.*, p. 55.

42 *ibid.*, pp. 55,6.

43 *ibid.*, pp. 58,9

44 *ibid.*, pp. 59,60.

45 *ibid.*, pp. 60,1.

46 Barbara Delatiner, "Single Parent and a Child's Party," N.Y. Times,  
March 18, 1984, p. 16.

47 Deborah Glickman, Letter.

48 Bubis, p.95.

49 Schulweis, p. 86.

50 Gates of Prayer, p. 620.

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**APPENDIX A****SAMPLE OF COVER LETTER SENT TO PARTICIPANTS.**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am delighted and grateful that you have accepted to be part of the research for my thesis, a requirement for completing a Masters in Religious Education degree at Hebrew Union College. Enclosed you will find a questionnaire. I would appreciate your completing this promptly and returning it to me in the self addressed envelope. After receiving it I will call you to set up an appointment at your convenience for a personal interview.

Sincerely,

Harriet Vogel (signed)



CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDY OF JEWISH IDENTITY, RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND BELIEFS,  
AND MARRIAGE PATTERNS

Please complete this questionnaire by following the directions at each question. You will be asked to do one of three things, --

- (1) circle a code number to the right of the answer you choose, or circle one code number in each row, etc., or
- (2) fill in a number (for example, your zip code), or
- (3) write in a word or short explanation (such as your specific answer, if the stated choices are not appropriate).

If you are uncertain or do not know the answer to any question, just leave that item blank and go on to the next question.



# SECTION 1. RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND AND COUNTRY OF FAMILY ORIGIN.

1. Where do you currently live (most of the year)? Please write in CITY OR TOWN, STATE OR PROVINCE, AND POSTAL ZIP CODE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City/Town)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(State/Province)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Zipcode)

2. How many years have you lived in the city or town where you live now? \_\_\_\_\_ years

3. This question is about place of birth.

First, please indicate in **column A** where **you** were born, in **columns B and C** where **your parents** were born, and in **columns D and E** the country or region of origin of your mother's family and your father's family. IF YOU DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, JUST GIVE US YOUR BEST GUESS.

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH COLUMN. [IF MORE THAN ONE ANSWER IN COLUMN D OR E, CIRCLE TWO NUMBERS.]

	A. You	B. Your mother	C. Your father	D. Mother's family	E. Father's family
USA or Canada .....	1	1	1	1	1
Russia, Poland, or other parts of Eastern Europe .....	2	2	2	2	2
Germany .....	3	3	3	3	3
Austria, Hungary, or other parts of Central Europe (except Germany) ....	4	4	4	4	4
Other, please specify below and circle the "5" in the appropriate column.	5	5	5	5	5

4. For each in Question 3 **NOT BORN IN THE USA OR CANADA**, please write in the (approximate) year(s) of immigration to North America.

A. You	B. Your mother	C. Your father	D. Mother's family	E. Father's family
(year)	(year)	(year)	(year)	(year)

**SECTION II.** IN THIS SECTION WE WILL ASK ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AT VARIOUS STAGES PRIOR TO ADULthood. IF ONE OF YOUR PARENTS WAS DECEASED OR IF YOUR PARENTS WERE NOT LIVING TOGETHER, YOU MAY CHOOSE TO ANSWER EITHER ABOUT THE DECEASED PARENT, OR ABOUT A STEP-PARENT OR GUARDIAN, OR WRITE "not applicable."

**A. "WHEN YOU WERE SIXTEEN. . ."**

5. When you were 16, where did you live (most or all of the year)? Please write in CITY OR TOWN, STATE OR PROVINCE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City/Town)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(State/Province)

6. A. When you were 16, what was your mother's and your father's (usual) occupation?

YOUR MOTHER

YOUR FATHER

JOB TITLE OR POSITION

NATURE OF WORK DONE

TYPE OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY

- B. Were your parents self-employed in the positions described above?

MOTHER

FATHER

Yes .....

1

1

No .....

2

2

Don't know .....

3

3

7. When you were 16, what did each of your parents consider themselves?

Mother

Father

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER  
IN EACH COLUMN)

Orthodox Jew .....

