Ten Da'at

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ON OUR COVER: A Prayer for Teachers.
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CONTENTS

Ten Da'at, Official Publication of the Torah Education Network (T.E.N.), is a joint project of Educators Council of America, Torah Education Department of the World Zionist Organization, and Max Stern Division of Communal Services of Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University.

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Da'ati

We like to think of the times when we were children as having been simpler, less complex and jarring. Values and expectations seemed more clearly defined, outside stimuli and diversions less threatening and invasive.

Today, however, the world moves in staccatto allegro. Contemporary society is fueled by rapid technology, satellite media, and the everchanging computer and video. To today's child outer space is but a neighborhood beyond his own, and the mystery and mystique of tomorrow is a tangle of superconductors, microchips, and his own limitless imagination.

Today's teacher must contend with those forces and powers of the contemporary milieu that infiltrate his class. He must confront the world that nurtures his student, that is providing his heroes, his ideals, and his values. And that confrontation involves choosing between denial and negation, or the far more difficult task of culling and adapting. It is the wise and seasoned teacher who recognizes that as the times change so must the motivation.

For the Jewish Day School teacher the challenge is a taxing one, for as today's students arrive in school with fewer and fewer of the Jewish basics, the teacher must work ever harder to stimulate and motivate. Yesterday, a child clearly understood the priority of Torah in his life; he was Jewishly conversant, familiar, and motivated. Today, knowledge is weak, motivation is tepid, at best. To succeed, the contemporary teacher must begin not at the point at which the schools of old began, but at the point of having to motivate. And motivation means keying in to the mind-set of a student, creating a sense of relevance in one's approach and immediacy in one's lesson. It means firmly establishing the Torah as the core and focus of one's teachings, while at the same time using the contemporary tools and methods that are most familiar to the student. If the balance is maintained and the focus is clear then, as he grows, the student will realize that they were but tools to help him learn Torah. And these tools serve two purposes. They motivate a student, thereby enabling him to appreciate the relevance of the Torah, and they serve to enrich, enhance, and in some instances, to teach.

Ours are indeed the best of times and the worst of times. For although, on the one hand, we are bombarded by so much that has to be overcome, on the other hand, never has there been such an opportunity for knowledge and Jewish growth. Whereas a child who had previously been unfamiliar with primary sources and textual skills found his intellectual growth stunted, today it is virtually impossible for anyone eager for Torah to remain ignorant. There are Anglo-Jewish hooks that translate, amplify and codify; there are computer programs that challenge an advanced student and those that assist a slower one; there are video presentations on mitzvot, halachot, and chesed; and there are numerous educational tools that serve as aids and support systems to the ultimate goal of teaching Torah.

Most importantly, however, there are creative and dynamic teachers whose enthusiasm and commitment result in exciting classrooms. **TEN DA'AT** is pleased to present, in this issue, a number of the quality professionals. They are men and women who have the Torah as their objective and the best of technology and creativity as their tools. They are professionals who incorporate theatre, video, and computer to their Torah classrooms; who can maximize the use of the library as an effective teaching tool; who successfully utilize the vast amount of Anglo-Jewish books to stimulate and challenge students; who have combined their scholarship and their skill produce innovative approaches to the teaching of History, Chumash, and Midrash whose creativity can transform a lesson into a happening; and whose sensitivity and professionalism offer insights into the values and moral development of children as well as halakhic issues relevant to the

Today's student is more sophisticated so are our teachers. Today's student must contend with the forces and powers of the temporary society, but so must our teachers. Today's student wants color, energy, intrigue. Share yours with us so that our teachers may achieve their goal. And what is that goal? To motivate and to teach, to motivate a student, not just for today, but come back tomorrow.

TEN DA'AT hopes that it is a small step towards that tomorrow.

Fayge Sof

Set the Stage for Jewish Education!

Dr. John A. Krug

Anyone associated with Jewish education today, whether Rabbi, administrator, teacher, lay leader, or parent, is painfully aware of the myriad of multidimensional problems facing the field. The combination of theological tensions, philosophical disagreements, and the economic realities of education does not bode well for achieving unmitigated success in the future of Jewish education. The dearth of deeply dedicated, totally committed and truly talented people willing to enter the field is both a side effect and a cause of the woes facing that venerable institution known as Jewish Education.

This piece does not propose to be a panacea for the problems that we, who are in professional Jewish education, must confront; nor does it in any way attempt to undermine or minimize the importance of formal educational technique and the more traditional manner of pedagogic approach. Nevertheless, in our fast-paced, high-tech, socially straining, and pressure-packed environment, it behooves the educator to constantly assess, evaluate, examine, and probe alternative methods of imparting knowledge to young people.

RABBI JOHN KRUG, a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, has also earned degrees in Education and Drama. He is the Assistant Producer of the "Fantasticks," the world's longest running musical, and has worked on 250 professional productions. He is the Director of Guidance and Counseling as well as on the Judaic faculty of the Frisch School in Paramus, New Jersey. He is Consulting Psychologist at the Hillel School in Deal, New Jersey as well as maintaining a private practice.

The Jewish educational system, not being immune to the onslaugbt of the surrounding society and barrage of often clashing cultural components, has allowed several factors to infiltrate its structure. One, for example, is a product of the mandated superlative world we live in and by: "more," "bigger," "better." The message is clear; quantity supercedes quality. The number of memorized ***mishnayot*** is more important than the understanding of meaningful ***mishnayot***. This whole notion is being reinforced by our computer-controlled world where educating our children has digressed into programming our children. This has yielded a form of regurgitational education which can be recognized by a child's ability to spit back a preprogrammed answer, albeit correct, as long as one does not ask for further clarification with such questions as "how" or "why."

There is nothing wrong with taking pride in the amount of material our children cover, but we need to ask ourselves, "At what price?" A child is a reservoir of ideas, thoughts, creativity, imagination, sensitivity, awareness, spontaneity, and innovation. These are, in fact, the very same qualities which motivated our ***meforshim***, were harnessed by our ***halachists***, produced the lively discussions found in our ***gemorrahs***, and, in general, led to the wealth and beauty of the material produced by our foremost commentators and codifiers, Rabbis, and writers. The value of yesteryear was to question, analyze, examine, assess, explore, discuss, conjecture, hypothesize, and comment. How unfortunate it is today that in some cases these have become the attributes which some educators believe slow down the system, impede progress in this mad dash to quantity, when these attributes could be the antithesis of preprogrammed children. It would be a shame if our educational process were to temper, if not crush, the child's reservoir of ideas. It is no longer a question of supplying answers; the issue is to be willing to sit and listen to the questions.

What needs to be done is to develop and utilize a means of blending our own efforts with a child's own natural resources. Creative dramatics, which covers the gamut from prepared scripts, spontaneous plays, use of puppetry, scroll theaters, dramatizations and games to role playing, sociodramas, improvisations, filming, videotaping and simulation exercises, is one possible alternative in addition to the many other forms of informal educational techniques which have been developed.

There has always been a reluctance within the collective Jewish subconscious to condone, or even recognize, a positive use for drama in the Jewish educational process. Drama is too closely linked to theater and, indeed, the many references throughout the *gemorrah* and *midrash* to **טרטיאות ולקרקסאות**, theaters and circuses, is overwhelmingly, and understandably, negative. If one traces ***Chazal's*** exposure to "theaters and circuses," one can begin to comprehend the justification for such negative sentiments to this art form. Furthermore, if one traces the history of the development of theater, it is easy to ascertain that the modern use of the terms "theater" and "circus" bears little resemblance to the notion of "theater" and "circus" in the Roman era. The Ludi Romani, instituted in 387 B.C.E., was a major building block in theater history;

Continued

which did contain plays, but was actually an official religious festivity. There are some suggestions that the origin of the word "lewd" owes its meaning to the Roman Ludi. This was the "theater" ***Chazal*** was exposed to. In fact, the theater of Rome was based on the slogan "panem et circenses" (bread and circuses). The enormous arena, Circus Maximus, which was built for mass spectacles, witnessed many animal baitings, gladiatorial games and religious offerings. This was the "circus" alluded to in the ***gemorrah***. Therefore, ***Chazal's*** rejection of a Jew's involvement or association with "theaters and circuses" is both reasonable and understandable.

However, creative drama is different. Creative drama can be defined by saying that to create is to bring to life, or to make something, to originate. What emerges comes from within the person or the group; it is ***not*** the imposition of something already completed. Creative drama is to build, through imagination, innovation, and original thinking. What is not required in creative dramatics is a particular skill or talent. What is needed is patience on the part of both the teacher and student in allowing a creative process to unfold. Creative dramatics is not a recreational activity that just fills time, not a **bitul z'man**, but is rather designed to help students learn, and achieve specific goals or objectives in an active rather than passive climate. If children are not allowed to use their natural resources, there is little opportunity for spontaneous growth and intellectual advancement. Rather, what educators have achieved is merely a duplication of their own knowledge.

There are several distinct advantages to incorporating this type of approach into teaching methodology. A major one is that creative dramatics offers a technique for learning for those students who do not adapt readily to the more traditional teaching methods, or for those students who need a high degree of external motivation. There has been a tendency within the ranks of Jewish education to write these children off as "nonconformists," "disinterested," "not really cut out for Yeshiva education," "not able to handle a double curriculum," et al. It goes without saying that creative dramatics is particularly beneficial for the special child, the learning disabled, or for those children with attentional deficit disorders or minimal brain dysfunction. However, the use of dramatics should not be limited to this segment of our student population. Issues ranging from stories in the ***chumash***, discussions in the ***gemorrah***, and ***halacha***, to textual approaches of the ***meforshim***, sociohistorical issues such as shtetl, Holocaust and Russian Jewry can all be taught, and learned, using creative dramatics.

In the younger grades, puppets can be used in a most creative fashion. Very often, the more quiet children, a bit on the shy and withdrawn side in the classroom, come into their own when they can work with puppets. In the older grades, sociodramas and filming can be used very effectively. Though the purpose of this article is not to serve as an exhaustive list of things to do, several illustrations will demonstrate how these techniques can be applied.

In one instance, the class was made into a ***Bes Din***, and the pros and cons of the Nazarite debated. The lively give-and-take which unfolded, identically paralleled the discussion in the ***gemorrah***. Following our own discourse, we then returned to the text of the ***gemorrah***, which now had come alive, and had become meaningful and relevant for the class.

In another instance, the class decided to make a film, showing how ***messorah*** is passed on from one generation to the next. Comparing Torah to water, the film, entitled ***Thirst***, had several scenes including issues of continuity, persecution, preservation, enemies from within, and the future (?!). More important than the fact that the students wrote, directed, acted in, and filmed the movie themselves, was the fact that they also learned and studied all the sources in ***tanach*** and ***gemorrah*** which were relevant to the theme of the film. They then prepared a resource book to use along with the film, and these high schoolers then went into the younger grades to use the movie as a trigger film to teach the children in the elementary school. The benefits, including the fact that these high schoolers actually served as teachers themselves, and enjoyed it (!), are obvious.

In a typical sociodrama, a member of the class is confronted by an invader from an alien planet, and must defend his Jewish religion and ritual. Though the kinds of discussions that emerge parallel those found in Maimonides' ***Guide of the Perplexed***, or Yehuda Halevi's ***The Kuzari***, such discussions are more likely to take place when the student, no longer in the "safe" confines of a Jewish school, encounters on a college campus or in the work place, similar questions.

