

THE KIBBUTZ WAY OF DEATH

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying ‘Of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in that day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’.”

Genesis, II, 15-17

‘See what a great thing is work! The first man was not to taste of anything until he had done some work. Only after God told him to cultivate and keep the Garden, did He give him permission to eat of its fruits.’

Avot di Rabi Natan

“thou shalt surely die”: thou must inevitably become mortal; *Hertz* comments on *Symachus*’ explanation: this assumes man was created to be a deathless being.

The Dying Human in The Kibbutz

SAADIA GELB

The Kibbutz is a collective society in which the life commitment is total. All individual efforts are pooled and all needs are provided for by the community. It is a widely extended family in which the sharing is theoretically unlimited. Any deviation from this principle on the physical, economic-monetary-material level is, therefore, easily discernible. Does this apply to the psychological level?

Experience has shown that the Kibbutz is at its best in times of extreme stress, both in joy and in sorrow. Is this also true when applied to the individual? Does the group really help the person when he undergoes an intensive personal experience? Does a person cry and die alone or is the ancient Hebrew adage that "the common woe is half consolation" applicable?

Rather than offer answers, an effort will be made to describe our circumstances, attitudes and reactions. Let the conclusions emerge by themselves.

The Kibbutz originated with young people. Although the ancient roots extend to Biblical prophetic days, to the sages and to philosophers, implementation was feasible when youthful enthusiasts ventured into uncharted adventures. During the planning days and in the early stages, death and dying were not taken into account except as heroic stances of defense. If death occurred, it was such an obvious disturbance that the only logical reaction was to ignore it as rapidly as possible and proceed with the business at hand. Death, however, did not allow itself to be ignored. Malaria and other diseases, ever complicated by malnutrition because of poverty, exacted a heavy toll. Marauders and brigands produced casualties. Worst of all, idealistic expectations were so high, whereas realities were so

severe, that many resolved the conflict by acts of suicide. The standard procedure was to dig the grave, gather in strong silence and disperse with fists clenched and teeth gritted both figuratively and physically.

In time, the Kibbutz became multi-layered and lost its youthful single-cultured uniformity. Inherent conflicts emerged. Complete rejection of the "old home" wasn't as simple or easy or complete as imagined. Religious habits and practices could be shed only if actively and consciously pursued and even then, at the expense of a nostalgic tug at heart strings. Nationalism *per se*, as powerful as it was, could not by itself substitute for an age-long religious-ethnic-cultural-tribal tradition. In short, the *new* did not totally displace the *old* nor did rationality offer the solace of deeply rooted emotionalism. Readings from the Psalms were heard at funerals. The traditional recital of the *Kaddish*, the Aramaic prayer for the dead, was no longer resented when the bereaved family requested it. The Kibbutz has not swung back to conservatism or orthodoxy, but has blended modernism with tradition. A Kibbutz funeral is generally not demonstrative and grief expresses itself in silence. After the lowering of the body, as many members as possible take turns in covering the grave using spades and shovels. A representative of "the community" or an associate of the deceased reads the eulogy. There is, generally, a reading from literature or the Bible or books of wisdom. If the deceased was active in organizations, there may be repre-

sentatives offering brief testimonials. Floral tributes are customary. The dispersal is without ceremony.

A member who was killed in active service is accorded a formal military funeral.

The attitudes of the different sectors of the Kibbutz population will be described in the following selections. Educators have a burdensome load since they are much more than professional teachers. They are simultaneously friends, counsellors, fellow-members, relatives and representatives of the establishment. Theirs is, in large measure, the responsibility of weathering the crisis of mortality.

There is no uniformity of attitudes among members of the Kibbutz concerning death and bereavement. It will be noted that a great deal depends on circumstances. Was death caused by illness or old age, by wars or accidents, suicides or crimes, negligence or inevitability? Was the dead one beloved or disliked, tolerated or honored? Did he (she) belong to the "in" or "out" subgroup? Did the illness preceding death involve substantial expense and discomfort? Are the feelings expressed at all stages genuine or do they reflect expected social behavior? Is there the usual annoyance, compassion, empathy, revolution, fear, guilt? Are there real differences in the behavior of a closely-knit society as contrasted with the individualistic Western society? In truth, no answers are authoritatively known.

Death has been a close companion to Kibbutz living. Although composed of young people, the security situation has

thrust death upon kibbutz members altogether too often. Kibbutz settlements are spread around the borders and hence are subject to first attacks by our enemies. The disproportionately high numbers of volunteers in dangerous military units among kibbutz members has resulted in many death casualties. All Israelis are aware of the companionship of death in their lives. Kibbutz members are more so. There are devel-

oping psychological characteristics of late that express themselves in a variety of ways and will be of great interest when investigated. I refer to much reactions as extensive travel, personal gratification, meditation and renewed social and political involvement.

In summation it can be said that all issues faced by society find their reflection in the Kibbutz, only we grope and grapple together. ■

Interruption

He left —

his sandals
by the door
dropped after
a basket ball game,
a hoe, a rake —
propped up against
The garden wall,
a book — a bus ticket
marks the place,
a letter written —
not yet sent,
notes for a meeting
the following day,
his wife, carrying
their unborn child.

Pinkey killed in war —
aged twenty four.

Anna Sotto

Letter to My Son

To Eren from Mother,

Today, Thursday, the 28th of Sivan, completes the thirty days of mourning for the death of your father. Tomorrow, the 29th of Sivan, will complete for you, Eren, one year. For you, Eren my son, as a present for your birthday, I am writing these words which are so hard for me to put down on paper; for you, members of Ma'ayan Baruch, for I owe you a great debt for your honest help, for the strong hand which you stretched out towards me, and for your condolences, for all this — thanks, although here this word seems so poor to me against the great feeling which I am loading upon it and nevertheless, this is the word — thanks.

The wound is not yet scarred over and the images rise before my eyes like a film strip projected in reverse, scattered and confused: here the work chart which my eyes still scan for the green label on which is written Yair. There, the little kibbutz office — the room, and the table in back of which sat your father, here the little flower garden which your father and I cultivated, and right here next to me, you Eren, who in spite of the lack of similar appearance to your father, are a living remembrance of him to me.

Yes, and it is still hard to believe that your father will not stand by me tomorrow, and say, "What? Has a year passed already?"

"Yes, Yaike," I would say to him then, "A year has passed, and more years will yet pass, and Eren will be a big boy and will understand many things which he does not now understand, but the word "father" he already knew how to pronounce but already forgot. (Perhaps it is good that you have forgotten, because I surely would not have been able to stand the test if you had said "father" to me, and only the tears in my eyes would have answered you.) It will remain for him a concept empty of any content."

You will hear still more about your father, Eren. From me, from your grandmother and grandfather, and from your father's friends on the kibbutz and

outside the kibbutz. You will come to know him not only as the camera captured him, but also as I saw him and knew him, and as his parents and friends knew him.

My hand writes, but my heart is betraying me. It refuses to believe the logic which tells it, "Yes, Yaïke is not here now." Your father's face, Eren, is looking at me from the picture and his eyes are saying to me, "Hey brave one, don't let your face be the mirror of your heart." The same sentence that was his custom to say to me whenever my face was the "mirror of my heart." "Yes Yaïke," I say to him, "I am a good soldier and the camouflage you bequeathed me is exceedingly good, and I am sure that you would not be ashamed of me if you could see me using it."

And what gift have you received from your father, son? Did he give you his devotion and loyalty to his parents? Or perhaps his great love for Israel and for Ma'ayan Baruch? Did you receive the strength and endurance that he possessed? Or perhaps his love for work?

If only you could receive all the gifts, all of them! And know that this will be a great present, greater than all the gifts which I could ever give you.

Yours with love,

Mother

What Shall I Call Him?

