

Families and the Jewish community: A feminist perspective

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JUDAISM and families: the terms seem almost synonymous. For many contemporary American Jews, it is difficult even to imagine Judaism without a traditional family at its center. But the meaning and experience of "families" has changed radically in the United States over the past few decades; and those changes have implications for the Jewish community as well. They require a rethinking of what many take to be essential elements of Jewish identity and community.

The issues involved in such rethinking appear to be particularly problematic for Jewish feminists. For, as the feminist movement has grown and developed, both in theoretical sophistication and in membership, we have become increasingly aware of the ways in which the *institution* of the family, and the particular ways

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in which women's roles have been defined through their relationship to that institution (even in the Jewish community), have constrained the growth and development of both men and women in the community. Most obviously, the perception of women as fundamentally anchored in the family and bound by familial obligation has been used to justify the exclusion of women from Jewish higher education, for example, or from public ritual participation (such as being counted in a minyan, called to the Torah, and so forth).¹ At the same time, however, we are told that the family is the central institution of the Jewish community; and that on the health of the family hangs the fate of the community. As Jews, we strive to maintain and strengthen those institutions and practices that nurture Jewish identity and community. What are we to do when what seems to preserve "Judaism" also—and at the same time—seems to oppress or limit large numbers of individual Jews?

The problem is further complicated by the demographic changes taking place in the world around us. In structuring itself around nuclear families, the Jewish community effectively excludes and alienates those increasing numbers of Jews—young and old, male and female—whose relationships do not conform to that norm. How will our community respond to the spiritual and communal needs of those who do not find a place at "father-son bagel brunches," for example, or whose intimate relationships do not lend themselves to a traditional Jewish wedding? Can a community grow and develop without incorporating those who present new challenges and new directions?

We need, then, to rethink both what we mean by family and what we see as the relation of individuals and families to the Jewish community. I propose, here, to begin—or, more accurately, to continue—such a dialogue: to define some of the dimensions of the issues we must discuss, examine the ways in which we have handled them to date, and to outline directions—perhaps already initiated—for alternative approaches.

Families and Functions: Dimensions of the Issues

We tend to think of families—Jewish as well as other—as units that provide the context for a number of crucial activities and relationships: companionship and emotional intimacy, economic

support, bearing and raising of children, carrying on of traditions. As our experience of the past fifteen years has demonstrated, however, many of these activities and relationships exist outside of traditional family structures. Nevertheless, all of us are bound, to one degree or another, in thought if not in practice, to the traditions and practices in which we were born and raised. Our ability both to examine and understand our own experience, and to envision and articulate alternatives, is affected by the degree to which we are able to step back from our own cultural assumptions, and recognize their historical rootedness and variability.

The relationship between families and interpersonal intimacy is one such problematic arena. Both our own Jewish upbringing and American culture have developed in us the perception that, to the degree that interpersonal intimacy is a value, it is to be achieved primarily in and through the nuclear family—that is, married couple, children, and, perhaps, a somewhat broader network of relatives. In reality, of course, our experiences in both the havurah movement and in the feminist movement have demonstrated the limits of that assumption: both those movements were built on, and thrive on, intense personal commitments among their members. Yet while friendships do provide important contexts for intimacy, ideologically many of us still think of family relationships as *the* significant human bonds.

A number of comments are in order about that perception. First, interpersonal intimacy of the sort that we now take for granted, at least as a goal, has not always been perceived as a primary goal of family—Jewish or otherwise. Within Western cultures in general, notions of what we think of as intimacy are probably of quite recent origin, developing, to any significant degree, only within the last 100 to 150 years. Descriptions of Jewish life in Eastern Europe suggest that emotional intimacy is a relative newcomer to the Jewish family as well (remember Tevye's "Do You Love Me?"?). Despite all our, and our culture's, stereotypes about Jewish mothers and Jewish families, the emotional intensity we associate with Jewish families is a recent phenomenon. Until the last century, if even that long ago, families functioned as economic or cultural units, ways of passing on traditions, perhaps, but not relationships in which people engaged for the purpose of fulfilling self-conscious "needs" for emotional

intimacy.² This is not to say that, in the earlier period, relationships were devoid of love or intimacy. It is, instead, to suggest that our expectations for relationships have changed, and that the pressures on them are consequently higher.

