



kol hamercav

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

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Philosophy of Jewish Education: A Field of Questions

Michael Rosenak, Mandel Professor
of Jewish Education (Emeritus)

A set of questions often asked of those who teach Philosophy of Education is, "What do you people actually do?" and "What is it good for?" or, "Who needs it?" The assumption behind these questions is that education, like children, should be seen (in practice) and not (theoretically) heard. What need is there to explore what education is? Everyone has been educated and almost everyone educates. So why manufacture complexities?

Educational thinkers respond that we can't really know whether everyone—or anyone—has been educated until we examine what was done with—or to—them, and whether what was done constitutes education by some particular set of criteria. These thinkers claim that the project of "educating well" requires conceptions and ideals that, when clearly stated and carefully applied, allow us to state that a given education is good and worthy and worthwhile. At the Melton Centre, educational philosophy is focused, as in few other academic institutions, on Jewish education. Philosophers of education not only try to locate universally pertinent educational questions, but engage in inquiry into such questions as: Who is an educated Jew? How does modernity, with its pluralism and diversity, enter into the definition of educated Jews? If Judaism is a religion, then how can Jewish education be more than religious indoctrination? Or can there be genuine religious education? What distinguishes between

the two? Can Jewish education also be secular, making it akin to French education rather than, say, to Christian education? Or is Jewish education not readily comparable to any other? Or is that statement apologetic? Seemingly endless queries.

To make things clearer, let us briefly raise one aspect of one issue: Who deserves to teach? This is a weighty question that can help us to distinguish between what we "legitimately" call education and what we will term "mis-education". It will clarify whether we see the teacher's influence as either good or bad. It will make us happy with "original ideas" coming from good teachers and upset at corrosive ones expressed by "unqualified" ones. Which teacher will really teach children what they need to know? Beyond that, who is entitled to say what children "really" have to know as humans and as Jews?

Some Jewish educational thinkers insist that the sources of Judaism must be seriously consulted in examining such questions. For example, there is the Talmudic statement, "when children build, consider it destruction, but the tearing down of the aged should be seen as construction". (Megillah 31) Commentators tell us that the young are to be equated with the foolish while the aged are the wise. We may learn from this statement that not all construction need be considered good and not all destruction, bad, but yet the main question is: What makes a person foolish or wise, suspect or trustworthy? How does this statement clarify the question, "Who may teach?" And what new questions does it raise?

And now the class may come to order: to delve into these and other educational questions and problems.

Brachot

Marc Hirshman, Director of the Melton Centre, has been promoted to Professor Chaver, and appointed to the Mandel Chair for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University.

Howard Deitcher, whose area of academic expertise is Bible Education, will succeed Marc as Director of the Centre in October 2002. Marc will become Chairperson of the Academic Committee of the Centre. Howard is past Director of Melton's Senior Educators Program and of the Jerusalem Fellows Program of the Mandel School, and is currently Director of the Mandel School's Intensive Development Program.





THE MELTON CENTRE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Melton Centre International Advisory Board held two days of meetings in London in February 2002, hosted by Mr. Gerald Rothman. Mr. Jeffrey Mahemoff was elected the new Chair of the Board, taking over from Mr. Charles Perlow who held this position for the past 4 years. In June 2001, Mr. Mahemoff was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia in recognition of his commitment and involvement in Jewish education and the Jewish community in Melbourne.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Graduate Degree Programs:

In the past two years there has been a significant increase in the number of MA students in the Centre. Altogether 109 students are studying in the MA programs, over one third of whom are from Jewish communities abroad.

The first group of students will be completing their two-year MA Program in Jewish Education, in English, in 2002. Thirteen students in the group, who are part of the Pardes Educators Program, will be assuming full-time positions in North American day schools in September 2002.

There are currently 21 students in our PhD program, researching such diverse topics as Sexual Education in the Religious Schools in Israel, Moral Dilemmas and Jewish Identity, the Sociology of Day Schools in North America, Miracles and Bible Education, and Jewish Food and Jewish Education: An Anti-Cartesian Dialogical Paradigm.

We offer a year-long seminar for doctoral students in which they present their research and findings. During the second semester, Prof. Philip Wexler, Visiting Scholar from the US and former Dean of the School of Education of Rochester University, is leading the seminar.

The Mandel Doctoral Fellowship

Three students currently enjoy the prestigious Mandel Fellowship which was inaugurated by the Mandel Foundation five years ago and has underwritten 5 doctoral students for 3-4 years each. The first two recipients have completed their studies. Dr. Alex Sinclair is a member of the faculty of the School of Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and Dr. Eli Gottlieb is on a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle. The Mandel Foundation has indicated its interest in continuing this vital program. These and other fellowships are instrumental in

both attracting excellent students and affording them the necessary conditions for intensive research and writing.

