

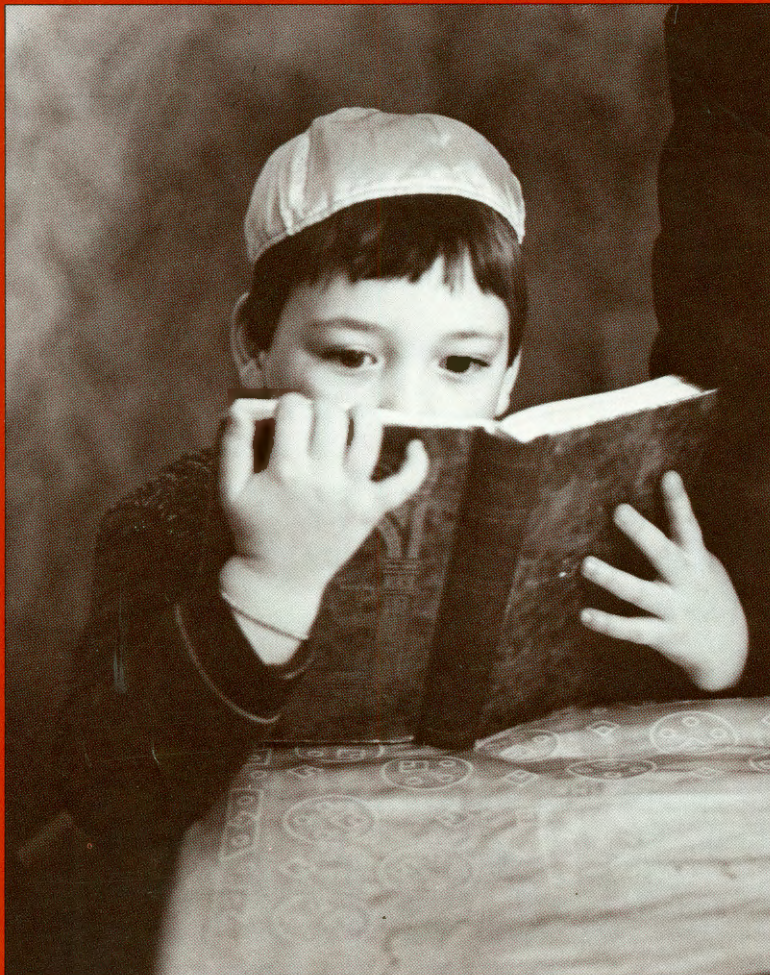
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Ten Da'at

A Publication of the Torah Education Network

Volume II, Number I Fall 1987

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ON OUR COVER: A young boy,
Budapest, Hungary, from *The Last
Jews of Eastern Europe* by Yale
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Da'ati

In the beginning there was the Word. And from that beginning emerged generations of giants who attempted to explain and translate that Word into everyday living. The Sinaitic experience, content as well as fire, was intended for the masses. But when we shrank in fear and shrugged in perplexity G-d responded by sending us those sages and teachers who could clarify His Word, the source of all Jewish knowledge.

There was Rabbi Judah the Prince who understood the need not only of the moment, but of the future. *Et laasot l'Hashem heferu Toratekha*. If the Torah is threatened, he reasoned, then it must be preserved. He was the first to break with halakhic precedent by writing what had been oral. Several centuries after the Mishnah was compiled, Rav Ashi detected the rumblings of history once again. The Babylonian Talmud was thus completed while the great Yeshivot were still permitted to function. As persecutions and expulsions further depleted our strength, Rav Yitzchak Alfasi condensed the Talmud which was too massive for the masses. He was followed by the Rambam who clearly saw the exile and understood the needs of the exiled.

And there were others. Rabbi Yakov ben Asher, Rabbi Joseph Karo, Rabbi Moshe Isserles. Giants, all, who dearly loved *Torat Yisroel* and *Am Yisroel* and wanted nothing more than that one be entwined with the other.

Each generation has borne scholars dedicated to unravelling the intricacies of the Talmud. Each has been committed to the single purpose of reintroducing us again and yet again to the Word of G-d. Some have codified and sum-

clearly saw his task. He too, in his way, must bring the Talmud to the masses. As a teacher, he knew that on the most basic level his students must attain an ease and fluency in the reading and analyzing of sources, progressing to an independent use of these sources. Indeed, the goal of every teacher must be to enable a student to draw conclusions from the text, cross-referencing to further analyze and understand until, ultimately, new and fresh insights can be offered. But all must emerge from the text and all must return to it, for the study of the sources has always been a goal in and of itself. That, ultimately, is what *talmud Torah* is all about. It is through the study of the sources that we gain the Torah's perspective and response to every kind of issue that needs clarification and application. We face today's intrusion of cults and missionaries by reawakening the doubting and confused to an appreciation of our sources. We confront the age-old conflict between science and religion, as portrayed in the questionable theory of evolution, not with beliefs and postulates that change every few decades, but with an understanding of our timeless text.

The values that determine our interaction with others, the morals that control our ethical conduct and behavior, the attitudes and approaches that shape even our most intimate and personal moments, all have deep roots in our sources. And that is how we must teach our Torah—as experiential, pulsating, living. Whether we use the computer or the story as our medium, or even plan a “happening”, as teachers we must continue our ancient tradition, our very existential imperative, of

Evolution, A Theory that Failed to Evolve:

Update for Torah Schools 5748

Moses D. Tendler

I. In January 1982 (McLean vs. Arkansas Board of Education 5 January 1982) the Arkansas Board of Education was enjoined from requiring all its schools to teach creation-science along with the theory of evolution. The main thrust of the legal decision was that "creation-science with its belief in *creatio ex nihilo* based on the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis is unquestionably a statement of religion . . . assuming for the purposes of argument, however, that evolution is a religion or religious tenet, the remedy is to stop the teaching of evolution, not establish another religion in opposition to it."

On March 4, 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a Louisiana law requiring that creationism be taught along with evolution in the public schools.

II. Is the theory of evolution a "secular humanism" or is it the consequence of scientific methodology?

How should this theory, once again a source of ferment and controversy in educational and legal circles, be taught in our Yeshivot and Day Schools whose students' first exposure is to the creationism of *sefer Beraishit*?

I believe it to be a categorical imperative of Torah education that teach we must! We cannot ignore the ferment nor deny the massive influence of the theory on the thought processes of our society because:

a) "Razor-blade" textbook revisions will not cure the focal infection of doubt that the theory inoculates when presented as a religion of secular humanism. Removing the offending pages from the textbook, no matter how carefully it is done, denigrates the power of Torah truths to compete in the arena of ideas and ideals—an arena in which we have never lost a match despite an occasional loss of a round!

b) Evolutionary theory is all pervasive in our culture. Can we hide all the "restorations" of dinosaurs found in our museums and publications? Must we draw in *yarmulkas* and *peyot* on all artist renditions of prehistoric man? Even if our students are not yet questioning the "first eleven chapters" of *sefer Beraishit*, we have the obligation of *at p'tach lo* to initiate the questioning lest the questions burst forth when we, the teachers of Torah truths, will not be there to provide the answers to satisfy the mind and soul of the questioner.

c) We are obligated to teach the truths of *Hashem's* interaction with the natural world.

שבת ע"ה. - אמר ר'

שמעון בן פזי א"ר יהושע

בן לוי משום בר קפרא

כל היודע לחשב בחקופות

ומזלות ואינו חושב -

עליו הכתוב אומר "ואה

פעל ד' לא יביטו ומעשה

ידיו לא יראו" (ישעי'

ה, י"ב)...

א"ר יוחנן מניין שמצוה

על האדם לחשב תקופות

ומזלות שנאמר (דברים

ד, ו) "ושמרתם ועשיחם

כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם

לעיני העמים" איזו חכמה

ובינה שהיא לעיני

העמים? זה חישוב תקו-

פות ומזלות.

... to refuse to master the science of astronomy is to refuse to see *Hashem* as He interacts with the natural world.

continued

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Rav Yochanan added it is a *mitzvah* to do so because it fulfills the commandment of *Hashem* to study and apply Torah knowledge. This is the wisdom and the understanding that the other nations appreciate.

III. The Theory of Evolution: in search of scientific facts.

Much has happened to the theory since it was formulated by evolutionists in the late 1800's. Darwinian evolution was quickly rejected when the science of genetics burst forth on the world of science. Darwin's lack of knowledge of genetics allowed him to propose erroneous mechanisms of evolution such as: inheritance of acquired characteristics (Lamarckian Inheritance) and the blending of inherited characteristics rather than their discreet segregation and independent transmission to the new generation. His reliance on stress as a main evolutionary force and his preoccupation with the negative consequences of inbreeding were quickly rejected by the neo Darwinists. The Synthetic theory was substituted. This theory incorporated the new science of genetics and introduced the influence of chance mutations and the "DNA story," to bolster the faltering theory. The basic construct remained the same: "Life having appeared once upon the earth, the various species have arisen one from the other by a gradual process of modification extended through untold generations." The mechanisms of evolution continued to elude the scientific search. "Facts" were accumulated based on:

- the fossil record;
- the resemblance of organs between disparate species (homologous organs);
- the purported presence of vestigial organs in "higher" species;
- evidence from comparative biochemistry, immunology, and embryology;
- evidence from artificial selection during animal husbandry and from the "green revolution."

The latter, an application of genetic principles to plant crops, has given us an era of world wide food surpluses, and has defused, forever more, the demographic time bomb erroneously proposed by Malthus.

Thomas H. Huxley, the great publicist of Darwinian evolution, restated

the basic construct as follows: "All species have been produced by the development of varieties from common stocks; by the conversion of these, first into permanent races, then into species by the process of natural selection essentially identical with the artificial selection by which man has originated the races of domestic animals."

Is there any evidence that such has occurred in nature without the intervention of man? Until a mechanism can be proposed that will enable us to produce such "races" under scientifically controlled conditions, the evolutionary theory remains but a theory, and one under severe attack from its former proponents.

Gradualism, as proposed by Darwin, failed to explain species development. No organism becomes more fit for survival with one miraculous modification called a mutation. The light sensitive eye is advantageous to the organism, but not the colored spot on the arm of a starfish from which it is supposed to have evolved. Why would a starfish with a small red birthmark be selected for survival? . . . A limb for locomotion is an asset, but not a bump on the streamline shape of an eel-like creature from which it is supposed to have evolved. . . . Why were these "sports" or misfits saved for survival? or by whom? Such concerns are summed up in a poem printed in many biology texts entitled "Ode to a Starfish" with a refrain of "Some call it evolution and others call it G-d!" The so called "proofs" of evolution are mere records of biological phenomena or areas yet uncharted by scientific methodology.