An active simulation game was developed in order to convey to our Westernized students the plight of Jews behind the Iron Curtain. They had to confront KGB interrogations, long lines of waiting for visas, passports and papers, and enforced "exile." In addition, textual material relating to ***pi yon shvuyim*** was covered. A greater under standing and awareness of Soviet Jewry emerged, as well as a deeper appreciation of our own freedom, all too often taken for granted.

Just because creative dramatics may be an ***informal*** educational technique, does not make it any less a ***valid*** educational technique. Teachers are still required to have educational goals in mind, certain learning objectives to accomplish, methods to be employed, and resources and materials to be used. In other words, this is serious business, which, in certain circumstances, actually requires more preparation time than a more traditional lesson plan.

There are many educational resources available for developing such creative techniques. The Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, JERAC (Jewish Educational Resource and Advisory Center) in Boston, ARE (Alternatives in Religious Education) in Denver, or CAJE (Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education) located on both coasts are excellent sources of information, in addition to the resource centers now available at virtually every board of Jewish education in the country. The local public library is also a wealth of information, and contains much that can easily be adapted for Jewish educational use. It requires a commitment of time and effort, not even dollars, to research such options. Energetic and daring educators will hopefully develop more such programs in the future.

It is time to counter the preprogrammed robotic students that are emerging from some of our schools, and stimulate the vast potential of creativity, imagination, awareness, innovation, and sensitivity that our children have to offer—if given the opportunity. In other words, let's set the stage for Jewish education.

Finding a Methodology in the Teaching of Torah

Second in a series of articles exploring the structural elements of the developmental lesson.

Rabbi David Eliach

Surely, Hillel did it best. When asked by the impatient convert to render the meaning of Torah while he stood on one foot, Hillel responded that the Torah taught man to do unto others as he would others do unto him. Perhaps one could sympathize with Shammai for his action in throwing out the convert. For the truth is how does one go about teaching this mass of material that is so diverse, whose content spans all of humanity's experiences and whose style in the telling of the human story ranges from the narrative to the poetic and to the forensic. Of course, what Hillel did was to subsume this seemingly disparate material within the framework of a religious imperative.

In a much later century, Immanuel Kant would define the methodology that Hillel used as a process that we utilize to know a given object in its wholeness. By and large, modern educational practitioners have employed two strategies to achieve this desired end: the lecture and the developmental lesson with its use of the Socratic method. In the former methodology, the teacher develops for the students the factual content of the material within the context of the teacher's perspective. In the latter, the instructor, through student participation in the process of the lesson, develops a similar content.

In practically all academic disciplines, the subject defines the material and the perspective. If one teaches history, one explores the given data of any period within the context of political, social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors. An instructor of literature will probe a text in terms of its esthetics and the narrative content in terms of very similar perspectives. More confining, the sciences and mathematics are also taught as "facts" in relation to overriding principles.

However, when we come to the teaching of Torah, we are beset with a different problem. On the surface, ***Sefer Bereshit*** can be taught as if one were teaching a forum of prose. ***Shir Hashirim*** can be taught within the esthetic framework of poetry; on the other hand, ***Parashat Mishpatim*** can easily be taught as legal material.

Yet the Torah is more than that. It is story and it is poetry; it is history and it is law; it is anthropology and it is sociology. But whatever human experience it is, it is informed by G-d and by a religious belief. Therefore, though on superficial levels, there will be a similar methodology in the teaching of Torah to the methodologies of secular subjects, the instruction in Torah demands that we find an appropriate methodology.

The reason for this need is that ultimately we do not teach ***Tanach*** to either develop Hebraic linguistic skills or historical perspectives. Although the latter are valuable by-products of such study, the overriding aim of teaching Torah is to inculcate in our student body the religious and ethical values of our people. The Torah is to be understood in terms of its holiness—its religious imperative. The teacher must learn to correlate the specific content of Torah to the commandments of G-d.

Unfortunately, the teaching of Torah has often been narrow in its approach. There are many who teach Torah ***pasuk*** by ***pasuk***. Each verse is expounded upon, often word for word. What is missing is an organic approach. The ***pesukim*** are taught as isolated items, the parts having little relationship to the whole. Then, there are teachers who employ solely secular methodologies. For example, in such a teaching of the story of King David and Bathsheba, David would emerge as a great sinner. Contemporary psychological and literary insights would inform the lesson, but the teacher would be achieving an incorrect aim. He would fail to see that what the Bible had in mind in the telling of the story was that a great man admitted to having sinned, and that even a king is subject to G-d's commandments. In the above two approaches, the first had correct aims but poor methodologies; in the second, the methodology was correct but the aim was wrong.

There is a third method that is equally unsatisfactory. In this approach, the teacher so overlays commentary on the text that the students become confused as to what is Torah text and what is midrash. A student must learn the differences between commentary and text.

In part III of this segment of articles, I will develop the methodology that is needed in effectively teaching Torah. ■

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Did Vashti Have a Tail?

Relections on Teaching Midrash Aggadah in Elementary Day Schools.*

Penina Besdin Kraut

I am a teacher of ***Tanach***, and midrash is part of my daily experience. Not that I teach midrash as a subject area, nor that I even quote midrash every time I walk into the classroom, but midrash certainly plays a central role in my understanding of ***Tanach*** and is always an integral part of any class preparation. To teach ***Tanach*** without the benefit of midrash is unthinkable; to teach midrash without some careful forethought and consideration should be equally untenable.

About a year ago, when my elder daughter was in fourth grade and my son in first, we were discussing the ***parsha*** of the week at the ***Shabbat*** table, as is our custom. My son had been marvelously well-prepared and was reciting in great detail all that he had learned in class. My daughter was fidgeting and seemed to be impatient with the lengthy review of the ***sidrah***. She was able to contain herself for just so long, and then she suddenly burst forth "Yehuda, what are you talking about? You're making up stories! That's ***not*** in the ***chumash***! I've learned that ***chumash*** already, and what you're saying is not written there." Racheli's indignation was legitimate, and Yehuda's perplexity just as real, for he had been telling the story faithfully, as his teacher had told it to him, with every midrash intact!

What we have here is a vivid example of a common discrepancy in what we teach our children. On the one hand, we teach the integrity of the Torah text and the importance of every single letter as written; on the other hand, we tell our children stories from the Torah with midrashim of the Rabbis woven into the narrative so tightly that there is no distinction between the narrative itself and the insights of our Rabbis. As a result, we invite inevitable confusion. We must distinguish between what is actually written in the **תורה שבכתב** and what is added by the **תורה שבעל פה**, so that when our children go to prove their point from the Torah text, they are not taken aback to find that it simply is not there.

Another aspect of teaching midrashim in elementary school that deserves attention is the process of selection. There must be a process of choosing which midrash to teach. We cannot and do not have to share every comment of our Rabbis on a particular issue. As teachers it is always our responsibility to use educational judgment in what we teach, and I believe that this applies to midrash as well. If a midrash helps to illustrate a point within the context of the lesson I have planned, then I will by all means use it. If a midrash delineates a problem or issue around which I want to build a discussion, then I most certainly would include it. If a midrash fills in gaps in the narrative that otherwise would be incomprehensible, or if a midrash teaches a **מוסר השכל** which can and should be appreciated by my class, then I have a duty to bring it to their attention. But I am not required to teach every midrash just because it is there. Midrash is a tool for learning; in elementary school it is not a subject in and of itself.

Rashi, the ***chumash*** teacher par excellence, clearly supports the notion of selection in dealing with midrash. On the phrase "and they heard" in ***Bereshit*** 3:8, Rashi states:

> "There are many ***aggadic*** midrashim and our Sages have already arranged them properly in ***Bereshit Rabba*** and in other midrashic anthologies. I, however, have come only (to establish) the ***peshat*** of the verse, or such ***aggadot*** as resolve the language of Scripture in its context."[1]

The purpose of our teaching midrash ma not always be the same as Rashi's, but wha ever we choose to be the focus of our less should be enhanced and further explain by the midrash we choose to teach. If th midrash does not complement or suppl ment our intended goal, then like Rashi, should not include it in our lesson plans.

Another factor to consider when decidi whether to teach a midrash is to consid how that midrash is likely to be received b our students when we teach it, as well a how it may be reinterpreted by them a fe years hence. Whenever she taught ***Megill Esther***, my colleague would teach the mi rash that Vashti grew a tail. Unfailing whenever I taught ***Megillat Esther*** to gr uates of her class (since Purim tends to repe itself annually, so too does the learning the ***Megillah***), one of the first question would receive would be a reference to th midrash. In the younger grades the questi would usually reflect all the excitemen incredulity, and enthusiasm of the young child to whom the wilder the fantasy t more endearing the notion—"Did Vash really have a tail, Mrs. Kraut?" (Tell again, won't you?) In the upper grades, es cially those of the preteens, the question variably would take on a different tone "Did Vashti really have a tail, Mrs. Krau (Do you truly believe that? Come on, no

Student reaction to what we teach can be ignored. If there is a danger that we may sowing seeds of cynicism, rebellion, or o right disbelief by a particular midrash, th wouldn't it be preferable ***not*** to teach it? not mean to suggest that anything diffic or uncomfortable for us in the teaching our Rabbis ought to be avoided, but I believe an honest evaluation should be m by the teacher if, in fact, teaching midrash risks more than it adds. Then we should keep in mind that by choosing to teach a particular midrash on the ele

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tary school level, one does not decree that it should never, or will never, be learned. By making that choice, one simply uses educational judgment to suggest that perhaps it would be better handled at another stage of student development.

The most apparent, yet most neglected factor in selecting midrashim to use in the classroom, is the decision as to whether one understands the midrash one intends to teach. It should be quite obvious that you can't teach what you don't comprehend, and yet, I believe, it happens all too often to teachers when teaching midrashim. For those teachers who address midrash at its face value and regard its message in its literal sense alone, I suppose this comment bears no meaning, for as long as they know the translation of every word in the midrash, they consider that they understand it. For me, both personally and pedagogically, that is an unacceptable and impractical stance, particularly if one teaches on the junior high school level. For example, how does one tell sixth, seventh, and eighth graders that the Rabbis say that Vashti grew a tail, and leave it at that? In the human experience, do people have tails? Can one sincerely expect one's students to accept the spontaneous growth of a tail on the Queen of Shushan? Perhaps it was a miracle, for anything is indeed possible if ***Hashem*** so decrees. Certainly true, yet blatant miracles and deviations of nature are not common experiences and would certainly have been recorded in the text to be preserved for posterity—like the plagues of Egypt or the splitting of the Red Sea—had they occurred even at the time of Esther. I cannot accept the position that the midrash here is filling in for us a revealed miracle not included in the text.

How then, as a teacher, do I handle this midrash concerning Vashti's tail? I can simply decide that since I do not understand this midrash, I will not relate it to my class. To merely present a midrash in order for it to be ridiculed is counterproductive. I have too much respect for the Rabbis to present them in an outlandishly inexplicable manner, and too much concern for my precarious preteen students to put them into a position where they must choose between respect for ***chazal*** and their knowledge of what seems impossible and nonsensical within reality. If all I have to present to them is that the Rabbis say that Vashti grew a tail, then I will choose ***not*** to teach this midrash.