What shall I call him when he comes near
to remove the bell jar covering me
And to say: Examine
the vibrant color
the heart of the fire
the molecule of time
the imposing dimensions
all of which are — me.
What shall I call him when he comes near
to remove the bell jar covering me?

16.1.72

Yossef Sariq

Translated by
Jules Harlow

Death is a Part of Kibbutz Life

NAOMI ZOREA

Death is part of life. It hurts, often frightens, sometimes releases people from hell. Most people live nowadays in a world where they are unprotected by tradition and ritual, ways of old which somehow helped man to cope with his loneliness. I often fell as if the media bomb us, by visual and auditory means, with false slogans:

Buy wigs!
Use cosmetics!
Wear jeans!

and old age and death will never come to you.

I do not want to make any false idealization. Kibbutz life does not make man immune to any of humanity's sorrows or frailties. Still, it has some alternatives to offer instead of the false insulting slogans quoted above.

I want to speak briefly about three points.

1. The kibbutz cemetery.
2. Community life, which includes very old people and always new born great grandchildren.
3. The tradition of remembering the dead, all the dead of the community.

A kibbutz is a unique community, which, in tune with Jewish tradition, is responsible for the well being of every member and centers around its children.

Our motto: "Everybody must give to the community as much as he can and receive from it as much as he needs," is, of course, an ideal that cannot be brought to complete realization, as we are only human beings. Yet, economically, the community *is really completely responsible* for every one of its members, be it baby, child, sick or disabled person or old man.

Since our children live together in children's homes, according to age groups, they are linked together and to the families of their peers more than in most communities of our time. Home means for our children not only the house of his parents, but also the house he shares with his peers, the big communal dining room where most communal festivities are held, beautiful gardens where he likes to play and workshops where he likes to go because his parent, granny, big brother

or uncle works there. The feasts are not only family feasts, but feasts of the whole Kibbutz family. Death, which due to the wars imposed upon us so often, is a too-frequent and uninvited guest in Israeli families, is not only a family affair but concerns the entire kibbutz family. The impact of each death on people varies, of course, according to the different human ties.

The cemetery, as the communal dining room, is part of the kibbutz home. A cemetery which is cared for and visited by children, helps to show them authentic dimensions of life. A cemetery can, of course, also be neglected or looked at as a fearful taboo. Then it is, of course, in tune with the false slogans.

We started our kibbutzim as young people. We gave no thought to old age. We tried to do our best for our children. We must learn how to do the same for the aged. Here, we are only at the beginning of the right road.

We have the potential for moulding our life so that old people can live as dignified human beings, on their own merit. But it is just as possible that they end their lives, embittered and frustrated, near their children, even though they are provided for economically. A group of older people whose spiritual needs are respected and provided for, as are the needs of the young, is not only a valid end in itself but, again, teaches the young genuine dimensions of life.

We have a lot to learn from Jewish tradition, on how to comfort the needy, the sick, the dying and the bereaved. The bereaved are granted complete legitimation to be absorbed in their mourning and then, gradually but firmly, the tradition pulls him back to life and life's obligations. Tradition teaches one to remember the dead, but not to transform one's reverence into idolatry: not to worship the dead at the expense of one's duties to the living.

On the death of every person living in my kibbutz, a small article is written in the kibbutz weekly.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, we have a memorial evening for all the people who died in our community, with special mention of the dead of that year.

This memorial evening takes place in addition to the national memorial days.

Our club, where the memorial evening takes place, is decorated with flowers. The names of all our dead are drawn on scroll paper, exhibited on the walls together with big photographs of last year's dead.

Old and young go there and children ask their parents about the dead they did not know.

Kibbutz life cannot anesthetize the pain of dying or bereavement. Yet, providing dignified and human norms makes life a little more beautiful and bearable. ■

FOR THE MEMORY OF KOYVCHE
OF KIBBUTZ MISHMAR HASHARON
"ELEGY TO THE SKY"

Through a field of grey rain I wander
to the cloud upon which I
 was born
and departed

long ago. I became a dream.
How shall the stars know me now?
Their withered auras like white
 birds
 float

into darkness.
Their sterling faces
stare without eyes
How shall they know what their child has become,
Or, when, by an oracle's moon forewarned
love my new spirit form?

O! Ancient parents, mine,
fading relics of sublime tradition

Who, in crimson fields surprised
with cries of exultation, death,

Who in ascension builded
White cities of desert
from dust

Who called unborn
Home to the glorious

I am home,
a soul;
She, our love,
stands defended.

In a grove of graves
Now, my rest.
Fingers of twilight
breach human sleep
and tenderly tear me
for I am with the quietest
forms
of Eretz Eternity

Bloom me
love me now
take from my fingers
all which they have touched
furrow them deep
into blackness, into seed,
I shall shrink like a eucalyptus
Time

What I had breathed into being
must talk with
the stories of my hands and feet.

And those of you who loved me...
Now that I have found acceptance
Now that I have become a fresh blaze
in the mystery
to which you lift
your faces,

think not of "where?"
as you would not try to guess
Who stands behind the stars
We are not lanterns
nor a light come late
but lips upon which
You are spoken

beckoning unto the Land...

Alan M. Kaufman

To Die With Dignity

RAHEL MANOR

Death is an inevitable, intrinsic part of human life. A society's image of death reveals the level of humanity of its people, their relatedness and spirit. People die everywhere, but the Jew, the Eskimo, the religious Catholic, each see death in different ways. Life and death are an inseparable unit, like light and darkness, good and evil.

The fact that man is capable of thinking about and conceptualizing death forms his life. Having the knowledge of death forces man to search for meaning in life. It lends a perspective in choosing values and the decision of priorities in moments when one must decide between conflicting sets of values.

Today society, acting through the medical system, decides when and after what indignities a man shall die. With the "help" of the doctor, Western man has forfeited the right to preside over his act of dying. Today, for so many, life itself means a running away from death. Man has lost the inner autonomy to recognize when "his time has come," and to take his death into his own hands. The patient's unwillingness to die on his own makes him dependent. He has lost the faith in his ability to die. The doctor, rather than the patient, struggles with death.

Kibbutz View of Life and Death

Kibbutz is a Jewish secular society based on human values; mutual help and responsibility, sincerity and honesty, no exploitation. Kibbutz society strives for a high quality of life. It gives its members the feeling of being more than a tiny anonymous screw in an enormous apparatus, or of being a helpless victim of an irresilient technocracy. It affords its members the right and the possibility to shape their own lives in the service of a society which offers them the feeling of belonging, of security.

If I chose to live in such a society and I had the feeling that I shaped my own life, I would want and need to shape my death as well. If I had the good fortune to live my life with dignity, I would want to die with dignity. Everybody in every society should

have this right and the possibility of exercising it. In kibbutz, however, there are some inherent, built-in factors which *could* make it easier.

I want to meet my own unique death, just as I have lived my own life. I would never want to discuss this at a kibbutz 'town meeting.' I simply want to insure that my desire as to how I want to die will be respected. You may both take life away from a human being and rob him from his right to shape his own death. Kibbutz respects everyone's right to shape their own life. There is an ongoing common search for the meaningful life. My personal feeling is that up to now there have not been enough discussions, no common search as to how one should die in kibbutz.

Kibbutz society today comprises three to four generations. Birth and death are intrinsic aspects of kibbutz life. The members share joy and sorrow, a whole life cycle, and the child is as much part of it as the aged. Members of the kibbutz who deal with "mental hygiene," educators, social workers, etc., consider it essential for the mental health of the individual and the community to confront problems, conflicts and difficulties in order to solve them. They see in the expression of feelings, both "bad" and "good," an important part of a healthy community life. Thus they strive to uncover and illuminate the dark places of taboos, secrets and mysteries, especially in regard to questions of life and death, as these may hamper healthy relationships and a realistic view of life.

