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The Melton Centre for Jewish Education

KOL HAMERCAZ

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Newsletter of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



From the Director

Prof. Gabriel Horenczyk



Dear Friends,

This edition of Kol Hamercatz reflects the breadth and depth of our work at the Melton Centre and the energy and resourcefulness that characterizes our academic and educational activity which reaches throughout the Jewish world.

The changing nature of today's Jewish world challenges us to confront new educational questions, and to generate new responses. The relationship between theory and practice in education guides the Centre's response in identifying, defining and creating relevant research questions, new skills and up-to-date teaching methods.

In my two years as director, these challenges have been particularly apparent with respect to issues of diversity and pluralism in education in general, and Jewish education in particular. In my visits to Jewish schools and institutions on different continents, a common theme has been the widespread need for new conceptual and educational tools to face the growing diversity among students. The Jewish education scene is much more varied than ever before, with increasing diversity of Jewish identities, religious denominations and ideologies. Most schools seem to cherish this diversity, as contributing to their growth and to the richness of school life and culture. But increasing diversity also calls for serious discussion on the best ways to react to the frequent dilemmas that arise from the multiplicity of identities and voices.

The Melton Centre has for many years capitalized on the diversity of its students, staff and faculty. We have been enriched by this diversity, and have seen the extent to which it has contributed to our discussions, projects, curriculum work and, above all, to our academic development. Over the years we have benefited from close cooperation with educational institutions with different Jewish ideologies and approaches. This was made possible by our academic base at the Hebrew University, which although ideologically neutral remains both interested in, and sensitive to, ideological issues.

Educational thought and research on pluralism in education in general, and in Jewish education in particular, is multifaceted and highly complex. It is informed by a variety of disciplines and by numerous, and at times conflicting, conceptual and methodological approaches. We at the Melton Centre are ready to confront the challenge posed by this complexity, which is too often left shrouded in

ambiguity and vagueness. Students in our various programs explore issues of pluralism in many courses that deal directly or indirectly with the topic. In 2008, we held, in partnership with Hebrew Union College, an international conference on Pluralism and Jewish Education, in which exciting theoretical and applied work was presented and discussed.

Questions of pluralism and education are not only raised by Jewish educators. The area of multicultural education has gained prominence during the last few decades. Scholars as well as practitioners have developed new ideas in theory and practice to better address the challenges posed by the increasing diversity in schools worldwide. In many countries, increased cultural diversity in societies and schools (due to immigration, growing intercultural contact and the "emergence" of new minority groups) has led educational institutions and policy makers to initiate change. Some of this change is at the elementary level of "first-order" additive changes but some constitutes more substantive "second-order" metamorphic change. Central aspects of educational practice, such as curriculum, teaching methods and staff composition are being examined.

Our own research and practice related to pluralism in Jewish education is informed by theories, concepts, and methods developed in multicultural education while also taking into consideration the unique features of Jewish education. Our work on pluralism and Jewish education has been enriched by the multidisciplinary nature of our faculty, and by our close relations with colleagues in other departments at the Hebrew University with an interest in this area. We are now engaged in a process of refining our understanding of the central questions and challenges. In parallel we have begun online projects involving schools and educational networks from all over the world where the dilemmas of pluralism in Jewish education are seen as pressing, as we work together to better understand the problems and develop adequate responses and solutions.

The State of Modern Hebrew in the Diaspora

Dr. Nava Nevo

Long noted for the unique phenomenon of its evolution as a revived language, Hebrew today continues to undergo considerable changes. The place of Modern Hebrew in the Diaspora brings forth essential issues, questions and dilemmas. The answers, though at times controversial, reflect the challenges facing Jewish communities worldwide.

While Hebrew in Israel has a clear status as a first language for native speakers, as a second language for immigrants and minority groups, or as a foreign language for foreign students and tourists in educational settings, Hebrew in the Diaspora cannot be easily categorized. It is certainly not a first language, but it maintains characteristics of both a foreign and a second language. It is a foreign language in that it is not used in the speaker's macro surrounding. It is a second language in that it is used in his/her Jewish environment, such as the synagogue, in Jewish ceremonies, at times in summer camps etc. and it is associated with Jewish cultural identity and heritage, with Jews as a people, and with the State of Israel.