Revivim

For the past three years the Centre has taken responsibility for designing and implementing a new approach to developing excellent teachers in Jewish Studies for the secular school system in Israel. The Revivim Program was launched in the 2000/01 academic year. The first cohort of 23 students began their 4 year combined BA-MA program in 2000/01, and the second cohort of 27 began this year. Melton is fully immersed in finding innovative ways to engage the most talented of our students in the problems of teaching Jewish culture and texts according to modern sensibilities. Every Wednesday, these BA students student-teach in laboratory schools and analyze and reflect upon the challenges facing them. This in addition to a full load of BA and eventually MA studies. Dr. Asher Shkedi, our expert on teacher training, designed and runs the entire education component of this demanding program. The program is run in cooperation with the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University.

Moscow State University

The Hebrew University offers a BA certification program for teaching Jewish Studies in Russian schools, in conjunction with Moscow State University. The Chais Institute of the Hebrew University asked Melton to oversee this new program and its 35 students. Dr. Marc Silverman of our faculty spends a month a year in Moscow and brought the students to Jerusalem for a month of study last summer.

Publications

Tova Hartman-Halbertal's *Between Mothering and Motherhood: Negotiating the Tyranny of the Shoulds*, is to be published by Harvard University Press; Jen Glaser's *Reasoning, Critical Thinking and the Critical Person* is to be published by SUNY Press. Dr. Glaser also has a regular 'spot' in *Analytic Teaching*, a journal that reviews Internet sites in Philosophy for Children. Ze'ev Mankowitz's *Between Memory and Hope: Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany, 1944-1946*, published by Cambridge University Press, is to be released in the summer of 2002.

The Centre's journal *Studies in Jewish Education* resumes publication with volumes 8, 9 and 10 in production. Volume 8 treats The Teaching of Talmud and Midrash and is scheduled to appear in the autumn of 2002. Volume 9 on Teaching Bible will appear in the winter of 2002-2003, and the tenth volume on The Philosophy of Jewish Education will appear in the winter of 2003-4.

Competitive Research Grants

Ford Foundation: \$60,000, "Bilingual/Bicultural Education in Israel" (Drs. Zvi Bekerman and Gabriel Horenczyk)

Spencer Fund: \$25,250, "Arab-Jewish Bilingual Education in Israel" (Dr. Zvi Bekerman)

National Science Foundation: \$22,000, "Basic Problems in Interpreting Cognitive Texts" (Dr. Jonathan Cohen)

Academic Conferences & Faculty Meetings

The Centre holds a number of regular faculty meetings that serve as forums in which different faculty members discuss their current research projects and issues pertinent to Jewish education.

The "Jewish Philosophy and Jewish Education" seminar is run in conjunction with the Mandel Foundation. During the second semester, the research group discussed recently published books on the connection between philosophical thought—general and Jewish—and Jewish education. By engaging in critical response to new publications, the group hopes to provide an example of the kind of activity that should characterize the philosophy of Jewish education as an emerging academic discipline.

The "Jerusalem Forum for Jewish Education" invites the wider Jewish Education community to seminars and conferences. The annual Zvi and Olga Infeld Memorial Lecture was held under the auspices of the Jerusalem Forum in January, 2002. Prof. Gideon Shimoni delivered the keynote address entitled "Jews and Apartheid: Community with a Conscience?"

In December 2001, the Centre hosted Ray McDermott, Professor of Anthropology and Education at the University of Stanford. Prof. McDermott gave talks in the School of Education and the Department of Communications; led a PhD seminar, and gave a public lecture on "Confrontation with Learning as a Cultural Category: Some Texts, Data, and Stories of Struggle" within the framework of The Jerusalem Forum. In May 2002, Professor Steven M. Cohen chaired a Workshop in which Drs. Leonard Fein and Ilan Ezrachi discussed Current Images of Israel amongst American Jews, and their Educational Implications. A "Jewish Identity" faculty seminar was initiated this year by Prof. Steven Cohen. Dr. Ze'ev Mankowitz led the first session and presented a paper entitled, "On Memory and Community: Some Initial Reflections".

On June 16-22, the Melton Centre, in cooperation with Haifa University, will be hosting the International Research Conference on Jewish Education, with 130 participants from around the Jewish world.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Senior Educators Program (SEP)

The SEP provides a year of training and enrichment for senior Jewish educators. This year, 19 senior educators from North and South America, South Africa and Poland, are participating in the program. This number of participants was made possible by additional support from the Jewish Agency, the Mandel Foundation and the Myers Foundation, which has also enabled us to expand the range of programs offered to senior educators and to increase their stipends. To date we have 36 excellent applicants for the Program for next year. In the summer we will begin the first of what we hope will be a series of video conferences for SEP graduates through the Internet.

Program for Senior Educators from the Former Soviet Union

This program, a subsidiary of the SEP, allows for the enrichment and training of Jewish educational personnel from the FSU. The program is taught completely in Russian, with participants also taking a Hebrew Ulpan. Each educator undertakes an applied educational project, all of which have been collected on a CD and circulated throughout the FSU. This year, 20 educators have already participated in the first of the two 3-month sessions held annually, and are to return in a number of weeks for the second session. The 119 graduates of the program are filling key positions in the Jewish educational network in the FSU, and a number have informed us that they have also initiated new educational ventures in their home countries. The program is supported this year by the Jewish Agency and the Myers Foundation.

The Jewish Educators Training Institute (JETI)

In the summer of 2001, JETI hosted a group of 11 key educators from all over Australia for a one-week educational program focusing on the Interpretation of Texts. This program was organized in conjunction with the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Federation of Australia, and funded by the JNF.

In January, 2002, JETI ran a 10-day seminar in Jerusalem on Teaching Bible for a group of 15 teachers from Jewish schools in Australia. At the end of May, Howard Deitcher led a workshop for the Bialik College teachers in Melbourne as part of our ongoing collaboration with Bialik and Mount Scopus Colleges there on a new curriculum for teaching Bible.

In February, JETI hosted a group of 19 educators from the Akiba, Clore Tikvah, and Clore Shalom schools in London, as the culmination of two years of work with these schools on the theme of 'Collective Memory and School Culture'.



In the summer, JETI will be hosting a group of 10-12 principals from Supplementary, Synagogue and Early Childhood schools (of different religious orientations) from New Jersey. Their 16-day program will focus on Text Education.

In July, 2002, the Centre will host a week-long seminar for the educational staff of the "Anshe Emet" elementary school in Chicago.

Nitzanim

This Hebrew language instruction program for k-2, developed by the Melton Centre, is in its final stages. 21 handsome booklets have been produced with teacher guides and audio tapes to meet the needs of this important population. Statistics for N. America for example show that the overwhelming majority of Jews send their children to Jewish pre-school groups. This winter and spring, the staff of the program conducted seminars on the use of the curriculum in NY, Philadelphia and Venezuela. Our partner and publisher in this venture, Matah, a commercial educational publisher, is enthusiastic due to initial sales, by April 2002, of over 20,000 units.

To date, we have held two 8-day introductory workshops in Israel for representatives of schools in the United States, Australia and Argentina; a workshop in New York at the beginning of February and in Caracas, Venezuela at the end of February; and two seminars, one in London and the other in Miami.

Ms. Nevo was invited by the Machlaka LeHinuch of the Jewish Agency to go to Kiev in May for in-service training on Nitzanim.

Internet Collaborative Learning – Golem and Yad2Yad

In the last year we have seen steady growth in participation in the Golem project. We have recently expanded activity beyond Israel and North and South America with the introduction of schools in Australia and Europe. At present about 25 schools are involved in the project, with approximately 10 of those schools based in Israel. We have over 1000 users registered and we hope to increase this number in the coming months through ongoing and active recruitment.

Within the Golem arena, students participate in a variety of activities involving different themes related to their cultural and Jewish identity. For Yom Kippur, for example, we looked at how different religions and cultures relate to fasting. Students were asked to go out and interview people in their community in order to try and discover some of the differences and commonalities that exist amongst different cultures with regards to fasting. In one of our social action activities (prior to September 11th), students were asked to respond to the

destruction of ancient Buddha statues in Afghanistan. Students had to grapple with traditional Jewish sources relating to idolatry and current attitudes towards the destruction of these statues.

The first research paper based on the project was presented to the Computer Supported Collaborative Learning Conference in the United States in January.

In light of the success of the Golem, we have also developed a new Internet project called Yad2Yad (Hand2Hand). Developed as an initiative of the Truman Institute, Yad2Yad is designed to encourage interaction amongst youth from different cultural groups in Israel. This Internet project ultimately aims to forge dialogue and understanding between young students from Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Israeli backgrounds within Israel through the use of modern communication technologies. Yad2Yad is still in its first phases of development. Approximately 5 Arab schools and 5 Jewish schools are ready to begin working on the project in the coming weeks.

Adult Education: The Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools

The Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Institute has some 5,500 adult learners studying weekly in 63 schools throughout the United States, