

Jewish Values in the Clinical Casework Process

PAULINE D. GOLDBERG

Jewish Family and Children's Service, Baltimore, Maryland

HISTORICALLY, the Jewish family and children's service, with its basic purpose of strengthening Jewish family life, has played an important role in promoting the mental health of the Jewish community.

With the increase in intermarriage, in the indifference of much of Jewish youth toward Judaism and the extermination of the Jews of Europe, and thus the cessation of the influx into the United States of learned and religiously oriented immigrants, the Jews of America are becoming more aware that they must assume a large responsibility for the continuity and character of Jewish life; consequently, in the Jewish social service field there is a recently emerging concern with Jewish values and a new interest in the role of an agency such as ours as an agent of Jewish consciousness and survival.

The case which follows illustrates the utilization of some Jewish values and concepts as a dynamic in the clinical casework process.

Mr. and Mrs. R. felt themselves in a crisis when Mrs. R. called us on May 29, 1973 to request counseling for their 16 year old daughter, Marcie, who had been dating a non-Jewish boy, Brad, for about a year. She had become moody and displayed temper tantrums. The arguments over their forbidding Brad in the house made their home life intolerable and they needed help in coping with this situation. Mrs. R. wanted this whole matter settled on the phone; however, I held to the Rs. coming into the office.

The R. family consists of Mr. R., age 40; Mrs. R., 36; Marcie, 16; Carl, 14; and Darryl, 11. When Mr. and Mrs. R. and Marcie came into my office on June 19, 1973, Marcie sat apart from her parents and appeared

intensely angry. She kept her head down at first and when she spoke wept freely. They all seemed under a great deal of tension and I began by helping them to express the difficulty they found in coming here. Mr. and Mrs. R. said that they felt their problem was small and Mr. R. felt that it could all be settled in one interview. I held to their coming at least four times. Mrs. R. is employed and earns \$4,000 yearly as a part time secretary. Mr. R. had just started a new business and thought he would make about \$12,000 a year. Considering his expenses, the fee came to \$15 a week which they were willing to pay provided this would not be an extended counseling plan. We settled on four weeks.

Marcie is an attractive girl, dressed in the modern style with dungaree pants and pretty tops, hair long and straight in the style of today's teenagers. I found her mature in her values for a 16 year-old, straightforward and thoughtful. She is entering her last year in high school and has been working part time in a retail store. The family said that she often helps with the housework and care of her brothers without much fuss.

Mrs. R. is an attractive woman, meticulously dressed with a high style hair arrangement. She preferred working in the business world to housework and appreciated the children's help at home. She has a good vocabulary and was quick in taking in whatever suggestions I made, whereas Mr. R. appeared blocked in his comprehension and seemed to understand only after I had repeated myself several times at different points in the interview. He is of medium height and build. He spoke haltingly as if he feared to express his opinions freely. It was only with encouragement from me that he revealed his true feelings.

The problem the Rs. presented is not an unusual one for our agency. Where else could a Jewish client reveal this kind of dilemma, where else seek healing for the fear, guilt and heartache such a problem creates

with assurance of confidentiality. When I asked them to tell me how they saw their problem and why they had come to the agency, Mrs. R. reviewed again what she had said on the phone and Mr. R. chimed in to say that the problem had to do with Marcie's seeing Brad, who is not Jewish, and who seems to be upsetting her. Brad, who had quarreled with his parents and left home, was living with a Jewish family a few doors away from the Rs. so that he always was close to Marcie. Marcie explained that she saw Brad only a part of every day as both he and she worked several evenings. He played in a dance band. The Rs. objected to his coming to the house every day. Mrs. R. said that she had accepted the fact that Marcie would continue to see him, but what disturbed her was her child's unhappiness. Rather haltingly, Mr. R. began to bring out that he had never gotten used to the fact that Brad was not Jewish and didn't think he ever would. Marcie cried quite a bit as she said that her father seemed to think that everything could be solved if she stopped seeing Brad, but she wanted them to know that she would not do this. This she said with anger and vehemence. She had tried to please them recently by agreeing to dating other people for a month, but she kept wanting to date Brad.