Second, the concerns for “privacy,” individuality, and intimacy have, themselves, arisen as “needs” within a particular social and economic context: advanced industrial capitalism. More specifically, the perceived role of women in maintaining that family has changed dramatically over the past 100 years, as a result of developments in the social and economic arena. Thus, in a division of the world into “domestic” and “public” domains—a division that was, itself, the product of the development of industrial capitalism—the “public” came to be identified with the world outside the home, the world of rough-and-tumble economics, competition, aggressiveness, and striving—the domain of the male; and the domestic sphere, the world of home-life, came to be identified with the values of nurturance, cooperation, love, and caring—a world defined as the domain of the female. Over time, and into our own day, family life has often been taken to be the only context in which mutualist, nurturant, and noncompetitive relationships can be developed and cared for. Both right-wing and some contemporary left-wing critics (such as Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*) have turned to the family as the only hope for “human-ness” in the dog-eat-dog world of advanced industrial capitalism.

Yet, as Marx argued—staking out a rather different position on the role of families in advanced capitalism—all relationships, including families themselves, are revolutionized by the changes that accompany capitalist development. No institution of capitalist society is able to remain totally outside the “cash nexus.” The family, too, comes to take its place ever more explicitly as a particular kind of economic unit: one supported by the labor-power of its members, and which, ultimately, comes to view even the nurturing of children simply as a means to sustain itself (through producing more potential workers). The shift from extended family networks to more nuclear family structures can also be seen as a function of these changing economic relationships.

Widespread current concern over the “family crisis” points out, of course, the degree to which contemporary families—

located as they are within an economic system that prizes competition rather than cooperation, “rugged individualism” rather than community—are unable to meet the needs of their members. Intrafamily violence is a serious problem—even in the Jewish community. Divorce rates have increased markedly over recent decades, and continue to rise. The number of single-parent families is also growing dramatically. And more and more people are living apart from any others, in “single-person households.” In response, the Moral Majority calls for a return to patriarchal structures and values; organizations such as Friends of Families advocate increased spending on social programs to provide the social and economic security necessary for people to build solid, committed, loving relationships; and still others argue that any focus on “family” obscures relations of domination within families. The programmatic implications of each of these positions are vastly different; but the power of each of their appeals comes from a similar source: the desire for intimacy.³

Partly in response to this perceived “crisis”—and beginning as early as a century ago—other institutions and relationships have developed to meet new needs which, for economic and cultural reasons, have not been met within the bounds of small nuclear families. In many communities—especially within the past 100 to 150 years—extended kin, neighbors, and friends, as well as (and sometimes, perhaps, even more than) spouses and parents came to provide important sources of support and social stability, especially for women.⁴

Yet, within any particular cultural context these roles and patterns play themselves out in different ways. While the division between “public” and “private,” and the perception of the family as an economic unit, certainly existed in Eastern European *shtetl* communities, for example, those relationships took different form there from what we now know, and from the pattern I have just described. Most strikingly, perhaps, many of what we now think of as “public” or “male” functions—for example, economic support of the family—were performed by women. Some have argued, in fact, that much of the stereotyping of Jewish mothers in contemporary American society is a consequence of the shift in roles that took place when Jewish families immigrated to the United States: women lost their function as economic providers and had nothing

with which to replace it in the new American context. The drive to assimilate meant that Jewish women strained to find new, more appropriately “American” outlets for their previously valued strengths.⁵

Jewish families as we have come to know them, then, are the products of a multiplicity of forces in which they, too, participate. Both the nature and structure of families, and the understandings of the relationship between individuals and families, individuals and community, and families and community have been undergoing rapid change during the past one hundred or so years. Yet, even beyond having to cope with these broad, socioeconomic changes, the Jewish family has carried a significant extra burden. A particular “functional” framework has come to set the boundaries for the options available to Jewish women, both within the family, in particular, and within the community as a whole.