The kibbutz is composed of age

groups. The founders came as a group, generally from a youth movement, from Israel or (often) abroad, as did the younger strata. The children are brought up in groups. An age-group experiences common difficulties and parts of the life-cycle. The question is whether we make the most of the possibilities inherent in these age-groups to help and understand each other in age related problems.

Kibbutz life is based on mutual trust. The members have economic security: all their basic needs are met. A sick person is cared for by his family, friends and neighbors, kibbutz institutions and officers. Therefore, when a kibbutz member expresses his desire to die in a particular way, e.g. not to prolong his life artificially, to die in his room in the kibbutz with relatives and friends around him and not in a sterile hospital room surrounded by technical equipment, he can be sure that there will be no misuse of his will: nobody is waiting for an inheritance and the burden of care for the sick person is subdivided, so nobody wants "to get rid of him." The kibbutz is part of the State of Israel. The question may arise as to whether the kibbutz may enact regulations different from State legislation. If we look at this square on, we can admit that Israel will never be California, i.e. will never have an euthanasia option.

On the kibbutz, we live according to our own laws, for instance with regard to retirement. Everyone who is able to and interested in continuing to work may do so, and the kibbutz is obliged

to provide work places and opportunities for every member who wants to work. This harms no one. The same could be true of a kibbutz member's desire to die as he wishes. I know from the many talks I have had on this issue, that it is controversial within kibbutz society. The question comes up: who shall I request to execute my will? The closest person in my family? He may be too involved himself. The kibbutz medical personnel? The kibbutz doctor? In California, the will is addressed to the family doctor and written in the patient's medical card. If the doctor refuses to accept the responsibility in a particular case, he is obliged to find a colleague who will.

I return to my initial statement: I don't care to force anybody in kibbutz to write a will, but I demand my right to do so and want to be sure that it will be carried out. The kibbutz officers must find a doctor who will be ready to fulfill a member's will. This whole procedure must not become an "official" issue.

Is Kibbutz Ready for Death?

Death accompanies us from the beginning of our lives. Starting with birth, every separation is a minor death, every change we go through during life means separation from the old to which we are accustomed. The more we cling to the old and become accustomed to it, the more painful the separation becomes. Thus, if we live consciously, we go through many deaths.

The way we talk to our children about death, the way we let them live

close to old people, the way we visit the cemetery with them, the adult rites of grief, mourning and memorial, are our ways of meeting and coping with death.

But do we talk honestly with friends and relatives about our fears and apprehensions about death? Do we communicate clearly how we want to die? Will there be a sympathetic ear when we say that we don't want to be sent to the hospital, not to have our life prolonged, that we have struggled and suffered enough? By staying at home we avoid the exile, loneliness, anonymity, indignity, which await us in the hospital.

Especially among the founders of a kibbutz, usually very strong and independent people, there are those who say: "I don't want to be in a situation in which I will be dependent on the care of my child, friend, neighbor. In this situation I prefer to leave home and be referred to a hospital or old age home." Somebody may answer: "You, who have always been a generous, helpful person, want to deny to someone close to you the right to help you?"

In which kibbutz are there discussions about these subjects among elderly parents and their children, among every age group, and between the age groups? I have the feeling that the answer is: almost in none. Even in the kibbutz, people are running away from this, avoiding painful subjects, not anxious to confront illness and death. Thus it seems to me.

Do we visit the terminally ill? The kibbutz can accompany its members

until the last minute, or can be frightened, letting a member die alone. Do we talk with the terminally ill about the approaching death? If we lie or avoid the truth, the patient cannot talk with us. Sometimes there is no need to talk, but to give reassurance by holding his hand. When approaching death, you go through several different phases. If there is somebody to talk about them, it is easier. The last phase is making peace. You need the reassurance of those who are close to you that your life was worthwhile, that something special which you created and contributed will continue to exist after your death.

I want to quote a young woman whose mother died: "Three springs ago my mother was dying — it took her several months — and we were together, she

and I, for hours each day. I sat beside her and held her hand; we spoke a lot of nonsense. But never, not once, did we mention why I was there. I sat beside her all those days, and yet she died without me. In love and grief we could not talk about death... The silence on this subject shows that we have been more frightened than we know, and this deprives us of each other's consolation and denies us the gift of comforting... Let us talk about death... it helps the dying and the living."

We will never speak about these intimate and personal problems in a kibbutz "town meeting." But we can, and should be aware of the necessity to talk and to think together and to help enable ourselves to die with dignity. ■

Wings Don't You Hear?

Wings, don't you hear?
Rushing wings outside,
in the cold air, wings
in silent flight on high.

Were I standing on the shore
with the last rays
rising higher and higher, shattered fragments in their midst,
and the world high above me
would I not be lowly?

16.1.72

Yossef Sarig
Translated by
Jules Harlow

I Love My Daddy Like the Sea

(From the reaction of five year old boy upon hearing that his father fell in the Yom Kippur War.)

Maybe he only fainted? But his tank was armored! Who killed him? (Tears, and while crying) I want a living daddy. I don't want a dead daddy. I have a daddy. He is dead. But he is still here. Maybe he will begin living again. Maybe we'll sprinkle water on him and he'll wake up. Now is he black? And could we see his bones? Is it like that he's sleeping, but he isn't covered up? (Told that he was covered, the boy felt better). My daddy lives in a grave now. This is the house of dead people. Mommy, come let's go to the graveyard and we'll decorate his grave . . . and grandfather's too. Mommy, are you sad? Who will look after Rami now? He is still a baby. I am already big, but he is still a baby. If I touch Daddy, will he feel it? What does he see now? Is it all black? And if I move and tickle him? Or if a few people were to move him? And if the strongest man in the world were to move him? Mommy, I dreamed about just how Daddy died. He simply made a mistake. He thought that the was was finished and got out of his clanging armor, and then he was hit. Wait, will I also have to go to war when I grow big, and will I die? Maybe, when all the days are over, Daddy will come back. Mommy, I dreamed that you went to the war and came back to me. Mommy, do you know, that I love Daddy, my Daddy, like the sea. Now it really hurts me so much in my heart, so much, that it hurts me now in my stomach. And I can't eat. I don't cry very much but here, in the corner of this eye, I have one little tiny tear all the time. It doesn't fall. It is such a pity that Daddy wasn't a tree. I have never seen a tree that died. Sometimes they dry out. But even then they stay standing. They don't fall, they don't fall, they don't lie in the ground. It's also a good idea to be a turtle. It has armor on it, and it lives a lot of years. And it goes slowly (He conspires with his grandmother:) To Sadat and Assad, we must put bees in their ears, and mosquitoes in their nostrils, flies in their head, and a rattle snake around their necks and on their seats.

I think that Daddy also knew about this plan before he died. Mommy, did it hurt Daddy when he died? Did he blow up? Even now, even in the grave he is very strong. If you'd feel his muscles, you'd see how strong he is, even in the grave. When will it be Thursday? That's the day Daddy will come back. And if he won't come back, they'll bring him. Wait, do all the soldiers die in the war? And if they all don't, why did my Daddy die? ■

Jackals

Remember the fields on a summer's night?
How the silver was poured out
with the whiteness of stubble rising toward it
and flowing through the milky mist
and shadows hiding among
the blue hills and the black
and a night bird calling judgment day
and the jackals.

And the stars, band upon band,
whispering in the lofty dome
and the mountain to the south, long and heavy
and silence. And the jackals.

There are no jackals today. You know?
Who was that howling yesterday so long
around my bed?

17.1.172

Yossef Sarig
Translated by
Jules Harlow

Memorial Proceedures in Kibbutz

ARYEH BEN-GURION

Here is an attempt to define a step by step, formal description of every stage of mourning procedures, from the moment of notification of death — to the effort to keep alive the memory of the deceased.

The procedures and customs gradually evolved in the course of 50 years of kibbutz existence.

The customs developed in response to the needs of the individual kibbutz and of the family as they arose, and not by a central institution.

While this is the recommended standard for the kibbutzim, no one is automatically bound to follow it.

There are variations and flexibilities in each kibbutz and the kibbutz is free to modify whtever it considers proper according to the case and situation.

As soon as the passing away of a member becomes known, the secretary of the kibbutz assures the placing of a proper announcement on the main bulletin board at the entrance to the main dining room of the kibbutz. All other notices are removed. From this moment on, the kibbutz takes on the atmosphere of personal sorrow.

★ The coffin is brought from the civil or military hospital, escorted by the deceased's closest friends.

★ Each kibbutz has its own cemetery which is part of the kibbutz proper.

★ The coffin is brought and laid in state in the public auditorium.

★ The coffin is draped in black, flowers are placed on or at the front of the coffin, and by its head stand two lit memorial candles. Alongside, arrangements are made for the seating of the family.

★ Members enter the hall and pass by the coffin.

★ At the appropriate moment, the coffin is borne to the hearse. The mourners accompany the coffin by foot to the gate of the cemetery on the outskirts of the kibbutz.

★ From the cemetery's memorial square the coffin is carried to the place of burial.

★ The coffin is placed on the open grave.

★ At this moment, words in memory of the deceased are said, poems and appropriate works are read.

★ The coffin is lowered into the grave, members and friends participate in covering the grave.

★ A member of the family or a close friend reads the biography of the deceased, or a fellow worker tells of their mutual experiences. The son or grandson expresses his feelings toward the deceased. A poem or psalm is read.

★ Wreaths are placed on the grave.

★ Ordinarily, *Kaddish* (the traditional mourner's prayer), is not recited unless specifically requested by a non-member.

★ If the deceased was a member of the armed forces, the rites are performed according to military procedures. The kibbutz secretary coordinates with the military authorities to include the kibbutz procedures

in the military ritual.

★ The days of bereavement are counted from the day of interment.

★ The period of mourning lasts between one day and a week. During this time there is no entertainment, no movies are shown, nor are there any public celebrations.

★ At the time of the funeral all work is stopped.

★ On the day of the funeral all cultural activities are cancelled.

★ On the remaining days of mourning it is permissible to carry on general meetings and activities. The meeting room may be open.

★ Mourning does not cancel the celebration of national holidays, like the Passover Seder.

★ Mourning does not cancel a marriage ceremony, but does cancel the wedding party.

★ On the seventh day the communal newspaper is dedicated to the deceased. Words are spoken at the graveside, his biography and picture are printed.

★ Friends and neighbors act as hosts. They help the family in mourning; the latter do not work or appear in public during this period.

★ Condolance calls are made, and their intention is to help the individual or family pass the period of grief with the support of the whole community.

★ Children are allowed to participate in the funeral from the age of 11 or 12, when the reality of death begins to be conceivable.

★ The funeral cortège passes outside the boundary of the living area so as not to upset the younger children.

★ Sorrow is expressed in the rooms of the members and in school. Parents tell their young children about the deceased. In the classes, (where the member was known personally by the children) they are encouraged to express their feelings in order to release their emotions.

★ The kibbutz cemetery is an integral part of everyday life. Nursery school teachers, indeed, teachers in general, are encouraged to visit it with the children, whereupon the children are free to express their feelings, thoughts and questions.

★ The kibbutz cemetery is a reflection of the security reality in which we live.

★ The kibbutz cemetery has no chronological sequence. Children did not always bury their parents; too often, it has been the other way around. We live always with the the "unnatural", "untimely" death, with those who have "died before their time."

★ On the thirtieth day, the kibbutz holds its final memorial ceremony for which there is an announcement made in the kibbutz newspaper inviting the family and members to participate. An announcement is also made in the regular daily newspaper inviting friends and relatives who do not live on the kibbutz.

★ Upon entering the general hall for the ceremony one is confronted by an enlarged picture of the deceased, arranged on a proper memorial background; alongside stand the traditional memorial candles. The candles are lit by a member of the family and the

entire attending group stands as a sign of recognition. At the ceremony we read things written by the deceased, and musical selections are heard, performed either by a soloist or a choir, perhaps with some musicians.

★ The ceremony only begins after the entire group is seated and settled, after which a member invites the family of the deceased to join the entire group and be seated in an area arranged for them in advance. The ceremony is over only after the family has left the hall.

★ At the end of the ceremony a memorial booklet is given to all members participating.

★ The booklet is put together by members of the family with the aid of friends and the publishers of the kibbutz weekly newspaper.

★ After the period of one year, the deceased's name will appear in the column *Ner Zicharon* ("Memorial Candle"), in the kibbutz newspaper.

★ The dates of the passing of members are kept chronologically arranged in a memorial book, and kept in the archives of the kibbutz according to the month and day of the year. The announcement in the kibbutz newspaper enables the members to remember the date of the passing and, in turn, stimulates visiting the gravesite and the family.

★ The uncovering of the gravestone will be done at the end of the first year. An announcement is made in the general newspaper and, once more, here songs or poems are read along with a short biographical sketch of the deceased.

★ All the gravestones are exactly the same in appearance.

★ After the period of a year has passed, a special memorial booklet may be prepared, providing an outlet for new perceptions after the initial stage of the purely emotional has subsided.

★ A memorial looseleaf folder is kept, with a picture of the deceased and a short biographical sketch. This collective file came into being as a result of the many instances of death among our members, both among those who died in wars, and those who died in old age. It offers the opportunity to all to have an arranged gallery of material about the deceased in one's personal library. After a year has passed, a page is printed and added by all to their personal file. This is not a replacement for the memorial booklet, which is also prepared.

★ In the memorial booklet we may also find the products of the individual's personal expression, be it as an artist, photographer, sculptor or musician. Poetry and literature written by the deceased are also included.

★ The kibbutz has many ways of collecting information concerning the deceased individual:

1. interviewing of the elderly members, by teen-agers or high school graduates;
2. transcription of the interviews, and making a tape of them so that they will be preserved for the future in their original text and in their original tone.

★ One of the tasks of the future *bar mitzva buchor* will be to interview his parents and grandparents, in order to

provide him with a sense of his familial roots.

★ The product of this research will be a family archive and Family Tree composed of his writings to members of his family here and abroad.

★ The kibbutz cemetery should be continually cared for by a veteran member or a professional gardener who will care for it and keep it up.

★ Every kibbutz has a committee that concerns itself with the preparations for the burial, the funeral procession, interment, the making of the tombstone and its written content.

★ To prevent the possibility of a second death, by being forgotten, we have developed the means to keep the deceased's memory alive. The kibbutz, as a living everyday entity, living and working and growing together with the individual as a kind of enlarged family, perpetuates his memory. The mourning procedures in kibbutz are in accordance with those suggested by psychologists to help those who suffer through the death, and to help them to return to a normal life. This therapy is also in accordance with the traditional Jewish approach of catering to the needs of the individual and of the family. ■

The Fawn

Standing timidly
fearful eyes watch the beach
where the shore and the lake meet
beckoning
hesitant quick steps rustle leaves
which once protected.

A shot is heard!
Torn, wretched and bleeding
Till the shore and the lake meet
at the wound.

Gentle ripples stir
flowing water soothes
once again the leaves are shaken
till the shadow is but imprinted
abandoned in the sand
where the shore and lake meet.

Pauline Ben-Or

“Some of our most gigantic constructions, some of the most splendid and extravagant works of art, some of the most complex rituals, have all been devoted to the housing, and equipping of the dead, in preparation for the journey of the soul beyond the grave. By 500,000 B.C., Peking Man was already burying his dead with ceremonial ritual. By 50,000 B.C., burial rituals were highly developed, and by 7,000 B.C. ancestor worship was flourishing at Ur.”