Historically, Hebrew was perceived as a crucial and obvious part of Diaspora Jewish identity. Today, research, as well as discussions with Hebrew teachers, school principals and communal leaders point to a decline in the status of Hebrew. Hebrew has not become the lingua franca of Jews around the world as might have been expected of a language that has the ability to serve as a bridge between Jews everywhere. Today we encounter Jews for whom Hebrew is not necessarily a crucial element of being Jewish. Many institutions do not place the study of Hebrew high among their priorities, and in many cases Day Schools have decreased the number of Hebrew classes and given students the choice between Hebrew and other more "practical" subjects in their last two years of study. There is an increasing tendency to study classical texts in translation into the vernacular, and supplementary schools (once called "Hebrew Schools") often teach only phonetic reading with no emphasis on comprehension. A salient example of the current status of Hebrew is Argentina, which in the past served as a model in this area. Today, the number of Hebrew classes there has decreased in favor of the English language, and Jewish subjects are now taught in Spanish or in English.

There are several reasons for the decline of Hebrew in the Diaspora today, including: a weakening of Zionist ideology and of the hegemony of the Hebrew language in Israel; a change in Israel-Diaspora relations; the rise in the status of English as a prestigious universal language as opposed to Hebrew, a language spoken mainly in Israel; easy access to Jewish texts through translation and increased

opportunities to become familiar with Israeli culture and current events through the internet in English; the lack of professional human resources for the teaching of Hebrew; a desire to integrate socially, culturally and economically into the majority society; and a leadership crisis in coping with these new trends.

The main problem concerning the study of Hebrew in the Diaspora lies in the modern communicative aspect of the language. Both students and their parents are often heard complaining that after 12 years of learning Hebrew, students should be able to speak the language with relative fluency. Among their suggestions for change, one repeated often, concerns communicative Hebrew: "More skills in being able to communicate are needed", "further emphasis should be placed on additional 'street Hebrew', modern conversational skills on a daily basis", "[Hebrew instruction] is not successful" and therefore it is "a poor investment of precious time". (Quoted from questionnaires administered as part of an assessment project conducted by the Melton Centre of the Hebrew University 1989-2000 and from Rodman's study on modern Hebrew, 2003)¹ If this is the situation in Day Schools, it is even more so in Supplementary Schools.

In light of the above, a crucial question arises: Why teach modern communicative Hebrew at all? Would it be more worthwhile to assign Hebrew classes to classical Hebrew and to enable students to read and understand classical Jewish texts as well as to be more readily prepared for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah or to be active participants in their synagogues? I believe that the more one is familiar with Modern Hebrew, the more it may assist in understanding classical texts. I also share Matt Kahn's view ("The Dilemma of Hebrew in Jewish Education" 2008) that although Jews may live without Hebrew, it would not be the same people. And "...if we lack Hebrew... that binds us as Jews, no matter where we reside, we might end up... isolated from each other spiritually", with no common collective memories, cultural norms, and a feeling of belonging and unity, let alone a sense of closeness to Israel and to Israelis as the speakers of Hebrew.

The teaching of Hebrew in the Diaspora faces a number of dilemmas and challenges. One crucial dilemma is whether Hebrew should be taught by native Israeli speakers or by local teachers. The Hebrew of native speakers is fluent and their pronunciation is accurate and natural, but quite often Israeli emigrants (or shlichim emissaries) serving as Hebrew teachers are untrained as professional teachers in general and as foreign/second language teachers and teachers of Hebrew as a second language in particular. In addition, at times tensions develop

between these teachers and their students or their parents due to their different mentality. Local teachers, on the other hand, share the same mentality, cultural norms and values with students and parents, but their level of Hebrew is often insufficient and needs to be improved.

Another dilemma concerns the language of instruction of Jewish subjects. Should Jewish Studies be taught in Hebrew or in the vernacular? There are different approaches to this dilemma. Those who are in favor of teaching in Hebrew see both the linguistic and cultural advantages of this method, while those who prefer teaching in the vernacular want to make sure that the students understand the text and its meanings. A third approach encourages teachers to read the text in Hebrew and discuss it in the vernacular. Attention should be drawn to two points in this matter. First, the teacher (or school) has to decide if the emphasis is to be put on accuracy of language or on content. Both cannot be achieved simultaneously and one will always be at the expense of the other. Second, the teacher should ask if the given subject is language-based, such as prayer or Bible, or non-language-based, such as Jewish history.