In a crisis situation such as this communication between family members often breaks down. For the adolescent who is necessarily rebellious and seeking to learn who he is and who he should be, a secure, unified family remains the major institution for him to give and receive the love and stability he needs to seek and find his self-identification.

Therefore, I emphasized the need for family communication with the Rs. as I explained to them from the beginning that we would use this interview for them to tell each other where they saw the problem and each to listen to the other so that we could see whether they could all come to some agreement about how they might live better together. From time to time I stopped to ask whether each had heard what the other had said and helped them respond to each other. At one point Marcie angrily blurted out that most of the trouble was caused by her maternal grandmother who was always in the home reporting on her. Mrs. R.'s mother

was a constant visitor. Her presence in the R. home was so constant that Marcie felt as if she had two mothers. She felt her own mother could not use her own mind as the grandmother was constantly telling them what to think and do. From their discussion I got the impression that she was a widow and alone. It was only in the second interview that I learned that she had a husband and other children. Mr. R.'s mother had remarried after his father died and visited only occasionally.

In encouraging Marcie to tell her parents how she felt, she said that at times she is in a bad mood, but felt that at her age they should let her alone and not interrogate her so much. If she went to her room in a bad mood, she eventually came out feeling better. Mr. R. brought out rather strongly that he objected to her dating Brad because of the religious difference in addition to its effect on her. She said, with anger, again and again that whether they liked it or not she would continue to see Brad and would run away if they continued to disallow his visits. When they tried to brush this aside, I stopped them and asked them to listen carefully to what she was saying. In addition, Marcie added that she was not planning to marry Brad, certainly not now as she plans to finish high school and go to college. She pointed out to them that she obeys their limits, comes home at their stated curfew or, if she is late, calls them. Her room is neat and she helps with her brothers. They admitted that this was true. I helped her to tell her parents what she wanted from them and she said that she wanted to entertain her friends at home the same as they do theirs.

Most of us today have more in common with and mingle socially more freely with non-Jews than did our grandparents. Marcie here is expressing the difficulties many of our youth find, then, in trying to put together parents' concerns for the survival of Jewish life and values with their own deep longings for honesty, peace, and universal communication. A society which emphasizes individual satisfactions does not make it easy for our youth to accept our own Jewish supra individual values.

Although at first Marcie had said in anger to her father, "What difference does his religion make?" she later said that she is Jewish and always will be, as will her children, and she would never consider marrying Brad or anyone else who did not respect this or change for her. Her mother then pointed out that at one time Marcie had told Brad

that she would want her children to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and he said that his grandmother and mother would hit the ceiling if they thought that he would have children who would be raised as Jews. Marcie admitted to this but said she was not planning to marry for a long time and that she would never change her religion. If he wanted to marry her he would have to change his.

During most of the first interview Marcie was tearful, angry, and defiant toward her parents. After they had listened to each other for a little while, because the tension and hostility between them was great, I suggested that I see them separately over the next few weeks. We would then evaluate what they had gotten from coming here and make a decision as to whether they wanted to go on. They agreed to this and on that first day I saw Marcie alone. She said little more than while her parents were in the room. She reiterated that she loved her parents and wanted to remain at home with them, but was unhappy that Brad could not visit her at home and that her father and mother ignored him. She wanted them to be courteous to him as his parents were toward her. His parents took her out to dinner and although she knew they were prejudiced against Jews, they were very kind to her. Many of her girl friends were going with non-Jewish boys and as far as her peer group was concerned they felt that she was very lucky as Brad was considered good-looking and popular. He, too, expected to go to college and even when they had casually talked about the possibility of marriage in the future, he would always say, "What am I talking about? I am only 18 years old." She would not consider marriage for several years, but felt that this is what her parents feared. She preferred Brad to others as they could talk to each other about their problems. Other boys were interested in sex only but she and Brad did not indulge as he respected her and would not want to place her in a difficult position. She said that he had left home because his mother objected to his playing in night clubs and her parents were concerned about his living without parental guidance. He had many Jewish friends and had been befriended by her Jewish neighbors where she visited him when he was not allowed in her home.

