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Ten Da'at

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Da'ati

The young boy stood before the *shtender* immersed in his own thoughts and reflections. There was awe and reverence in his captivated stillness, a dawning sense of communion that was new to him. Here was where Reb Moshe Feinstein z"l had taught and learned and dovened for scores of years. And here he now stood, gingerly opening his *Siddur*, sensing, yet not comprehending, the wonderment, the humility, the honing of the moment.

Why should this youngster, but a month before reaching *gil ha-mitzvot*, be so profoundly moved by the *shtender* of Reb Moshe? And why should his *tefillat mincha* reflect a warmth and a depth his father had never seen in him? And from what inner resource did it emerge?

The young boy's intensity came from the same source that motivates the adolescent who deferentially approaches a *sefer*, and old person, or a rebbe; the young man or woman whose *tefilla* reaches across a room and beyond the present; the adult whose values and actions reflect a conscious will rather than meaningless contemporary impulse; the Jew, anywhere, whose appearance, language, and leisure truly reflect what is held most dear.

Yirat Shamayim is a composite of many elements. It is attitude, approach, action, and reaction. It is a perspective and response generated by an obligation — and an ability — to be different, apart. It is a reverence for our past and a commitment to continuity that we share from Moshe to Moshe and beyond. It is a capacity for sacrifice, devotion, and awe and it begins with humility.

It also begins in the home. From the moment we are given a name our mission becomes crystallized. During our childhood all those components which will formulate our own measure of *yirat Shamayim* are absorbed to be later released. We take note of our parents'

priorities and pursuits, and their expressions of spirituality. We mimic their values and their capacity for self-denial. And we note the tangible expressions of what is meaningful and important to them: the *s'farim* in the house — and where they are placed; the regular *shevrin* and *minyanim* attended — even on days that seem endless; the *hesed* and consideration and tolerance of others — even when standards and observances differ. Indeed, our parents' interaction with and estimation of others ultimately formulates our capacity for awe and reverence for God. A child who learns to respect those who represent Torah, who hears and sees the deference offered to Torah learning and labor, will know to revere, not only the *makom* of a *Gadol*, but the *gadlut* of the *Makom*.

On the other hand, the superficial goals of many parents often become a clear vindication for the emaciated values of their children. Thus are their attitudes, priorities, and ambitions promoted and reinforced. And thus do they arrive in our schools, arms akimbo, daring us to prove that our lofty goals are more worthy. Behind them sneers contemporary society with its media, movies, and music. It's the same streets of the big cities that the *shtetls* of yesteryear feared, and they are still unsafe for our young.

How do we teach these children not to want the meaningless, frivolous, materialistic values of society and, perhaps, of their parents? How do we teach them to combat the sophisticated onslaught of the contemporary world while yet remaining involved and active? How do we teach *yirat Shamayim* — can it, in fact, be taught? Ideally, *yirat Shamayim* is learned by example and observation. And ideally, schools should provide students with endless possibilities for observation and interaction

with teachers *outside* the classroom. Given the limitations, however, we must bombard our students with a variety of approaches.

Firstly, we must provide them with maximum learning possibilities. We should never be tempted to compromise on quantity and substance, for as our students become more conversant with our sources they will know the reassurance of belonging, the security that comes with knowledge, and an easier acceptance of parameters and structure. And, of course, it is through the sources that one establishes a dialogue with God and one begins to comprehend the awe, the reverence, and the responsibility.

But sources beg teachers — good teachers who are creative, exciting, challenging, alive. Teachers who can captivate students with the potency and vibrancy of the text even in — especially in — our contemporary world. Teachers who are genuinely concerned and involved with each individual student and who are themselves clear proof that, not only does the system work, but that *yirat Shamayim* enriches, ennobles, and adds meaning and depth to one's life.

Thirdly, we must envelop our students in an atmosphere and an environment that clearly bespeaks our priorities and values. *Tefilla*, extra-curricular activities, dress code, school publications, and decor can all foster an awareness and represent a dimension of *yirat Shamayim*.

As many of the writers in this issue of *Ten Da'at* conclude, in our contemporary malaise there can be no given formula and no guarantee. We must, however, realign our thinking, re-evaluate our approach, and renew our energies so that *yirat Shamayim* can be rededicated among our youth.

Fayge Safran

Torah Education at the Crossroads

Norman Lamm

The following is adapted from the Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein Memorial Lecture delivered at the Adult Institute of Continuing Jewish Education, Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun, New York City, March 1989.

In addressing this topic, I make certain assumptions which it is best to declare at the outset.

I speak of "Torah Education" as it is known and practiced in Centrist or Modern Orthodoxy. This means, Jewish education in that community which subscribes to *Torah Umadda* as a desideratum and not a concession, to tolerance and moderation, to the State of Israel, and to the unity of the Jewish people. But these admirable qualities and values are ancillary to the primary principle of Torah as the very source of our lives, both individual and communal, and the study of Torah as the pre-eminent *mitzvah* of Judaism. My remarks might be viewed as self-critical, negatively constructive. Although I shall dwell upon our faults and failures and flaws, and forgo self-gratulation, do not conclude therefrom that we are hopelessly inadequate and doomed. Quite to the contrary: If I am critical of our educational efforts, perhaps harshly so, I ask you to attribute the public airing of my displeasures as a sign of collective self-confidence and strength.

DR. LAMM is President of Yeshiva University.

Were I less confident of our past achievements and future triumphs, I would not risk exposing our weaknesses.

I shall cluster my remarks about two poles or centers of concern: *Torah* and *Mitzvot*.

*Why, after all,
should a
young person
study Torah
when it is
so easy to be
accepted,
successful, and
recognized
without a
whisper of
Jewish literacy?*

TORAH

The Torah component in the theme of "Torah Education at the Crossroads" may be divided into a discussion of: motivation, continuity, and axiology (or: the role of Torah in the hierarchy of values).

Motivation

One of the most fundamental, difficult, and persistent questions which Jewish educators have to confront is that of the motivation to learn. This is universally the case, but it is especially nettlesome for children or adolescents of our community who are exposed to the whole gamut of contemporary experience in which Torah learning is not a prestige item.

The perennial problem is getting more difficult of late. Why, after all, should a young person study Torah when it is so easy to be accepted, successful, and recognized without a whisper of Jewish literacy? It is even possible to attain eminence in national and international Jewish leadership while remaining profoundly ignorant of Jewish classics, practice, or values; or worse, one can be married out and aggressively assert that the dogma of "pluralism" qualifies the ignorant, the Jewishly illiterate, and the intermarried to be "Jewish" leaders equal with all others. Why study Torah when it hardly articulates with anything familiar in secular life, when it has

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We must beware of reducing Torah to a “course” or subject or discipline or field of knowledge alone.

barely any resonance in the general studies which a child undertakes for all of his/her youth in our society?

For most of the 70's there seemed to be certain segments of Jewish society for whom this question seemed less acute. This was the era of the Counter-Culture, when many young Jews rebelled against the Jewish “establishment” and its insensitivity to cultural and spiritual values, by seeking out Jewish study in one form or another. This was the period of ethnic self-assertion, of the proliferation of Jewish studies courses in universities throughout North America, and a conscious rejection of many of the symbols and institutions of our technopolitan society.

That period, however, quickly passed away — and I rue its untimely demise. The 80's generation on our campuses has been as humorless, as intensive, and as grimly serious as the 70's generation — but about altogether different things. They are over-concerned with their vocations, their professions, their security, their social acceptance. With the shift from marijuana to booze has come the change from Marcuse to money, from society to self and status, from the New Leftist to the All Rightnik...

Our tasks, therefore, promise to be more difficult, not less so. With the obsession with vocation and money-making seeping down to high schools and even lower, culture as such is in eclipse, and Jewish learning especially threatens to become the private preserve of a priestly class — once rabbis, now mostly *roshei yeshiva* and, in other circles, university professors of Judaic studies: the new monastic order, the Essenes of the Academy. But that, of

course, jeopardizes the existence of Torah which must be *moreshet kehilat Yaakov*, a possession of *all* our people.

Continuity

The criterion of success in Torah education is not how much or how well our pupils learn in their schools, but how much and how often they learn *after* they leave school, when they are at work and building families and running businesses and raising children.

Of Torah we say daily *Ki hem hayenu v'orekh yamenu*, “They [the Torah and its commandments] are our life and the length of our days.” The test of whether we are truly committed, of whether Torah is really “our life,” is whether or not it is indeed “the length of our days.” If you want to know if Torah is central to your life — *ki hem hayenu* — check to what extent you turn to it in *v'orekh yamenu*, after your formal schooling is over. How often do you open a *Gemara* or *Humash* or attend a regular *sheur*? The test results for most of us — most of us Orthodox Jews, let alone the others — is probably quite dismal. And that means that we must take an honest look at the educational system which produced us, as well as our society in general.

I submit that to improve this situation, to make sure that, to the maximum extent possible for us, Torah becomes a part of our adult lives, we must make a serious attempt to induce and inspire the best and brightest of our high school students to continue their full dual-curriculum of Torah and general studies into their college years.

In elementary Jewish schools, we teach skills and love. In high schools we teach ideas and ideals. But it is primarily Torah study on the level of higher

education that can succeed in encouraging the study of Torah as a life-long occupation, as an act of the love of God expressed in the idiom of the intellect.

Regular Torah study on the college level is critical to developing the habit of Torah study for the rest of one's life. Only if Torah education is continued on a higher level for an ever larger number of Centrist Orthodox Jews, can we hope to achieve credibility — in our *own* eyes — as an authentically Orthodox voice, and thus validate our approach to secular studies and the Gentile worlds and the non-Orthodox communities and the State of Israel.

Axiology

The question of axiology is that of the scale of values, and what role we assign to the study of Torah, what emphasis we place on it vis-a-vis other activities.

The Mishnaic teaching *v'talmud Torah kneged kulam* means that Torah study outweighs not only all the other *mitzvot* but, remarkably, even non-*mitzvot*, such as vacations, entertainment, proficiency in every conceivable sport, and so on....

To the largest extent, this emphasis on Torah as the chief value of life and of Judaism is transmitted, or not transmitted, to our charges in indirect as well as direct ways: not only by construction of curriculum, but also by our own conduct as parents and teachers, our tone of voice, our body language, and the clues and hints they pick up from us and from their fellow students.

We must beware of reducing Torah to a “course” or subject or discipline or field of knowledge alone. Torah is and must always be presented as a deeply religious and spiritual enterprise. The Sages taught that Torah study by man is an act of *imitatio Dei*: we imitate the Creator who spends most of His time studying Torah. And God learns Torah; He doesn't just “take a course” in Torah in His heavenly Yeshiva Day School....

I am not advocating that we teach only Torah. I am philosophically committed to *Torah Umadda*. I do not expect or want all boys to become rabbis or *roshei yeshiva* and all girls teachers (although we could use many more recruits to both callings). I want our children to be proficient in all their secular studies too. But I want all of them, no matter what careers they will pursue, to keep Torah as their prime spiritual commitment and *talmud*

Torah as a regular and ongoing part of their lives.

That, I maintain, must be the end-product of our form of Torah education: greatness as human beings, but always as great Jews. And that cannot happen without the proper emphasis on the primacy of Torah as a life-long enterprise of the first importance. No form of Orthodoxy can flourish without that emphasis.

MITZVOT

The Facts on the Ground

We turn now from the question of the study of Torah to that of *shemirat ha-mitzvot*, the problem of the observance of the commandments, and thus the whole “life style,” as it is now called, of our school population both during and after their years of formal education.

When I do so, I refer not only to the matter of “observance” in a way that can be quantified and projected in a sociologists’ survey: how often do you lay *tefillin*; how often do you light candles?

I am concerned by the *quality* of the observance, the emotional dimension of our *shemirat ha-mitzvot*, the investment of our deepest feelings, the enthusiasm we bring to our religious acts, the faith in the transcendent One which must always underlie our expressions of Jewish living.

There was a time that our elementary yeshiva schools and even high schools were models of disorganization, pedagogical disasters. Today almost all of our educational institutions are efficient, systematic, and professional. Our teachers are pedagogically competent, psychologically sensitive, well trained. Lesson plans are submitted, conferences are held, and the classes hum.

Everything that is needed for the success of the educational venture is there.

Everything except *neshama*, soul.

Our children are taught to recite *berakhot* before eating, and their knowledge of which blessings to recite and when is often quite sophisticated. But I do not find these children actually reciting them, as a normal and accepted part of their lives, at home. Moreover, even when a *berakha* is recited, I rarely detect a note of genuine feeling. The schools seem to be fighting a losing battle against the homes, purveyors of emotional thinness.

I sometimes attend services at one yeshiva high school or another and, with a considerable number of very happy exceptions, find them depressingly similar to the “daveining” of their parents. The *tefillah* is by rote, without *kavanah*, without heart. The prayers roll off their lips fluently — and fall to the floor, shattered and splattered. If our children are no better than we are, what hope is there for the future? (It was Elijah who said, “Enough! Now, O Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers” — I Kings 19:4.) And if our schools cannot correct the situation, who will?

The Problem in Perspective

We must remember that our educational concerns embrace not only the transmission of knowledge — of the cognitive and abstract elements of culture per se — but the whole gamut of Torah, which is as broad as life itself. For the Jewish educator, character and religious conduct and morality are not merely ancillary consequences of learning, but the very substance and stuff of education. Moral behavior and the spiritual life are the *telos* or goal of the education: “*Takhlit hokhmah teshuvah u-massim tovim*” (Ber. 17b): The purpose of wisdom is repentance (the spiritual transformation of personality) and good deeds (practical moral conduct).

It is this disjunctiveness between, on the one hand, the moral life and the spiritual aspirations that are the purpose of Torah education and, on the

other, the deprecation of such values in contemporary Western culture, that makes the enterprise of Jewish education so problematical today.

The kind of conduct expected of a young Orthodox Jew and Jewess — regular *tefillah*, set times for study of Torah, modesty in dress and speech, respect for elders and Torah scholars — is often alien to what is expected of them as “typical Americans” in their socioeconomic class, where the norms are more often set by television rather than the *sheur* and by the agenda of the political liberals rather than by the *Shulhan Arukh*.

The question of “lifestyle” or *shemirat ha-mitzvot* ultimately relates to what Victor Frankl has called the “noogenic vacuum” in the life of contemporary man; it boils down to a metaphysical pain: the lack of transcendent anchorage or roots for all values and all of life. Our students and the homes they come from are afflicted by a creeping emptiness that our society insinuates into our very selves, by an axiological void which demands to be filled. It is a very depressing question that modern man usually attempts to suppress: without God, without something beyond me and beyond my physical existence, what is life all about? What meaning is there to all this? Why struggle? Why live? Why not suicide?

Such questions have disturbed Western society at least for the past forty years. We probably can pinpoint the most recent outbreak of such concern as 1949, when Karl Mannheim

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published his essays on "Diagnosis of our Time" and "The Crisis in Valuation." He recognized that the twin sources of the deep crisis and malaise in Western civilization were the erosion of legitimation and the loss of meaning. As legitimation became attenuated, the usual sources of authority began to lose their significance — from Presidents and Prime Ministers to Popes and Professors. The sense of purpose is gone. Our lives and our acts are hollowed rather than hallowed. We look about in vain for something worthy of our commitment and our love. We have relativized good and evil and trivialized reward and punishment. God has been dethroned by man, and as our other idols have been found to have clay feet, apotheosized man has been discovered to be flat-footed.

Hedonism is the unspoken and unchallenged assumption of the times. Indeed, it is the metaphysical cataclysm which we have sustained from the loss of legitimation and authority which gives rise to hedonism. As Amitai Etzioni wrote a few years ago, "Hedonism further develops when norms which define meanings disintegrate without being replaced by new norms. Hedonism thrives amidst a spread of normlessness."* In other words, for the Jew the loss of *halakhah*, of a life of *mitzvot*, leads to a life of gross and empty pleasure-seeking.

Often, this hedonism — sometimes in quite vulgar form — coexists ironically with the trappings of Orthodox observance. Examples: shameless public expression of sexual affection — while wearing a *kippah*; Orthodox men and women filling their minds with the most dreadful pornographic trash, far more polluting to the imagination than the smokestack exhaust that fouls our air and against which some of these same people rail with all the passion of trendy indignation; parents taking their Day School children to Club Med for their "winter vacation."

Allied with hedonism is an individualism run rampant: self-centeredness, egocentricity. Hence, all those "self" movements: self-realization, self-expression, self-fulfillment, and the variety of weird "therapies" which grow wild in the fertile soil of California. It is an orientation that stems from Swine-

*"The Search for Political Meaning", in *The Center Magazine*, March/April 1972.

We have got to aim to educate a generation of Jews who care — who really and truly care about their Judaism, who worry about it, who identify their destiny with its destiny, their fate with its fate.

burn's "Man is the measure of all things." This ultimately becomes, "I am the measure of all things." In *Teahouse in the August Moon* — a Broadway play popular many years ago — a little Okinawan recites an insightful soliloquy in which he says "There is East, there is West, there is North, there is South; I am in the middle, so I am the center of the world."

But such narcissistic self-indulgence is misleading. It is a living lie. And it leads right to the contempt for Torah.

Judaism, while focused on man, holds that man is important only because he stands before God, and it is this which gives him his significance despite the fact that he is finite, fallible, imperfect.

Jewish education thus has a massive task of resisting this regnant, unspoken philosophy of the world about us, and — without overstating the case and without detracting in the least from the need for self-esteem for the child — teaching, in ways they understand, that self-fulfillment comes from self-transcendence, that finding the self is achieved by losing the self in a great cause: the study of Torah; the life of *mitzvot*; Israel; concern with oppressed Jewries and the homeless and the sick and the underprivileged.

The central mission of Jewish education is to fill the metaphysical void creatively and truthfully. I am certain that it will not be possible to do so with nationalism, e.g., Zionism or Israel alone; not by language alone, whether Hebrew or Yiddish; not by a warmed-over liberalism and meliorism presented as the totality of Judaism; not by the

academic study of Judaism, for if man does not live by bread alone, neither does he thrive by disembodied text alone.

Our response will have to be a spiritual one, a religious one, a metaphysical one. We must provide the raw material of Torah from which students can construct their personal Jewish answers for themselves to such ultimate questions. And that means taking *mitzvot* seriously as the practical expressions of truth, of trust, of a deepening sensitivity to the One, the commanding Presence. If we are to answer that need and in that manner, then we must impart not just knowledge but life; teach not just *how* to do *mitzvot* but *to* do them; present Torah not as just a way of being Jewish, but as its very essence.

The mission of Orthodox Jewish educators, therefore, is to influence the home rather than be influenced by it, and to present Torah expressed in a life of *mitzvot* as the source of legitimacy, authority, value, and validity. Unless we strive to do so, all our other educational efforts will be in vain. We must never submit to the benevolent trivialization of Jewish life and learning as something secondary and merely ethnic — a kind of intellectual equivalent of gefilte fish.

The Need for Renewal

What I am calling for in our educational institutions is a sense of renewal, a turn from technique to *takhllis*, a reinvigoration of both our external and internal lives from the sources of *emunah*, of Jewish faith of all the ages.

It is simply not enough to be identified proudly as Jews. There has got to be study, study of Torah. And there has got to be *shemirat ha-mitzvot*, observance — on a level higher and more intensive than is present in our homes.

And observance in and by itself is not enough. We have got to raise a generation of religious Jews. And Jews, as a sympathetic and wise Gentile observer once said, do not merely *have* a religion; they *are religious*. Or should be.

We have got to aim to educate a generation of Jews who care — who really and truly care about their Judaism, who worry about it, who identify their destiny with its destiny, their fate with its fate.

Another way of saying the same thing is that we must so raise our children — and ourselves — that we are capable of being indignant when Torah is ridiculed, mocked, scorned.

The Capacity for Outrage

Permit me to go to the enemy camp to find a striking example of what I mean when I plead for a sense of indignation as the criterion for faith and commitment and seriousness of purpose.

An Indian novelist, a disaffected Muslim living in London, wrote a book that shook the world. Salman Rushdie incurred the wrath of the Islamic world because of what it considered blasphemy of all it holds sacred. Ayatollah Khomeini promptly condemned him to death and ordered his execution.

Now, there is no doubt that Khomeini was a religious butcher who lacked the most elementary qualities of humanness, compassion, or sensitivity. The Ayatollah was a disgrace to all religious folk of all faiths. Indeed, he even gave fanaticism a bad name.

But that is not my concern now. What I am intrigued by and what I admire is the capacity of Moslems world-wide to be indignant. Moslems really *care*; they were angry, irate, furious. Their capacity for outrage is a clue to how deeply they feel about their religion.

Not too long ago, fundamentalist Christians were also deeply disturbed and upset by a movie which they thought showed terrible disrespect to their central religious figure. Some of the protesters went overboard in demanding censorship of the movie, and others went even further in transforming their protest into ugly manifesta-

tions of anti-Semitism. But their protest showed that they care about their beliefs, that they take them seriously.

I admire those Moslems and Christians who possess this capacity for outrage, and I am jealous — even as I am fearful of the excesses of some of them.

I also admire, *le'havdil*, the *Haredim* in Jerusalem who refused to suffer the insensitive commercialism of those who put up advertising posters, which they considered immodest and salacious, in their neighborhood bus stations. The lunatic fringe that decided to torch these stations was and is fanatical and over-reactive and deserves condemnation. But the peaceful protesters were right on target. They showed that they cared, and that is why they were angry and indignant enough to demonstrate their fury by marching and shouting. Can you imagine our prim, proper, well behaved youngsters of our day schools, elementary and high and college, doing the same because their moral sensibilities as *benei Torah* were outraged?

Now, most Jews care deeply about things too. We organize against signs of anti-Semitism, we demonstrate against Soviet treatment of its Jews, we march in defense of Israel. And so do our day school youngsters — with even more verve and zeal than their parents. But all this concerns *Jews* — not *Judaism*. It refers to the physical and political security of Jews, but has nothing to do with faith, with religion, with morality, with Torah, with soul.

We get terribly nervous about the threat of censorship of any group, but that is either because we fear the consequences for ourselves or, even if for objective reasons, it is a cherished political belief, not a holy Jewish tenet. American Jews can summon the emotions of anger at a threat to free speech, which is as it should be, but not about scorn heaped upon Torah. We are ready to man the ramparts for the First Amendment but not for the First Commandment; most Jews do not even know what it is.

We have so much fiction by American Jewish writers that scoffs at Judaism and Jewish tradition in the most devastating and heart-breaking ways, that we have become inured to it. Israeli writers are even more blasphemous than their American Jewish counterparts. Some of the diatribes we read here or that Israelis write there make Rushdie's anti-Islamic stuff seem so tame that we

might call them "Angelic Verses." Yet, who is outraged by all this? Who is ready to mount a protest against Woody Allen's anti-Judaic writings equal to our angry reactions to his Op-Ed piece in the New York Times against Israel, or to the Nazi march in Skokie a number of years ago? Whose blood boils when an Israeli playwright holds all that is sacred to us as believing Jews up to contempt and ridicule, belittling all that is dear and precious and holy in our tradition? I am not speaking of philosophical or theological arguments — which must be met civilly and respectfully — but of cheap ridicule, of literary "shmutz".

