

Pictures and Models: An Exploration in Jewish Educational Thought

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*Pictures and Models: An Exploration in Jewish Educational Thought**

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Models: A Word of Introduction

In a now classic article, “Philosophical Models of Teaching,”¹ Professor Israel Scheffler distinguishes between activities that may be included in the category of “education” and those, such as indoctrination, or conditioning, that do not qualify. He then notes some questions that characterize the educational venture: “What sort of learning shall I aim to achieve? In what does such learning consist? How shall I strive to achieve it?” He tells us that he will address the questions by way of a consideration of three influential models of teaching which provide, or at any rate suggest, certain relevant answers to the questions above.

In this essay, I hope to do the same with regard to three models that seem to be particularly congenial to Jewish education and that, like Scheffler’s models, “do not so much aim to describe teaching as to orient it.”

But how, precisely, are we to understand the concept of “models”?

Section One: The Variety and Educational Uses of Models

Michael Ruse² points to certain characterizing features that all models share. For example, models of all types draw analogies between the model and some aspects of reality or of some scientific claim. We may distinguish between physical models, usually small or large scale material constructions, and theoretical models, wherein scientists map limited aspects of reality and introduce simplifying conceptions and assumptions. These models enable us to look at complex realities through prisms that make them manageable. For example: for certain purposes and in certain situations we assume that a map “shows” us an area or a country under consideration, or even lays “the world” before us. We are invited to grasp the world or some aspect of it through particular lenses that focuses our attention on “a way of seeing things” that is particular to the model.

* In Memory of my teacher and friend, Seymour (Shlomo) Fox .

¹ Israel Scheffler: “Philosophical Models of Teaching,” in Israel Scheffler: *Philosophy and Education* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1966), 99-114; citation from page 100.

² Michael Ruse: “Models,” in Ted Honderich (ed.): *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 582-83.

As for educational models specifically, they can be expected to draw pictures relevant to the educational scene and to make educational prescriptions.³ They describe educational situations metaphorically, and then invite us to see things their way and to accept their guidance in thinking through germane issues. For example, we may have a model that claims to measure achievement by way of letters ('A' to 'F') and then we may plausibly speak of a given learner as "an A student."

Conceptual models that deal with such prescriptive matters as education, then, can be seen as pictures of reality designed for use. They are frameworks within which theoretical work and practical policy discussions are conducted. When these theories are prescriptive and not simply descriptive, (as educational issues are, for education is a practical enterprise) they may be expected to suggest normative directions and standards.

Taming and Cultivating

In conceptual models, the pictures drawn frequently come to us in the shape of metaphors. Two well-known examples from within the field of education are, respectively, the "picture-idea" of education as an act of *cultivating* children, on the one hand, and the picture-idea of *taming* them, on the other. The latter picture suggests that children are naturally evil or at least "wild", and that they share with domestic animals the requirement that they be "domesticated" before being given the run of the house or, the world. In line with this "picture", moral education constitutes the hoped-for conquest of Mr. Hyde, a loathsome creature, by Dr. Jekyll the epitome of the educated and virtuous human being. (In Stevenson's classic story, alas, the opposite transpired and Mr. Hyde emerged victorious.)

In the first model-metaphor of "cultivation," the "picture" drawn brings to mind horticulturists who lovingly and carefully tend their young shoots. The metaphor: like tender seedlings, so must children be nurtured and helped to grow. At times they may legitimately be given direction, but they are not to be overpowered or excessively subjected to intervention. Children in this model like plants: they are endowed with the quality of growth, they are naturally beautiful. Our task as educators is to respect the

³ On the prescriptive character of educational theory, see T.W. Moore: *Educational Theory, An Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1974), 1-26.

child's inner development but to appreciate that without gentle intervention the weeds all about may choke our flowers to death. Our vocation, according to the metaphor-model of cultivation, is to care for the plantings, to "help nature along."

Conversely, the "taming" model-metaphor speaks candidly of the need for discipline. In the dire situation of the natural wickedness of humans, discipline is of utmost importance and "tender care" may be a recipe for disaster.⁴

A Way to See the World

Marc Belth places the model in a broad framework where it assumes the dimensions of a paradigm, a total way of seeing the world and exploring it, and sometimes, daring to exchange this way for another.⁵ Like Ruse, Belth argues that whatever man studies he is in fact studying some aspect of reality as it is revealed in and through the theoretical model he uses.⁶

This is a comprehensive framework within which we view a given reality, or even our entire world. Once again, the model simplifies so that that the matter under consideration can be clearly grasped and acted upon. Belth describes what transpires in the world of models, which he also calls "systematic clusters", as follows:

...man is continuously shaping his experience into a whole which can be recalled readily and used in confronting and explaining new events. In this constant shaping, he borrows from everywhere - from his observations, from what he has felt and tasted, from his dreams and illusions, from his desires and dreads. What he sees in the world is what his systematic cluster permits him to see. The meanings which events come to have are derived entirely from this system, [from this] model of reality through which he sees the world.

⁴ On the pedagogical and theological aspects of this "taming" model, see Michael Rosenak: *Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge* (Colorado: Westview, 2003), 73-90. On the consequences of "taming" for discipline, cf. *Idem.*: "Corporal Punishment in Jewish Education; A Philosophical-Educational Exploration," in Peter Y. Medding (ed.): *Studies in Contemporary Jewry; Jews and Violence* (Oxford, 2003), 168 ff.

⁵ This conception of paradigms is developed by Thomas S. Kuhn in his groundbreaking *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970).

⁶ Marc Belth: *Education as a Discipline; a Study of the Role of Models in Thinking*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965), 61.

We sometimes call such models philosophies of life, theologies, developed political systems... But a model can also be a word, a design, a plan, a picture, Sometimes models are efforts at copying the events of the world, connected by created concepts: sometimes they are highly abstract symbols that stand for things. But however we may characterize them, they are windows through which we see the world...and they make the world meaningful to us in their own terms...⁷

How, then, do innovation and change originate? They come about, says Belth, through the work of revolutionaries; people who escaped from conventional thought to envision new models, to draw new pictures.

The task of drawing new pictures is not simple. Consider, for example, George Orwell's superb little novel, *Animal Farm* (1946) that pithily describes a failed revolution of "animals", that is, oppressed masses, against human (i.e., capitalist) enslavers. Orwell shows how insidiously old models survive even under new names, as the now regnant pigs in his tale progressively become more "human", i.e., they turn into slave drivers.

But, declares Belth, there are some extraordinary men and women who do step outside their models and thoughtfully examine how these models work. They might argue that these are now inadequate to organize present experience. They create new models and, in some manner and to some degree, persuade others that the world seen through these newly discovered windows is more meaningful, more desirable, more predictable and more manageable. Not surprisingly Belth points to philosophers as "the most notorious among these model builders".⁸

"The Destruction of the Old [the Wise] is Called Construction"⁹

How does this happen? If indeed we always see things through the prism of an already constructed model, how do these talented individuals become builders? We may understand from the rabbinic passage cited in our sub-title above that building first

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Tosefta *Avodah Zarah* (I-19). The original context deals with the question of rebuilding the Temple: If the young tell you to build and the old tell you to destroy, listen to the latter, for the building of children is destruction, and the destruction of the old is construction.

involves the process of undermining and even destroying what was until then sacrosanct. If so, a central task of philosophers, philosophers of education included, is to examine, within their distinct fields, whether certain models still serve to identify “the field” and can still legislate for it with authority; whether existing models still constitute our “world.” We must keep in mind that where new models are on the scene, even in nascent form, they tend to cast doubt upon the viability of old ones. But this is a complicated procedure. Determining when to build and when to destroy requires, in addition to great courage, much knowledge and experience. It is best, posits the Tosefta, left to the old, the wise.

