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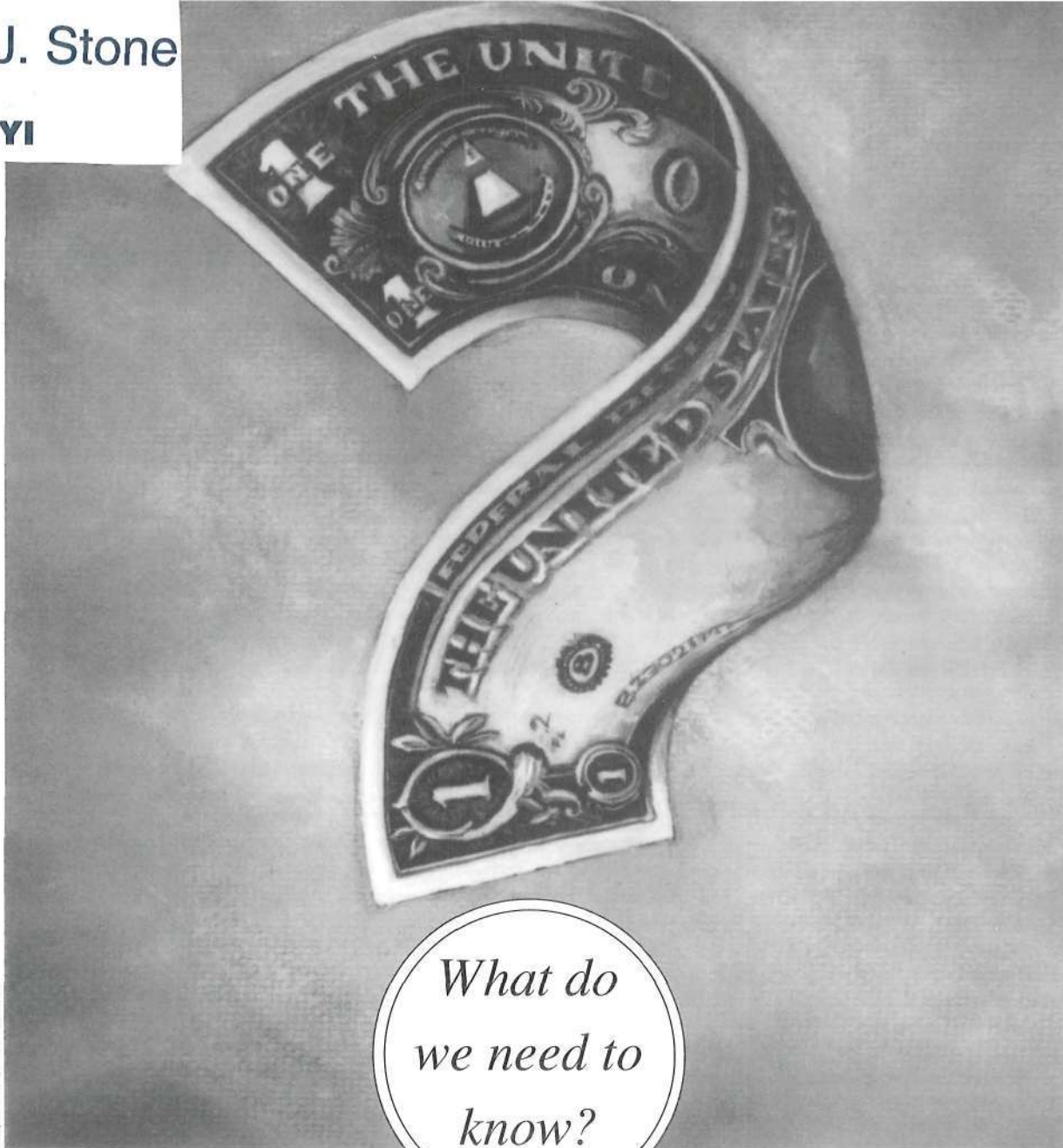


Illustration by Karen Stolper

*What do  
we need to  
know?*

## JEWISH WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

by Susan Weidman Schneider

### *PART ONE: Women's giving to "mainstream" Jewish organizations*

Jewish women today control more wealth than ever before—as wage-earners, beneficiaries of estates, directors of companies, board members of foundations and women's funds, and as the ones in charge of running family foundations while their brothers, fathers or husbands manage the family businesses. Despite their potential to use this money for Jewish causes, Jewish women are giving a smaller percentage of their *tzedakah* [charity] to Jewish organizations than ever before. While secular organizations are examining women's patterns of philanthropy and exploring ways of bringing women in (including Jewish women) as major donors, many Jewish organizations still aren't paying enough attention to women's new "charity clout."

## The Male Model

As the generation of extremely wealthy men who are the mainstays of Jewish philanthropy ages and dies, and the burden of sustaining Jewish institutions becomes shared by a broader base of donors, women's contributions become an urgent matter. Obviously, Jewish women's philanthropy has implications for the entire Jewish community, but aside from one or two researchers, the topic has not yet been examined closely, either by the general Jewish organizations (which seldom segment their statistics by gender) or by Jewish women's organizations. Both groups remain largely ignorant of this huge new repository of expertise and insight on women's philanthropy—which has been generated by researchers in the women's movement, political campaigns, university alumnae giving (an important sector, given Jewish women's high educational levels) and academia [See box].