During this interview I tried to be warm and sympathetic toward Marcie, expressing my understanding to her and how hard it was for her to have her grandmother check-

ing upon her all the time in addition to her parents' feeling about her friend. She responded to this and agreed to come in for several weeks to discuss the family situation further.

The adolescent is not as predictable as he was in his recent pre-adolescent past and parents are justified in their fears and concerns about him. His confusion as a result of the biological changes within him, his trying on one personality after another in his search for who he is or should become, his waverings between child and man can be confusing and wearing for parents.

Therefore, in my first interview with Mr. and Mrs. R. alone I sympathized with them in how hard they were finding the situation and I asked if they felt that they were the only people with such difficulty. Mrs. R. said that she was hearing similar things from many of her friends and felt that they were experiencing the trend of the times. Mr. R. spoke as though he didn't know what was going on in the world and asked whether we knew of other people with similar problems. I said that he was not alone, but I knew that this would not make things easier for him. I sensed that he was suffering over this and he said that he was. His wife seemed to think that he should not have feelings against Brad because he was non-Jewish, but I said that he was entitled to his feelings. I could understand them as I thought that most Jewish parents would feel as he did. He looked to his wife who responded with the fact that she also has feelings about Brad's religious difference but stopped worrying because she saw that nothing she did helped. He said that he could keep the boy out of the house if he wanted to. I said that this was his house and he could do that, but I thought we should consider what was important to them and how they could maintain better family relationships as they were complaining about the fighting in their home over this situation. I helped them review what they had heard from Marcie in the previous interview and Mrs. R. reminded her husband that what she had heard was that Marcie would run away if they did not permit Brad to visit. Their restrictions had made the situation worse and she did not want to cause Marcie to run away with Brad. She repeated this several times before Mr. R. appeared to

take it in. Although I sympathized with them, I tried to help them see the good in Marcie and they agreed that there are many destructive things other young people were into that Marcie was not. She had always been a very obedient child and now it was hard for them to accept her taking a stand and defying them with Brad. I tried to help them understand the process of separation and what was going on between them and Marcie at this point in her development. I could understand that they would find it hard to accept what she was doing now, but I thought it was natural for her to rebel in order eventually to leave them in the natural process of growing up.

They said that Marcie had had stomach pains and the doctor thought she was getting ulcers for which they blamed Brad. Marcie had said that the stomach pains were a result of mononucleosis she had had the previous year. I said that I questioned that she would be getting ulcers just from recent tension.

As we discussed this, Mrs. R. said that she felt that Marcie was always under tension. Early in their marriage they had had many arguments and even considered separating. She married at 18; the children came close together and she needed her mother a great deal to help with them. Marcie had lived through many family tensions and basically was very fearful. She threw up everyday in elementary school and Mrs. R. would go to school to quiet her down. I tried to help them see the pattern of fear and perhaps jealousy of the other children who were left at home. At first they denied the jealousy but later admitted that Marcie probably did feel this.

Mrs. R. seemed distressed by the thought that in the next few years all of her children would be on their own. She said this is hard for her probably because in their family there had never been a real separation between mother and daughter. Her mother had lived with her grandmother and now her mother is constantly in her home.

Mr. R. began, at first rather haltingly but with my encouragement more openly, to say that he objected to Mrs. R.'s mother's constant presence. She should remember that Marcie talked about this in the first interview and that he and Marcie had suffered by the grandmother's constant interference. Mrs. R. seemed shocked at this and said that he never had told her that before. She thought that he liked her mother doing so much for them. He felt that she had been

insensitive to many remarks he had made about her mother who, he felt, had stood in the way of their having a good relationship. He wanted more privacy.