However, I have another alternative. If I can take this midrash and interpret the words in such a way that an inner meaning emerges which conforms to reason and reveals a hidden truth, and thereby highlights the purpose of midrash and the wisdom and insight of our Rabbis, then I will choose to teach and share this midrash with my class.

Midrash is a tool for learning; in elementary school it is not a subject in and of itself.

As the Rambam says, "...the sages knew as clearly as we do the difference between the impossibility of the impossible and the existence of that which must exist....[The] sages did not speak nonsense, and it is clear...that the words of the sages contain both an obvious and hidden meaning. Thus, whenever the sages spoke of things that seem impossible, they were employing the style of riddle and parable..."[2]

In this vein, I have offered the following suggested interpretation to my classes concerning the midrash of Vashti's tail. Who has a tail? A horse, a dog, a cat, a cow... in short, animals have tails. When Vashti was called to appear before Ahasverosh and his guests, she became so enraged that she lost all sense of reason and logical thought and grew a tail. She became as irrational as an animal, and as emotionally caught up in getting back at her attacker as any animal naturally would.

This is my own interpretation of the midrash, and I emphasize to my classes that it is only ***my*** understanding, and therefore they are free to accept or reject it, just as you the reader are free to do. What is important here is not this particular midrashic interpretation, but rather the approach to midrash which I am trying to convey. The midrash is never nonsensical, and elementary school children should never be put into a position where they are likely to draw that conclusion. The wisdom of our Rabbis is a given fact. It is our job to release that wisdom and offer suggestions to unlock the parables and allegorical language frequented by the Rabbis. If we are uncomfortable with that role in principle,[3] or if we are unable to fulfill that role when dealing with a particular midrash, then let's acknowledge our shortcoming and admit openly to our class that we don't comprehend the true intent of the midrash, or let us choose not to deal with that midrash in class at all. To simply quote the midrash, translate the words, and let the rest of the pieces fall where they may is to my mind clearly irresponsible and a disservice to our students. ■

****The above article is dedicated to the memory of my father, Rabbi Morris Besdin, ע"ה who taught me to love Tanach and appreciate the Midrashim.*** P.B.K.

[1]Translation taken from Nehama Leibowitz, ***On Teaching Tanakh*** (Torah Education Network, 1986), p. 39.

[2]See Rambam, "Introduction to Perek Helek," Isadore Twersky, ***A Maimonides Reader*** (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1972), p. 409.

[3]Ibid., pp. 401-410.

Top TEN Profile:

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan *z"l*: An Appreciation

Rabbi Pinchas Stolper

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's meteoric rise as one of the most effective, persuasive, scholarly and prolific exponents of Judaism in the English language came to an abrupt end on January 28, 1983, with his sudden death at the age of 48. Rabbi Kaplan was a multi-faceted, uniquely creative and talented author, scholar, thinker, rabbi and educator who touched the lives of thousands. The forty-seven volumes that were his life's work accounted for a qualitative and quantitative leap in Jewish publishing, making a host of difficult topics and concepts available to the English-reading public.

In the course of a writing career spanning only twelve years, Aryeh Kaplan became known to Jewish youth and adult readers for such books as ***Waters of Eden—The Mystery of the Mikvah; Sabbath—Day of Eternity; G-d, Man and Tefillin; Tzitzis—The Thread of Light; The Light Beyond; Adventures in Chassidic Thought (An Anthology); The Handbook of Jewish Thought; The Bahir***—a commentary and translation; ***Meditation and the Bible; Meditation and Kaballah, Jewish Meditation*** and ***Made in Heaven—A Jewish Wedding Guide***.

Rabbi Kaplan was a resourceful and creative translator, as his recent volume, ***The Living Torah***, attests. A clear, contemporary translation of the Five Books of Moses, ***The Living Torah***, remains true to the original Hebrew and to Jewish tradition. It includes notes, alternate translations, maps, illustrations, diagrams, charts, cross-references and an annotated bibliography. This extraordinary work has been hailed by scholars and students alike as the most readable and complete translation of the Torah yet produced. Yet, even this achievement pales with the knowledge that ***The Living Torah*** was accomplished by one man, in nine months, while similar translations have required an editor-in-chief, a group of translators and a staff of researchers, illustrators and other specialists who labored for many years to complete their task. Rabbi Kaplan also translated ***The Way of God*** by Luzzato's ***Derech Hashem***; the seven-volume ***Torah Anthology***—a translation of Yaakov Culi's ***Yalkut Meam Loez***, the classical Sephardic commentary on the Torah, the ***Passover Haggadah*** and ***Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom***, the writings of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav.

Rabbi Kaplan was born in New York City and was educated in the Torah Voda'as Mir Yeshivos in Brooklyn. After years of study at Jerusalem's Mir Yeshiva, he was ordained by some of Israel's foremost rabbinic authorities.

Rabbi Kaplan earned a Master's degree in physics and was listed in Who's Who in physics in the United States. "I use my physics background to analyze and systematize data, very much like a physicist would deal with physical reality," Rabbi Kaplan once described his method of research.

I first encountered this extraordinary individual when I spotted his article on "Immortality in the Soul," (in *Intercom*, the Journal of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists) and was taken by his unique ability to explain a difficult topic usually reserved for advanced scholars

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RABBI PINCHAS STOLPER is the Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union.

almost completely untouched previously—in English so simple that it was possible for these concepts to be understood by any intelligent reader. It was clear that this special ability could fill a significant voice in English Judaica.

When I invited Rabbi Kaplan to write on the concept of *tefillin* for the Orthodox Union's National Conference of Synagogue Youth, he completed the ninety-six page *G-d, Man and Tefillin*—with sources and footnotes from the Talmud, Midrash and Zohar—in less than two weeks. The book—masterful, original, comprehensive, inspiring yet simple—set a pattern which was to characterize all of his succeeding works.

A soft-spoken, unassuming individual, modest and self-effacing despite his spreading renown and popularity, Aryeh Kaplan was an activist in NCSY, a firm believer in acquainting unaffiliated and alienated Jewish youth with their heritage. He was a prime force behind the *teshuva* movement, the return to Jewish observance. "Throughout history, Jews have always been observant," he noted in an interview. "The teshuva movement is just a normalization. The Jewish people are sort of getting their act back together again. We are just doing what we are supposed to be doing." Indeed, his books reflect a similar, upbeat philosophy. The message he tried to get across was that "Judaism is a live, growing concern. A person looking for meaning in life needn't go anyplace further."

Aryeh Kaplan's unusual warmth, sincerity and total dedication to Torah were an inspiration to the thousands he reached personally. His home was always open, his table was a mecca for individuals in search, always crowded with Sabbath guests and students. He traveled far and wide to share his knowledge and commitment with young people at seminars, retreats and college campuses.

Rabbi Aryeh Moshe Eliyahu ben Shmuel Kaplan abandoned a promising career in physics, deciding instead to devote himself totally to the dissemination of Torah. He succeeded in uniting many elements in one personality—he was the Talmudic sage, the man of *halacha*, the master of western civilization and the scientist, with an uncanny grasp of *kaballah*, Jewish mysticism and chassidic thought.

In the process of bringing Torah to the masses, Rabbi Kaplan revealed much of what was previously hidden. His mind contained libraries of books, waiting to be put into writing. It was the will of the Lord that so much be revealed and no more. ■

Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of Aryeh Kaplan

PART I

Rabbi Baruch Rabinowitz

INTRODUCTION

I once asked Rabbi Kaplan why he gave so much of his invaluable time to attend the conventions of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth.

He replied that he felt it very important to personally interact with the people for whom he was writing. The results of his efforts show that he not only identified and addressed the dilemmas and doubts of those whom he met but he simultaneously provided a wellspring of information for even the most accomplished scholar. The articles, pamphlets, anthologies, and books he authored reveal the richness and depth of Jewish life as expressed through mitzvos. While drawing from a multitude of varied primary sources including the secretive world of Kabbalah his writings are characterized by use of nontechnical language, order, and clarity which define and categorize both the simple and the complex. He excites hy creating a problem and solving it and by comprehensively analyzing each issue. While some of his writings are best suited to provide direction for the hesitant, others could enhance the comprehension of every reader.

The reviewer will attempt to provide a synopsis of the work of Rabbi Kaplan and offer a possible focus or use for that work in an educational setting. Works will be presented by topic—Mitzvos, Hashkofoh, Chassidus, and Kabbalah, General, Translations.

I. MITZVOS

Each pamphlet in this series begins with a practical introduction and guide for the unfamiliar, and concludes with mystical meanings and relevance. In a high school setting the series would serve as excellent supplementary reading, incentive projects, or as an introduction to texts relevant to that mitzvah.

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Tzitzith—A Thread of Light
O.U./NCSY 1984—95 Pages

What do passion, clothes, power of choice, self-control, and the serpent of Eve have in common? Tzitzith! In a 95-page booklet we are exposed to the mystery of tzitzith and majesty of tallit. It includes an illustrated chapter on making your own and another which touches the four corners of the physical, spiritual, and historical worlds to offer an appreciation of a mitzvah easy to fulfill yet extremely meaningful.

Tefillin: G-d, Man and Tefillin
O.U./NCSY 1973—80 Pages

This short, well-illustrated volume is a very basic introduction to the why and how of tefillin, enhanced by an understanding of its metaphysical meaning. It concludes with a compendium of excerpts from Midrash, Talmud, Kabbalah, and Chassidic thought. It should be part of all seventh and eighth grade pre-Bar Mitzvah learning.

Waters of Eden: The Mystery of Mikvah
O.U./NCSY 1978

In ninety-one pages of penetrating clarity the laws of the establishment, construction, and varied uses of mikvah are lucidly presented. It is not meant to be halakhically definitive but ex-

plains the difficult concept of mikvah illuminating tumah and tahara by emphasizing the sanctity of marriage and intimate relations, employing a theme of "harmony with nature." In one unique chapter the reader experiences the richness, depth, and challenge of Biblical exegesis as the author extracts the laws of mikvah from the precise wording of the Biblical text. This could be read and discussed in the upper grades of high school and in all forms of adult learning.

Sabbath: Day of Eternity
O.U./NCSY 1974

Shabbat—the only ritual of the Ten Commandments
Shabbat—a central expression and fortification of our belief in the Omnipotent
Shabbat—not a proverbial day of rest—it is a life-enhancing force.

In fifty-one "quick" pages the author ties the Shabbat of creation to the Shabbat of the exodus from Egypt to its role as a microcosm of the ultimate Shabbat—of the messianic era. With a chapter devoted to describing the thirty-nine forbidden categories of work and another offering practical advice on how to enter the inviting, warm, enriching environment of Shabbat, this booklet serves as a very basic introduction and a springboard to understanding and appreciating Shabbat.

Made in Heaven—
A Jewish Wedding Guide
Moznaim Publishing Co.

This is really two books in one. It provides the uninitiated with a very basic guide to the Jewish wedding from initial preparations through the end of Sheva Brachot. All relevant texts and brachot are translated and explained. The Guide also provides the learned and the scholar with extensive footnotes and commentary for the sources of all halakhot and customs according to various Jewish traditions. There is a clear, informative discussion on nonhalakhic themes of "beshert" and love. It can also be uniquely useful in contrasting the prevalent non-Jewish ideas of love and marriage with authentic Jewish understanding of those ideas.

II. FOUNDATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

These books and pamphlets are designed to outline, define, discuss, and transmit some of the most crucial fundamental truths of Judaism in language readily accessible to the average reader. Some are introductory while others are more advanced.

The Handbook of
Jewish Thought
Moznaim Publishing Co. 1979—286 Pages

Modeled after the Rambam's *Yad Hachazakah*, this clearly written book exposes us to a systematic presentation of ideas, tenets, and philosophies which form the backbone of Judaism. The book includes discussions on Foundation, G-d, Man, Israel, The Mitzvot, Inspiration, The Torah, Prophets, Tradition, Sanhedrin, Authority, Halakha, and Custom. Although chapters flow from one to another each can also be read and learned as a separate entity. The copious comprehensive footnotes, extensive lists, and thorough index makes this equally useful for the erudite scholar, searching educator, and the uninformed. In an educational setting it is an excellent reference book. It can be used as a text in a more advanced high school class or excerpted for introductory background information prior to delving into an area.

Maimonides Principles:
The Fundamentals of Jewish Faith
O.U./NCSY 1975, 1984

The thirteen "Ikrei Emuneh" are the cornerstone and the starting point of study of Emunah, Jewish belief. In 101 pages the author translates passages from some of the many writings of the Rambam which elucidate those principles and their parallel in Yigdal. At the conclusion of each chapter is a list of stimulating and provocative questions. This booklet is particularly useful as a class project or as preparatory work for a scheduled discussion.

If You Were G-d
O.U./NCSY—82 Pages

A composite of three separate but related topics. The first, "If You Were G-d," presents a thought-provoking microcosm of our world by "playing G-d." The reader is led through a series of challenges and thoughts ultimately positing that understanding the goodness of G-d, life in a Torah society and the mission of the Jewish people must overcome the difficulty of piercing philosophical, historical, and practical questions which trouble many and have sent others looking elsewhere.

The second, entitled "Immortality of the Soul," delves into the midrash and Talmud to explain the function, challenge, power, and immortality of the neshama—the soul. It offers a fascinating glimpse of the role of neshama in the World of Reward (Gan Eden) and the World of Retribution (Gehenem).

The third, "A World of Love," contains poignant discussions on the purpose of creation, free will, this world and the world to come, and the role of the physical world vis-à-vis man's spiritual mission.

This trilogy is particularly relevant to upper teens, collegiates, and adult education study groups.

The Infinite Light
O.U./NCSY—61 Pages

The philosophical imperative of the first three commandments and various attributes of G-d are carefully and methodically explored. Achieving understanding of G-d's relationship to Man and the world, in so far as we can, is the lifelong aim of a Jew, because belief in G-d is unique to man and innate to the Jewish people.

This booklet may best benefit those who feel the need to directly confront the issue of the existence of G-d.

The Real Messiah
Composite of small pamphlets

This series of pamphlets discusses the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, Messianism and Jesus. They are eminently readable by high school students and up. They could be used to present initial counterarguments to the doubting soul or, where deemed necessary, to arm one with the necessary ammunition to fulfill the Mishnaic decree "Da Mah Le'hashiv le'apikores"—know what to answer to the heretic. They may be used to sensitize high school students who intend to enroll in non-Jewish universities where they could be exposed to alien, antagonistic beliefs and ideas. Even if the student will not achieve total comprehension he may at least retain the message that there are satisfactory answers to those arguments. The 4-8-page pamphlets are not designed to be comprehensive treatises on the topic, but attempt to provide basic answers in a forthright manner.

The series begins with two actual accounts of people who had strayed and returned, "Now I am a Jew" and "My Way Back—A Girl's Story." In "Why Aren't We Christians" the teachings of the apostate Paul are used to highlight areas of sharp disagreement between Christian teachings and Judaic beliefs. "When a Jew Becomes a Christian" focuses on the idolatry of Jesus and halakhic and spiritual consequences of the Jew who embraces Christianity. "From Messiah to Christ" presents the sequential process whereby the Mashiach of the Jews was claimed to be the Christ of the Christians, and the Jewish reaction to that process. "Jesus and the Bible" provides evidence that, in an attempt to validate their beliefs, the Christians are guilty of taking Biblical verses out of context and misinterpreting the Hebrew language. A picture of Jesus as a vindictive haughty man whose actions bear no relationship to his preachings is discussed in "Behold the Man: The Real Jesus." Finally, "The Real Messiah" presents an overall perspective and vivid portrayal of the prophecy of the true Messianic era and teases the imagination of the reader to superimpose that prophecy on modern times.

Part II will appear in the next issue of TE**DA'AT.**

An Overview of the Developmental View of Moral Reasoning

First in a two-part series

Esther M. Shkop, Ph.D.

It is, perhaps, a supreme irony in the history of American education that parallel to the erosion of a common core of moral and social values which has left secular education bereft of its age-old mission to build character and foster ethical behavior, the number and intensity of academicians focusing on the study of moral development has been ever increasing. Since World War II, public policy, on cue from a series of Supreme Court decisions, has directed public school teachers away from instruction and indoctrination that reflect any religious world view. At the same time, it has limited the prerogative of schools to transmit and uphold a host of social conventions, such as dress codes, symbols of nationalism and patriotism, and formalized expressions of respect for authority and elders, despite the nonsectarian foundation of such conventions. Viewing values, moral and social, as relativist at best, and arbitrary and irrational at worst, the contemporary teacher has been trained to conceive of rule-abiding, authority respecting behavior as the dangerous antecedent of mindless chauvinism which resulted in the obeisance of the Nazi soldier and the fanatical self-sacrifice of his Japanese allies. Thus, the transmission of nonscientific "knowledge" which forms the bones and sinews of a culture, has been largely deleted from the curriculum—to the chagrin and disaffection of virtually every segment of this pluralist society which bears the financial burden of public education.

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Responding to the phenomena of World War II, and the backlash that followed, Lawrence Kohlberg began a study of moral development spanning over three decades. His aim was the discovery of a universal, rational, and nonsectarian criterion which could inform moral reasoning and, ultimately, behavior. Picking up where Piaget had left off, Kohlberg's work combined descriptive and empirical examinations of how people come to hold the values that guide their thought and action, with prescriptive models of how educators can enhance the morality of their charges without relying solely on indoctrination. Studying children, adolescents, and adults in various countries, Kohlberg and his collaborators found much evidence supporting his theory of cognitive development of moral judgment.

This theory, modified and refined over time, posits that moral reasoning (the rationales individuals employ to explain why a course of action is right or wrong) is sequential and hierarchical. The stages of development that the child passes through follow an ***invariant sequence***. That is, the order of the stages does not change from one individual to another. Cultural factors and the nature of one's social environment may cause the rate of moral development to vary or even to stop, but will not change the sequence of development.

Piaget and other researchers had ob-

Continued

served that up until the age of ten most children focus on the "objective" consequences of an act in determining whether it is right or wrong. To young children intentions seem to be of little consequence compared to the amount of damage done. To the objective child, then, lying is wrong only if it is punished; the accidental destruction of a $100 vase is deemed worse than the intentional destruction of an inexpensive item. Kohlberg termed the reasoning patterns observed by Piaget in the very young children as Level I—***Preconventional Moral Judgment***, where avoidance of punishment is the central criterion in determining right or wrong. At this level, the source of the dictum (i.e., whether the person demanding some form of behavior is empowered to punish or withhold some desired reward) is a crucial determinant in whether the dictum will be obeyed.

Piaget found that by about ten or eleven, the child moves into "subjective" moral reasoning, when he is capable of taking the perspective of the person(s) involved in a situation and thereby consider the ***intentions*** behind the act. By then, the child is less egocentric and is able to perceive more than one dimension of the problem. Kohlberg refers to this higher level of reasoning as Level II—***Conventional Moral Judgment***, where the need to be "a good person" in your own eyes and those of others is the primary criterion for determining what is right or wrong. At this level, following the rules and winning the respect of authority is the most central motivator. Individuals at Level II are most concerned with conformance to and acceptance by their social group, a concern commonly associated with adolescents' single-minded obsession with being popular.

Yet, research has found that most adults never progress beyond this level of moral reasoning. At this level of reasoning most people behave as law-abiding citizens, seeking respectability and a good reputation, though they fail to discriminate between legal and moral imperatives, and between socially accepted behavior and morality. In addition they fail to resolve dilemmas arising from conflicting requirements within the social group, or varying requirements from different groups to which they simultaneously belong.

The highest level of moral reasoning posited by Kohlberg, Level III—***Post Conventional Moral Judgment***, is guided by the criterion of universal justice, and the calculation of the greatest good for the greatest number of all people, which overrides the demands of personal utility or the interests of a limited social group. Research indicates that very few individuals employ this higher level of judgment in resolving moral dilemmas, but empirical study supports the belief that educational intervention can foster the development of moral reasoning. What distinguishes this level of reasoning from those preceding it is that the use of universalized "principles" allows one to deal with moral dilemmas to which no specific rule or law applies perfectly. People who exhibit this form of reasoning are less likely to violate their notion of moral wrong, even if such behavior is socially accepted.

The body of literature in moral education testing Kohlbergian models indicates that people advance in their moral reasoni when they are exposed to or are required interact with reasoning slightly above th own. In practical terms, a developmen view of both cognition and morality calls the parent or teacher to meet the childr where they are, to "plug into" their level understanding, while striving to move the forward gradually to the level immediate above their own. Overt exhibitions rewards and punishments to foster desir behavior are thus both appropriate and fective in the primary grades. However teacher's limited focus on outcomes witho attention to efforts and intentions arre the young child's development, and preven progression from the pre-conventional stag

At the same time, the developmental vie warns educators away from talking down children, from employing rationales th are beneath their current level of thinkin This is an error typically committed by a p mary grade teacher substituting for a day junior high school, where she quickly d covers that a threatened trip to the principa office, howsoever effective with a six-yea old, fails to budge a seventh grader who she may have unwittingly rendered a he to his classmates. While such an error is u likely to cause permanent damage, in essence it is not different from the more p nicious practice of attempting to insti piety in older children through fear divine retribution.

The implications of the cognitive develo ment view of moral reasoning for Jewi day schools, and the relation between mor reasoning and moral behavior will be di cussed in the forthcoming issue.

A Case Study in Tolerance OR You Caused My Child To Eat Treif....

Rabbi Eugene I. Kwalwasser

Yavneh Academy, located in Bergen County, New Jersey, is a centrist Orthodox day school, and although most of the children come from observant homes, some do not.

The following episode took place in our school; the names have been changed to protect those involved.

Dena, a first grade student from a nonobservant home, is celebrating her seventh birthday. Her mother arranges a party at a local bowling alley that rents its room for parties and serves food prepared in its own kitchen. In recent years, due to the influx of traditional families in the area, an arrangement has been made with this bowling establishment that the serving of kosher food from outside vendors is permitted. The community thus assumes that any food served at a Day School student's party is kosher.

Dena's mother, however, orders the regular food fare for her youngster's party but does not inform any of the children or their parents. The children attending the party do not question the kashrut, assuming that the usual kosher arrangements have been made. They partake in the meal that is served to them at Dena's party.