In this first segment of a two-part LILITH series, I will explore the following questions: How do the causes Jewish women give to differ from those of other women? The traditional Jewish fundraising method—peer-pressure—has in the past worked well for men, but does it boomerang for Jewish women? How can Jewish women make sure that their philanthropy most effectively leverages change? The second part of the series (in LILITH's Summer issue), will focus on women who support primarily "alternative" Jewish causes, and progressive and feminist organizations.

In its 1992 analysis of "Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy," the United Jewish Appeal (the most successful philanthropy in the entire United States, raising more than \$668 million in 1991) devotes not one of its 130 pages (and 29 tables) to women. (Jews are not alone in this omission—Independent Sector, one of the major organizations which studies volunteer groups, has just completed a survey of "Religious Congregations in the United States" without breaking down any of its information by gender.)

Against this egregious background of neglect, LILITH decided to interview more than 100 women donors to Jewish causes, as well as professional fundraisers, money managers and psychologists. We found that Jewish women were unquestionably a distinct group. We hope that our research—broad though not formally statistical—will encourage social scientists to take the next step.

Because United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and local Jewish federations ("umbrella" campaigns for a whole array of services in the United States and Israel) raise vastly more money than any individual Jewish group, it made sense to focus here on some characteristics of women's giving in relation to these major organizations.

Needless to say, everything we know about gender differences is borne out in an analysis of charitable giving.

- Men often characterize their giving to Jewish causes as a "Jewish tax," suggesting a depersonalized, obligatory, routine tithing. "Business-as-usual" was the way one woman described the philanthropy of Jewish men. Others said: "Men fund the status quo, women fund change. Men give to preserve institutions, women give to create new programs."

- When dealing with money, men are motivated as much by competitive instincts as by any cause itself. "For men, money means power and ego," says Deborah Fuller Hahn, a journalist and community activist in Fort Lauderdale. She notes that "the difference is unbelievable. I've gone to mostly male fundraising events, where people stand up and announce how much they're going to give to the UJA/Federation fundraising appeal. One man will get up and say, 'I'm giving \$18,000.' The next man gets up and announces: 'My partner here is giving \$18,000? OK. I'm going to give \$18,100. Women's giving is much more personalized—they give because something in the community has touched them.'

Emily Sunstein of Philadelphia, a board member of the American Jewish Committee and the Philadelphia Free Library Association, grew up in Texas, where "my mother often accused my father of making donations just because he wanted the prestige. Her donations were different." Classically, when men give to a philanthropy, they achieve status in a hierarchy or pecking order, display their success, compete with others, and gain influence in their communities. In the mid-1920's Eleanor Roosevelt described government service in terms that apply equally well to philanthropy: "Women go into politics to make social change; men go into politics to get elected."

Maddie Glazer of Des Moines, who supports Jewish causes and is national chair of a \$105 million campaign for Drake University says, "I don't like to give to bricks and mortar. I don't need to see my name on something. I like to give where I feel the money can do the most good." This attitude is shared by most women. According to Harvard sociologist Francie Ostrower who has just conducted a study of "elite" philanthropists in New York City, most of these men give to established institutions, while "only the women give to social services and programs. No men do."

- The way in which men ask for money is different, too—and it antagonizes most women (and some men). Karen Stone, a development officer at UCLA, calls men's style of asking for money, "command and control: 'Give because I tell you to.'" Many men feel flattered by this approach. "The assumption in this command is that of course we have lots of

money," explains one generous anonymous male donor, "we just need to fork it over."

- Nicki Newman Tanner, active with UJA/Federation in New York and a Board member of the 92nd Street YM/YWHA in Manhattan, has just co-chaired the most successful college fundraising campaign in U.S. history—more than \$168 million given to Wellesley by alumnae. She chides Jewish federations for "never letting the donor feel good about the gift. You're immediately told that there are more needs to be met, that next year you'll be expected to give more. You're even told that your contribution this year isn't 'significant'. Women don't respond to this." Even the top leadership of the federation Women's Division reflects this dissatisfaction with how women are asked to give money: 94% said that they would give more to the Federation "if they were solicited differently," according to a 1986 study.

These examples point to the fact that male and female giving are indeed different. "Donors will give to a person, not a cause" is the male-oriented wisdom parroted in "solicitor training" sessions by men trying to figure out how to extract money from other men. This axiom doesn't hold for women, however. We know that women DO give to support a cause they believe in—not to compete, not to impress the solicitor, not to see their names on buildings. It's no wonder, then, that men trying to raise money say "women of independent means are very difficult to solicit." These men are on the wrong track.

## What should Jewish organizations know about women's giving?

Charitable giving has been one of the few socially sanctioned public activities for middle- and upper-class women. In the transition from time to dollars, women's giving moves in the opposite direction from men's. First a woman volunteers, or is drawn to the cause; then she writes the check.