Hardly anyone, really. We greet it with a shrug. We are so used to it that it no longer bothers us. And maybe that loss of the sense of outrage really bespeaks a loss of faith, a condition of being uncaring, cold, callous. Or at least of not being sufficiently committed.

In a word, our loss of the capacity for outrage is an indictment of our whole community which has absorbed uncritically the hedonistic and narcissistic ethos of the larger society, and of the educational system which has failed, despite heroic efforts, to change it. With all the marvelous, wonderful, even incredible accomplishments of which we can be truly proud, there is a dangerous worm gnawing away unseen in our vitals, and this problem must be addressed and solved soberly and deliberately, and not overlooked and ignored.

The most critical problem facing Orthodoxy which preaches *Torah Umada*, moderation, tolerance, and openness is: Can we be all these things without sacrificing that "*bren*," that enthusiasm, that zeal and commitment and powerful love without which we are condemned to spiritual superficiality and religious mediocrity? Can our youngsters, some of whom aspire so mightily to be "cool," learn the ambition to be warm and even ablaze with the dream of achieving spiritual authenticity?

What is needed for all this to occur is a new assertiveness of Orthodoxy, grounded in both commitment and openness, tough-mindedness and tolerance; a new injection of single-minded dedication; a refusal to be passive about our future; a willingness to face criticism and react to it constructively; and a resolve that we will make Torah education grow in both quality and quantity. ■

Educational Implications of *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* and *Hakhel*

Jack Bieler

The following is adapted from a paper presented at the *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* of the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, October 1988.

One of the greatest challenges of Torah learning is the need to personalize what one is studying, to attempt to make the issues that are under scrutiny immediate, timely and practical. Not only will such an approach assist our students to properly understand what they are learning, but it should inform general policy undertaken by a school and the community it serves. The following is an example of what such an approach could generate.

Two unique celebrations that were observed during the days of *Bayit Rishon* and *Sheni* — *Simhat Beit HaShaeva* and *Hakhel*, illustrate this challenge. The *Mishna* and *Gemora* describe how on each day of Sukkot water drawn from the *Shiloah*, a water source in southern *Yerushalayim*, was brought to the Temple and poured over the altar as part of the morning *tamid* sacrifice. The ecstatic playing of instruments, singing, dancing, and acrobatics accompanied this ritual each evening of the festival. If a particular mood dominated these

days, it was the spirit of *simha*, happiness. *Simhat Beit HaShaeva* thus appears to have allowed for the maximum experiencing and expressing of the Torah's command associated with Sukkot in Devarim 16:14, "*vesamahtah behagekha*."²

It is significant that while *Pesachim* (109a) defines *Simhat Yom Tov* as either manifested by the consumption of *korbano shelamim*, peace sacrifices, or various types of sensual and material pleasures, such as drinking wine, receiving new clothing, or being given various delicacies, the *simha* associated with *Simhat Beit HaShaeva* apparently had a more spiritual emphasis. The *Mishna* in *Sukkah* 5:4 stresses that it was specifically the *hassidim* and *anshei ma'aseh* who were allowed to dance with torches.³ A reason for such a policy might be that the model for *simha* that was being legislated was one of *simha shel mitzva*, lit., the joy associated with the performance of God's will, rather than *simha shel hollelut*, literally, the happiness that comes about via frivolity.⁴ In order to guarantee this optimal mood of *simha shel mitzva* during *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*, not only does the Talmud in *Sukkah* 51b note that men and women were separated during the celebrations but that the active public celebrants were carefully screened for the proper qualifications to dance *lishmah*, i.e., for the sake of the spirit of the day rather than as a result of some ulterior motive. Rambam⁵

notes that the role assigned to those less-learned and less-spiritually accomplished who were present for the festivities was an essentially passive one, i.e., "*kulan baim lirot velishmoah*," all come in order to see and hear the antics and outward manifestations of the *simha shel mitzva* of the *hassidim* and *anshei ma'aseh*.

The phraseology chosen by Rambam in the comment "*kulan baim lirot velishmoah*," creates an intriguing and evocative link to the second celebration that took place during the Sukkot festival — *Hakhel*.⁶ *Hakhel* was to take place "*bemoed, shnat hashmitah, behag ha-Sukkot*," literally, at the appointed time, the Sabbatical Year, during the Festival of Sukkot, and, more specifically according to *Masekhet Sotah* 7:8, "*motzai Yom Tov harishon shel hag*," the period following the exit of the first day of the Festival [of Sukkot]. The entire Jewish nation, men, women and children, were commanded to come to the *Mishkan* or *Mikdash* in order to listen to a public reading by the king, or other political leader, of certain portions of *Sefer Devarim*, "*lema'an yishmeu u'lema'an yilmedu*," in order that they hear and learn, essentially passive roles that are reminiscent of Rambam's description mentioned above. However, despite the parallel that can be pointed out between the two rituals, the fundamental difference distinguishing one from the other would appear to be of overriding importance. Rather than attempting to

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impart an ideal *simha* experience to the onlookers, as in the case of *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*, the object of *Hakhel*, according to the Torah, is for the Jewish nation to learn “*leyirah et Hashem Elokeikhem kol hayamim asher atem hayim al haadamah...*” —To fear the Lord your God all of the days that you live on the land. The centrality of *yirat Hashem* in the religious makeup of the observant Jew serves as a key premise of all traditional Jewish sources. Both the Written and Oral Traditions repeatedly stress the crucial nature of such a mindset for the sincere religionist.⁵ The idea that God-fearing individuals — those who exhibit humility, who are able to “stay within themselves,” and who acknowledge and act from a perspective of deference to a Power greater than themselves — can be produced via some form of mass educational experience is tantalizing for the Jewish educator. For this means, in short, that *yirat Hashem* can be taught.

The need to impart and enhance a sense of *yirat Shamayim* within our students as well as the “condition of *yirat Shamayim*” in the community at large, is a major concern and educational priority. Based upon the descriptions of the level of religious observance and commitment of the Jewish people, prevalent during certain eras of Tanakh, one would probably have to question how effective *Hakhel* was in terms of universally imparting true *yirat Hashem*. Nevertheless, even if the reality that is described would appear to leave a great deal to be desired when it comes to *yirat Hashem*, we would be remiss if we didn’t attempt to ascertain and then translate into contemporary formulations the factors that might have allowed *Hakhel* to have properly advanced *yirat Hashem*, had other variables not intervened.

Three factors are emphasized by Biblical commentators. Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffmann⁹ stresses the timing of *Hakhel*. He posits that the harvest festival of Sukkot in general, and the year following the *shmittah* observance in particular, constituted an occasion at which *am Yisroel* as a whole would urgently feel the need to express its gratitude to God for His largess and sustenance. To be present at a communal expression of thanksgiving among all echelons of society, from the king to the *ger toshav*,¹⁰ says Rabbi Hoffmann, was what advanced a sense of *yirat Hashem* and

forged it deeply into the people’s collective consciousness. Netziv¹¹ emphasizes the place of the event. To be in the courtyard of the Temple while the Torah is being read publicly, he notes, was what made the most significant long-lasting impression. Sephorno and Malbim¹² apparently feel that the desired *yirat Hashem* was designed to come about from participation in the collective

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learning experience itself. There are a number of questions that present themselves according to this latter approach: was it the specific material studied that made the impression;¹³ was it the charisma exuded by the King that made for an unforgettable experience; or was it the joint studying by several generations and echelons of society, led by its political and spiritual leadership, that made the event particularly memorable and effective? Should we perhaps assume that all of the above are necessary for optimal effect? Whatever our conclusions are regarding these possibilities, the words of Malbim are worth noting: “*Halimud gadol shemaviv lidai ma’aseh, shepeirusho halimud maviv lidai yirah, vehayirah lema’aseh.*”¹⁴

Paraphrasing *Masekhet Kiddushin* 40b, when given a choice between the importance of learning as opposed to doing, learning is considered the more significant of the two, because learning results in increased God-fearingness, which ultimately leads to greater mitzva performance. At the very least, as one of the *Ba’alei Mussar*, Rabbi Simcha Ziesel Mikelm noted, the mitzva of *Hakhel* ought to be viewed as proof that the development of *yirah* requires study, and, in his view, can potentially be “taught and not only caught.”¹⁵

An additional wrinkle, however, must be considered with respect to *Hakhel*. The once-in-seven-years celebration of *Hakhel* would take place, at least according to *Tiferet Yisroel* #48 (on *Sotah* 7:8), on the first evening of *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*.¹⁶ This would coincide with the celebrations of *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* which are also pegged for *motzaei Yom Tov rishon shel hag*, and which featured the lighting of great *menorot* and dancing with torches, activities that would most likely have taken place during the evening. *Sukkah* 5:3 even states that every courtyard in Jerusalem was bathed in light as a result of the activities in the Temple. Realizing that *Hakhel* and *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* may have actually coincided with one another, one cannot help but wonder about what happened when the giddy, albeit spiritual, atmosphere of *simha* coalesced with the assumedly serious and intense climate designed to promote *yirat Hashem*. Were they mutually exclusive or constructively complementary? What constituted the dominant emotion of the evening? And, from a practical vantage point, should a combination of *simha* and *yirat Hashem* be striven after as an ideal? Can healthy *yirat Hashem* only emanate from a context of *simha*? Or, should this composite be viewed as a once-in-seven-years aberration, perhaps comparable to Israel’s simultaneous celebration of *Shmini Atzeret* (and its *Yizkor*) together with *Simhat Torah*, and therefore not to be sought after and reproduced?

In conclusion, the following observations are relevant to the enterprise of contemporary Jewish education, based upon the discussion above:

1) The commemoration of *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* should not only give rise to a social event, but also help us to clarify the concept of *simha shel mitzva*.

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extra-curricular activities should be informed as much as possible by such an emphasis. The experiences that are arranged for a student during his or her school career should be consciously and positively weighted in favor of *simha shel mitzva* rather than *simha shel hol-lelut*.¹⁷ Whether a policy of elitist exclusionism is the only means by which this can be accomplished should of course be carefully weighed. But populism can often work against the best interests of *kedusha* and *tahara*.

2) The theme of *simha shel mitzva* is at least contrasted if not complemented by an emphasis upon *yirat Hashem* as manifested in the *mitzva* of *Hakhel*. Therefore, equal emphasis in the extra-curricular program ought to be placed on the development of *yirat Hashem* even as means are sought after for enhancing the sense of *simha shel mitzva*. It would seem that if many different perspectives are included when extra-curricular planning takes place, the different emphases and perspectives that are needed to constitute a balanced approach to learning and observance will be able to be aired.¹⁸

3) The cause of *yirat Hashem* could perhaps be advanced as a school community effort, not only within our children but within ourselves as well, if context could be found wherein families would celebrate *semahot* as well as learn together in the spirit of *Hakhel*.

4) Even if truly communal learning proves technically too difficult to orchestrate, it is important for the various generational and interest groups within the community to be inspired and goaded on by the examples of the learning activities of others. A school should play a leading role in encouraging the organization and continuation of such learning opportunities for everyone involved in the school, and these activities should be given as much publicity as possible in order for all to aspire to emulate the examples of the most successful of the groups.

5) The curricular programs in traditional Jewish schools ought to reflect a concern for and an awareness of issues and topics that will potentially enhance a student's feelings of *yirat Hashem*, rather than leaving such matters to chance or osmosis.

The above reflects an attempt to draw implications from Biblical educational

practice and then translate them into the modern day school context. Naturally, it is a great deal easier to speak about *simha shel mitzva* and *yirat Hashem* in the abstract, as opposed to conceiving a program aimed at heightening such sensibilities. Nevertheless, the curriculum goal in too many of our schools is the imparting of skills and knowledge, exclusively, rather than inculcating those religious attitudes that the ideal day school graduate should possess. While evaluation of skills and information is easier than measuring gradations of spirituality and commitment to Torah, sources such as those cited above describing *Simhat Beit Hashaeva* and *Hakhel* may guide us in terms of what should be considered *ikar* and what ought to be viewed as *tafel*. Additionally, the profile of the instructor of at least *limudei kodesh* should ideally model powerful senses of *simha shel mitzva* and *yirat Hashem* if we are to expect our students to aspire to such an approach to Torah and mitzvot. ■

(1) Although *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*, literally, the rejoicing of the place of the waterdrawing, is not mentioned in any explicit manner in the Written Tradition, this particular *halakha l'Moshe miSinai* is described in the *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, specifically *Masekhet Sukkah*, beginning with Chapter 4, *Mishna* 9. In these *Mishnayot*, the details of the rituals associated with these water libations, as well as the accompanying merrymaking (see *Ibid.*, 5:3 and 53a), are summarized at length.

(2) Although this obligation to be *mesameah* on *Yom Tov* is defined in *Pesahim* 109a as constituting a *binyan av*, or paradigm, for all *Yamim Tovim*, as opposed to exclusively applying to the festival of *Sukkot*, the fact that *Devarim*'s description of *Sukkot* is chosen as the focal point of the theme of *Simhat Yom Tov* would appear to substantiate the attempt to precipitate the extreme joyous emotions that are intended to emanate from *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*.

(3) This point is supported by the Talmud's presentation of Hillel Hazaken, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hanania, as examples of the exceptionally spiritual and learned personalities that were permitted to dance and cavort in public at the *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*. See *Sukkah* 53a.

(4) This distinction is utilized in *Shabbat* 30b in order to account for *Kohelet*'s simultaneous castigation and praise of rejoicing (2:2, 8:15). According to the Talmud, the joy that has as its basis lightheadedness and disrespectfulness is criticized by *Shlomo Ha-Melekh*, whereas he fully encourages the joy that emanates from fulfilling the Torah's commandments.

(5) *Mishna Torah, Hilkhot Lulav*, 8:14

(6) While several of the details of this ceremony are also fleshed out by the Oral Tradition, nevertheless unlike the source, or lack thereof for *Simhat Beit Hashaeva*, the textual basis for this second event is clearly to be found in the *Torah Shebikhtav*. In *Devarim* 31:10 ff, instructions are given for the observance of the *mitzva* of *Hakhel*, or literally, "cause to gather."

(7) See *Netziv* on "*Tikrah*" in *Devarim* 31:11.

(8) For example, *Moshe* tells the people in *Devarim* 10:12, "*Mah Hashem Elokekha shoel mei'imakh ki im leyirah et Hashem Elokekha...*" i.e., all that God asks of you is to fear the Lord your God. *Ravah* states in *Masekhet Shabbat* 31a that no matter how spiritually and socially accomplished a person's life may have been, "*Ee Yirat Hashem hih otzaroh, ihn; Ee loh, loh,*" i.e., If the fear of God was the context in which one lived his or her life, then yes, it has been a virtuous existence. And if not, then the apparently worthwhile attainments are to be questioned.

(9) *Dovid Tzvi Hoffman, Sefer Devarim, kerakh sheni, Netzakh*, Tel Aviv, 5721, p. 562 on "*Bevoh kol Yisroel.*"

(10) According to *Ibn Ezra*, *Devarim* 31:12 on "*Vegerkha.*"

(11) *Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, Haamek Davar*, Va'ad HaYeshivot B'Eretz Yisrael, Yerushalayim, 5727, p. 260 on "*Veyaru et...*"

(12) *Ovadia Sephorno, Biur al HaTorah*, ed. *Zev Gottlieb, Hotza'at Mossad HaRav Kook*, Yerushalayim 5747, p. 354 on "*Velamdu.*"

Meir Libush Malbim, HaTorah Veha-mitzvah, Yerushalayim, 5729, p. 443 on "*Et kol divrei haTorah hazot.*"

(13) The particular sections of *Sefer Devarim* read by the king are delineated at the end of *Sotah* 7:8.

(14) *Malbim* on "*Veshamra la'asot.*" See note 12.

(15) *Simchah Zisel Mikelm, Ohr Rashaz, kerakh sheni*, ed., *Chaim Shraga Levine*, Yerushalayim 5737, p. 189 on *Devarim* 31:12.

(16) The time during the day for *Hakhel* is a point of controversy among interpreters and commentators. Since the Torah is normally read only during daylight hours, a strong case could be made for the King's reading during the day. *Tiferet Yisroel* appears to have been influenced by the *Mishna's* resorting to the language of *motzai Yom Tov harishon*, in contradistinction to *Yom rishon shel holo shel moed* or *Yom sheni shel hag*. See *Entzyklopedia Talmudit*, Vol. 10, col. 448, fn. 62.

(17) See *Mayer Schiller, "Realities, Possibilities and Dreams: Reaching Modern Orthodox Youth," in Ten Da'at* vol. 3 no. 2, Adar 5749, Winter 1989, p. 25-6.

(18) An interesting counterpoint is created in *Shabbat* 30b and 31a between the emphasis upon *simha shel mitzva* in terms of resolving a contradiction in *Kohelet* on the one hand, and *Reish Lakish's* and *Rava's* emphasis upon *yirat Hashem*, on the other.

Teaching Yirat Shamayim

Shimon Kerner

Yirat Shamayim, one of the most fundamental requirements and goals of Torah Judaism, is at once a precept unto itself,¹ as well as the thread which weaves the tapestry of every Jewish activity, of every mitzvah, indeed of every moment of our daily lives.² It is thus our obligation, as educators, to evaluate and reevaluate our teaching to ensure that it is directed at producing students whose knowledge, wisdom, and conduct as Jews reflect the highest levels of *yirat Shamayim*.

Is it possible to teach *yirat Shamayim*, or is it an exercise in futility; can one acquire it or is it a quality which is either possessed or not possessed at birth? The attitude of Hazal is clear. Rav Hanina said, "All is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven."³ It is the task of each Jew to exercise his/her free choice, to formulate and demonstrate his/her own capacity for *yirat Shamayim*. The Torah speaks numerous times⁴ of *limud l'yira* — teaching and learning fear of God, for a person is not born a *yarei Shamayim*. Although each is endowed with different levels of intelligence, no one student has a greater propensity towards, or natural ability for, *yirat Shamayim*. No one dare claim that imparting *yirat*

Shamayim is easy, but neither is it an unattainable and unrealistic goal.

What is Yirat Shamayim?

If we are to properly orient ourselves towards teaching *yirat Shamayim*, it is worthwhile to analyze what this term means. The *baalei mussar*⁵ speak of two types of *yirat Shamayim* — fear of punishment, *yirat onesh*; and fear of sin, *yirat het*. Founded on the basic premise and fundamental belief in reward and punishment, the former is the level which the average person is expected to reach. In a sense it is self serving — I

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must do what God wants of me in order to avoid disaster here and in the afterworld. The latter, which only those on the highest level attain, is also called *yirat romemut*. Such an individual recognizes the awesomeness, supremacy, and perfection of God while, at the same time, is conscious of the human being's own mortal, imperfect status. Maimonides includes both types under the mitzvah of *Et Hashem Elokekha tira*⁶. *Yirat onesh* deters us from the violation of *lo taaseh*, which is accompanied by punishment,⁷ while *yirat romemut* is part of the commandment to love God. Indeed, Maimonides incorporates love and fear in the same halakha.⁸ What emerges is a definition of *yirat Shamayim* as God conscious. This takes the form of cognizance of God's omnipotence and ability to reward and punish. It can also take the form of consciousness of the greatness of God leading to *yediat Hashem, ahavat Hashem*, and a sense of man's purpose in the world to serve God.⁹

To better understand how to inculcate *yirat Shamayim* into our students let us try to glean some insights from an analysis of various sources.

Yirah Via Observance

On Moshe's admonition to Bnai Yisrael, "What does God demand of you hut to fear, etc.," the Gemara asks, "Is the fear of heaven such a small thing?" and concludes, "Yes — for Moses it was a

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small thing."¹⁰ The obvious question raised by many commentators is, how could Moshe have spoken to the masses about conduct and values in terms of his own unusually high standards? Rabbi Joseph Albo in his *Sefer Haikarim*¹¹ offers the following explanation. Although fear of God is a specific command, he writes, it really is a general principle embracing all commandments. Moshe Rabbenu was fully cognizant that attaining the required degree of fear, love, and service of God is extremely difficult. Thus he told them that these ultimate goals can be achieved via "*lishmor et mitzvot*

tion of the words in the *Shma*. At a school Shabbaton we should impart many of the halakhot of Shabbat in addition to the "flavor" of Shabbat. Our *gemilut hesed* committee should learn and practice the halakhot of *bikur holim*, collection and distribution of charity, etc. If our students recognize and understand the need for careful mitzva observance then will they hopefully be that much closer to *yirat Shamayim*.

Yirah Via Derekh Eretz

The Mishna states: "*Ain boor yerai het*"¹⁴ — an uncivilized, uncultivated

angering God or violating His commandments. *Yirat Shamayim* evolves from a realization of His mastery, His providence, and His kindness.

Alshikh uses a similar approach to resolve a question raised by many commentators regarding *maaser sheni*. "You shall eat before the Lord your God...that you may learn to fear the Lord your God all the days."¹⁸ How does this pilgrimage to Jerusalem, eating, drinking, and abundant rejoicing, teach people a fear of God? Perhaps, he suggests, the idea that people are to take *maaser sheni* to Jerusalem is to "deter them from repudiating the source of their bounty, and that they should realize that this wealth did not originate with the power of their own hands. In this way they will come to an awareness that all belongs to the Almighty and never stop fearing the Lord continually."

If this is the essence of *yirat Shamayim*, then our task is to instill the feeling of *hakarot hatov* within our students. This refers to an appreciation of God, as well as of other people. Similar to the comment of the Netziv above, we can posit that the way we act with and feel towards people paves the way for our relationship with God. There are so many opportunities for our students to say "thank you" — to a fellow student for helping prepare for an exam, lending books or notes; to the bus driver; to teachers and administrators for planning events and activities; or to parents for their physical, emotional and moral support. We must seek every opportunity to impress upon our students the critical need for *hakarot hatov* to others and from thence to God. Perhaps an in-depth study of the *Amida*, *birkhat ha-shahar*, and *birkat hamazon* may serve to better help our students realize how indebted we are to God.

Yirah Via Limud Hatorah

The Sifre¹⁹ comments on the verse, "*Lmaan tilmad l'yirah*," that *maaser sheni* was given only for the purpose of promoting study and reverence. *Yirah* can be achieved through Torah study if the subject matter is treated with appropriate seriousness and reverence. If the Torah which our students study is to pierce their souls, we must present it with methods that will give it a status much greater than just another subject and another grade. Let us not underestimate the ability of our students for rigorous analysis. Through positive

Let us not be exclusively concerned with theoretical discussions, but rather place a strong emphasis on mitzvot maasiyot.