Thus, writers as diverse in perspective as Saul Berman, Jacob Neusner, Paula Hyman, and Rachel Adler⁶ have all pointed out that Judaism has set aside a special status for women because of women’s presumed particular relationship to family and tradition. As Berman argued, womanhood “constitutes an independent juristic status, shaping to varying degrees every legal relationship and being characterized by a special set of rights and duties determined extrinsically by law rather than by contractual agreement.”⁷ Both Berman and Neusner—though in different fashions—trace the ways in which women have been defined as “other” within Jewish tradition, freed from particular sorts of ritual obligations (positive, time-bound *mitzvot*) so that they may fulfill their primary obligation—care and nurturance of children, in particular, and family, in general. Adler and Hyman have made clear the implications of this categorizing for the self-development of women. What is important for our purposes, here, is that the maintenance of a traditional, patriarchal family, with separate roles (in both the public ritual/communal sphere and in the domestic sphere), has come to be identified—at least within traditional circles—with the maintenance of Judaism. In its most extreme form, this argument is buttressed by a kind of pop-religious-psychoanalysis, which claims that the strength of Jewish male identity—and, therefore, once again, of the continuity of Judaism—would be undermined by a blurring of role differentiation within Jewish practice.⁸

Finally, and obviously related to the two functions we have just discussed (companionship/intimacy and carrying on of traditions), there is the role of families in child-bearing and child-raising. It seems hardly necessary to note the attention given by Jewish tradition and the community to the importance of bearing and raising children—*p'ru ur'vu*, after all, was the first *mitzvah*—especially in the post-Holocaust era. And we generally tend to think of nuclear families as the only, or certainly the most highly preferred, context in which child-birth and child-rearing can take place. Yet, both the feminist movement and, to some extent, early havurah ideology and practice pointed out the limitations for children, and for the community as a whole, as well as for women, of institutional arrangements that place the entire responsibility for child-rearing on women and within the nuclear family.⁹

In addition, of course, increasing numbers of children—both within the Jewish community and within the society at large—are growing up in families that differ substantially from the “norm.” Only about 14 percent of all families in the United States are “traditional” families (that is, with a male wage earner, head-of-household, wife working in the home, and children); a slightly larger percentage of all families is composed of two-parent families where both parents are wage-earners; 15 percent of all families are single-parent woman-headed families; and increasing numbers of people, both old and young, are living either alone or with people to whom they are not related by either birth or marriage. By 1980, “23.4 percent of all children aged seventeen or under were not living with both parents. They were instead living with one parent, another relative, or a non-relative.”¹⁰

This is not to argue that any of the alternatives to traditional nuclear family structures mentioned so far are, necessarily, superior to the nuclear family, or are to be advocated as models for the future. It is to suggest, however, that a Jewish community that is vital and speaks to the variety of ways in which its members live their lives, must begin to confront these demographic changes. It is not simply that the feminist movement—or the havurot—has challenged us on a practical or an ideological level. It is, rather, that our traditional models and understandings are, *in fact*, inadequate to the ways in which we are *already* living. Since both havurot and the feminist movement provide some models (however uncon-

scious) for dealing with these changes, it is surely worth examining them to make at least somewhat more explicit the ways in which we have already begun to adapt. Then, we can rethink, in a serious way, the relationship between family structures and Jewish communal life; and ways to incorporate the diversity of Jewish lives into that community.

Judaism and Changing Families

Jewish communities in the United States have responded to these demographic changes and changes in life patterns in a number of different ways, some more fruitful than others. Two approaches might be said to characterize those responses.¹¹ Some have responded relatively inflexibly, apparently operating on the assumption that if we ignore it, it will go away. Practically and pragmatically, what that means is that Jewish communities continue to develop programs, organize synagogues, and structure activities on the assumption that virtually all members of the community are married and living in traditional families. Synagogues that set memberships by families, for example, and do not allow single people to join, are, perhaps, an extreme example of such an approach—unfortunately, still too common. Organizing social events/activities with the assumption that the “normal” attendee is a married person with spouse is only a milder form of the same practice. Ignoring or denying the existence of lesbian and gay male Jews is yet another manifestation of the phenomenon. Needless to say, such practices at best marginalize those who do not live in traditional relationships; and, at worse, make them feel totally alien and unwelcome within those institutions that claim to serve or speak for the community.

Other communities have responded somewhat more flexibly, at least in form. “Tolerance” of those who live in less traditional structures characterizes the response of at least those elements of the Jewish community with which most readers of this journal are familiar. Such an approach recognizes the existence of some of those—singles, divorced, widowed, single parents—who are not married, but assumes that all wish to be and ought to be married. The typical communal response to those labelled “singles” is to arrange separate functions that maintain their isolation. Such ac-

tivities might, of course, be undertaken with the “best of intentions”—“singles” evenings, for example, where those who are unmarried will have opportunities to meet others similarly situated and, if all goes well, perhaps even find a mate. The underlying assumption here, of course, is that all those who are not married *wish* to be and that their single status is the most significant fact about them. As should be obvious, such attitudes (and programs) deny the possibility that some people may have made a conscious choice not to marry. At the same time, they reinforce a sense of isolation on the part of those who may wish to be married but are not or who may be in relationships other than traditional marriages.¹² In any case, such approaches tend, although in different ways, to place those who are not married in the category of “other,” and to impede their full integration into, and participation in, the Jewish community.

