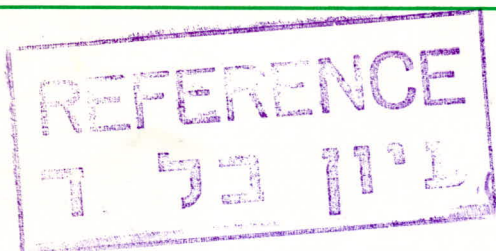


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ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR AN AGING
JEWISH WORLD

Immanuel Jakobovits

international forum

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BROOKDALE INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY
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BR-IF-9-86

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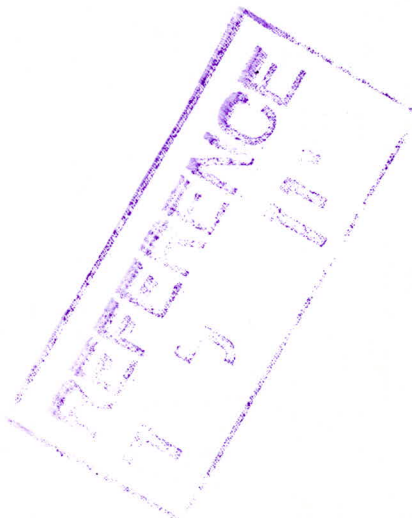
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ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR AN AGING JEWISH WORLD

Opening Address Delivered by Sir Immanuel Jakobovits,
Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth,
at the
Symposium on "Aging in the Jewish World"
July 3rd, 1985, Jerusalem



What is to be discussed at the Symposium, and the ethical implications I am charged to highlight, may well be summed up in the truism: "Everyone wants to get old, but no-one wants to be old". This statement applies not only to the individual. We all seek long life and hail the medical advances which have so spectacularly increased the average span of life. Yet, all too often the price exacted by these advances is a corresponding aggravation of the suffering, hardship and loneliness caused by old age.

However, in the case of individuals, not only is aging an inevitable process ordained by nature, but there is usually a net gain. Most people presumably prefer to live another twenty or thirty years with the resultant costs and infirmities rather than to die prematurely without them. As Churchill is reported to have said on his 80th birthday when asked "How do you feel being 80?", and he answered: "Considering the alternative, very well!".

Nationally, or collectively, the situation is rather different. It is still true that, as "the people of eternity", we want to get old, and yet we wish to be an eternally young, never an aging people. Thus far the comparison with the individual holds: we want to get old, but not to feel old. But, in contrast to the individual, becoming an aging people is neither natural nor inevitable. As a people we have it in our power - unlike the individual person - to become young again, to reduce the median age of our members, and to mitigate some of the enormous problems aging communities impose on us. As we shall see, the exercise of this power of rejuvenation also lies largely within the ethical realm.

More obvious are the other ethical ramifications in the concerns of this Symposium, at least to the extent to which the ethical guidelines I am to present and explain are governed by Jewish religious imperatives and insights. I refer to obvious concerns on how to treat the aged. They also affect much wider considerations as to communal priorities where aging accentuates the competing pressures on limited financial and human resources.

Accordingly, I propose to divide my assignment into three quite distinct rubrics. I will consult our Jewish sources and traditions on (1) the attitude to the aged and their treatment, (2) the resultant redistribution of communal resources, and (3) the urgency of reversing the tide of aging in the Jewish world.

II

Let me say at once, having studied the very comprehensive and informative papers prepared for this Symposium, I find that they have a good deal to say on the first item regarding the treatment of the aged, very much less on the second item including notably communal budgeting, and next to nothing on attempts to deal with the root of the problem, by eliminating or mitigating its cause - my third item.

Valuable as these papers are, there are also several other omissions in them. For instance, I missed some survey of the present number of old age homes and residents as well as day centres serving the old on a world-wide basis. I also would have liked to find some indication on existing and planned facilities for the training of

Jewish social workers, with special reference to the Jewish input in their studies, to meet the growing demand for such personnel. Above all, of course, I look for a distinctly Jewish dimension in the presentation of the problems and their solutions, and I found this aspect only cursorily touched on in the papers by Sergio DellaPergola and Shimon Bergman. But, then, these omissions leave all the more material for me to deal with.