Hashem v'et hukotav...l'tov lakh.¹² God asks merely for the fulfillment of His will in our daily activities, for it is this that will gradually lead us to the higher level of fear. This approach echoes *Sefer HaHinukh's* explanation of the symbolism behind many commandments: "*Aharei ha-peulot nimshakhot halavavot*" — one's heart is drawn by one's actions.¹³ By acting with *yirat Shamayim* we can feel the *yira* and make it part of our very being. The educational implications of this approach are fairly simple. Let us not be exclusively concerned with theoretical discussions, but rather place a strong emphasis on *mitzvot maasiyot*. We should attempt to sensitize our students to the profound impact of scrupulous mitzva observance; we must try to develop within our students an appreciation for minute details and nuances in practical observance. For example, at the *minyan* in school, we should stress all details of *tefillah*, from exactly how to stand, step and bow in the *Amidah*, to the precise pronuncia-

person has no regard for right and wrong, and thus has no hope of experiencing the fear of sin. Conversely, fine qualities and a gentle character develop a strong feeling for doing what is "right". This is the prerequisite for *yirat Shamayim*. Our students must learn about Jewish *midot* through text, discussion and by example. We should also work together with our parent body to instill respectfulness and dignity in our students. Notes the Netziv on the verse, "Respect the elders and fear God,"¹⁵ that if one conducts oneself with respect to elders then one is capable of experiencing *yirat Shamayim*. This perhaps explains the Mishna which states: "Fear of one's Rebbe is as fear of heaven".¹⁶

Yirah Via Hakarat Hatov

Abraham¹⁷ explains that the compelling force behind serving and fearing God is *hakarot ha-tov*, appreciation of His kindness. When one realizes to what extent one is indebted to God, then one will do everything possible to avoid

reinforcement for insightful questions and sharp answers we can make our students feel that they are an integral part of our *mesora* process. Let us learn Talmud in a way that students will be engaged in actual dialogue with the Tannaim and Amoraim.²⁰ Through these methods we will inject our students with a feeling of reverence for *Gedolei Torah* and *limud Torah*. We don't need *maaser sheni* as a means of enticing our students into our classrooms. What we must do is make our classrooms reflect, in whatever way we can, the sacred atmosphere that encouraged those who brought *maaser sheni* to Yerushalayim to become *lomdei Torah* and *yirei Shamayim*.

Yirah Via Religious Experience

Rashbam²¹ adopts a more emotional approach to the explanation of the *yirat Shamayim* produced by the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim. It was not the religious study and book knowledge which led to *yirat Shamayim*, he says, but the overwhelming existential experience of seeing the Divine presence, the priests engaged in their service, the Levites at their posts, and the Israelites in their array, that utterly impressed the on-looker to the point of *yirat Shamayim*. According to Rashbam, *yirat Shamayim* isn't taught by any specific rebbe or text, but rather by exposure to moving religious experiences. We can apply this theory in our yeshivot by providing our students with experiential opportunities that are age appropriate — whether by showing very young children a *sefer Torah* for the first time, or by carefully planning a stimulating

and moving Shabbaton or Rosh Hodesh hagiga for older children, or enabling them to meet and interact with *Gedolim*. A similar idea is expressed in the mitzvah of *Hakhel*, where the goal is "*lemaan yishmeu v'lamdu l'yirah*"²² — when even the children, including those of non-educable age according to many *meforshim*, were brought to hear the king read the Torah to the entire assemblage of Israel. People of all ages are impressed by memorable events. Often the total impact on the religious psyche transcends the importance of how much content is actually retained.

Yirah Via Role Model

The Dubno *magid* in the name of the Vilna Gaon offers a different resolution to the problem of how Moshe could speak of *yirah* as such a small matter. When the Gemara says that for Moshe it was indeed a small matter, it means that for the people in his generation it was easy since they had such a perfect example of *yirah* as Moshe Rabbeinu. His *yirah* flowed onto and into his disciples. Perhaps one of the most effective ways to teach *yirat Shamayim* is for a teacher to have, to display, and to be a model and an example of *yirat Shamayim*. The Gemara comments on the verse in *Malakhi*: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they should seek Torah at his mouth, for he is the angel [messenger] of the Lord of Hosts."²³ Rav Yohanan explained, "Only if the Rebbe is like a messenger of God should Torah be sought from his mouth."²⁴ Our own standards of *yirat Shamayim* must be beyond reproof. We must never be hypocritical; we must

have the utmost respect for our students, careful never to embarrass them; and we must command and earn our students' respect.

Clearly, there is no one method of teaching *yirat Shamayim*. We can only hope that, by integrating and blending all the methods together, coupled with *siyaata dishmaya*, we will experience more than just a measure of success.

1. Dvarim 6:13 and 10:20.
2. Ramo, Orah Hayim, Chap. 1, par.1.
3. Brakhot 33b. This is derived from the verse, "And now Israel what does the Lord your God demand from you? Nothing but to fear God, walk in His ways, etc.", Dvarim 10:12. Fear of God must come *me-imakh*, from you.
4. Dvarim 4:10; 14:23; 17:19; 31:13
5. See *Mesillat Yesharim* chap. 24. See also Maharsha to Brakhot 33b.
6. *Sefer Hamitzvot, mitzvat asef 4; Yad Hahazaka, Hilkhot Yesodei Hatorah*, chap. 2, *Halakhot 1-2*.
7. See Ramban, Shemot 20,8 beginning with "*Zachor*" where he explains that all positive commandments emanate from love of God, while the negative commandments stem from fear of God. Therefore, when in conflict *asef* supersedes *lo taaseh*.
8. Op.cit. *Yad, Yesodei haTorah*.
9. In the very first halakha in Shulhan Arukh, the Ramo sets forth the rule by which every Jew should live. "*Shiviti Hashem l'negdi tamid*" — all of my actions are being "videotaped" in heaven and therefore I should conduct myself accordingly. See also Rashi on Vayikra 19:14; 19:32; 25:17. There he explains that whenever "*v'yareita me-Elokekha*" is used, it refers to an area where only God knows man's sincere intentions and motivations.
10. Brakhot 33b.
11. Part 3, Chap 31.
12. Dvarim 10:13.
13. *Sefer HaHinukh*, Mitzvah 16.
14. Avot 2:6.
15. Haamek Davar on Vayikra 19:32.
16. Op. cit. 4:19.
17. Abravanel on Dvarim 10:12.
18. Dvarim 14:23.
19. See Tosfot Bava Batra 21a who quote the Sifre, and Torah Temimah Dvarim chapter 14, letter 56.
20. See *Reflections of the Rav*, by Rabbi Abraham Besdin, volume II, pages 21-23, for a beautiful illustration of this point.
21. Rashbam on Dvarim 14:23.
22. Dvarim 31:13.
23. Malakhi 2:7.
24. Moed Katan 17a.

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Teaching Tehillim to Jewish Adolescents

Michael Myers

Ambivalence and anger, dependence and rebellion, despair and ecstasy, typify the emotions churning within the adolescent. The Book of Tehillim addresses these issues in range and depth as no other book of Tanakh.

Certainly, the destruction of the Beit HaMikdosh and the factors contributing to that event are important to any thinking Jewish adolescent. The cycle of National Wrong-doing-Retribution-Return as a principle theme of the Book of Judges is a matter that students in a Torah high school setting will consider valuable in their attempt to construct a meaningful Jewish outlook on life.

But what dominates a teenager's daily life are the questions that tug relentlessly at his/her sense of being — questions of inadequacy, of failure, of proper moral conduct, of peer acceptance, of love and of hate. No book of Tanakh rivals Tehillim in the personal expression of human emotion — joy, despair, disillusionment, hope, remorse, and triumph. It can serve as an extraordinary means to help students discuss and relate to these emotions while creating a bond between student, text, and Jewish values and thought.

What do we hope to accomplish in teaching Tehillim to American high school youth? The book is so rich in imagery and poetic beauty, so fertile as

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a source of Jewish thought, so powerful a force in Jewish life that the very words are said to possess a mystical vibrancy capable of effecting change in the world.

Where, then, to begin? We begin, as always, with the student. The primary objective in teaching Tehillim to American high school students is the creation of a spiritual companion to which they can turn for solace and joy, inspiration and intellectual fulfillment. The attainment of this objective goes far beyond "Tehillim *zaggen*" which has its own merit. Attaining this goal requires utilization of the skills necessary for the serious study of Tanakh, language, and literature. But this companionship is dependent upon an element unique to the

period of adolescence. The successful formation of this lifelong companionship depends upon the sensitivity of the teacher to unique psychological and emotional conditions of the teenage student.

How volatile are the emotions of the adolescent boy and girl! Filled with questions and uncertainty, the adolescent moves from childhood to adulthood. How well can the thinking adolescent relate to Psalm 13! Note the text of Psalm 13 and the comments of Meir Weiss:

- 1 For the leader
a psalm of David.
- 2 How long O Lord, will You
forever forget me?
How long will You hide Your
face from me?
- 3 How long shall I have cares on my
mind, grief in my heart all day?
How long will my enemy be
exalted over me?
- 4 Look, answer me, O Lord, my God!
Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep
the sleep of death;
- 5 Lest my enemy say,
"I have overcome him,"
my foes exult when I totter.
- 6 But I — in Your faithfulness
I trust,
my heart will exult in Your
deliverance.
I shall sing to the Lord, for He has
dealt kindly with me.

The reader of the psalm is immediately made aware of the emotional changes which take place in it. No one emotional state is expressed in it from beginning to end. The psalmist begins with an expression of deep sorrow; out of his despair bursts forth the cry: "How long?" Thence he gradually ascends to the heights of trust: "I shall sing to the Lord, because He has dealt kindly with me." According to the accepted terminology in psalm criticism, our psalm belongs to the genre known as individual lament, while its conclusion is one of thanksgiving. The transformation of emotional state from one extreme to the other is also expressed in the structure of the psalm.¹

Teaching Tehillim to Jewish Adolescents

Because so much of Tehillim is written in first person, the objective of text as companion is a more clearly attainable goal.

Particularly before the *Yamim Noraim*, Tehillim can be a source of spiritual enrichment. Psalms 1, 15, 27 and 51 can serve as extraordinary sources of inspiration. Aside from being used as primary text of study, some chapters of Tehillim are invaluable in the creation of the totality of an event. The power of the incident of David, Batsheva, Uriah, and Nathan is undisputed.² The words "*ata haish*" are as devastating an indictment as is found anywhere in Tanakh. David's reply "*hatati l'Hashem*" — also two words — gives us a hint of his penitence. But to understand the depths of his pain, the extent of his remorse, we must turn to Tehillim 51. It is in Psalm 51, that David is seen not only as prototype *baal teshuva*, but as a teacher of Israel.³

Similarly, from the record of Samuel I chapter 22, we have no inkling of David's feelings toward Doeg who was directly responsible for the deaths of the Kohanim of Nov, and indirectly for the deaths of Saul and his sons, not to mention the interminable anguish of David. In Psalm 52, the intensity of David's feeling comes to the fore. Hazal understand this psalm as a guide to the realization that the ultimate end of slanderers and murderers is doom.⁴ Like a microscope for the soul, the

psalmist enhances the reader's understanding of the incident, focusing upon the intensity of emotion as well as the act itself.

How, then, do we best approach a chapter of Tehillim? The strength of the psalm resides in its flow. As soon as possible, the student must read the psalm in its entirety. It was, in fact, composed without commentaries on the margin. And that is how it has been read for centuries. Certainly, the student must study the *mefarshim* on this or any chapter of *Tanakh*. A *perek* simply cannot be fully understood without them. Despite the unquestionable benefits of *mikraot gedolot* study, we must beware of a danger. Often, teachers spend so much time in the analysis of *mefarshim* that their study has the effect of observing a portrait from very close range. The wonder of detail is appreciated, but the sense of wholeness is lost.

Great care must be taken in the selection of *divrei Hazal*. The commentaries of Hazal regarding the relationship of David and Batsheva can be a powerful tool in developing moral reasoning. Their words can help the adolescent to understand the ethical complexities involved, and the delicate lines of demarcation that exist between "that which is legal and that which is moral." But, if the words of Hazal are used solely as a means to "rubber stamp" David's behavior, a grave injustice is committed to the student, Hazal, and to David himself. When students proclaim without hesitation and without qualification, "David never sinned!", they side-step the entire moral question that Hazal were forced to confront, while rendering Psalm 51 a perfunctory statement, a nicety expressed over an unfortunate *faux pas*.⁵

The teacher must guide the student to become attuned to the precision with which the psalm is constructed. For this reason, it is advisable for each student to have available a text that is devoid of commentary. Using such a text will help the student to spot verses that signal transition. Dividing a *perek* and titling each section is a fine exercise. The thought process of the psalmist is made much clearer to the student. Discussion of literary devices and technique are valuable in enhancing appreciation of the psalmist's means of communication with the reader. The use of anaphora, and other forms of word repetition, set the tone for a given psalm and are help-

ful in making the student aware of the mood that the psalmist sets.

In Psalms 8, 12, and 23, we can see how a verse can be considered a turning point, reflecting a substantive change in relationship or attitude. Students should be asked to identify such pivotal verses. For example, in Psalm 23, the phrase "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I fear no evil, for Thou art with me," is central to the psalm. Until this verse, David refers to God in the third person. "*He* restores my soul," "*He* leads me beside the still waters." After traversing the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the relationship between the psalmist and his creator reaches its most personal state. He proclaims: "*Thou* art with me," "*Thy* rod and *thy* staff, give me comfort." When one's life is in great peril, speech is directed *to* God rather than *about* God.⁶

Many psalms focus upon an eternal question: What makes the happy person? (Psalm 1); What makes the righteous person? (Psalm 15 and 24); Why should an omnipotent God be concerned with the frail and finite species that is Man? (Psalm 8); How can Israel, beset and besieged among nations, survive? (Psalm 2). The eternal questions and the answers posed in each psalm are very much on the minds of the students. Allow them to search for the questions inherent in each psalm.

Comparative study of different psalms can be a most useful exercise. Both Psalm 1 and Psalm 15 approach the issue of the righteous person. Yet, Psalm 1 takes the negative approach, beginning its description by declaring what the righteous person is not. In contrast, Psalm 15 describes the righteous person first in positive terms. Accounting for the differences in the two psalms is not only a rewarding intellectual exercise, but an inspiring one as well.

Upon concluding a *perek*, it is a good idea to ask students to pick a verse or expression that is particularly meaningful to them. Have them explain why the verse selected is special to them. While it is not a good idea to require large passages to be committed to memory, students often gladly commit to memory a verse that *they* have selected. The verse becomes a part of them, a legitimate source that they can draw upon at will. In this manner, Tehillim can, in fact, serve as a companion.

continued

While most of the examples cited above are of psalms that have not been incorporated in the daily prayer book, those psalms should not be excluded from formal study. However, if we restrict our study to those psalms included within the Siddur, students are cut off from a very meaningful learning experience.

Asiyum is an excellent opportunity to promote a sense of class unity and closure. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher randomly distributes the psalms that will not be formally studied in class. On a regular basis, students submit brief reports on their assigned psalms. Each report should include:

1. The theme of the psalm or the Eternal Question posed.
2. The Jewish attitude regarding the question as expressed within the psalm.
3. Selection of two verses for analysis of style, and by use of commentaries.
4. Selection of one verse within the psalm that has particular meaning to the student.

At the conclusion of the semester, the class prepares a *siyum*, inviting friends and family, a *siyum* that can serve as the centerpiece for the year.

In the age of high-tech, the world has become more efficient. More people can be processed, labeled, categorized, accepted or rejected in less time than ever before. Numbers rival names as the primary source of human identification. In the face of this onslaught upon human individuality, we must gear our studies to support the development of the healthy personality. The Book of Tehillim is one tool that we may use to help our high school students explore and tap the great and noble spirit that resides within them. ■

1. Meir Weiss, *The Bible from Within*, Hebrew University Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1984, p. 299.
2. Samuel 2 Chapter 12.
3. Psalm 51:15 "I shall teach transgressors of Thy ways."
4. Sanhedrin 106B.
5. See Abravanel and Malbim, Samuel II Chapter 12 and Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, Psalm 5.
6. This is an observation of the poet Aryeh Strauss as related by Prof. Nechama Leibowitz.

Torah High School Network News

Jeffrey Lichtman, Executive Director
Gary Menchel, Chairman

UPCOMING EVENTS

While hibernation is the call to order for many, the winter months will find the Torah High School Network hosting a number of events for students and professionals alike.

On **Wednesday December 6th**, member schools will be involved in a **Yom Iyun** for oppressed Jewry. Students will share a wide array of learning experiences — including slide shows, *shiurim*, first hand accounts from experts, experiential programs and special *t'fillot* — to develop a better understanding of the situation in Jewish communities worldwide and our responsibility to them. Special materials and program ideas developed by Network staff and students will be provided for this unique happening.

On **Thursday December 7th through Sunday December 10th** the Network will conduct its **Second Annual "Specialty" Seminar**. This program will focus on student government leadership for current and potential student council leaders. Those student representatives attending will have the opportunity to study and exercise skills related to the theory and practice of student government. This program will be held at Yeshiva University.

On **Sunday February 11th and Monday February 12th** the Torah High School Network, in conjunction with the Ramaz School, will hold its **Fifth Annual Curriculum and Issues Conference**. Between 80 and 100 educators, are expected to gather at Ramaz for this program whose theme is "Teaching Zionism, When, Where and How?". Rabbi Jon Bloomberg of the Maimonides School, Boston, and Uri Gordon of Ramaz are chairing this event. The conference will provide the opportunity to explore various curricular options, teaching methodologies, and materials.

For further information, please contact Jeff Lichtman, Executive Director, Torah High School Network at 500 West 185th Street, Suite F430, New York, NY 10033 or (212) 960-5292.

STUDENT DELEGATE CONFERENCE

On Thursday October 26th through Sunday October 29th the Beth T'filoh School in Baltimore hosted the Third Annual Student Delegate Conference of the Torah High School Network.

Sixty student representatives from twenty-five schools joined with Network staff to plan student projects for the 1989-90 school year. These students leaders were also involved in intensive leadership training to better plan and implement both Network and individual school programs upon return to their schools.

The theme for this conference was "Activism: *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La Zeh*." Students studied sources related to this topic and met with Jewish communal leaders including Rabbi Avi Weiss, Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and Gary Rosenblatt, Editor, Baltimore Jewish Times. Brainstorming, studying, role playing, debating — under the guidance of staff — these future leaders tackled the toughest topic of our time.

Extra Curricular Programs: Asset or Liability?

Yosef B. Rabinowitz

A glance at the faculty roster of most yeshiva high schools will probably reveal at least one faculty member designated as "Director of Student Programs," a title that implies responsibility for special programs, trips, clubs, councils, and the like. In recent years, yeshivot have become more committed to sponsoring a host of student activities and special programs. Besides using them as an enticement for prospective students, many yeshivot recognize that these programs provide students with a broader vista and expose them to ideas and feelings that cannot always be attained within the classroom itself.

It is understood that a class has a set curriculum and that there is no room within it for Rosh Hodesh programs or Purim parties. It is also understood that a teacher cannot be an expert in Jewish films, slides, skits, and songs, or the most effective way of using those mediums. Some programs require the larger setting of an assembly and the unique talents of certain faculty. A staff member is thus needed to coordinate, assign, and schedule those events. To their credit, many yeshivot have recognized and responded to this need.

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Successful extra curricular activities, however, are a combination of roles, attitudes, goals, and impact. Each school must evaluate all these components to determine whether its programming is an asset or a liability. The following will explore the specific people involved in programming, the roles they play, and the attitudes that are conveyed. There are essentially five groups to consider: Administration, Faculty, Students, Parents, and Director of Programming.

Administration

The principal of a school establishes the role of extra curricular programming via both attitude and budget. Are programs tolerated as a necessary but not ideal part of school, or does the principal actively participate, thereby showing care and concern for content and implementation? Are budgetary allowances provided or must programs be self-sufficient, thus requiring that all buses, entrance fees, etc., be paid for by the students? If special assemblies and programs are to be meaningful and successful, the entire school population must know that these programs are important to the administration. A principal's main concern must be with the content, purpose, and achievements of programs and only secondarily with the impact they will have on the clocks, bells, and schedules. This is not to suggest that programs can be haphazard

and unaccountable to timetables, but it does emphasize the principal's responsibility to create a balance that indicates the importance of these programs within the structure of formal education. By treating a program as a serious, required event; by not allowing students to use programs for other purposes; and by enforcing discipline, the principal influences the tone, attitude, and thereby the effectiveness of a program.

In addition, the vision and goal that the principal sets for a school can be communicated via programs. What are the values to be emphasized? What moral, educational, religious and social messages are to be encouraged? How should religious observances be discussed? Can behavior — moral or religious — which is common to a large part of the student body and their families, be criticized? A principal must not only have the courage to state the unpopular, and the wisdom to do so in an encouraging and warm manner, but the ability to consistently uphold principles, values, and philosophy as well. If Torah learning is a stated ideal of a school, then, when prestigious math or science contests conflict with Talmud classes, a principal must be able to manipulate the Judaic studies schedule or limit activity participation so that Torah learning is not compromised. Even the most subtle indications that a principal gives regarding the role of

continued

extra curricular activities can be clear and convincing messages to the faculty and staff as to what their attitude and involvement should be.

Teachers

The second group is the Judaic and general studies faculties. Teachers should view a program as a shared experience with their students; as an opportunity to observe them outside the classroom; and, at least for some, as a chance to gain insights into the Jewish values and priorities expected of their students.

In order for any program to be effective, however, the faculty not only must attend, thereby clearly indicating that a scheduled program is not a free period, they must also actively participate. Teachers should volunteer and assist in those areas reflecting their unique talents or contacts. Sometimes, all members of a faculty must work together in designing a program to combat a given problem, e.g. cheating; or to enhance atmosphere. For example, the faculty can use comical classroom scenes to write a series of warm, funny Purim skits depicting the lighter side of student life. The Judaic studies faculty, however, has a greater and deeper responsibility, often including the preparation of a special unit of learning for, or from, a *Yom Iyun* or Intersession booklet. Although this extra unit cannot take precedence over regular classroom lessons, faculty must be familiar with the material for only then can the program sessions and discussions be meaningful.

Faculty should be consulted in forming both general program goals and specific methods to be used, and they should be solicited for material (written, audio, visual, etc.) on a series of program topics. In addition, they should always be briefed as to the content, purpose, and direction of each program so that they understand its goals. They should also be encouraged to follow up on the program within their individual classes. This helps the students clarify any misunderstood points as well as provides the Director of Programs with extensive feedback.

Ultimately, faculty should realize that programs can help create a broader dialogue between teachers and students. When a faculty member par-

ticipates, students see a person, not just a teacher. Relating to students outside the class impacts on the relationship with them in class as well. Properly approached, a series of school events can create an easier and more rewarding teacher-student relationship.

Students

The key to all programming is, of course, the student, the target audience. Student reactions to programs can range from "exciting," "informative," "meaningful," to "boring," "repetitive," "preachy." Many see it as a free period or as an opportunity to catch up on homework, sleep, or friendships. There are a number of ways to forestall student negativism:

- Programs should not be stylistically repetitive, i.e., always a speaker, trigger film, skit format, etc. Topics should be as diverse as possible with some serious discussions, others on lighter topics, and some, perhaps, purely for fun. A school trip in New York, for example, might begin by visiting a Russian emigre, lunch at a Manhattan eatery, and end with a Broadway matinee.

- Programs must skillfully and quickly capture the interest of the students. In creating a program, special attention must be given to the opening, the pace, and the medium through which the message is given. Topics must be carefully chosen and then, not helabored.

- Involving students in the writing or presenting of programs often captures the attention of the rest of the students, for when a fellow student is on stage, interest is heightened and criticism is blunted. In addition, by using upperclassmen, younger students have something to aspire towards as well as role models to emulate. Upperclassmen, in turn, develop a sense of leadership and the responsibility of influencing others.

- Keeping assemblies small creates a more personal atmosphere, enables closer supervision, and allows for programs that are grade-appropriate.

- Teachers must anticipate and prevent potential cliques of trouble before a program begins as well as maintain order throughout.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the Director of Programs who must

know the needs, the mind-set, the possibilities and the limitations of the student body. But even an excellent program must have the cooperation and encouragement of supporting staff to help it realize its fullest potential.

Parents

The next group to consider are the parents. Not only are parents generally not involved in school programs, often the principles and practice of a school, the vision and ideals that it seeks to inculcate within its students run contrary to the norms of their communities and homes. When the yeshiva promotes close and rigid adherence to mitzvot such as *kashrut*, *Shabbat*, *tzniut*, etc., it is often urging students to go beyond their parents. The awkwardness of this position is clear. However, involving parents in school programs and activities introduces them, in a close, personal way, to the values, goals, methods, and personnel of the school. This, in turn, can build trust, understanding, and support — the effect of which will be felt in the classroom.

Director

The final participant to consider is the Director. The position of Director of Student Programs is generally not an administrative one, but is often held by a faculty member. The Director, however, must assign roles to the faculty and ask for their cooperation and assistance. Sometimes the authority of the principal is needed to encourage cooperation and involvement, or even to inform faculty of their roles and insist that they fulfill their responsibilities. In order to avoid resentments and strained relationships, the role of student programs, and that of the Director, must be clearly established and supported.

When all of the above components interact together, then the extra curricular programs of a school can develop into a force and a power that will greatly impact on the development of our Jewish youth. ■

Author's Note: My own personal deep appreciation to Rabbi Baruch Lanner under whose guidance, care, and involvement I am privileged to work.

Teaching Students to Cheat or Not to Cheat

Norman Amsel

The recent New York Regents exam scandal involving some yeshiva high school students and graduates has, once again, focused the attention of many Torah educators upon the problem of cheating in our schools. Although most teachers and principals realize that these incidents are merely symptoms of a much greater problem, such public occurrences often provide the trigger for self-examination. This, in turn, may help educators investigate new possibilities and strategies to eliminate or minimize the problem of cheating in our day schools. The following will attempt to define the problem, analyze some of its causes, and offer a few general and specific proposals.

Cheating can be found in every school, including in yeshiva elementary and high schools. A number of years ago, the Principal's Council of the Board of Jewish Education of New York conducted an unscientific anonymous survey through questionnaires of yeshiva junior and high school students in both coeducational and non-coeducational schools in the New York area. One of the

major areas investigated was that of cheating and lying. The results showed students in *every* school polled admitting to widespread cheating. In addition, little variation in the extent of cheating could be seen differentiating type of school, the religious philosophy or the age of the students. Furthermore, this author has found that in the proper, non-threatening atmosphere, students openly speak about their cheating on tests, copying homework, and even lying to teachers and parents.

What causes students to cheat, especially when they are repeatedly taught by parents and teachers that cheating is morally wrong and violates Torah principles? The most prominent factors mentioned by the students themselves in frank discussions are: 1) the pressure to succeed and 2) peer pressure. Often without realizing it, parents and schools place enormous emphasis on "the bottom line," i.e. receiving high enough grades in order to go to the "right" high school or college. Schools themselves often unwittingly add to this pressure by giving recognition only to students who achieve the highest scores, without acknowledging great effort by weaker students. Awards for moral achievement and outstanding character are never given as much recognition by parents (and many schools as well) as awards for academic achievement. Although parents will never consciously promote cheating to achieve the desired end of high grades, the nonverbal signs

of disapproval when seeing a child's tests or report card send a powerful signal to children about what is really important. Some students, then, who are incapable of achieving these expected high grades on their own, will do anything to achieve this approval, including cheating. Others, who have the ability but not the inclination, will also cheat to achieve these "expected" results.

The effect of peer pressure, especially in high school, should also not be underestimated as a factor causing many students to cheat who would not normally violate the rules on their own. When "everybody" is doing it, it becomes extremely difficult to have the moral courage to challenge the unethical behavior of all of one's classmates by refusing to cheat when others do so. The negative social implication of being the class "goody goody" causes many students to go along with the majority when the opportunity to cheat presents itself.

It is interesting to note how many teachers "are sure" that no cheating exists in their classes, when, in actuality, cheating is rampant. Our students have become very clever in devising methods which fool the faculty. The relatively easy access by students, year after year, to state-wide Regents exams, supposedly locked up in a safe, clearly demonstrates how enterprising our students are today.

continued

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A third factor contributing to cheating, usually not verbalized by students, is the perceived values in general society. As students look at newspapers and television, they constantly see headlines about many of the "leaders" in society who have broken the rules (i.e. the law). Whether the person arrested or indicted is a Jew or non-Jew, religious or non-religious leader, students see adults accused of illegal activities. Unfortunately, the punishment is often minimal, as many accused seem to "beat the system." This is demonstrated with the recent scandals in insider trading, corruption in nursing homes, with noted "leaders" in the Jewish community. Furthermore, the leading candidate for the mayor of New York City clearly admits that he did not submit income tax returns for a number of years, but there is little public outrage. These incidents send a signal to students that many are engaged in "breaking the rules," and, even if caught, it is possible to "get away with it."

Nowhere is this message more clearly projected than in the arena of sports, where many of the athletes are truly heroes to our youngsters, and their behavior is readily imitated. When athletes in general, and star athletes in particular, are given second and third "chances" to return to the sport when found partaking in criminal and unlawful activities such as drugs, students perceive that, even if caught, they will be given another chance. This attitude is displayed to an even greater degree with star athletes, as players and the public are willing to forget "mistakes" if the player is a real star. When both Keith Hernandez and Dwight Gooden, star baseball players with the New York Mets, were finally proved to be drug users after repeated denials to the public, each player was given a standing ovation by the fans the first time he appeared on the field following a short respite and admission of wrongdoing. Today, both players participate as if nothing ever happened, and continue to be admired by children and adults alike. Thus, the student learns that you may lie to others and break the law, but you will be forgiven if you say you are sorry and you are good enough at what you do.

With all these powerful forces "pushing" our students to cheat, we can understand why teachers, principals and even parents who repeatedly tell children not to cheat will, by themself,

be ineffective in curtailing such activity in school and in life after school. What then, as educators, can we possibly do in the school environment to minimize or eliminate this illegal activity and immoral attitude? The following are a few possible suggestions which may be tried independently of one another. Each should be evaluated beforehand, given the specific student and parent populations and the general atmosphere in any given school.

The first signal should come from the school administration. Even though society in general rewards achievement no matter what the means, principals should minimize praise and awards for achievement only. By giving equal recognition to students who demonstrate superior effort and strong moral character, the administration sends a message that achievement alone is not the only goal. Awards ceremonies, special societies and dinners can be created for those students who try the hardest but do not achieve, as well as for those students who do continuous acts of *chesed* in and out of school. Realistically, grades and the emphasis on grades will never be totally eliminated. However, by em-

phasizing the concepts of *Torah lishmah* and *sekhar mitzvah mitzvah*, doing good for its own sake and not for the reward, the pressure to do well may be minimized. Of course, while parents and society are sending signals to achieve at all costs, this signal alone may be ineffective in changing student attitudes. Other strategies are necessary.

If possible, the school should organize speakers and workshops in the framework of "helping your pre-teen or teenager cope with stress." As part of these programs, parents should be made aware of how they often unwittingly cause or "teach" their children to cheat by increasing the pressure or demonstrating that success is the ultimate value in life. These discussion groups can be very helpful for parents in general, and also encourage a meaningful parent-child dialogue. Another strategy that sometimes pays dividends in the classroom is the policy that students need not take one test a semester, if there is a legitimate reason why the students could not study. This sends a message to the student that, rather than cheat when he or she did not study (even for non-legitimate reasons), there is an option to

What causes students to cheat, especially when they are repeatedly taught by parents and teachers that cheating is morally wrong and violates Torah principles?

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talk to the teacher about it rather than “having to cheat.”

More specifically, discussions with the students as part of a separate or integrated curriculum on moral values will probably be most effective in changing student attitudes, if executed properly. Below are some of the ideas, concepts and Jewish sources that might be included in such discussions.

When discussing the topic of cheating in a frank atmosphere, students will usually present reasons why cheating on a specific test should not be condemned. In addition to the claims cited above, students may argue that if no one knows about a specific test and all that is copied the answers to a few meaningless facts which could be looked up afterwards anyway, then it cannot be so wrong. In the large scheme of things, no one will ever know the difference, and it's just this one test, so what could be so wrong? The teacher should explain through discussion and questions (not a lecture) that Judaism makes no moral distinction between a “small” or “large” sin. Judges look at each equally.¹ Although the punishment may be greater for someone stealing a million dollars than for stealing one dollar, the violation of sin is the same. Therefore, there is no moral distinction between cheating on a quiz or on the SAT. The class should then discuss how hardened criminals and those who embezzle large companies might have behaved as students. The class should agree that a person starts small, and, if successful, may move on to more serious cheating and breaking of the law. No one can know, for sure, who will stop after one “little quiz” and who will continue to become a chronic cheater and eventually move on to greater forms of law breaking.

As far as the argument “no one has to know”, we see that Judaism seems to feel it is far worse to commit a sin without anyone knowing than when it is done publicly. That is why some explain that the thief (*ganav*) who steals at night when “no one will know” pays back double (*kefel*), while the robber in broad daylight (*gazlan*) only pays back the amount stolen. In addition, somebody will always know — you, the cheater (as well as God). The teacher might go on to discuss how a person who continually cheats must feel: inadequate that he or she cannot obtain or does not try to obtain passing grades legally. As part of the discussion about

the peer pressure to cheat, it must be emphasized that, ultimately, one must answer to oneself for the rest of life.

In discussing the Hebrew term for cheating, the class should be made aware of the term *genaivat da'at* and the seriousness of this sin.^{2*} In fact, though many students who cheat would never think of stealing, the Tosefta says that cheating is the worst form of stealing, and implies that it is worse to cheat than to rob a bank.³ Then the class should analyze this term *genaivat da'at*, and decide whose “thoughts” are really being stolen. Who is being deceived when a student cheats on a test or plagiarizes a term paper? Firstly, it is the teacher. The teacher believes that this student has attained a level of competence that has not been achieved. Then, it is the parents. They are paying enormous sums of money, thinking that their child is being properly educated, based on the grades. They, too, are being deceived by the cheater. Then, the colleges’ “thoughts” are also being stolen. In accepting students based on a grade point average, the college believes that the student has legitimately attained this level of accomplishment, and may deny other students entrance to the college based on this false assumption. Finally, of course, the student himself or herself is being deceived in thinking that he or she is really fooling someone, when, in the long run (when the importance of learning those “meaningless facts” becomes clear), the student will feel cheated.

Sometimes these arguments work with students, but sometimes they are ineffective. Students, however, usually respond best when they believe that they themselves will be hurt by someone cheating. The teacher should ask the class how many students feel it is legitimate to cheat if, through that cheating, they will hurt someone else's class rank and ultimately deny them entrance to a particular college. Most students (even those who do cheat) will admit that it is wrong since this kind of cheating can hurt them or their friends. The teacher should then demonstrate how any cheating has the potential to hurt a fellow student. In addition, the teacher should ask, how could students object when they get hurt through cheating by others if they continue to cheat themselves? They can only expect or demand others to stop when they themselves cease this activity.

Finally, the teacher may tell the story of the bright, creative and personable young man who was very popular in school. Throughout high school he cheated on almost every test by devising ingenious methods to avoid getting caught. Being popular, his friends never told on him. He even cheated on the SAT exam and got into a good college, where he continued to cleverly cheat and get good grades. When he cheated on his Medical Boards, he was admitted into medical school where he also cheated and graduated without learning very much. Because of his good personality, he built up a private practice and he is now your doctor. How do you feel about this person and cheating now? He very well may be your doctor (without you knowing it) and may hurt many people. Almost all students will realize the danger in having a chronic cheater put in a position of power. The same story could be told of a lawyer, accountant, rocket scientist or any other professional. If we all object when we get hurt through cheating, then we cannot ourselves cheat and potentially hurt others.

Ultimately, the students must understand that it is difficult to do the right thing when peers, and society in general, are doing the wrong thing. In the short run it hurts. But in the long run, feeling good about oneself and helping make the world a better place is the right choice.

The above suggestions are by no means meant to exhaust all the discussion possibilities or school strategies in combating the cheating problem. Educators must make teaching moral values, in general, and the elimination of cheating in the schools in particular, a priority. Only by establishing a meaningful curriculum in these areas and by integrating activities, classes and creative programs can this challenge be met. Only when administrators, teachers, parents and students work together will the threat of cheating be eliminated. It can happen. It must happen. ■

1. Deuteronomy 1:17

2. Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Hilkhos Mekhirah 18:1

3. Tosefta, Bava Kama, Chapter 4

*Ed's Note: See Gershon Fluk, “The Ethics of Cheating: The Jewish View,” *Ten Da'at*, Vol I No. 1, Tevet 5747.

TESTING: The First Ten Points

Lawrence R. Schwed

Tests are a fact of life. As teachers, we write them, evaluate them, and revise them all the time. No one doubts their usefulness in measuring the efficacy of one's teaching or the diligence of the students' preparation for class. The challenge however, is in determining the best format for testing an individual class under a particular set of circumstances. Of equal importance is whether the exam actually tests or measures that which it intended to do. These are concerns that must be confronted by all educators: principals, chairmen of departments, and especially by the teachers and test writers themselves.

It is no secret that on occasion it is the test itself that fails. No matter how carefully it is prepared, or how assiduously the students are coached, sometimes the results are disastrous at worst, disappointing at best. Students miss the point of a question, misunderstand the directions, write too much or too little, answer in generalities instead of specifics, and so on. Sound familiar? This phenomenon can often be avoided if the test writer keeps a few of the following key points in mind.

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1. Write a detailed outline of the material that was actually taught. Decide what is important enough to test. Then review all this in class guiding the students on exactly what and how to study. Merely telling students, "The test will be on the first three *p'rakim* of *Yishayahu*," or "Study the French Revolution," or worse, "The test will cover everything we learned in class," are statements that can lead to frustration and misinterpretation. A review in class of the major topics and salient points to be tested sets the limits of study as well as helps students acquire the desired study habits necessary for the course.

2. Write sample questions based on the important material, and try them out in class in the form of homework, class work, or review. In this way, the level of difficulty of a particular type of question, and of individual questions themselves can be determined. In addition, any misunderstood or poorly comprehended ideas can then be clarified.

Students often approach a test bewildered as to what they are expected to know, and how they are expected to convey their knowledge. One technique that may be helpful is to incorporate student generated questions into the review, or to actually have the students prepare sample questions for class review. Students can thus learn to anticipate questions and prepare for them in a more directed, focused manner.

In most instances, it is unfair to assume that students will be able to successfully answer questions of a particular type, reflecting an individual teacher's unique style, without having been previously exposed to them. Test taking, like many other things required of students, is a skill that must be taught and reviewed.

For this reason, it is essential that students understand the kinds of responses that are appropriate and expected. This can be accomplished by actually reviewing and analyzing, in class, different types of responses that students will offer to sample questions and on homeworks. Only in this way can a teacher be sure that the test will actually measure the students' understanding of the material, and not their misunderstanding or frustration with the test.

3. Questions must be worded with great care. Language should be direct and simple and students should be required to concentrate on only one type of skill at a time. Questions requiring more than one type of thinking should not be grouped together. Multi-directional questions are confusing, intimidating, and virtually useless for purposes of evaluation.

For instance, questions that demand simple factual answers such as: "In what year were the Jews expelled from Spain?" or "List the three top commodities traded on the New York Stock

Exchange in October of this year," should not be grouped together with more global questions that require the student to analyze or synthesize broad bodies of knowledge. The latter type includes questions such as: "List and explain the religious and economic motive behind the expulsion from Spain," or "Why were the three most heavily traded items on the New York Stock Exchange in October 1988 subject to insider trading fraud?"

In addition, words like: "Discuss," "Tell about" and the like should be replaced with more precise descriptive directions such as "Describe in 3-5 sentences," or "List two biographical facts." Wherever possible, words like "Why" should be replaced with more exact instructions such as "What are the causes?" or similar phrasing. The more exact and precise the directions are, the better chance the student has of understanding what is required and answering to the point.

Vague phrasing can change a factual question into an opinion one. Consider, for example, the difference between these two questions:

a. From among the poets we have studied in Hebrew literature, who was the most important one in the Moslem period of Spain?

h. Suggest an author, from among the many whom we have studied in Hebrew Literature, whom you consider to be the most important of the Moslem period in Spain.

Clearly, "a", phrased as a question, assumes that such a topic was discussed in class. The student is merely required to recall the discussion. In contrast "b" which is phrased as a direction rather than a question, requires the student to make a judgment about the poets studied, and to choose one. In "h" there really is no wrong answer.

The unwary teacher will often phrase the question as example "b", when in fact the intention was to ask "a". In such a case the student has every right to state an opinion, assuming that it can be substantiated. On the other hand, asking a type "a" question when in fact the answer is really more opinion than fact, can create the frustration of trying to remember something that may never have been taught at all.

4. A test should be a learning experience as well as a measure of knowledge. The student should feel that

this is an opportunity to demonstrate competency and understanding of a certain body of knowledge. Therefore, questions should be relevant to the topic, and should test the important aspects of the material. The level of difficulty may vary throughout the test. But a question should be difficult because it requires the student to use a higher level of thinking such as analysis or synthesis, not because it tests an obscure piece of information or trivia. This is an important distinction to keep in mind.

5. It is vital that a colleague review the test before it is administered. A teacher is often so sure of a certain answer that other possibilities are never even considered. However, because of the phrasing, cultural or age differences between the students and the teacher, and many other factors, the student may legitimately understand the question to mean something other than what was intended and thus respond in an unanticipated way.

An objective analysis by a colleague may forestall some of these problems before confusion and ambiguity further complicate the testing procedure. This is particularly true with multiple-choice items, a subject which deserves separate treatment.

6. The manner in which questions are displayed and arranged on the page may also determine, to a certain degree, the success or failure of a test. If a test is written with inadequate space between individual items, students may have difficulty reading it. The teacher may have to waste precious test time reading through parts, if not the entire, exam.

Short answer type questions should provide enough space to answer the question, or at least clearly indicate the expected length, i.e. one sentence, one paragraph, etc.

7. Similar type items should be grouped together. Identifications should not, for example, be mixed with essays or short answers. In addition, the point value stated next to each question helps students budget their time and set their priorities.

8. A sample answer often puts the student at ease, and offers specific direction. It may also eliminate numerous questions during the test itself.

9. After the test, the teacher should review it with the students as soon as possible. The benefits to the students are obvious. In addition, the teacher will become aware, before marking, of how the students responded to each question, possible pitfalls, misunderstood directions, etc. If need be, the teacher can then reassign the point value of certain questions before beginning the marking process. It also gives the teacher the opportunity to reteach what is necessary while the material is still fresh in the students' minds.

10. An analysis of the test results helps the teacher understand where students need additional help, what skills need to be retaught or reviewed, which types of questions need to be practiced in class, and finally how well the teacher has succeeded in teaching the material.

On multiple choice tests, this process has been simplified with the help of the "scantron" machine which not only grades each exam, but can also provide important statistical data. Even the simplest model will yield an average, the number of tests graded, and an item by item print out of the number of students who chose the wrong option to each question. Too many wrong answers to an item indicate a problem with that item. Too few might mean that it was too easy and therefore non-discriminating and perhaps useless.

Undoubtedly, test writing is a complicated, involved process. Developing an expertise is a skill that takes many years. Each teacher must discover what works best not only in a particular subject, but, more importantly, for the students of a particular class. Standardized tests notwithstanding, not every test is necessarily appropriate for every class learning the same material. A skilled teacher takes this into account when writing any exam.

Testing, in all its forms, needs to undergo constant review. This, of necessity, may require additional funding. Schools should offer inservice sessions for their teachers as well as opportunities for teachers to share their expertise with their colleagues. Raising teachers' awareness of the challenges and pitfalls of test writing may have an important side benefit as well. It may even cause teachers to reevaluate their methods of instruction. And this, after all, is what it's all about. ■

Reducing Grades as a Means of Imposing Discipline

Joel B. Wolowelsky


Educators universally recognize the professional obligation to maintain the integrity of a student's transcript. However, ensuring that a student's grades are neither higher nor lower than they legitimately should be is a halakhic obligation as well.

In his responsum declaring the absolute prohibition of in any way aiding in the theft of the final comprehensive New York State Regents examinations, Rav Moshe Feinstein, z"l, makes an important point in addition to the general prohibition of theft.¹ He notes that employers often rely on a student's transcript in deciding whether to employ a particular person. When a grade is higher than what it should be, the employer is robbed of the opportunity to properly evaluate the prospective employee.


Of course, the "flip side" is equally compelling. If a student's grade is lower than what it should be, the student is robbed of the opportunity to be properly rated for the job, a college placement, a scholarship, or anything else for which evaluation of a student's transcript is required.