What is necessary, then, is to develop yet a third approach, one that moves beyond mere “tolerance” to recognition of the various choices people may make (or be forced to make) about their lives, and to incorporate that diversity into the mainstream of the Jewish community. People seem to need and thrive on warm, supportive, intimate relationships—both with peers and with children and adults of different ages. But traditional families are *not* the only contexts in which such intimacy can take place; nor need traditional families be the only context in which we can conceptualize such relationships. The same could be said of other “familial” functions, such as nurturing of children or continuing tradition. It is crucial both for the Jewish community as a whole, and for individuals and groups within it, to recognize and acknowledge different forms of relationships, and to provide ways in which a variety of relationships can be validated and affirmed, so that all Jews can be nurtured by the *community*, and so that the community can be enriched by that diversity.

What would such an approach mean, practically and programmatically?

Interestingly, the beginnings of such a rethinking can be found in the very practices and institutions of the havurah movement, particularly in its early days. Feminists may have criticized the institution of the family and pointed out its limitations for women—both within and outside the family—but early havurot, however

unconsciously, developed practices that provided some important alternative models. Thus, members joined *as* individuals; single people were not made to feel alien or strange, all were there together. When children were born, each birth was a celebration for the community. Many people, in addition to the parents, took responsibility for child-care when the young ones came to *davven*. And many—especially single people, but some married as well—conscientiously undertook to develop and maintain long-term relationships with those children. Havurot celebrated accomplishments and the lives of their members—not just those linked to life-cycle celebrations (though those too, of course) but publication parties, graduation parties, and so forth—recognizing that a vital community must acknowledge and nurture all aspects of people’s lives.

In those earlier days, our visions were, perhaps, clearer, although not always clearly articulated. As the years have gone by, membership has aged, and many have married and are engaged in raising children, some of the initial commitments have, I think, been lost. It is time, now, both to reclaim them and to move ahead: to recapture those often unspoken elements of our early commitments that can provide direction to the dilemmas of today.

Minimally, to think pragmatically about what the Jewish community could do to comprehend and incorporate the diversity of its membership is to take seriously and respond to the criticisms and suggestions offered by Elizabeth Koltun and Laura Geller some years ago—most particularly, the need for a new understanding of “completeness.” As they argued, Jewish tradition has treated marriage “as the paradigm of completeness.”¹³ They offered, in response, an analysis of the components of a “complete” life in Judaism: procreation, companionship, and avoidance of illicit sex; and suggested that the values and goals inherent in those elements—that is, a commitment to Jewish survival, companionship, and avoidance of illicit sexual behavior—could be and in fact *are* being met in a variety of relationships other than marriage. One can love and nurture children and older adults and make commitments to their growth and development, even if they are not biologically one’s own. People can achieve a sense of intimacy and companionship through a variety of different relationships with friends and/or lovers. And honest and meaningful sexual connections can certainly exist outside of the traditional marriage context.

What is missing, of course, is the active recognition on the part of the community that such relationships exist, and that people who engage in them may even flourish! Such recognition would require not only an acknowledgment of the variety of life choices Jewish people may and do make, but an acceptance of the issues posed by those choices as issues *for the community as a whole*. If we are truly to incorporate people who are living their lives outside of heterosexually constructed nuclear families, we must recognize that the responsibility for adapting to those differences falls not only on those who live differently, but on the community as a whole. That means not assuming that the “normal” Jewish life is one lived in a traditional nuclear family. Many Jews will continue to live in such families; but many will not. For the benefit of those who do not, it is essential that the community devote attention—and resources!—to creating a context in which all members can live full Jewish lives. We will need, for example, to restructure Jewish institutions: creating Jewish day-care facilities to meet the needs of families or households with two working parents, or to ease the extra burdens of those who may have children but not have a second parent with whom to share work and child-care responsibilities; or restructuring synagogue programming so that activities are not oriented around marital status, but, rather, around interest groups and task-oriented projects. In the words of Koltun and Geller:

The process of restructuring Jewish institutions must go hand in hand with open-mindedness about all the Jewishly valid options. Obviously, people who choose to marry should be encouraged, for marriage is one way . . . to live a complete life. However, those who choose not to marry, who postpone marriage, who are unwillingly single, or who are not sure, also need and deserve support and encouragement. This process is one of reeducation, restructuring, rethinking and reevaluation for single and married people alike.¹⁴

It is impossible to say, at this point, exactly what a Jewish community that truly recognized and valued a variety of familial options might look like. But it will of necessity be a community that takes seriously the *communal* context of the command *p’ru ur’vu*. It would be a community in which the provision of day care is recognized as an issue for all, not simply as the responsibility of individual mothers. It would be a community that provides support

to single parents and their children and recognizes that one need not be part of a traditional nuclear family to bear and raise children. It would be a community that recognizes that people may choose to live communally with others, and find support and fulfillment from those relationships. It would be a community that truly supports those who do not have children; a community that both explodes the myth that true fulfillment requires child-bearing and child-rearing but that also provides opportunities for the childless to develop meaningful, long-term relationships with young people, should they choose to do so. It would be a community that recognizes that those who devote their energies to educating children or adults, to caring for the aged, or otherwise engaging in communal service, are contributing to the survival of Judaism. And it would be a community that not only acknowledges, but celebrates, gay and lesbian relationships among its members.

Some find any such imaginings frightening, fearing that articulating even those alternatives that are already being lived will, somehow, “infect” others who would otherwise find their way into traditional families. A number of points must be made in response. First, life choices are not “infectious”; many find themselves in nontraditional situations through circumstances beyond their control. People are *already* choosing—or being forced to choose—to live in nontraditional structures, even without any support from the Jewish community. Withholding of communal support merely guarantees that those who live in nontraditional ways will not have access to, or be incorporated into, Jewish communal life. In other words, the expressed fear that the choice of a nontraditional life is a choice to abandon the Jewish community will certainly come to be a reality *if those now included within the community* make it so!

Second, the price of such exclusion is borne not only by the community but, obviously, by those treated as different as well. Whether we speak of single Jews, whose marital status leads them to be treated with pity by the community, and who are denied opportunities for meaningful relationships with young children; of divorced or widowed people, who can engage in communal life only with a sense of shame and failure; of the elderly but childless, who are seen to have no link with the future; or of gay and lesbian Jews who are denied the opportunity to share moments of celebration or sadness with both their loved ones and the community, the

cost of our limited vision is extreme. Too much is lost to the community through the inability of members of these various groups to participate fully and joyfully; too much is denied to them in the way of challenge, nurturance, and community itself.

Third, as Jews, we have preserved ourselves, grown, and developed over the centuries not by denying the changes in the world around us, but by responding to them creatively. When a variety of new approaches to secular learning developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, modes that appeared to challenge the sanctity of traditional texts, even members of the most observant communities came to recognize that to ignore them is to stagnate and die. New forms of Jewish learning developed, as a result, representing positive, creative responses to what were initially perceived as dire threats. Similarly, the secular nationalisms that arose during the nineteenth century in Europe posed a fundamental challenge to traditional notions of Jewish peoplehood. The many strands of Zionism with which we are familiar today developed, at least in part, in response to the challenges posed by those secular movements.¹⁵

Fourth, the issue is finally one of Jewish survival. Much of the fear and concern that arises around the topic of “alternatives to the nuclear family” is related to a deeply rooted anxiety about the continuity of the Jewish people, an anxiety from which we have almost never—certainly not in recent years—been free. But even though I have tended to treat that concern in relatively traditional terms—focussing, for example, on alternative ways of raising Jewish children—there is more, much more to the health and survival of the community than the creation of more Jewish children and families.¹⁶ We have much important work to do to improve the quality—and reach—of Jewish education, so that members of our communities, whether adults or children, will have the knowledge we need to understand our past, to cope with the present, and to envision a Jewish future. We must continue the work of Jewish renewal, to provide access for a much wider group in the community to the sources of spiritual strength our tradition can provide. And we must devote ourselves to achieving peace in the Middle East, since so much of Jewish survival is tied up with Israel’s moral and physical survival.