Our sages who were "observant" Jews par excellence, were fully aware of homologous organs and even relied on this knowledge to set halakhic directives.

ש"ע או"ח תעניח

הקע"ה, ג

אם היה דבר בחזירים

מהענין מפני שמעיהם

זומים לשל בני אדם.

"An epidemic of intestinal disease amongst pigs requires a declaration of a day of fasting because their intestinal tract resembles that of humans."

"Vestigial organs" most often reflect our ignorance rather than our investigative skills. The Thymus gland, now known to be a major component of our immune system, was once listed as a vestigial organ. The appendix, the classic vestigial organ is now suspected of playing a role in immune mechanisms as well.

IV. The theory collapses

The forty year dominance of the modern synthesis ended in Chicago in 1980 at the conference simply entitled "Macroevolution." Gradualism, the basic tenet of evolutionary theory was rejected on the basis of its former greatest proof—the fossil record. The summation of the participants, all leading evolutionists, reads like an epitaph on the tombstone of the modern synthesis nee Darwinism. Evolution, according to a near unanimous reanalysis of all available data, does not move at a stately pace with small changes accumulating over periods of many millions of years. The principle feature of individual species within the fossil record is stasis, not change. The record, read without bias, reveals that species remained unchanged and then suddenly disappeared to be replaced by substantially different but related species. There are no transitional forms! All have been postulated

We have the obligation of at petach lo to initiate the questioning lest the questions burst forth when we, the teachers of Torah truths, will not be there to provide the answers

How should this theory . . . be taught in our Yeshivot and Day Schools whose students' first exposure is to the creationism of sefer Beraishit?

complete the record but they do not exist except in the imagination of the evolutionists. New terms have been coined to define the fossil record as it is, not as evolutionists wish it would be! Punctuated equilibrium, episodic evolution is now the master. "The Omnipotent position of adaptationism embodied in the Modern Synthesis is overturned."¹

The concurrence of three leading evolutionists in a review of the *Evolutionary Synthesis: Perspectives on the Unification of Biology*, edited by Ernest Mays and William B. Provine, is the summation of the theory that was.² Niles Eldridge, the reviewer, states: "I think that the idiosyncracies of these major individuals are underplayed. A case can be made that individuals, rather than disciplines, were responsible for the emergence of the Synthesis and its particular character . . . Why . . . did so many biologists accept the synthesis though it remained unproven? I suggest that this is all the explanation we need: the persuasiveness of a few highly talented biologists, promulgating a single simple and rationally very appealing set of ideas."

There is no theory of evolution to attack or defend in 1987. There are stirrings of a new modification of the theory that must now begin to search for new "proofs." The theory is too appealing to let die. Like the Bohr atom, it may not be true but it helps the human mind to grapple with the massed data from the biotic world. It allows for some order in the chaotic profusion of genera and species.

Indeed we owe Darwin, despite the erroneous views he held and the short lived theory he proposed, a great debt of gratitude. The idea of studying animal disease models to find cures for human ills would be an irrational pursuit, were it not for the educative impact of evolutionary doctrines.

Metabolic pathways elucidated in bacteria are assumed to be imitative of human metabolism, thanks to Darwin and Huxley.

V. What are the religious/halakhic problems posed by the theory? There are but two. One is inherent in the theory—the age of the universe measured in billions of years, not 5748 as recorded on our calendars. The other is randomness or undirected evolution that denies existence of a creator. This is not a component of the theory but an atheistic stance of some evolutionists. The belief of many evolutionists is that there are constraints on evolutionary expression that do not permit random evolution. How far is the concept of restraint from that of *Adon Olam*? If it is professed that the hand of G-d guided the evolutionary process, we can affirm Darwin's statement in a letter to the author John Fordyce who wrote *Aspects of Skepticism*. "It seems absurd," he wrote on May 7, 1879, "to doubt that man may be an ardent theist and an evolutionist."

What about the age of the earth and the claims of man's descent from other species and other variants of humanity?

The Torah view of *motar haadam min habehaimah ayin*, "there is little difference between man and animal," is a goad to man to rise from animal to human life by dint of our exercise of Free Will to accept Torah instructions in developing our life style. The church, in deifying a man, opposed the notion that man was but another animal in G-d's biblical zoo. The *gedolei hador* at the time of Darwin found little to criticise in the theory or its scientific findings. The *Tifereth Yisroel*, whose masterful commentary on the *mishnayot* is the "standard in the field," published his *Drush Ohr HaChayim* in 1842. This was, coincidentally, the year the Piltdown man (later found to be

a hoax) was discovered. The *Drush* is found (regrettably few find it!) in the back of the first part of *sefer nezikim* of the "big" *mishnayot*, *Yakhin Boaz*. In this treatise, he relates to the Darwinian evolutionary theory of his time as follows:

"ועתה אהי ידידי

ראו... כי הסוד הזה

שנמסר לאבותינו ורבו-

חינו והם גלוהו לנו

זה כמה מאות שנים מצא-

נוהו שוב בהטבע ברורה

לעינינו בזמנים המאו-

חרים כבזמנינו הבהירה

ביותר"

He relates to the fossil finds in the Carpathians Himalayans and in the "Mountains of Cardillan in America" and describes the fossil remains in each stratum. He refers to the Mastadon found in Siberia, and to flesh eating "inguanadons" and herbivorous "megalasourus."

מכל האמור נראה ברור

שכל מה שמסרו לנו המקו-

בלים זה כמה מאות שנים

שכבר היה עולם פעם אהה

ושוב נחרב וחזר ונחקיים

זה ארבע פעמים... הכל

התברר עכשיו בזמנינו

באמת וצדק... ולפענ"ד

שאותן בני אדם שהיו

בעולם שנקראין פראאדע-

מיסען

ר"ל הבני אדם שהיו

בעולם קודם בריאת אדם

הראשון העכשווי, הן הן

974 דורות שנזכרו בשבת

דף פ"ח וחגיגה דף י"ד

שהיו נבראים קודם בריאת

העולם העתיי.

continued

The fossil record . . . reveals that species remained unchanged and then suddenly disappeared to be replaced by substantially different but related species.

Neither the age of the earth, the fossil finds of strange creatures nor the evolution of man, posed any "threat" to Torah truths as understood by the *Tifereth Yisroel*. Indeed, data from carbon dating lead/uranium, and other radioactive time clocks affirm the great age of the earth. It is difficult to accept the explanation of some "literalists" amongst our rabbinic leaders who see the irrefuted facts of science as a test of man's faith. The Creator purposely placed dinosaur bones, and other fossil remains where we would find them to test our faith in the teachings of our Sages. As we see, one of our great Sages taught us otherwise. The concept of a "testing" G-d with a flair for the dramatic, is also foreign to Torah theology (except in the "testing" of Abraham).

Did Hashem make this last world in six days and rested on the seventh, or was it six millenia? Either assumption can be correct. What is not an assumption but an axiom of our faith in Hashem, is that the Creator of the world revealed Himself to Adam and Eve and taught them the truths of the man G-d relationship. These truths were transmitted to Noah and then to Shem who, as King of Jerusalem, Malki Tzedek, met with Abraham and refined the truths that Abraham evolved from his own study of the G-d nature relationship. Shem's daughter Tamar married Judah, the son of Yaacov, and gave rise to the Kingship of David and Moshiach.

This evolution of man is what is relevant to our lives in the service of Hashem. The Torah is not a biology text nor even a book of history. It is an instructional book of morals and ethics for Jew and non-Jew. All other lessons learned therefrom may or may not be the true intent of our G-d who ordered every word of our Torah to be inscribed by Moshe the great grand nephew of Judah.

VI. To sum up: In 1987 there is not one piece of scientific evidence for macroevolution or the development of one species from another. All our work in genetics, molecular biology, recombinant DNA explains variations within the species but does not offer any mechanism for the development of new species. Yet the notion of a common thread that interconnects the biotic world is both utilitarian and elegant. It does not violate any Torah beliefs. The Talmudic literature refers to prior worlds and earlier men before the present world that is dated 5748 years from the birth of Adam and his wife Eve. Some of our great Torah sages accept this literally and see in it a concurrence with the scientific claim for a very ancient world. No one dare label such a belief heretical, even if personal family tradition is to accept that the world was created *ex nihilo* 5748 years ago.

The key to presenting the above discussion to students is to do so without apologetica. If our Torah traditions were in full opposition to scientific claims, we would not hesitate to reject the relative truths of science in favor of the absolute truths of our Torah. But if it is possible, through intensive study of both Torah and scientific texts, to avoid such confrontations it is our duty to do so. There can not be real conflict between Torah and Science, only apparent disagreement.

The *Elokim* who created the world in accord with *His* laws of nature came down on Mt. Sinai to give us the Torah, and announced to all creation "Anokhie Hashem Elokekha" I am the Hashem, the personal G-d who designed a Torah for you and I am also *Elokekha*, your G-d who put into effect all the laws of nature. ■

¹ *Science* v.210,21 November 1980 p. 883-866.

² *The Science*, April 1981

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Top TEN Profile:

An Interview with Adin Steinsaltz

Jacob M. Rabinowitz

The world of Torah learning is, by the grace of G-d, burgeoning. There may be more Jews engaged in serious, regular Torah learning today than at any time in the last five or six centuries.

The networks of Yeshivot in America and Israel and the focussed passion of Roshei Yeshiva and students for learning, the ready availability of texts, duplication material, and tapes, the sophisticated acceptance of learning for its own sake as a culturally acceptable goal—all of these are major contributing factors. But a complete and honest review would also note the unique contributions of two remarkable individuals, working independently not only of each other but of established schools and institutions as well: Pinchas Kehati whose brilliant and lucid commentary opened the door to the Mishnah for many, and *yibadel Tschaim* Adin Steinsaltz whose awesome Talmud project is uncovering the Talmudic world to those who would seek it and even for those who never thought they would seek it.

Of the two, the as yet incomplete Steinsaltz work is the more formidable. Announced in 1964 to a rather skeptical group of scholars and publishers, the series has produced eighteen volumes to-date. A more rapid pace for the final twenty or twenty-two volumes

will allow the entire Babylonian Talmud project to be completed by the year 2,000. By then other Steinsaltz projects such as—the Jerusalem Talmud, English translation and edition of his Babylonian project, an analogous Tanakh work—all of these should be well on their way to completion.

The scope and magnitude of the undertaking becomes more astonishing when one is told that Rabbi Steinsaltz does virtually all of the important writing—concept clarification, explication, annotation—by himself. A staff of thirty is kept busy editing, verifying, and following up the work of this one man.

Rabbi Steinsaltz, born in Israel fifty years ago to a secular family with Chassidic antecedents, is a man of many rich talents. Had his love for Talmud and his conviction that it should be open to all not overwhelmed him at an early stage of his life, he probably would now be a major contributor to the world of painting and sculpture. This background, so different from that of the regular Talmud educator or Rosh Yeshiva, may be responsible for his singular dream and its realization.

The externals—speech, manner and appearance of the Rabbi are modest and unassuming. So, too, is his office and Institute tucked away in one of the lesser known side streets of Jerusalem. But the calm exterior belies a volcanic interior. His intensity is searing and he seems to be perpetually suppressing

an inner explosion, capping an energy well. It has to be thus. How else explain the *chutzpah* of the vision, the audacity of the dream to prepare a book, as he calls it, which would be a radically new and different edition of our priceless Talmud?

Why did he do it?

Rabbi Steinsaltz—“This book came from *sheurim* which I used to give. The *sheurim* were offered to a mixed group and it turns out that the readership of my book is also heterogeneous. It is thus not exactly a beginner's book or a teacher's guide or intended for advanced pupils. What we have is a volume which can be used at different levels but not for the same purpose.”

For one class or kind of user the Steinsaltz Talmud (this is what it has come to be called in a spontaneous and remarkable tribute) is helpful because “it cuts out a great part of unnecessary hardship. By providing punctuation and translation, ninety percent of needed lower level preparation time is rendered unnecessary, and the time saved can be used to achieve a higher level.”

But isn't this ultimately a handicap to the Talmud student who is denied the opportunity to learn “real” Talmud?

Not at all says Rabbi Steinsaltz. “By jumping this preparation gap the user is given the ability to use the language and rhythm of the Talmud at an earlier stage than would be true without it and

continued

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thus one moves beyond that stage to really begin an education."

This approach is consistent with ideas expressed in other Steinsaltz works. In *The Essential Talmud* and in his *Guide to the Talmud* he urges students to approach Talmud study by identifying with its methods and goal—a process of searching for truth. Proper preparation and study seeks to remove all impediments to that process, be they cognitive or linguistic.

This is helpful not only in the Talmud text but also in Tosefot. "The punctuation in Tosefot is also designed to be used as a jumping board for real interaction with the study of the text. Clearing away problematics leaves one free to begin to ask intelligent questions and expect intelligent answers."

Rabbis and teachers may also find his edition useful as they prepare to transmit to others a section "which is no longer fresh in their minds." Since the Talmud is so vast and there is so much to know the "book" can be very helpful in "drawing attention to important analyses or derivations which the Rabbi, not studying the *masekhet* at this time, might overlook."

For all who use his text, Rabbi Steinsaltz believes, there is the assurance that "there is hardly a page in which there is not something new." Of course, in keeping with his own modesty, it is likely that this *chidush* will not always be obvious at first glance. It may have to be searched for—but this too is an important part of the process.

"Rabbi, you note that your text can be used by teachers and Rabbis as they prepare to teach. Do you have any guidelines for the amount of preparation needed by a teacher or, put another way, when did you feel satisfied with your own page of text?"

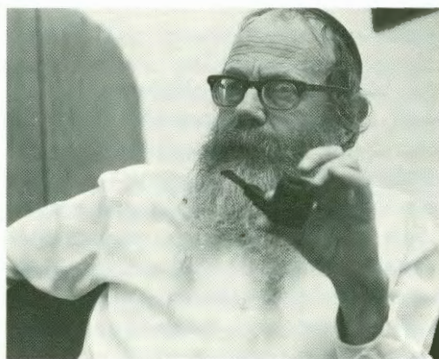
"The ultimate goal of any one who prepares a text, for himself or for transmission to others, was best defined by the Brisker Rav *z"l*. He said that the highest level of *Gemorrah* is the ability to learn a smooth page of *Gemorrah*. A smooth page is defined as "learning without gaps, learning with complete understanding. At that point you have a text without any rough spots, or a completely smooth text."

Now this is not an easy assignment. It involves not only meticulous preparation but hard work and patience. Here Rabbi Steinsaltz cites the example of Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski *z"l*

who used to say a daily *sheur* in Bayit V'Gan, directed to a non-yeshiva audience. He once told one of his students that he reviews the *sheur* four times¹ before he delivers it. The fourth review is conducted as a private *sheur* for his wife. If she has difficulties with it, if she can't understand it, then something is wrong with it and it must be reexamined. This is the clarity expected of the teacher. And this is the clarity found on each page of his "book."

His painstaking preparation and attention have borne fruit. Over fifty thousand copies of each volume of the Steinsaltz *shas* are bought by eager lovers of Torah, an unbelievable figure for a supposedly esoteric text.

My next question related to the place of Talmud in the high school curriculum. It was not unfair to ask this



Adin Steinsaltz

teacher, who is also a creative educationist and the founder of the first *dati* high school in the Negev, to comment on overall curriculum.

The specific question—How many hours per week should be devoted to Talmud in the high school curriculum?

The answer is not given in numbers. Rather, as befits the Talmudist, especially one who has been exposed to scientific discipline and organization at the university level, it is framed as part of a larger principle.

"Knowledge has a critical limit below which it is completely useless. The Sunday school [on the American scene] has proven totally ineffective because the amount of material and knowledge transmitted is so small that it doesn't make sense. Therefore the one clear result is that the students come to hate both the day and the subject.

The same is true for Talmud. Below a certain level of knowledge and competence it is needless and useless. If students cannot enjoy it it is a waste of time. Almost any other [Judaic-Hebraic] subject will do."

His unequivocal recommendation "if you cannot reach the needed level don't enter."

Isn't that somewhat harsh? Perhaps someone could enjoy learning Talmud on a very reduced basis? The reply remains firm.

"Learning Talmud really means learning three languages simultaneously: What is being said, what it means (thought), and the explication and comments by Rashi, Tosefot, etc. History, even Bible, can be enjoyed by reading. Either directly or in translation. But not so Talmud. Learning the text is like learning philosophy in French. First the language has to be mastered and then the thought."

What it comes down to is this: "Enough time has to be devoted to the learning of Talmud to make sure that the exiting student—despite all the demands made on his time by college prep courses, by sports, by social life and thinking of social life—is able to understand and work through a page of text. Even passive understanding on an intelligent level will do.

Some students achieve this. But even those who cannot quite reach this must be at least sufficiently well prepared that they understand a *sheur* upon hearing it. If the curriculum cannot produce this minimum then it doesn't pay to include Talmud."

This formulation will obviously require each principal to assess his/her school and program in the light of the level of the entering student, and the interest and commitments which can be realistically demanded. Only then can the place of Talmud in the curriculum be defined.

I left the unassuming Rabbi. Left him alone in his unassuming office to continue his monumental work. In a little while he would be leaving for Meah Shearim to the Yeshiva Mekor Chaim which he recently founded. A Yeshiva combining the methodology and approach of the Lithuanian yeshiva with the warmth of a Chassidic environment and the openness of university. But until he had to leave he could prepare for his radio program or perhaps dictate a few *blatt* and help open a few more doors. Because while "sin is forgivable, ignorance is not" and one must do everything possible to dispel ignorance and permit the light and beauty of our unique heritage—the Oral Law—to inspire us all.

Transmitting Jewish Values to Young Children

Rivka Behar

We have been charged with the mission of being a "light unto the nations" and, indeed, we have held ourselves to a high standard. Jews have always been singled out for achievements in the general society and have been notably absent in affairs relating to crime and corruption. Today, however, we read the newspapers with trepidation lest we come across names of yeshiva graduates linked to unethical or even criminal behavior.

How is it possible that we have failed to integrate Jewish ethical values into our daily lives? Why have we not prepared our students to deal with the pressures and moral ambivalence which characterize today's society? How is it possible that those who are taught *mipnai saivah takum* can sit on a crowded bus while an elderly person is standing; or that a yeshiva student who learns about *genaivat da'at* can cheat on a test without feeling guilt? Why do they fail to see a connection between Torah teachings and what is practiced in every day life?

Jewish values are intended to educate, sensitize and prepare us for

making decisions in any moral situation. They serve as the core around which we shape the personalities and souls of our children. The examples we set, the roles we present, and the way in which we deal with daily problems in and out of the classroom, are the blocks upon which we build character and transmit values. Through the interaction of adults with children and children with each other, the classroom, the home and the community become the arena for the transmittal of ethics and standards.

Researchers, including Jean Piaget, have been virtually unanimous in

focusing on early childhood as the prime formative period for growth and development of values and attitudes. Morality develops in initial stages; progression from one to the next is dependent not only on the child's ability alone, but rather on interaction with the environment. To progress through the stages of moral growth, children require a nurturing and supportive adult who serves not only as a role model, but who helps them internalize moral values. Authoritarian parents and teachers who control through punishment and restriction retard moral growth; adults who interact with children with respect, fairness, consideration, promote moral growth.

How can teachers convey Jewish values to three, four and five-year old children often behave self-aggressively with their peers. A momentary constraint may momentarily curb negative behavior but has no effect on developing values. A child's learning from one child to another is more than a mechanical process; it is a placate a parent or teacher.

Traditionally, young children are taught *chesed*, *tzedek* and *rahamim* through formal lessons, stories, work sheets and teacher-directed projects. Children recite *l'raikha kamokha* without understanding its meaning or internalizing the lesson. In fact, children experience so much stress during the lesson, that they display irritability.

A teacher who reduces Avraham Avinu to a paper doll for children to copy or assemble, trivializes our heroic role model and sheds no light on his moral teachings.

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behavior contrary to the very words they are reciting. A teacher who reduces Avraham Avinu to a paper doll for children to copy or assemble, trivializes our heroic role model and sheds no light on his moral teachings.

The professional early childhood teacher who understands how children learn, teaches *midot* and *mitzvot* from everyday experiences. *Hakhnasat oh-rim* is taught by inviting guests to the classroom, involving children in acts of hospitality, engaging them in offering refreshments and making visitors comfortable. During the week of *Parshat Vayera*, Avraham's example of hospitality and kindness to strangers is read directly from the Torah and associated with the children's experiences.

An important new channel for hospitality and kindness is the reception given to newcomers from Russia, Iran and Israel. The teacher's example of welcoming them and easing their integration into the new environment is the model from which children may emulate Avraham Avinu and learn to live together in a complex world full of human diversity.

Children learn values through natural situations rather than formal presentations. Sensitive teachers provide time and freedom for informal social interaction in a warm and accepting classroom environment. The teacher guides the children at play and gently steps in at the "teachable moment" to make the "Torah connection." In a conflict between children, for example, the teacher helps both victim and aggressor see each other's point of view. Holding the children close to one another, the teacher clarifies and interprets the children's perception of their altercation. The children learn to listen to each other, and are guided towards awareness and mutual empathy.