One manifestation of this situation of crisis, in which old models seem inadequate or misleading, is that philosophers take on an analytic and descriptive task: they attempt to define and to survey different competing models in a given area of study and experience. Here the philosopher, in “reviewing” all views, stands implicitly above them all. And sometimes he explicitly criticizes them for playing by the (confining) rules of discourse commonly accepted. S/he may also undermine the authority of existing models by saying that “there is something to be learned from all of them” or by simply describing norm-legislating models dispassionately. Sophisticated descriptions of the models being examined tend to deprive them of their prescriptive or normative status. “Learning something from all of them” is to see them from a new vantage point. Indeed, descriptions of models are often a prelude to discarding them.

Scheffler’s Three Models: Locke, Plato and Kant

This point, of studying and describing with a view to possible reshuffling and rebuilding, is implicit in Israel Scheffler’s classic description of three models of teaching in the paper already cited: the Impression model, the Insight model and the Rule model.¹⁰ The first “draws the picture” of an initially blank mind, likened to a clean sheet of paper on which teaching and experience inscribe things to be “processed” and made into active knowledge. The agents of learning, i.e., teachers and parents, are charged with filling the paper, i.e., the mind, with materials which the mind can rework, making the connections that form real knowledge.

¹⁰ Scheffler: *Op. Cit.*, 100-112.

If this first model derives from a “picture drawn” by John Locke, the second originates in the thought of Plato, and, later, bears the imprint of Augustine.¹¹ A central focus of this model is that learners grasp, or “envision”, only that which they, in some sense, already know. Teachers, then, are engaged in “reminding” the learners of what they know. The model poses the question whether they must also, in some sense, *not* know it, for otherwise, when and how can one be said to have learned something new? The third, the Rule model, which is closely associated with the thought of Immanuel Kant, sees the essence of education in the teaching of principles, of freely accepted yet binding imperatives. Scheffler sees the rule model as complementing the others by adding to the cognitive “discoveries” of the first two models the dimension of actions learned.

The Mansion: A Fourth Model?

As we might expect from our reading of Belth, finding good points in three conflicting models may presage the explication of a fourth one that learns from the alleged shortcomings of the others. This new model incorporates “what is to be learned” from each model but, by so incorporating them, is actually creating another model. In the case before us, we may call it the “mansion model”, for it sees education as drawing learners into a house with many rooms and many windows. We enter the mansion armed with principles, insights and rules but, also, with cultural and historical traditions. Our task, says Scheffler, is to pass on “the multiple live traditions in which [our principles]...are embodied and in which a sense of their history, spirit and direction may be discerned”.¹²

In this connection, Scheffler cites the English educational philosopher, R.S. Peters. The task of the teacher, Peters states, “is to try to get others on the inside of a public form of life that he shares and considers to be worthwhile.” This is a model, then, that seeks to make young people “at home” in a many-splendored place where we can freely take in its treasures but according to rules and principles that we have inherited from our historical traditions of science, morality, and culture. Needless to say, this new

¹¹ We should note that this model is expounded also in *Midrash Tanhuma Pekudai*. See my discussion of it in *Roads to the Palace; Jewish Texts and Teaching* (Providence: Berghahn, 1995), 91-96.

¹² Scheffler: *Op. cit.*, 113-114.

model may also be scrutinized when needed to determine whether the goods it brings us are “the best that we know” and how they may be improved should the (perceived) need arise. Hence, in teaching, “we do not impose our wills on the student, but introduce him to the many mansions of the heritage in which we ourselves strive to live, and to the improvement of which we are ourselves devoted.”¹³

From Scheffler we may learn that theoretical models, including models of teaching, do not so much aim to describe teaching as to orient it. In the act of simplifying, they weave a coherent picture out of epistemological, psychological and normative elements. Models not only enable us to represent and organize the world or some significant part of it by way of a somewhat simplified pictures of reality, but they bear ideological, theological and pedagogical worlds of meaning and obligation.

Ideologies of Instruction

I shall maintain, in line with the thought of the late Israeli educational philosopher, Zvi Lamm, that educational models are often used, consciously or unconsciously, to transmit concealed ideologies of instruction.¹⁴ Thus, in studying the ways in which models help us to understand the educational enterprise, we are also examining and evaluating these ideologies and attempting to understand more clearly how they affect our thinking on educational issues and where they are leading us. These ideological questions may be formulated as follows: (a) How do we perceive the current situation in Jewish education, or in whatever field being explored? (b) What is good, but, also, what do we find unacceptable and/or even perverse in the current situation? (c) What would we envision as an improvement or even fundamental change that we can see as a *tikkun*, a repair of this current situation? (d) What must be done to bring about the required *tikkun* or transformation? What is involved in mobilizing “our forces” to achieve the desirable state of affairs?

The Three Educational Models of Zvi Lamm

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Zvi Lamm: *Conflicting Theories of Instruction: Conceptual Dimensions* (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1976.), especially 3- 35 and his cognitive map, 224.

Lamm lays before us a specifically ideological triad of educational models, two of which he rejects, though they may be said to “survive” as carefully monitored stages within the third model, which is the commended one. There is, first, of all, the ideology of *socialization*, incorporated in an “initiation” model that draws a picture signifying togetherness, say, campers standing around the flagpole in a semi-circle or children sitting in straight rows in the classroom. Here, children are expected to take on the accepted values, funds of knowledge and practices of the educating generation. If they do so, their education can be deemed successful; we may assume that their teachers have utilized appropriate subject matter, created a congenial learning environment, developed the appropriate relationships with pupils and have devised suitable tools of measurement and evaluation (e.g., examinations). The success of teachers becomes evident when their pupils have become good and loyal members of their society. Here, then, is an ideology of loyalty to society, communal togetherness and competence.

A somewhat different model he terms the “molding” one, of *acculturation*. Within this model, children are educated to accept and identify with the principles and ideals of the culture. This differs from the socialization model insofar as learners who have been initiated successfully into the culture are given the freedom to interpret and apply the culture’s principles on the basis of their own defensible (!) decisions regarding their application for their generation and in their own situation. To deserve the trust and gratitude of their mentors, they must demonstrate that they wish no ill to the heritage of their culture even, or especially, when they innovate within it. A suitable picture of this model may be students sitting around a table in a graduate seminar in humanities.

Lamm expresses disapproval of both these models which, he declares, lead to inadequate and even pernicious theories of instruction. The model of socialization, he believes, creates robots. As for the model of acculturation, it denies young people genuine autonomy by feeding them classic “verities” that chain pupils even while claiming to have liberated them.

The only form of instruction that he legitimates as genuine education is grounded in the model of *development*. In this model, instruction does not serve the purposes of socialization or acculturation, but cultivates autonomy in each individual. Education is founded on belief in the fundamental goodness, good sense and intelligence of young

people who have not been corrupted by bad “education”. Here, children are invited or even required to discover their own principles. They are also to develop the courage to bear the responsibility of applying them freely without having to justify them on the basis of other, often antagonistic, models. A possible picture of this model is Abraham standing “on one side” while all others stood on “the other side”. But this picture must incorporate Abraham’s covenant with God who, paradoxically, tells him to stand alone.

Imported Models: Freud, Buber and Soloveitchik

Lamm’s model is pristinely philosophical-educational. However, many models that are not inherently educational are imported into education from proximate disciplines such as theology, sociology and psychology.

One of the most celebrated models of modern culture that conceptualizes personality is that of Sigmund Freud, who presented us with three characters at loggerheads with one another, jousting within each of us and with the environment. These characters are in constant inter-action and, generally, conflict. This picture has invited generations of psychoanalysts to pose varying questions that take off from this fundamental image. How shall we define and manage the neuroses that arise from the deep-seated conflict between these three ogre-like little men and the environment? How may we define mental health in the unfailing presence of these strange characters? What constitutes competence and propriety in the conduct of therapy? As for educational questions: how shall we take the fundamental and gloomy facts of personality and human existence into account so that life may be lived with some contentment and richness, even in the presence of the omnipresent “discontents” of human civilization? In these questions, the prescriptive character of such models is much in evidence.