In New York State it is public policy that "a grade is intended to be an educa-

tional evaluation, that is, an estimation of a student's level of achievement within a particular subject area."² Of course, "level of achievement" includes many things, such as performance on



Ensuring that a student's grades are neither higher nor lower than they legitimately should be is a halakhic obligation.



would be impossible to try to establish a uniform breakdown of the grade for each and every subject. But a consistent requirement that applies to all disciplines and all teachers is that one "may not subvert the purpose of grading [i.e., educational evaluation] by arbitrarily reducing a student's grades as a means of imposing discipline."³

On the simplest interpretation, this would rule out lowering a student's grade for some behavior outside of the subject classroom. For example, a school in New York State had a policy of reducing a student's grade to a maximum of 75 if he or she had been suspended for disciplinary reasons. When a student's grade was thereby lowered as a result of an incident in the lavatory and his subsequent suspension, the Commissioner invalidated the policy. He ruled that "there appears to be no reasonable relationship between the student's misconduct in the lavatory and the level of achievement attained by such student in his courses for that marking period."⁴

This general public policy also applies to discipline for actions within the classroom. For example, a school had a policy of reducing a student's report card grades one point for every unexcused lateness (after the second occurrence) within a given quarter. Understandably, no penalty would be imposed for an excused lateness, (as, for example, if a principal asked to speak to the student and kept him or her until

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examinations, homework assignments, class discussions, projects, compositions, laboratory exercises, and so on. Diverse disciplines, and different teachers, apply varying specific weights to each of these components, and it

The fact that a particular policy might in actuality be effective as a method of maintaining discipline is entirely irrelevant to the question of whether it is ethically acceptable.

students who did attend classes on the day that that student cut did not have 5% of their grades in those classes determined by that particular day's classroom performance. "Reducing petitioner's grade by 5% for conduct unrelated to academic performance clearly constitutes arbitrary and unreasonable action," he ruled.⁶

These rulings concern deducting points, but the policy addresses the over-all integrity of the grade, and "a corollary would be that academic awards shall not be given for non-academic achievement." A student who gets "bonus points" for good attendance, fine behavior, participation in a particular after-school club, and so on, is not being rewarded for academic achievement. Thus those who evaluate the student's transcript are not seeing a mark that measures what it should, and other students in the class who have attained the same level of academic achievement but who have not earned the "bonus points" have been denied a grade that reflects their actual standing.

It is true that as a private school, a yeshivah might not — from a technical legal standpoint — be subject to every ruling of its state's Commissioner of Education (and certainly to the rulings of another state's official). But these rulings are not simply formal orders to schools under a Commissioner's jurisdiction. They are expressions of public policy, a definition of what a grade is in our society and what a person who evaluates a student's transcript may logically assume when examining the document.

The fact that a particular policy might in actuality be effective as a method of maintaining discipline is entirely irrelevant to the question of whether it is ethically acceptable. There are many disciplinary methods which would be quite effective if allowed to be used but which are rejected because they violate our standards of propriety. Lowering a student's grade for cutting or lateness might actually get the student to class on time every day. But to reduce grades as a means of imposing discipline is, in our society, to rob the student of a true grade. A yeshivah which allows a student's grade to be higher or lower than it should be as an evaluation of actual academic achievement should be re-evaluating its policy to bring it into conformity with halakhic and professional standards. ■

NOTES

1. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe, Hoshen Mishpat*, part four, responsum 30, page 244.
2. *Matter of MacWhinnie*, 20 New York State Education Department Reports 147 (1980).
3. *Matter of Coleman*, 23 NY Ed Dept Rep 126 (1983).
4. *Matter of MacWhinnie*, 20 NY ED Dept Rep 147 (1980).
5. *Matter of Gibbons*, 22 NY Ed Dept Rep 136 (1982).
6. *Matter of Caskey*, 20 NY Ed Dept Rep 138 (1981). Note also, *Matter of Shamon*, 22 NY Ed Dept Rep 430 (1983).
7. Letter from the Supervisor, Bureau of School Registration, New York State Education Department, December 29, 1988.

after the starting bell). The Commissioner invalidated this policy because it "is automatic in its application and premised solely upon whether a student's absence is excused or not. Such a policy is logically inconsistent, in that students who have 'excused' absences have equally missed 'necessary' work..."⁵ The points were being deducted from the student's grade as a disciplinary sanction and not as a measure of his or her academic achievement. Such a marking system violated the professional standards for grading.

This logic likewise invalidates a policy which lowers a student's grade for cutting. Classroom work is an important component of a student's academic achievement. But inasmuch as points are not automatically deducted when a student is sick, for example, the grade reduction for cutting is a disciplinary sanction unrelated to academic achievement. Indeed, the Commissioner also reversed the policy of a school which imposed a grade reduction as a sanction for cutting. A student's grade had been reduced by 5% for each day of unexcused absence. But, noted the Commissioner,



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LET THEM PLAY CHESS!

A Bohemian Rabbi Speaks About Hinukh

Yaakov Jacobs

Maharal Mi'Prag. So powerful a leader was he that a body of legends evolved around his life, as if to explain what the masses perceived to be supernatural powers.

So cherished was he by his own people, that his grave in the Prague cemetery draws supplicants to this day.

So revered was he by non-Jews, that a statue depicting him in gigantic proportions was commissioned and built by the Christian community of Prague.

So masterful was his exposition of passages in Talmud and Midrash that he baffled others, that he influenced the philosophies of all who came after him.

And with such force did his original approach to the teachings of the Sages penetrate the psyche of *klal Yisrael* that, as some would have it, he was the fountainhead from which followed Hasidut, and the revolutionary Mussar school of Reb Yisrael Salanter.

Yet, in his early years Rabbeinu Yehuda Leib ben Bezalel — his full name, was denied the post of Rav at the AltneuShul in Prague. Prague was then the capital of Bohemia, a major center of Torah learning, and the hub of scien-

tific research and speculation which was then spreading throughout Europe. Maharal's keen insights into what ailed *klal Yisrael* in those times were rejected, and even met with scorn. And throughout his life he was plagued by the most vicious slanders. Indeed, his passionate attacks on the plague of *loshon hara* carried an overlay of personal pain. It was only after his reputation spread throughout the Torah world that the

elders of Prague invited him to lead their *kehilla*. And it was only after his death in 1609 that various disciples and members of his family began to succeed in pressing his ideas on a previously unwilling people.

Today, mention of his name brings forth expressions of awe, yet few who have passed through our yeshivot have even read his work.

Maharal was a forceful critic of the leadership of the Jewish communities in Bohemia. He was a powerful defender against physical threats and attacks from the non-Jewish world. But he was perhaps most forceful in the defense of the sacred texts of Judaism against the malignment of contemporary scholars. In his *Be'er HaGolah*, he dealt with Aggadic texts which, when read literally, appeared to depart from the meaning of passages in the Torah and, in other cases, appeared to depart from reason. He was unafraid, when he believed such texts to be allegorical, to read them as such, and in the process he extracted from the texts lessons of sublime importance which immensely enrich our understanding of Torah teachings.

When, for example, three Talmudic Sages responded differently to the question, "What should one do who wishes to achieve a higher level of piety?", Maharal rejected the apparently obvious reading of the text as a dispute on what areas of learning and practice are more conducive to piety. The first Sage proposed the study of *mili d'Brakhot*,

The student,
rushed from a
smattering of
Mikre with
little Mishna
which is the
base of all
Torah learning,
leaves without
Mikre, Mishna,
Talmud, or
derekh erez.

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He was perhaps most forceful in the defense of the sacred texts of Judaism against the malignment of contemporary scholars.

that section of the Talmud dealing with *mitzvot bain adam la'Makom*; the second put forth *mili d'Nezikin*, the laws of damages and personal injury — obviously relating to *mitzvot bain adam l'havero*, interpersonal relationships; and the third proposed the study of *Avot*. And what area of mitzva-imperative emerges from *Avot*, asked Maharal — *mitzvot bain adam l'atzmo* — those which deal with man's relationship with himself, a category of mitzva one generally hears little about. Rather than seeing a dispute, Maharal read this text as a statement of the three categories of mitzvot which are inter-dependent: absent any one of the three and we cannot achieve a Torah personality. Going a step beyond, Maharal contended, citing Aggadic texts, that weakness in all three of these areas made it impossible for the *Beit HaMikdosh* to withstand the onslaughts of our enemies; made it impossible for us to remain a unified people in our own land, and prevents

Moshiah, who sits waiting at the gate of Yerushalayim, from bringing the *Geula*.

Given these telling insights into the malaise of *klal Yisrael* in his time, we can better understand Maharal's lifelong preoccupation with what he perceived to be the flaws in the *hinukh* system practiced then.

Maharal introduces us to his radical approach to *hinukh* — which is really a call for a return to tradition — in his work, *Gur Aryeh*, a super-commentary on Rashi. In *Va'ethanan* Rashi comments on the Torah's command "And you shall teach [these words of Torah] to your children," that "*v'shinantom loshon hidud hu*," the verb suggests precision; that we teach so that the words "will be precise in your mouth, to the end that they shall be so readily at hand, that should one pose a question to you, your voice will not hesitate in response." Maharal comments:

In our generation our teachers function in perverse ways; they

think of themselves as moving forward while actually moving backwards. Their behavior may be likened to that of the fool who sees a workman who is about to build a wall, digging a hole in the ground: he wonders why the worker does not build the wall on the surface of the ground, not realizing that should he do so, the wall will crumble and fall.

In previous days, clear goals were set — based on a child's capacity — to educate him in a rational manner. [In accordance with the Mishna in *Avot*] at age five he was taught *Mikre* (*Humash*), at ten Mishna, at fifteen Talmud. At five a child could understand *Mikre*, and it would prepare him for the next step. What he learned at this stage took strong root in his mind. He could then comprehend Mishna...building on the foundation of mitzvot [in *Humash*]... Mishna following naturally. And, having mastered Mishna, which is the foundation and the framework for all of Torah, as he approached the study of Talmud, he was ready to build a tower soaring to heaven....

Today our misguided teachers give the young student a smattering of *Mikre* from the first passages of the weekly *parsha*. They break off [at the end of the week] starting with the opening of the new *parsha*. When the year is over, the child has forgotten everything, and then starts all over again, and so on for three, four or five years. When the child leaves his study of *Humash*, he takes nothing with him: he leaves as he arrived....And there are some who then cast the child into *Gemara*, where he chirps the sounds like a bird, having little notion of their meaning.

Then, says Maharal, in a pun dripping with irony: "they go on to *Tosfot*. Yet, would that they grasped the essence [the text of the *Gemara*] and did not grasp at the periphery.¹ ...They then proceed to *pilpul shel hevel* [vain casuistry]² which having no foundation in truth degenerates into *sheker* [falsehood], *sheker* being the exact opposite of Torah which is truth." Speaking of the time when the student leaves the *Beit*

Maharal Mi'Prag. Mention of his name brings forth expressions of awe, yet few who have passed through our yeshivot have even read his work.

Medrash and takes a wife and goes out into the world to build a house: "...It all seems to have been a dream; he leaves serious learning taking with him neither *Mikre*, nor Mishna, nor Talmud, nor *derekh erez* [the basic understanding of living as a Torah Jew in society]."

In *Derekh Haim*, Maharal's commentary on Avot, when he comes to the completion of the Mishna's discussion of the forty-eight means of acquiring Torah learning, he says, in effect, "we, of course, in our time have no need for these techniques," having so perverted our *hinukh* system. But he moves quickly from cynicism to contrition, and in one of the few such very personal intrusions into his work, he writes: "It is with a broken heart...that I write these words...I hardly think myself worthy to castigate, nor should it appear that I consider myself free of the errors of which I speak. On the contrary, it is because I too have studied in a flawed manner that I have become aware of what ails all of us." But he quickly returns to the fray. There are those, he says, who believe that *pilpul*, even when it has no firm basis in sacred texts, is nevertheless needed "*l'hidudah*," to "sharpen" the mind as a sort of mental gymnastics. He writes: "...if this is what you seek, why lead your students into falsehood: *yo'tair yaish lilmod umnat nagrut oh sh'ar umnat, oh s'hok ha'yadua*, (it would be better to teach them carpentry, or other crafts, or the well-known game [of chess] which would be preferable to causing them to speak falsehood in the name of Torah)."

Maharal seems not to have built a philosophical system. But from this writer's limited reading of his works, it is apparent that he *has* built a Torah system. His works have specific themes, for example, *G'vurat Hashem*, dealing with the Exodus; *Tiferet Yisrael*, dealing with the Revelation on Sinai; *Netzah Yisrael* dealing with *Galut* and *Geula*. Yet there are recurring themes which are treated meagerly in one instance, more extensively in another (...*aniyim b'mokom ehad, v'ashirim b'mokom aher*). The image presents itself of an artist working in his studio with a number of canvasses standing on easels. His pallet and brush always in hand, he moves about, adding some paint here, changing a color there, picking up an idea only hinted at on one canvass and expanding it on another. This would ac-

On Translations

One of the classic works on translating lists as one criteria that the translator be capable of having written the original. For those of us engaged in translating sacred texts — as educators or writers — this is more than we can aspire to. Translating Maharal brings additional challenges. Contrary to conventional wisdom, his writing is not at all difficult to understand and consequently not difficult to translate — up to a point. In offering his explanations of texts, he begins with a direct, while highly original, interpretation. He then probes more deeply, and it is on these levels that difficulties of comprehension, and consequently translation, arise. But there is yet a more difficult problem. Having offered an approach to a text, he repeats it several times, often with no variation and no apparent reason. Suggesting copier's errors here is patently inadequate. One can find some solace in the Kotzker Rebbe who told his Hassidim to put aside their Hassidic texts and devote themselves to Maharal. One Hassid complained that Maharal repeats himself too much. The Kotzker, not one of an easy disposition, shouted, "We cherish every word, and you complain that there are too many?" and proceeded to throw the man out of the Beit Medrash.

Throughout this essay I have emulated the example of S. Asaf, who in his citations of Maharal in Hebrew, uses ellipsis marks to indicate where the repetitions have been omitted. I pray that a more astute reader than I will find a better solution.

In any case, Torah Jews dare not take solace in translations. They are at best a temporary bridge back to the original, never a final station.

One of Franz Rosenzweig's first efforts at translating Hebrew into German — he was later to translate Tanakh with Martin Buber — was *Jehuda Halevi: Zweiundneunzig Hymnen und Gedichte*. Following the translations of Yehuda Halevi's poems, Rosenzweig heads his *Nachwort* with a statement made by Friederich Leopold v. Stollberg, after he had completed his translation of the major epic poetry of the Greeks into German:

O Lieber Leser, lerne Griechisch und wirf meine Übersetzung ins Feuer.

Dear Reader: learn Greek and throw my translation into the fire.

count for his saying at different times, "...as I have explained elsewhere," "as I will explain in another work." Those works available to us are in fact a continuum; one cannot say that one work is superior to another, or richer in content. They all command our attention. Consequently in the confines of an essay—an "essay"³ is after all an attempt to deal with a large issue in a small space — no one of Maharal's themes can stand isolated from all the others.

As already noted, Maharal says that the student, rushed from a smattering of *Mikre with little Mishna which is the base of all Torah learning, leaves without Mikre, Mishna, Talmud, or derekh eretz*. In fact, he had not been discussing *derekh eretz*. But it is *derekh eretz* which suffers most when the Jewish *neshomah* is deprived of the life-giving thorough grounding in *Mikre, Mishna* — and then, of course, *Talmud*. Unable, as Maharal teaches, to relate to the Almighty, to his fellow Jew and fellow man, and unable to deal with himself, he is susceptible to all of the prevailing social illnesses which stand ready to invade the *neshomah* when the immune defenses are gone. The gap between Torah learning and Torah principles in our interactions with society lead to what has been called "the ethical paradox."⁴ The solution to this agonizing problem lies not only in Maharal's proposals for authentic *hinukh*, but in all that he has to tell us elsewhere about human dynamics.

It is a Torah truism that a generation in which the *Beit HaMikdash* is not rebuilt, is guilty of its destruction. If *klal Yisrael* continues to be the focus of Jew-hatred (oddly the German's had a work for it: *Judenhaas!*), then we can fix responsibility for our current state with those factors which caused us to be driven from our land and to lose the glory of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

We have so much to learn from Maharal: about sanctity, about kindness, about *Golut* and *Geula* — and about humility.

Let Maharal have the last word:

The heart of every man who seeks the glory of this Creator, must be broken by all that we see ... As for me, I tried to repair the little bit that I would, but I did not succeed ... May the Almighty in His mercy return us to His Torah and guide us back to the paths of Truth and Righteousness. ■

Editor's Note: Ten Da'at is interested in publishing reactions to Maharal's approach to *hinukh* and its applicability today. Please write.

1) The *Tosfot* is a collection of comments on the Talmud from different hands which appears alongside the text in most printed editions. The word means "additions", and while Maharal had no particular quibble with the *Tosfot*, he finds fault with those who over-emphasize their importance in the formative years of a student's approach to Talmud. (It has been suggested that an edition of the Talmud printed in Krakow without the *Tosfot* was prompted by Maharal.) In a similar vein, Maharal is critical of exposing students of Talmud to Rashi's commentary before they are ready for it. The entry on Education in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* which deals with Maharal takes this to mean that Maharal disapproved somehow of Rashi, an absurdity given that his first publication was *Gur Aryeh*, which, as noted in the text, is a commentary on Rashi.

2) One more example of Maharal's educational concerns being misunderstood is that his sharp words on "*pilpul shel hevel*" hardly mean that he dismissed the technique. He himself comments in one of his works on the requirement that a candidate for the *Sanhedrin* must be able to prove in scores of ways that a *sheretz*, which is *tamei*, is actually *tahor*. Obviously, no sophistry can revise the status of a Biblical law, but, says the Maharal, looking at all aspects of the *sheretz* and *tumah* and *tahara* deepen our insight into Torah law. For the same reason Maharal encourages free inquiry and dissent, since confronting dissension sharpens one's own understanding.

3) This essay might not have been written were it not for Rabbi Elya Chaim Carlebach of the Zecher Naftali Foundation, who urged me to delve more deeply into Maharal, and to prepare a work on *Netzah Yisrael*.

4) Dr. Irving N. Levitz, of the Wurzweiler Graduate School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, writes the following in *Jewish Life* (Fall, Winter 1977-78) on "Crisis in Orthodoxy: The Ethical Paradox":

What is emerging with embarrassing frequency from among Orthodox Jews is the involvement of a disturbing number of its adherents in a myriad of corrupt activities...

It should not seem [however] that Orthodox Jews have a monopoly on corruption. This is simply not so. There are no empirical data nor is there any responsible social scientist that could indicate that Orthodoxy, as a way of life, fosters or encourages corruption. But here is the rub: neither is there evidence that Orthodoxy as it is practiced today, either discourages, controls, reduces, or in fact has any effect on moral behavior at all.

Perhaps Levitz is too harsh, but the fact that there were forces who mounted strong opposition to publishing the article, indicates a reluctance to deal with the problem.

MAHARAL ON HINUKH

A Brief Primer:

To learn more about Maharal's thinking on *hinukh* is to learn more about Maharal...is to learn Maharal. First: forget what you've been told about the impossibility of understanding Maharal. Start with "*Ntiv Ha'Emet*" in *N'tivot Olam* — one of my favorites; or any other of Maharal's works. In most cases, he begins with a Midrashic or Talmudic passage — or at times a *posuk*, and goes on from there. If you have been exposed to these sources, you will probably feel at home right at the start. Then listen to the question he raises: you should have no difficulty with that. Then listen as he repeats himself time and again — like a good teacher. (Could that be the secret of his repetition?) Keep going until you feel you don't understand. Then you can say, "there are *parts* of Maharal that I don't understand." But you will have the sensation of one who drinks from a well of clear, fresh water, and you will want to again and again. And you will never again say, "It's impossible to understand Maharal."

Annotated Bibliography:

Assaf, S. Ed., *Mekorot L'Toledot Ha-Chinuch B'Yisrael*, Volume I of IV Tel Aviv, 1954.

Assaf brings together some of the major statements by Maharal in his anthology of sources in Jewish education.

Kleinberger, Aharon Fritz, *Ha'Machshavah Ha'Pedagogit Shel Ha'Maharal Mi'Prag*, Hebrew University, 1962.

Kleinberger, in his dissertation called, aptly enough, *The Educational Theory of the Maharal Mi'Prague*, digs up many more sources. The study, finely translated from the French into Hebrew, and published by the Magnes Press, opens up more than the narrow confines of scholarship would normally permit.

Weiss, Avner, *Rabbi Loew of Prague: Theory of Human Nature and Morality*, an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1969.

What is educational theory without psychology — Rabbi Avner Weiss' dissertation of Maharal's theory of human nature and morality brings more light to the subject of *hinukh*.

Primary works of the Maharal have had a sad publishing history. In the fifties a well-printed edition, relatively free of errors, was unavailable. Today, one almost-complete edition is available, and there are even competing editions of some of the works.

Sadly, the works cited above are out-of-print. Israel has had a spate of paperback reprints, and Avner Weiss' work, presumably being prepared for publication, is available only in a very poor copy of the dissertation from Xerox Microfilm in Ann Arbor. All are available in libraries.

The Bible Laboratory

B. Barry Levy

It has long been unthinkable to teach science without laboratory facilities; in some places it is actually illegal. The laboratory, literally a “workplace”, provides tangible and practical exposure to the real life situations about which the science student learns, and it offers opportunities to work and experiment with the techniques and theories that are taught — virtual impossibilities in traditional frontal settings. Language laboratory facilities became popular several decades ago for more or less the same reasons, as well as for their offering increased opportunities to individualize the learning, reviewing, and drilling processes. Even more universal is the use of laboratory facilities for teaching computer related skills. A typing, programming or word processing course taught without adequate hands-on experience would be considered a farce.

The university model of science education, the availability of vast financial resources, and strong commitment to the value of laboratory-type education thus have enabled many courses to benefit from this type of arrangement. It is self-evident, however, that Jewish studies have not shared broadly in this development. A few schools have in-

vested in some language laboratory equipment for the teaching of Hebrew; plays, performances and shows serve to teach dramatics; daily services offer opportunities for practicing synagogue skills; and socio-dramas sometimes find a place in the teaching of ethics. But we are far from the day when every *beit midrash* will be equipped with an adequate library, much less a computer hook-up to the Bar Ilan University Responsa Project. And most classes in which texts are taught, and which focus almost exclusively on the text, lack even the requisite dictionaries, atlases, and reference books. The school that proudly offers access to one reserve copy of each volume (and perhaps a photocopier) in its small and overcrowded library — thereby demonstrating its superiority to many sister institutions in which even this level of access is unavailable — should perhaps imagine the science course in which one testtube, or one microscope, or one piece of litmus paper, or one computer is made to suffice for a class of twenty-five or thirty budding scientists.

This is not to suggest that all Talmud courses be turned into laboratory encounters or that religious thought or the Bible be taught in a scientific way; both are valid to a point and self-defeating if carried to excess (though there is no other way to train someone properly to render halakhic decisions). Nor is this meant to debate the theoretical underpinnings of laboratory-type educational

facilities and experiences; when used effectively, the laboratory wins. Rather, it is suggested that educators examine the laboratory model of education for what it is, scrutinize the many opportunities it provides both teacher and student, and apply them to the teaching of Jewish studies. The concept is valuable for many areas of the curriculum, but the following will focus on its use in Biblical studies.

The Laboratory is a Special Place

No one can mistake a biology lab for anything else. It is decorated with scientific equipment; its walls are covered with pictures and drawings; it is stocked with specimens of all sorts; it even has a distinctive smell. A well equipped lab intoxicates the students with the many new and challenging — and, above all else, interesting — things it thrusts upon them. One may attend biology classes in any room in the school, but, for obvious reasons, administrators often schedule as many as possible in the lab. The Bible, on the other hand, is taught wherever convenient. Who has ever seen a special Bible room that dazzles the students who merely open the door, creating an enticing environment that is exclusive and absorbing?

Let every school stake a claim on one large, well lit classroom that will become the Bible Lab, where all Bible clas-

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ses and only Bible classes will be taught; which will be decorated with Bible motifs and equipped with multiple copies of the various tools that Bible students must learn to use; and which will become the hangout for the school's Bible aficionados. Such a facility will need the following types of resources:

1. Furniture and Equipment:

Regular desks and chairs may suffice, but appropriate tables for group work are recommended. A locked storage closet, secure glass cases for displays and a sizeable library, are also important.

Walls should be covered with carefully mounted charts of Biblical chronology—perhaps a timeline; lists of Biblical books, kings, and weekly Torah readings; posters depicting the evolution of the Hebrew alphabet and recreations of Biblical scenes on Israeli stamps or by well known artists (their accuracy or lack thereof must be discussed as part of the program); and reproductions of illuminated manuscripts. These should be changed throughout the year, as should the displays of quotations and sayings culled from the Bible, and bulletin board collections of relevant newspaper and magazine articles.

Adequate space must be left for maps of the ancient Near East and Israel, which should be readable from every corner of the room and mounted on rollers so they can be closed when not in use. This will save valuable space, protect the maps, and enable the teacher to test student mastery of the information contained in them.

2. Work Centers:

Every student must bring to the lab a copy of the Bible in a format large enough to read easily, (the three-volume *Mossad HaRav Kook* edition of the Bible without commentaries is recommended), as well as a copy of the specific Biblical text and commentaries used in this particular class (for *Genesis* and *Exodus*, *Torat Hayyim*, above publisher, is the most easily read edition). In addition, every work center for two students should be equipped with a complete *Mikraot Gedolot*, Biblical atlas (*The MacMillan Bible Atlas*, a translation of *Atlas Carta*, is one of the best), complete concordance (there are advantages and disadvantages to the editions of Mandelkern and *Even Shoshan*, but they are the best), dictionary of Biblical Hebrew, Ben David's

Who has ever seen a special Bible room that dazzles the students who merely open the door, creating an enticing environment that is exclusive and absorbing?

Makbilot BaMikra and a copy of both Pritchard's *The Ancient Near East* (an anthology of ancient texts and pictures that relate to the Bible) and possibly the new Jewish Publication Society translation of the Bible. These books cannot be left unattended on the lab tables, so each set must be mounted in a portable carrying case that can be collected, checked, and locked in the supply closet in minimal time at the end of each class.

3. Reference Works:

In addition to the above, the lab must be equipped with a selection of the reference works, commentaries, halakhic codes, midrashim, histories and other books that students should learn to use in Bible classes, including (in no special order): *Mishna*, *Babylonian Talmud*,² *Encyclopedia Mikrait*; Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein's *Torah Temimah* and *Tosefet Berakhah* (of great pedagogic value if used properly); L. Ginsberg's *Legends of the Jews*; and M. S. Segal's *Mavo HaMikra*. At least one copy of the Jastrow Dictionary and Mazar's picture commentary *Views of the Biblical World*, as well as subscriptions to popular journals of Biblical and archaeological interest should be available.

The laboratory library must also contain a selection of other important commentaries and midrashim, most in Hebrew, some in English, and a few in both languages. There is literally no

limit to the volumes that can be included in this category, but it is important to choose authors and editions carefully. Among the contemporary contributions should be a set of *Da'at Mikra* and as many of Nechama Leibowitz' publications as can be obtained, including her legendary question sheets.

The collection should also have a selection of halakhic works, including the full *Shulhan Arukh* with commentaries, Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and the *Mishnah Berurah*; and a selection of books on such topics as Biblical poetry, prophecy, history, law and narrative; a copy of *Sefer HaHinukh*, perhaps one for each work center, to be used in *Humash* classes; and Levine's picture book *Melekheth HaMishkan*. Also useful are copies of various Bible curricula, teacher guides for specific parts of the Bible, and quiz books of Biblical interest, together with a file of materials related to the annual Bible contests held here and in Israel.

4. Supplementary Equipment:

The lab should have audio-visual facilities — a large screen, slide and movie projectors, video equipment, tape recorders, and a supply of appropriate materials, including a library of music on Biblical themes or related to Bible texts and full samples of all cantillation systems. The equipment may be shared with other departments, but the tapes

It is suggested that educators examine the laboratory model of education for what it is, scrutinize the many opportunities it provides both teacher and student, and apply them to the teaching of Jewish studies.

and slides should be kept in the Bible Lab.

5. Reproductions of Ancient Artifacts:

Archaeological discoveries have enriched our understanding of ancient realia in many ways, and reproductions of many ancient texts and objects can be purchased relatively inexpensively. One can talk for an entire year about the Pharaoh who enslaved the Hebrews (and his identity remains uncertain), but a study of the buildings in which he lived or the artifacts left by his people (or even an embalmed mummy) enlivens the story in ways that text study cannot hope to match. Discussion of Purim invariably includes an explanation of the word *pur*, and an awareness that the actual way in which Haman cast the lots remains unclear. Show students a model of an authentic *puru* (actually from several centuries before the time of Esther but possibly similar to those mentioned in the story), and this aspect of the story is clarified. Similarly, one may teach about Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem (recounted in *Isaiah*, *Kings*, and *Chronicles*) using only the Biblical texts; include the version of the story in *Sennacherib's Annals*, and the story will be remembered as a highlight of the course.

The principles of archaeological work, so important in all attempts to reconstruct the ancient past, can be demonstrated with a sandbox, though it is not necessary to maintain one for only this purpose. In addition, at least one company sells imitations of old broken jugs and pots that students can piece together to reconstruct models of ancient ceramic utensils, thereby experiencing the excitement and task of the archaeologist (of course, they can make their own, too). One could run a simulated archaeological dig by mixing the fragments of several pots (including one modern flower pot), some text fragments, and other items in the sand and allowing students to recover and reconstruct them to determine what can be learned about the society that produced them.³

6. Laboratory Manuals:

In order to conduct "experiments" following the laboratory model, the teacher must have manuals for use at the different levels. On the high school level, much of Nechama Leibowitz' material is suited to this purpose, espe-

The seriousness of purpose as well as the inspiring opportunities that the Bible Lab affords the creative teacher make it an essential facility for every school.

cially her question sheets and the questions that appear in her various publications; other models are also appropriate. Using a simple format of Goal, Procedure, Observations and Conclusions, one can design brief (one or two hour) lab projects that follow scientific method and introduce students to the problem solving strategies of Biblical studies. Individual lessons in these manuals should develop themes taken from the texts and never consist of series of factual questions based on them. Rather, in formulating them, the operative principle is that one not be able to answer any question without correctly answering all previous questions in the series. Thus the end result will contain developed concepts about the Bible, not mere information extracted from it. Initial definition of the problem, followed by a careful list of procedures (prepared by the teacher, perhaps in consultation with the class) would help students learn to define their questions and develop approaches to finding the answer. It would also direct teacher and student efforts away from the all too popular spoonfeeding/memorization pattern of Bible teaching and expose the field as the exciting, stimulating and enjoyable endeavor it really is.

In Conclusion

Well equipped rooms in which teachers can teach their specialties—biology, computer programming, French, cooking or basketball — are one of the essential elements required of all serious school programs. Attractive displays and equipment are only as valuable as the teachers and students make them. The Bible has been taught without such aids, and some students have learned their lessons well. Some teachers and administrators may fear that such innovations can compromise

religious goals, but this is not a serious challenge. The teaching of awe and reverence may not depend on the availability of the resources described above, but it should not be hindered by them either. The seriousness of purpose as well as the inspiring opportunities that the Bible Lab affords the creative teacher make it an essential facility for every school. The Bible Lab should become an educational necessity, if only to demonstrate in a concrete way that the Bible is no less important and serious than physical education or computers. But it will also offer new and exciting opportunities to the creative teacher, involve students more directly in the activities of Bible study⁴ — not only the mastery of subject matter — and unquestionably highlight one of the most important aspects of the Jewish school curriculum. ■

NOTES

1. My sincere thanks to Dr. Joseph Lukinsky for sharing with me his conception of the Bible laboratory and a brief list of some of the resources such a facility should contain.

2. Reprinted editions of classical printings of rabbinic texts are often available in varying sizes and quality. Sturdiness, readability and reproductibility are the most important qualities. Texts must be large enough to read, small and clear enough to photocopy, and strong enough to withstand a good deal of use.

3. Copies of artifacts are available, for example, in museum shops, numerous outlets in Israel, from companies who advertise in *Biblical Archaeology Review* and similar publications, and from the Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington D.C.

4. I am pleased to report that the Akiva School in Montreal has begun to develop a Bible Lab for use at the elementary level. With the assistance of a grant from the Jewish Educational Council of Montreal, it is also actively preparing a selection of Laboratory manuals for use in Grades V and VI.

THE BIBLE LAB:

A Principal's Perspective

Frances Levy

Any new and creative school activity is bound to encounter some skepticism from professionals and laymen — especially when it requires a new budget line — and the Bible Laboratory at Akiva School was no exception. But after a year of use, the Lab has become an integral part of the school and the overall response to it has been very positive.

In order to appreciate the goals of the Lab, one must briefly examine the educational philosophy of our school. We are strongly committed to developing all thinking and linguistic skills (and in Quebec this means fourteen hours per week of French in addition to Hebrew and English) into one integrated, academic program. Approaches to teaching and learning remain the same regardless of the specific subject being taught. A laboratory experience for religious studies is thus very much in keeping with this attitude.

In addition, the presence of the Lab has raised the profile of Jewish studies, in general, and the Bible, in particular, among all members of the school community. The very name Bible Lab posted on the door in large letters, evokes questions and comments from all and sends a strong message about the seriousness with which we approach religious studies. Introduction of the Lab into our school accompanied a move to larger

quarters. The availability of the extra space was a requirement for opening it. The furniture for the Lab consists of tables and chairs, not desks, differentiating it immediately in the minds of the children from a “normal” classroom. It is decorated with appropriate posters, charts, maps and pictures, including color photocopies chosen to complement the Bible unit under discussion. Multiple copies of concordances, atlases and other appropriate books fill the shelves. Located as it is across the hall from the library, the Lab's resources are complemented by those of the library, and are equally accessible to staff, students and parents. Children able to do advanced, independent work with Jewish texts found the Lab, with its library of reference works, an excellent place to work.

Our Bible Lab, known as the *Ma'abadah L'Tanakh*, is also used for other activities and meetings including several parent programs. On Curriculum Night, for example, we hosted an exhibit of reproductions of illuminated Bible manuscripts and unusual Bible atlases, which introduced the Lab to parents and provided an interesting and attractive subject for an innovative unit on the Bible. A similar adult education program on the history of the Passover Haggadah was held in the Lab where the resources and setting contributed to studying the Exodus and the related holiday celebrations.

Within the academic framework, the initial Lab session focused on a very

concrete lesson, the role of archaeology in Bible study. To this end, we buried copies of ancient texts and artifacts, as well as broken clay pots and other available items in sand boxes or bins and held a series of excavations. Items discovered, including inscriptions from Biblical times, copies of Canaanite artifacts, and later objects (mosaics, coins and texts), provided opportunities to study the concepts of typology and stratigraphy and served as the jumping off point for many subsequent lessons that examined the significance of the discovered objects.

A series of Lab exercises, coordinated with the regular Bible classes, moved to more abstract and textual lessons, such as decoding paleo-Hebraic script, identifying unknown texts with a concordance, use of the concordance, organization of the Bible, discussion of how one determines the meaning of an unknown word, determining unknown words in Biblical poems, the presence of foreign loan words in the Bible, etc. These units of work were conducted through the use of Laboratory Manuals designed for each of them. As with other kinds of laboratory exercises, students investigated on their own, following a step-by-step process of discovery, of testing hypotheses, and of forming conclusions, guided by the Lab instructor and assistant (the class teacher). These activities were limited primarily to grades 5 and 6 (the oldest grades in our school) who used the Lab every other week. During the first

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year, younger classes used the Lab less frequently to construct models of the Mishkan, the Temple and Noah's Ark, and to observe a *sofer Stam* writing mezzuzot.

The Lab also served as a vehicle for professional development. A number of classes for Bible teachers focused on how to use its unique features, and student teachers from the local university's Jewish Teacher Training Program shared in some of the experiences as well.

A few suggestions to consider in developing a similar program:

1. The Bible Lab proposal was originally designed for use in high school. While many of the principles governing its operation are applicable in elementary school and help set the groundwork for more sophisticated study at the secondary level, one must be careful not to overstep the level of the students. The Lab was successful in grades 5 and 6 and should work with younger students. Its greatest potential is still with the older grades.
2. Do not underestimate the investment in either time or funding that is required to develop the Lab properly. Once undertaken, the project cannot be allowed to fail, and proper execution requires much staff and administrative time, a steady supply of books and other equipment, and the services of a good consultant who can design the materials to suit the needs of the school.
3. In its initial steps with the Lab, the Akiva School received some financial assistance from an innovative Projects Grant of the Jewish Education Council of Montreal (equivalent to the local Bureau of Jewish Education). Such support can aid in starting Bible Labs elsewhere. ■

Ed.'s Note: For further information please contact Mrs. Frances Levy, The Akiva School, 450 Kensington, Westmount, Quebec H3Y 3A2, (514) 939-2430.

TEN V'KACH: An Idea Brokerage

Money, Math and Tzedaka: AN INTEGRATED PROJECT

Sandra Dee Brickman

Our first and second graders recently participated in an exciting learning experience which reflected an integration of Mathematics, Social Studies, Art, Jewish Values, and Tzedaka.

As Grade 1 explored a Social Studies unit on "How Money Is Earned and Spent," the teacher introduced and developed various concepts. The children discussed the many aspects and implications of: earnings, merchandise, customer, price, profit, sale, salesperson, value, cash, consumer, proprietor, credit.

At the same time, they were studying a Money Unit in Mathematics. They learned to recognize the different coins and know their values. They examined some "bills," too. They practiced adding and subtracting values to \$1.00 and how to "make change."

As a culminating activity for these two units, Grade 1 planned a "Shopping Mall." They brought in small used toys, hooks, games, "tchotchkes," etc. Together, they decided upon a price for each item and attached a price tag. The students were divided into teams to "open" stores. They selected store names and prepared appropriate and attractive signs and decorations.

While this was happening, all Ramaz Lower School classes were learning about the struggles of Soviet Jews who left Russia and are trying to immigrate to Israel, Canada, or the U.S.A. They

learned about the "Passage to Freedom" fund raising campaign and were eager to help.

Our second grade children were invited to come to the "Mall" to go shopping. They were asked to bring \$.75-\$1.00. As they made their purchases, the first graders helped them with their selections, took cash, and made change. When inventory ran low, they added items from "stock," shopping bags of extras kept behind their "counters." When it was almost closing time, many even lowered their prices to increase sales. The money earned by each shop was clear profit as all merchandise was brought in by the children. All profits were donated to the "Passage to Freedom" campaign.

Participation in these activities led to discussions on basic Jewish values, in general, and Jewish business ethics in particular. An understanding of the importance of honesty, fairness, and trust, even when facing competition, was developed. We hope to make this aspect of the program a stronger part of the project next year.

This simple to replicate unit involved two grades of our students in a learning experience in a variety of integrated curricula. It provided a hands-on approach to a basic Mathematics unit, enhanced the children's self-esteem, highlighted the special guidelines we follow in our lives as Jews, and enabled young children to earn money for an important Tzedaka. The project was educational and exciting for customers and salespeople alike, and all were especially proud of their participation in the "Passage to Freedom" campaign. ■

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Textual Transmission, Continued

Moshe Bernstein

The following is a response to the articles by Rabbis Marvin Spiegelman (Ten Da'at Winter 1989) and Shalom Carmy (TD Spring 1989) regarding the teaching of the issue of textual transmission in Torah education.

I should like to contribute the following to the dialogue begun by my colleagues Marvin Spiegelman and Shalom Carmy. My remarks shall follow the order of the letters as published in *Ten Da'at*. The issue of variation in textual transmission of Torah sources of different sorts raises questions which are both substantive and pedagogical, and it is important to distinguish between them.

First, substantive issues. My remarks shall focus on *Torah shebikhtav* because, in my opinion, the question of variation in the textual transmission in *Torah shebe'al peh* is almost a non-issue on a certain level. If students are sensitized to the fact that, by definition, and unlike *Torah shebikhtav*, *Torah shebe'al peh* does not have a precisely fixed text (or, at least, did not have a fixed text until comparatively recent eras), then the notion of variation is part and parcel of the tradition. And I refer here to Talmudic material, for when we talk about Biblical commentaries of *rishonim*, even a cursory perusal of commentaries to Torah indicates that scribes had a great deal more freedom

to add and subtract than we would have imagined. (Parenthetically, neither Chavel's Ramban or Berliner's Rashi is "indispensable in determining the correct reading of the text." Both are useful, and may be indispensable in learning, but neither one approaches the standards expected of a critical, scholarly edition. Rabbi Chavel was not aiming at that goal, and Berliner was operating with editorial methodology which is now antiquated. Both are preferable, on the whole, to the currently standard text in the *Mikraot Gedolot*.)

The question of variation in the transmitted text of *Torah shebikhtav*, especially in *hamisha humashei Torah* is far more touchy, for there it is the received text itself which is endowed with the sanctity of being God's word. Errors thus seem to encroach more severely on matters of faith, especially when the *midrash halakhah* seems to derive laws which are considered *d'oraita* from phenomena such as *malei ve-haser*. Yet, there are variations among medieval manuscripts of Tanakh, copied and transmitted by the *baalei Mesorah*, and there are *drashot* of Hazal which are clearly not based on a text like our Masoretic one. This is not a *hiddush*, but a well-known fact (although, as I shall discuss further, how it ought to be made known and dealt with is a serious pedagogical issue). *Rishonim* grapple with the problem of how to deal with this material¹, and a *gadol* such as Rabbi Akiva Eiger was not afraid to list

a whole series of them in his comments to Shabbat 55b.

However, hiding behind the somewhat mystical answer supplied by the Hazon Ish about the *Mesorah's* being protected by *siyata dishmaya* is not, I believe, the way to deal with the problem.² I suggest, rather, that in certain areas like that of *Torah shebikhtav*, the *Mesorah* defines its own reality. Thus the text of *Torah shebikhtav* produced by the *baalei Mesorah* is, by definition, the correct text, whether or not it is correct in actuality. No other text, for example, can be read from in the *bet hakneset*, but texts other than the Masoretic may be relevant when studying Tanakh on *certain* levels (but emphatically not on the high school one).

This brings me to my first pedagogical observation — I am not as sure as Rabbis Spiegelman and Carmy that these issues ought to be confronted as a "planned tangent" with our high school students. There is a need, at times, to answer the student's question by saying that a response lies further down the path in his or her education. Ideally, this might not be the appropriate tack to take, but granted our non-ideal world, I feel that the only sort of answer which most teachers would feel comfortable with giving a high school student is just the sort which I will have to seriously contradict and revise as a college teacher. The sophistication and knowledge of high school students are simply not sufficiently advanced for a proper answer to be meaningful to them.

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Here I must agree forcefully with Rabbi Carmy's footnote 2 about "young, sophisticated educators" who "jazz up their teaching by encouraging such inquiry." High school teachers must restrain themselves from feeling that they have to teach their students everything that they have learned in college and graduate school (just as high school *roshei yeshiva*, in my view, must refrain from "saying Torah" when their responsibility is to teach students how to make a proper *leynen*). I am all in favor of the gradual development of sophistication which they can develop without, in Rabbi Spiegelman's terms, "rocking the boat."³

My disagreement in this area with my good friend Rabbi Shalom Carmy derives from a different angle, and focuses on two very different points he makes in his response.⁴ He has asserted the superiority of the theologian to the scholar, giving the impression that involvement in the "fine points of the history of textual transmission" somehow detracts from one's ability to be a *yere Shamayim*, and asserting, perhaps more significantly, that "our theological conversation with Tanakh and Hazal has suffered because we are too easily distracted by preoccupations that, however legitimate they may be, contribute neither to fear of God or His love." That the ideal goal of our *talmud Torah* must be an enhancement of our relationship with the Divine is a notion which all should agree is clear. But no amount of theological posturing, engagement with *dvarim ha'omdim berumo shel olam*, or reflections on issues like *tzaddik vera lo* can shield us (or our students who will ultimately succeed us) from certain aspects of "objective" study, of which textual transmission is perhaps one. Whether or not we choose to confront various aspects of modern Biblical scholarship in our high school or college classrooms, we must all make decisions for ourselves, about the limits to which we allow that scholarship to affect our stance to and study of Tanakh.

I do not claim that the study of textual transmission is theologically significant (except insofar as it is appropriate to reflect theologically on an accurate text), but I do not know whether I should be as disappointed as Rabbi Carmy if a student of mine became preoccupied with these matters (unless it was to the exclusion of all others). *Ein adam lomed ella bemakom shelibho*

hafetz, and if participation in textual investigation is done with *yirat Shamayim* and with the intent of fulfilling the commandment of *talmud Torah* in the broadest sense, it might very well be an appropriate mode of study for some individuals. Not everyone is a theologian, and non-theologians, too, are able to perform *talmud Torah* in their own ways.

The second point of significance where Rabbi Carmy's formulation intentionally overshoots the mark, is his avowedly hyperbolic description of "the slippery slope," claiming that the acknowledgment of variants in the Talmudic text will ultimately lead some students to wholesale emendation of the Biblical text. Dramatic exaggeration can be misleading at times. I, too, stress that the *baalei Mesorah* preserved the text of *Tanakh* as well as was humanly possible. The emphasis must be placed on the care and integrity of the transmission, but *lo nittena Torah lemalakhei hasharet* in this regard as well.⁵ I know full well that for an individual who is not committed to Torah as a value system, and is searching for a reason to kick against the goads, the acknowledgment of "errors" in the Masoretic text can serve as a doorway out of the system. And, for immature students, it might be difficult to discriminate differences in vocalization and in *kereketiv* from real variants which have a life in Talmudic text or medieval Biblical manuscript and, in turn, from emendations created by the modern Biblical scholar to "fix" an "insoluble" difficulty in the text. This is why I do not think that there should be any proper discussion of this issue with high school students. It cannot be right to do a half-job, and the full job cannot be done with them.

On the other hand, high school instructors must be familiar with the issues and with the sources which pertain to them, both within classical Jewish literature, and, to a lesser degree, in the arena of modern scholarship, so that, if the question arises in the classroom, they will be aware of its parameters. Certainly Rabbi Carmy is right when he emphasizes the need to avoid "the discomfort or defensiveness that nurture a morbid fascination with these questions." They are not central, in and of themselves, to advanced Torah study, and are even less so in secondary education.

In a sense, our discussion of the issue of textual transmission is an example of the larger question of the relationship of "scholarship" to "learning" which has many ramifications for both the study and teaching of Torah. It is important that the matter be raised *mibbifnim*, from within our own circles, and that it be raised by those who are committed to Torah, but understand the value, as well as the methodology, of scholarship. It would be excessively naive to think that we shall be able to create any sort of unanimity regarding how to deal with it, but we should hope that, with appropriate *siyata dishmaya*, a consensus with which we should all be able to operate is attainable. ■

1. Cf., for example, *Teshuvot* of Rashba attributed to Ramban 232 and *Teshuvot* of Radvaz 4:101. Professor Sid Leiman wrote a brief essay in *Yavneh Studies in Parashat Hashavua (Naso)* where he raised, in a very relaxed and readable fashion, many of the issues around which our topic revolves. He has since expanded his remarks in a variety of oral forums, but has not, to the best of my knowledge, published further on the subject. On the issue of variant readings of the Biblical text in rabbinic literature, the important study by Yeshayahu Maori, "Midreshei Hazal Ke'Edut LeHilufe Nusah BaMikra" in the forthcoming *Sefer Hayovel* for Professor Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, must be consulted. He sets out the problem quite clearly, including a survey of responses to it by rabbinic scholars through the ages.

2. For a discussion of the position of Hazon Ish, see the exchange of articles by Z.A. Yehuda and S.Z. Leiman in *Tradition* 18 (1979) 172-180 and 19 (1981) 301-310.

3. This is one of the reasons that a course such as Yeshiva University's "Introduction to Bible" cannot be taught on the high school level. The students are not, and should not be, up to the level of sophistication which we hope it demands. Furthermore, since a proper discussion of issues like this one requires resorting to sources which I like to refer to as "not in the library of the *bet midrash*," there is the additional difficulty of educating students to the role and value of such material, and the energy devoted to that task could probably be better spent elsewhere in the case of high school students.

4. I must point out, in passing, that Rabbi Carmy and I had the opportunity to discuss our disagreement, and that, while we do not by any means hold identical views, the following have the advantage of his oral reformulation of his position. He stressed in conversation the rhetorical nature of some of the comments with which I take issue.

5. At times the types of errors which are occasionally encountered in *sifrei Torah* today can enlighten students as to how an "error" might have occurred in transmitting a sacred text.

Textual Transmission: A RESPONSE

Shalom Carmy

Many thanks to Dr. Bernstein for joining the discussion between Rabbi Spiegelman and me (Kohelet 4:12). I have two observations to make about his remarks. With respect to his animadversions about the “planned tangent” that Rabbi Spiegelman and I would hold in readiness should the need arise, our conversations have confirmed my judgment that the disagreement is apparent rather than real. We would both entrust the ideal high school teacher with the discretion to respond to the classroom situation as it develops, in accordance with the maturity of the group and (in private conference) the individual students. Unfortunately not all teachers are equally in control of the information and concepts; sometimes the subject matter controls them instead. We both want me to be right, yet we both fear that, unless teachers become fully competent and comfortable with the issues, then Dr. Bernstein’s view — that *perisha* has the better of *derisha* in this case — deserves to prevail.

Let me add that, under the “best case” scenario, the response offered the unsophisticated high school student should be one that university teachers could revise and amplify rather than uproot and contradict. This, I believe, was the approach of the Rambam, who pitched his explanations so that they were accessible to philosophers and to regular people, each at his/her level. It also conforms to my impression of *maran haRav* Soloveitchik’s *shlita* practice in communicating profound ideas.

I must also comment on Dr. Bernstein’s statement that “not everyone is a theologian.” Whether I happily agree with him, or protest with every fiber of my being, depends on what he means by “theologian.” If theology is an academic speciality like any other, a scurrying to say (or pretend to say) things about God

(preferably in writing) that are different from what others have said, then the capacity to “do theology” is clearly not a universal endowment, and we should be thankful that “not everyone is a theologian.” If, however, theological reflection brings us face to face with the wonder, mystery and perplexity of existence as revealed in Torah and discovered through life, if, as Eliot put it, “there is no competition — there is only the fight to recover what has been lost and found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions that seem unpropitious,” then the failure to cultivate and appreciate the theological center of human intellectual inquiry is far more than an intellectual deficiency. It is more akin to playing chess without the king.

To stress the primacy of *yirat Shamayim* is not to denigrate the value and methodology of scholarship. The study of textual transmission, is, as Dr. Bernstein notes, theologically significant only, “insofar as it is appropriate to reflect theologically on an accurate text.” Surely that achievement (a *hekhsher* for theology) is not to be sneezed at. A similar case can be made for the mastery of other scholarly tools. It is time we recognize that the alternative to competent scholarship is not pristine theological reflection. It is rather the kind of bad scholarship or pseudo-scholarship that muddies the waters of any theological endeavor it feeds. For our own community to refrain from scholarly pursuits would thus tend to undermine serious theological study, or, at best, render us overly dependent on the expertise of those outside our camp. Presumably, the degree of involvement in such matters by advanced students is affected by the usual factors: ability, inclination and need.

I do not dispute that dedication to the elucidation of scholarly “fine points” need not detract or distract us from the primacy of *yirat Shamayim*.² The safeguarding of that religious-intellectual primacy, however, requires special vigilance at every educational level.

Perhaps this was perceived most clearly by Rav Kook, author of the most sustained, perspicacious vision of the ideal cooperation between academician and thinker. Discussing the latter’s reliance on the former, he writes: “they [the thinkers] need support, from great ones, masters of specific discipline, who are usually more famous in the world, because the multitudes [*hamon*] grasp the glitter of the particular discipline...more than they grasp the greatness of general spiritual richness.”³ He goes on to assert that “each particular thing, insofar as it flows into the general soul, becomes transformed afterwards, by virtue of spiritual digestion, into something general and encompassing, all according to the value of the inclusiveness...of the inclusive soul.”⁴

But we have come a long way from Rabbi Spiegelman’s original concern. Though our goal is to “grasp the greatness of general spiritual richness” we can work towards that goal only by choosing the right steps with respect to the question on the table. Thus it behooves Dr. Bernstein and me to return the baton to the high school instructors who confront these problems at first hand. ■

1. Rabbi Mordecai Breuer and others (myself included) have explored theological ramifications of textual variations, but these rather complicated attempts need not affect the general point.

2. Few would credit the analogous argument about Gemara. Concentration on textual and conceptual analysis of the Gemara should not diminish from the religious awe and the profound theological consciousness inherent in the activity of *talmud Torah*.

3. *Orot HaKodesh* I #34. The bulk of the *Hokhmat HaKodesh* addresses curricular-epistemological issues fundamental to educational thought. It deserves to occupy us more than it has.

4. This is not the place to enlarge on other unsavory features of contemporary academic political culture, nor to deal with the ideological pressures prevalent, to a greater or lesser degree, in academic Jewish studies.

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Gifted and Learning Disabled: A Holographic Image

Craig S. Fabrikant

The educational community has long grappled with teaching children who are not average or are not part of the mainstream. These children are traditionally identified as being educationally handicapped in one form or another. In reviewing the statistics, the number of students who fall into this category has ranged from fifteen to twenty percent of the school age population. Students who traditionally fall into these categories are identified as "learning disabled."

For learning disabled children, problems can range from specific deficits to perceptual, neurological, cognitive or physical ones. A learning disabled child is identified according to the particular definition and diagnostic tests used.

There is, however, another whole population of children who are not traditionally recognized as being educationally handicapped. This group, comprising three to five percent of the school age population, also falls outside the mainstream of our current educational system. These children are identified as gifted or intellectually talented. Because our educational system is not

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*"Where my
reason,
imagination or
interest were not
engaged I would
not or could not
learn."*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

usually geared to accommodating their needs, these students may in fact, based upon some theories, be handicapped.

There is the general belief that learning disabilities are not limited to a particular select group, but rather are present among all groups of students. As a result, the Gifted/Learning Disabled child is slowly becoming a recognized entity within the educational community. Although, statistically and conceptually, educators are aware of this, psychologists, developmental pediatricians and others are just beginning to recognize the need to provide extended services to these children.

Unfortunately, this recognition still remains in a state of confusion and professionals are perplexed as to how to adequately identify these children. More importantly, how is this unusual and distinct population to be educated? This is especially complex because these children combine characteristics of behavior similar to both the gifted and the learning disabled.

The following overview of definitions, identification procedures, case studies, and recommendations for educational programming, will attempt to provide a basic understanding of these children.

DEFINITIONS

A. *The Gifted Child*

Gifted children are often identified as a result of their performance. This performance / ability is usually first observed by educators, parents or others who notice that the child is performing above age level. The child is then sent to a professional whose evaluation determines that the child is indeed performing above a particular cut off point.

There have been numerous definitions on what constitutes the gifted child. Most begin with the cognitive level, traditionally thought to be an Intellectual Quotient above 130. This number can vary depending on the test used or the parameters set by a particular program. Once this has been identified, other criteria or dimensions are evaluated. These include specific

academic abilities, psychological and visual motor abilities, thinking and processing, and leadership abilities. A determination is also based upon reports of interpersonal skills as well as recommendations from parents, teachers and peers. Each of the above areas alone does not necessarily define a gifted student. However, in some combination, students with these traits will stand out above the average student in the classroom.

B. *The Learning Disabled*

Clear parameters have been developed to identify the learning disabled child. Traditionally, either the Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition is used or that of Public Law 94-142. According to the latter, a learning disability is "a disorder in one of the psychological processes...that may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations..."

C. *The Gifted Learning Disabled Child*

Although not absolute, it is far easier to define the child who is gifted or learning disabled than the one who is Gifted/Learning Disabled. This results, in part, from the many children who, on the surface, fit into neither the learning disabled or the gifted definitions. Many of these children become camouflaged and proceed through school without identification.

Daniels, in 1983, put forth four groups of gifted children. These include the:

- 1) Gifted Achiever
- 2) Gifted Underachiever
- 3) Gifted Pseudoachiever
- 4) Gifted/Learning Disabled

Even though Daniels defines these four groups, the only clear identification is achieved through academic performance. The Gifted/Learning Disabled child must first be determined as gifted. However, there can be no proper identification of this child when the learning disability keeps him/her from falling into this category.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED/LEARNING DISABLED

In Tannenbaum's (1983) comparison of the characteristics of the Gifted and

Gifted/Learning Disabled child, several consistent traits emerge, including: high knowledge base, broad range of interests, highly developed language skills, and sensitivity. However, there is, within the child, an inconsistency, and at times an inability, to realize these characteristics. Many times there is a diversion to areas of comfort or success, with an avoidance of difficult areas. What surfaces is a sense of frustration which is all too often defined in terms of some maladaptive behavior. Due to the misperceptions of those attending to the child, many characteristics in the Gifted/Learning Disabled are disguised and, unfortunately, become unacceptable in the educational setting. Gifted areas are thus rarely identified and the child becomes lost in the system. There are times when these children display more negative than positive behavior, including disorganization, self-criticism, disruptiveness in the classroom, and slow and laborious in work (Baum, 1988). Such children often perceive themselves as educational failures, which in turn, lowers their self-image. These students can become less flexible and have difficulty in adapting to social or educational situations (Daniels, 1983).

As previously stated, Gifted/Learning Disabled children can develop a number of different characteristics to compensate or even hide from their difficulties. Some of these prevent the child from being identified, let alone educated, as gifted. There is a whole population of students who, through their disguises, are perceived as average students. Typically, these students plod along getting average grades. Since the average student constitutes the mainstay of our educational system, they tend to fit in. Ultimately, there is little reason to regard them as having a problem with education. What the system does not realize is the intense frustration and the negative self image that eventually causes the children to completely reject education. It is not until teachers, parents or other professionals see a spark that diagnostic testing occurs.

The next major group of Gifted/Learning Disabled students that come to the attention of professionals are those who present behavior problems. These can range from "hyperactive", being the class clown, general disruptiveness in the classroom or other more serious problems. If not helped,

some of these students will eventually drop out of school and use other mechanisms to deal with their frustrations.

One of the easiest groups to identify are those who vacillate between gifted programming and resource or remedial assistance. Such children might be able to read and discuss topics above their chronological age. However, when asked to put this same information on the written page, they do so at or below their chronological age. For this group — gifted and learning disabled — both areas become more obvious as general academic performance has significant highs and lows.

Identification of the Gifted/learning Disabled

Identification procedures of the Gifted/Learning Disabled can be a difficult and, at times, cumbersome task — in part because many may never have cause to come to the attention of professionals. Those that do, present a wide range of variables, for there are no clear cut cognitive or learning assessment profiles that distinguishes this population. The only valid alternative is to review each child on a case by case basis, which, for practical purposes, can become a monumental task.

CASE STUDIES

Some of the clearest examples are those students who present a profile of inconsistent functioning, with one or more areas clearly in the gifted ranges. On the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Verbal or Performance scale abilities may be well above a prorated Intelligence Quotient of 130. However, one of the scales (either the Verbal or Performance) will be significantly lower than the other. Academically, these children would be considered average students.

One particular child, not classified as being or close to being gifted, was found to have, on a general cognitive level, overall abilities in the High Average range of intelligence. When the cognitive levels were broken down, verbal abilities were well above an IQ of 100; performance or visual motor abilities were within the average levels; whereas tasks requiring perceptual skills were well below average.

The above child was then given a comprehensive battery of educational test-

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ing. The results showed that her general knowledge, language abilities and comprehension were at the eighty-fifth to ninetyeth percentile. However, math applications, visual-motor tasks and spelling were found to be below the twenty-fifth percentile.

What emerges are clear cut discrepancies in functioning. Within a verbal-oral modality, this child is clearly gifted. When required to put the information on paper, however, functioning becomes clearly learning disabled.

Another example is the child whose intelligence testing qualifies him for gifted programming. However, he came to the attention of professionals because he was doing only average work and, in recent years, had become a behavior problem. Upon further investigation of educational areas, significant inconsistencies were found. Skills requiring reading and reading decoding were deficient. Although this child was knowledgeable, his ability to read was approximately two years below his sixth grade level. It became clear that there was a learning disability in reading and he was given resource assistance. One other adaptation was made. His textbooks and other reading materials were provided to him orally. In addition, testing and performance were only graded on oral responses. The result is an excellent student who is now working hard to compensate for his deficit area.

One final example is a high school sophomore who was spending a good part of his time getting into trouble. His parents and educators assumed that he was a behavior problem. Some were convinced that he had resorted to drug use. It was a counselor who noticed that he was bright, with a high vocabulary and general knowledge abilities. The result was a referral for comprehensive testing. The battery of testing revealed some interesting results. First, his cognitive abilities were found to be within the Very Superior range of Intelligence. There were some definite problems in areas of responding to perceptually based tasks. However, there was enough frustration early in his schooling that this child was turned off to education. With assistance there was a change in his, as well as his teachers', attitudes and a significant improvement in his grades. The result is that this sophomore is once again enjoying a

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positive and successful educational experience.

The above are three examples of Gifted/Learning Disabled students who have come to the attention of professionals. However, many students who should be professionally identified as both gifted and learning disabled won't be because other labels have already been given to them. In most systems, unless a child has a reason to be tested he/she may never be identified. It takes a well trained observer to note that there is something wrong, that there is another level of ability that is not being realized.

PROGRAMMING FOR THE GIFTED/LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

Curriculum for the Gifted/Learning Disabled student takes a different approach than either gifted education or programming for the learning disabled. Placement in either one or the other, exclusively, may prove to only frustrate a child. Enrichment programs may be too advanced, requiring skills that are in deficit areas. The result is frustration and a sense of failure upon return to the regular classroom. Learning disability classes may not be stimulating enough, which may result in boredom, and basic remediation may turn the student off.

The Gifted/Learning Disabled students, by their unique characteristics, forces educators to find special teaching methods. The major role of teaching must focus on strengths and not on

weaknesses. In fact, the child's strengths should be used to assist in remediation of any weaknesses. This requires a highly individualized program of instruction.

According to Baum (1988), in order for potential to be recognized, special enrichment activities should be designed to develop the student's superior talents. Activities must encompass both interest and strengths as well as provide sophisticated challenges to motivate bright minds. Enrichment activities must be designed to circumvent problematic weaknesses and creative behaviors should be reinforced and appreciated within the school setting.

Teachers must learn to encourage the growth of strong areas while supporting weaker ones. Curriculum implementation, methodology, and approach should be geared to the highest level of response. Furthermore, the child must be viewed as an active participant, aware of what is being done and thus his/her cooperation must be sought at all levels of the educational process.

Conclusion

Gifted/Learning Disabled education is a new, as yet unchartered area. There is a lack of adequate research and a need to do much more before we can approach a viable operational definition. But, as students continue to present us with unique problems, we must first and foremost properly identify them. This is particularly critical for the many who do not display traits that would bring them to the attention of professionals.

The Gifted/Learning Disabled children who straddle two polar categories present well trained educators, counselors, and other professionals with the challenge to unearth their gifts, as well as their deficiencies, thereby discovering and proclaiming their potential for so much more. ■

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Depression in Children and Adolescents

Harvey N. Kranzler

In recent years there has been an explosion of research concerning depression in children and adolescents. Although there are still many unanswered questions, previously held assumptions and myths have been modified or put to rest. In the past, it was thought that the spectrum of depression from low grade persistent sad feelings and low self esteem to fully manifested cases of depression or manic depressive illness could not occur in children. As opposed to adults, children were thought to have only a form of "masked depression" which appeared as behavioral difficulties, learning problems, psychosomatic symptoms and school phobia. We now know that the spectrum of depression does occur even in early childhood, and studies indicate that depression has been diagnosed in up to 2% of prepubertal children with an even higher percentage in adolescents. Of those children and adolescents referred to psychiatric clinics, approximately 20% have a diagnosis of depression. Another study indicates that as high as 8% to 9% of students in an urban school sample have some form of depression. There have been no studies focusing specifically on the yeshiva student population,

but clinicians who work with yeshiva students have empirical experience that depression not only exists, but is more prevalent than previously thought. One cannot assume that the family structure and Torah value system in the Orthodox Jewish community will necessarily protect children from depression, since many children experience multiple stresses such as family strife, intense pressures in a double program, and the competitive need for success and achievement. In addition, genetic predisposition in some families to depression clearly does exist.

Teachers, administrators and school personnel are able to pick up early signs and symptoms of many behavioral difficulties, sometimes even before parents are aware of them. The problems may first appear in school or there may be a denial of what is obvious to a more neutral, less subjective observer. Classmates and peers are also able to discriminate with uncanny accuracy which of their school mates are having difficulty and are depressed. There has been an increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms of depression in the print and visual media, especially when there are sensational events such as the clusters of imitative suicides that occurred recently among adolescents all around the United States. This increasing awareness may account for what appears to be an increasing incidence of depression in the school age population i.e. as parents and educators become

more aware of what to look for, they are noticing children who have more than the "usual" moodiness, understandable upset over a disagreement with a friend, or disappointment about a bad grade. On the other hand, there are times when depression is not only "normal" but is important as a form of coping and a stimulus for growth. When there has been a death of a family member, usually but not necessarily a grandparent, there is a healthy bereavement that can look like depression. This may occur even after a time lag of up to a few months. The death of a loved pet is sometimes overlooked as a cause of bereavement. The feelings that accompany not being accepted in a desired class, team, high school, yeshiva or college of one's choice can also mimic depression. Using Erik Erikson's notion of crisis as being an important stimulus for ongoing growth and development, setbacks can help youngsters develop the ability to accept themselves as capable and valuable, despite limitations.

The spectrum of depression about to be described is of necessity going to be sketchy and cannot do full justice to the complexity of the manifestation of depression in children and adolescents. The purpose of this review is to present symptoms of depression to be alert to, in order to recognize the warning signs and know when to seek further clinical evaluation and professional help. Symptoms of depression may be a com-

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ponent of, or a reaction to, many difficulties such as learning disabilities and adjustment disorders. Studies have shown that often depression has a close association, even comorbidity (i.e. two separate diagnoses), with anxiety disorders, especially those arising when separated from family and difficulty attending school; attention deficit disorders both with and without hyperactivity; and conduct disorders.

The hallmark of depression is a persistently sad or irritable mood which is either not related to a specific cause or, even if triggered by events, the mood continues with an intensity and duration that the situation does not merit. Poor appetite or overeating, difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, low energy or fatigue, low self esteem, poor concentration, difficulty making decisions, and feelings of hopelessness are often present as well. In a low grade depression these moods and symptoms can wax and wane and can manifest in any combination. When these symptoms become more intense and the moodiness more fixed with the possibility of a loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activity, social withdrawal, agitation with increased motor activity or observable slowing of the body's muscular responsiveness, excessive feelings of worthlessness or overwhelming feelings of guilt, multiple complaints about real or imagined physical ailments, or recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation — whether or not there is a specific plan of suicide, then a diagnosis of major depression can be made. There can be any variation or combination of the above listed symptoms and they may alternate with manic behavior and feelings of elation or can be associated with delusions, hallucinations or disturbances in thinking. In younger children there is less likelihood of the feelings being verbalized and depression is recognizable more by sad looks, irritability, and multiple physical complaints. As children are more able to verbalize their feelings, the picture of depression even in prepubertal children is almost adultlike.

A preoccupation with death, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts are of serious concern even in very young children. Sometimes there is a tendency for parents or caretakers to minimize these signs. Although successful suicide in children is rare, thinking about suicide is not rare and is an important

We now know that the spectrum of depression does occur even in early childhood.

warning sign and should be taken seriously. The incidence of suicide increases in adolescence and is highest in older white male adolescents. Most completed suicides occur in adolescents who have repeated suicidal thoughts and attempts, who have been identified as having a serious psychiatric illness, and have a history of aggression and alcohol abuse. Adolescents who have a history of severe anxiety and a need for perfection can impulsively attempt or commit suicide when faced with a failure. In addition to an individual predisposition towards suicide, there also needs to be certain trigger factors such as stress events, altered states of mind and the opportunity to complete a suicide. Recent research has shown that many of the prevention programs in schools are not helpful in preventing

suicide and that clusters of suicide attempts and completed suicides occur in vulnerable children and adolescents when there is attention focused on suicide either in the media or in schools.

The key to prevention is early recognition of depression since there are available treatments such as individual psychotherapy, family therapy, and, at times, medication. If there is the potential danger of suicide, hospitalization may be necessary. Although there is the possibility of the recurrence of depression even after successful treatment, nevertheless when the child or adolescent, the family and the school all work in concert and are aware of the early warning signals, the more distressing and even life threatening symptoms can often not only be alleviated, but even be prevented from recurring. ■

One cannot assume that the family structure and Torah value system in the Orthodox Jewish community will necessarily protect children from depression.