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One parent, upon hearing from her son that he "never tasted such delicious pizza," calls Dena's mother to thank her and to inquire as to the source of the pizza.

When the truth is revealed, my phone rings incessantly with calls from parents who are concerned about how the school can allow such an incident to take place. Some are irate, others express outrage, and a few show understanding. For the most part, they are concerned that their children should not be "contaminated" by this incident. Some even demand that this family be expelled from the school on grounds that they are not sensitive to the principles of Orthodox Judaism. These people instruct their children not to play with Dena during recess or at any other time.

My approach to this conflict is two-fold. The first aspect is dealing with Dena's mother. Such an incident may stem from either ignorance or from a deliberate intent on the part of a parent. Educational processes are needed in both cases. The latter demands rebuke and *mussar* whereas the former requires explanations and patience.

The second aspect is placating the Orthodox parents who are offended and explaining to them that they, too, have responsibilities as educators—to educate fellow Jews to a greater appreciation of Judaism. It must be clearly stated that the school does not condone children eating nonkosher food but that the school cannot control the personal lives of each family. Checking about the food preparation for *any* activity outside of the yeshiva is a parent's responsibility. If there are any questions before an event, the school is more than happy to clarify any potential concern. After the fact, however, the only option is to deal with the future and try to educate everybody involved.

The process requires patience, understanding, and sensitivity to all, regardless of background. The *frum* parents should be encouraged to become involved in some form of outreach and *kiruv* so that these incidents will not recur. They must be made to feel that their assistance is needed in educating others and that their children will not suffer any long-lasting negative consequences from such an incident.

The task is not an easy one, but the job can be accomplished. Over the years, some of our parents and faculty have influenced nonobservant families in becoming more traditional, and the rewards are most satisfying. It is my belief that the key to success lies in CUPID: compassion, understanding, patience, interest, and diplomacy. ■

Ed's Note: Ten Da'at invites response. Please consider sharing a solution, problem, or challenge that you have encountered.

Imitation, an Effective Means of Education: A K-12 Experience

Nina Butler

The beauty and the challenge of teaching young children is their amazement and aim at what we sometimes take for granted. As educators, we should occasionally set aside our prepared lessons and draw upon one of life's experiences to its fullest.

In Hillel Academy's Kindergarten we attempt to do that and I would like to share what began as a class experience and evolved into a school-wide project.

I. Background and Setting:

—Kindergarten aide is getting married during the school year

—Co-ed Orthodox Day School including students from nonobservant homes.

II. Objectives:

—Reenactment of a traditional Jewish wedding in school

—Involvement of each grade, K-12, in some part of the preparation and reenactment

—Learning of the ***sheva berachot***

—Dancing and singing and participating in the mitzvah of rejoicing with the bride and groom

—Challenging every student to learn something new about Jewish marriage (see suggested list below)

—Engendering school morale and ***ruach*** by working on one huge project together.

III. Procedure:

1. Establish date and time for ***chatan*** and ***kallah*** to appear in wedding clothes
2. Meet with faculty
   a. Establish time parameters: "wedding" not to exceed 2-3 hours
   b. Present a checklist of tasks for teachers to select what is most appropriate for their grade levels. These tasks and auxiliary lessons can include:
   1. Designing, writing, and sending of the invitations [Hebrew calligraphy demonstration]
   2. Organizing the ceremony [examination of ***chupah*** procedure including its historical development; study of meaning and order of ***sheva berachot***]
   3. Writing and reading the ***ketubah*** [lessons on laws of contracts, witnesses, and the ***ketubah*** content]
   4. "Props"—wine cup, candles, glass to break, place for ***tenaim*** [discussion on customs and their significance]
   5. Build and decorate ***chupah*** [significance of marriage beyond the wedding, including study of primary sources]
   6. Decorate bride's chair for ***kabbalat panim*** [with emphasis on teaching the mitzvah of rejoicing with the bride and groom]
   7. Prepare music [learning appropriate songs...school band...wedding tapes]
   8. Decorate rooms for ***Chatan***'s tabl***kabbalat panim***, and meal [examin tion of concept of ***hidur mitzvah***]
   9. Bake huge challah [tactile involv ment suggested for younger grades]
   10. Prepare meal [sold as hot lunch b seniors as yearbook fundraiser]
   11. ***Divrei Torah*** [sharing some of th material learned above, reflections o marriage, sources, etc.]
   12. Flower arranging
   13. Dances at meal [an opportunity t teach Jewish dances]
   14. Photography
3. Follow-up meeting with a letter to teac ers confirming each task and a gener schedule.

IV. Conclusion:

Watch the faces! And realize your own i ner satisfaction of knowing you brought lesson that each and every student will r member for years to come.

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Teaching "Akeidas Yitzchak"

Sarah Wainkrantz

Awe and trepidation best describe my initial response to the prospect of teaching ***Akeidas Yitzchak*** to a group of high school seniors. The challenge of this undertaking entailed the awesome responsibility of conveying the ***ruach*** of the ***akeidah*** through a pedagogic approach.

This article proposes a two-step approach to teaching the ***akeidah***. The innovative segment of this proposal is contingent upon its conventional segment. An analysis of both segments prefaces the discussion of potential benefits stemming from this proposal's implementation.

The initial stage of learning is designed to lay the foundation of the ***shiur***. An in-depth study of ***chumash*** and Rashi focuses upon the exact text that generates Rashi's question and mirror Rashi's answer. Many enigmatic explanations in Rashi necessitate the investigation of commentaries on Rashi such as **מזרחי**, **שפתי חכמים** and **גור אריה**. The benefit, derived from exposure to these ***meforshim***, becomes manifest in the students' subsequent ability to engage in independent study of ***chumash*** and Rashi.

Although Rashi constitutes the primary commentary selected to explain the text, consistent study of relevant Rambans should complement the concentration upon ***chumash*** and Rashi. Ramban should be discussed in light of Rashi's viewpoint thus encouraging students to pinpoint the words of the ***posuk*** that become the springboard for comparison and contrast between Rashi and Ramban.

In addition to Ramban, other commentaries may be selected. However, the general principle that may be helpful is that relevance to Rashi should constitute the criterion for the selection of supplementary ***meforshim***. Thus, time allotted for developing skills in reading and analyzing ***meforshim*** is simultaneously utilized for the development of a more comprehensive understanding of ***chumash*** and Rashi.

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At this point, the student is equipped with a vast reservoir of knowledge that will be processed in the second phase of the program which involves the reorganization of the text and accrued ***meforshim*** according to predetermined topics.

The teacher now introduces the students to a limited number of pivotal concepts in the ***akeidah***. The student is given a number of worksheets, each one incorporating a single ***hashkofah*** and a list of ***pesukim***. The student is asked to record the exact text and accompanying ***meforshim*** that support the designated ***hashkofah*** on the sheet. Upon completion of all sheets the student possesses a comprehensive set of notes that display a total conceptual picture mirrored in the words of the ***posuk***.

This teacher selected seven pivotal points for the student to pursue: 1) What is the purpose of a trial if G-d already knows a person's capabilities? 2) What was *Avraham Avinu*'s test in the ***akeidah***, and how did he pass that test? 3) Did G-d really desire the sacrifice of Yitzchak? 4) What was Yitzchak's role in the ***akeidah***? 5) Prove the value of **כונה** through the ***akeidah***. 6) Prove the value of action through the ***akeidah***. 7) What is the legacy of the ***akeidah*** for later generations?

The following worksheet was prepared for the second of the above pivotal points:

עניין העקידה – השקפה (ב)

מהות מעשה העקידה: מה הנסיון אשר נתנסה בו אברהם?
התבטלות לענני רצון ד' מתוך אהבה ד'

שלמות האהבה משתקפת:

1. בביטול אהבות אחרות, בפרט אהבת בנו היחיד (מלבי"ם)
_____

2. בקיום כל חלקי הצווי – לרבות זביחתו האיל, בלי אידו כונה זרה (מלבי"ם)
_____

3. באמונתו שענין העקידה לא הי' שיגיע מטובה לרעה (תורה תמימה)
_____

4. בזריזותו של אברהם לקיים את המצוה – "וישכם אברהם" – "יריידים מקדימים למצוות" (רש"י)
_____
"ויבקע עצי עולה" (רמב"ן)
_____

5. באהבתו שקלקלה את השורה (רש"י)
_____

6. בעובדה שלא היתה שום כפי' עליו, לא אומ"ם, לא תדחפה – "לא הי' בלבו, רק לעשות רצון ד'"
_____
"קח נא" (רש"י)
_____
"אברהם" ולא "אברהם אברהם" (מלבי"ם)
_____
ביום השלישי וישא אברהם את עיניו" (רש"י)
_____

7. באהבתו ובשמחתו על קיום הצווי ששששה את המבוכן האמיתי של הצווי (מלבי"ם)
_____

8. בויתורו של אברהם על ישוב המחיצה בין הצווי הנוכחי לבין הבטחתו של ד'; "כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע" – "ועתה ידעתי כי ירא אלקים אתה" (תפסק רבר).
_____

9. בפסירות נפשו הרוחני – למען קידוש ד' – למען השגת המדריגה הנעלה של ביטול היש (מכתב מאליהו + מלבי"ם)
_____

There are a number of advantages that result from this approach:

1. In order to insure the success of the program, the teacher must establish the pivotal points prior to any learning in the classroom. The presentation of the ***shiur*** reflects the teacher's increased preparation and organization. Moreover, the primary ***hashkofos*** determined by the teacher set the criterion for selection of additional ***meforshim***. Selectivity avoids the problem of overloading students. Learning too many extra ***meforshim***, that are virtually unrelated to the primary concepts of the ***shiur***, generally leads to confusion and forgetfulness. Limitation, however, does not imply elimination of ***meforshim*** outside Rashi. On the contrary, this program insures exposure of new sources that are preselected in an organized manner.

2. This method transforms each ***posuk*** and each ***meforesh*** into a building block of a totality. The magnificent beauty of Torah learning emerges as the students create a tapestry of insights by connecting the threads of individual ***pesukim*** and ***meforshim***.

3. Essential concepts and insights are no longer expressed in terms of generality and abstraction. This approach anchors each ***hashkofah*** to concrete text, thereby increasing textual proficiency. Secondly, learning is no longer an exercise in note-taking. When studying for a test the main point of reference becomes the ***Chumash***, not the notebook. Thirdly, a student will remember a ***perush*** far better if it is associated with other ***meforshim*** in a particular category. Fourthly, the students feel a tremendous sense of pride in knowing a complete unit "backwards and forwards." High test scores and enthusiastic class participation indicate that the students' sense of accomplishment is justified.

Critical to all of the above is the teacher's role which reinforces the integral relationship between text and ***ruach***. ■

The Library As Partner in the Teaching Process

Marcia W. Posner

Too often, the library is considered apart from the school, an extra, an enrichment; a place to send the children to do research or to hear a story. The library is certainly the place for these activities, but it is also a teacher-resource center, a source for nontext materials which will provide depth to the curriculum—adding relevancy and meaning, and a school for individual study where the learner can proceed as far as he wants and at a pace that suits him.