A theological model that has long been utilized in Jewish and non-Jewish education is based on Martin Buber’s distinction between “I-Thou” relationships that bespeak encounter and personhood, and I-It situations in which “the other”, human or even divine, is no more than an object for use, conceptualization and control. The graphic representation, conveyed by these two (as it were) sets of persons, summons us to build the center of our lives around and within “I-Thou” orientations, rather than “I-It” ones.

We are asked to meet the other in a dialogical fashion. The educator, then, is responsible for “arranging encounters” between his or her pupils and for them. At the same time, she must recognize that the learning of skills, also necessary for a fulfilled and responsible life, is legitimately slanted towards the conceptual and objective thinking of “I-It”.

Similar is Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik’s model of “Adam I” and “Adam II,” presented to us in his essay, “The Lonely Man of Faith.”¹⁵ This has been read as suggesting that education be constructed to generate tension between “majesty” and “covenant” in the life of the educated religious personality yet envisioning ultimate accord between them. Education at its best draws Adam I and his majesty into the circle of authority bestowed by God on the covenantal Adam II.

Developmental Models

Some models, then, are drawn from disciplines such as theology and psychology, co-opted by educators for their own purposes. There are also models that explicitly lead us to think of education as resting on stages in children’s cognitive or moral development. In these developmental models, the first stage should lead eventually to the second and then on to the third and further stages; whether it does so adequately is seen to depend largely on the educator.

A consistently developmental model that is anchored in educational rather than psychological theory is that of Kieran Egan¹⁶ whose four stages of educational development represent the educational ideal and program of leading children towards ever greater understanding of the nature and substance of reality. Here, the key phrase is “stages.” The person being appropriately educated is assumed to move steadily in a specific direction: from the mythic stage to the romantic, then to philosophical and, finally, to ironic thinking. What the model pictures is much like a ladder. The number of rungs to be successfully climbed depends on many factors: physical, mental, and environmental. But development is certainly an educational issue.

It is important to note that all such ideological and prescriptive models leave some researchers and observers skeptical: Why entertain the illusion that such basically

¹⁵ Joseph B. Soloveitchik: *The Lonely Man of Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

¹⁶ See, for example, Kieran Egan: *Individual Development and the Curriculum* (London: Hutchinson, 1986).

differing inclinations - say, that between Adam I and Adam II - can be harmonized, or that there is a dialectic movement toward ultimate concord in human life, say, between “I-It” and “I-Thou”? If there are in fact different types of people, who have greatly variegated formative experiences, why should we not expect each person to develop in the direction of her early experience and innate traits? The I-It child, or the Adam I child will develop certain traits of controlling behavior, while the one whom William James called the “tender-minded” person will more closely resemble the “I-Thou”, or the Adam II profile. These researchers may claim, on the basis of their own sociological, psychological and philosophical models of course, that the Soloveitchik- or Egan-oriented educator tries, by an intellectual sleight of hand, to convert descriptions into prescriptions, as though “facts” of development and cognition could magically be turned into norms, like pumpkins into carriage, simply by drawing interesting pictures.¹⁷

Section Two

Three Ways of Seeing What Educators Think They Are Doing: A Reiteration

In the preceding pages, we made some preliminary excursions into the landscape of educational models and acquaintance with some pictures, concepts and characters one may expect to meet on such excursions.

Now, we are ready to briefly examine three possible models for the formation of the educated person with specific reference to the teaching of the Jewish tradition. All three meet the criteria of identifiable models; all make prescriptions for “moving” children towards what their adherents see as the purposes of education and as blueprints for making educated (Jewish) persons. While each is distinct, none needs be seen, in principle, as indifferent to the pictures and metaphors of the others. All draw pictures that help us “store” and organize knowledge and moral insights, all invite us to envision how “it could be different”, and all set rules for theory and conduct. All, in an age of valuative crisis, present problems to the normative educational thinker and practitioner, and to all one may pose ideological questions.

¹⁷ See the implicit critique of Charles S. Leibman who brings human “types” into a research pattern that calls into question “harmonizations” of the kind we have considered. Cf. Charles Leibman: “The Sociology of Religion and the Study of American Jews,” *Conservative Judaism* XXXIV (May-June 1981), 17-33.

The first of my three I shall call the *four-tiered philosophical* model, which is graphic. The second model I shall call the *language-and-literature* model, which is conceptual; and the third, the *traditional-existential* model, which tells stories. What may each separately suggest to us and teach us? Is the statement that “they can all teach us something” in fact a harbinger of a new model? Or, perhaps, they complement one another, for example, by marking progressive stages of development and comprehension?

Finally, what kinds of questions about basic commitment and conviction arise from an analysis of the implications of one or more of them?

Model One

Principles, Ideals, Aims and Means

What I am calling the four-tiered philosophical-curricular model, was first called to my attention in conversation with my late teacher, Professor Seymour Fox. It is based on four theoretical elements in curricular discussions. In this approach, we begin our conversation with philosophical principles and then move in the direction of theory of practice and, finally, to practice itself.

I am drawing the picture of this model in the form of a four-tiered building. There is a “foundational” ground floor, or tier, of principles, pure and Platonic. These basic principles describe what we hold true with regard to ultimate reality and its significance, or lack thereof. The savants who dwell on the first tier inform us, and then constantly “remind” us, as to what “we” believe about transcendence and what, in the nature of things, we hold to be inherently good and valuable. These answers, and the questions that lie behind them, may be formulated in the shape of a sublime philosophical discourse. But at times, and for many, the philosophy and the principles can be stated more simply: as affirmations of commitment and faith. As such they inform us of our view of things. What we affirm as the body of principle by which we are to live is our picture of the world. Moreover, the ideas we have of the world and ourselves within it are what we educate towards.

On the basis of principles and *ideas* propagated by the savants on the first tier, our second tier people build *ideals* of what the good, the achievable and the real should look like after they have been brought down to earth and translated into concrete human

situations. We may say that here, articles of “faith” and conceptions of the true and the worthy (principles) are re-imagined as practical *visions* for human life.

For example: the principle of (belief in) a revealing God is “brought down” to us in “religion”, which constitutes a system of ideals (of practice, commitments and embodiments of “the good life”). Each principle or belief might be expressed in a number of ideals or religions.

A belief in the ultimate value of freedom can receive principled and concrete expression in diverse ways. We may opine that Freedom is an aspect of reality telling us what was “in God’s mind” when He created the world, or that it is an imperative of Reason. When we examine the principle of freedom in its various versions and “translate” it into the social, political and historical challenges facing us in this particular time, we are most likely to recognize it in the democratic and liberal ideal of “bringing freedom down to earth”. In the discovery of what is ideal and can be justified in the name of principles, we are discovering the fundamental agenda of the education to which we are committed.

Let us summarize by drawing a picture of the first two tiers. With regard to those sitting on the first, the “principled” tier of the four in this model’s picture: think of them as elderly, wise and severe. These sage individuals, remember, reside quite abstractly in a rather airless hall, and they are called upon to answer such weighty questions as: What is real, knowable, worth knowing and good?

Those who ask such troubling questions for purposes of translation into their mundane reality are of course sitting on the second tier. They have somewhat more of a view but hesitate to open the windows lest the savants sitting below them catch colds and lose their ability to function. We must keep in mind that in this model the second tier people are assumed capable of acting only after consultation with the first tier sages for they draw their justification from the principles of the first tier’s eminences. The task of our second tier characters, it is said, is only and always to bring these embodiments down to earth, articulating them as values, as ideals.

Problems in the Tiers

But this seems overly simplified, in fact, often false. We may entertain the thought that living ideals are not simply translations from abstract ideas, but are also (and, in Judaism, are particularly) decisions made on grounds of revelation and the conversations revelation engenders. Hence, the first tier sages, who represent the world of pure principle, find themselves in the uncomfortable situation of being more revered for their antiquity than respected for ostensible relevance. They may come to feel that while they are lords of educational thought, they are somewhat like members of the contemporary House of Lords, dressed in finery but politely ignored. This situation is variously manifested; I shall mention only two examples.

(1) Even a cursory study of educational ideas and ideals reveals that almost identical ideals can be based on diverse and even opposing principles. For example, a person may be devoted to democracy (an ideal) on the basis of his/her belief in the principle that humans are created in God's image. Yet, conversely, her devotion to democracy may rest on the belief (an idea) that human life is absurd and un-principled. Those who adhere to democracy for the latter reason demonstrate by their commitment their desire to "make something" out of chaos, to redeem themselves from it, to live with others decently, even if absurdly. The "image of God" doesn't enter into it.

Hence, the citizens of Tier One are dismayed to see some men and women of Tier II insisting that the educator's ideals are in some ways more important or at least prior to her principles in the educational enterprise. Of course, the first tier people may remind their second tier fellows that the Torah, in its two creation stories, "teaches Torah" by beginning with a principled narrative (In the beginning...And God saw that it was good...Male and female He created them") and only then moves "down to earth", to a story of the ideal itself, represented by humans, the commandment they were to obey, but didn't, their failed relationship– and their eventual reconciliation. To this, the ideal-oriented educator may respond with the arguments and verses used by Bet Hillel in the classic controversy with Bet Shammai, to show that moving in either direction is equally valid.¹⁸

¹⁸ The reference is to the dispute between Bet Shamai and Bet Hillel whether the heavens or the earth were created first, with Shammai offering "principled" reasons for his view and Hillel more down to earth reasons. The Sages declare that the proof texts offered can be combined, as in Genesis 2:1 (*Genesis Rabbah* I:15).

(2) We have seen in the case of our two democrats how diverse principles can give rise to common ideals: one theologically-oriented, and the other secular-existentialist in spirit. But it should be clear, also, that people who have the same principles may embrace them in the service of different ideals!

For example: Let me imagine myself running a Jewish school situated next to a Catholic one, the latter headed by a devoted educator and a woman of theological principle. In conversations with her, it becomes clear to me that she and I agree on many principles, first and foremost, the existence of God. We also both affirm that God created the world, that He is good, and that He has communicated with humanity through revelation. We are also at one in believing that He is the redeemer of the human soul.

Yet my colleague understands these tenets of faith in terms of her religion, which is a distinct constellation of ideals and one radically different from my own. Therefore neither of us would ever entertain the idea that our schools be merged. Also, there will be serious doubts as to whether we could ever run a joint activity that specifically testifies to our schools both being “religious” schools.

Why is this so? Speaking from my side: though I share some of the spiritual concerns that animate my colleague’s faith, the crucial issue for me is: What are her ideals? For example: Does she observe the mitzvot, that is, does she perform actions, social and individual, that testify to Jewish religious beliefs and acts? Do we share responsibility for a living Jewish people that is a people of revelation? Of course she will have similar but converse concerns. We may respect each other and befriend each other. We may share certain ideals. We have common aspirations for the society in which we both live. We should like to see a more decent one and we are likely to frame this ideal in vaguely religious terms. But we cannot educate towards faith together, under one roof.

All these problems force us to entertain the notion that the first tier can also be the second, and vice versa. This notion raises various questions for Jewish educators who are uneasy with a view of the world which accords pride of place to principles rather than to ideals. But let us, at this moment, keep our first two tiers as originally conceived in the model and now visit, even if briefly, the third and fourth tiers.

The Third Tier and the Question of Curriculum

The third tier brings us to the theory of practice. We raise the question of how to formulate goals that can bring the ideals into the real lives of learners. On the basis of recognized ideals (Tier Two), the educator is here asked to state and define his actual aims. What constitutes the curriculum? Why are certain aspects of human experience highlighted and others ignored or played down? What price is paid for each decision? What is the syllabus for each sphere of life and knowledge? How does each syllabus represent our best efforts to make educational ideals come alive; to create competence and genuine feeling in those who live by these ideals? How does the total curriculum address both individuals and society as a whole?

As we might have expected, this tier is a bustling place. There are think tanks galore, guest speakers, inquiry into a range of shapes and forms of education, pilot programs in various realms of knowledge, and experiments into diverse ways of envisioning human abilities and potential. Here, major jumps are to be made – from the heights of the ideal to the animated area of relevance and communicability, achieved or not. What is side-tracked and what is placed at the center of things because it evokes fierce loyalty and concern?

This negotiation, between the ideal and the possible, moves into high gear on Tier Four. Teachers must now decide which means are most useful for achieving the stated goals. If, for example our ideals are complex and at times paradoxical, the desire to educate toward complexity must always figure in deliberations, and these deliberations must take place in the context of theological and ideological ideals that often present themselves as straight-forward prescriptions for specific attitudes required of “good Jews” and loyal citizens. Likewise it must be kept in mind that psychological *descriptions* pertaining to cognitive development may, at a given stage, sabotage certain *prescriptions*, turning normative statements into research data.

The Fourth Tier: A Technical Matter?

Some people come to the fourth tier thinking that finding the right means for the educational enterprise at hand, is a technical matter. Yet, in fact, the availability or non-availability of appropriate means must necessarily affect the goals. Thus, an outstanding

curriculum that spells out its goals clearly and reflects lofty ideals can stumble on the training and performance of teachers who have not been taught to understand these goals and whose agreement to its principles has not been secured. In their teaching, members of the teaching staff may conceive of the curriculum, its purpose and processes, differently than did the curriculum writers, or than what their school boards intended. Hence, while the curriculum can be well served by teachers, they may also sabotage it.

The educator, in writing her curriculum, must not forget that means are never neutral or simply techniques, and that realities on the ground may carry more weight in determining what actually happens than statements of aims.

Following Heilman,¹⁹ let us imagine a Modern Orthodox school whose goals are perfectly acceptable to its constituents. Though not all the parents are themselves Modern Orthodox, the school's leadership has devised what it considers to be a reasonable way of dealing with this datum, and has made a sensible policy decision.²⁰

But there is a major problem that cannot be solved by setting policies or issuing statements of aims. The problem is that the burgeoning of the Modern Orthodox day school movement requires a far greater number of trained and committed teachers than what is currently available in the community. The educational leadership will then "have no choice" but to turn to secular or ultra-Orthodox teachers. The leadership may institutionalize this situation and ignore or turn down the plea rising up from the third tier, to invest heavily and in a focused manner, in teacher training! As for the teachers employed, they, too, quite legitimately, have a philosophy, and they place on the third and fourth tiers what they learned from *their* mentors!

As my colleague, Seymour Fox, liked to say, one can only hope that the fine cognac of educational philosophy and theory will arrive at the educational table as tasty and healthy grape juice. It could be worse than that.

¹⁹ Samuel Heilman: "Modern Orthodox Judaism Today: Currents and Trends in America," *Studies in Jewish Education* vol. X (2004), 49-64.

²⁰ For example, traditional Jews who are not themselves fully observant have agreed that, in sending their children to the school, they have expressed their agreement that the school's aim of using the curriculum to promote an Orthodox agenda, is acceptable to them, and they commit themselves not to sabotage or undermine it in their parenting.

To sum up: this model looks to present a philosophically-based, hierarchical scheme. On each level, we are to accept the authority of those directly below us. They are to give legitimacy to our ideals, and ultimately to our educational aims and then to means. In this model, the curriculum may seem to be laid out like a “set table”. One first clarifies and consults principles, then “translates” them into ideals, which in turn lead us to aims and means. But we must keep in mind that different and even opposing principles may serve as the basis for given ideals. Furthermore, there is a variety of goals that may, under ever changing circumstances, “capture” the ideal and distance it from its original intent.²¹ Finally, there is the “give and take” that characterizes the locating of adequate means to carry out the goals; means that are often simply unavailable. It appears, then, that the notion of “a set table” has only limited validity. It is up to the characters on the last two tiers to remind the personages in the first two tiers that education is “not in Heaven.” But someone up there has to remind those below that, in this model, education must point to Heaven.

The “Language-Literature” Model

The terms *Language* and *Literature* that are definitive to my second model, I shall explain shortly. But first, let it be noted that we are little concerned here with abstract philosophical questions. Rather, we begin our deliberation with goals. These goals reflect ideals. However, these ideals are not cherished mainly for their reported ability to reflect metaphysical truths, though this, too, is within the circle of their possible significance. Mainly, the goals are perceived in terms of the culture by which we live; *within* which we live. This culture provides our contact with what we consider reality; it is within it that we engage in an on-going conversation about what is worthy and worth knowing to us.

True, in the consciousness of the educated person, the goals of education are admittedly based on ideals of culture “as it should be.” But the normative underpinnings of this model, while reaching out to cultural ideals, have more to do with the identity of the person being educated than with his or her philosophical acumen. This person is to

²¹ A pithy example would be the interpretation which is given to the concept of ‘*tsniut*’ (modesty), which has moved in many school settings to connoting no more than boy-girl relationships and confining these relations as much as possible, whereas the classic understanding of *tsniut* surely takes in the character trait of humility and behavior that is in good taste.

become a participant in culture; perhaps a builder as well as a son or daughter. This means, also, that she can be expected to know a great deal and to be capable of putting valued artifacts of culture in their proper niches, contexts and perspectives.

Beginning with the goal of initiation, as this model does, means that education, first and foremost, must bring the young person into society and its “Language.” What is the picture drawn by the model of *Language*, and its companion concept, *Literature*?

Language Defined

Let me begin by delineating what is meant here by the first of these two metaphors: “Language.” “Language,” as the term is used here, does not refer mainly to “spoken” languages such as Hebrew, English or French). Rather, it is indebted to the conception of “civilization” as the British philosopher Michael Oakshott understood it.²² In my own use of the term, I have referred to Language as the sum total of society’s canons: its basic assumptions and procedures; its characteristic modes of behavior and communication; its “inner” truth and self-understood character in the eyes of those who “speak” it.

Language, then, is all that is holy to society or perennial within it; all that gives it, and us, a specific and expressed identity. And since our “Language” is our identity, it is no more to be discarded in times of crisis than is a person wracked by problems to commit suicide. However the history of Language indicates that it constantly undergoes interpretation and that it must remain open to new understandings if its devotees wish to protect it from becoming archaic and unconvincing. “Language”, then, could not survive without what we are calling, “Literature” to which we shall turn shortly.

A fundamental quality of the Language of Judaism is that it is an historically religious Language that posits a close connection between Language and Revelation as found in its sacred books and traditions. Books that are considered embodiments of Language, or to contain it, or are said to be touched by it, are “holy”. They are citadels of Language. This Language is to be impressed upon the hearts of the young by the communities that define themselves as living by it.

²² See Michael Oakshott, “The Study of Politics in a University,” in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1962), for an exposition of his view on “Language” and “Literature.”

The status of sacred writings, holy actions, holy times, and even the Hebrew language itself (*leshon hakodesh*) as hallowed (Language, the Word of God), was self-evident until recent generations. Then it was taken for granted that Scripture, studied “day and night”, could have no “unacceptable” passages but only “difficult” ones. No wonder that when a holy book fell to the ground, it was kissed. For these tomes conveyed Language – and Language was “from Heaven”.

Literature Defined

And when we turn to the concept of *Literature*, we encounter a paradox that is at the heart of this model. Namely, that what was learned in search for contact with the Language was itself largely or mostly Literature. For where people live within a Language, they must “speak” it, and their speech becomes interpretation, commentary; a blend of both tradition and innovation. How so?

Let us state this systematically: The lives of people who live within their Language produce “Literature”. Those dedicated to the Language see all worthy Literatures as growing out of it, demonstrating its richness. The Language comes to be cherished as the source of Literatures. Worthwhile Literatures, those that somehow return the learner “to the source” demonstrate what people in the society have done with the Language, how they have expanded and illuminated it by way of new Literatures. No wonder, then, that Literature has been traditionally considered worth “learning” if and where it reflects favorably on the Language, showing the power of the Language to generate new Literature and signifying the devotion of its speakers to the Language.

For those who live by this model, the purpose of education is clear. It is to draw young people into the Language, to get them to “speak it” fluently so that it becomes theirs, and to introduce them to valuable Literatures that have expressed and maintained the Language and, also, built upon it throughout its history. An implicit goal within this model is expressed by the desire of the educator that, hopefully, the person now sitting before him will be capable and worthy of adding Literature, even a footnote, to the common fund of his cultural “world”, a footnote that points, once again, to the meaning of the Language itself.

We shall address a major ideological and theological issue inherent in this model in the concluding section. Here, we shall mention the danger that has, in recent generations, given the model some notoriety by way of one of its core images. This image portrays the learning individual, a master of Language and fluent in Literature, sitting in a citadel of the Language, e.g., the Yeshiva and the “learning” student, who threatens, despite the best intentions, to turn “learning” into an elitist pursuit. Hence, I suggest, an important piece of Literature is the controversy within its corpus as to whether a person’s preoccupation with Language will be deemed worthy to the extent that s/he is also capable of self-support (by pursuing a trade), and to the extent that s/he learns to deal with the challenges and dangers posed by the physical environment (for example, by knowing how to swim), in addition to devoting time to Torah (*Kiddushin* 29b).

It is, of course, the latter requirement that returns us to the essence of this model and to its highest aspiration. The duty to “learn Torah for its own sake” may be understood to imply that the learner who lives fully within this model is constantly replenished by living contact with the Language and its classic Literatures. They are his life and the length of his days, and they can create a unique perspective on “literary” pursuits of various kinds. In this context, one may think of the parent of a budding university student who suggests that the young person first spend a year or two “studying Torah.”

To “Be Like Moses” Yet Not To Be; A Traditional- Existential Model

Autonomy and Authenticity

We move now to our third model. Here, the picture is a montage of human predicaments, of challenges, dilemmas and discernments. It is a model of story telling and of shocks of recognition at what is being heard.

But first: What is the reader to understand by this title? What is a “traditional-existential” model? Is it traditional or existential? If existential, how traditional? And where does Moses come into the picture? He was, after all, not traditional but the father of a new entity: the People of Israel. And what is the intellectual casuistry that makes him an existentialist in the light of his life project of creating a kingdom for a commanding monotheism and a home for the thundering voice of prophecy? And, to confound the bewilderment: Is this people a “project” of Moses – or of God? And, a final question, addressed to the present writer: What are you up to?

We are already in the thick of the complexities that characterize this model as it has been presented by modern Jewish thinkers who were themselves heavily invested in education, men such as Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. We must also acknowledge the colossal pedagogic work of Nehama Leibowitz who can largely be credited with making the teaching of Jewish biblical texts a central educational enterprise! And in her wake, we have known many creative teachers who have made us aware of the seeming contradictions, thus, the educational difficulties within the model; difficulties that have been, more often than not, presented as strengths! Clearly this model looks to teachers who are wise and learned and who strive to impart much knowledge to “learners”. Yet we also hear an implicit warning by mentors of this model not to confuse education with endless streams of “subject matter”. They tell us that education is always of the person rather than of the field, i.e., one teaches material but does not educate it: only people can be both taught and educated.

This model seems close to the educational conception of “vision” but, characteristically, it deals with vision against the backdrop of moral and often religious decisions and dilemmas. But who ever thought of religion as a locus of dilemmas?

A Model of Narratives

The narratives told within this model are its central “pictures”. These stories may be divided, like the model itself, into two modes: the religious and the secular, though such categorizations vastly oversimplify the matter. Is the Kafka who authored *The Trial* and *The Castle* secular or religious?²³ In what is called the secular mode, the emphasis is, at first, on stories that depict deliberation towards the solution of problems. They are often inspiring and heroic. They are often biographical. But they are discovered to bear, at the outer limits of experience, a call to the human soul to admit the presence of the incomprehensible, the absurd and tragic in life’s path as well as the sublime and significant. This often shocking discovery pulls the person to a search for self, perhaps through classic Literature and philosophical anthropology, perhaps via a fascination with poetry or art and film, or perhaps by way of a need to journey to unknown or hidden coves on the face of the earth. All are studied and pondered in search of the complexities with which we must live and in search of guidelines for how to do so. All impress upon the learner that there are problems that must be confronted even if they cannot be solved, problems that will forever remain part and parcel of our situation as human beings.

In the religious manifestations of this educational model, the tension between autonomy and authenticity, often of minor significance for secular-minded thinkers and teachers, is writ large. This tension arises from the decision of the educated religious person and her teachers to acknowledge the presence of Transcendence in the educational situation that is experienced as having been there from the start, in addition to, and alongside of, inquiry-guided-by-intelligence.

As in a life defined as secular, the encounter with this presence teaches that there is perplexity and even mystery and contradiction in the very fabric of life. Thus, autonomy is both illusionary for “all is in the hand of Heaven” and yet it is at the heart of the matter, for the Fear of Heaven is not in the hands of Heaven. “Heaven” demands responsibility and accords freedom, and, specifically, frees the human being from the

²³ It is noteworthy that one of this model’s significant thinkers, Franz Rosenzweig, upon reading Kafka’s novel, *The Castle*, expressed the opinion that: “The people who wrote the Bible seem to have thought of God much the way Kafka did,” Nahum Glatzer: *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1953), 160.

sense of tragedy, for not everything is required of the person him/herself. Hence, if we cultivate the sense of tragedy, we may be enticed into evasion and useless introspection into the human soul.

The presence that is there from the beginning is the Torah, and the shape of deliberation it adds to general inquiry, is called “learning”. Yet this is not simply traditional learning; as in the secular mode, there is an acknowledgement of dialectics as an avenue of enlightenment. There is conscious decision making and, last but not least, a desire to integrate “everything known” so that faith does not become an escape from reality. *Yir’at Shamayim*, “Fear of Heaven” (and that is what we are talking about within the purview of this model), requires responsibility. And responsibility requires knowledge.

This model, then, whether in its religious or secular modes, is much concerned with both individual responsibility and with the integration of everything we know and experience. This requires a “working out” of what we know and an admission of ignorance. Here, philosophy, and philosophies of various realms (e.g., of law, of education, of science, of history, of religion, etc.), play major roles in helping us to integrate what we know and experience, as well as what we don’t. But the model does not exempt the religious person from the quest for “putting it all together”, the hallmark of what the educationist, Ernst A. Simon, called “second innocence”--*temmimut sheniyah*.²⁴

Two Tales

In engaging in abstract discussion as we have done here, we may well be distancing ourselves from understanding the model itself. At this point, therefore, we must take note of our model’s discomfort with too many or premature explanations, as though everything can be made clear and simple after all. We move, then, to the broad plains of the model where there are stories and teachings.

Our first tale is unmistakably yet obliquely, about piety. The story-episode concerns the Hasidic teacher and rabbi, Zusya of Hanipol. His disciples, it is told, found

²⁴ See Ernst Akiba Simon: “*Oz Aitam: Al Hatemimut Hasheniyah* (Then I Shall be Innocent: On the Concept of Second Innocence),” *Idem., Ha’im Od Yehudim Anahnu* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1982), 135-69 (Hebrew).

him, after many years of illness, on his death-bed, in a state of great trepidation. When they asked him for the cause of his agitation he is said to have replied:

In the world to come to which I am now being called, I will perhaps be asked why I wasn't like Abraham or Moses. I am not afraid of such questions and I have an answer at hand, namely, that I am neither Moses nor Abraham. The question I dread is, why weren't you Zusya?

We note, first of all, that this, as many stories of its kind involves a dialogue between the teacher and his disciples. The teacher feels himself called upon to instruct his disciples "this one more time", to teach them Torah. But apparently, it is not to be; the teacher seems powerless, paralyzed by fear. He cannot, so it seems, end his life as he conducted it: as their teacher! The students are shocked.

But the teacher is lifted out of his agitation; he understands his duty to teach after all. The message he conveys is at first disappointing and the pupils may plausibly think that the rabbi is simply "unloading" the reason for his dread in their presence, and that is not an act of genuine teaching. He is warning them that he (and they too?) may be asked, Why weren't you like Moses? Now that I am to be judged, perhaps those above will expect me to be like Moses. A mission impossible, even for persons as righteous as Zusya! At that moment, Zusya probably reflects, after an act of "returning" to himself before God: I shall have to be brave – even brazen. I shall ask the Heavenly court, Why do you judge me unfairly and harshly? After all, no one can be like Moses!

But then he discovers the source of his fear and the substance of his own teaching: What if the Heavenly court asks me why I was not Zusya, all I should have been? Why wasn't I myself? And to that I have no answer.

A strange confession and a strange teaching. My pupils: I, your teacher, am telling you of my inadequacy. But my telling you this does not deprive me of the right and duty to teach you. And the teaching is: Be, each of you, you yourself. Get close to your own ability to be authentically what you can be, yourselves, as disciples of Moses, our teacher.

The second tale is in the same vein but it is more majestic and so, it expands the discourse about "rabbis on their deathbeds" speaking to their pupils at the hour of

ultimate truthfulness (*Berakhot* 28b). It describes the great sage, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, the one who had who received permission from the Roman emperor to found an academy at the coastal town of Yavneh for Torah study, and this, in the last days of Jerusalem and the Commonwealth. Now we are only a few years after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, and in the hour of Rabban Yohanan's death. Once again, the scene is one of students who have come to visit their rabbi and to receive his final earthly teaching. Here too they find their master and teacher weeping. He explains:

[Even] if I were being taken before a human king, who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, and I can appease him with words and bribe him with money, I would still weep. And now that I am being taken before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He...and if He kills me it is eternal death and I cannot appease Him or bribe Him and furthermore, when there are two roads before me, one leading to *Gan Eden* [paradise] and one to *Gehinom* [hell] and I don't know by which path I shall be taken, shall I not weep?

Then, after warning them that their fear of God should be no less than their fear of humans, he becomes unexpectedly authoritative and practical, even confident in the appropriateness of his actions:

At the moment of his departure [from the world], he said to them, Remove the vessels [from the room that they not become ritually impure due to a death in the room], and prepare a seat for King Hezekiah of Judea who is coming.

As I have suggested elsewhere,²⁵ R. Yohanan, who weeps at the prospect of heavenly judgment, having established for himself that he is indeed a "fearer of God", finds that he is freed from other fears. He can and does act, making a halakhic ruling about situations of ritual impurity, as though he were dealing with a theoretical case or one pertaining to another person. Could an outsider notice, or expect, that the law's applicability is now occasioned by the teacher's own death?

²⁵ Rosenak: *Roads*, 111-112.

Rabban Yohanan admits that he anticipates the arrival of King Hezekiah. Rashi opines that the Judean king of some one hundred and fifty years before, is coming to accompany R. Yochanan to the next world. If so, this is a dramatic scene indeed. King Hezekiah, the embodiment not only of piety but of kingship is coming to give his hand to the dying sage who negotiated with Rome for “Yavneh and her sages” so that study of Torah might outlive the Temple and the commonwealth. Would not the Judean king look upon R. Yochanan, the man who negotiated with the enemy in wartime, as a traitor?