The problem of the old age explosion, as documented in the papers distributed to us, is both real and alarming. The figures not merely speak for themselves; they cry out almost with despair. There is clearly some frightening writing on the wall when we learn, for instance, that the number of Jews in the Diaspora has declined since 1975 from 10 million to less than 9-1/2 million, and is likely to be reduced to only 8 million by the year 2000 - a net loss of 2 million Jews in only 25 years. It is caused by the dramatic rise in the proportion of the aged, whereby those of 65 years and over accounted for 15.7% in 1975 as against a projected 20.1% by the end of this century, whilst the corresponding figures for the 75+ group will increase from 5.7% to 9.1%. In Western Europe alone, the total number of Jews is likely to be reduced from 1,139,000 to 857,500 during these 25 years, whilst those aged 75 and over will increase from 69,500 to 80,500.

Perhaps the drama of these statistics becomes more realistic when I tell you that at Nightingale House in London, by far the largest old age home in Anglo-Jewry with well over 400 residents, their average age is now 88 years. The problem of how to cope with the social, financial and communal problems arising from these awesome figures, and perhaps even of how to survive with them, is as massive as it is

unprecedented.

III

On the attitude towards the aged in Jewish teachings, I need hardly cite chapter and verse for an audience such as this to demonstrate the numerous injunctions on the respect due to old people by reason of age alone, irrespective of any other merit or relationship. The biblical law to "rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old" (Lev. 19:32) requires not just vacating a seat in a bus or subway, but to stand up as a mark of respect even if there are vacant seats. It applies to Jews and gentiles alike, simply because of the dignity due to them. They are even exempt from certain religious and social duties, such as retrieving and restoring lost property, especially livestock, not on account of any frailty, but simply because such acts are incompatible with the honourable status of the old (Deut. 22:1, and commentaries). Again, in the allocation of synagogue seats, Maimonides (Hil. Tephilah, 11:4) followed by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim, 150:5) rules that the aged are to be placed in the front row, facing the congregation.

Even stricter are the injunctions on the honour due to parents, featured in the Ten Commandments and elaborated in much detail in rabbinic sources. The duty to honour father and mother includes the obligation to attend to their needs and to look after them even in infirmity, unless their mental (or presumably likewise physical) condition is beyond control and compels the children to entrust their

care to others (Yoreh De'ah, 240:10).

In the Jewish tradition, this high esteem for the aged generally, and for parents in particular, helped them to overcome the handicaps of age and to be compensated for the toll nature took of them. The dignity of old age gave them communally a claim to reverence and even leadership as "elders", and domestically a place of special elevation as patriarchs of the family. No doubt the restoration of this status would constitute a major contribution to solving the problem of the aged, at least in some respects.

IV

The constant association of age with wisdom as well as with dignity is a further factor in overcoming or balancing some of the disabilities of old age. Realising that, in the words of Job, "With the old is wisdom, and in length of days is understanding" (12:12), Jewish law has never set an arbitrary retirement age. Even discounting the longevity of so many biblical figures, whereby Moses only started his career at 80, in our own generation many great men reached the peak of their achievement well after 65 - to mention only Pope John XXIII, Adenauer and de Gaulle, as well as Ben Gurion in our own ranks. Among contemporary spiritual leaders I could name rabbinical giants like Rabbis Moshe Feinstein, as well as the late Menachem Kasher, Yehezkel Abramsky and Isser Yehuda Unterman, whose intense creativeness did not diminish in their 80's and even 90's, or Mordechai Kaplan who was still active as a centenarian. When Sir Robert Mayer, the famous pioneer of children's and youth concerts, was

about to celebrate his 100th birthday, and a distinguished friend organised a concert to be attended by the Queen in his honour, the friend - as she told my wife - warned him months ahead: "Robert, if you die before your birthday, I will never speak to you again", and he lived happily and quite actively for over four years more.

Enforced retirement can often precipitate premature physical as well as mental decay. Who does not recall that Golda Meir, when she was summoned to be Israel's fourth Prime Minister at the age of 71, was a sick and tired woman, and became rejuvenated instantly by the adrenalin of the enormous new responsibilities thrust upon her?