Example: Two children are fighting over a doll carriage, each screaming, "I had it first."

Teacher: What happened? How do you feel about that? How do you think he/she feels? What can you do to solve this problem?

Whatever the children decide that is agreeable to both, is a lesson in conflict resolution. Children need to build negotiation skills. They need to consider possible alternatives and the effect of their behavior on others. When parents or teachers decide on resolving the problem by, for example, having them take turns with the carriage, an important learning opportunity is lost. They have missed the "teachable moment" and the chance to relate *v'ahavta l'raiakha kamokha* to a commonplace situation.

Young children, even toddlers, often show natural signs of empathy and compassion. Parents and teachers can strengthen these tendencies by commenting on them.

Example:

Teacher: You helped Shmuel pick up all the beads he spilled. That was very kind.

A spontaneous act of kindness is verbally labelled a "mitzvah."

Many young children (and adults) are oblivious to those around them in need of help. Parents and teachers can sharpen perceptions by articulating their actions. Modelling is not enough.

Teacher: Look, Mr. Levy is carrying our lunch tray in both his hands. He won't be able to open the door. I'm going to help him. I'll open the door for him.

Example: Look at Mira's face. She looks upset. Let's find out what we can do to help.

..... Mira is upset because she lost her new ribbon. Let's help her look for it.

Today's children are surrounded by examples of selfishness, greed, hostility and violence. They need tools with which to cope and counter confrontations in this environment. They need to develop autonomy, problem-solving, coping, negotiation and conflict resolution skills. These skills can be developed by learning Torah through active involvement. If we expect our children to integrate Jewish values and practice them, rather than merely recite them, then we must make this the focus and priority of early childhood education. ■



Do you know of someone else who might enjoy receiving Ten Da'at? Please let us know the name and address of the person or institution and we will gladly send a copy.

The Educational Implications of Research in Moral Development

Second in a two-part series

Esther M. Shkop

In the previous issue we provided a general description of the major tenets of the "Cognitive Developmental Theory of Moral Reasoning" as first proposed by Piaget and later developed by Kohlberg. Many readers surely noted the similarity with Maimonidean prescriptions for education that progresses from learning *shelo lishma* to the development of *Torah lishma*. Indeed, what prompts our attention to the theory and research by Kohlberg, his colleagues and critics, is not its innovativeness, but rather its confirmation of notions propounded by our Sages long ago. An analysis of the three levels of moral reasoning described in the previous issue will indicate that what differentiates the first two levels from the highest third level is that moral action is rationalized on the basis of external inducements—be they tangible rewards and punishments or social approval or ostracism. In either case, the individual determines what is "right" and "wrong" primarily on the basis of consequences meted out by someone or something other than himself. In contrast, Post-Conventional moral thought justifies

particular behavior on the basis of its consonance with the individual's fastly held beliefs and principles and his own self-concept. This article will examine the major findings of research testing the validity of the developmental theory of moral reasoning, and the implications for practitioners in Jewish Day Schools and Yeshivot.

Numerous studies by various researchers in several countries have tended to lend credence to the idea that individuals progress hierarchically from Pre-Conventional to Conventional, and finally Post-Conventional or Principled moral reasoning, and that the progress is sequential and unidirectional. More recent research, however, points out that even pre-adolescent children who have been exposed to intense religious education have the capability of making the subtle differentiation between precepts and rules that are binding only upon members of particular groups, and more fundamental imperatives that are universal and moral in nature. Studies of children in a variety of parochial schools have found that many can make subtle discernments between what we would call *chok* and *mishpat* that earlier researchers thought to be in the province of only more sophisticated and mature adults. For example, when asked about proper moral behavior, such children will stress that boys and girls *should* dress differently, explaining that the Bible so commands. When probed as to whether this rule would

hold even if G-d had not commanded it, or whether this rule is binding on non-believers who are not versed in the Bible, the children readily explain that this is the kind of rule (like *Kashrut* and *Shmirat Shabbat*) which does not apply to all people everywhere. In contrast, the children explain that stealing is wrong because it was forbidden by G-d, but that even if it were not specified in the Bible, it is the kind of rule which would apply to all people everywhere. (The ability to make such fine differentiations between "religious" and "moral" imperatives, between social conventions and ethical rules are not as apparent among youngsters exposed only to public secular education).

Such findings alert us to the incredible complexity of moral thinking even in young children that are early exposed to problems of "right" and "wrong", and to the efficacy of educational intervention in the development of "conscience" and sensitivity to social convention and ethical demands. Moreover, they point out a fact that is largely obscured in Kohlberg's writing—that children and adults can simultaneously employ various modes of moral reasoning; that even individuals who have progressed to the highest level of moral thought still justify many of their behavioral choices in the name of "fitting in" and "getting along with others," recognizing that, though as lofty and glorious as the principles of "justice" and "human dignity,"

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The cognitive developmental school of moral development has provided us with tools to assess whether or not our charges are internalizing the moral principles of the Torah.

goals of social acceptability and peace are worthwhile.

Not so heartening is the paucity of empirical evidence linking moral thought with moral behavior. Lest this fact provide fodder for the cynic who points out that intellectual genius does not increase the chances for "goodness," it should be remembered that empirical research of actual human behavior under natural conditions is often methodologically impossible. Moreover, it is commonly the case that we will observe identical behavior in people motivated by very different inducements. We may find generous gifts of charity among individuals seeking a tax break, and those seeking honor, and even those committed sincerely and solely to the social good. The linkage between human action and its underlying motivations must be either inferred or indirectly observed. Thus, the case for genuine moral commitment is made in the *Book of Job* by the severance of good deeds from favorable consequences. Job is "proved" to be a *tzaddik* by his persistence and perseverance in the face of all evidence that being "good" is not opportunistically worthwhile. But such

tests are extreme, and are not available for ready use by the social scientist.

Nonetheless, there is a body of literature citing indirect and long-range evidence which strongly suggests that the development of moral reasoning is a *necessary* if not always sufficient condition for moral behavior. There is substantial proof that people who justify moral choices on the basis of commitment to principles of *tzedek* or *v'asita hatov v'hayashar* will more firmly persist in the ethical behavior in which they believe even in the face of social disapproval and even when such behavior leads to significant sacrifice and pain. In contrast, people who abide by certain codes of behavior mainly because they seek contingent rewards such as approval from their peers, or because of their reliance on authority figures (those empowered to reward or punish), will readily change their choices when social norms alter or when ordered to do so by "legitimate" rule-makers. Thus, an educational system which expediently relies on social conformity alone in fostering moral behavior runs a great risk of raising adults who can radically change their behavior once removed

from the enforcement of the parochial society. Or more commonly, such an educational system develops Jewish children who can sincerely ask whether it is permissible to steal from gentiles, and are more likely to judge a person by the external identifier (e.g., garb, language) than by his ethical behavior.

As Jewish educators most of our efforts are directed at developing reverence for the Law, and adherence to the mitzvot, both rational and non-rational, in our belief in the sanctity and overarching authority of the Lawgiver. But at the same time, the Ramban has warned us away from limiting our efforts to the development of the *naval birshut haTorah*—for whom the letter of the law is the only reality. Moreover, the Tanakh provides us with numerous examples of protagonists (e.g. Moshe Rabbenu, Avraham Avinu) who dare question the ways of the Almighty in the name of justice and righteousness. While the beginning of Wisdom is reverence and fear, the unobscured goal is devotion and love. While adherence to law is expected, it is *chesed* and behavior *l'fnim m'shurat hadin* that are always aspired to. If nothing else, the cognitive developmental school of moral development has provided us with tools to assess whether or not our charges are internalizing the moral principles of the Torah. Moreover, this school has provided guidelines and methods by which we can render our lessons in Torah and Mishna as vehicles for developing more advanced moral reasoning. ■

Suggested Readings: (Useful Anthologies summarizing theory, research and application methodology)

Arbuthnot, J.B. and D. Faust, *Teaching Moral Reasoning: Theory and Practice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981)

Berkowitz M.W. and F.Oser, *Moral Education: Theory and Application* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1985)

Lickona T., *Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research and Social Issues* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976)

Mosher, R., *Moral Education: A First Generation of Research and Development* (New York: Praeger, 1980)

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An educational system which expediently relies on social conformity alone in fostering moral behavior . . . develops Jewish children who can sincerely ask whether it is permissible to steal from gentiles, and are more likely to judge a person by the external identifier than by his ethical behavior.

Ed's Note: Please look for a classroom application of the principles of moral education in our next issue of Ten Da'at.

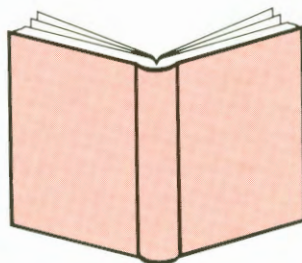
STORYTELLING:

Five Steps to Teaching Others

Peninnah Schram

There are days, even years of our lives that have faded into our memories because, perhaps, so many of them were uneventful. So too, have many school experiences intermingled one with another, and as a result, specific information, dates, facts, lectures, are soon forgotten.

But this is not the case with stories! Stories use images, metaphor, characters, dialogue, plot, riddles, questions, exaggeration, fantasy, conflict. Interweaving these unusual elements, along with ethical lessons and ideas in a beautiful "short-hand" way, the stories we hear remain in our memories for easy recall when we need to extract the necessary wisdom and knowledge from



them. Perhaps it is far easier to recall a story than a lecture because of two main interrelationships: the relationship between the story and the listener; and the relationship between the teller and listener.

A story offers an opportunity for dialogue in the mind of the listener. We can perhaps better understand this statement through a paradox: I tell you a story, you are the storyteller. When we hear a story, we use our imagination to complete images, we create our own mental pictures, add our perceptions to the experience, we identify with the hero/heroine as a role model, see new possibilities and options for solutions, and discover for ourselves the meaning of the story (although not always on first hearing).

Sharing a story creates a bond between teller and listener. The listener trusts the teller, enjoys the direct, personal contact between them—regardless of how many listeners there are, and feels as though the

teller is offering a gift—a gift of self, of time, of heritage.

The educational process is not restricted to the classroom, but includes the home as well. Actually, anywhere and anytime can be a time for learning. Thus, storytelling should be an ongoing activity, both in the classroom and in the home, during a walk in the park and around the Shabbat table. Stories are all around us and within us. We therefore need to begin with ourselves to find and prepare stories to tell. We must be ready for that special moment that begs a story. We must be able to recognize those subjects and lessons that are best introduced or reinforced with a story. But realizing the opportunity for a story is one ability, telling it effectively is yet another.