1

1

Conservative Jew .....

2

2

Reform Jew .....

3

3

Just Jewish .....

4

4

Catholic .....

5

5

(Please specify denomination) ←

Protestant .....

6

6

Other (Please specify and circle  
the "7" in appropriate column)

7

7

## B. "DURING YOUR CHILDHOOD. . ."

8. Please read the various activities listed in this question. Then indicate about how frequently your parents (one or both of them) took part in each one during your childhood.

	Never	Once a year or less	2-5 times a year	6-11 times a year	12 times a year or more
Have Jews visit in your home?..	1	2	3	4	5
Have non-Jews visit in your home? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attend synagogue services? ...	1	2	3	4	5
Attend church services? .....	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please tell us about life cycle ceremonies you (and your siblings) have experienced.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Yes	No	I had no brothers	I had no sisters	Don't recall
Were <b>you</b> confirmed? .....	1	2	--	--	--
Were any of your brothers or sisters confirmed? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Did <b>you</b> have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? .....	1	2	--	--	--
Did any of your brothers have a Bar Mitzvah?	1	2	3	--	5
Did any of your sisters have a Bat Mitzvah?	1	2	--	4	5

10. Was there a **religious ceremony** in connection with the circumcision of each of your brothers, and (if you are male) your own circumcision?

Yes, for all .....	1
Yes, but not for all ...	2
I had no brothers .....	3
No, for none .....	4
Don't recall .....	5

11. Did your parents name their children in synagogue? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Yes, all .....	1
Yes, but not all ...	2
No, none .....	3
Don't know .....	4

12. This question is about Jewish family customs. Most of the time during your childhood, was it your family's practice to. . .

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Yes	No	Don't Recall
Light Sabbath candles? .....	1	2	3
Have mostly Jewish friends? .....	1	2	3
Eat no bread on Passover? .....	1	2	3
Live in a "Jewish neighborhood"? .....	1	2	3
Sit shiva after the death of a relative? .....	1	2	3
Build a Sukkah? .....	1	2	3
Keep Kosher? .....	1	2	3
Have or attend a Passover Seder? .....	1	2	3
Light Hanukah candles? .....	1	2	3
Have a Christmas tree? .....	1	2	3
Fast on Yom Kippur? .....	1	2	3
Light Yahrzeit candle at home in memory of a relative? .....	1	2	3
Eat pork or pork products? .....	1	2	3
Observe Yizkor on Yom Kippur in synagogue in memory of a deceased relative? .....	1	2	3
Have a Mezzuzah on your front door? .....	1	2	3

13. Now we would like you to tell us about some of the educational, social, and cultural activities in which you participated as you were growing up.

PLEASE INDICATE THE NUMBER OF YEARS OR SUMMERS YOU ATTENDED BEFORE YOUR 22ND BIRTHDAY.

Activity	How many years or summers did you attend?	In thinking about it now, on the whole was it a positive, neutral, or negative experience?		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
Sunday School (1 weekly session) _____		1	2	3
Yiddish School (1 weekly session) _____		1	2	3
Synagogue School (2 or more weekly sessions) _____		1	2	3
Jewish Day School or Yeshiva (all day, 5 days a week) _____		1	2	3
Other Jewish schooling, please specify _____		1	2	3
Synagogue or Temple Youth Group _____		1	2	3
Other youth group with Jewish content and/or members _____		1	2	3

## 13. (Continued)

Activity

How many summers did you attend?	In thinking about it now, on the whole was it a positive, neutral, or negative experience?		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative

Summer camp of Jewish religious movement (such as UAHC)	_____	1	2	3
Summer camp with Jewish program	_____	1	2	3
Mostly or all Jewish summer camp without Jewish program	_____	1	2	3
Summer study or touring in Israel	_____	1	2	3
Semester or year in Israel	_____	1	2	3
Other Jewish activities, please specify _____	_____	1	2	3

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

**IF YOU ATTENDED COLLEGE:** What was  
the name of the undergraduate col-  
lege you attended (the longest)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of College)