We should therefore encourage doing everything reasonably possible to extend the working age of men and women, in whatever capacity. We would deem it morally wrong for a father to retire from business simply to give way for an impatient son, or for older people to step out of public life just to make room for younger blood. Let the young strive by their own efforts to establish themselves, and not climb to success on the back of their elders. It might be healthier for both generations.

V

In the Jewish tradition, there is not even a school leaving age. The Shulchan Aruch code of Jewish law expressly provides that the duty to study Torah is incumbent alike on rich and poor, on the healthy and on invalids, on the young and on the very old (Yoreh De'ah, 46:1). There is no better therapy for the mental debilitation of the aging

process than continued learning. How profound was the observation of our Sages in the Talmud: "Scholars, the older they get, the more wisdom they acquire, whilst the ignorant increase their folly with age" (Shabbat 152a). Just compare the intellectual vivacity of the highly educated old man or woman with the dotage and boredom of the uncultured. Hence, the Yiddish proverb: "Old age to the unlearned is winter; to the learned it is harvest time." Nevertheless, even those whose intellectual faculties have withered are to be treated with the same dignity as any old scholar. As a saying in the Talmud so picturesquely puts it: "Respect an old man who has lost his learning through no fault of his. The fragments of the Tables broken by Moses were kept in the Ark of the Covenant alongside the new" (Berachot 8b).

We think of education primarily as the preparation for an active career, supplying skills needed to make money. We forget that education is at least equally precious and vital as an investment for old age. How wise is the counsel in the Book of Proverbs: "Train the young man according to his way, so that even in his old age it shall not depart from him" (22:6). The longer we expect to live, the more we must cultivate in early youth the love and pursuit of intellectual interests which will be as stimulating at the age of 70 or 80 as they were at 20.

VI

Perhaps even more striking than what Jewish sources do say on old age is what they do not say. In preparing this lecture and looking for antecedents for the role of the aged in the literature on Jewish

social welfare, I was quite startled to discover several significant omissions. I searched for references to the old among groups of people entitled to charity or public support, and I found none. Yes, there are numerous entitlements for the poor, the orphan, the widow, the Levite, and the stranger in the gates - but none for the old. Even in the very extensive social legislation of the Talmud and later the great mediaeval codes, the aged simply do not feature among the beneficiaries of welfare grants or institutions. The only passing reference to old people in a social welfare context I could find was in a commentary on the Mishnah in Pe'ah (8:1) which provides that the corner of a field which by biblical law must be left to the poor is free for gleanings to be collected by others, but only after the aged have had their chance. But the reason for giving preference to old people over others is not because of any special entitlement but simply because they are too frail to compete with younger people for the final spoils in the free-for-all after the poor have removed their due.

There is a still more surprising omission. In the highly organised welfare services distinguishing Jewish communities throughout the ages, provisions were made for meeting every conceivable need. The poor were looked after, there were free loan societies, every community had its sick visitation rota, its hostels to accomodate strangers, its officials offering experienced counsel for those in need or distress, and its Chevra Kadisha for attending to the dying and the dead. But evidently there were no communal amenities of any kind for the aged. The famous Jewish-Hungarian scholar, Leopold Low, in his classic work, Die Lebensalter, on "The

"Ages of Man in Jewish Literature" published in 1875, devotes two erudite chapters to the attitude to old people and their treatment, with a wealth of Jewish and comparative source material - but not a word on any special social benefits or services granted to them. Nearly a century later the leading Jewish social historian of our own day, Professor Salo Baron of Columbia University, in his monumental works The Jewish Community in three volumes, and A Social and Religious History of the Jews in twelve volumes, does not feature a single entry on the care of the aged. The absence of any such references to old age in these massive collections of all relevant historical sources is, of course, highly significant.

Another striking example is the history of B'nai B'rith, the world's largest and oldest Jewish service organisation, founded in New York in 1843. Its aims, as formulated a few years later in the Preamble to its Constitution, included "alleviating the wants of the poor and needy; visiting and attending the sick...; and assisting the widow and the orphan on the broadest principles of humanity". Exactly the same formulation, which made no mention of the aged, was still used in the Constitution of the First Lodge of England adopted in October 1955. Only in 1964 was this revised, and the last sentence of the Preamble was made to read "... assisting the aged, the widow and the orphan".