Women want a connection to the work they support, so it stands to reason that they reach for their checkbooks for causes that really touch them. Here's a case in point: Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell tells about a group of Reform women rabbis who were approached to fund a faculty slot at Hebrew Union College, the movement's rabbinical seminary. They replied that as women they are paid less than their male colleagues, that many of them are not working in congregations and hence have no discretionary funds, and so on. Yet when one of the women then asked, "What if this were specifically a chair in feminist theology?" the women immediately agreed that for *this* idea they would stretch their *tzedakah* resources. Women's philanthropy is often determined by how intimately and specifically a donor can

connect to a cause.

Consonant with this, women also, according to fundraisers, ask "a million more questions" than men do. "If I am approached to contribute to an athletic facility in Israel," says Paula Gottesman, who generously funds both Jewish and non-Jewish community projects, "I want to know: Will women have equal access to the gym? Will there be facilities for the handicapped? And child-care facilities so overburdened mothers can use it too? And is a gym really necessary in that neighborhood, or is job training more urgent?" This parallels what happens when women buy stocks; one (male) broker grumbles, "When I give a woman client a piece of paper she hangs on to it for a week. A man would make up his mind right away."

A woman's concern for detail can be a great strength in philanthropy. "Women are more rational than men on boards," says Judith Stern Peck, former chair of the Task Force on Jewish Women at the Commission on Synagogue Relations of New York UJA/Federation and a board member of MAZON: a Jewish Response to Hunger. "Women hold organizations more accountable," she says "We are so used to looking after details that we're more accurate about our fiduciary and fiscal responsibilities. For example, I sit on one board where the few women board members wouldn't let the organization expand without sufficient budget. Men's minds turn to mush when they walk into a board room—they wouldn't run their business this way."

"Men are very sloppy about knowing the details of the projects they support," confirms Raquel Newman of San Francisco, active with scores of Jewish organizations in the US and Israel, and a consultant to non-profit organizations.

Beatrice Cummings Mayer of Chicago, immediate past president of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, believes that "a female response to needs is very directed; we will bring this to philanthropy. NPO's," she says, using the in-the-loop acronym for nonprofit organizations, "are not sensitive enough to emerging needs and new approaches to old problems—such as homelessness, mental health issues, children at risk."

### *Women seek a "culture of comfort" with one another*

Women share a commonality of experience that creates a strong baseline for a fundraising solicitation by another woman. In face-to-face solicitations, men stress that "who asks" is important, in order to establish a connection (however formal and codified) between the asker and the donor. But women don't require this prior connection to recognize their commonality—it happens

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—Judith Stern Peck

instantly. In one flash, in a shared laugh over a politician's gaffe reported in the morning newspaper, or a sigh of understanding over child-rearing difficulties, women acknowledge their common experiences. The literature we have in common bonds us too, even if we haven't all read Deborah Tannen or Carol Gilligan cover to cover. Many women report that they meet strangers and can talk in a kind of feminist shorthand very quickly (even if the F word is never mentioned).

Jewish women have something to teach others on this subject—the model of women working comfortably with other women that is characteristic of Jewish women's organizations, synagogue sisterhoods and women's divisions of Jewish federations. Other organizations are beginning to understand that many women feel more comfortable working with other women on money issues. Co-ed colleges and universities such as Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania are now starting women's councils. Natalie Pelavin, a seasoned Jewish community leader, activist and political fundraiser in Michigan, notes that this is "so different from 15 years ago, when women wanted only to be part of men's groups."

After witnessing a women's "caucus"—the term used by United Jewish Appeal for its group fundraising sessions—a male observer comments: "I can't believe it. The women talked very personally about crises in their own lives and why they want to support Jewish programs. Some of them even cried."

Joyce Antler, Professor of American Studies and Women's Studies at Brandeis observed what she calls "Jewish women making ritual" in a group solicitation of funds in Boston. Women passed a candle around the room as each woman introduced herself, spoke about her ties to the Jewish community and how much she was going to contribute this year. "You could see that the bonding had meaning both in terms of the Jewishness and the femaleness."

The remarkable successes of women's

reinforce this perception of women's commonality. For example, Natalie Pelavin says that "All you had to do in the fall of '92 was to say politics, women and choice in the same breath and women simply threw money at you. I've never seen anything like it." The politics of those stellar political campaigns proves both that women give out of a deep sense of commonality with other women and to support causes they believe in.