A further dilemma relates to the choice of Hebrew textbooks. What criteria should be used in making these choices? Is it the organizing principle, the linguistic level, the content or the cultural values that the textbook transmits? What about its religious orientation, its relevance to the students' world, or its approach to the teaching of a second/foreign language? Students and parents often argue that the Hebrew textbooks and curricula are irrelevant to students' lives and less attractive than materials used in teaching other languages. To quote one parent: "Some of the textbooks are the ones I used 20 years ago. An injection of enthusiasm is surely needed". It should be noted that in recent years a number of new curricula have been developed



Nava Nevo Honored at Melton Centre Faculty Seminar

that are more culturally adapted and emphasize communicative Hebrew (such as Chalav Udvash for early childhood, Nitzanim for 5-8 year olds, Chaverim Be'Ivrit and Tal Am for Elementary School, Neta for Junior-High and High Schools).

Based on the conception that Hebrew is an important component in Jewish life, I would like to share some thoughts, both on a contextual and on an educational level, about how to improve the state of Hebrew. The agenda of Hebrew in the Diaspora must be brought to the front stage and its place and importance in Jewish Education seriously discussed. In accordance with the special needs and purposes of each community, realistic goals for Hebrew instruction, must be reconsidered and redefined. These should be based on the answer to the question, "why Hebrew at all"? The type of language and the language skills one desires to emphasize should be taken into account and the amount of teaching time allocated for Hebrew needs to be determined. Other considerations include:

- Determining the desired Hebrew profile at the end of each grade level
- Identifying and creating a pool of Hebrew teachers in the community
- Strengthening the command of Hebrew of these local teachers and training them in teaching Hebrew as a second language
- Creating a professional organization to help teachers share ideas, problems and challenges
- Setting up early childhood Hebrew Immersion programs
- Selecting appropriate teaching materials relevant to the students' world by using informed criteria for the analysis of curricula, textbooks, and other materials
- Assessing the impact of the selected programs and materials on students' achievements and attitudes to the study of Hebrew

The limited length of this article allows for only a very brief discussion on the broad topic of the state of Hebrew in the Diaspora. However, I hope that it will contribute to raising awareness of the complexities involved and the challenges facing Jewish educators, community leaders, principals and Hebrew teachers in the Jewish world today.

¹ Rodman, P. (2003). Israel and the place of Modern Hebrew in Jewish education worldwide: A consultation about the possibilities for Hebrew language instruction, report submitted to the Research and Development Unit, Department of Jewish Zionist Education, the Jewish Agency: 13-14.)

As in past years, Melton Centre faculty and administrative staff formally opened the academic year with an all-day seminar at the University. Gaby Horenczyk, Director, spoke about the challenges facing the Centre, presented his vision and outlined plans for the 2010-11 academic year.

This year the program devoted a session to Hebrew Language Learning, honoring Dr. Nava Nevo, on her retirement. Professor Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University delivered a lecture on "Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Hebrew Schools Abroad", an area of interest shared by Nava with whom Prof. Shohamy collaborated for many years. Nava responded to the lecture drawing on her own research and experience in the field.

Following lunch there were informal tributes to Nava's contribution to the work of the Centre as researcher, teacher and valued colleague.



Professor Elana Shohamy,
Tel Aviv University

Nava Nevo Starts a New Chapter

Zeev Mankowitz, Former Director of the Melton Center

After decades of dedicated, excellent and significant work, our friend and colleague, Dr. Nava Nevo, has retired and is scanning the horizon seeking new challenges for her remarkable talents. At the farewell event held at the beginning of the semester, the Director of the Centre, Professor Gaby Horenczyk made it very clear that while Nava is officially retiring she will be invited to consult on many projects in the coming years.

As the Academic Coordinator of Hebrew-language education Nava was a pillar of the Melton Centre and a key member of its senior faculty. Her capacity for serious, sustained and creative work in a demanding area of Jewish education was universally admired and saluted. From early in the day to late in the afternoon Nava was hard at work – planning, writing, organizing, tutoring, teaching and more.