All this clearly means that the old had been so completely integrated as members of their families that they just did not constitute a special class of people requiring either the protection of legislation or the support of communal care.

VII

Only by recognising this most remarkable finding can we understand the very late and very slow arrival of old age homes on the Jewish social scene. The first such home, as far as I could discover, was founded by the Sephardim in Amsterdam in 1749. It appears that this was the only such Jewish old age home anywhere in the 18th century, and only very few others are then found in our records in the first half of the 19th century, all of them in Germany - one established in Berlin in 1829, another in Hamburg in 1839 and the third in Frankfurt in 1844.

Such homes did not become common until well into the 20th century. By 1938, Germany had 67 of them, compared with 70 in America by 1966, though the number of beds was 3,568 and 12,500 respectively, so that the American homes were very much larger on average (see Encyclopaedia-Judaica 2:346ff).

On the whole, therefore, the institutionalization of care for the aged among Jews started only in very modern times, clearly corroborating the reluctance to give the aged any special social rights and entitlements already reflected in earlier Jewish legislation, as we have seen.

Obviously, the statistical circumstances we are now facing, not to mention the far-reaching social changes in contemporary Jewish life, are such as to compel us to realise the ever-widening distance between the demands of reality and those of Jewish teaching with its ideals. In an age in which we now have to think for the first time of two generations in retirement, looking after the elderly is bound to create problems which many a family can no longer solve on its own

without communal support and professional assistance.

Nevertheless, we should give every encouragement to preserving the primacy of family integration wherever possible. In this spirit, it is gratifying to learn from Ronald Weismehl's paper that in Chicago, for instance, the "Gerontological Council of Jewish Federations" have, since 1970, shifted the weight from institutional care to community support and home care. Similarly, Melvyn Carlowe reports from Britain that "whereas in the past the emphasis has been on institutional care in the traditional old people's home or geriatric hospital, there is now widespread recognition on the part of practitioners and lay leaders that more effort and resources should be devoted to enabling people to fulfill their potential and to retain their independence with dignity for as long as possible within the community". This trend is no doubt paralleled in many other communities as well.

VIII

This leads me to a more specific illustration for the application of distinctly Jewish ethical guidelines in an increasingly acute area which, strangely, I also find were omitted in the papers prepared for this Symposium. I refer to the growing demand for communally-sponsored hospices, or whatever is the Jewish equivalent for institutions taking care of the terminally sick. The question of the Jewish attitude to hospices has often been raised with me in the United States, and I know of at least one Jewish agency in Los Angeles

actively engaged in promoting the idea - The Jewish Hospice Commission of Greater Los Angeles. At the request of our own Jewish Welfare Board in London I prepared some guidelines in 1983. I will read them to you as an attempt to demonstrate the application of Jewish concepts relevant to the treatment of the aged:

1. The first priority in communal facilities for the care of terminal patients should be to train and/or employ skilled medical, nursing and counseling personnel to provide home-support services for families who cannot otherwise cope with such patients. Jewish tradition and sentiment call for the spiritual and psychological props of a home environment - its warmth, intimacy and familiarity - particularly in the ebbing stage of life, including death itself. Institutional care in that condition can greatly aggravate the patient's physical and mental condition, however excellent the medical and nursing services provided may be. Moreover, Jewish ethics seek to encourage children or other relatives to take personal care of those precious to them, wherever possible. The easy access to institutions discharging this responsibility by proxy could well further erode the once-exemplary family bonds which constituted the universally-envied pride of Jews, and which the community should seek to preserve and strengthen.
2. Where medical or social conditions render home support services inadequate or quite impracticable, the community should provide institutional facilities, but insist on making these approximate a Jewish home atmosphere as far as possible. Even Jews who in good health may be distant from Jewish life and observances, or

indeed from any active identification with the Jewish community, usually feel a need for the comforts of their faith in times of grave illness and suffering.