Lawrence Stone

★ ★ ★

“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Amram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the Land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.”

Genesis XI, 31-32

Kibbutz Memorials

J. FEINMESSER

Many kibbutzim face a dilemma: what is a fitting memorial to members who have died? Much discussion revolves around the names which will appear on this memorial. The necessity of remembering three distinct groups complicates the problem. These groups are: 1) members who fell in battle; 2) the founding members of the kibbutz; 3) victims of the European wars and the Holocaust, who died as members of the Kibbutz movement. (This mainly concerns the oldest kibbutzim).



What is it that motivates a man to erect a memorial for his nearest friends and relatives? From what source flows the impulse to keep the memory alive of those loved ones who have passed on? And what is it within parents, widows, children and members of kibbutz in general that stimulates them to keep alive the memory of those who were killed? If we can understand these feelings, we will be able, perhaps, to find the most fitting form in which to express these hidden longings. In this way we may succeed in building the right monument to honor those who have died.

We must differentiate between the familial feelings of the members of one generation on the one hand, and the feelings of those who continue life in the kibbutz and, as such, are a link in the chain of generations, on the other. The very real pain and sense of loss in the first case are, nevertheless, of a temporary nature. The suffering of the individual wife, parent, child, is as temporary as man himself, a passing shadow, with time bringing relief, at least forgetfulness.

These feelings cannot give expression to a "living monument" to those who were such an essential part of our society, of our life. They were on every piece of ground, on every tree, on every shrub and lawn in the space around us. They breathed the air we breathe, walked the paths we walk, took part in our discussions and shared our doubts and difficulties. They shouldered responsibilities, and we miss them all along the line. They were, and here lies their strength and ours, a link between past and future in this country. And

therefore, a physical static object that has neither past nor future will perhaps offer some relief to those who suffer in the present and to the longings of the nearest relatives, though they will offer no more than that. These are usually artistic monuments, or useful playgrounds, or buildings for the public use of the settlement. What then is the right way for establishing a memorial to those who have left us?

The Jews built no pyramids, made no sculptures, as the classical Greeks did. "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness." They put up a stone or a heap of stones marking an event at a certain time. They fought, conquered and fell without mentioning names of victims, only marking the place. They never consecrated the memories of the great figures of the nation, Moses and Aaron, with a physical monument, but sought to revere their memories and to perpetuate their presence in the history of the people and in the tradition of the generations. While all the pagan peoples surrounding Israel were praying to stone idols and to mummies, the Jews engraved all that happened in their lives and the memory of their ancestors on the slabs of their hearts. They felt through their sense of history that the secret of remembrance lies only in the very memory of the people and not in embalmed kings and idols. And so they created those literary masterpieces in which the giants of the Jewish nation in Israel's past are kept alive. "Write this for a memorial in the book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua." The

Jews held "Memorial Days," "Memorial Gatherings." "Remember what Amalek did unto thee." "He will remember the pure souls." It was a veritable culture of remembrance.

Jewish mythology also produced concepts, images and values marking the individual as a member of the people. "May his soul be gathered in eternal life." Only from life as an aspect of eternity does the remembrance of man's soul get its value — not from a stone monument and not from embalming.

This culture of remembrance was even a part of every child's consciousness: "Next year in Jerusalem." We can say that the renewal of our life of Independence in Israel comes as a continuation of this system of values.

In the return of the Jews to their land, among them first and foremost the kibbutz settlers, the tradition of the Fathers found its continuation. The ancient Jewish farmers liked to live in villages or in small towns. The great leaders of the nation were farmers and craftsmen. They used to defend the lives of, and teach *Torah* to, the young children and *yeshiva* students of the coming generations, and thus they raised life in the village to a higher cultural level than that of their neighbors; in the same way the kibbutniks of today combine physical and spiritual work, thus creating an atmosphere that educates the next generation towards the ongoing development of the kibbutz.

Therefore, we must never reach a stage in which some future kibbutz visitor come upon buildings "dedicated

to," monuments, playgrounds or halls with big plaques full of names, memorial tablets and sculptures with inscriptions. To whom do these speak? Whose feelings will be sparked by them? In the end, we shall become like Europe with all its public squares, loaded with stone slabs in memory of its heroes. We already have such monuments scattered in various places around the country.

In the kibbutz, with its special way of life based on equality, it is unfitting to commemorate the present with monuments of outstanding heroes. Doesn't imitation of what goes on in our surroundings change what we are?

The question is: how do *we* erect a memorial? "Memorial" means to show man in his time and his generation, the individual in his collective. Memory is something continuous. One does not remember only once. It is a physical, artistic expression. The question is: how do we let the past speak?

The kibbutzim are developing more and more. They are no longer what they were when they were founded. I foresee a third and fourth generation who will be thirsty for the values which united us. Will this generation know where to get the essential information about its past? We live and act as if we possess no past or future, as if we were a transit camp living only in the present.

One of the critical problems of all human settlements in the world, other than the largely amorphous big cities, is the lack of expression given to their ways of life. Social content needs a physical body giving testimony to it.

All social activities of the kibbutz must take place within the central living area of the kibbutz grounds; often these essential needs are pushed aside by economic considerations or other pressures that always seem more important.

There are free-floating needs in the kibbutz that will find their solution only when there is a building on the grounds of the kibbutz to house, embrace and foster them. It is not yet sufficiently realized that the higher standard of the kibbutz the more cultural-spiritual needs it has. Its public center becomes wider so as to include more and more elements sustaining itself from the social roots that have struck ground on that spot. The shade given by the tree, to those who come to sit by it, is in direct proportion to the number and strength of its roots in the earth.

Every part of the community must draw on and hold fast to the socializing center of the kibbutz from the day he is born until the end of his life. All the members' growing and developing, their very lives, must be housed in the sanctuary in which they are anchored, the living area of the kibbutz. As it is written: "And they shall make me a sanctuary; and I will dwell in the midst of them."

Many kibbutzim are struggling with the problem of lack of buildings in which to house the multiple public cultural activities the kibbutz has to offer. This lack of space limits those activities. I am acutely aware of several pressures on different age groups and on different strata of the population caused by the

lack of cultural facilities. More than in any other types of settlement, in the kibbutz the living area is the expression of the cultural level of the population. What does the living area contain, what shapes it, do the sidewalks criss-cross in all directions? Where are the different "corners," or neighborhoods, begun by the former generation? Are the members aware of the absence of a central public building which must be the heart of the kibbutz premises? An old proverb says: show me your dwelling place, and I will show you the inner contents of your life!

One of the prominent components of every culture, and of ours in particular,

is the culture of remembrance. Remembrance is the struggle for continuity, for tradition, for a connection between the past, present and future. These are the elements that enliven the past: the development of a culture of remembrance, the cultivation of the spirit in the memorial place, the creation of a fitting atmosphere, the layout of the memorial itself.

In that case, how do we create something which produces the atmosphere of the "culture of remembrance"? The problem comes up again and again in the kibbutz, and it is difficult to summarize a clear-cut definite view. The kibbutz and its culture and its ways-of-

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, even Gilead as far as Dan; and all Naftali, and the land of Ephraim and Menasseh, and all of the land of Judah as far as the hinder sea; and the south, and the plain, even the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, as far as Zoar. And the Lord said unto him: 'This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying: I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.' So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of¹Moab, according to the word of the law. And he was buried in the valley of the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was 120 years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping in the mourning of Moses were ended."

Deuteronomy, XXXIV, 1-8

life are a reflection of its members. The impression one gets from outer appearances is different from kibbutz to kibbutz; there are also differences of outlook among the various age groups. These different views reflect the members' preferences for how to shape the memorial. There is no one-and-only recipe for fostering this culture.