Rabban Yohanan, who fears Heaven, is not afraid.

A Third Text

Our perplexity grows as we examine a short Biblical text and an even shorter rabbinic commentary on it that seem to say the very opposite of what we might expect from our two previous stories:

And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you? *Only this*: to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, to keep the Lord’s commandments and laws which I command you this day, to your good (Deut. 9:12-13).

To use a concept that this model shares with the previous (Language and Literature) one, these are “difficult” verses. In the presence of this comprehensive demand, for fear and love and service and obedience, can one really say “Only this (is requested)”? *What more could God possibly ask?* Here there is fear of God, and walking in His ways, and loving Him. What else is there?

To this question, the Talmud offers a succinct answer (*Berakhot* 33b): The “only this,” a great matter for all ordinary mortals, was a trivial matter for the one who spoke to God “face to face”: Moses. The message is clear. Everyone else is to learn from him, to emulate him, to see how this overwhelming and endless task of the spiritual life can come to look like “a small matter”. We have for what to aim though we cannot achieve it. Thus, the hero of this model in both his/her religious and secular varieties is constantly afraid; his “fear” is built into his or her existential situation. S/he always, even like Zusya and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, feels inadequate. But it is precisely the realization that one

can never rise to the level of Moses that gives strength to the person who must act and who believes that s/he will “only” be judged for not being him/herself. The reward, however conceived, is for the sincere attempt to “*be like* Moses for whom it was a small matter” but without the ability or even the intention to be *him*.

Such are the stories that figure large in the curriculum of the traditional-existential model. We may now briefly discuss two major characteristics of our “Traditional Existential” model of Education.

Freedom and the “Fear of Heaven”

(1) Ideally, the individual being educated should always maintain his or her integrity as an individual, autonomy and responsibility. For the religious teacher and pupil this means that choice and responsibility, however paradoxically, are to play large roles in the curriculum. Elsewhere²⁶ I have cited Van Cleve Morris, an existential philosopher of education, to the effect that the first time a child who tries to get out of being sent to the grocer dares to tell his mother, “I didn’t ask to be born,” she should rejoice. What the child is saying is that he is “not guilty” for living and therefore cannot be coerced (he “doesn’t have to”) buy eggs and milk “for her”. Why the joy? Her son now understands that, being relieved of guilt (for having been born), he is now responsible and must decide how to respond. He will judge the request and she will judge his response.

Hopefully, it won’t look like that! Hopefully, both mother and son will continue to live in a relationship of ever growing trust. Nevertheless, the rules have changed. The son, we may say, is no longer someone who can be sent to the grocer every five minutes (after all, what about his sister?). In Jewish terms, we may say that he has become a Bar Mitzvah: one who knows himself to be responsible for his decisions and actions. Paradoxically, he is now free to choose and he is responsible for his choice. Now, he is commanded.

Theologically, the most problematic feature of this model—in which responsibility and freedom are equally present—is that while ultimate values are ultimately binding, they become so as a consequence of choice. Once chosen, they make

²⁶ Rosenak: *Tree of Life Tree of Knowledge; Conversations with the Torah* (Boulder: Westview, 2001), 258.

a claim to absolute authority and the religious teacher will do everything that is educationally justified to bring about this choice in her pupils.. However she will not consider a child a criminal if he chooses otherwise, no matter how pained she may be.

This acceptance of the individual's choice as legitimate even when painful, will be unacceptable in many other traditional models. There it will be argued that absolute values are absolute precisely because they precede us into the world; we do not "have" these values but they "have us"; they are eternally and automatically binding. Yet the fact remains: While moral prescriptions continue to be binding, even if not individually chosen, this is patently not the way the public, even the modern Orthodox public, perceives religiously non-normative behavior and belief. Indeed, this tolerance of non-normative behavior points precisely to the "modernity" of the model.

Furthermore, since the educated person is always "on the road," the study of Torah is not only an aspect of socialization, nor simply an act of appropriating a Language and significant Literatures. Rather, the person who "sees things" through the prism of this model, studies in an attitude of self-search.

(2) As I have tried to show in a previous work,²⁷ the teaching of values here evokes a dialectic and deliberative approach. I shall spell this out.

At times, when we think of "teaching values" we envision impressing on the minds and hearts of children that they must distinguish between good and evil, between value and "anti-value". Thus the story of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32-33) impresses on us the iniquitous nature of idolatry. We are bidden to serve God alone. Here, then, we have a clear case of "right and wrong". Similarly we might say, with deceptive simplicity, that loving-kindness is good while hatred is bad. Why deceptive simplicity? Because here the matter is already not quite clear. When is loving-kindness "the value" while hatred is an anti-value? Are there not those (i.e., the incorrigibly wicked) whom we are commanded to hate? Was Aaron the high priest "weak" when he succumbed to the demand of the mob to build the Golden Calf? Or was he demonstrating his character as a "lover of peace"? It transpires that most of the absolute moral values we are to protect and maintain involve us in situations of dilemmas. True the values on the first tier

²⁷ Rosenak: *Roads*, 147-185.

(to borrow a picture from our first model) grant us identity and a clear moral sense, but until we discover the dilemmas in them, we don't know what we should actually do. When do we choose the path of peace and when the path of truth? They are seldom the same!

Take Aaron again. A *midrash* tells us that he loved to make peace between quarrelling people. He did this by telling each of the two, in turn, how the other regretted having offended his friend, whereupon they were reconciled; Aaron had made peace between them. But how about truthfulness? Was Aaron justified in lying to the “enemies” for the sake of peace? When may we tell white lies to reconcile people, and when is this illegitimate? What are possible ways out of the dilemma? We should note that, in this model, we have a deliberation; an instance of (possible) problem solving that revolves around Torah – and “learning” it.

To sum up this point: Teaching values is not mostly about “Do this and be good”, but, rather, creating sensitivity to the valuative problem that faces us as we stand before different and even contradictory statements, or recommendations, or norms. How can we reach a resolution? What shall we do if we can't find a resolution? What, in various situations, are the grounds of choice made accessible through the prism of “learning”?

Section Three

Models: Some Illustrative Uses

I have briefly pictured three models for the purpose of clarifying certain central questions in education, and Jewish education in particular. Those models, I have tried to show, are conceptual structures that help us to think about the issues and to locate underpinnings of the positions taken by educators. As noted, the ideological or normative questions that arise in this context can be summarized as follows: what do we consider in the current situation, to be acceptable or unacceptable, what would constitute the repair of the unacceptable and how do we move towards its *tikkun*, mending the world?

Language and Literatures: R. Soloveitchik and Zvi Lamm

How, for example, might Rabbi Soloveitchik utilize the concept of “Language and Literature” that characterizes our second model to explain the current Jewish situation, to

argue for its improvement and to envision effective mobilization for change as seen through the prism of the Halakhah? It can be argued that the idea of Language can serve to explicate the Halakhah as the pristine “Language of Judaism,” inviting Jews to believe and share in the unique destiny of Israel as normative in form and substance. “Literature,” in a Soloveitchikian view, then, would be not only commentary on the Bible and on the words of the Sages but everything that touches on the Language without itself *being* Language. These features of Literature would bring to the fore historical-national dimensions of Jewish existence, and a collective sense of history and obligation. R. Soloveitchik would argue that the inner world of personal religious experience is to be shaped by Language (i.e., by the Halakhah and its inner meaning). Such a conception of Language could “explain” the doctrinal axiom that Jewish halakhic discipline and demands are not to be tampered with. At the same time, the Halakhah should be explained and its “difficulties” addressed in the framework of a living and Language-driven Literature.