3. Such institutional units for Jewish patients should preferably be Jewishly self-contained. It is quite acceptable to run these in association with, or as part of, a general institution, whether of a denominational or non-denominational character, so long as every effort is made to enable the Jewish patients to feel that they are in a Jewish atmosphere, cared for by the personnel attuned to their normal Jewish experience, particularly in respect of their religious needs.
4. Neither hospices nor any other term suggestive of a fatal prognosis should be used in the Jewish context. Jews, whether by temperament or by religious faith, never give up hope, and Judaism deems it morally as well as psychologically wrong to doom patients by confinement to institutions from which they know no living discharge is expected. The notion of "preparing for death" is entirely alien to the Jewish tradition which requires us to sustain hope and confidence "even when a sharpened sword is placed on one's throat". It would therefore be desirable for such units, even if intended primarily for terminal cases, to be used also for suitable patients who may still have a prospect of recovery.
5. In an aging community, with a low birth rate to provide normal family support by the younger generation, the problem of caring

for the terminally sick is bound to become even more pressing, and the demand for communal services and facilities is likely to rise appreciably in the ensuing years. In meeting the specifically Jewish dimension of this demand, nothing is more urgent than adequate counseling facilities geared to the Jewish family. When severe illness strikes, it is not only the patient but also his nearest relatives who require competent advice, fellowship and encouragement to prevail over the anxieties and tensions inevitably in the wake of such a trying experience. Skilled and deeply-committed counsellors are no less indispensable in such situations than good doctors and dedicated nurses. By meeting these requirements, the Jewish community will not only help those most acutely in need, but also cultivate the finest Jewish virtues of compassion and loving-kindness.

IX

Turning now very much more briefly to the distribution of limited resources in the face of growing and competing demands, we may find the search for ethical guidelines rather more elusive. But at least part of the problem is that so little work has yet been done on assembling and analysing the data, the simple facts and figures, on which the eventual policy decisions on communal priorities must be based. Our background papers, as I have already intimated, provide little information, and the available material, both nationally and internationally, is exceedingly sparse. In Britain, we have only very recently started an attempt to ascertain how we cut up our communal

cake - what proportion of our fund-raising and disbursements is devoted, for example, to Israel, to welfare, and to Jewish education, respectively. The same ignorance on the allocation of resources more or less holds true elsewhere. Even in countries where funds are centrally collected and distributed, such as in the United States with its Federations and United Jewish Appeal, proportions vary widely, and there are no overall policies on how to relate, say, the needs of the elderly for social care with the needs of the young for education, let alone on how to assess both needs in relation to the support for Israel.

What is clear is that the demand will increase enormously on all sides. Already the bulk of our welfare budgets goes to the care of the aged. From Britain, for instance, it is reported that annually "out of the estimated 20 million spent on Jewish Social Services, 14,266,000 is spent on services for the elderly" (cite from Carlowe, p.3); that is, more than 70%. But what is even more significant in our context is that, according to the same report of this 20 million expenditure the Jewish community itself provides only 6.6 million, whilst the balance of over 66% comes from outside Jewish communal sources, mainly from the Government. This compares with Government funding amounting to 30% of total agency revenues in America, where, moreover, "in-home" services are a highly profitable private industry (cite from Weismehl, p. 8). Whatever the exact percentage, present indications are that Government participation is likely to be drastically cut back in most communities, whilst the demand for these services will rise even more dramatically, as the statistical trends I have mentioned indicate. In other words, we will face a double crisis of falling revenues and steeply rising needs.

The problem is seriously aggravated by the same double crisis looming on the educational horizon. Whilst the demand for more intensive Jewish education, notably through day schools, is happily increasing quite phenomenally almost everywhere, the available resources are diminishing - by reasons of both sharply rising costs generally and the cut-backs in Government support in countries where this is available. No special gifts of prophecy or even foresight are therefore required to see the increasingly urgent need for some comprehensive review of the present, often altogether haphazard, methods affecting overall budgetary policies, forward planning and decisions on priorities.

We can hardly look back to the Talmud two thousand years ago or to the final codification of Jewish law in the 16th century for precise guidance on situations which simply have no precedent. Yet there are some principles which may be helpful, enshrined in these much earlier sources. For instance, the Shulchan Aruch rules in very general terms that "the study of Torah is greater than the honouring of father and mother" (Yoreh De'ah 240:13), whereby children for their own pursuit of Jewish learning leave their parents. There is here some indication of priorities, at least to the extent that educational requirements cannot automatically be set aside by demands of the aged, even of parents.