The accomplishment of these tasks will surely not be under-

mined by actively welcoming into the Jewish community those whose life paths differ from the stereotypical norm. More important, the infusion of energy, creativity, and strength that would be available to the community through incorporating those who are now on the margins might well make an important difference in the ability of all of us to meet the challenges of our survival as Jews (and as inhabitants of this planet).

What I am suggesting is that we think seriously about the distinction between the central elements of the Jewish tradition and the historically specific institutions that have been developed to carry out those traditions.¹⁷ The nuclear family as we know it is not, in itself, central to the continuity of Judaism: it is, instead, simply one possible set of relationships through which young people may be born, nurtured, and prepared for membership in the Jewish community, and adults may find opportunities for companionship and intimacy. Once we recognize that there are other means to achieve those same ends, and that even "undermining the family" need not necessarily threaten Jewish survival, the path is open to think about alternatives to the nuclear family.

Challenges to the familiar may appear threatening, but they also offer significant opportunities for renewal. Rethinking done from within a context of commitment to the continuity and vitality of the Jewish community and its most basic traditions and values opens tremendous possibilities for growth and creative development. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

1. It seems hardly necessary to restate here the feminist critique of Jewish attitudes toward, and treatment of, women. The clearest statement of various elements of that critique is still to be found in Elizabeth Koltun, ed., *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives* (New York: Schocken, 1976).

2. See, for example, Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York: Dial, 1976), especially pp. 62-64; also Mark Zborowsky and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is With People* (New York: Schocken, 1952). Conversations and seminars with Mariam Slater have been important in clarifying these issues for me.

3. See, among others, Michael Lerner, Laurie Zoloth, and Wilson Riles, Jr., "Bringing It All Back Home: A Strategy to Deal With the Right" (Oakland, Calif.: Friends of Families, n.d.); Barbara Ehrenreich, "Family Feud on the Left," *The Nation*, March 13, 1982. A good summary of these debates may be found in Ilene Philipson, "Heterosexual Antagonisms and the Politics of Mothering," *Socialist Review*, No. 66 (Nov-Dec. 1982), especially 55-58.

4. See, for example, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love

and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America," *Signs*, 1, 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29; and my "'Sisters' or 'Comrades': The Politics of Friends and Families," in Irene Diamond, ed., *Families, Politics, and Public Policies* (New York: Longman, 1983)

5. See, for example, Baum, Hyman, and Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America*.

6. Saul Berman, "The Status of Women in Halakhic Judaism," *Tradition*, 14, 2 (Fall 1973), reprinted (and abridged) in Koltun, ed., *The Jewish Woman*; and "Orthodoxy Responds to Feminist Ferment," interview with Shulamith Magnus, *Response*, No. 40; Jacob Neusner, "Mishnah on Women: Thematic or Systemic Description," *Marxist Perspectives* (Spring 1980), 78-98; Paula Hyman, "The Other Half: Women in the Jewish Tradition," in Koltun, ed., *The Jewish Woman*; and Rachel Adler, "The Jew Who Wasn't There: Halacha and the Jewish Woman," *Davka* (Summer 1971).

7. Berman, p. 118.

8. See, for example, Richard Yellin, "A Philosophy of Jewish Masculinity: One Interpretation," *Conservative Judaism*, 32, 2 (Winter 1969), 89-94.

9. Note Alan Mintz's comments on "overprotectiveness," for example, in "Along the Path to Religious Community," in *The New Jews*, edited by James Sleeper and Alan Mintz (New York: Vintage, 1971), pp. 28-29.

10. Andrew Hacker, "Farewell to the Family?" *New York Review of Books*, March 18, 1982; and Zillah Eisenstein, "The Sexual Politics of the New Right," *Signs*, 7, 3 (1982), 567-88.

11. This portion of the article has benefitted immensely from conversations with Steven M. Cohen and T. Drorah Setel.

12. The denigration of individual life choices that follows from such an approach is poignantly set forth in Elizabeth Koltun and Laura Geller, "Single and Jewish," in Koltun, ed., *The Jewish Woman*, especially pp. 48-49.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

15. I am grateful to Donna and Tom Divine for raising these issues with me, and helping me to think about how to deal with them.

16. I wish to thank Gladys Maggid for her comments on an earlier draft, which pushed me to think more clearly about this issue.

17. Donna Divine and Vicky Spelman helped me to articulate this distinction.