

Family Life

Categories: Other

Jewish family life, which is famous all over the world, was faced with an ordeal in the ghetto. The very existence of family is itself uncertain in the narrow space of the ghetto. On many occasions, family members were separated after some managed to escape while it was still possible, or as the result of evacuation; many now do not even know where – or if – their relatives are now living. It casts a long, depressing shadow on those who live in cramped ghetto rooms. What is more, they do not live in those poor rooms on their own but have to share them with other unfortunates, who, being strangers, are a potential cause of conflicts. As a result, spouses can hardly afford any intimacy. Moreover, the principal purpose of marriage, namely procreation, is made particularly difficult, which in turn is the reason the birth rate has dropped to a minimum. Also for children already born the complete lack of privacy is harmful. Social environment in a regulated economy, where everyone has the same rights and obligations, undermines the parental authority, making it virtually impossible to bring up children. It often happens that underage children are more important in supporting family collectives than their parents. How can seniors command obedience and respect, when the commandment to honor thy father and thy mother remains a hollow phrase. Poverty and hunger complete the destruction. Therefore an often cruel reality exceeds all limits of the imagination.

However, to preserve the honor of families, we should remember all the frequent cases of heartwarming love mightier than all problems. Parents and children, siblings and relatives, sacrifice their wealth and lives for one another. It is all the more tragic that such attempts are usually unsuccessful. Many whole families were exterminated. It is the same as in the case of all human suffering: the spirit of the weak is ruined, while the strong will grow even stronger until they are as hard as steel by dealing with the difficulties, also where the corporeal clod is not able to withstand such strain. Consequently, it is in the eye of the beholder, whether he will choose from the abundance of material such aspects that in

the unnaturally artificial atmosphere of the sealed ghetto do the Jewish family life honor, or dishonor it profoundly. Here, in the ghetto, the noblest tragedy clashes with grotesque deformation.

Peter Wertheimer

Resources

Encyclopedia, p. 68-69.

Tags

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