Marriage: Society poses challenges to its traditions



At a lecture conducted for a group of martied women in Long Island, the subject was "A Happy Martied Life." At the conclusion, there were questions and answers, and finally, the lecturer asked, "Are there any more

estions: From the back of the questions? From the back of the room, one heard a voice ery out. "Are there only more answers?" We live in an age when marriages seem fragile, under great stress and subject to disintegrating forces. We consider ancient words of wisdom on this theme.

A Roman matron of the first century asked a venerable rabbi, "What has God been doing ever since He completed the work of creation?"

He responded, "The Almighty has been sitting in heaven, ar-ranging marriages."

But a wise man, in commenting on this passage, noted that

matches are made in heaven but
marriages are made on earth. We
all know that it's only in fairy
tales that we encounter the
phrase, "They were married, and
they lived happily ever after." On
behalf of all who are successfully
married, we offer collective testimony that a fulfilling marriage is
created, nurtured and developed.

The traditional conception of
marriage is challenged by ideas
and philosophies that are achieving wide circulation in our culture. The very spirit of the modern age challenges and undermines the stability of marriage.
According to the judeo-Christian
tradition, marriage is more than a
biological union, an economic
partnership, a legal entity, or a
psychological association. Marriage is a consecration, a sanctification of life intended to endure.
It links us with the past and the
future. It enables us to experience
sacred qualities of the human
spirit.

Several years ago, a book titled
"The Temporary Saciety"

spirit.
Several years ago, a book titled
"The Temporary Society"
achieved wide circulation. The
author believes that we need to
find new social forms that are

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consonant with the transient quality of our society. Manufacturers are developing clothes that are disposable. You wear them once and throw them away.

Similarly, he argues that we ought to design social structures that allow us to throw them away when they are no longer useful to us. Our task is to help people learn to develop intense and deep human relationships quickly, then learn how to let go; learn how to get love and how to lose love; learn how to enter relationships and how to leave them.

Ilka Chase used to tell the story of the aftermath of her divorce from Louis Cahlern. His next wife was Julia Hoyt. Ms. Chase, going through a trunk, found a box of handsomely engraved cards, going through a trunk, found a box of handsomely engraved cards, bearing simply the name, "Mrs. Louis Cathern." Feeling ashamed that they should go to waste, she wrapped them up and sent them to her successor with a little note: "Dear Julia, I hope these reachyou in time."

Something of that spirit pervades this book. The author is wrong conceptually, marally and scientifically. Life becomes

cheapened and trivialized without commitments that endure and loyalites that persist, without riendship and love that grow and blossom with the passage of time. Every couple who has lived well together over the years develops a sense of shared history. It's like a sea anchor in the turbulent seas of life, holding them steady in the face of life's storms and high winds. The richness of joint memory creates for them a special kind of tenderness.

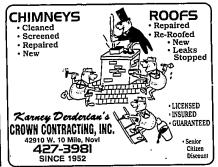
To spend a lifetime with another human being is an incredible thing to contemplate. Marriage partners intermingle their energies and experiences and dreams over on entire life span. It gives them both a living history that the fragrance and essence of their past. It increases the richness of the present and the promise of the future.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Con-

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Con-gregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. If you have a question or comment, call him at 953-2047, mailbox number 1862, on a touch-tone phone.

■ From the back of the room, one heard a voice cry out, 'Are there any more answers?'







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