A Guide to Hebrew/English Word Processing

Leonard A. Matanky

My earliest encounter with word processing came a little over seven years ago. Using what was then a powerful program, a colleague and I wrote and edited a workbook for a Tanakh course. For two non-typists, word processing promised wondrous new opportunities. As we merrily typed along, we were able to see the text on the screen, make any necessary corrections in spelling or style and subsequently print a flawless copy of our work.

Today, as the debate over computers in the classroom rages on, teachers and administrators in yeshivot and day schools have begun to discover the tremendous benefits of word processing. As the proverbial tortoise and the hare, the use of word processing in schools has made slow but steady progress. Increasing numbers of teachers are preparing classroom materials and schools are publishing newsletters, calendars — and even books — using computers.

Of particularly good news to Judaic teachers and administrators has been the constant development and improvement of Hebrew/English word processing programs. Long gone are the days when Hebrew had to be typed backwards, from left-to-right. Today all of

the major Hebrew/English programs feature “push modes” through which the computer changes the direction of typing depending on whether Hebrew or English is being used.

Yet, choosing the *best* Hebrew/English word processing program for a

**Today...
teachers and
administrators
in yeshivot and
day schools
have begun to
discover the
tremendous
benefits of
word
processing.**

school's needs is a difficult task. Not only does one need a thorough knowledge of computers, but also an up-to-date list of word processing software — and even then there can be countless obstacles. The following is thus intended for those without the con-

nections or inclinations to be both a “private eye” and a computer expert. While a single article cannot review all of the many word processing programs, we will highlight the key features of some of the most popular and useful Hebrew/English word processing programs available for the Apple II series, Macintosh, and IBM computers.

APPLE II SOFTWARE

The Apple IIe and IIc have long been the “work-horse” of educational computers. Currently, they are the most popular school computers in America. However, the Apple II's are not as powerful as either the Macintosh or IBM, and the same is true of their word processing programs. In general, Hebrew/English word processing on the Apple IIe or IIc requires two special replacement chips, called “Hebrew chips,” that are installed in the computer. These chips convert lower case English letters to Hebrew, while leaving the upper case for English. As a result, any English that is needed must be typed in capital letters.

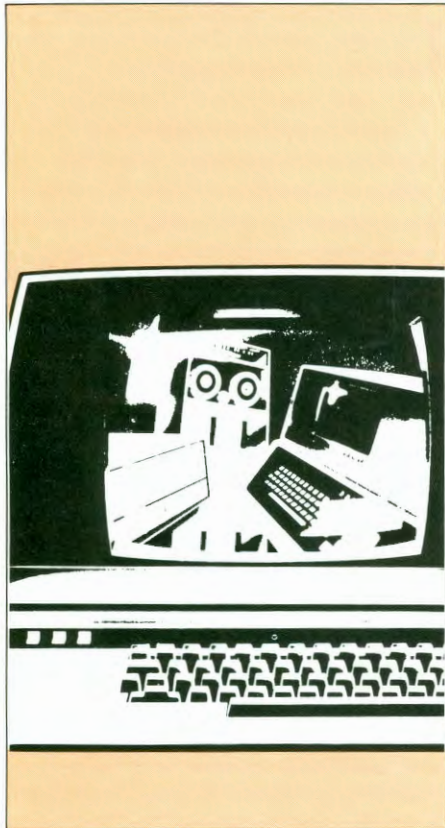
Currently, the most popular Apple II Hebrew/English word processing program is produced by the Tel-Aviv based Sibit and is called **Kol-Bo**. Actually, Kol-Bo is a bilingual version of the most popular Apple program of all-time, Appleworks 2.0. Like Appleworks, Kol-Bo is an integrated package consisting of three programs: word processing, data

continued

RABBI MATANKY, Ph.D., is Assistant Superintendent of the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago and Director of the Morris and Rose Goldman Computer Department for Jewish Studies.

base and spreadsheet. Not only is Kol-Bo very easy to use, but information from any of the three parts of the program can be transferred to another. This means that data from the spreadsheet or database can be copied to the word processor. Furthermore, Kol-Bo contains a large array of formatting options and even allows the user to "embed" special codes to the printer.

An innovative feature of Kol-Bo is the automatic "push mode." For example, in an English document, as soon as a lower case letter is typed, the computer begins to work from right-to-left, displaying



the Hebrew letters in their correct order. However, there is a problem with this feature. Every time the space bar is pressed, the "push mode" is turned off and returns to its standard direction of typing. As a result, if one is typing in English and wishes to include two Hebrew words, one must first type the second Hebrew word, press the space bar, and then the first Hebrew word. For people who interchange between Hebrew and English, this can become very cumbersome. Nevertheless, this program is widely used and does provide good results. Since Kol-Bo looks and works almost exactly like the "number one" Apple word processing program

which many people already know how to use, it can be a good choice for schools.

In the near future, Davka will be introducing the first Hebrew/English word processor for the Apple IIGS. This program, to be called **Hasofer**, will take full advantage of the graphic capabilities and speed of the IIGS. Featuring both pull-down menus and the IIGS mouse, this user-friendly program will include many of the features, until now only available on the Macintosh or IBM. For the first time, Apple users will be able to select from a variety of fonts in different styles (bold, italic, underline, etc.) and sizes.

MACINTOSH SOFTWARE

The only professional Hebrew/English word processing program for the Mac is **Rav K'tav**. Created by Micro-Macro of Israel, Rav K'tav is distributed exclusively in the USA by Davka. Taking full advantage of the "Mac's" capabilities, Rav K'tav is a simple, yet powerful word processing program. Anyone who is familiar with "pull down menus" and the Mac's "mouse" will learn Rav K'tav in minutes.

Typing and editing with Rav K'tav is very easy. The primary direction (whether left-to-right or right-to-left) is controlled by an arrow on the top of the screen. The "push mode" is controlled by another icon or a combination of two keys. Once engaged, Hebrew can be typed within an English document or vice versa. Like IBM word processors, Rav K'tav can type English in both upper and lower case and also type Hebrew. Most of the formatting commands are contained on a "ruler" that appears at the top of the screen. There are many Hebrew fonts available and each can be used in numerous styles and sizes. In addition, some fonts also allow the user to type vowels that appear on the computer screen. Special features include automatic footnoting (type a footnote and it is automatically formatted and numbered), creation of "table" charts (frame drawing) and graphic importing.

Like other Macintosh programs, Rav K'tav printing follows a "what you see is what you get" approach. Using a laser printer, the output rivals typesetting, and as a result, Rav K'tav is already used by schools and institutions to produce "textbooks" and newsletters. Even though Rav K'tav does not allow for multiple columns or have a "spell

checker" it is one of the best all-around programs available.

IBM (AND COMPATIBLES) SOFTWARE

Since the IBM is the premier computer in Israel today and still the most popular computer for academics, there are many more Hebrew/English word processing programs available for this computer. The most popular IBM word processing program in Israel is a "bare-bones" program called **Einstein**. Available from Einstein Computers in Jerusalem, this program is very simple to use, with "help screens" galore. It does not allow for many of the advanced features of the more powerful word processors, but it does get the job done. It does not require a "Hebrew chip," but does need an EGA, CGA, or Hercules graphic card. A new version, now in development, will also support laser printing.

The next level of word processors includes three programs with very different features. The first is **Kal-Bo**. Created by Sibit, Kal-Bo is an IBM version of their Apple program, Kol-Bo. It includes the three functions of spreadsheet, database and word processing and also adds a fourth — telecommunications. Since it is made for a more powerful computer, each of the three functions are much more flexible and laden with features than what is found on the Apple II version. Kal-Bo requires either an EGA card or "Hebrew chip".

As a word processor, its major advantage is its similarity to Kol-Bo. If one knows the Apple program, Kal-Bo can be learned in minutes. Furthermore, files can be converted from Kol-Bo to Kal-Bo. In a school setting, if both IBM's and Apples are used, students need to learn only one program, but will be able to use both kinds of computers.

Multiwriter is Davka's contribution to IBM word processors. Like the previous programs, it is easy to learn and use, but does contain some additional features. Multiwriter can do justified parallel columns, tables, and frames, and with its companion program, Translator, can do Hebrew/English spell checking and translating. For example, if, when one cannot recall the appropriate Hebrew word, then the English equivalent can be typed and by pressing the control F-2 keys the Hebrew translation is substituted. Multiwriter does not require a "Hebrew

chip," but does require an EGA, CGA, or Hercules graphic card. Multiwriter works with most dot matrix printers, supports laser printing and is relatively inexpensive.

The third program is Gamma Production's **Multi-Lingual Scholar**. This program is an easy to use word processor that combines two unique features: 1) it can use over forty different languages and five different alphabets at one time (e.g. Hebrew, English, Persian, Cyrillic and Greek); and 2) it is the only IBM Hebrew/English word processor that features on-screen vowels in their correct positions. In addition, this program includes utilities that allow the user to change the keyboard layout and even to create new fonts. As a result, a number of different Hebrew fonts, all with vowels, are available.

The multiple language capabilities of Multi-Lingual Scholar does slow down the program. However, it is still fast enough for the the average user. The program includes many formatting and spacing options, including auto footnoting, but does not allow for multi-columnar display. Graphics are required, but Hercules, CGA, VGA or EGA cards are enough. Finally, the program supports both matrix and laser printers and the output is very impressive. Overall, if on-screen vowels are required on an IBM word processor, Multi-Lingual Scholar is the program of choice.

The most advanced level of Hebrew/English word processors for the IBM includes two very powerful programs. The first is a Hebrew/English version of **Wordmill**. This program, developed in Israel by Intersoft Software, is difficult to learn and, unfortunately, the manual is of no help. It is, however, a very good program. It has powerful search and replace functions; includes macros to combine various commands; does almost every kind of formatting needed, including multi-columnar display and footnoting; and, perhaps most importantly, works with almost any printer — whether dot matrix or laser. In addition, like Multiwriter, Wordmill features a Hebrew/English dictionary and spell checker. Nevertheless, it does not do on-screen vowels and this can be a limitation for schools.

The final program, **Nota Bene** is, by all accounts, the most powerful Hebrew/English word processing program available. Written by Dragon fly

Software primarily for the academic and scientific community, it is actually a modified version of the XYwrite word processing program. Together with its Language supplement software, Nota Bene can use four different alphabets at a time, including Hebrew, English, Cyrillic and Greek.

Not only does Nota Bene contain the most flexible formatting options of all programs, including all of the academic page layouts (e.g. APA and University of Chicago), as well as double and triple series of automatic footnotes for scientific editions of manuscripts, its real claim to fame is its fast text retrieval options. It can search and sort through documents as quickly as a database program. Once in the program, commands are given either through a series of key strokes or through "Lotus-style" menus and sub menus.

No special chip is required for this program. Vowels can also be included in the text, but they appear on the screen after each letter. However, when printed, the vowels move to their proper locations. While this problem is solved by the printer, Nota Bene's biggest drawback is that it does not support many different printers, and while its dot matrix printing is good, the current version does not give a very good laser printout.

As is evident, there are many different Hebrew/English word processing programs to choose from. Before purchasing a program, a school must determine how it plans to use it. Available computers must then be analyzed for suitability and cost. For example, for the purpose of mixing Hebrew and English text, any of these programs will do. However, the Apple IIe and IIc programs cannot provide upper and lower case English along with Hebrew. Or, if on screen vowels are a must, and the only available computer is an IBM, then the Multi-Lingual Scholar is the best choice. No program is "better" than any other until abilities and needs are matched. ■

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Israel
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03-241-041
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Responsive Readers

I recently received Volume III, numbers 2 and 3 of *Ten Da'at*. I want to express my admiration for the general quality of the pieces. It is a pleasure to read and to anticipate a truly fine Torah education publication.

Rabbi Moshe Miller
Atlanta, Georgia

In my article, *On the Bat Mitzvah Celebration: An Annotated Bibliography*, (*Ten Da'at*, Vol. 111 no. 3, Spring 1989) an important citation was inadvertently omitted. The reference is: Cohen, Alfred S. (Rabbi), "Celebration of the Bat Mitzvah," *The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* (Fall 1986, #12) pp. 5-16.

Congratulations on a very fine issue. It is gratifying to have been part of it.

Esther Nussbaum
New York City

Your excellent issue on Jewish education for women (*Ten Da'at*, Vol. 111 no. 3, Spring 1989) raised many important points worthy of serious consideration. With your permission, I would like to briefly raise two items on the subject.

The first concerns the *Birkhat ha-Zimmun* said before *Birkhat haMazzon* when three or more adults eat together. Three men have an obligation to add the *zimmun* while three women have the halakhic option to add it or not (provided three men are not present, in which case they too would become obligated), (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 199:7). Unfortunately, this option is often overlooked in yeshivot and observant homes.

In a coed situation, if three men are present they take precedence in saying the *zimmun*, as it is obligatory for them. But many a Shabbat dinner has three women over Bat Mitzvah age present

with only one or two adult men. As *haRav haGaon* Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *shlita* points out, in such situations the women may add the *zimmun* and the one or two men should join them and answer (*Halikhot Beita* 12:8 n. 14). This simple halakhah should be part of the curriculum for girls reaching the age of mitzvot, and, indeed, adding the *Birkhat haZimmun* should be part of the daily public *Birkhat haMazzon* said in all-girls yeshivot. (In coed yeshivot, the boys have halakhic precedence.) Just as boys reaching the age of mitzvot look forward to the time when they will be adult enough to join in and even lead *zimmun*, *benot mitzvah* should be able to demonstrate their adult status by joining and leading the family or school *zimmun*.

The second point concerns *tefilah* for women, an issue touched upon in some of the articles. We should stress that educators and synagogue rabbis have been sending a very negative message to women over the years. Coed yeshivot often schedule *minyan* for the boys each morning, exempting the girls from a *tzibbur* experience which should be training them to appreciate a full synagogue *davening*. (Not to mention depriving them of *kedusha* and *keriyat haTorah*, a point raised by those who oppose women's prayer groups.) The fact that women may not be obligated in *tefilah betzibbur* is irrelevant. After all, youth congregations encourage girls to attend on Shabbat morning and, in general, there are many optional but worthwhile activities in every school. Are these daily school *minyanim* so devoid of positive educational content regarding *tefilah* that principals are so quick to exempt the girls?

Similarly, synagogue rabbis make little effort to encourage high school girls or married women to attend *davening* on Friday night or Shabbat afternoon.

In fact, one can often see yeshiva-educated women attend a lecture or *sheur* in shul on Shabbat afternoon and then leave and stand outside during *minha*. Putting aside the fact that many *poskim* obligate women in *minha*, are the rabbis so convinced that the Torah value of standing outside and talking is greater than that of *davening minha* that they make no effort to encourage the women to stay? Or is it perhaps that they feel that in the end *shul davening* is man's business? I think it's worth thinking about.

Jack Feinholtz
Brooklyn, New York

In her article on women administrators in Jewish education, (*Ten Da'at*, Vol. III no. 3, Spring 1989) Rookie Billet mentions the question of professional titles for women educators. Some schools have addressed the issue by using the title "Rebetsin" on their stationery, but this is clearly an unacceptable solution. Not all women administrators are married to rabbis, and, in any event, the title "Rebetsin" acknowledges the training and accomplishment of the administrator's husband, not her own.

Perhaps the time has come for the Seminaries to establish a minimum standard of advanced knowledge in Torah, halakhah and pedagogy, and to award a professional title. This would recognize that women Jewish educators, like their male counterparts, need advanced study in Torah, although different from what is required for *semikha*. Some creative brainstorming would be necessary to come up with an appropriate title, but the issue Ms. Billet raised is a real one which should be addressed.

Y. Rivkason
Jerusalem, Israel

I read Abigail Lerner's recent article in *Ten Da'at* (Vol. 111 no. 3, Spring 1989) with great interest. I admire her willingness to deal directly with relevant halakhic issues in the lives of her high school students. However, any young Jewish woman growing up today must face a crucial fact which is not dealt with (and neither did any of the other writers in the *Ten Da'at* issue): men — and only men — have always been the ultimate *poskim* of halakha. Why is this an issue? Because it would be very difficult to argue that the halakha as we know it today would be the same halakha had women participated in its decision-making process throughout the centuries. For example, as the concept of *tefillah* was developing after the destruction of *Bayit rishon*, women religious leaders (had they been given the chance) might very well have seen to it that women be included in a *minyán*.

The key issue is: why should women be dependent upon men for ultimate halakhic decisions — governing even the most personal areas of their lives? (And please, do not try to sidestep the issue here. I know that there is latitude in halakhic practice, but real *she'elot* are only forwarded to men). Is the only way out of this problem by claiming something like "this is the way G-d wants it to be"? I would be happy to hear from her regarding this matter; at any rate, I do hope she will bring this up with her students.

Theodore Weinberger
Atlanta, Georgia

RESPONSE:

The questions Mr. Weinberger poses trouble many and they are deserving of thorough, well-reasoned responses. My intention here is not to do that, but to present my personal perspective or *hashkafa* on the issue — to state here

what I would tell my students. In addition, I will suggest several articles that do deal with the halakhic aspects of the issues raised by Mr. Weinberger.

Enclosed with Mr. Weinberger's letter was Rachel Adler's article entitled "The Jew Who Wasn't There."¹ Let me state at the outset that although Ms. Adler raises some good points about solving, within halakhic parameters, issues that impact on women, I find her tone so disrespectful as to be offensive. In addition, a good deal of her reasoning is fallacious. As such, I feel she disqualifies herself as an intellectually honest spokeswoman for those of us who are committed practically and intellectually to halakha, despite our own questions and doubts.

The "key issue" Mr. Weinberger speaks of — "Why should women be dependent upon men for ultimate halakhic decision?" — must be addressed at two levels: 1) the comprehensive Torah knowledge requisite to be a *posek* 2) the status of the *posek* as a communal leader.

With regard to women achieving sufficient knowledge to properly analyze Jewish law and render valid halakhic opinions, halakhic literature offers several examples of women whose opinions were respected, often above those of their male peers. Bruria, the daughter of Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon and the wife of Rabbi Meir, is cited in several places in the Talmud. The Jerusalem Talmud cites the daughters of Elisha ben Avuyah who refuted arguments of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the editor of the Mishna. Later halakhic authorities also cite the women in their lives as able toilers in the vineyard of Jewish law.²

I offer these examples not as apologetics. Certainly the existence of female Talmud scholars was and is not the norm. These examples *are* indica-

tive, however, that when it comes to halakha, information and analysis are what count. Women are as capable of imparting halakhic knowledge as are men. This is something that has been accepted throughout Jewish history — long before the question of equal roles for women became a burning social issue.³ Women have been "*paskening*" in their kitchens for generations. It is no less important today for women to be armed with halakhic knowledge. It is the responsibility of the school and the family to see to it that women have enough knowledge not to *have* to call a Rav every time a dairy spoon falls into a pot of boiling chicken soup.

With regard to halakhot governing the most personal areas of women's lives, I am moved by the sheer number of couples who observe the laws of *taharat hamishpaha*. But, it is incumbent upon *all* of us — especially women — to study and understand, on more than a basic level, the halakhot that apply to our personal lives. This is one area where we could use some more knowledgeable women. Because they feel awkward approaching a man concerning *hilkhot niddah* many women have expressed their need to speak to a woman before, or instead of, bringing their personal problems to a Rabbi. I, myself, have acted many times as an intermediary between a woman and Rabbis who are experts in *hilkhot niddah*. It has been my pleasant experience to have been treated with respect and professionalism by the Rabbis I have approached on these occasions. It would be interesting to explore the possibilities of women achieving expertise in *hilkhot niddah* to the extent that their decisions could be heavily relied upon.

As far as women holding official communal roles as *poskim*, we must go back to the general issue of Jewish women

communal leaders. The statement in Deuteronomy 17:15 "You shall set over you a king" and the Sifre's comment "a king but not a queen" have had ramifications through the ages for women and their potential to rise in the community in leadership roles. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein deals with this issue at length in the *Iggrot Moshe (Yoreh Deah II nos. 44-45)* in a question pertaining to a female kashrut supervisor. Rabbi J. David Bleich in volume II of *Contemporary Halachic Problems* also analyzes the issue and cites the major sources in his chapter "Women on Synagogue Boards" (pp. 254-67). Many opinions are quoted on both sides of the issue.

Finally, when Mr. Weinberger states that, "It would be very difficult to argue that the halakha as we know it today would be the same halakha had women participated in its decision making process through centuries," he is in dangerous territory. Halakhically established principles are not subject to external pressures. One thousand women "poskim" deciding together could not change the nature of who constitutes a *minyan*. One thousand women *poskim* could not change the words in Deuteronomy 24:1 regarding divorce: "When a man takes a wife and marries her then it comes to pass if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found in her some unseemly thing, he writes her a bill of divorcement and gives it into her hand and sends her out of his house." Even if all women took on all the positive time-bound commandments they could not change the status of women from being in the category of *ha'aino mitzvevh v'oseh* — one who is not commanded in a mitzva but performs it anyway. One of the most important elements in the beauty of halakha is its eternal nature. I daresay that the continuity of halakha is indistinguish-

able from the continuity of the Jewish people.

On the other hand, halakha is marvelously flexible in its applicability to changing circumstances. This includes not only changes in technology but changes in the social structure as well. It is the obligation of those in a position to apply halakha, to remain sensitive to those changes, to stay abreast of new technology and advances in medicine and certainly to always be informed concerning social change. It is our obligation as Jews — men and women — to see to it that our *poskim* fulfill their obligations in this area and to flock to those whose erudition, intellectual honesty and sensitive tone — regardless of the ultimate decision — bespeak an unflinching commitment to halakha as well as a deep concern for individual Jews and *klal Yisrael* as a whole. Regardless of whether women *poskim* are a halakhic possibility, what we need to seek are *poskim* of great integrity who are true to halakha and to the well-being of the Jewish people.

Abigail Lerner

NOTES

1. Response #18, Summer 1973. Reprinted in *Contemporary Jewish Ethics*, Kellner, Marc, edit. Sanhedrin Press, N.Y. 1978 pp. 348-354.
2. Epstein, Baruch HaLevi, *My Uncle the Netziv*. Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, N.Y. 1988. pp. 156-164.
Elinson, Elyakim, *HaIsha V'HaMitzvot*, vol. II *Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra* pp. 146-7.
S. Feldbrand, *From Sarah to Sarah*, Eishes Chayil Books, Brooklyn 1980 pp. 3-9.
3. How should women acquire Torah knowledge? The subject of women and Torah Study is treated comprehensively in Weinberger, Moshe, "Teaching Torah to Women," *Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society IX*, Spring 1985.
See also the *Torah Temima* Devarim, Chapter 11 Ot 48.

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