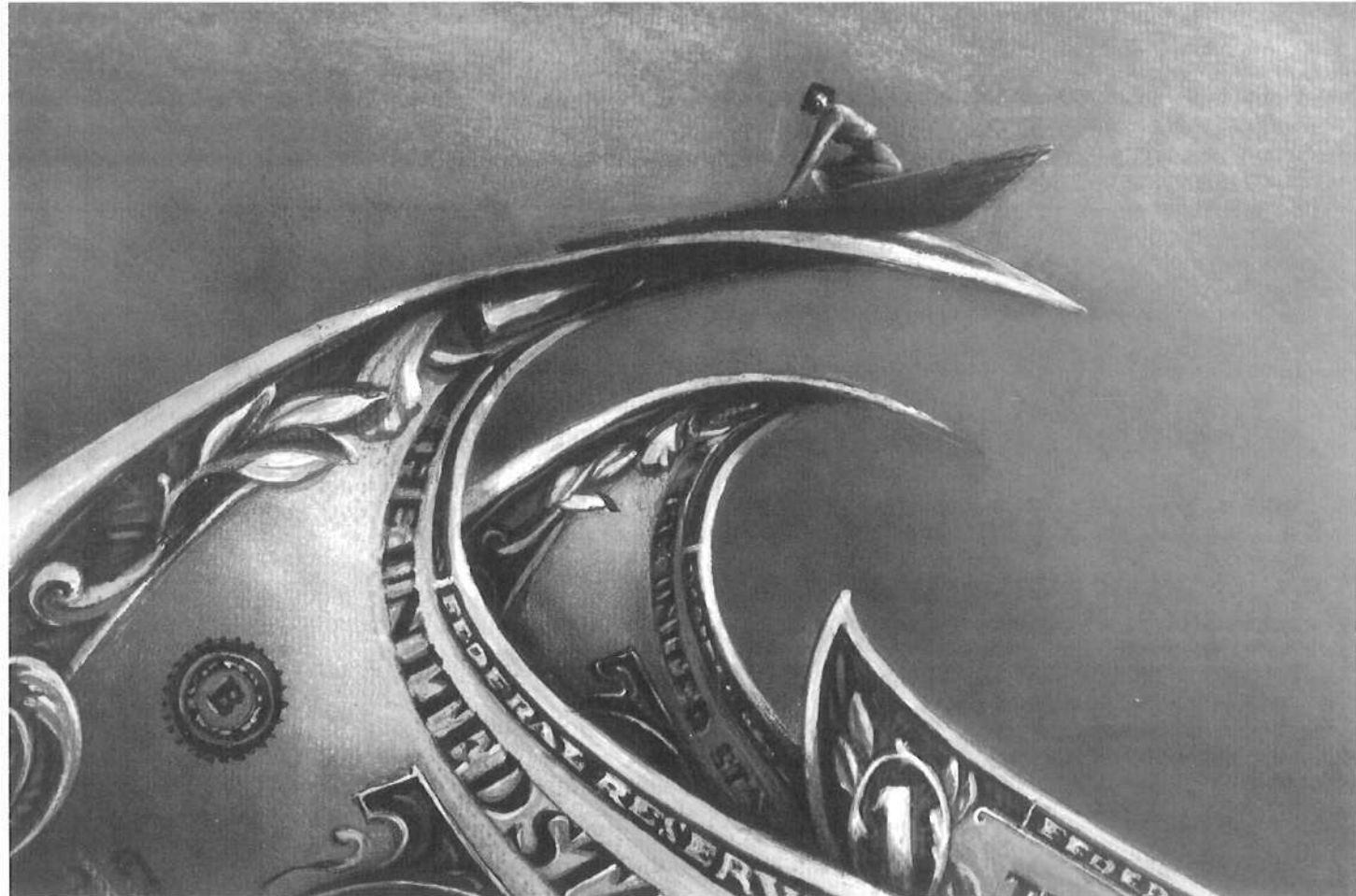
Some American Jewish organizations—for example, American Jewish Congress—phased out their women's divisions in the 1970's, only to discover by the mid-80's that women wanted to act together. They then created the Commission on Women's Equality. The difference lies in the feminist nature of the new women's group—it addresses women's issues, not just the agenda of the parent organization as a whole. Similarly, ten years ago there was discussion about abolishing B'nai B'rith Women or merging it into its male counterpart. Now it has completely separated from B'nai B'rith International and is a powerful women's organization unto itself. Some women, however, worry that separate women's organization will "warehouse" women, keeping their issues far from the center of money and power.

Does this "culture of comfort" indeed ghettoize women? Certainly less so than in the past. Now there is a critical mass of women qualified to speak out with authority to a male world. Women are empowered and encouraged to act by being with other women. The question remains to be answered, however, if Jewish women, acting in concert, will be able to make significant changes in the organizations they support.

### *What gives us clues about Jewish women's philanthropic behavior?*

American Jewish women are the best educated in the country by a long shot (64% of Jewish women between 25 and 45 have college degrees, as compared to 18% of other white American women), and as such have been uniquely positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that have opened up to all women in the professions and business life in the past decade. Rikki Abzug of Yale University says she senses that the Jewish women who serve on boards of trustees of nonprofit organizations are there "for their own ties and talents, not because they're somebody's wife or daughter."

• "Giving is a Jewish habit" asserts Sylvia Barack Fishman of Brandeis University. The Talmud tells, very practically, that "*tem ayn kemach, ayn Torah* [where there is no flour there is no learning]." In other words, you need bread too. In focus groups with women



donors of all faiths, UCLA Director of Donor and Prospect Relations Dyan Sublett noticed that “the Jewish women were the ones who said that religious ideals and family traditions had shaped their own philanthropy.”

*Tzedakah*, the Hebrew word for charity, literally means “doing justly,” a religious obligation. In Jewish life, philanthropic activity is sometimes a substitute for religious affiliation. One woman, the daughter of wealthy, highly assimilated German Jews, says of her Christmas-tree childhood, “I knew I was Jewish only because my mother gave money to Jewish organizations.” But unlike the record of non-Jewish women’s charity, which has largely been church-related (according to studies of Catholic women and of largely non-Jewish women in Indianapolis), Jewish women’s “religious” charity has been largely directed through Jewish women’s organizations. Direct giving to synagogues has been men’s work—perhaps because the capital campaigns synagogues need to run are so edifice-oriented. Women’s contributions to synagogues have largely been in the area of education--underwriting, for example, an adult education series, an annual scholar-in-residence program or a special lecture.

