

Prof. Eliezer Jaffe Shares 50 Years of Social Welfare in Israel

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Eliezer Jaffe, a native of Cleveland Ohio, first came to Israel in 1957, where he volunteered at the Maabarot (transit camps for new immigrants). It was in these muddy, primitive tent cities where he decided that in order to help this small but bustling country, he needed to return with a doctoral degree.

This he did. Making Aliyah in 1950 with a PhD. in social work, Professor Jaffe was one of the founders of the very first Department of Social Work in Israel, at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. Other universities followed suit, and based their own social work programs on the one Dr. Jaffe began at Hebrew U.

Specializing in social services for children, Professor Jaffe saw a need for research into inter-country adoptions, which were not possible because of government policies of the time. He and his wife spent a sabbatical year travelling to 15 countries and gleaning as much information as they could on the subject, before returning to Israel and re-writing the Israeli adoption laws.

Professor Jaffe saw a need for interest-free assistance for short-term needs. Based on the teachings of the Rambam, in which the highest level of charity is one which provides the needy with a means to become self-supportive, Professor Jaffe founded the [Israel Free Loan Association](#) in 1990. This organization has helped tens of thousands of people over the years, awarding loans totalling more than \$170 million. What is astonishing is the 99% return rate, a factor which Professor Jaffe attributes to the respect awarded to each recipient. "People who need the loans are no better or worse than any of us. It can happen to any one of us overnight." Maintaining the dignity of those in need is one of the cornerstones of Professor Jaffe's work ethic and philosophy of life.

Tune in to be inspired by Professor Eliezer Jaffe, winner of many awards and writer of more than 14 books including "Giving Wisely" and "Letters to Yitz," who believes that anyone can make a difference, and that giving is just a way of paying off our interest on this gift we call "life."

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