Solomon Ibn Gabirol, the eleventh century Spanish poet and philosopher, wrote:

In seeking knowledge,
the first step is silence,
the second listening,
the third remembering,
the fourth practicing,
and the fifth—teaching others.

Not only is this sound advice for acquiring knowledge but it is also a valid sequence to be followed in mastering the art of storytelling.

1. In order to retrieve the stories we already know, stories we have read and temporarily forgotten, stories of our

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own personal experiences, and so on, we need *silence* so we can listen to our hearts. We need to discover who we are and what values we hold. We need time to think and search through our minds, as well as through our books, for those stories. Besides retrieving "old" stories, we of course might find "new" stories to add to our repertoire.

Begin a card file. When you think of or come across a story you recall and love, note it on a 3x5 card, with citations, the theme, the moral, values, names of places and characters, summary of story, variants, and other information for future need. (Many details evaporate with time, especially the sources of the story. So write them down).

Go into your own head and read the stories silently before you try them out loud. Sense how *you* respond to the story. Try to understand why. After all, we are drawn to some stories more than to others—and knowing why can give you a key to yourself. The more you know about yourself, the better storyteller/teacher/communicator you can be. Think about the first story you remember—the story you asked to hear over and over. That is an important story to discover (or rediscover). For me, an Elijah story was the first story I recall my father telling me. And in silence I reconstructed that story, especially since I could not find it in print, and my father is no longer alive to tell it to me again. This "discovery" helped me understand my love of, and my need to tell, Elijah stories.

2. We need to learn to *listen*, to ourselves and to others. Listening actively and imaginatively is an art that calls for concentration and work. It does not just happen. As teachers and storytellers, we must learn to listen so that we can be better attuned to our stories and to our audiences. Words are only part of a story. Indeed, we tell stories with more than just words. We tell stories not only with our voices (a musical instrument with pitch, volume, rate, inflection, etc.), but also with our imagination. Listen to how you hear sounds of all kinds, and how you might, in turn, use what you hear in your telling. Listen to yourself as you express a thought or dialogue in a story. Have you used pause (silence of another kind which is very important in speaking), phrasing, vocal variations? Has your vocal expression captured the

meaning you wish to convey? Along with listening, work on all your senses to observe, taste, touch, smell and hear the world around you. Thus when you tell a story about birds in a forest, or a spice box, or matzah crumbling, or about Shlomo or Shmerl, etc., you will not just be talking, but rather creating

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the mental images first. Then through your voice you will transmit what you "see" and "hear" to those listening. Listening is part of the dialogue that goes on *within* the teller as well as *between* the teller and audience. It makes the story come alive and the teller remains present at each moment of the story.

3. *Remembering* a story is easily done when one sets up a plot outline of the story, a sequence of the action, (e.g. what happens first, then next, and so on). Trust yourself to remember four or six points which give the story a form with a beginning, middle and end. Do not try to memorize a story word-for-word, unless it is a literary story. (Although you can edit a literary story, you must remain faithful to the original). Rather, make the story your own by remembering why you chose it, what it means to you, and why you want to tell it, along with remembering the plot sequence. Then, remembering the entire story will be no problem because you will connect more directly with the story and listeners.

4. *Practicing* the story often by yourself, with friends, with students helps you to "own" the story. That is when a story comes *alive*. The caution is to beware of memorizing-by-rote because of repetition, or of "setting the story in stone," so to speak. Practice with flexibility in imagination and in words. Think as you tell—knowing that each time you tell the story there will be changes, both in yourself and in your listeners. The story never stays the same. My experience tells me that it is only on the twentieth telling that the story really becomes mine. So give yourself practice and time to help the story grow and change. And with each telling, the storyteller discovers new layers of meaning, new insights, new wisdoms in the story. And that is why we must all hear the same stories many times, whether by telling them or listening to others tell them.

5. By sharing our stories, we are *teaching others*. When we become excited about an idea or an experience, we want to tell someone else, to share what we have learned or discovered. That's storytelling! It is a sharing and an exchange of what is important to us in a narrative that contributes form and meaning to our lives. We have our traditional stories to share as well as our personal experiences and family stories. Through these stories our students and children learn about Jewish life, with its hopes and miracles, its history and religion, its values and customs, its joys and sorrows. Within our classroom studies, our home discussions, at any time, we need to have those stories to serve as springboards for developing a way of life, options, a right way to act, good deeds, understanding others, and empathy.

Stories are a link between generations. They are a natural part of the educational process as a celebration of our memories and our lives. As teachers, we must continue to tell stories which fill our students' "storehouse of memories" so that they, and we, can continue to tap the knowledge and wisdom that stories contain. ■

Ed's Note: Guidelines for Storytellers from Prof. Schram's Storytelling Workshops are available from the T.E.N. Office as are her bibliographies on Storytelling and Creative Dramatics, and Travelling in Time: Family Stories.

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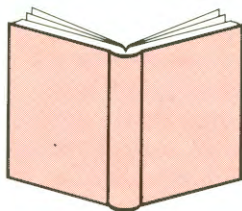
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CATALOGUES OF JEWISH LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

SELECTED JEWISH CHILDREN'S BOOKS—An Annotated List. Compiled by Dr. Marcia Posner. Published by JWB Jewish Book Council, 15 East 26 St., New York, NY 10010

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE WITH A JEWISH THEME by Enid Davis. NY, Schocken Books, 1981

EYORE'S BOOKS AND RECORDS OF JEWISH INTEREST FOR CHILDREN. Compiled and Annotated by Peninnah Schram. Eyore's Books for Children, 2212 Broadway, New York, NY 10024 (updated 1987).



* These books contain only one story.

** There is also a *Teacher's Guide* available.

T.E.N. Activities

If you missed

The Wolowelsky Handbook
The Levy Publication on Rav Kook

The Student Network
Conference in Washington
The ECA/TEN Convention

Don't Miss:

The Hecht educational adaptation of the Rav's essay on "Singularity of Israel"

The Long Island Conference on "Goals of Day School Education" on November 16th

Curriculum Aids: (all in Hebrew)

Shoftim—
Detailed workbook and Teacher's Guide by Simcha Fisher. Suitable for upper elementary and high schools. Torah Dept.
Shmot through Yitro—
Detailed faculty resource manual by Abraham Eliezri at Yeshiva University High School for Girls.
Yeshayahu—
Detailed curriculum for first twenty chapters. Torah Dept.

Also expect:

T.E.N. visits/conferences in Memphis, Los Angeles, Boston Another regional conference in the Midwest.

Completion of the skills-based curriculum project for elementary schools—in Chumash.

Health and Sex Education in our Day School

Michael Novogroder

For many years the Board of Education at Moriah Day School in Englewood, N.J. had planned to initiate a program which would include sex education. Their goal was to formulate a course which would present basic information from a halakhic point of view. A subcommittee was formed which included two rabbis, two psychologists and a physician. Their initial task was to explore existing courses amongst the yeshivot in the metropolitan area. At that time, only two schools had a program as a formal part of their curriculum. In one yeshiva the course was taught by the principal, and in the other, by a local physician. After a careful review, the committee decided to write its own course.

The initial draft included various aspects of adolescent development. Information regarding the physical and physiological changes occurring during puberty were to be presented in a very objective and honest manner. Major psychological problems of adolescence would also be included. The physician involved prepared the former presentation while the latter was prepared in conjunction with the

psychologists. A final portion of the course would discuss various aspects of social interaction which are pertinent to the adolescent. The entire syllabus was presented to the Rabbinic members on the committee and to the principal.

The course, taught separately to the eighth grade boys and girls, is divided into four sessions. In order to form a sense of continuity, the material is presented as a cycle beginning with conception and going through the development of a male and female newborn. Following birth, the cycle then continues with the growth of the child into adolescence when physical growth and psychological changes occur. Finally, marriage and conception complete the cycle.

In the first class, we see the developing fetus as a means of teaching the students about their own anatomy and that of the opposite sex. Slides of photographs and drawings are used throughout the course. Both internal and external anatomies are completely described.

We then begin a discussion of puberty by describing the normal variations of growth (length) patterns. Emphasis is placed on how varied normal children can be, with some being normally tall and others normally short. Pubertal changes occurring during adolescence are accurately described from the prepubertal to the fully developed adult. The accompanying physiological changes, including

the menstrual cycle and nocturnal emissions, are fully reviewed. During this discussion we also emphasize how variable normal pubertal development can be. We especially attempt to allay fears of either precocious or delayed development.

Obviously there are a host of psychological and emotional changes that occur during puberty. We narrow our discussion to those areas that are felt to be most pertinent to this age. We begin with a discussion of the normal ambivalence that teenagers feel towards adolescence and its accompanying responsibilities. We then proceed to discuss their new feelings for independence—from teachers, parents, and any person of authority. On the one hand we explain these new feelings as age appropriate but we also offer suggestions on how they can channel these thoughts under the guidelines of Torah, common decency and respect for others.

Finally, we enter the area of sexual awareness and physical desires. This part of the discussion is sensitive and must be presented in an honest, thorough and objective manner. Once again emphasis is placed on the normal occurrence of these thoughts. References are made from the *Gemorrah* and *Meforshim* on the Jewish approach to a healthy physical and emotional attachment between husband and wife. We thus attempt to channel and direct their sexual awareness to the proper place in marriage. Respect for the

DR. NOVOGRODER is Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, N.Y.C., and Director of the Pediatric-Endocrinology Department at Engelwood Hospital, N.J. He also has a private practice in Teaneck, N.J.

marriage partner and fulfillment of a physical bond as opposed to celibacy and denial of physical feelings, is the center of our discussion. Our entire presentation is under an umbrella of Torah guidelines; no different than guidelines for eating, drinking and other physical needs. It is during this part of the discussion that we include basic facets of physical relations between husband and wife. With this we have completed our initial cycle.

During the past few years we have expanded from the discussion of respect between husband and wife to respect for peers and one's own self. Thus, we now include comments on how one should respond to peer pressure, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse.

Our experience during the past four years has been a very positive one. Students have made it very clear that they are interested in the course material. Their active participation in discussions has necessitated the addition of another session to the initial four. Once a sense of honesty and objectivity is assured, they have felt free to question and comment on every aspect of the discussion.

At present, the course is given in its entirety by a local physician who is not a member of the school faculty. Ideally, we would like to incorporate the material into the regular school curriculum. Our future efforts revolve around expanding the *midot* aspect of the course and presenting a portion of the material to the seventh graders.

Unlike similar programs given in public schools, we have the luxury of not only offering factual information, but also Torah direction and guidelines in the use of this knowledge. It is our belief that our students will have a better understanding of, and be better prepared to cope with the problems of adolescence. ■

Ed's Note: Do you have a proven innovative curriculum or program to share with our readers? Please write.

Have any TEN DA'AT ideas been applied in your school? Please write.

On Cults and Missionaries

Barry Bender

Each generation throughout Jewish history has had its own brand of proselytizing missionaries. Some have tried sword and fire, others rhetoric and threats of gruesome consequences. Our generation must face the subtle and far more dangerous overtures of proffered love, acceptance and warmth.

There is a critical need for Jewish educators to be aware of these ensnaring missionaries—their approaches and methods, as well as to arm our vulnerable youth against their onslaught. Far too many of our youth have become believers in the ranks of Jews for Jesus for us to remain unconcerned and untroubled. Chazal themselves have challenged us to bring redemption to the world by saving a single Jewish life.

To actually become an anti-missionary and anti-cult worker, however, requires a great deal of commitment, determination, strength and of course, training.

The first step is to honestly determine one's own qualifications. Only when one has received specific training from qualified and experienced individuals can one even begin to consider entering the field. The reading of books alone does not provide sufficient training. One cannot learn how to swim by jumping into the middle of a lake after

reading a "How to Swim" book. Training must include interviews with ex-believers, psychologists and sociologists, all of whom can explain the believer's experience from an emotional and sociological perspective. Being properly qualified also requires the proper disposition. A successful anti-missionary/cult worker must be a patient and very understanding individual. One must be in control of one's temperment at all times. One must be honest with one's feelings at all times. Working in pairs is suggested, for example, if there is discomfort in working alone. A believer will sense a worker's lack of confidence and will challenge his/her credibility.

The second step is doing one's homework. Examine the family and its background. Do family members interact well? Is there any sibling rivalry? Was there neglect or abuse? Determine whether the believer has joined out of spite rather than true belief. With the parents' permission speak to the grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The local rabbi, teachers, and neighbors can often provide important insights. Was there a recent death in the family? Is there marital strife? Is the believer merely seeking a substitute family, acceptance and love?

Second, investigate the believer. Has there been a sudden change in personality? Speak to classmates and close friends. Has the believer been involved with alcohol or drugs? "Visions" can be induced by hallucinatory drugs. Was there a sudden drop in grades? Did the believer suddenly stop seeing his/her friends? This might reflect a change in personality inherent in cult induc-

continued

BARRY BENDER is a Rabbinical student at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University. For the past seven years he has been involved in the rehabilitation and deprogramming of cult members. He has also lectured for schools, youth groups and synagogues.

“And Jonathan said unto him, Tomorrow is the new moon, and thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.”

1 Samuel 20,18

tees. Be aware of contradictory statements, as this might indicate a previously unseen problem. Be careful to never lay blame on anyone, even if there is absolute certainty.

Third, determine the type of missionary group the believer is with. This is NOT done by visiting the group, but rather by reading books, articles and leaflets about the group. Other anti-missionary workers may have information, ideas or methods in dealing with this particular group. Research their methodology. Do they preach or do they use mind control and brainwashing techniques? Workers themselves have had to be retrieved from their infiltration of groups that were using brainwashing techniques. Find out if there are any ex-members of the group that can be approached. Perhaps they too would be willing to speak with the believer.

Only after this homework is thoroughly completed can one know if one is ready. It must never be forgotten that this knowledge, skill and approach is about to determine the future of someone's life.

The most important aspect of “bringing someone out” is follow-up. If serious problems have been uncovered the proper psychological or psychiatric help should be obtained. There are specialists who deal with ex-group or cult members. I was taught by my teachers never to attempt to bring someone out unless I have a signed agreement by the parents that they and their child will go for whatever follow-up treatment is recommended.

I have, intentionally, not dealt with the actual techniques used in bringing someone out. Because there are so

many varied and complex techniques I believe that they should be taught on a personal level in a teacher-student relationship.

What about people not yet involved in these groups? Is there a way to warn them or teach them what to be wary of? I am a firm believer in teaching about cults and missionary groups in the classroom. I have taught children as young as ten years and adults as advanced as eighty. The curriculum for a classroom, prepared by or in consultation with an anti-missionary worker, should revolve around awareness, prevention and refutation. The students should understand step by step how someone can become ensnared. They should be able to recognize warning signs and know whom to contact for help. Students should thoroughly understand those verses and prophecies in Tanakh that are often quoted by missionaries. They should also be made aware of the claims and so-called fulfillments in the New Testament. The proper history background and context for these verses should be taught. Students will then clearly see that the sources used by the Hebrew Christians are taken way out of context and that the claims of prophecy fulfillment are very vague and open to critical analysis. There are many movies, newsclips and articles available on Hebrew Christian groups and cults. If possible, the course should include a visit by an ex-member or qualified anti-missionary worker.

Geography is also a factor to be considered. Because there are an estimated 2,500 to 3,500 different groups in the U.S. focusing on the groups within the proximity of one's

school is recommended. Students and their parents should be given someone they can contact in case of a missionary or cult emergency. I also suggest that a similar curriculum be offered to parents because they too are susceptible.

Our generation must continue to combat the missionary and cult groups with trained and qualified workers, but ultimately it is the responsibility of our Jewish educators and outreach professionals to equip our youngsters with the tools necessary to resist this dangerous infiltration. We can succeed, but only through knowledge and awareness and the strength they provide. And, who knows, perhaps the single soul we save will, in turn, save many others. Perhaps that is our generation's challenge of redemption.

Ed's Note: Ten Da'at has received a first person account of a cult encounter. We will be pleased to send a copy upon request.

Ed's Note: The TEN office can be contacted for further information on anti-cult workers and curriculum.

Recommended Reading:

Faith Strengthened by Isaac Trok, Harmon Press

The Jew and the Christian Missionary by Gerald Sigal, Ktav Publishing House

Holy Terror by Conway and Siegelman, Doubleday

Snapping by Conway and Siegelman, Dell Publishing

Crazy for God by Christopher Edwards

What the Cults Believe by Irvine Robertson, Mood Press

Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of Aryeh Kaplan

PART II

Baruch M. Rabinowitz

Ed's Note: Part I appeared in the Sivan 5747 issue of *Ten Da'at*.

III. CHASSIDUT

In an effort to unlock the hidden world of Chassidut for the masses, Rabbi Kaplan wrote on Chassidic thought and thinkers. His works serve as an introduction and an invitation to further explore the world of Chassidic philosophy.

The Light Beyond

Moznaim Publishing Co., 1981

Beginning with a basic introduction to Chassidut and its initial founders, this book anthropologizes chassidic thought on thirteen essential topics—G-d, Creation, Man, Israel and Torah, Faith, Love and Reverence, Meditation and Prayer, Commandments, Torah Shabbat and Yom Tov, Life and Society, Sin and Repentance, Divine Providence and Ultimate Future. The book is well footnoted and indexed.

The Chassidic Master: History, Biography and Thought

Moznaim Publishing Co., 1984

The title aptly describes this book. It begins with a short history of Chassidut and an introduction to its unique philosophical approach to Judaism. Each one of its thirteen chapters is devoted to another Chassidic giant, beginning with the Baal Shem Tov (1698) and concluding with the Kotzker Rebbe (1789). Each unit is divided into two sections. The first gives a biogra-

phical sketch of that individual while the second is a translation of selected portions of his writings.

IV. GENERAL TOPICS

The Aryeh Kaplan Reader: Collected Essays on Jewish Themes *Artscroll Mesorah Series, 1983*

A collection of various articles, written by Rabbi Kaplan, for journals, papers and lectures.

The first section contains articles of diverse interest including a Court for Gittin, Technology and Halakha, and the History of Old Seforim. The second contains a transcription of his notes and lectures regarding Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Purim and Pesach. The third addresses collegiate readers on issues such as free will, extraterrestrial life, resurrection and prayer. The articles average six to seven pages and are informative and clear, some appeal to a general audience while others are more technical.

Jerusalem: Eye of the Universe *NCSY, 1976*

Yerushalayim is both the focal point of our existence and the lens through which we view the rest of the world. This booklet describes Yerushalayim as the physical part of the universe designed to bring peace and harmony to the dynamic spiritual force that is man. Using a biblical/historical/philosophical perspective the author portrays Yerushalayim in all its intricacy and diversity.

A Call To The Infinite *Moznaim Publishing Co., 1986*

An anthology of newly translated quotations from Biblical, Midrashic, Talmudic,

Halakhic, and Chassidic works on every imaginable aspect of prayer. Though it provides neither cohesiveness of approach nor comprehensiveness of topic, it does offer substantive quotes as well as provides inspiration for thought. Excellent source material that can be used in a research project.

Laws of Chanukah

Moznaim Publishing Co., 1977

This short pamphlet can be used where textual study of the *Mishnah Brura* is beyond the level of the student. The upper part of each page contains a translation of the works of Rav Yosef Karo and Rav Moshe Isserles as they appear in the *Shulchan Arukh*. The commentary on the bottom of the page draws from many *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* explaining and expounding upon the laws of Chanukah.

Torah Anthology

Moznaim Publishing Co., 1978 16 vol.

This multi-volume work is an original translation from the Ladino text. The expanded and detailed footnotes, bibliography, and indices enhance an already invaluable source of biblical commentary. Although it may not prove essential as a regular source of basic classroom material, it certainly provides one with varied, and sometimes unusual insights as well as answers for those gnawing or offbeat questions. By design, it complements the text with Talmudic stories and parables upon halakhic areas related to a given chapter. This new translation is lucid and colloquial.

A perusal of the footnotes indicates the amount of research that was necessary to improve upon the original edition.

continued

The Way of G-d

Feldheim Publishers, 1977 and 1983

The Hebrew text by Rav Moshe Luzzato is a fundamental exercise in practical philosophy. The translation makes this vital work accessible to the general public.

The Living Torah

Moznaim Publishing Co., 1981

This new translation of the Torah is a major contribution to both learning and teaching. The language and sentence structure, although not strictly literal, originate from Talmudic and Rabbinic interpretations of these verses. The narrative flows naturally, adding dimension to story and text. The extensive footnotes are a treasure of sources, alternative explanations, comparison with other translations and guide for further research. The volume is replete with maps, charts and drawings which illustrate the various journeys, wars, structures, vessels, creatures, flora and fauna of the Torah. They are extremely useful in teaching the usually difficult topics of *korbanot*, *mishkan*, and *kashrut* and in depicting the rare plants, herbs and spices mentioned in the Torah. There is a comprehensive index and bibliography which provide information on over one thousand commentaries. All aspects of this work are extremely valuable in both the classroom and home.

Meditation and the Bible 1978

Meditation and Kabbalah 1981

Jewish Meditation, A Practical Guide 1985

Schocken Books

The first of this trilogy is a translation and elucidation of previously published texts on Jewish meditation. Biblical events, stories and narrative take on a new perspective when seen in this reflective light. *Meditation and Kabbalah* translates many works which have never before been published. Its research involved the deciphering of esoteric manuscripts which may be important keys to Jewish meditation.

The *Practical Guide* is a unique contribution to Jewish literature. Aside from being a basic introduction to meditation, it incorporates and reveals fundamentals of meditation within a Jewish halakhic framework, including topics such as mantra meditation, contemplation vocalization, *merkavah*, *hitbonenut* and other kabbalistically oriented practices.

For the worldly collegiate these books may be an antidote to the lure of Far Eastern culture. For the bold and adventurous they teach meditative techniques and practices which can help define a new sense of insightful interpretations of prophecy, sacrifice, rituals and prayer. But above all these books provide evidence that meditation is at the root and apex of the Jewish spiritual dimension, in theory as well as in practice. ■

Responsive Readers



I received the second issue of *Ten Da'at*. This is a most welcome development. The caliber of the articles was good, thoughtful and practical. They bespoke a desire to express distinctive modern Orthodox educational values. This is the key to the healing of our community which for too long has surrendered its own insights and set up teaching situations in which polarized and withdrawn type halakhic values are offered as the only guidance to students who are living quite a different life. I believe that more Rabbis and scholars should be enlisted in this process. They too would be excited by the chance to renew Jewish education at the highest level.

*Irving Greenberg, President
The National Jewish Center for
Learning and Leadership*

I recently received your charter issue, and want to add my congratulations to your undertaking. Any step taken to further and enhance traditional Jewish education is worthy of note.

Because your stated purpose is to give expression to "responsible Torah viewpoints," I feel that I must raise an early objection. Both on your cover and in your logo, *Ten Da'at* uses an irresponsible depiction of the *luchos*. Although the generally accepted illustration of the tablets is square on the bottom with rounded tops, this shape does not seem to have any basis with the "Torah viewpoint." While *Torah She'bksav* does not provide any

information regarding the shape, the *Gemorrah* (Baba Basra 14a) gives precise dimensions indicating that the tablets were square at both ends.

This is an important point vis-à-vis *chinukh*. A Jewish child growing up with non-kosher pictures of such things as the *luchos*, in his or her otherwise kosher environment, will be confused when later confronted with traditional texts that contradict what he or she was led to believe was true.

The use of these same symbols by traditional Jewish organizations serves only to compound the problem. If we are truly committed to the promulgation of Jewish education and identity, we must be careful to resist non-Jewish influences on Jewish themes.

*David Kracoff
Office of Student Finances
Yeshiva University/
Brookdale Center*

I have received the second issue of *TEN DA'AT*, and wish to congratulate you upon this exceptional achievement.

As a founder and first President of the Educators Council of America, I take pride in this venture of our Council as a joint sponsor.

The topics and philosophic directions of the articles coincide with the ideology of our Council.

*Dr. Sampson A. Isseroff,
Education Director
Metropolitan Commission
on Torah Education*

Giving Wisdom to the Wise

The Bar-Ilan Center
For Computers and Jewish Heritage

Joel Saibel

Bar-Ilan's Center for Computers and Jewish Heritage, situated on the University's main campus in Ramat Gan, Israel, is the home of one of the world's most "erudite" computers. This computer, whose databank continually grows smarter with each entry of a Judaic masterpiece, can already "recite" the entire *Tanakh*, the *Talmud Bavli*, 250 volumes of *She'elot U'tshuvot* (responsa literature), the Rambam's *Yad Hachazaka* and even the works of the modern Israeli writer and Nobel laureate, S.Y. Agnon.

Recently it has "memorized" the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, the *Midrashic* Literature and Biblical commentaries of Rashi, Rambam, Radak, Sforno and Metzudot—in all 70 million words of running text in Hebrew.

The project began in 1966, when Bar-Ilan first began to apply computer technologies to the study of rabbinical Responsa literature. In 1983, this "Responsa Project" became part of Bar-Ilan's Center for Computers and Jewish Heritage, created to design software, disseminate information and develop educational applications.

Ever since the Talmud was compiled in the fifth century, Jews have looked to it for guidance on problems ranging from the mundane to the esoteric. Because the Talmud could not address

every specific issue, Jews would go to their local rabbis for answers in the spirit of the *Halakhah*. These authorities, known as *Poskim*, would respond in writing, and the volumes of questions and answers became known as the Responsa.

An estimated 3,000 volumes of Responsa, containing at least 500,000 questions and answers on a wide variety of subjects, were penned in Hebrew by more than 1,800 authors over some 15 centuries. No one person could memorize all these, and there was no index of Responsa. Someone seeking answers to a question might have to search throughout the Responsa for months. Now a computer can do it in seconds.

In 1979, the Knesset passed a law that allowed decisions from the Responsa to be used as legal precedents in Israel's courts, especially in a case where there was no precedent in modern Israeli law.

The Responsa Project also serves as a valuable aid in the classroom. By applying information-retrieval methods to the large volume of Jewish writings that have been recorded in the Bar-Ilan computer, students can quickly see—on their computer screens—how different rabbis applied Jewish law in different societies. Special workbooks emphasizing the modern significance and vitality of the Oral Law have been designed by the Center at Bar-Ilan, which has also prepared educational units consisting of a video

program and a self-instruction software package that depict the relevancy of the Halakhah in contemporary times.

The databank of the Bar-Ilan computer today contains more than seventy million words from Jewish classical writings. Plans call for the addition of basic Jewish works, especially medieval philosophical literature, Biblical and Talmudic commentaries, the Kabbalah and other works of Jewish mysticism, Chassidic literature and modern Hebrew literature. Soon all this information will be available at the touch of a keyboard.

The center at Bar-Ilan is now working to establish an international network that will allow users to communicate directly with the Bar-Ilan computer. The first such center has been established in Chicago. New software is constantly being developed for use on terminals and microcomputers which are to be set up in universities, law courts, libraries, yeshivot and—ultimately, it is hoped—in every Jewish home. ■

Ed's Note: For further information or for computer access please contact:

*Dr. Irving Rosenbaum, Director
Institute for Computers in Jewish Life
845 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 843
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312-787-7856*

JOEL SAIBEL is a publicist and editor who frequently writes on Jewish and Israeli issues.

TEN LEV:

Perspectives on Emotional and Psychological Well-Being

The Impact of Divorce on the Child in the Classroom

Marcy and Sylvan Schaffer

In assessing why a student may be having difficulty, a teacher or psychologist would of course examine the child's academic setting and intellectual potential. However, it is also essential to take the student's family situation into account since family problems can have an impact on classroom performance.

Divorce is one of several types of family problems. Marital conflicts may involve ongoing strife between parents or may extend to separation or divorce. The disruption caused by such fighting and family dissolution may effect a student's school performance for several reasons. First, the distraction caused by changes in the family may prevent a child from completing assignments. In addition, rumination about the divorce could cause lapses in a child's concentration in the classroom.

Children are also affected by divorce in other ways. Some children may blame themselves (however unrealistically) for their parents' divorce, and subsequently harbor unrealistic expectations that they can bring their

parents back together again. This prevents them from accepting reality.

Children may also be ashamed of their parents' situation. They may attempt to hide it from their friends (thus further pushing off reality), or they may withdraw from their classmates in an attempt to avoid embarrassment.

Another common result of divorce is fear. A child may wonder about what his or her situation will be after the divorce. On a deeper level a child may fear that since the parents have stopped loving each other they may also stop loving him/her.

In a contested divorce a child may be put in the difficult position of being a pawn, a tool in the parents' personal battle with each other, or of being forced to actually choose between the two parents.

After a divorce a child's performance may be adversely affected by the custody arrangement. A poorly arranged visitation schedule, aggravated by difficult transitions between the parents' homes, may prevent a child from functioning well in school.

One by-product of divorce is the stress of a single parent family. A child may be affected by the financial difficulties of the custodial parent, especially if those difficulties include mandatory tuition payments. A single parent may also have difficulty in coping with raising a family while working at the same time. As a result,

there may be less time and attention for a child. Discipline may suffer since parents often attempt to win over their child by bribery or lax discipline. Children can also be affected by marital strife that does not result in divorce. One frequently hears that a couple is staying together "for the sake of the children." This may have an adverse effect on children who are aware of their parents' problems and may thus fear that they will do something wrong which would spark a divorce.

In such families parents sometimes deal with marital problems through their child in a process call 'triangling.' This places the child in a very difficult and unhealthy situation. In extreme situations a child may witness violence between parents, often requiring police involvement.

The impact of conflict and strife may be as detrimental to a child as a learning problem. Teachers, guidance counselors or principals who become aware of family discord should assess the situation carefully. They are the ones who often detect a serious problem in a child and have the resources for referral as well as the opportunity to offer a child support, strength, and stability at a time when they are most needed.

DR. SYLVAN SCHAFFER is an attorney and a clinical psychologist. He is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Einstein Medical School, N.Y.

DR. MARCY SCHAFFER is a psychologist in private practice and is on the faculty of Queens College, N.Y.

Torah High School Network

Stanley Peerless

The Torah High School Network was founded three years ago to provide a forum for the sharing of concerns and creative ideas among high school principals. It has since emerged as an association of high schools in the United States and Canada dedicated to promoting the following shared principles:

- The centrality of Torah study, observance, and ethical conduct.
- The intrinsic value of General Studies within the framework of Torah U'mada.
- Participation in general society within the context of Jewish observance.
- Active concern for the welfare of all Jews and for the unity of the Jewish people.
- Devotion to Religious Zionist ideals and support for the State of Israel.
- Equal commitment to the education of Jewish young men and Jewish young women.

RABBI PEERLESS is principal of the Hillel Academy of Dayton, Ohio. He has served as Chairman of the High School Network, and presently serves as its treasurer. He is also the liaison between Torah Education Network and the High School Network.

High School Network activities have focused on curriculum sharing, faculty development, and student leadership programming. Two curriculum conferences are held annually, one in conjunction with the fall Educators Council of America convention and one during the summer.

School Network Student Organization was formed. The second annual seminar, held a year later in St. Louis, Missouri, hosted seventy students from eleven schools. From its theme "The Individual and the Community" emerged the concept of coordinated student programming in the areas of



In November 1985, the Torah High School Network initiated its student programming with an International Leadership seminar in Detroit, Michigan. Six schools participated in the conference which focused on the theme of "Responsibility for all Jews." As a result of that seminar the Torah High

social and political action. A solidarity day on behalf of Soviet Jewry was held by Network schools last February, and a joint project has been launched to help support chesed organizations in Israel. Future plans include the introduction of Israel programs. This past

continued

summer the High School Network initiated a summer Tanakh seminar in Israel for faculty members. The program, organized under T.E.N. sponsorship, included a variety of tours and lectures by, among others, Professor Nechama Leibowitz.

