

OUTLINE

AN ORTHODOX PROSPECTIVE ON COLLOQUIUM ON JEWISH EDUCATION
AND JEWISH IDENTITY
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE - JUNE 9, 1975

I. Relation of Jewish Identity and Jewish Education. Jewish Identity does not necessarily derive exclusively from Jewish Education. But it can not flourish or thrive in a free society without it. In this sense, Jewish Education is more important now, under conditions of freedom, than it ever was in the Ghetto.

II. A) The Zohar teaches the famous triad: The Holy One, Israel, and Torah are one. Rav Kook interprets this as unity approachable by one of three avenues, like a wheel with three spokes. "Jewish Identity" is essentially only the second -- the love of Israel -- and it is only one of three ways to attain this totality. An "Orthodox" approach must emphasize all three simultaneously.

B) Torah. The goal of all Jewish Education must be the goal of all study of Torah: Torah Lishmah, for its own sake. Our ultimate aim must be to develop students who will study of their own accord and out of selfless motivation. Only way to produce this is to make it a real problem. Antagonism is if it is not a real problem, it is not a real problem.

Strangely, this was more easily achievable in the early years of this decade than it is now or in the foreseeable future. The Counter-Culture was highly critical of vocationalism and the practical bent, and although it emphasized "relevance" to an exaggerated degree, it did away with the materialistic motivation. Unfortunately, the apparent end of the Counter-Culture means a reversal of the epistemological revolution that it ushered in, and we shall now be forced to appeal to self-interest in a greater measure than we had to a mere five or eight years ago.

Nevertheless, Jewish teachers throughout the ages insisted that self-interest was an indispensable propaedeutic to the study of Torah for its own sake. "A man should always study Torah not for its own sake, so that he may ultimately arrive at Torah for its own sake." The method for achieving this in our times is, most effectively, by creating a society or community which will cherish Torah scholarship and not denigrate it relative to other values. Hence, societal reform outside the classroom is as crucial as all the pedagogical work that takes place inside the classroom if the educational venture is to be successful. Jewish education cannot be separated from the value-ecology of the community.

C) God. The purpose of Torah is not to generate the secularized "education" that, as a metamorphosed vestige of an authentic Jewish value, is responsible for the Jewish folk emphasis on graduate degrees... Rather, true Torah study must be theocentric. The Talmud teaches: *אדם חכם כבודו כבודו*. Torah, as the repository of divine wisdom, must ultimately lead to repentance and good deeds. We shall take each one separately.

1. "Good deeds": The importance of establishing patterns of conduct, the *Mitzvot*. This is a distinguishing feature of the Jewish religion. "Jews not only have a religion, but are religious." Despite the fact that Jewish practices must be inculcated as having their autonomous worth, independent of "relevance," nevertheless the teaching of Torah ought to be related

u.c. - everything was so
can't impose it harshly. But firmly. *Mitzvot* are.
Need explain these autonomous phenomena, not before us.
Then has it? NOT NECY - "Swing to right" in other - mostly young.

my paper not
resonance. not
disagreement about
prescription
but fr.
united.
p-v-o
there are
differences.
Also - mostly
DS forest.
Autobiog.
cannot preserve
sense - not
enough - learned
that was for
20 years ago
would not take
it! only recall
enough to write
u.c. many kids
fell away.
but can't
over-blame
J-schools -
harm to
what can be
in antagonistic
society - a
not unimportant

variety definition... function
will mention
of it later
but
this is an
action item
describe
Jeh. coming -
circles
NARS 1978
- a box -
Yulet prob.
New promises
Also - before school
not more
Jah. -
hopeful - a symbol
Jah. -
to be
but - then
another
this - a
the Hebrew
to formalize
unimportant
this
important

to ethical and social idealism. There is, however, a set sequence of instruction in order to be true to Jewish values and to avoid the banality of "relevance." First must come the development of life-long habits of "good deeds" or Mitzvot. Then, as a second step, must come the explication of these behavioral patterns in a manner relevant to issues of the day and to overarching moral values. Thus, Passover and Hanukkah must be taught for what they are, both halakhically and historically, but then must be related to the ideals of freedom and self-determination. Shabbat must be taught for what it is, and its implementation in the rhythm of the week, but also as freedom from the tyranny of technology.

2. Teshuvah. By this I mean the development of a genuinely religious personality. An Orthodox educational system must go beyond the imparting of dates and the inculcation of routines or even value judgments on social and moral issues. It must seek as well to nourish a Jewish subjectivity, emphasizing the affective side of the personality. Judaism, as Rabbi Soleveitchik has said, has not only a tradition of ideas, but also a tradition of feeling and affect. The upgrading of the affective side of personality over the rational and intellectual in the recent Counter-Culture was a sign of the famine that the Western soul had experienced until this revolution in style, manners, and values erupted. This aspect must not be allowed to atrophy again. Education must emphasize feeling, experience, excitement, subjectivity. Hence, Jewish Education must have more drama, not only dramatics. Inspiration is at least as important as instruction in Jewish Education. That is why more Orthodox schools are now beginning to emphasize certain experiential factors they had heretofore neglected: Seminars, Shabbatonim, etc. The school must make up for what is lacking in the home and in society.

D. Israel.

1. The school must develop in the child a sense of identification with his people, a sense of community:

2. The importance of the State of Israel. Jewish schools may differ, according to their various perceptions and ideologies, as to the status of the State in Jewish thought. But certainly it cannot be ignored, and the attitude must be positive and reinforcing. The encouragement of Aliyah.

3. More and more, schools are coming to realize that teaching the Holocaust, by one means or another, is an indispensable ingredient in Jewish Education. To omit it or understate it is not only morally irresponsible, but educationally wasteful.

I do NOT agree Silberman/Greenberg that after H.C.T., we no longer speak further in old ways. Not that I deny

validity of it - write F&D - but for generations

got upset - not only teach FACTS - but

also try to make them feel it; that coming to ask
wishes wrong not to have any answers

conclusion: that not intended. Use - Set of Ch. Silberman... so - entire school at first
= travel program. 5. camp - (incl. - all this; 5. camp - entire: 1st (summer) = early

more joy -
also Seminars
(BB pamphlet
on fun - 20)
expression
JEWISH
(educational
LEARN -
JL have
20 N)

Puzzled: is J. ed - DS - really effective? For statistics. My
impression: more for parents > for. Also why J. ed - DS
great? And both - affective element ... but - J. ed - DS - attract
by Seminars, but
not - culture
forgetting
things
forgetting
it's element
of J. ed
only
early - late