THE SCHOOL-LIBRARY COLLECTION

First, let us examine the library collection and see what it should offer. There should be an ample reference and nonfiction collection in Hebrew, English, Yiddish, if teaching and discussion is carried on in these languages. Among the reference collection should be encyclopedias, dictionaries of language, biography, Judaism, etc.; almanacs and other yearbooks; Bibles, commentaries; and concordances; geographic encyclopedias and atlases; directories, guides, and handbooks. The nonfiction section should contain Bibles, hiblical commentaries, and other subjects related to this period; rabbinic literature, various codes of law and their commentaries, books about the Sages, Jewish philosophers—including the prophets, post-biblical and medieval philosophers, up to the contemporary period; books about Jewish ethics and mitzvot; books about prayer and several kinds of prayer books; books about the origins, rationale, and development of various life-cycle rituals and practices; Jewish folkculture and how it is expressed in several languages, among different Jews, and at different points in time. There should be a section of folktales and legends, derived from the people, retellings from the Bible, the Talmud, and Midrash. Books that address current concerns of Jewish students and their families are needed; books about animals, plant life, ecology, and the Jewish perspective on nature and animal life; the cuisine of Jews from various countries; books about pure science and its foreshadowing in biblical and rabbinic literature—including literature from the Association of Jewish Scientists; Judaism in art, crafts, needlework, music, dance; literature of religious and secular Jewish writers who write prose or poetry about the Jewish historical experience, the tension between traditional values and secular lifestyles and the choices that had to be made; of persecutions and of joy; books about archaeology, ancient history, medieval history, history of Jews in the Diaspora, in Galut, pogroms in England, France, in Germany during the Crusades, in Poland, the Ukraine, and in Russia; whole sections on the Holocaust and the formation of the modern State of Israel; on geneology and biography.

There should also be a section of fiction—current books, and of short stories—books for young children from 4-8, 8-12, 12 and up (arbitrary divisions), these should deal with home and family, holidays, Jewish values, rituals and practices, stories of children and their pets and toys, older children having to make choices, Jewish historical and biographical fiction including the Holocaust and the struggle for Israel. Some of these stories should be realistic, others mystical or even fanstasies.

THE TEACHER/LIBRARIAN INTERVIEW

Now the question—how are these to be used? It is a question of knowledge and communication between teachers and librarian. The librarian should know the curriculum not just in general, but week by week. The librarian should know the contents of the library, intimately. The teacher should volunteer to give the librarian her lesson plans or at least her informal plans about two weeks before the lesson. The two should have a discussion about what the teacher really wants to accomplish in the lesson that day. Does she want the students to be able to memorize certain facts, to be able to read or *daven* particular passages? Does she hope to have the students understand the context in which the material being taught was formed, was needed, and the personalities of the people who had to decide what and how tradition was molded to the times while still remaining Torah-true? Does she want the students to be able to place themselves in positions similar in concept to historical or religious events?

Well, obviously, all the resources of the school will be needed to teach the children cognitively—to learn certain facts and be able to perform certain skills (very often textbooks and computer program drills do this the best); or affectively—attitudinally, emotionally, integratively (very often nontextbook material such as nonfiction

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A GOALS WORKSHEET FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS

TEACHER: LIBRARIAN:

Cognitive Objectives	Methods and Materials	Affective Objectives	Methods and Materials

Teacher's Name _____ Class _____ Date of Appointment _____

Room Number _____

fiction, and film insinuate these feelings better).

In such a busy school, when do teachers and librarians have time to sit down and plan together? Library visits for teachers of a single grade should be scheduled with the librarian all through the term. Once every two weeks should be enough. At that time they should tell the librarian what they hope to teach two weeks hence and what they hope the students will be able to do and to feel regarding what has been taught. The librarian may be able to immediately suggest books and passages that will be appropriate—many may not be on the exact subject, but will encompass the same underlying theme. She should also bring new teaching resources to the teachers' attention—resources which come into the library as a result of her subscribing to certain magazines, or which she has ordered from publishers, or various Boards of Jewish Education. These visits may have to take place before or after school.

A THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIP

Once the librarian has been alerted, she can arrange for the books to be easily available and she can give talks about the books. After students complete their research, a follow-up discussion can take place between the students, librarian, and teacher on insights gained through the readings and their relevance to the material under study. This is a three-way partnership. The teacher prepares the formal material as prescribed by the curriculum; the librarian supplies the collateral material to deepen the meaning of what is being taught, and the students teach both teacher and librarian, as they interpret both lesson and outside readings from their perspective. It can be a most exciting way to teach.

SPECIAL LIBRARY PRIVILEGES AND SERVICES FOR TEACHERS

The librarian should order books that will enhance a teacher's technique or subject mastery, and allow them to be borrowed on long-term loans, unless the material is in constant demand. The librarian should not delay processing new items that will be useful to teachers. In addition, reference books may occasionally be loaned to a classroom for the day, or to a teacher for a weekend.

The librarian should clip and/or copy relevant periodical and newspaper articles, columns, information that will be of interest to particular teachers with whom she has a working relationship. That is not to say that teachers should not do the same, but the librarian has easier access to publishers' catalogs as well as the training to organize the material into a "vertical file." She should bring curriculum-oriented titles to the attention of the proper teachers and order the book, filmstrip, video, etc., at the teacher's request.

TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITY

On the teacher's side, this trust and partnership should not be abused. The teacher must be responsible not to lose or misplace the borrowed material and should return it when promised, or upon request. A teacher should not lend it to a colleague, but rather return it to the library for further circulation.

THE TEACHING OF LIBRARY SKILLS

Library skills should not be taught apart from a research lesson. It is almost impossible to remember in a vacuum. One learns and remembers in answer to a perceived need. Therefore, library skills and research assignments should be planned together in the biweekly teacher-librarian conferences.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Whether a student is advanced or slow, the library is the place for individualized instruction. Released time for advanced students may be used for research or collateral reading as a way to challenge their capacity, inviting them to bring back the newly acquired knowledge to the class. Slow students can be helped by tutors in the library, either computer, programmed books, or human; or by reading material about the same theme, or set in the time being studied, but written in an easier, more understandable form. This sometimes provides a slow student with enough insight so that he is better prepared for learning. Slow students cannot learn abstract concepts and have trouble retaining rote material. If, somehow, the understanding of why something should be learned and how it was first developed, can be communicated, the abstract becomes more concrete. That is why rabbis used little stories to teach with. The library can be used in the same way, if the librarian knows her "stock."

To help locate books with certain themes, holidays, and values, you can use ***Juvenile Judaica: The Jewish Values*** authored by this writer.

But this is just a start. In fact, so is this article. The rest is up to you. ■

DA'AT TORAH

Parents and Strangers: *The Halakhic Issue of Rejecting and Dismissing Students*

Rabbi Simcha Krauss

The community involved with Jewish education, the ***chinuch community***, is beset by a variety of problems, all of them challenging, and most of them defying simple solutions. I would like to address myself, from a ***halakhic*** perspective to one critical issue that plagues administrators, educators, and lay leaders involved in school affairs.

Surely every school is faced, at times, with a decision about rejecting or dismissing a given student. In fact, even success can create its own problems. Is there a point, for example, when a Yeshiva can tell prospective applicants, "Sorry, registration is closed?"

Obviously one cannot make blanket statements. Each and every case has to be decided on its own merits. Still, I believe that one can provide a Torah perspective, a Torah vector, if you will, on these topics.

It is best to begin with the well-known passage in ***Masechet Bava Batra*** 21a:

> ...Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav; But the name of that man is to be blessed, to wit R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, for without him the Torah would be forgotten in Israel. For at first if a child had a father, his father taught him Torah and if he had no father he did not study.... They then made an ordinance that teachers of children should be appointed in Yerushalayim.... Still if a child had a father, the father took him to Yerushalayim...and if not he would not go.... They therefore ordained that teachers should be appointed in each district...and if the teacher punished them they would rebel and leave.... Until R' Yehoshua ben Gamla came and ordained the institution of teachers for children in every district and town.

A close analysis of this passage will yield the following information:

1. Before the ***takanah*** of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, the prime teacher and transmitter of Torah was the parent.

2. There was an interim period, before R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, when Torah was taught by people other than the parent. Then, however, when the child "rebelled" he simply quit the system.

3. Finally, R' Yehoshua ben Gamla established a system of schools in every district and town. It seems, from the context, that after R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, the child who "rebelled" did not leave the system.

It is interesting to note that, in the ***Gemara***, the rebellious child's leaving the school is mentioned only in the interim period. No mention of the child who "rebelled" is made in the period of full parental involvement, nor in the period after R' Yehoshua ben Gamla's ***takanah***. Why not? It would seem to us that the issue of children rebelling and the proper relationship to such children is a universal concern at all times.

It would seem that with R' Yehoshua ben Gamla a radical transformation took place in the nature of responsibility to teach Torah. At first, as stated, the responsibil was the father's. At the second stage wh for whatever reason, the father could discharge his responsibility, he took his to Yerushalayim and privately arran with an individual teacher for the educat of his child. Finally, with R' Yehoshua Gamla, the responsibility to teach To began to devolve on the community.

Indeed, a check of Rambam's formulati of the relevant ***halakhot*** in "Hilkhot mud Torah" will show the same reading the ***halakha***. Rambam begins "Hilk Talmud Torah" with the individ exemptions and obligations of Talm Torah. Then, in the second chapter, he op with the communal responsibility and formulation of R' Yehoshua ben Gaml ***takanah*** to "appoint ***melamdei tinokot*** every county, district, and city."

One would infer from the above that long as the obligation to educate is ind dual in nature, there can be cases wh learning is not universal in nature– student "rebels" and leaves. An individ teacher may not be successful with a par ular student. He may say, "I give up," an then no longer responsible for his educati

This is not the case, however, with Jewish community. The community *m* transmit the ***mesorah***. The commun ***must*** be successful. At the communal le the tradition has to be taught, implement and transmitted. Hence, after R' Yehos ben Gamla's ***takanah***, there is no provisi for the student who "rebels." Even rebellious student must be accommodat

Another point ought to be made about ***takanah*** of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla. sainted Rebbe, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, no R' Yehoshua ben Gamla's strange introd tion..."***But***, the name of that man is to blessed, to wit R' Yehoshua ben Gamla... The ***Gemarra*** says "But he should blessed." It would have been proper to st R' Yehoshua ben Gamla *is* to be bless Why the introduction of "But..."?

Rav Hutner saw in this one word a lam on the deterioration of ***Kenesset Yisro***

Continu

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The ideal situation is indeed that the Torah should be taught not by a hired individual, nor by a school. The ideal is, and at one time was, that the father teach his son Torah. The transmitter of Torah, ideally, is the parent. However, this ideal state of affairs did not last. The situation of a father teaching his son Torah ceased. A breakdown occurred in the ideal transmission of the ***mesorah***. To save the system from breaking down further, R' Yehoshua ben Gamla ordained the establishment of a school system, "the institution of teachers for young children in every district and town...."

In other words, R' Yehoshua ben Gamla's institution, though lifesaving for the Jewish community, came about by a decline from the normative and ideal situation. It came about because, alas, the ideal state where the father taught the child Torah no longer existed. To take note of that fact ***Chazal***, while praising the ***takanah*** of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, introduced the episode with "But..."

In light of what has been said, today's Yeshiva represents two institutions. It represents the Jewish community, whose duty it is to transmit Torah. It also represents the father who, ideally, should have taught and transmitted the ***mesorah***.

As we pointed out before, the community cannot reject a student. It cannot say that we have no place for a particular student. A father, by the same token, will certainly not reject his child. As a matter of fact, a glance in the ***Gemara*** cited above will reveal that in both of those situations, in the period when the father taught Torah to his child and in the period after R' Yehoshua ben Gamla, no mention is made of the student who "rebels" and leaves the system. The clear implication is that somehow, neither the father nor the system can reject the "rebellious" student. Indeed they dare not reject him.

This is illustrated, aggadically, in the ***Gemara Pesachim*** (119 b) which states that in the future, when G-d will arrange a banquet, He will look for someone worthy of the honor of ***Birkat Hamazon***. First, G-d will ask Avraham Avinu. But Avraham Avinu will decline because he has a son, Yishmoel, who did not turn out so well. Yitzchok will decline the honor because Esau was not the best of children. Finally, G-d will turn to Dovid and, indeed, Dovid will gratefully accept the honor and lead the ***Birkat Hamazon***.

There is one difficulty with this Gemmarah. If Avraham and Yitzchok were disqualified because of their rebellious children, they why did Dovid accept the honor? Didn't Dovid, too, have a rebellious son, Avshalom?

One can reason, however, that Avraham and Yitzchok were disqualified not because they were unsuccessful parents who could not keep their children in line. It was not their fault that their children opted out of their tradition. Rather, the disqualification of Avraham and Yitzchok was grounded in something else. It was grounded in the fact that they rejected their rebellious children. It is here that Dovid distinguished himself. Certainly Avshalom did not walk in Dovid's footsteps. Avsholom rebelled against him. But never did Dovid reject his child, rebellious as he was. Never did Dovid reject Avshalom.

It is out of this perspective, I believe, that questions, difficult questions to be sure, such as the rejection of a student, the dismissal of a ***talmid***, the closing of registration, should be viewed.

We all intuitively agree that to turn prospective students away from school is in the category of ***Dinei N'fashot***. Still, the fact that we ask the question tells us something about the manner in which we relate to the student. We only raise the question of acceptance/rejection because we think of the student as a stranger. A parent, obviously, does not ask whether he should accept or reject his child. A parent never rejects a child. As Schools and Yeshivot who represent the community and the parents of ***Klal Yisroel*** we must pursue policies of acceptance and openness. Practically speaking, educators must design programs to meet the special needs of these students, and the community must provide the resources to implement these programs. Only then will we find ***bracha***. ■

T.E.N. ACTIVITIES

If You Missed...

Visit by Prof. Rappel;
Regional Conference in Dayton;
Visits by Dean Rabinowitz to Baltimore, Columbus, Dayton, Shulamit (Brooklyn), Washington;
Special material prepared for T.E.N. by Dr. M. Sokolow;

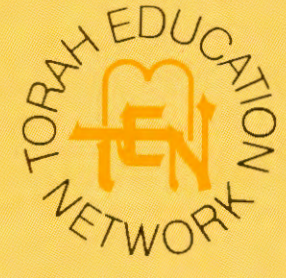
Don't Miss:

Lay Leadership Congress in Boston May 31;
Visits by Dean Rabinowitz to Atlanta, St. Louis;
Next year's conferences in Columbus, Long Island and...

Also Expect:

More visits and conferences;
More educational materials prepared under Dr. Sokolow's editorship;
Progress in a skills-based curriculum project;
Chumash curriculum for 9-10 grade;

Help—when you need it—if we can possibly give it.



History Through Biography: A Modest Proposal

Dr. Moshe Sokolow

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the sheer mass of historical data (which only grows greater) is often an obstacle to the meaningful study of Jewish history, the question often arises: Can history be taught—adequately and significantly—without the usual concentration on names and dates? We would like to propose an innovative suggestion whose consideration ought to profit us even if it does not result in curricular change: Biography.

Basically, the idea is to narrow the historical focus within each era to a comprehensive biographical sketch of a representative personality. The class would discuss the background of the period, then read the biography while looking for the points where that individual's life intersected with the social, economic, and intellectual history of his/her Jewish community.

For example, the era between 1391-1497 in Spain and Portugal—which encompasses the issues of Conversos, Marranos, Inquisition, and Expulsion—can be canvassed via the biography of Don Yitzchak Abrabanel, whose personal history intersects that of Sephardic Jewry at all of the aforementioned points. A student who can recite Abrabanel's biography and demonstrate those intersections has an adequate and significant grasp of that period.

II. A SAMPLE LESSON

The following is a sample lesson whose objective is to illustrate how a unit of Jewish history can be taught effectively utilizing the principle of "History thru Biography."

We have chosen to begin with a unit entitled: ***The 15th-16th Centuries: Inquisition, Expulsion, and Reorganization.*** We will proceed to recommend a teaching method, biographical selections, background and/or review readings, and suggestions for t coordination.

In discussing the pertinent features objectives of this lesson, we have been gui by the syllabus for the integration of Jew and general history, grades 9-10, prepa by the Board of Jewish Education of Gre New York.

III. DIDACTICS; SUGGESTED SEQUENCE

1. The teacher explains the backgroun the assigned unit, based on either one o proposed readings, or general informati

2. The teacher assigns the biography to students, asking them to prepare to disc (orally or as a written assignment) the p nent features of that biography as relate to specific items in the backgro explanation.

3. After two or more units have been stu in this fashion, the teacher assigns one o background readings, asking the studen

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natch their perceptions of the events and he personalities (obtained from the read-ngs and discussion of the biographies) with hose of the readings.

This will provide:

a. opportunities for periodic review;

b. larger perspectives, on longer periods of history, than are available from indi-vidual units;

c. occasions for reflection on historio-graphical assumptions and inferences.

V. THE SEQUENCE ILLUSTRATED

As applied to the 15th-16th-century unit, he method we are recommending would progress as follows:

Step 1: The Background

Jews were expelled from England in 1290 nd from France in 1394. The most tragic and consequential expulsions, however, would ccur in Spain and Portugal.

In this unit we will examine three aspects or phases) in the process of these last expulsions:

a. the Inquisition, which preceeded them;

b. the expulsions themselves;

c. the subsequent reorganization of the Spanish-Jewish exiles in other European or Middle Eastern countries.

The starting point for this lesson will depend upon whether a geographical or chro-nological sequence has been observed until now. If chronological, then the transition should be from the steadily worsening posi-tion of Jews throughout Europe, to the cli-max of the tragedies in Spain and Portugal. If geographical, the focus should be on the decline from the idyllic "Golden Age" (noting the Almohade invasion and the Reconquista) to the persecutions of 1391 and 1411, to the conquest of Granada.

(A brief chart contrasting the history of the Jews in Spain with that of Western Europe from the 10th-15th centuries can be found on p. 179 in: **יעקב כץ, צבי בכרך: ישראל והעמים ב' (ת"א: דביר, תש"מ)**

Either way, the background concepts most central to this lesson include: New Christians, Marranos, Inquisition, Auto da Fé. Among the recognizable historical personages: Torquemada, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Manuel of Portugal.

Step 2: The Biographies

Against this background and pursuant to the three phases described in Step 1, the following are the suggested biographies, along with the features they provide which are most pertinent in this context.

A. Don Isaac Abrabanel

Biographical sketch by Jacob Minkin in *Great Jewish Personalities* vol. I (B'nai B'rith, 1960), pp. 254-279.

(An exhaustive, scholarly biography is available by Benzion Netanyahu: ***Don Isaac Abravanel; Statesman and Philosopher*** [Phila.: JPS, 1972].)

1. The roots of the Jews in Spain and their particular role in matters of finance (i.e., the long-term establishment of the Abrabanel family in Spanish society).
2. Their hiculturation (i.e., Don Isaac's thorough education in Jewish and classical wisdom) and the ease with which so many moved in, and between, both worlds.

(The opportunity is available here for a brief recitation of Abrabanel's philosophical, political, and exegetical compositions.)

3. The effects of forcible conversion on even this established family (i.e., Don Isaac's grandfather's temporary conversion in 1491) leading to a discussion of the phenomenon of Marranism.

(Marranism, per se, will feature subsequently in the biographies of the Nasi family.)

4. Don Isaac's devotion to his fellow Jews even at great financial and personal risk; his attempts to annul the decree.
5. Torquemada's role in obtaining the expulsion order; the machinations of the Inquisition.
6. The devastation and demoralization caused by the actual expulsion; the refuge in Italy (i.e., the paradox of Jews finding haven from a Catholic Inquisition precisely in the homeland of the Popes).

(The massive and brutal forced conversions which accompanied the subsequent expulsion from Portugal do not feature in the biography of Abrabanel. Like Marranism, however, they are introduced in the *Nasi* biographies, and are germane to the biography of *Joseph Caro*, too.)

(Brief excerpts from Ahrabanel's own accounts of the expulsion appear in the aforementioned text by Katz and Bachrach, p. 180.)

B. Rabbi Joseph Caro

An exhaustive, scholarly, biography is available by R.J.Z. Werblowski: *Joseph Caro; Lawyer and Mystic*, 1962.

1. The expulsion from Portugal.
2. Refuge in Turkey and in North Africa (an opportunity to review the prevailing notions about the legal and actual status of Jews under Islam, compared to their treatment in Christendom).
3. The return to Eretz Yisrael.

A particularly interesting way of documenting the post-1492 migration to Israel is through the comparison between the travelogues of Meshullam of Volterra (1481) or Obadiah of Bertinoro (1488-90), and of a 16th-century traveller such as Moses Basola (1521-23), or Elijah of Pesaro (1563). A useful source of this information is Elkan N. Adler: ***Jewish Travellers*** (NY, 1966), which provides the relevant texts in English translation.

4. The emergence of Safed as a center of the Kabbalah.

A brief excursus on Mysticism would be in order focusing, perhaps, on the figure of the *ARI*, Rabbi Isaac Luria, whose own biography parallels or intersects with that of Caro in several respects.

5. The renewal of ***semikha*** (ordination) and the ***Shulchan Arukh.***

C. Dona Gracia Nasi

Biographical sketch by Greta Fink in *Great Jewish Women* (NY: Bloch, 1978), pp. 18-29.

(An exhaustive, scholarly, biography is available by Cecil Roth: ***The House of Nasi; Dona Gracia*** [1947].)

We have deliberately selected the biography of Dona Gracia Nasi rather than that of her better known nephew, Don Joseph Nasi, in order to highlight the often neglected role of Jewish women in Jewish history.

1. Marranism in Portugal (background).
2. Refuge in the Low Countries: (Antwerp, Flanders), Italy, and Turkey.
3. Organizing the escape of Marranos from Portugal.
4. Tiberias and Naxos.

Step 3: The Background/Review Readings

Since the actual assignments will have to be made by the individual teachers based on considerations of language and sophistication, we offer the following suggestions as structural models only, for the sake of the illustration.