Mrs. R. turned to me and said that she thought this was the way of a Jewish mother and how could she tell her mother to come less often. She asked if I didn't think that most Jewish mothers spent a lot of time in their daughter's home. I said that the first book of the Bible says that when a person marries he should leave his primary family and cling to his spouse.¹ Mr. R. brightened up at this and said that he would prefer his wife's cooking and housework. Mrs. R. said that evidently her mother was making a problem between them and she was willing to talk with her about this. I could understand that she would find it hard and reviewed with her a little about what she thought she could say to her mother. She agreed to tell her mother that they are coming for counseling and that it would be in the best interest of them all for her to see less and visit them less. In a short while Mrs. R. said that she had discussed this with her mother who seemed to understand and she was able to tell her mother that if she wanted to visit but shut her eyes to what she saw she would be welcome. The family would be willing to have less of grandmother's cooking in order to have more privacy. I asked Mrs. R. whether she felt that her kind of togetherness with her mother at this stage of her life was a good thing and she felt that it really was not. She would not want to be in Marcie's home that constantly after Marcie married.

Both Mr. and Mrs. R. kept asking direct questions about whether they should allow Brad to come and talk to them as he wanted to discuss why they felt such a difference between him and Jewish boys. I said that this would be totally up to them as they had a right to decide who they wanted in their home; however, I thought they needed to consider this in the light of what it did to their family relationships.

As the American educator and writer, Will Durant, once said, "Youth bears law and order grudgingly — it is asked to be sober and judicious when it's very blood makes youth a continuous intoxication." In this situation the Rs. felt that their will to keep Brad out of the house set up a

¹ Genesis, Chapter II, Verse 24.

counterwill in Marcie to have him in the home.

They decided to allow him in the house although they were able, with my suggestion, to tell her calmly that it hurt them that she was going with someone non-Jewish. When Mr. R. seemed fearful of getting involved in an argument with Brad, I helped him to decide what he could say. I reiterated that I felt Mr. R. was entitled to his feelings and that reason was reason and feeling was feeling and "never the twain shall meet." Perhaps he could say that this was a very deep feeling which had helped to preserve Jewish life for thousands of years. He had strong feelings about Jewish survival which depended greatly on marriage within the group. This could not be argued. Mr. R. liked that and said that he would think it over; if Brad argued, he would use this. When he allowed Brad to visit, the boy did not ask any questions so that the need to discuss this did not arise. He said that he could say good evening to Brad without anger and just did not involve himself in any further discussion.

Several times during my interviews with Mr. and Mrs. R. together, Mr. R. said disparaging things about Mrs. R.'s brothers, one of whom married a non-Jewish woman who converted to Judaism and the other who was going with a non-Jewish woman. He thought that his mother-in-law was so concerned about Marcie because she had been unsuccessful with her own children. He also did not want the same thing to happen to Marcie. Mrs. R. kept emphasizing that her brother's wife was Jewish as she had converted and the children were observant Jews. Mr. R. said that if Marcie were to marry Brad it would be hard for him to accept this even if Brad converted. Mrs. R. seemed very pained at her husband's attitude toward her sister-in-law who is an active member of the Jewish community. When Mr. R. turned toward me I said that according to Jewish law Marcie's children will be Jewish because she is Jewish² and also that Jews, although they do not encourage conversion, have respect for proper converts.³ Some of our sages were converts⁴

² Maimonides, *Laws of Prohibitive Unions*, Chapter 13, Paragraphs 14, 15, 18.

³ As specified by Israel's principal codes — Maimonides, Tur, Schulchan Aruch.

and the law is that a convert is Jewish and the fact that he was something else before is never to be talked about again.⁵ Mr. R. seemed a little shocked by this, but Mrs. R. seemed pleased. I knew he wanted something different for Marcie and I could sympathize with him on that, but we cannot guarantee what our children will do and sometimes are called on to adjust to the next best thing.

As I got to know Marcie better and appreciated that she appeared to have good values, I tried to help Mr. and Mrs. R. understand that and to relax a little. She felt strongly Jewish, wanted more education and recognized that she was not ready to marry yet. She still wanted a good time before settling down. Mr. R. did not accept my opinion on this so readily, but Mrs. R. was pleased that I concurred with her as this was her conception of Marcie also.

In my discussions with Marcie she said that she felt her parents' upset was caused mainly by their fear that she would marry Brad. I tried to help her look at whether there was some truth in her parents' feeling and especially that she was making herself unnecessarily unhappy maybe even to spite them, but she denied this was so, said that marriage was a long way off for her and that the good she found in Brad outweighed the bad. She admitted that he had many problems which at times he placed on her and caused her moodiness, but she saw that as part of a friendship. She wanted to share his problems. Her parents expected her to be always in a happy mood, but this was not normal. If they paid less attention to her moods the whole household would be better off. She wanted me to try to help her parents understand this and I encouraged her to talk to them about it. On the other hand I was working with them on this and trying to help them to listen to Marcie.