• Because women were traditionally closed out of much of public religious life, community involvement through philanthropy

became an alternative route to participation and empowerment in the Jewish community. Jewish women’s organizations have been in the past the *shul* for women. Philanthropy was not only a road to participation and (relative) power in the Jewish community, but also one of the few sanctioned ways of expressing publicly the religious or spiritual impulse.

• Many Jewish women choose to express their Jewish identity through philanthropy when their marriage to a non-Jew might make synagogue attendance uncomfortable. About 30% of Jewish women under the age of 40 who are marrying for the first time will marry a man not born Jewish. “More than a quarter of the women in my Jewish women’s group in UJA/Federation are married to non-Jews, and are groping for a way to affiliate as Jews,” says Linda Kern, of Knoxville, Tennessee. Philanthropy for Jewish causes is a useful and important measure of how much their religious identity still means to women who participate only minimally in other Jewish activities.

• Recognizing women’s philanthropic impulses and financial resources, some fundraisers view women’s issues as an opportunity to attract money. Two recent examples:

The Jewish Theological Seminary decided in the fall of 1992 that its Rosh Hashanah message—delivered in a full-page ad in *The New York Times* and elsewhere and used as hand-

outs in most Conservative congregations—would deal with domestic violence in Jewish families [see Kol Ishah, p. 32]. Whether raising money was a prime motive for the ad is unclear; what we do know is that women around the country did make charitable contributions to the JTS after the ad appeared. Rachel Josefowitz Siegel of Ithaca, New York, said “I wasn’t going to make a contribution to the Seminary this year, but when I saw that ad I had to.” Just as a so-called women’s issue attracted this donor, another organization, the Simon Wiesenthal center in Los Angeles, lost her, because in its numerous mailings she saw “no pictures of women active or giving, no quotations from women—no awareness that women exist! Just the occasional picture of women as wives.”

• Brenda Lipitz of Baltimore, as president of its Women’s Division, was outraged by recent data showing that executive directors (the paid heads) of women’s divisions of Jewish federations were not considered part of each federation’s top management team. “How can we imagine women are being taken seriously in the Jewish community when we see an organizational chart like this?” Spurred by her advocacy, the Baltimore federation has restructured its staff; the women’s division professional is now part of the executive team, and support staff has been added to the

women's program. But Lipitz's success has not yet been duplicated in many cities, and her strong advocacy "takes its toll," she said. "It's very hard fighting an establishment that has been in place since the beginning of time."

Some women have walked away, burnt out from trying earnestly to move federations to promote women to the highest leadership positions, both as volunteers and as professionals. "I am simply worn out," said one. "I'm going to put my energies into women's political organizations, and raise money for them, and for my college, where I'll be respected and listened to." The majority of Jewish career women feel that the Jewish community isn't supportive of them, according to a study by sociologist Rela Geffen Monson, which LILITH co-sponsored in the late 1980's. Monson asks the acid question: "Will these women continue to feed the hand that bites them?"

### Modesty

The strong statements of Lipitz and others who speak out for women's equality notwithstanding, all women tend to downplay their own accomplishments in conversation in order to establish personal connections with others, says Sondra Shaw, co-director of the Network on Women as Philanthropists. This general women's modesty, or an erasing of differences in order to find common ground, is especially true for Jewish women, who may have special reason to feel uneasy about going public with their philanthropy.

Women reveal in myriad ways that they want to belong to a group, not stand out from that group, when they make a philanthropic contribution. They do not usually want to be honored at a testimonial dinner, nor to be known for writing a check significantly larger than their friends'.

Many organizations report difficulty in getting a woman from among their ranks who's willing to be headlined as "woman of the year" or some such title in order to draw contributions from her associates. The greatest success in spurring women to raise their gifts is by making the increase part of a group process. UJA Women's Division has created Lion of Judah pins, with an eye in a different colored gem for each level of giving, recognizing gifts ranging from \$5000 to \$50,000. Women raise their contributions to meet each level of giving so that they can have membership in this "club." There is no "club tie" (for instance) to link the men who give at various levels. Similarly, the "Wall of Healing" at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem has encouraged women to contribute, but almost always on a par with their peers, not as exceptional philanthropists.

## "Will women continue to feed the hand that bites them?"

—Rela Geffen Monson

A woman often tailors her charitable giving (at least her public giving) to the level of those around her. The modesty this bespeaks is admirable, but the liabilities are twofold. First, in sharp contrast to men's competitive giving, women often do not give as much as they are able to because they don't want to be seen as richer than their friends (a woman of substantial means, who lives very modestly in a New York suburb, says that she keeps her giving anonymous "the same way I wouldn't automatically assume when I go to the theater with my friends that they'll be able to afford orchestra seats. I don't want them to feel uncomfortable because I can buy something they can't."). Second, although Maimonides proposed that the highest form of *tzedakah* is anonymous, with neither donor nor recipient known to one another, anonymous giving is not a precept much subscribed to in Jewish life today. If almost all contributions come from individuals whose charity is known, and if women are uneasy about making relatively large contributions, the result is a paucity of women role models for others who might then see themselves as able to make large contributions too.