Some high school .....	1
High school graduate .....	2
Some college .....	3
College graduate .....	4
Some graduate school .....	5
Master's degree or equivalent ..	6
Law degree .....	7
Medical doctorate .....	8
Other doctorate .....	9
Other, please specify	0

## C. "YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS . . ."

15. When you were in high school,  
how often did you attend an  
organized Jewish activity, in-  
cluding religious services?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

**IF THE FREQUENCY VARIED DURING  
YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, ANSWER  
FOR THE YEAR(S) YOU WERE MOST  
ACTIVE JEWISHLY.**

Rarely or never .....	1
About once a year .....	2
Several times a year, but less than once a month .....	3
About once a month .....	4
2 or 3 times a month .....	5
Once a week or more .....	6

16. When you were in high school, did you date. . . (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)A. **IF YOU DIDN'T DATE IN HIGH SCHOOL,**  
please circle an additional number  
for the answer that best describes  
the group with whom you socialized  
most.

I didn't date .(PLEASE READ A) .	1
Only Jews? .....	2
Mostly Jews? .....	3
Jews and non-Jews equally? .....	4
Mostly non-Jews? .....	5
Only non-Jews? .....	6

IF YOU WERE JEWISH AS A TEENAGER, please answer Q. 17A.

IF YOU WERE NOT JEWISH AS A TEENAGER, please answer Q. 17B and 17C.

17A. If you were Jewish as a teenager, which of the statements below best describes your parents' approach toward your dating non-Jews? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| They encouraged me to date non-Jews .....  | 1 |
| They expressed no preference .....   | 2 |
| Although I think they preferred that I date Jews, they expressed no opposition to my dating non-Jews ..... | 3 |
| Although they stated their preference that I date only Jews, they permitted me to date non-Jews .....      | 4 |
| Although they strongly opposed my dating non-Jews, they did not forbid it .....                            | 5 |
| They would not permit me to date non-Jews .....  | 6 |
| The issue never came up because .....  | 7 |

----- IF YOU ANSWERED Q. 17A, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 18. -----

17B. If you were NOT Jewish as a teenager, which of the statements below best describes your parents' approach toward your dating Jews? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| They encouraged me to date Jews .....  | 1 |
| They expressed no preference .....   | 2 |
| Although I think they preferred that I date people of my own faith, they expressed no opposition to my dating Jews ..... | 3 |
| Although they stated their preference that I date only people of my own faith, they permitted me to date Jews .....      | 4 |
| Although they strongly opposed my dating Jews, they did not forbid it  | 5 |
| They would not permit me to date Jews .....  | 6 |
| The issue never came up because .....  | 7 |

17C. If you were NOT Jewish as a teenager, please give a brief description of your religious education. \_\_\_\_\_

18. When you were college age, whether or not you actually went to college, how often did you attend an organized Jewish activity, including religious services?

IF THE FREQUENCY VARIED DURING THOSE YEARS, ANSWER FOR THE YEAR(S) YOU WERE MOST ACTIVE JEWISHLY.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Rarely or never .....                                  | 1 |
| About once a year .....                                | 2 |
| Several times a year, but less than once a month ..... | 3 |
| About once a month .....                               | 4 |
| 2 or 3 times a month .....                             | 5 |
| Once a week or more .....                              | 6 |

19. When you were college age, whether or not you actually went to college, did you date. . . (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

A. **IF YOU DIDN'T DATE**, please circle an additional number for the answer that best describes the group with whom you socialized most.