At one point I had offered the opportunity for Marcie to come to the office with Brad if she felt their relationship was that close. She told me that Brad was already seeing someone about his own problems.

⁴ David Bridger and Samuel Wolk, Ed., *The New Jewish Encyclopedia*, Behrman House, Inc., 1962, p. 361. Onkalos, reputed author of the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch was a proselyte.

Pirke Avot, Chapter V, Mishnah 26 and 27 — the Talmudic sages Ben Bag Bag and Ben He He are said to have been proselytes.

⁵ Talmud Baba Metziah 58b.

After Mr. R. permitted Brad to visit her, Marcie's whole attitude during our interviews was changed. She seemed bubbling over, although she always retained a seriousness. In addition, she seemed more sympathetic to her parents' fears of possible intermarriage and the reasons for these fears.

At one point I tried to help Marcie see that what she expects from her parents was to care about Brad as she did. She admitted this and I wondered whether she felt she could force someone else to feel exactly as she did. After some discussion she said that they could not force her to feel differently so she supposed she couldn't force them either, but she just wished they would. I said that part of growing up was to be able to have your own opinion and allow other people to have theirs and I wondered if she were ready to do that with her parents with respect to her interest in Brad. In teenage fashion she grimaced and said that she had never thought about that and did not know whether she could continue to take their not liking him. Marcie felt that basically she had a good relationship to her mother to whom she could tell practically everything. With her father the situation was different as for most of her life he had worked long hours and was hardly home. She found it difficult to talk to him as he was either glued to the television or sent her to her mother for decisions. I asked that she try to find a time to talk to him about this; and in my interviews with Mr. and Mrs. R. I tried to help them find time to talk with her so that they could get to know each other better. I tried to help them present calmly their Jewish values to Marcie without force. Mr. R. said that Marcie used to kiss him and his wife before going to bed. Recently their relationship was such that she no longer did this. It meant a great deal to him to have her show this affection. I felt that as she was getting older she might discontinue that which would not mean that she was rejecting them, but encouraged them to discuss this with her. Also, Mr. R. said that whenever Marcie asks him anything she breaks into tears and they could not understand that. They seemed to be asking me for an explanation, which I said I could not give them, but why didn't they talk this over together to arrive at the reason. In a later discussion Mr. R. brought out the fact that whenever Marcie asks him for permission he sends her to her mother. When I asked why he did this, he said that he thought this was the way all Jewish families were run — the mother makes the decisions.

I said that that was not my concept of a Jewish family and that in Jewish life with respect to rearing children many things were incumbent on the father. Jews saw father and mother as a united front which was what teenagers needed.⁶ Mr. R. got involved in discussing what he might do differently when Marcie asks his permission and I suggested that he could say that he would discuss this with Mother and they would give their joint decision. Both of them liked this and said that they would begin to try a united front.

I knew that ultimately Marcie would make her own decisions, but I hoped that my intervention would help her make these decisions not out of rebellion but based on some practical considerations of what such decisions would mean to her and on a heightened awareness of and pride in her Jewishness; therefore, in our discussions I tried to stimulate her to talk about what she meant by feeling "very Jewish." She explained that the most important things to her were the holidays and she would never want to give these up. She spoke about Passover when they change their dishes and all the family came to them for a Seder. She would always want that in her home. She talked about her Bat Mitzvah and said that she would want this kind of thing for her girls and a Bar Mitzvah for her boys and that she enjoyed going to Hebrew school, especially with Rabbi X. She missed Friday night observances as all of them were working on Friday nights now and that had been a time when they could get together and talk. The grandmother had been coming on Friday nights because her mother came late, but she would prefer her mother to be there early and take care of the Sabbath observances.