Some priorities in the laws on charity are quite specific, such as the duty to erect a synagogue taking precedence over other charitable donations, except for Torah instruction of the young and for poor, sick people (249:16). Again, education alongside caring for sick people who are poor, ranks highest in the claims on our

benevolence.

Even if we explored the rich material in subsequent rabbinic sources to the present day, we would still obtain only a very vague outline on where and how to direct our communal efforts and resources. What may have to weigh far more heavily in resolving the dilemmas now confronting us are much broader considerations with ethical overtones. Quite apart from the conflicting individual claims, based on the possibly competing priorities in the mutual obligations between parents and children towards each other (i.e. education and care for the elderly, respectively), there are communal, and indeed national, perspectives to be borne in mind. These obviously include the claims of Israel for support, claims which Jewish law deems superior to the demands of needy Jews elsewhere (251:3) and perhaps even of the poor in one's own community (Chatham Sopher, Choshen Mishpat,10).

Each of these three major areas - Israel, education and the aged - can in some respects advance claims overriding the other two. Israel's centrality in Jewish life, not to mention its special burdens in the expenditure on defence and immigrant absorption, renders the supremacy of its claims obvious, and indeed by far the most widely accepted, as reflected in the disproportionate share of all Israel-oriented fund-raising. In many communities this share exceeds the domestic expenditure on education and social services, combined. (A recent conservative estimate for Britain found that 60% of all funds were raised for Israel.)

On the other hand, the elderly in our own communities may now face increasingly severe hardship or even abandonment without adequate communal support. Should this happen, there could well be a consequent serious backlash against Israel in particular, in that the

intensity of Zionist fund-raising could be blamed for the collapse of essential domestic services and their failure to provide aging parents with at least a modicum of comfort. After all, every member of our communities anticipates aging and its anxieties, and neither young nor old will easily forgive a community which neglects essential provision for themselves or their parents in old age.

However, tradition and reason may yet assign the highest priority to education. Without transmitting a knowledge and love of Judaism to our children, there will in future be no Jews, no Zionists, no supporters of Israel or any Jewish charities, including Jewish welfare services. Without Jewish education, all Jewish activities will eventually cease and Jewish life itself will become extinct. We already see ample warning lights, flashing the imminent disappearance of those Jewish communities which have not caught on to the recent resurgence of intensive Jewish learning at day schools and at more advanced academies.

At the same time, there is of course some educational value in supporting Israel or helping Jewish charities. In fact, Israel in particular is now well aware that a few millions more may make precious little difference to the country's economy and the astronomical sums needed to sustain it, whilst the same amounts may make all the difference in the donor communities to a Jewish school rising or collapsing with hundreds of Jewish children at risk, or to a Jewish old-age home opening or closing its doors to scores of old people who have nowhere else to live out their days in a Jewish environment. The principal beneficiaries of the funds raised for Israel are the givers themselves more than the recipients, in that the

activity galvanized by Israel fund-raising still remains one of the most potent instruments of Jewish identification - indeed it is often the major dynamic of Jewish communal enterprise throughout the Diaspora.

Allowing for all these pros and cons, it would therefore seem that the claims for priority fairly evenly balance between Israel, social welfare and education. It is to be hoped that from international consultations such as will occupy this Symposium over the next few days will emerge some agreed guidelines for communities the world over on how to reallocate resources in the light of the new exigencies which broadly challenge us all alike.

X

Finally, I return to where I started, indeed to the beginning of all life. It lies in the nature of things that an aging community must eventually die. Any society in which the toll of death is not matched and then overtaken by new births is bound to be self-liquidating. Our present vital statistics are catastrophic. If we allow the decimation of our diminishing ranks to continue, all our best plans, our most generous endowments, our best professional skills and our finest institutions will shrink and ultimately come to nought, for lack of Jews to sustain them - or even to require them.