But from all of the talks I have had with kibbutz members with different personal outlooks, of different ages, one common denominator stands out: we must develop the memorial within the borders of the central living area. Some of the older kibbutzim, for whom the question has long existed, have the beginnings of archives, of collections of memorial data, and also of physical monuments, but not always placed in the kibbutz center because of the short-sightedness with which we lived in the early years of our existence.

In the middle-aged kibbutzim the public center exists and allows for the possibility of making, and correctly placing, a memorial.

In the younger kibbutzim the memorial must be created together with the very first daily work assignments right after the first day of settlement, along with a "record book" which should be opened then and which should contain all important events. (Such books were kept in Jewish communities in the Diaspora; examples can be seen in the National Library in Jerusalem). Every detail of the social life in the beginning will become very valuable in the course of time. Every page, every

report, every little note, list or minutes of *mazkirut* (secretariat) meetings, etc., is important for the coming generations.

Today, new kibbutzim are established in the Golan Heights and in the Arava. This is not part of some triumphal procession, but is a difficult pioneering effort, filled with an early yield of crises; shouldn't its history be written down?

But the memorial must not dominate the surroundings. It should fit in harmoniously, be part of the organic totality of the kibbutz grounds. Below follows a list of what is needed for a memorial place. It is a long term job and every kibbutz will decide for itself what comes first and what comes later. Most important is that young kibbutzim lay the foundation for the memorial at the beginning of their existence.

The memorial should consist of three main components:

1. A park of ornamental trees, lawns, paths, benches, lighting and sculptures of various kinds.
2. Buildings in this park, namely
 - a) library and study rooms.
 - b) club-room.
 - c) archives.
 - d) an open square for ceremonies, partly roofed.
 - e) a playground for children.
3. Interior decoration, furniture, etc.

The archives should contain:

1. Everything published about the kibbutz, about its surroundings, its history and the history of the site.
2. A room divided into sections and corresponding to different periods, including a section devoted to the kib-

butz record book, minutes, the weekly publications starting from the beginning of the settlement, various other publications issued by the kibbutz.

3. Plans and archeological maps about local past or about the region in ancient times.

4. Plans for the area of land, the surroundings and their development.

5. Plans of the living area, its developmental stages and changes.

6. Diagrams showing the economic development of all branches of the kibbutz economy.

7. Graphs of demographic development.

8. Archival materials of the members with audio-visual facilities.

9. Stories of the founders, filmed or told by others.

10. Letters written by members, other

writings, journals, paintings, articles.

11. Photo albums of the kibbutz and the members, arranged by periods, ages and groups.

12. One whole section devoted to those who fell in Israel's wars, consisting of: a) individual small sections for all those killed in battle, containing personal effects. b) descriptions of the places of battle where they were killed. c) a place for commemoration ceremonies.

13. A classroom for teaching the subject, provided with all pertinent documents and with recording instruments.

This list is not an attempt to provide a complete ready-made program. One thing is clear: it is our duty, to our future and to ourselves, to let the past live among us, to pay homage to the spirits of our friends and comrades and to keep their memories alive. ■

"Cast Us Not Off", Kibbutz Style

YEHOASHUA GILBOA

When the kibbutz movement introduced a pension scheme in the early seventies, eyebrows were raised: kibbutzim and pensions? On the face of it, could there be a greater contradiction? But a second glance reveals that this innovation (which, incidentally, was discussed for many years in the movement) does not differ greatly, in essence, from developments in other spheres of kibbutz life. If you like, the pension fund is but one of the constructive consequences of a "discovery" made by the kibbutzim only a dozen years ago or so: that they are not immune to old age...

The normal, inevitable process of aging, which takes its toll of all men, came, not so long ago, as a surprise to the kibbutz movement. Aging seemed to be a denial of the nature of that product of youth — the communal settlement.

What young man is capable of envisaging himself in the evening of his years? The young people who populated the kibbutz movement for so many years — were certainly too preoccupied to think about the situation summed up in the ancient (and topical) psalm: "Cast us not off in the time of our old age; do not forsake us when our strength faileth." The kibbutz appeared to be an eternal fountain of youth, bubbling over with vigor — and how could its settlers have been expected to look ahead to the days when their strength would wane? In their community it was impossible even to contemplate the idea of being "cast out."

For decades, therefore, the kibbutz — whether deliberately or unconsciously — "rejected" the problem of aging, and members were instinctively repelled by the thought of discussing it.

It is characteristic, for example, that in the literature of the kibbutz movement and its affiliated youth movements there is almost no reference, until the nineteen fifties, to the problems of old age. All kinds of urgent and long-range questions were discussed at length, and almost every aspect of kibbutz society was examined. But even when parent-child relationships were studied and analysed, the discussion remained on the ideo-

logical plane, and the phenomena accompanying old age were ignored.

It is almost uncanny to see what a marginal, almost infinitesimal place the problems of the elderly member take up in kibbutz literature — in contrast (for example) to the vital question of whether members should be permitted to have “private” radio... And it is interesting to note that the elderly *chaverim* themselves preferred lengthy debates on radios to discussion of their more personal problems.

The January, 1960 issue of *Hedim*, the organ of the Kibbutz Artzi movement devoted to the special problems of the kibbutz, contained an article entitled “Outlines of a Discussion of Aging in the Kibbutz” by David Canaani of Kibbutz Merhaviva. In his foreword he wrote: “I believe that this is the first attempt to examine the problems of old age in the kibbutz in a more comprehensive fashion.” A first attempt! — In 1960! This comment illustrates the lengthy disregard of the kibbutz movement for this basic human problem.

For several decades the only “old people” in the kibbutz were usually “parents,” i.e. the parents of members, who were not members in their own right. Not much attention was devoted to them. It is true that their children fulfilled their obligations and gave them their “due,” but these elderly people were not part of the kibbutz world. They lived on its outskirts, almost “outside;” to quote Canaani: “Parents in the kibbutz seemed to belong to another world.”

One sometimes encounters among kibbutzniks guilt feelings at the bureaucratic and “charitable” attitude to parents in the past (again, to avoid misunderstanding, I am referring to “parents” whose kibbutznik sons brought them to the kibbutz to live there). Members say: “Look where and how we housed them. Even though they were cared for in the material sense — they were sometimes the most abandoned, the most pathetic members of our community.” Whether this attitude emanated from a so-called revolutionary-ideological approach or resulted from plain indifference — few people had the time or patience to give elderly parents more than the essential minimum amount of attention.

This attitude may have been connected with the fact that the kibbutz was a product of youth and was, for many years, populated almost exclusively by young people. Parents were almost outside the pale, because kibbutz society was basically a single-generation unit. But the perspective shifted when the settlements found themselves containing two and even three generations, when grandparents and grandchildren were equal members of the same kibbutz. A commune shared by three generations of *members* (and this is now quite common), with a fourth generation on the horizon, can no longer afford to ignore the fact that large numbers of old and elderly people live in its midst.

The bent backs of the elderly members, the decline of their physical and mental powers, the emotional crises

(however unjustified) which accompany aging — these cannot be compensated for by the distinctive qualities of the kibbutz.

Furthermore, just as in some ways the communal way of life can help alleviate the problems of aging (which are universal) so in other ways it may aggravate them. And the kibbutzim are now trying to find a way of bestowing maximum benefits on their older members while reducing to the minimum the impact of the disadvantages of the communal life.

I have discussed this question with a non-kibbutznik, who has devoted considerable attention to problems of aging in the communal society: he is Shimon Bergman, chairman of the Israel Gerontological Association. He claims that in urban society it is easier for a man to “conceal” the fact that he is growing old, while in the kibbutz a man “ages in public.” It is more difficult, from the physical point of view, for him to hide his infirmity from others. Even in a large kibbutz people rub shoulders with one another all the time, and although members now enjoy greater privacy, they are still extremely dependent on the collective and its institutions.