In the last two interviews Marcie talked about her desire to have a big wedding when she married, in her own synagogue with Rabbi X to perform the ceremony. She said also that she knew that Brad's parents accepted her but would oppose his converting or bringing up his children as Jews. She looked at me as if she were realizing this for the first time and said that she supposed she couldn't have that kind of wedding if she married Brad and he didn't convert. Could she? I said that she could not and what she was bringing out now was that there would be many problems for her and for Brad too

⁶ Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is With People*, "Peace of the Home" Part IV, Chapter II, Schocken Books, New York, 1952.

if they decided to marry. Perhaps we could be helpful to her should she be faced with such a decision. I wondered if she would return to talk with us about it and she said she certainly would. She then began to say that Brad had some opinionated ways that might not be easy for her to live with and she wondered whether either of them could live with the other in a marriage. In the last interview she said that Brad was thinking of going to Europe with his band next year and if he did that, "forget it" — she would look around for other fellows. Brad was going to college next year and she would be left in high school. One of the reasons she went with him was that he was right there all the time, but next year she probably would be looking at other boys.

By the last two interviews Mr. and Mrs. R. had heard from Marcie many of the things that she had said to me. Mrs. R. was pointing out to her husband that knowing Marcie she would expect her to look around for other dates next year when Brad would be less available. At one point I said to them that I knew that if I could predict for them a happy ending ten years from now they would relax. Both laughed saying they wished I could do this. I said that I couldn't, but I could tell them that teenagers today often dated one boy for a while and went on to another and that Marcie's seeing Brad did not necessarily mean that she would marry him. They were doing all that they could by making a better home life and giving her their values. It was my impression that she was a good healthy girl and showed the results of their efforts in rearing her. I tried to help them see that she cared about them and the younger children, she worked and made good school grades and was not involved in any harmful activity so that they had many things to be thankful for. I often told Marcie how pretty and healthy I thought she was, whereupon she would thank me and look very pleased. Mrs. R. said that Marcie had never been demanding, that she had always bought her own clothes from her babysitting, and she had a lot of compassion for Marcie who she felt had suffered in the years of their struggle.

Adolescents often complain, with justification, that they are not trusted by their parents, that their intellectual and social abilities are not valued and yet they need this trust to find their own inner strengths, their own true identity and maturity. As I felt that Mr. R. was not trusting of Marcie, I said that to him several times in the interviews, but he

constantly brushed this aside and appeared not to take it in until late in the third interview when he blurted out that he did not trust any 17 year old. I questioned on what he based this and wondered how well he really knew his child. Mrs. R. pointed out that they had married very young and prior to that had once gone to a resort with an older couple. Their parents did not know with whom they were sleeping although in reality the two women slept together and the two men in another room, but their parents trusted them. Mr. R. said that he would not have had sexual relations with his wife prior to marrying her as those were his principles, but he did go out with Gentile girls for sexual purposes. I said that maybe this was one of the reasons he was worried about his daughter's going with a Gentile boy and he said that it was. He would not feel as badly about his boys taking out Gentile girls. When I questioned why he said that he felt that boys were stronger and could pull girls in their direction. He feared Brad would be stronger and pull Marcie his way. I said that from my experience with his daughter I was willing to trust her and recommended that he spend some time with her to get to know her better. Mrs. R. said that she trusted her daughter and I pointed out that this meant trusting what they had given to her in the way of values, both moral and religious ones. She felt that she had done most of the giving and therefore was more able to trust. Mr. R. said that he was going to make time to talk to Marcie.

The discussion about Marcie's possible sexual involvement moved Mr. and Mrs. R. to talk about some of the other things in their home such as that Mr. R. subscribed to magazines with pictures of nude women. He left these where his boys could see them and Mrs. R. was upset by this. Mr. R. made some remark about this which led me to feel that maybe they were having difficulties in their own sexual relationships. When I questioned this Mrs. R. said that they do not have as satisfactory sexual relationships as they once had since the children grew up because she fears the children will hear them in their bedroom. At this point their 15 year old boy questions what they are doing when they go to their bedroom, tells them to have a good time, but warns Mr. R. not to hurt his mother. At times Mr. R. makes it obvious in front of the boys that he is calling her to the bedroom for sexual purposes. In addition, he had told the boys that when they are 18 years old he will fix them up with a girl. I agreed with Mrs. R. that this was inappropriate behavior for both the

boys and the father and that maybe they should continue in the counseling so that we could discuss this further. Mr. R. said quickly that he would just discontinue getting the magazines and would not talk to his boys in that way anymore, but he did not want to continue.

