

**Making a difference**

Many of us dream of bettering the human condition. **Eliezer Jaffe** '55Y, professor at Hebrew University's School of Social Work, Jerusalem, can say his efforts have revolutionized two spheres of Israeli life.



His research and work in intercountry adoptions by Israeli couples have resulted in pending Knesset legislation "that will bring Israel into the modern era for adoption," he said.

"As the number of local adoptable children has drastically declined over the last 10 years, over 10,000 families have gone abroad to adopt. But Israel's present laws do not relate in any way to intercountry adoptions," and, in fact, create a government monopoly over adoptions.

Jaffe's recent book for adoptive parents explains relevant laws of 12 "sending" countries. Due to its impact—and his years of lobbying—the Knesset may finally allow the establishment of nonprofit social service organizations to deal with this issue.

The former director of Jerusalem's department of public welfare also estab-

lished (in 1990) and chairs the Israel Free Loan Association. "Over a half-million Russians and 40,000 Ethiopians have come to Israel in the last few years. We provide them with interest-free loans to help with things like rent, student tuition, medical emergencies, and business-related needs. With \$5 million in circulation from private donations, we've helped over 5,000 families and individuals."

IFLA loans helped to get 10% of all Ethiopians living in caravans into housing. Other loans assist immigrants and Israelis with unexpected needs.

"It's Maimonidean philosophy all the way—helping people with loans rather than charity. Through this method, our donors' capital investment becomes self-perpetuating." Jaffe's philosophizes, "The gift of life is a loan, and we need to make good use of it while we have it."