A. Bachrach and Katz (see above), pp. 160-164.

B. David Bamberger (ed.): ***My People; Abba Eban's History of the Jews*** (NY: Behrman, 1978), pp. 136-143, 174-182.

C. **אברהם יצחק איגוס: דברי ימי ישראל ב' (ירושלים: המחלקה התורנית, תשכ"ז)**

■

Bits of Bytes:

Teachers and Successful Computer Training

Chani Friedman, Rabbi Leonard A. Matanky, Todd Hoover, Ph.D.

During the last several years, much work has been done in training teachers to become computer literate. The training has ranged from a general introduction to computers, to courses that focus on the specific skills related to using software in the classroom or computer programming.

Recently, efforts are being directed towards teachers who wish to design and develop their own software. This is especially helpful when there is a shortage of good software to meet classroom needs. For this purpose, "authoring languages" have been created. These are a "half-step" between the standard languages such as "Basic" or "Fortran" and English. One of the first authoring languages was "PILOT."

For the past three years, a select group of teachers of the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago has participated in a program through the Morris and Rose Goldman Computer Department for Jewish Studies. Using Apple's version of PILOT called "SuperPilot," the Goldman Computer Department's training program was geared to the design and development of an instructional computer program for classroom use. Teachers were provided with computers for their use during the entire training program and all sessions were conducted in a lab setting.

Since this program involved a high investment of financial and human resources, a search was made for tests that would aid in identifying those teachers most likely to succeed in developing their own software compared with those who might benefit from a different approach.

The research consisted of various cognitive and content tests that were administered to the participating teachers. The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal and the Ross and Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes were used to evaluate the data.

After the research tests were administered and evaluated, it was found that forms of reason (i.e., deductive or inductive) had no significant impact on the ultimate results of teacher training. Instead, the two most important factors were the teachers' possession of sequential thinking skills and content knowledge. Though the lack of these skills do not indicate a poor teacher, based on this study, it would indicate a poor designer of educational software.

As a result of this study, and feedback from the participating teachers, the Goldman Computer Department restructured its training program into two separate programs:

1. software design and development
2. integration of commercial software into the curriculum.

Recommendations were made to the teachers as to the training programs best suited for them.

Both programs have helped teachers integrate computer use into their classrooms. Much software that is tailored to classroom needs has been created by trained teachers. Other teachers are now using existing programs with total confidence and ease.

The Goldman Computer Pilot Project certainly succeeded in removing the "f of using computers in the classroom. Te ers feel very comfortable with comp assisted instruction and their students reaping the benefits. There is even a work of teachers who, having completed training program, serves as a consult body in key subject areas—both Judaic General Studies. As the premier projec the Goldman Computer Department, Pilot study of teacher training has es lished the Goldman Department as the l est and most advanced computer departm for Jewish studies in North America.

Though computers are not appropriate all forms of learning, they represent an valuable tool for increased student moti tion and learning when they are appropri Combining teacher training and softw evaluation and development with purchase of computer hardware and s ware, the pilot project is a revolution step towards the complete integration computer-based instruction into the Jew school. As the department grows each y new ideas and innovations enhance the p spects for the future.

For further information about any of above, including teacher training and sup vision, software design, and consulta regarding classroom computer use in J and General Studies, please contact Morris and Rose Goldman Computer De ment for Jewish Studies of the Associa Talmud Torahs of Chicago at 2828 W Pratt Blvd., Chicago, IL 60645.

Ed's Note: TEN DA'AT is eager to pu cize computer educational program Jewish subjects. Please send us any vant information.

MRS. FRIEDMAN is the Assistant Director of the Morris and Rose Goldman Computer Department and a teacher in the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago.

RABBI MATANSKY is the Director of the Morris and Rose Goldman Computer Department and Supervisor at the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago.

DR. HOOVER is on the Advisory Board of the Morris and Rose Goldman Computer Department and is a Professor in the School of Education at Loyola University, Chicago.

Our Bookbag

tory in a Handbook

ew Integrated Social
ies Curriculum for Yeshiva
School, Grades 2-6 *by*
dra Leiman
lemented at the SAR
demy
le possible through a
nt from the Fund for
ish Education
iewed by Mrs. Marlene
enspan

m through the ages our great
hers have scrutinized every
ment of existence, from the
ginning of time to the present,
ough metaphorical telescope
l microscope. Their observa-
ns of the eternal cycles of
th, life, and death weave
ough *halacha* to teach us how
live in this world. The burgeon-
intellects in sixth-grade social
dies extend this perusal one
re generation when they ask:
Why must we learn about the
t if it is already finished and
not be changed? Sondra Lei-
n, master teacher at SAR
demy, addressed herself to
question in her book: *A New*
grated Social Studies Cur-
ulum for Yeshiva Day
hool, Grades 2-6.

Under the aegis of Rabbi Shel-
Chwat, Principal of SAR
the time, Sondra Leiman
tely combined Jewish and
rld History in a manual de-
ned to imbue Jewish stu-
ts with the knowledge and
nsibility of our place in
tory. Rabbi Chwat described
rmat as "an integrated
e consisting of units based on the standard general studies program with an appropriate Jewish program."

In her introduction, Mrs. Leiman points out that she has produced neither a comprehensive nor "a philosophical approach to how an integrated classroom should work in a particular school." However, educators using this manual will find "material that they can readily use in their own programming."

Due to time considerations, our sixth-grade social studies department concentrates on the visualizations and creative discussions provided in the manual that challenge students to identify with historical Jewish figures through the eyes of the civilization under study. In our readings on ancient Sumer, for example, we explore the *pesukim* pertaining to Avraham's journey from Ur to Beer Sheva, which Mrs. Leiman painstakingly lists, emphasizing geographical, social, political, and archaeological descriptions. Our aim is to recognize Avraham as a concrete individual operating within time and space, as a human being living through daily episodes similar to our experiences, yet as an iconoclast whose clear vision and steadfast belief moved mankind into a new age of perception. We are very careful not to confuse the Bible with our secular textbook. Hence, these neonate Torah students experience a different kind of revelation, as they try to relate to Avraham as a real-life person, with real feelings, in a tangible location. We apply Mrs. Leiman's principles to other cases throughout our study of the Middle East. Although the students are rigidly skeptical at first, Mrs. Leiman's explicit activities add a strikingly new dimension to studying history as a recording of true adventures of vivid personalities and events.

The *Integrated Social Studies Curriculum*'s overwhelming success lies in furnishing the creative teacher with materials and ideas to integrate Jewish and World Histories with meaningful bridges and insights that strengthen youthful determination and personal goals. The manual emphasizes that the key to education is student seeking, probing, and discovering. Thus the vibrant eternal *halacha* weaves on its tapestry repetitive patterns that enable students, as their wisdom matures, to integrate the events of the Past and Present and to set the stage for the Future.

MRS. GREENSPAN currently teaches at the Yeshiva of North Jersey and at the Teaneck Jewish Center Hebrew School. She has co-authored a pilot Mini-School Curriculum in the New York City Public School System and was Director of Education and Vocation at Summit Institute, Jerusalem.

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Responsive Readers

I want to express a sincere mazal tov and *ya'sher koach* for the impressive work *TEN DA'AT* represents.

The articles are interesting and the graphics are appealing. But I was most impressed by your "New Voice" column. Nowadays, staking out the middle ground is a personally and professionally threatening position. *Kol Ha-Kavod* to you for having the vision to recognize the pressing need and the courage to act upon it.

Richard Wagner
Jewish Education Association of Metrowest
West Caldwell, New Jersey

I am very pleased to see the establishment of TEN. The most recent issue of *TEN DA'AT* was very enjoyable. I would like to comment on the article written by Rabbi David Eliach.

In the example he gives, he speaks about teaching about *Eved Ivri* by relating it to the history of slavery in America. I think this addresses a serious problem that we often make in Judaic studies. Our goal should be to have the student relate those studies to what he later learns in his secular studies rather than the reverse. For example, we should teach Rashi's comments about G-d's creation of many worlds before the student learns about evolution. He can then apply his Judaic knowledge to question his secular teacher. There must be other methods of motivation with respect to *Eved Ivri* than relying upon American history.

Rabbi Sidney A. Green
Congregation Shomrei Habrith
Reading, Pennsylvania

I just finished perusing through the first copy of *TEN DA'AT* and I am full of enthusiasm.

This magazine fills an obvious void. Moreover, the articles (some too brief to fully develop the intended objective) represent a cross-section of key issues facing the Jewish educator.

Dr. Ephraim Frankel
The Hebrew Academy of Atlanta
Atlanta, Georgia

On Our Bulletin Board

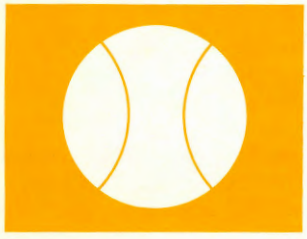
1st Annual Elitzur Yeshiva High School Tennis Tournament

Under the auspices of Elitzur New York

Date:
Sunday, May 31, 1987
Sunday, June 7, 1987
Sunday, June 14, 1987

Time:
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on May 31st and June 7th; 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (if needed) on June 14th

Place:
National Tennis Center
Flushing Meadow—Corona Park
Flushing, Queens



Further Information:
Mr. Norman Ringel
Director
Elitzur Tennis Tournament
70-23 136th Street
Flushing, New York 11367

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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Exhibitions through
July 30, 1987

NEROT MITZVAH
Jewish ceremonial lamps by the world's leading designers including Ettore Sottsass, Richard Meier, and Leo Lionni, on loan from the Israel Museum.

ASHKENAZ: The German Jewish Heritage
Depicting 1,000 years of European Jewish History.

THE SPIRIT OF ALEPPO
Objects, textiles, documents, and photographs tracing Syrian Jewish migration to New York in the early 20th century.

MENAHEM BERMAN: A Designer for the Sacred
Jerusalem's Master Silversmith, Sabbath candlesticks, kiddush cups, seder plates, menorot, mezuzot, and commemorative pieces.

DAVID MOSS: *Song of David*
Facsimile of new Illuminated Haggadah

Yeshiva University Museum
2520 Amsterdam Avenue
(West 185th Street)
New York City 10033
212-960-5390

Museum Hours:
Sunday, 12:00 noon-6:00 p.m.;
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Guided tours are available by appointment. The Museum gift shop is open during regular Museum hours and there are food facilities on campus.
Admission fees are:
Adults/$3.00, Senior Citizens/$1.50, Children 4-16/$1.50; Museum Members and University I.D. card holders, free. The Museum is easily accessible from all major parkways as well as the 7th and 8th Avenue subway lines and the Third Avenue bus.

Satellite Exhibits

The Gallery
Benjamin Cardozo School of Law

ARNOLD EAGLE:
Photographs 1930-1960
55 Fifth Avenue (13th Street)
New York City
Gallery Hours:
Sunday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.;
Friday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

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Professionally Speaking

DATELINE: Lancaster, P

A growing, traditional
School, grades Pre-K thro
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cities, is seeking two full-t
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Judaic Studies departmen
Applicants must be qualif
to teach modern Hebrew,
Chumash, Rashi, Mishnah,
Customs and Holidays as w
as be sensitive to the needs
children from observant a
nonobservant homes.

Depending upon qualifi
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available involving worki
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tive training, and/or cant
positions. Please send resu
to: Lancaster Jewish Day
School, 2120 Oregon Pik
Lancaster, PA 17601

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