Each time Mr. R. came in he started with saying that there had been no changes because Brad was still coming to the house. I once questioned whether he really believed that it was my goal with him to stop this or whether I could stop it. He said that he really understood that we were working on better family relationships; however, each time he continued to say there was no change until Mrs. R. would point out that the situation at home was much better. Then Mr. R. would agree. They saw as better the fact that Marcie was quieter, that she kissed them goodnight and talked to them and that whereas she had originally said when they were together in my office that she would never go to dinner again with the family unless they included Brad, she had gone with them to dinner without him to celebrate Darryl's birthday and had been very pleasant and communicative. The atmosphere at home was free from arguments.

In her last interview with me Marcie was in a very good mood, and as we evaluated what she had gotten from coming to the agency, she said that the mood at home was much better. She emphasized the fact that Brad was on better terms with her parents and she felt that I had helped in that. Her father was not yelling at her but came to her room to kiss her goodnight each night. She added, "I got everything out of myself." She never talked to any one about her problems before and then, in a bouyant teenage fashion she added, "You really helped, you really did." She said that she is the first child, the first to date and separate from her family; therefore, she felt she and her parents were suffering more now than they would when the boys started to date. Her mother was constantly saying with sorrow that all of her children will be out of the house in ten years. When I asked how she responded to that she said, "Well, mother I will come and visit you." I said that what she was saying was that she was not going to get tied at home to her mother and was determined to make a life of her own and I thought that was good. By this time Mrs. R. had influenced Brad to return to his parents and both families were pleased about this.

In ending Mr. and Mrs. R. agreed that things were better at home and that they had gotten a good deal out of coming for counseling. Mr. R. continued to feel that one thing he did not get was respect from his wife and children. When I

questioned what he meant by this, he just repeated the word "respect," but Mrs. R. said that she felt that what he meant had to do with the fact that he often teased the children to the point of hysteria. They, then, wouldn't listen to what he said because they did not know when he was teasing and when he was serious. Mr. R. agreed that this was true, and I said that it was difficult for children to take teasing and that even teenaged children needed to know exactly where they stood, that they needed both tender loving care and limits and direction from parents. What they were discussing was putting Mr. R. on the same level with his children rather than in the captain's seat which he seemed to want. He then said that he would try to stop the teasing.

As we summed up what they felt they had gotten, I thought that they presented many potential problems which were left unsettled such as Mr. R.'s difficulty in communicating with his children, and I questioned whether they would be able to sustain the peace of their household if they did not continue for a while yet. It was my recommendation that they continue and Mrs. R. said that she would be ready to do this. When Mr. R. did not understand the reason for this, she told him that it was similar to his experience with Weight Watchers in that he could control his diet and weight as long as he went, but was not able to sustain it when he discontinued abruptly. Mr. R. laughed at that but said that he wanted to hold to the four weeks for the present. They both then decided that they would try to live for a while without the agency but would be willing to return should they need to. Mr. R. expressed his appreciation of my Jewishness and Jewish knowledge as that had been important to him. Mrs. R. pointed out that even though they had problems, their overall relationship had improved over the years and they would like to see how they could manage without counseling. The chief advantage to having come here, she said, was that her husband listened to me. He had not accepted similar help from their friend and lawyer who referred them to us having decided not to counsel them as he did not want to be responsible for the possible outcome with Marcie.

In evaluating the process in this case, we need to consider that the R. family members bring to the helping situation a good deal of ego strengths as well as background of sound family and Jewish cultural values. Their values both Jewish and universal, however, are being painfully tested as a result of their various

family crises brought into the open by Marcie's relationship with a non-Jewish boy. One crisis is that of Marcie's adolescent rebellion and beginning separation. Another is in Mr. and Mrs. R.'s marital relationship strained by their daughter's demands and their own fears of what life will be like for them when their children are grown. There is also the crisis in their parental roles as a result of their own early unmet developmental needs as well as that produced by the rapid societal changes in our age which burden parents with threats and anxieties.