Some have suggested that women fear success as men fear failure. Earning or giving away markedly more money than your peers feels dangerous, too "out there" for many women. The line about women's writing may hold for philanthropy too: "Anonymity was a woman."

Some of this is women's modesty or uneasiness in general about standing out—if you're too smart or too pretty something bad will happen to you. But there's a distinctively Jewish piece here too—an uneasiness around money that suggests that it's a arena fraught with peril.

The linking of Jews and money represents a danger area for many Jews. A good deal of anti-Semitism has focused on caricatures of Jews as rich and—worse—venal, selfish, and acquisitive. Jewish women have been the special victims of this classical anti-Semitism in the guise of "JAP" jokes, with their pernicious amalgam of anti-Semitism and misogyny. The

existence of these stereotypes may explain something about Jewish women's uneasiness about being visible as donors an "exceptional" contribution, especially to a non-Jewish charity.

### Women of inherited wealth — what worries them?

Women born into wealth often don't feel the money is theirs. One woman said that she felt like "an impostor." Another said that she didn't want any recognition or honors for the large sums of money she gives away because "I never felt it was really mine." Valerie Tishman Diker, a New York philanthropist who has explored her growing Jewish consciousness in *Journey to the Heart*, says of her inherited money, "When I was younger I pretended that the money wasn't there. That's what my father always told me to do."

The story of Rita Poretsky of Philadelphia, namesake of a foundation set up after her death to fund a variety of Jewish women's projects, echoes this. "She never felt as if she owned this vast amount of money while she was alive," says Arlene Agus, a trustee of the foundation. "She never spent any of it. She lived very modestly. And now, with the foundation, she's become a philanthropist posthumously." Jewish men who have inherited wealth do not express these concerns; perhaps because they more often enter the family business and therefore "own" the money more than their sisters do.

Feminist philanthropist Tracy Gary has created a service organization, "Managing Inherited Wealth," to help address the discomfort and shame some women (Jewish and non-Jewish alike) feel about having large sums of money they themselves did not earn. Women with inherited wealth are learning that they don't have to be passive conduits for money; they can wield good power as philanthropists.

Fundraisers are often unaware of the anxieties women with inherited wealth may feel about money. A New England woman says that she refused to contribute last year to a Jewish philanthropy she'd supported regularly because a man called her for her pledge and told her the sum she was expected to give. "Deciding how much I want to give is one of the few things I can determine for myself in this world. I was furious with him." Her instincts were generous, but the style of the asking pushed her away, and took away from her the locus of control

### How about women who earn the money they give away?

While women with inherited wealth are sometimes uneasy about broadcasting their assets ("How can I be an activist and also "out" as a woman of

wealth?" asked one woman in her early forties), women who have earned the money they are giving away are often elated and flattered to be asked for substantial sums. "When they realized that they could give \$1500 and be part of the "pomegranate level" (with its own brooch), working women in Santa Barbara were thrilled," said Barbara Zonen, executive director of the Santa Barbara Federation.

"I made a big pledge to UJA this year, and it was my *pleasure* to do so," said a Chicago woman who is a banker. "I went on a mission to Eastern Europe and I increased my gift, and it was my *pleasure*; after I went to Israel I increased it again. I was so *happy* that I could do this!" Her satisfaction was fully evident—she was beaming when she described her growing philanthropic commitment. Eleanor Dubin of Long Island, who has been active both for Jewish causes and as chair of a Ronald McDonald House, says that she is "thrilled" when a woman announces a large contribution. "I get very excited when I find out that a woman is earning so much that she can give a big sum. Philanthropy makes me feel good. Some people may want a major diamond or something like that; for me the excitement is being able to write a check to a good cause."

Because so little effort has been made to identify and encourage the philanthropy of career women, synagogue president Betty Byrnes of San Diego quips that "the biggest beneficiary of women's gifts has been the IRS." Women entrepreneurs and professionals represent a class that should be courted avidly by fundraisers, though this is not yet widespread in the Jewish community.

Career women, by and large, still do not have the resources for philanthropy that men do. One woman in Rhode Island said that she had turned down the presidency of her synagogue (she'd have been its first woman president), because she realized that "all the men who have held this job had offices and secretaries from their business lives. I am not yet in a position in my business where I have enough employees to spare one to work for me in my role at the synagogue. An invisible contribution to charity is the unremunerated work performed by the secretaries and business employees of the Jewish male leader."

Women in the workforce understand how little attention is paid to women's needs. Jewish career women active in feminist organizations are likely to support women's causes over traditional Jewish organizations and federations, according to Relia Geffen Monson. It stands to reason that these women are more likely to give to a Jewish organization if there is a woman's component to the institution or program.

"Women lawyers don't give to Operation Exodus [the fund to help rescue and resettle Russian Jews]," complained one woman

volunteer active in UJA's women's division. "Have you tried telling them about the Op Ex work in mentoring—making a match between Russian professional women just arriving in Israel and their Israeli counterparts who are already established in their careers?" asked an observer. The reply: "It never occurred to me." By choosing to emphasize an area these North American professional women identify with—women's struggles to advance in a male world—solicitors can spur greater involvement and greater giving. Linda Kern, a marketing consultant who has organized a group of Jewish business and professional women in Knoxville, Tennessee, says, "In terms of numbers, if B and P women were marketed to correctly, they'd make a big difference in federations nationally—probably another \$100 million a year!"