Bergman believes that although a large proportion of kibbutzim now house four generations — the “institutionalization” and services in many of them are still adapted to a two-generation society. The demographic development in the kibbutz calls for replanning. There is need for changes in environmental design, housing and building,

and in the scope and form of various institutions. The fact that many members have now reached what is customarily regarded as retirement age (or more) also calls for radical modifications of working arrangements, organization of leisure time etc. The kibbutz should also be obliged to associate itself with the framework of social planning earmarked especially for the elderly. There is no escape from establishing and developing the apparatus needed for tackling the complex social, economic, cultural and emotional problems of old age.

Considerable thought has already been devoted to this issue. But it seems that the years of neglect — or, to be more exact, of inability to foresee the inevitable — have caused solutions to lag behind needs. When you visit kibbutzim, you see this “lag” with your own eyes and members confirm your impression.

The living quarters of elderly members — and not necessarily of “parents” — are, in many cases, distant from the center of the kibbutz. This is not, Heaven forbid, the result of malice. On the contrary, it reflects consideration for seniority rights. The “Vaticans” (from the word *Vatik* — veteran) were built on attractive sites, and their relative remoteness from institutional buildings (and from what might be denoted the “population centers”) lends them a suburban atmosphere. But when these quarters were planned and built, the veterans were still young. Now many of them find it difficult to

walk the long distances to the dining room, the clubroom, the cultural centre, the storeroom or the "supermarket".

And the present situation — one kibbutznik told me in all seriousness — is "ideal" when one considers what might happen in the nineteen eighties if immediate action is not taken. In this settlement, there are dozens of men and women who have reached "retirement" age. Most of them live in attractive, comfortable and reasonably roomy quarters — which are located over three hundred yards away from the dining room (in some kibbutzim the "Vaticans" are over a mile away from communal services). They already find it difficult to make their way to the dining room and back several times a day. What will things be like in ten years time when they are that much older?

In some settlements the visitor might almost think himself in Holland; men and women of all ages flash by him on bicycles, the most popular form of internal transport. They are generally old and rusty bicycles, with all kinds of improvised attachments for carrying loads or small children. The kibbutzim are large and it is a long way from one "suburb" to another, to the institutions, the services — and so they travel on wheels. It is a healthy and pleasant solution, but it is gradually ceasing to be practical for the older people. They cannot ride bicycles, and at the same time it would be extremely hard to rehouse them in the centre of the settlement. It is not surprising that the question of "public transport" has been

extensively discussed (and, in several cases, put into operation). Years ago it was hard to imagine a kibbutz with street signs, but we have become accustomed to this. And we will also grow used to the idea of bus routes in the settlement . . .

We are now witnessing a revolution in thinking. There was a time when members did not "recognize" the existence of old age, but such subjective non-recognition is now an absurdity. However sacrosanct the values of the kibbutz — and work is the supreme value — the passing of time and the burdens it brings can no longer be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Eventually the elderly member is forced to come to terms with the waning of his ability to contribute to the collective — just as the collective must come to the conclusion that it is necessary to give more to its older members than it once thought sufficient.

In other words, one might say: kibbutz society and the individual within it have faced up to the challenge of old age in a mature fashion. This means, first and foremost, that delusions are discouraged and, simultaneously, false apprehensions (which, in the kibbutz, are emotional rather than material) are soothed.

The term "intelligent aging" is now widely used in the kibbutz movement and it is a sensible phrase. A kind of "communal gerontology" seems to be developing, which takes into consideration — together with those facts common to all societies — the special conditions and atmosphere of the commune.

In studying the subject, I took note of a particularly interesting fact: the more the kibbutz searches for institutional solutions (which I shall discuss further on in this chapter) to the problems of the elderly — the greater is its awareness of the need for increased responsibility of the family for its older members. Their material existence is assured, and this fact meets with universal approval (though there is sometimes resentment at the disproportion between giving and taking among the elderly). But it is felt that the family should accept responsibility for their emotional satisfaction and peace of mind.

It is true that this issue sometimes engenders tensions and creates side-problems. I have heard kibbutzniks say (in so many words): "We are happy to undertake the burden of caring for our parents; we understand that family home care is more pleasant for them, but we cannot undertake a twofold burden — if we are to undertake this care, then our general work load must be lightened." In some settlements members work less hours if they are caring for elderly parents. But, in any case, members who neglect their parents are the objects of censure, or, at the least, of gossip. This fact undoubtedly reflects the intensification of familial trends in the kibbutz, which we have discussed elsewhere.

One of the most sensitive problems is that of the "old-age home;" the acceptance of the idea entails the breaking-down of psychological and even ideological barriers.

Elderly members have told me: "When the idea of setting up kibbutz old-age homes was first bruited — we were horrified." I heard one septuagenarian say: "I would rather crawl on all fours than go into a home." And an elderly *chavera* confided in me: "There have been a number of things which have not been to my taste in my many years in the kibbutz. After all, it is a human society with normal qualities and failings. But nothing has ever sounded as false a note to me as the combination of words 'kibbutz' and 'old-age home'."

Nevertheless it is clear that people no longer shudder in horror at the thought. The change in attitude seems to be part of the trend towards "intelligent aging."

The old-age home is, of course, only one institutional solution to the problem. There are other solutions, but for the great part they are based on "care," i.e. dependence of the old and handicapped on other people who will take care of them. And it is extremely hard to provide suitable care, according to modern standards, outside the framework of an institution. Some old people in kibbutzim are in need of medical treatment and almost round-the-clock supervision. In short, there is almost no escape from the institutional solution.

But even this solution is not simple. An old-age home serving the needs of a single kibbutz is feasible only in a large settlement. What is a small and relatively young kibbutz to do if it has a limited number of sick elderly people? It has been suggested that regional

homes for the aged be established, or that several neighboring settlements set up joint living quarters for the elderly.

This again raises problems: if a man has given his life's blood to his settlement and is deeply attached to it — how can he bear to be uprooted? There is indeed a certain element of cruelty in this solution. But in some cases it is crueler to the elderly member to leave him in his own home — when the proper conditions for care are lacking.

Where regional old-age homes or housing for the elderly are concerned, the kibbutz movement does not seem anxious to take advantage of technological achievements and modern im-

provements. More than other social units, the kibbutz tends to devote attention to the social or community aspects of proposed institutional solutions. Both young and old are clearly aware that experience has shown that even the best medical, physiotherapeutic and culinary services, the most advanced care, the most streamlined equipment and installations, cannot serve as substitutes for "atmosphere," human warmth and comradeship.

Thus, the vital question is: when a man is weighed down by the burden of his years, how is he to preserve his dignity in his own eyes and those of the people around him? ■

"There is hardly any sphere of human activity where rationally incompatible beliefs so easily coexist, and where pre-logical, one might almost say metalogical, feelings so stubbornly survive in periods of advanced civilization as in our attitudes toward the dead."

Erwin Panofsky

The Nurse's Task on Kibbutz

The main social principle of the kibbutz is that everyone gives to the society to the best of his ability and receives from it according to his needs. The nurse can play a vital part in the realization of this principle. It is her responsibility to give to the sick whatever he may need. In the light of this approach it is understandable that when a member is critically ill the nurse must also help the patient's family as well as taking an active part in his care.

Her involvement, of course, varies according to the needs and the demands of the patient and his family. (In some cases it is more convenient for the patient to be taken care of by the nurse and not by the family.) Sometimes, it is the family that needs the emotional support. In any event, it is her duty to be in charge twenty four hours a day.