The helping process has enabled this family to begin to partialize the different crises and move toward resolving them. Methods of crisis intervention interwoven with Jewish content were used to help them discover the confidence they can have in their own ideals, strengths and capacities to change when the family equilibrium requires that. The nature of the problem they brought lent itself to a place for Jewish content in the clinical casework process. A clinically trained professional person is expected to include in his helping methods an understanding of the cultural experiences of the client as well as the social aspects of his problems. A clinically trained professional worker, concerned about the integrity, quality and continuity of Jewish life can, as shown here, choose a helping method which integrates a knowledge of Jewish experiences, values and feelings with a knowledge of human growth and behavior.

In their traditional role of helping people adjust to changes in their present environment, social workers often have neglected the deeply rooted need in human beings for continuity. The Talmud expresses this need when it states, "As my father planted for me, so will I plant for my children." Major elements of continuity for Jews in both their personal and family living can be found in Jewish tradition and values. The Rs.

have strong feelings about their heritage and want to transmit this to their children, but their Jewish knowledge, vague and full of misconceptions, they have been using damagingly in their own self interest. Hopefully what they have learned in their brief but intensive experience with our agency will raise the level of their Jewish knowledge so that they use it toward better family relationships. Many weaknesses both personal and family have been left untouched, but the family appears to have gained the kind of confidence in professional help that would enable them to return should the need arise.

Bibliography

Books

- Josselyn, Irene M., M.D., *The Adolescent and His World*. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1964.
- Linzer, Norman, *The Jewish Family*. New York: Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, 1968, pp. 17-32, 87-92.
- Zborowski, Mark and Herzog, Elizabeth, *Life Is With People*. "Peace of the Home." New York: Schocken Books, 1952, pp. 291-307.

Articles

- Berl, Fred, Ph.D., "Assault on Clinical Practice." Presented at the Jewish Assembly, New Orleans, November, 1973.
- Feldman, Leon A., "Jewish Training and Orientation of Social Workers," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XXXIV, No. 2 (Winter, 1957).
- Handlin, Oscar, "Changing Patterns in Group Life in America and Their Implications for the American Jewish Community," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XXXIV, No. 4 (Summer, 1958).
- Hofstein, Saul, "Preparation of Workers for Casework Practice in the Jewish Agency," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLV, No. 2 (Winter, 1968).
- . "Modalities in the Treatment of Family Discord," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLVII, No. 1 (Fall, 1970).
- Kallen, Horace M., "American Jew, What Now?" *The Jewish Social Service Quarterly*, Volume XXXII, No. 1 (Fall, 1955).

- Kutzik, Alfred, "Jewish Values and Jewish Social Service," *Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XXXVI, No. 1 (Fall, 1959).
- Pasewark, Richard A. and Albers, Dale A., "Crisis Intervention Theory in Search of a Program," *Social Work*, Volume 17, No. 2 (March, 1972).
- Posner, William and Hofstein, Saul, "The Use of the Agency's Jewishness in the Casework Process," *The Jewish Social Service Quarterly*, Volume XXVI, No. 3 (March, 1950).
- Schlessinger, Benjamin, Ph.D., "Intermarriage: An Old Problem and a Modern Dilemma," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLVII, No. 4 (Summer, 1971).
- Schiff, Alvin I., "Programming Jewish Values for Jewish Adolescents in Jewish Community Centers," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLVIII, No. 2 (Winter, 1971).
- Setleis, Lloyd, "How Should We Act? How Should We Be?" *Journal of Social Work Process*, Volume XVI, (1967).
- Shapiro, Manheim, "Survival and Service: Who? What? Why? How?" *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLVIII, No. 1 (Sept. 1971), p. 29.
- Zeff, David, "The Jewish Family Agency: Individual and Group Casework Services That Build Jewish Identity," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLIX, No. 4 (Summer, 1973).
- Zibbell, Charles, "Strengthening Jewish Commitment," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Volume XLIX, No. 3 (Spring, 1973).