There's a special opportunity for complementarity now: unlike in past generations, where women of achievement might have had advantages of higher levels of education or opportunities not available to their peers, there are not marked differences between full-time volunteers and women who are in the paid workforce (the majority of Jewish women). The women who aren't working for pay may be wealthier, but they have the same education, usually, as the business and professional women, so that they look at them and can legitimately say: "I could have made her choices. I could be running a movie studio today too. Or whatever." One of the reasons that the 1992 elections were so empowering for many women whose philanthropy had until that point been directed exclusively to Jewish causes was that they felt they were real players on the national scene, and that they were, clearly, moving in the same milieu as the career women who were their cousins, neighbors or college classmates.

A new development gives a clue that career women are ready to reach for their checkbooks as well as for their appointment books: A Long Island UJA/Federation business and professional women's group is publishing a network directory—you have to give a minimum of \$500 to the "campaign" to be included, plus pay a \$36 listing fee. Directories like this have been tried in the past simply as a networking tool, as part of providing service and appealing to these women. Now the women leaders understand that the women have money to give, and that they are willing to make their contributions to participate in the directory.

### *Time and money complement one another*

**I**t's a truism of fundraising that a woman will first get involved with a project and then give money. After a man becomes a

## RESOURCES

### Books

*Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy in America*, Barry Kosmin and Paul Ritterband, eds., Rowman and Littlefield, 1991. (See especially "Patterns of Giving of Some Jewish Career Women," by Relia Geffen Monson.)

*Jewish Environmental Scan: Toward the Year 2000*. Council on Jewish Federations, 730 Broadway, New York, NY 10002

*Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power*, Kathleen D. McCarthy, ed., Rutgers University Press, 1990.

*Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy: Market Research Analysis, 1992* (Prepared for the United Jewish Appeal) Center for Modern Jewish Studies Policy and Planning, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02254

*Women's Culture*, Kathleen D. McCarthy, Chicago University Press, 1991.

### Organizations Studying Women's Philanthropy

*Center for the Study of Philanthropy* City University of New York, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036

*Center for Women and Philanthropy* University of Wisconsin-Madison 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

*Forum on Women in Philanthropy* Indiana University Center on Philanthropy 550 W. North Street, Suite 301, Indianapolis, IN 46202-3162

*Independent Sector* 1828 L Street NW, Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20036

*National Council for Research on Women* 530 Broadway, 10th floor New York, NY 10021

*Program on Nonprofit Organizations* Yale University, Box 154, Yale Station New Haven, CT 06520-0154

*Resourceful Women and Managing Inherited Wealth* 3543-18th Street Box 9, San Francisco, CA 94110

*Women and Foundations/Corporate Philanthropy* 322 Eighth Avenue, Suite 702 New York, NY 10012

donor he is asked to come to events, sit on committees, and participate in the organization's agenda.

Given this differential, the loss of volunteer participation by women in Jewish organizations in the past two decades means a decline in the pool of women donors. It's a chicken-and-egg situation. With few outstanding women in leadership positions in these organizations (both women's and co-ed) other women don't join. If there are no new members, there are no fresh donors. Without money the organization can't advance the kind of women's agenda that would appeal to new members.

In the past, "Going to meetings and lectures and programs gave a woman something interesting to bring to the dinner table," says Judy Sloan, a hospital executive, a trustee of Brandeis University and a highly successful fundraiser for UJA and other causes. "For a generation of well-educated Jewish women who didn't have jobs, their volunteer activity made them more interesting in their own social circles." Philanthropy was a way of seizing some power—or at least some of the dinner-table-podium time—in the family.

"No time" is an important reason why Jewish women volunteer less than they used to, and less than non-Jewish women. Unlike other women, who may decide to have their children, and then resume their careers, or to establish their careers and put off children, Jewish women seemed determined to do everything at once—responding to two Jewish imperatives: "Make something of yourself!" and "Produce grandchildren!"

Even high-profile business women and Hollywood executives feel the conflicting pulls on their time if they want to be involved in the Jewish community. Judy Adler Sheer, in charge of "major gifts" at the national headquarters of UJA, has helped gather together a Women of Distinction group for UJA. She reports that "Like most women, these highly successful Jewish women see community activity as taking away from their family. With men, their community activities are seen to be part of their business life—and present no conflict at all with family responsibilities."

### *Where female and male philanthropy intersect — the couple*

Gender equality certainly makes itself felt in a household's approach to philanthropy. The majority of Jewish women both make independent financial decisions and will influence their husband's giving. But the woman's role in spurring a "family" contribution is underreported and therefore undervalued. "No one asks how the decision to give was reached," notes Sylvia Barack Fishman.

Partnership is the model for most Jewish couples. Jewish women are likely to be in more egalitarian marriages than are women of other ethnic or religious groups. "Jewish men don't marry down," comments Nicki Newman Tanner. This means wives are likely to make family financial decisions along with their husbands, and advocate for causes they want their husbands to support. It also means that a Jewish wife is likely to feel entitled to make philanthropic donations in her own right and in her own name, even if she is not earning at par with her husband, or not earning at all.

