

Pennies for Heaven

Myra Noveck

The hundreds of Jerusalem institutions that rely on donations to keep in business do not enjoy the suggestion of the Yom Kippur *mahzor* when they count the contributions they get before the most important fast of the year.

"Repentance, prayer and *tzedaka* avert the severe decree," the *mahzor* tells us. Some call it charity, others philanthropy, or doing justice.

Jerusalem has a resident expert on the subject. Dr. Eliezer Jaffe is a professor of social work at the Hebrew University and is a former director of the Family and Community Services department of the Jerusalem municipality.

He put together "Giving Wisely," a guide to more than 260 organizations that could benefit from philanthropy.

He says there are no definite figures on who gets how much when. "If I had

money I would set up a centre for the study of philanthropy and volunteerism in Israel," he says.

The UJA is not in Jaffe's book. But its heavy season for contributions is in March before American Jews file their income tax returns.

Jaffe's own definition of *tzedaka* is partnership philanthropy, where the donor is involved with the project he supports. "It goes beyond writing a check, -it means doing homework, staying with the project, thinking about how money can best be used."

Though the book, which appears only in English, is directed to donors from abroad, it affords the Israeli donor as well with opportunities for useful giving.

Jaffe's advice for the donor is three fold: 1) pick a subject

which pulls you personally 2) be wary of putting all money in to hardware such as buildings and think more about the software — programming and services, or what software might be suitable in addition to the building. 3) Look into non-conventional grassroots organizations that don't have a chance of getting aid from the government or the Jewish Agency.

"There are lots of organizations doing very nice work but they are unsophisticated in fundraising and they don't have any up-front money for public relations and few contacts abroad where the big money is."

He says: "We're all going to leave this earth some day, the question is what did we do when we were here. It's something to think about during the holiday season but carry out all year."



(Isaiah Karlinsky)