Clearly, one could enter the discussion of Language and Literature in contemporary Jewish life and education at a radically different point. Let us imagine, for example, Zvi Lamm’s response to the very notion of Language which, to him, is part and parcel of the problem of reactionary and enslaving indoctrination. He is likely to posit that modern thought and experience have exposed such conceptions as “Language” to be mere wishful thinking, grounded in an ultra-conservative ideology. In his model, those who have recourse to this term construct a static future in the light of a feverishly imagined past.

The argument about what we are calling Language brings into view a paradox within the Language-Literature model. In relatively serene epochs, Language had the status of the self-understood and it delineated “the world”. It was, in a sense, the model itself. Thus there would be little occasion to define this sentiment and give it a name except in the presence of non-Jews who “didn’t understand” or heretics who refused to. That which is self-understood needs no explication!

So what happens to Language in the contemporary situation of doubt and suspicion? Does it not become an indicator of ideological conviction “of some people” rather than an encompassing social reality of everyone? It would appear that that is

indeed the case. To illustrate: we have seen see that Lamm's development model rejects Language and thus maintains that everything is Literature. The "world" constitutes an arena of cultural activity without walls. Here, then, is an example of how various understanding of Language and Literature helps us to categorize and give form to differing ideologies of education. Those who look forward to an education of total openness and self-development without imposed norms posit that our problem, that prevents repair, is the very concept of "Language". They will find the "Literature only" conception congenial. On the other hand, there are those who say that all is Language, and think of education as being, ideally, an uncompromising transmission of the sacred or the pristinely classical.

And what about those who wish to be modern (living within plural and ever-changing Literatures), yet traditional (dedicated to enduring forms of Language and to classic "Literatures")? What are their options? Shall they endeavor to teach by the traditional model, somewhat modified for pragmatic reasons (in ways that the tradition allegedly finds acceptable), or shall they praise the "old" (i.e., wise) philosophers who construct a new model that incorporates not only new Literature, but even, however hesitatingly, new Language?

Tradition and Modernity: A New Model

We shall illustrate. Israel's long-time Minister of the Interior, the late Yosef Burg, a very sophisticated person, was once asked which word in such hyphenated terms as *Torah-V'Avodah*, (Torah and productive work); *Dati-Leumi* (National-Religious), or *Modern-Orthodoxy*, was the really important one: the more obviously traditional-Jewish Language oriented one or the more modern one? His answer was that the hyphen between each set of pairs was the most important of the three signs.

Burg was making a philosophical model-making statement. Even in the presence of the old model, he felt that a new one was being constructed that reflected a specific ideology, hence a specific model of change. In this model, *Avodah*, i.e., the word picture in which we see people working with their hands, engaged in worldly affairs and combining Zionist and religious activity, needs no apologies. Torah is not a frill and *Avodah* is not a compromise with the mundane in this new model, which has learned

from many others. Modern Orthodoxy is not an accommodation that makes room for both tradition and innovation, nor is it, as Haredi thinkers would say, a pernicious form of modernity that converts Judaism into a type of pale Literature, leaving the wide plains of experience and identity devoid of “Yiddishkeit”. Nor is it a form of tradition that gingerly makes overtures to modernity for the sake of its own (traditional) survival. Rather, so says the hyphen of Dr. Burg, it is a new model, with some destruction (such as the demystification of the ghetto experience) for the sake of construction (of Eretz Yisrael) before the heavenly redemption).

Separately and Together: Two Questions

I shall briefly pinpoint questions raised by each model separately and then raise a question about their possible inter-actions.

The first of our models begins its curricular explorations by turning to philosophers for adequate understandings of basic principle. As a result, its adherents will say that they alone implement principled education, in which difficult questions receive forthright answers. Yet, despite the orderliness that seems to characterize this model and its ability to cover the field of educational activity and to address all aspects of it, there is a crucial question to be addressed to it, namely, whether the metaphysical-principle model is meaningful and appropriate?

- In examining whether this model is both of the above, we may ask: do teachers, even those who speak unequivocally of “a Torah of truth,” primarily mean by this that education--as such--and Jewish education--in particular--rests on doctrinal explorations and pronouncements? Perhaps the narratives of the forefathers and mothers; of the giving of the Torah, of wanderings in the desert and the conquest; figure more prominently in our teaching? Do we not find our ideals often preceding our principles?

We have seen the issue arise in the controversy between Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai as to whether the heavens or the earth preceded in the Creation. What distinguishes one view and perspective from the other is obviously not simply “the facts of the case” or the doctrinally correct way of seeing things. Indeed, the Sages

resolve the problem by saying to each party to the dispute: Why shall we not agree that you are both right? The argument need not be useful in arriving at some objective truth though all would agree that there is much Torah to be learned from it. What we seem to have here is a conversation about what *meanings* can be found in the narrative of creation!

In moving once again to the Language-Literature model, we note that closely knit communities, in which Language really connotes an overwhelming reality, yet which are in some contact with modern rhetoric are particularly well served by this model. Only publics that live faithfully by them, that are both drawn to modernity yet are profoundly suspicious of it for it scorns the truth of their model, can make good use of it. A primary example would be the Haredi public. For example, they can use it to discover – and rediscover - that “everything serious is Language.” In a different fashion, Modern Orthodox communities find it useful for making diverse Literatures available, without sacrifice, so it is said, of (Jewish) Language. If, for example, someone maintains that “everything in Jewish Language is Halakhah” then vast expanses are left free for “universal” Literature!

Peters’ Paradox

The question I shall address with regard to the third model is a distinctly educational one. It was raised many years ago by the aforementioned British philosopher of education, Richard L. Peters, in his well-known essay, “Habit and Reason: The Paradox of Moral Education.”²⁸

What is the paradox of which he speaks? It is that we wish to educate to “Reason” (or to whatever overriding value and virtue stands at the pinnacle of our ideology) while the facts of gradual human development and maturation make it obvious that children, at an early stage, cannot really comprehend the ideal of the curriculum or what is “normative” about it. Thus, they must learn “Habit” before they are ready for “Reason.” The problem and paradox is that the Habits learned may undermine Reason. Habits are

²⁸ Richard L. Peters: “Reason and Habit; the Paradox of Moral Education”, in Peters: *Moral Development and Moral Education* (London: George Allan and Unwin, 1981), 45-60.

hard to break! How can one educate the whole personality to Reason (or, for traditional Jews who are “inside” the model of *Yir’at Shamayim*, to love and fear of God), when the deep or “real” motivations for pursuing this ideal are not yet comprehensible to the child?

We may suggest that the paradox may be addressed in Judaism as a matter of stages. We teach the performance of mitzvot before we talk about values. We stress the teaching of what I have called “explicit religion” (norms of behavior, socialization, initiation and imitation) before we deal directly with “implicit religiosity”, that which wells from the heart, conveys significance and emphasizes personality.²⁹ This does not mean that elements of Implicit religiosity should not be part and parcel of the curriculum from the first, or that children cannot philosophize, but that explicit teaching conveys the identity of the child, makes him or her part of the community and prepares the child for a life of mitzvot.

The devotee of the third model may fail to see the problem. She will point out that there are stories and commentaries for young children as well as for the mature. And also, that there is poetry and song in the life of commandment and community as well as in the inner life of spiritual search.

If this blending of spirit and law is to be cultivated, reaching towards some common Language in all three of our models, we may be able to learn from all of them and with all of them. That venture, of learning together may indeed undermine all existing and self-sufficient models. But the Torah did not descend from Sinai as a paradigm. Jewish faith must qualify the claim that there is one model, all-encompassing and exclusive; we are not bidden to serve conceptual models, but to serve God. If we confuse the one with the other, we may find ourselves worshipping idols. Indeed, if there is a striving for a common Language, the plentitude of models from which we can learn may be fortuitous.

²⁹ For my recent discussion of this issue, see Michael Rosenak: “Zelophehad’s Daughters, Religion and Jewish Religious Education,” *Journal of Jewish Education* 71:1 (2005), 3-21.