I didn't date .(PLEASE READ A) . 1  
 Only Jews? ..... 2  
 Mostly Jews? ..... 3  
 Jews and non-Jews equally? ..... 4  
 Mostly non-Jews? ..... 5  
 Only non-Jews? ..... 6

**SECTION III. ABOUT YOU AS A JEWISH ADULT -- YOUR CURRENT ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES, AND EXPERIENCES.**

20. What is your Jewish status? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

I was born Jewish:

Both parents were Jewish ..... 1  
 Only mother was Jewish ..... 2  
 Only father was Jewish ..... 3  
 I converted without specific plans for marriage to a Jew ..... 4  
 I converted prior to marriage, but would have converted anyway .. 5  
 I converted prior to marriage, but would NOT have converted without specific plans for marriage to a Jew ..... 6  
 I converted, but don't regard myself as really Jewish ..... 7  
 I never converted, but I feel Jewish ..... 8  
 I never converted, and although my spouse is Jewish, I do not consider myself Jewish ..... 9  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_ 0

21. IF YOU CONVERTED TO JUDAISM:

A. Under whose sponsorship did you convert?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Reform ..... 1  
 Conservative ..... 2  
 Orthodox ..... 3  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_ 4

B. For how long a period did you formally study Judaism before conversion? \_\_\_\_\_

C. At the time of your conversion, you might have participated in one or more of the rituals listed below. For each one, please indicate whether or not you participated in it.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Yes	No
Private conversion ceremony .....	1	2
Conversion ceremony in front of congregation ..	1	2
Jewish court (Bet Din) .....	1	2
Ritual immersion .....	1	2
Ritual circumcision .....	1	2
Other, please specify _____	1	2

22. How well do you know each of the following languages?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Well	Fair	Slight	Not at all
Reading Prayerbook Hebrew ..	1	2	3	4
Modern Hebrew .....	1	2	3	4
Yiddish .....	1	2	3	4
Ladino .....	1	2	3	4

23. Religious beliefs vary widely. In this question we list a number of statements of religious belief. Please tell us about your own belief by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis- agree	Strongly disagree
God has a special concern for the unfortunate and the oppressed .....	1	2	3	4	5
We have the ability to appreciate what is beautiful in the world because something of God is in each of us .....	1	2	3	4	5
The concept of God is an old superstition that is no longer needed to explain things in the modern era .....	1	2	3	4	5
A strong belief in God strengthens the will to live when a person is seriously ill .....	1	2	3	4	5
God is not aware of our actions .....	1	2	3	4	5
Those who feel that God hears prayers are just deceiving themselves .....	1	2	3	4	5
Given human nature, our ability to know the difference between right and wrong had to have been inspired by God .....	1	2	3	4	5
The Bible is nothing more than an important book of moral teachings .....	1	2	3	4	5
It is a sign that God still cares about the Jews that the State of Israel came into be- ing immediately after the Holocaust .....	1	2	3	4	5
God works in ways we don't understand .....	1	2	3	4	5

24. Many reasons have been given for remaining Jewish. Please indicate by **CIRCLING ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW** how important each of the five is to you as a reason for remaining Jewish.

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
The satisfaction I get from being Jewish' .....	1	2	3	4	5
I owe it to my parents, grandparents, and ancestors. ....	1	2	3	4	5
I don't want to give Hitler his victory after all .....	1	2	3	4	5
Jews have a special task to be examples to the world ..	1	2	3	4	5
I was born a Jew and see no reason to change .....	1	2	3	4	5



25. Much has been written and said about Jews as the "chosen people." Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what the term "chosen people" means to you? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

The Jewish people was chosen to bring the knowledge  
of God to the world ..... 1  
Whether or not the Jewish people literally was chosen  
by God, Jews have had a special role in history .... 2  
Because Jews were chosen, they must be better ..... 3  
Jews were not really chosen; they have been simply  
victims of circumstance ..... 4

26. What is your current marital status -- are you. . . (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Married ..... [PLEASE ..... 1  
Separated ..... CONTINUE ..... 2  
Divorced ..... WITH ..... 3  
Widowed ..... Q. 27] ..... 4  
Never married ... (PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 38) ..... 5

27. How many times have you been  
married [including your  
current marriage]?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Once ..(PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q.30).. 1  
Twice ..... [PLEASE ..... 2  
Three times ..... CONTINUE ..... 3  
Four times ..... WITH ..... 4  
More than four times .. Q. 28] .. 5

28. Was your **former** spouse Jewish? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

IF MORE THAN ONE FORMER  
SPOUSE, ANSWER FOR **FIRST**

Yes, born Jewish ..... 1  
Yes, converted to Judaism before marriage .. 2  
Yes, converted to Judaism after marriage ... 3  
No, not Jewish ..... 4

29. While you were divorced or widowed (before your most recent marriage), about what **proportion** of the people you dated were Jewish? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Did not date then ..... 0  
None ..... 1  
Almost none ..... 2  
A few ..... 3  
About half ..... 4  
Most ..... 5  
Almost all ..... 6  
All ..... 7

30. Is your present (or most recent) spouse Jewish? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Yes, by birth ..... [CONTINUE ..... 1  
Yes, by conversion before marriage ... WITH ..... 2  
Yes, by conversion after marriage ... Q. 35] ..... 3  
No ..... (PLEASE ANSWER Q's 31 - 34) ..... 4

NOTE: QUESTIONS 31 THROUGH 34 SHOULD BE ANSWERED ONLY IF YOUR **PRESENT** (OR MOST RECENT, IF YOU ARE DIVORCED OR WIDOWED) **SPOUSE IS NOT JEWISH.**

Yes	No
-----	----

31. A. Was your present (or most recent) spouse married before? ..... 1 2 (CONT. WITH Q.32)
- B. Was (his/her) former spouse Jewish? ..... 1 2
- C. Are there any children from your spouse's previous marriage? ..... 1 2 (CONT. WITH Q.32)
- D. Does your spouse rear his/her child(ren) from a previous marriage as non-Jews within your home? 1 2
- E. Does your spouse celebrate Christian holy days with his/her child(ren) in your home? ..... 1 2
- F. Does/Do your spouse's child(ren) who does/do not live with you, visit your home regularly? ... 1 2

32. In some families non-Jewish spouses do Jewish things; in others they do not. If your spouse is not Jewish, does he/she . . .

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Yes	No	No Children
...attend synagogue services as often as you do? .....	1	2	-
...participate in some synagogue activities? .....	1	2	-
...participate MORE actively in the synagogue than you do? .....	1	2	-
...refrain from involvement in Jewish religious activities with <b>you</b> (and your children)? .....	1	2	-
...attend church services on special holy days? .....	1	2	-
...attend church services somewhat regularly? .....	1	2	-
...take your child(ren) to church services sometimes? ...	1	2	3
...rear your child(ren) in a faith other than Judaism? ..	1	2	3

33. This question asks about your present or most recent spouse and (his/her) parents.

Yes	No	IF NO: In which country was he/she born?
-----	----	--

- A. Was your spouse born in the USA or Canada? 1 2 (Country)
- B. Was your spouse's **mother** born in the USA or Canada? 1 2 (Country)
- C. Was your spouse's **father** born in the USA or Canada? 1 2 (Country)
- D. IF ALL THREE OF THEM WERE BORN IN USA/CANADA:  
From what country or part of the world did most of your spouse's ancestors come?

(IF MORE THAN ONE, PLEASE NAME THE ONE YOUR SPOUSE IS MOST LIKELY TO IDENTIFY WITH.)

(Country or region of family origin)

34. When your spouse was 16 years old, what did each of your spouse's parents consider themselves, as far as you know?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH COLUMN)

	Spouse's Mother	Spouse's Father
Catholic .....	1	1
(Please specify denomination) ← Protestant .....	2	2
Orthodox Jew .....	3	3
Conservative Jew .....	4	4
Reform Jew .....	5	5
Just Jewish .....	6	6
Other (Please specify and circle the "7" in appropriate column) .....	7	7
Don't know .....	8	8

35. Before your (first) marriage, approximately what proportion of the people you dated were Jewish?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Did not date then .....	0
None .....	1
Almost none .....	2
A few .....	3
About half .....	4
Most .....	5
Almost all .....	6
All .....	7

36. How old were you when you were (first) married? \_\_\_\_\_

37. A. Where were you married (the most recent time)?  
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

In a synagogue .....	1
In a church .....	2
Some other place (Please specify type of place) .....	3

B. And who performed that wedding ceremony?  
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

A rabbi or cantor .....	1
Non-Jewish clergy .....	2
A judge or Justice of the peace .....	3
Jewish and non-Jewish clergy jointly .....	4
Other (Please specify) .....	5

THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED BY EVERYONE.

38. Thinking about the neighborhood where you now live, about what proportion of the people who live there are Jewish?

None or almost none ( 0 - 10%)...	1
Less than half .....(10 - 40%)...	2
About half .....(40 - 60%)...	3
Most .....(60 - 90%)...	4
All or almost all ..(90 -100%)...	5

39. Thinking about the people whom you consider your close friends, . . .

(PLEASE READ A & B AND CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH COLUMN)

A. ...about what proportion of them are Jewish?		B. ...about what proportion of them belong to your Temple?	
All .....	5	.....	5
Almost all .....	4	.....	4
Most .....	3	.....	3
About half .....	2	.....	2
Less than half .....	1	.....	1
Almost none or none .....	0	.....	0

40. For approximately how many years have you belonged  
to the Temple where you are a member now?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

41. Please read the various activities listed in this question. Then indicate about  
how frequently you participate in each one. (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH  
ROW).

	NUMBER OF TIMES PER YEAR:				
	Never	Once or less	2-5	6-11	12 or more
Attend a sports event, such as a ball game? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visit a museum or attend a symphony concert, theater, or other live cultural event? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Have Jews visit in your home? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Have non-Jews visit in your home? ...	1	2	3	4	5
Attend synagogue services? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attend church services? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attend Jewish adult education class or lecture? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attend general adult education class or lecture? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Read a book with Jewish content? ....	1	2	3	4	5
Read a book without Jewish content? .	1	2	3	4	5
Read a Jewish magazine or newspaper?	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Attend meetings of, or perform organizational functions for:</u>					
Your own Temple? .....	1	2	3	4	5
Jewish organizations other than your own Temple? .....	1	2	3	4	5
General organizations or civic groups? .....	1	2	3	4	5

42. During the past year, how has your family (living in your household) distributed its charitable giving? (We don't want amounts -- just the percent to various causes or organizations.) PLEASE ENTER A PERCENT FROM 0% TO 100% ON EACH LINE SO THAT THE COLUMN ADDS TO 100% (APPROXIMATELY).

Your Temple or synagogue .....	_____ %
Reform Jewish national institutions, such as UAHC, HUC-JIR, or ARZA .....	_____ %
UJA/Jewish Federation .....	_____ %
Other Jewish causes or organizations .....	_____ %
Other general causes or organizations .....	_____ %
TOTAL ...	100 %

43. This question is about customs in Jewish families. Is it the practice in your family to . . . (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	Yes	No
Light Sabbath candles? .....	1	2
Eat no bread on Passover? .....	1	2
Sit shiva after the death of a relative? .....	1	2
Build a Sukkah? .....	1	2
Keep Kosher? .....	1	2
Have or attend a Passover Seder? .....	1	2
Light Hanukkah candles? .....	1	2
Have a Christmas tree? .....	1	2
Fast on Yom Kippur? .....	1	2
Light Yahrzeit candle at home in memory of a relative? .....	1	2
Eat pork or pork products? .....	1	2
Observe Yizkor on Yom Kippur in synagogue in memory of a deceased relative? .....	1	2
Have a Mezzuzah on your front door? .....	1	2

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

44. A. How many children do you have, all together, counting any who may not be living now (and any by a previous marriage)? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. How many of your children are married? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. If any of your children are married, how many are married to non-Jews? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. How many (more) children do you (and your spouse) expect to have (in addition to those you already have had)? \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU HAVE HAD, OR EXPECT TO HAVE, ANY CHILDREN, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 45.  
IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN NOW, AND EXPECT TO HAVE NONE IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH Q. 50.

45. In this question we would like you to tell us about your child(ren)'s educational, social, and cultural activities.

First, please give us the age and sex of (each of) your child(ren) in Part A below.

Next, in Part B, please indicate on the line the number of years or summers each attended or took part in the activity before his/her 22nd birthday.

Third, please rate in the box the quality of the experience on your child's growth as a Jew, using the following rating scale:

EXAMPLE: Six years,  
a positive rating = 6 +

+ = Positive  
blank = Neutral  
- = Negative

PLEASE INDICATE THE NUMBER OF YEARS OR SUMMERS CHILD ATTENDED **BEFORE HIS/HER 22ND BIRTHDAY**. IF CHILD IS **NOT YET** 22 YEARS OLD, PLEASE ANSWER PART A FOR HIS/HER **PRESENT AGE** AND PART B (number of years/summers) FOR WHAT YOU EXPECT HE/SHE WILL DO **BY AGE 22** (and skip the rating for the young child(ren)).

**Part A.**

	Child #1	Child #2	Child #3	Child #4
Age: _____				
Male ..... 1	... 1	... 1	... 1	... 1
Female ... 2	... 2	... 2	... 2	... 2

**Part B.**

Activity	Child #1		Child #2		Child #3		Child #4	
	Number of years (or summers)	R A T E	Number of years (or summers)	R A T E	Number of years (or summers)	R A T E	Number of years (or summers)	R A T E
Temple Sunday school (1 weekly session)	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temple Hebrew school (2 weekly sessions)	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish Day School or Yeshiva (all day 5 days a week)	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temple Youth Group	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other youth group with Jewish and/or members	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
UAHC Summer camp	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other summer camp with Jewish program	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mostly or all Jewish camp without Jewish program	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summer study or touring in Israel	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semester or year in Israel	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Jewish activities, please specify _____	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	<input type="checkbox"/>

46. Have you had (or will you have) a religious ceremony in connection with circumcision of your son(s)?

Yes, for all ..... 1  
 Yes, but not for all .. 2  
 No, for none ..... 3  
 Have no sons and do not plan to have any .. 4

47. Please tell us whether or not you observe the following practices?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

Did you (or will you) name your children in synagogue? .....

Yes, all	Yes, but not all	No, none	Have no children & do not plan to have any?
----------	------------------	----------	---

Have your children been confirmed (or will they be when they are old enough)? .....

Did (or will) your son(s) have a Bar Mitzvah? ...

Did (or will) your daughter(s) have a Bat Mitzvah? 1

1 2 3 4  
 1 2 3 4  
 1 2 3 4  
 1 2 3 4

48. Below are a number of things that Jewish children have done. Please tell us how you would feel about it if a child of yours. . . (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	IT WOULD BOTHER ME:			
	A great deal	Somewhat	A little	Not at All
...became an Orthodox Jew?	1	2	3	4
...converted to Christianity?	1	2	3	4
...married a non-Jew?	1	2	3	4
...settled in Israel?	1	2	3	4
...married a convert to Judaism?	1	2	3	4
...became a Unitarian?	1	2	3	4
...decided not to attend or dropped out of college?	1	2	3	4

49. Which of the following statements best describes your approach toward your child(ren) dating non-Jews? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

- I encourage them to date non-Jews ..... 1  
 I express no preference ..... 2  
 Although I prefer that they date Jews, I express no opposition to their dating non-Jews ..... 3  
 Although I state my preference that they date only Jews, I permit them to date non-Jews ..... 4  
 Although I strongly oppose their dating non-Jews, I do not forbid it .. 5  
 I do not permit them to date non-Jews ..... 6  
 The issue never comes up because \_\_\_\_\_ 7

50. Jews differ in their beliefs as to the circumstances under which a rabbi ought to officiate at a wedding between a Jew and a non-Jew (who has not converted to Judaism). Please indicate below, by circling one number in each row, whether you think. . .

	Yes	No	Don't know
A rabbi should officiate if. . .			
...the parents of the Jewish partner are members of the rabbi's temple . . . . .	1	2	3
...the couple getting married joins the temple . . . . .	1	2	3
...the couple promises to rear their children as Jews . . . . .	1	2	3
...the non-Jew has completed all of the requirements for conversion except for the conversion ceremony . . . . .	1	2	3
...the couple is not planning to have children together . . . . .	1	2	3
...the couple promises to expose their children to Judaism along with the religion of the non-Jewish partner . . . . .	1	2	3
...the wedding ceremony is in a church . . . . .	1	2	3
...Christian clergy co-officiates . . . . .	1	2	3
A rabbi should officiate only if the prospective bride and groom are both Jewish (either by birth or conversion) . . . . .	1	2	3
Other (Please explain) _____	1	2	3

51. Some people have told us that they relate to being Jewish in non-traditional ways. The statements below represent some people's means of identifying as a Jew. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each one by circling one number in each row.

	Agree	Disagree
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am naturally good at expressing emotions . . . . .	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am strongly in favor of nuclear disarmament . . . . .	1	2
Most non-Jews have negative feelings about Jews . . . . .	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I have stronger family ties than non-Jews have . . . . .	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am self analytical . . . . .	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I have a greater compassion for the less fortunate groups in our society . . . . .	1	2
When I meet someone new, I personally feel more relaxed if that person is Jewish . . . . .	1	2
Primarily because I am a Jew, I am less likely than a non-Jew to become an alcoholic . . . . .	1	2



52. We are interested in your idea of what it takes to be a good Jew. Please tell us, for each item below, how essential it is to being a good Jew.

<u>A good Jew. . .</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable, but not essential</u>	<u>Makes no difference</u>
...supports all humanitarian causes .....	1	2	3
...believes in God .....	1	2	3
...knows the fundamentals of Judaism .....	1	2	3
...supports Israel .....	1	2	3
...attends weekly worship services .....	1	2	3
...gains the respect of Christian neighbors ..	1	2	3
...belongs to a synagogue or temple .....	1	2	3
...marries within the Jewish faith .....	1	2	3
...contributes to Jewish philanthropies .....	1	2	3

53. We would like to get your opinions about some important current issues. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the statements below.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>
Parents of children in religious day schools should receive tuition tax credits .....	1	2	3	4	5
Orthodoxy represents the mainstream of Judaism .....	1	2	3	4	5
Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in return for credible guarantees of peace .....	1	2	3	4	5
Persons convicted of murder should be subject to the death penalty .....	1	2	3	4	5
A Jew can lead a more authentic Jewish life in Israel than in America .....	1	2	3	4	5
The United States government should make nuclear disarmament a primary goal of foreign policy .....	1	2	3	4	5
Israel's commitment to democratic values has eroded in recent years .....	1	2	3	4	5
Reform Jews should defer to Orthodox authority .....	1	2	3	4	5
Israel is the center of contemporary Jewish life .....	1	2	3	4	5
A Jew who marries a non-Jew who does not convert to Judaism is jeopardizing the future of Judaism .....	1	2	3	4	5

54. All together, how much time have you spent in Israel?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

None .....	1
A few days .....	2
About a week .....	3
More than a week, but less than one month .	4
About a month .....	5
More than a month, but less than six months	6
More than six months, but less than a year .	7
A year or more .....	8

55. Please give us **your own** and, if you are married, **your spouse's** present [or former] occupation. If you are retired or not employed, please write in your usual/former occupation.

	YOUR OWN	YOUR SPOUSE'S
JOB TITLE OR POSITION	_____	_____
NATURE OF WORK DONE	_____	_____
TYPE OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY	_____	_____

56. Are you (and, if you are married, is your spouse) self-employed?	YOU	YOUR SPOUSE
Yes .....	1	1
No .....	2	2

57. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_  
(year)

58. What is your sex? Male ..... 1 Female ..... 2

59. If you would like to be considered for participation in a follow-up personal interview, PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR HOME TELEPHONE AREA CODE AND PHONE NUMBER.

(      ) \_\_\_\_\_  
A/C

60. Is there anything else you would like to tell us relating to the questions in this survey? Any comments you wish to make, either on the back of this questionnaire or in a separate letter, that would help the Research Task Force will be greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH EFFORT AND FOR YOUR TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. PLEASE ENCLOSE THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE AND RETURN IT TO THE RESEARCH OFFICE.