One woman announced, "I don't worry about giving away "his" money anymore. In the early years of our marriage I used to think that all I had to give was time, and that the money belonged more to him because he was out there working for it. Then after living with him all these years I began to see the truth—I keep him sane so he can go out there and make that money!" Another woman interviewed says, "I give to more liberal causes, politically and in the Jewish community [this is true of Jewish women generally]. Whenever my husband writes a check for the more conservative ones he supports, I write a check for the same amount to something I support. I guess it's my way of saying we're equal, even though he's the one who earns the money."

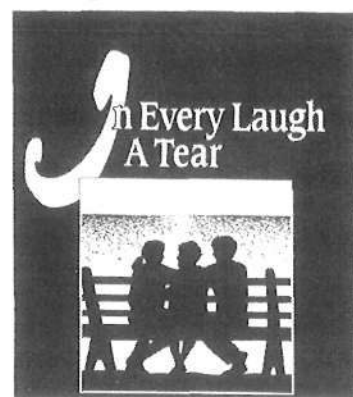
For at least two of the women interviewed, income earned from salary and interest on inherited money provided a fund used exclusively to support causes their husbands wouldn't have assisted. These women were politically more liberal than their husbands and used the money for women's projects, pro-choice programs and feminist political causes.

Jewish women are unrecognized spurs to their husbands' charitable giving, and several high-profile donors reported that men who approach their husbands for contributions to Jewish charities ignore them. On a UJA "mission" to Israel last year, the person sent to solicit one couple said to the husband, "Oh just let your wife enjoy the beach. You and I will talk." Since the woman, known to be a successful fundraiser herself, was well aware of her own role in helping to determine how much her husband would give, she says, "I decided just to stay back and see what happened." In many cases what happens is that the gift might have been larger had the solicitor thought to include the wife too. "The Jewish community," says Nicki Newman Tanner, "just doesn't read women's role in family philanthropy correctly."

Lynn Kroll, a UJA supporter known for her support of educational programs and Jewish schools, corroborates this in describing one of her own experiences in a "couple solicitation." "I kept trying to send the solicitation."

*(continued on page 29)*

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"Maizel", "Maisei", "Maysel." When my brother immigrated in 1920's from Romanovo village of Belorussia, his first name was "Hatskel." I know that he used to live in New York and in late 1950's he moved to the suburbs. When he lived in New York he used to have a food business. He has a son who is a Doctor, but unfortunately his first name is unknown. I have some pictures from my brother's wedding and his son's Bar Mitzvah.

If somebody knows something about my brother and his family, it would be greatly appreciated if you would inform me about that at my address: 321 Elmora Avenue, #203, Elizabeth, NJ 07208.

ABEL MAYZEL

LILITH is a very important part of my life. I am a Jew and a feminist and finally I am being recognized and spoken to. So understand that this negative letter is written with sadness. In the current issue, in the article on Politics 1992, no mention is made of the only all female, pro-Israel Pac, "Joint Action Committee." In the struggle to have Jewish women take an active dollar-power role in politics your readers should know about the only all volunteer action organization that supports the single issue of Israel: *Joint Action Committee, P.O. Box 105, Highland Park IL 60035, President Ms. Marcia Balonick, 708-433-4774.*

MARSHA LEIFER  
North Miami Beach, FL

I would like to suggest to you that you do an article on the dearth of young Jewish women on TV sit-coms. The only one I know of is the illegitimate daughter on "The Powers That Be." There is no scarcity of young Jewish men, and lo and behold, they are all involved with non-Jewish women. This possibly reflects the fact there are a great many Jewish sit-com writers on TV, and very likely all married to non-Jewish women.

I think this situation should be exposed and protested. By the way, I am 81.

Am enclosing contribution of \$100.

MARY COHART  
New Haven, CT

(Please see Nora Mandel's comments in *Kol Ishah*, page 35.)

In your "From the Editor" [Summer 1992] you write, justifiably so, about the harmful reality of discrimination based on weight and looks. The story told by Jewish women college students was illuminating: how often have we all spent precious time and energy discussing

weight, food, diet, etc? However, your conclusion, "To make no more mention of weight, size, physical perfections or imperfections when I greet someone or when I describe her," is fallacious, though well-meaning. If, as you write, people have "not much more control over their bodies' shape than they do over the color of their eyes," aren't you being pointless in failing to use descriptions like "thin" or "fat," just as you would be absurd if you shied away from "green-eyed" or brown haired"?

What I propose is that we *destigmatize* the word "fat," and return it to its rightful place as an adjective, not a moral thermometer.

If you are averse to any and all adjectives for fear of being racist or weight-obsessed, what of fear of sexism? Is it acceptable to describe a visitor as a *female*, rather than a *male*? If I merely said, "A person came to see me," I am being purposefully vague. So "tall" is permissible but "slender" is not?

By the way, I'm fat. Or chubby? Voluptuous? *Zoftig*? I too look forward to a time where my other attributes—my intelligence, my sense of humor—can be appreciated and/or dismissed, not merely the size of my thighs.

DIANE SALZBERG  
Valencia, CA

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