Happily, there is one bright ray of light and hope penetrating the grim statistical cloud threatening our future, and I am amazed at the widespread refusal to recognise this one bright ray on the demographic horizon of the Jewish people.

All sections are aging and therefore diminishing in numbers - with only one quite startling exception, and that is the most intensely committed and strictly observant element of our people. Though by far the hardest hit segments of our people in the Holocaust, with perhaps 90% of their world destroyed - their hassidic strongholds, their great Yeshiva centres, their vast communities all over Eastern Europe in ruins - today this element is reborn, flourishing and proliferating in five continents as never before, thanks to the phenomenal cultivation of a religious conscience which has secured an incomparably higher growth rate than the rest of our people by reason both of a prolific birth rate and also the virtual stoppage of losses through assimilation and intermarriage.

To tackle the problem of an aging population we need expanding nurseries even more than well-run nursing homes. We need a new sense of values in which large families are treasured more than large cars, and in which lonely children at home trouble us at least as much as lonely old folks in homes. We need to mount effective communal campaigns drawing attention to the menace of extinction resulting from our neglect in fulfilling the ethical imperative to "be fruitful and multiply" - the first of Judaism's 613 Commandments. And we must back up these warnings by incentive schemes and other communal facilities to encourage raising our birth rate.

The cruelest euphemism in the contemporary Jewish vocabulary is "the decline in fertility" - a phrase so often used in our background papers to conceal a deliberate pursuit of convenience to the point of self-destruction as if it were some genetic defect or some ecological disaster turning fertile land into a barren desert. Visit any of the

staunchly religious neighbourhoods teeming with children in Jerusalem, or in North-West London and Gateshead, or in Boro Park and Lakewood, or in fast growing districts of Toronto, or Melbourne or Johannesburg, and you will soon discover that Jewish fertility has not declined. What has declined is the vision born out of foresight, commitment generated by values, and a readiness for sacrifice through a return to idealism.

There can be no greater contribution to easing the burden of an aging community than to raise a new generation of teachers, social workers, children and parents suffused with these values to ensure that we will once again become a people known above all else as "the Children of Israel" - children of whom it may be said, in the beautiful words of the Sabbath Psalm: "Even in old age they shall still bring forth fruit; they shall be full of sap and freshness - to declare that the Lord is upright, My Rock in whom there is no unrighteousness" (92: 15-16).

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התייחסויות אתיות להזדקנות בעולם היהודי

עמנואל יעקובוביץ

פורום בינלאומי

פב-9-86

ג'וינט ישראל
מכון ברוקדייל לגרונטולוגיה
והתפתחות אדם וחברה בישראל

גבעת-ג'וינט, ת.ד. 13087, ירושלים 91030

המכון

הוא מכון ארצי למחקר, לניסוי ולחינוך בגרונטולוגיה והתפתחות אדם וחברה. הוא נוסד ב-1974 ופועל במסגרת הג'וינט האמריקאי (ועד הסיוע המאוחד של יהודי אמריקה), בעזרתן של קרן ברוקדייל בניו-יורק וממשלת ישראל.

בפעולתו מנסה המכון לזהות בעיות חברתיות ולהציב להן פתרונות חילופיים בשירותי הבריאות והשירותים הסוציאליים בכללם. אחד מיעדיו הוא להגביר שיתוף הפעולה של מומחים מהאקדמיות והממשלה, עובדי ציבור ופעילים בקהילה כדי לגשר בין מחקר לבין מימוש מסקנות מחקר הלכה למעשה.

סידרה בינלאומית

המאמרים מציגים מימצאי מחקר והשקפות מקצועיות של מלומדים אורחים מחו"ל, של אנשי אקדמיה בארץ ושל חברי סגל המכון. המאמרים בסידרה מציגים דיונים החורגים מעבר להקשר האמפירי הישראלי, או עוסקים בסוגיות מושגיות ומתודולוגיות בעלות ענין בינלאומי כללי. בכך משמשת הסידרה במה שבה נבחנים בפרספקטיבה בינלאומית ההלכה והמעשה של נושאי ההודקנות.

הממצאים והמסקנות המוצגים הם של המחבר או המחברים וללא כוונה ליצג את אלה של המכון או של פרטים וגופים אחרים הקשורים למכון.