The rapid growth of the Torah High School Network, in both size and scope, is testimony to its perceived need. Schools which have participated in Network activities include Maimonides School, Boston; Frisch High



School, Paramus; Beth Tfiloh High School, Baltimore; Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington; Hebrew Academy of Greater Miami; Yeshiva High School of Atlanta; Hillel Academy of Dayton; Akiva Day School, Detroit; Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto; Herzeliyah High School, Montreal; Ida Crown High School, Chicago; Block Yeshiva High School, St. Louis; Rocky Mountain Hebrew Academy, Denver; Milwaukee Community High School; Yeshivat Ohr Hatzafon, Seattle; and Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate, Winnipeg.

It is clear that the Torah High School Network has, in a very short time, become a significant force in Torah education in North America. ■

The Torah High School Network was an initiative of the Educators Council of America and the Torah Department of the World Zionist Organization. Officers include:

Chairman—Rabbi Gary Menchel, Block Yeshiva H.S., St. Louis

Vice Chairman—Dr. Kalman Stein, Maimonides School, Boston

Treasurer—Rabbi Stanley Peerless, Hillel Academy of Dayton

Secretary—Dr. Peter Abeloe, Beth Tfiloh H.S., Baltimore

Executive Director—Rabbi Chaim Hisiger, Columbus Torah Academy

Professionally Speaking

Where

T.E.N.'s placement services are conducted through the offices of the Department of Educational Services, Max Stern Division of Communal Activities, RIETS, an affiliate of Yeshiva University. The department's record of performance is well established and recognized by Jewish educational organizations, schools and candidates. TEN has added new dimensions to the scope of the department's activity and facilitated outreach to new communities and candidates.

For Whom

T.E.N.'s placement services are available to bona fide search groups and qualified candidates. Given T.E.N.'s perspective, schools and educators will generally be those who identify with what may be broadly termed the "Torah U'Mada" philosophy. Placement, however, does not require that communities or candidates have a formal connection with any specific institution. The service also endeavors to be helpful to bureaus and boards of education which seek senior personnel to staff and lead agencies. For these openings, the placement service has a long standing agreement with JESNA, the umbrella agency for bureaus, and refers candidates through its channels.

How

How does one go about applying for the placement service? A community or school search group will write to the office indicating the title of the opening, specific duties, and the salary budgeted. If this is a very senior position, it is generally advisable for the chairman of the search group, or his representative, to call the placement office directly before writing to discuss the nature of the opening.

A candidate will write indicating availability and attach four copies of an updated resume. If the candidate is not known by the placement office, he or she will be invited for a meeting/interview. Community and candidate requests are acknowledged promptly and are placed on an active list. It is expected that both the community and candidate will keep the placement office apprised of developments or changes in the status of the position or availability. The placement office, for its part, aims for service which reflects professionalism and concern, openness and fairness.

Charges

There are no charges. This means very simply that the service provided is honest and equitable. There is, therefore, never a "hard sell" of candidates to a community or a community to a candidate. The office hopes and anticipates that the placement activity will lead to interaction in which educational services and mutual support will sustain an ongoing fruitful relationship. The goal of the placement office in maintaining this policy of service without charge promotes the high standards which are its hallmark.

This brief statement is intended to respond to a need for general information. Inquiries are always welcome at the address or phone listed below:

Department of Educational Services
Suite 419
500 West 185th Street
New York, N.Y. 10033
(212) 960-5266

The Great Tzedakah Happening: A Creative Experience

Fran Borovetz

Although the common cry of teachers is that "there is never enough time," we must often set aside time for special experiences for our students. We must not forget that our children's education should be more than teacher directed lessons in a classroom. We must make time to take our children out of the classroom—into a large social hall, library, or even outdoors to interact with other students in a hands-on participatory activity and learning experience.

One example of a group experience that was very successful was called *The Great Tzedakah Happening*. This tzedakah activity was adapted from a summer conference sponsored by C.A.J.E. (Coalition on Alternatives for Jewish Education), an event that I was privileged to co-chair.

Since all schools collect tzedakah money, this group experience can easily be duplicated or adapted in any school.

I. The student body begins by selecting from a list those charities/organizations which they would like to contribute to. They must then focus, through the activity which follows, on these questions:

■ What exactly do these charities do, what is their purpose?

FRAN BOROVETZ has authored many creative teaching materials that were published by Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc. and Torah Aura Productions. She is principal of the Solomon Schechter Day School in Pittsburgh, Pa. and has given numerous workshops, throughout the country, on creative teaching ideas.

■ How were these charities formed and who is the motivating force behind each charity?

■ How do we determine which charity receives more than others?

■ How much should each charity receive?

II. The Great Tzedakah Happening

1. Grade Level: 3,4,5

2. Recommended time allotment: 1 hour/15 minutes

3. Activity Breakdown:

a) Definition of Terms: Allocation, Campaign, Board of Directors

b) Introduction and Grouping

c) Distribution of folders

d) Campaign strategies for each group

e) Campaign presentation

f) Discussion, Voting, and Allocations

g) Wrap-up and Results

4. Process

a) Formation of groups—approximately six per group.

Each group represents the Board of Directors of a charity or cause.

b) Each "Board" receives a folder with information about their specific charity/cause. They must then devise a campaign strategy to convince others to contribute to their need. This campaign must include a description of their charity/cause and its activities and importance. Campaign techniques can include speeches, skits, interviews, pantomime, dialogue with audience, storytelling.

c) Each group is then granted \$300 in play money (\$50 per member) which they must distribute.

There are two conditions to allocations and voting:

a) Each group must not allocate more than one-half of their total to their own charity.

b) Every member of the group must agree (after a discussion based on the campaign presentations) on those charities/causes to which they will allocate funds. Once they reach a unanimous decision, the group's ballot is marked appropriately, indicating the amount of money allocated. The money is then placed in the envelope of those selected charities.

5. Wrap up:

After each group has completed its allocation the total amount for each charity is counted. A wrap-up discussion might focus on whether those charities/causes received the most money because of their campaign presentation, their cause, or both.

6. Results:

Students now have a greater understanding and awareness, not only of various charities and causes, but of the difficult process of raising and allocating funds for them.

A group learning experience does not just "happen"—it takes a great deal of planning by teachers and administrators. Experiences such as *The Great Tzedakah Happening* however, serve not only to enrich and expand our students' awareness, but to sensitize them to the needs of our Jewish community as well. As Jewish educators that should be one of our dearest priorities and most cherished goals. ■

On Our Bulletin Board

The Jerusalem Prize for Torah Education

The selection committee for the Jerusalem Prizes for Torah Education in 5747 awarded a special note of recognition to Yeshiva University for its singular activities in the field of Jewish Education in the United States, and in recognition of its Centennial Year. Of Yeshiva University's 26,000 graduates, 2,000 are ordained Rabbis, and 1,500 families live in Israel.

The prize was presented by President Caim Herzog at a special ceremony at the President's residence, and was received on behalf of Yeshiva University by Mr. Charles Bendheim.

Changing of the Guard

Mr. Chanoch Achiman and Mr. Yitzchok Askof of the W.Z.O. Torah Education Department have returned to Israel this summer after completing three years of service to Torah Education in the United States.

Mr. Achiman is replaced as head of the Torah Education Department in the U.S., by Rabbi Yochanan Fried of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav Kook in Jerusalem. Rabbi Fried was the Director of *Beit Harav*, an institute for the dissemination of the works of Rav Kook, and chairman of the Institute for *Halakhah Berurah* and *Beirur Halakhah* for the publication of the Talmud

with Rav Kook's decisions. Rabbi Fried also served as the Director of the Department of Torah Culture in the Ministry of Education in Jerusalem.

Mr. Askof is replaced as Pedagogic Supervisor and Coordinator of Teacher-Shelichim by Amram Melitz, one of the senior Religious Educators in Israel. Mr. Melitz, who holds degrees in Education and Psychology from Bar-Ilan University was the Director of the Southern Region of the Ministry of Education.



Seminars in Israel

This summer the Torah Department sponsored several educators' seminars in Israel;

- A group of NY teachers headed by Rabbi Dr. Joseph Preil.
- A group of BJE educators with Dr. Shimshon Isseroff.
- Teachers and Rabbis of the R.Z.A. with Rabbi Meir Golombek.
- A teachers group of the High School Network organized by Rabbi Stanley Peerless

-The Chicago BJE sent a group of teachers who had participated in a preliminary winter seminar organized by Rabbi Lenny Matanky and conducted by Dr. Yehuda Eisenberg.

-Meir Efrati led two groups of teachers from the New York area.

Texts and Topics

Under the editorship of Dr. Moshe Sokolow, TEN has published three pedagogic and didactic teachers' guides in a series entitled: "Texts and Topics."

The first unit deals with Purim and the story of Yosef, the second discusses land purchases in Eretz Yisrael which are recorded in Tanakh, and the third is a unit for Shavuot dealing with *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*.

TEN has also published a unit on aspects of Teshuva according to Rav Kook prepared by Dr. Moshe Sokolow; an examination of universal and particularistic love in the works of Rav Kook, prepared by Rabbi Boaz Levy; and a translation of three didactic essays by Nechama Leibowitz, also by Dr. Sokolow.

Rabbi Pinchas Hecht of the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington has prepared a unit based on Rav Soloveitchik's essay on "The Singularity (segulah) of Eretz Yisrael."

In addition, a Handbook-Checklist entitled "Responding to a Death in

the Yeshiva Family" has been prepared for TEN by Dr. Joel Wolowelsky.

The Torah Department is pleased to announce the publication of *Shevivim*, a collection of thoughts and ideas on the topic of Man and the Universe selected from the *Orot HaKodesh* of Rav Kook, and translated into English by Rabbi Sholom Carmy.

National Contests

We are all accustomed to our students earning national and international honors in the Chiddon HaTanakh. But it comes as no surprise that students in our member schools also receive honors in a variety of secular competitions. For example, seven of our member schools earned national honors in the 1987 National Math Exam. They are Flatbush, Frisch, Hafez Hillel (Deal), Ramaz and Yeshiva University High Schools, all in the NY-NJ Metropolitan area, and Maimonides Yeshiva H.S. in Brookline, Ma.

There are two national math contests, one for grades 6-8 and the other for high school students. Information can be obtained from American Mathematics Competitions Department of Math, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68583.

Let us know in which national contests your school participates; we will share the information with our readers.