Over the years, Dr. Nevo was instrumental in organizing four international conferences focusing on the teaching of Hebrew in Israel and throughout the Jewish world. She led the development of materials that championed a new approach to teaching Hebrew from pre-k to high school. Nava worked with 18 schools throughout the Jewish world in developing a ground-breaking research-based tool for evaluating achievements in Hebrew teaching. She was

the architect and moving force behind Nitzanim, the innovative Hebrew primer series for early childhood, which achieved great success worldwide. She achieved all this in addition to her wide-ranging courses on the teaching of Hebrew, her empathetic but demanding tutorials and her patient nurturing of the M.A. in Jewish Education offered by the Rothberg International School.

Behind this imposing record of achievement stands a modest, delightful friend who, having registered all the above would waive it aside with a self-deprecatory expression in Yiddish and then, simply get on with the job.

Derekh tzleikha Nava, fare thee well on the road ahead.

Program for Enhancing Expertise in Jewish Education – Israel Education



Participants in the Program for Enhancing Expertise in Israel Education attended a successful intensive seminar at the Centre during the summer. The seminar was the culmination of a year of courses and tutorials by distance learning. During the seminar they presented their personal projects in Israel education that they developed in the program.

From right to left. Back: Ana Iosif, Brazil; Ilana Eilberg, Brazil; Joyce Szlak, Brazil; Alzira Ryngelblum, Brazil; Lara Levyon, Argentina; Front: Lydia Mrejen, Argentina; Ruth Mendelson, Argentina; Diana Jufe, Argentina; Stella Dinkova, Bulgaria; Sara Sugar, Hungary.

The Lead Jewish Educators Program

Three talented Jewish educators from the US and Australia spent the 2009-10 academic year at the Melton Centre developing their professional expertise and deepening their academic backgrounds. Each participant designed an individualized program of study with a personal tutor to develop an innovative educational project for implementation in his/her home community.

Below, two of the educators reflect on their year at the Melton Centre.

It was a wonderful opportunity to immerse into Israeli life, accelerate my Hebrew and learn with international experts in the field of Jewish education. The connections I made with educators from around the world will allow me to continue to share ideas and experiences.

It was a unique opportunity to research my project of art integration in Tanach curricula on both the theoretical and practical levels.

We confronted challenges facing Israeli society and the Jewish world today, in an open and supportive framework. I especially loved living in Jerusalem and following the rhythm of Jewish life as we celebrated every Shabbat and each holiday Israeli style.

Amanda Castelan–Starr
Melbourne, Australia

The Melton Centre provided me with a wonderful opportunity to explore and expound upon my own personal interests in Jewish education and to further my connection with Israel. I am particularly grateful for having had the opportunity to work with an advisor in producing a project that will surely serve as a basis for work and research in the years to come. I made friends with professors and students in the Centre and look forward to staying in touch with them in the coming years. Overall, the program was incredibly enriching, as was the opportunity to spend time in Israel at the Hebrew University.

David Almog
New York, USA

Interactive Museum for the Teaching of Jewish History in Memory of Jaime Pollak Ganz to Open in Santiago, Chile

The Melton Centre has been invited by the Jewish community of Santiago and the Pollak family to help establish a dynamic hands-on learning institution in memory of Jaime Pollak, an ardent Zionist and active member of the community. Housed in the new Jewish Community Cultural Center, the museum will serve as an interactive educational resource for the teaching of Jewish history.

The museum's goal is to trigger debate by presenting various points of view on different periods of Jewish history while showing their relevance to contemporary Jewish identity. Exhibits and activities are aimed at a diverse audience, both Jewish and non-Jewish, of all ages.

Project Director Marcelo Dorfsman is working with a team of educators, architects, designers, artists, writers and multi-media specialists to create this exciting new space. Professor Israel Bartal of the Hebrew University of

Jerusalem will serve as head of the steering committee for the project.

The Interactive Museum for the Teaching of Jewish History will dedicate an entrance wall to the history of the Jewish community in Chile, and devote permanent space to the Holocaust. The opening exhibit, Pathways, will portray four periods of Jewish history (Antiquity, Second Temple History, The Middle Ages and The Establishment of the State of Israel) using advanced technologies to present major texts, events and personalities.

Specially prepared educational materials will accompany each exhibit, community involvement will be encouraged by having local educators and youth act as guides and facilitators.

Professor Gaby Horenczyk, Director of the Melton Centre's, presented the Melton Centre vision for the project, which was received with enthusiasm during his recent visit to Santiago.



Simulations of rooms in the Museum

Israel Education Initiatives and Updates

Melton Centre initiatives and projects frequently evolve as responses to the growing needs of Jewish education and Jewish communities world-wide. Most recently, the search for models and approaches in Israel Education has led to an innovative multi-disciplinary project, which includes research, training, implementation and the development of academic courses.

The Centre's research program for Israel Education focused on a survey of over 300 North American Jewish Day Schools on behalf of the AVI CHAI Foundation. A research team, headed by Alex Pomson and Howie Deitcher, organized this study, and conducted in-depth qualitative research at 15 lead schools. The findings indicated a lack of clear educational purposes as well as poorly coordinated and fragmented practices in the field. A follow-up grant from the AVI CHAI Foundation has recently expanded this research to explore the attitudes of high-school students to the place of Israel in their lives, in some of these schools.

A similar study funded by the Pratt Foundation in Australia is collecting data in Australian Day schools. Working with a local research assistant, Alex Pomson and Howie Deitcher are expanding their project during the 2010-

11 academic year by conducting an extensive survey which will include interviews with students. The data they collect will help school leaders develop more coherent and better coordinated programs.

A series of reports and publications summarizing and analyzing the findings from the Centre's research projects in Israel Education are now available. A searchable database of curricula for teaching about Israel was created on behalf of the iCenter, thanks to funding from the Jim Joseph and Schusterman Family Foundations. A series of unpublished reports can also be found on the Melton Centre website. Journal articles have been published in The Journal for Jewish Education and in Contemporary Jewry. A Chapter by Alick Isaacs on the purposes of Israel education will appear in the soon to be published International Handbook of Jewish Education.

In addition to the work of the faculty, Melton Centre Masters and Doctoral students are also examining various topics related to Israel education. One such example is Daniel Rose's recently submitted dissertation on the impact of role-models on the decision to make aliya, under the supervision of Gaby Horenczyk and Alex Pomson.

The Centre's theoretical and research studies in the field inform, and are informed by, its educational activity, primarily in the areas of teacher-training and course development. During the 2009-10 academic year a group of eleven educators from Latin America participated in a year long training program. Its goal was to develop a cadre of educational leaders committed to fostering dialogue between educators in Israel and in Jewish communities around the globe, and to study issues related to the place of and approach to "Israel" and "Diaspora" in Jewish education. The program included an Orientation Seminar; Academic Courses through Distance Learning; weekly Tutorials with Melton Centre faculty to plan and develop individual educational projects; and an intensive three week Summer Seminar in Jerusalem. A second group of educators is planned for this year. A further group of informal Jewish educators from Canada will be starting a similar program in 2011, with the support of the Pincus Fund and other agencies in Canada.

Based on successful experiences with new technologies in Distance Learning, the Centre has commissioned faculty members Alick Isaacs and Marc Silverman to develop new web-based courses in Israel Education.

The Former Soviet Union Principals Project

The Principals' Project for the Former Soviet Union and Baltic States was initiated by the Ministry for Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, the ORT Network for Jewish Schools in the FSU, and the Ohr Avner and Shema Yisrael Networks in cooperation with the Heftziba staff at the Ministry of Education.

The goals of the program are to advance knowledge of Judaism, develop managerial skills and to strengthen ties with Israel. The key organizations in the FSU cooperate in the development of the program, including selecting the participants and supporting them during the program and after its conclusion. The program opens with a seminar at The Hebrew University followed by a four month distance learning program in the FSU and culminates in a two-week study program in Israel. Each participant, guided by a mentor, formulates an individual project promoting Jewish education and applying theoretical material learned in the program. The immediate result is the initiation and realization of 26 new educational projects in just one year.

The present group of 26 principals and vice-principals began their program in August 2010. The opening event took place at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Beit Maersdorf. Minister for Public Diplomacy

and Diaspora Affairs, Yuli Edelstein, and Professor Sarah Stroumsa, Rector of the University addressed the participants, as did representatives of key educational organizations involved in the project. The following day Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Sofa Landver and Chairperson of the Knesset Absorption Committee, Lia Shemtov met with the principals.



Participants (left to right): Arie Haskin, Program Director; Prof. Marc Hirshman, Chairman Academic Committee; Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, Rector Hebrew Univ.; Yuli Edelstein, Minister for Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs; Robert Singer, World ORT Director General and CEO; Yohanan Ben Yaakov, Head of the Heftziba Program-Ministry of Education; Rabbi Chaim Friedman, Director of Ohr Avner Network; Shimon Har Shalom, Shema Yisrael Network.