As a general rule, the family doesn't have the responsibility of dealing with health institutions. Nevertheless, the contact with the doctor is first and foremost on the part of the family. If possible, the patient is treated within the family and social framework of the kibbutz; for various reasons, this is not always possible.

From the economic point of view, it is the whole society which carries the load. The family, more specifically the patient, are freed of having to afford the cost of treatment. Every effort is made to help the patient recover, or bear the sickness, through intensive care, the best equipment, etc.

In short, I want to say that only in a kibbutz society does a nurse work with such a high degree of personal involvement. She has to relate to the doctor, the family, and the society and to be aware of the requirements and limitations of all three. In addition, she is in charge of various aspects of the patient's treatment.

The nurse has fulfilled her task if the patient and his family and the kibbutz society feel that everything possible was done.

Critical illness sometimes lasts for years. This situation creates a deep emotional involvement on the part of the nurse. The patient, I have no doubt, perceives

this, and benefits from the familiar and sympathetic care he receives. He doesn't have to deal with being away in a hospital for a long time.

But what about the nurse as a human being? Can she become close friends with every patient? Is it possible that she dies a little each time, with every

death?

If not, where should she draw the line of her personal involvement? Furthermore: how would treatment look in the kibbutz without this involvement?

I am concerned with this problem and it has a lot to do with my continuing this work. ■

GOLDA MEIR

1898—1978

A Single Moment in a Lifetime

ALON

NEOR

Two years ago when I was a student at the Hebrew University, it so happened that I was walking from my apartment on Keren Hayesod Street towards the campus. It was early in the morning and a whole hour was left before the beginning of the first class. Therefore, I was in no haste and unconcerned about the time.

I was delighted and surrounded by an April Spring. Oh! what a scene it was! The blue sky stretched from one horizon to another. While the lovely sun embraced with its shining rays, the street, the pavement and the roofs of the house, a cool wind blew.

For about fifteen minutes I walked alone. Suddenly my eyes perceived two motionless figures, in a narrow lane, which had no splendor and no name. As I came closer I saw them move clearly. She was a girl in her early twenties, with golden hair framing her pale face. Her height was no more than five feet, giving the impression of a little girl. Nevertheless, the look in her eyes told me she was a young woman.

He was a soldier, dressed in uniform, possibly her age, whose appearance conveyed an air of confidence and self-respect. He was a very tall man and well built.

I must confess that when I first passed by them I only gave them a cursory glance. A soldier is leaving his sweetheart, I thought to myself, it is not an unusual sight nowadays in this country. Undoubtedly, there are many others going through this experience at this very moment, so why take to heart things which seem to be part of our world order. And indeed it is these painful farewells that give a flavor to love. Was it not the old philosopher, if my memory does not deceive me, who once said "Love so cruel, and yet so desired."

But then when I looked at them once more out of sheer curiosity, I could not help stopping. Indeed there was something unbelievably different about them that made my attention grow almost unintentionally. Their arms were strongly clasped together while the gaze in their tearful eyes was so strong that for a moment I thought they were one.

Strangely, no sound came from their mouths and their lips did not move. As a statue they stood, com-

pletely detached, so it appeared, from the reality of our foolish world.

For a long time I kept watching them. Afraid to move lest I break the spell of that pure moment.

I might have stayed like that for a long time, had they not suddenly separated without uttering a single word. On their faces a look of despair as their bodies trembled.

It seemed that the essence of their existence depended utterly on that horrible and constrous oneness. Slowly as the soldier walked down the lane, turning and looking sadly at his love with every step he made, the will to live seemed to vanish from the girl's face. There in front of me, she appeared to be dying.

"Killer, killer come back," I shouted with all my might when I could no longer restrain my feelings.

"No, no, come back," I called. Completely forgetting that I was no more than a bystander.

Then the soldier disappeared from my

sight and the amazing play vanished into thin air as though it was just a dream.

Weeks and months have gone by and the vision of the two lovers continues to haunt me time and again. I was overcome by nostalgia. I would go to that forsaken lane and would watch the soundless houses. In my imagination I could see once again the two of them standing there tortured in their sacred love. As it can be guessed, I have never had the opportunity to see them again. However, when I think seriously about it, I must say that I am rather pleased with the situation. With the passage of time I am unlikely to witness that same spectacle.

After all, friends, to tell the truth, it was only one moment out of many others: marvellous as it might be, nevertheless only one minute out of a complete life. So let that dear moment be treasured in my heart for ever and not be destroyed by the cruel whip of time. ■

Contributors

MAHMUD ABASSI was born in 1935. He studied at the Haifa and Hebrew Universities, and is currently completing a Ph.D. in Arabic Literature in Israel. He edits the literary supplement of the newspaper, **Al Anba'a**, and is the chairman of the editorial board of the literary journal **Ash-Sharq**. He has published many translations of Hebrew works in Arabic, inter alia, a book on kibbutz. He has published many novels, stories and plays. He teaches in the department of Arabic Language and Literature at Haifa University and is active in various frameworks which attempt to deal with the Arab-Israel dispute. In the last elections to the Knesset, he headed an independent list which failed to achieve a mandate. His "Notes on Israeli-Arab Literature" appeared in **SHDEMOT** No. 9.

YARIV BEN AHARON is a member of Kibbutz Givat Givat Haim (Meuchad), and is active on the editorial board of **SHDEMOT**. He writes often on questions of Jewish identity and socialist-zionism. Yariv is an author (**The Battle**) and is the son of Yitzhak Ben Aharon, former secretary-general of the Histadrut. Yariv's reply to Bernard Avishai's essay on Zionism appeared in **SHDEMOT** No. 8.

ARYEH BEN GURION, expert on Jewish holidays, edited the Kibbutz Pesach Haggada and Bar Mitzva Kit, used in cities, community centers and kibbutzim. He assisted Henriata Szold in her work with refugee children during the Second World War. Later, he was sent by the Jewish Agency to Toronto, Canada to become principal of a combined Jewish High School of the Farband, Arbeter Ring and Poalei Zion. In 1971 Aryeh was educational shaliach to the West Coast of the United States and worked in the Bureau of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation in Los Angeles. Aryeh Ben Gurion lives in Kibbutz Beit Hashita. His "Desert Scenes" appeared in **SHDEMOT** No. 7.

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SA'ADIA GELB received a degree in Psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1933 and a Master's degree in 1934. In 1934 he was also ordained as a Rabbi. He immigrated to Israel in 1947, becoming a member of Kibbutz Kfar Blum. He has worked as a farmer, fisherman, and hotel keeper. He served as kibbutz secretary and treasurer as well. Most recently, Sa'adia has completed a term as the Comptroller of the Ihud Kibbutz Federation. His "How Did It Happen?" appeared in **SHDEMOT** No. 7.

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No. 5; his essay on the Kibbutz movement as an opposition to the Likud government appeared in **SHDEMOT** No. 8.

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HANNAH AMIT KOCHAVI is chief translator and advisor on translations for SHDEMOT. Born in Haifa in 1947, she attended the famous Reali school, and holds a B.A. and a M.A. in English and Arabic from the Hebrew University. She is presently working on her Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Folklore and teaches at the University of Haifa and at Oranim. She lives in Kibbutz Yagur. Hannah translated Mahmud Abassi's *Towards Break of Dawn*.

D. T. translated the *Tear-Gas Monologue*, the selections by Yirmiyahu Yovel, Zev Shternhal, Amnon Sela and Yariv Ben-Aharon, and the Kibbutz Galicia letter.

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- ★ Poet Eli Alon talks about his use of religious imagery in his poems.
- ★ Women in Israel and in Kibbutz.
- ★ Hannah Arendt and the Jews.
- ★ **Democracy in Crisis:** The Kibbutz Asepha and Its Critics.
- ★ Hired Labor.
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