Recent Doctoral Graduates and their PhD Theses

Bilha Admanit **Her Family, His Family**

Advisor: Gabriel Horenczyk

The study examined the attitudes of religious adolescents towards the status of women in the family in three areas: equality in daily functioning, combining motherhood with a career, women's participation in religious activities.

The study found that religious girls express more egalitarian views than boys do concerning the woman's role in family life. This was even found to be true of girls who see themselves as at the "very religious" end of the spectrum. An additional finding was the way in which the subjects of the research set priorities among the issues confronting Jewish women. The most important issue for them was combining motherhood with a career, followed by equality within the family unit; the least valued issue was participation in religious ritual activity.

Eitan Eliram **A Study of Media Rituals and e-Rituals**

Eitan Eliram

Advisors: Zvi Bekerman from the Melton Centre and Esther Shely-Newman from the Communications Department

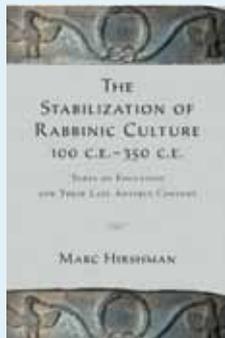
The study focuses on "cross-border rituals" used in Internet video conferencing and social networks linking groups throughout the world. It examines the impact of video teleconferencing on educational rituals related to Jewish peoplehood, and brings together issues from the fields of education, communication theory and the anthropological study of ritual in its ethnographic and conceptual dimensions.

One example from the study is a Tu B'Shvat Seder where schools in Israel and abroad participate in an e-ritual focused on expressing and reinforcing the idea of Jewish peoplehood. The aim of the educators

was to mobilize technology to underscore commonalities connecting Jews around the world, while emphasizing the centrality of contemporary Israel to Jewish values and a way of life. While to some extent, the ritual was successful, it also highlighted lines of division.

Reviews of Recent Publications

During the past academic year three members of the Melton Centre faculty published books relating to Jewish education. Here are brief descriptions of the books and a selection of reviewers' comments.

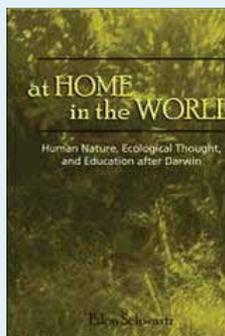


Marc Hirshman, *The Stabilization of Rabbinic Culture 100 C.E.-350 C.E.: Texts on Education and Their Late Antique Context*
Oxford University Press, 2009

Prof. Hirshman's book is an inquiry as to how a small group of, at most, a couple of thousand named scholars and rabbis of the first five centuries of the common era, in Roman Palestine and Sassanid Persia, was able to secure and sustain a thriving national and educational culture. The book, through a close reading of extended discussions on learning in rabbinic literature, discovers new insights into the Sages' views on education.

In a pre-publication review, Professor Jon D. Levenson of Harvard Divinity School wrote:

"...*The Stabilization of Rabbinic Culture 100 C.E. -350 C.E.* explores this fascinating but underappreciated cultural and religious movement in a way that both scholars and laypersons can enjoy. For Jews today, discussions of Jewish education in rabbinic times and its connections to Greco-Roman culture are especially valuable."

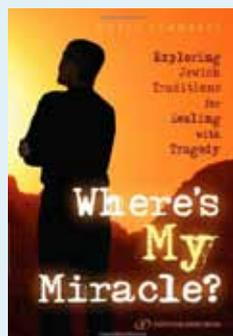


Eilon Schwartz, *At Home in the World: Human Nature, Ecological Thought and Education after Darwin*
State University of New York Press (SUNY Press), 2009

The book traces the history of Darwinism,

examining attempts to apply Darwin's theories to educational philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It analyzes recent trends since the reemergence of Darwinism toward the end of the twentieth century. Through the thought of Peter Kropotkin, John Dewey and Mary Midgley, he argues for a compelling educational philosophy rooted in our best scientific understanding of human nature.

Isis Brook of the University of Central Lancashire wrote of the book: "Eilon Schwartz's book makes a worthwhile contribution to a rising body of literature that helps to strip Darwin of the unhelpful interpretations under which his work was maligned. What Schwartz succeeds in doing, with admirable brevity, is to unpack the way Darwin's early interpreters were responsible for creating many of the obstacles that stand in the way of a proper appreciation of what Darwin had to say about human nature and culture; and to show what a properly Darwinian approach could offer."



Morey Schwartz, *Where's My Miracle? Exploring Jewish Traditions for Dealing with Tragedy*
Green Publishing House, 2010

Morey Schwartz offers a fresh, thought-provoking approach to the eternal mystery of the miracle, based on the multiple texts found in Jewish tradition as well as lessons learned from experience. Having made Aliyah in 2000, just weeks before the onset of the Al Aksa Intifada, the author took note of the reactions of survivors and spiritual leaders throughout the years of violence and was struck with the pat, simplistic, and often not-well-thought-out reactions and explanations offered by Israeli spiritual leaders to give meaning and purpose to the violence. The author attempts a refreshing theological approach to this question that has helped individuals in working through difficult philosophical questions and issues in their own lives. The book examines the way the sages dealt with the suffering of the innocent, providing the reader with a selection of

rabbinic texts presenting multiple Jewish approaches to some very difficult questions.

Daniel Gordis of the Shalem Center wrote of the book:

"Morey Schwartz brings the experience of a congregational rabbi, the angst of an Israeli living through one of Israel's darker periods and the pathos of a deeply compassionate human-being to bear, as he guides and comforts his reader exploring one of life's most difficult questions. Unlike many such books, Schwartz does not tell us what to think or believe. "Where's My Miracle?" presents Judaism's often-conflicting answers to the problem of evil, with texts and counter-texts, urging the reader to think for himself or herself, appreciating Jewish tradition not for its simplicity, but for its complexity and profound humanity."

Visit of Hebrew Union College Board of Governors

The Melton Centre recently hosted the Israel Committee of the Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College. Together with HUC President, Rabbi Professor David Ellenson, the committee met with Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson, President of The Hebrew University, who emphasized the importance of confronting issues of pluralism in Jerusalem, and the crucial role played by the joint initiatives between the Melton Centre and the College. Students currently studying in the Advanced Program in Pluralistic Jewish Education, which includes an MA at the Melton Centre, shared their experiences and described how their studies contribute to both their professional and personal development.



Rabbi Prof. David Ellenson, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, Prof. Gabriel Horenczyk

Special Screening of "The Peretzniks"

The Centre had the opportunity to welcome back Katka Reszke, who a few years ago completed her doctorate with us on the identity of young Polish Jews. She was in Israel in her role as assistant director and editor of the documentary "The Peretzniks" together with the director Slawomir Grünberg. The film was screened at the Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival.

The film tells the story of a Jewish school in Lodz, Poland that was shut down following the Communist anti-Semitic campaign in 1968. As a result, Peretz School graduates are dispersed today between US, Israel, Sweden, Poland and other countries. The bittersweet memories of their youth in post-war Poland are what binds the Peretzniks together to this day.

Katka and Slawomir came to the Melton Centre for a special screening of the film, which they introduced to an audience of Melton faculty and students as well as guests of the Centre, including some who had attended the school and experienced the events described in the film. The screening was not only an opportunity to take pride in the achievements of our graduate but also to learn about a little-known time and place in Jewish history which raises fascinating questions about Jewish education, identity and survival.



Slawomir Grünberg, Katka Reszke

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kol hamercaz

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Goodbyes

After thirteen years at the Melton Centre as Editor, Public Relations Director and Coordinator of the International Advisory Board Vivienne Burstein has accepted a new position in the Division of Development and Public Relations of the University. The Melton staff, faculty and members of the International Board who benefited from her strong identification with the Centre's goals and interests, her dedication and personal warmth, thank her for her years of dedicated service, and wish her continued success in her new position.

For fifteen years, Yohanan Mevorach served as Technical Assistant at Melton, and was always ready to help the Centre its day to day functioning in countless ways. The staff and faculty are grateful for his many years of dedicated work, and wish him well in his new position in the Maintenance Department at the University.



■ The Melton Centre for Jewish Education

Director: Prof. Gabriel Horenczyk

Executive Director: Ms. Irit Harat

Chair, Academic Committee: Prof. Marc Hirshman

Chair, Committee on Research & Instruction: Dr. Michael Gillis

Chair: International Advisory Board: Mr. Jonathan Brodie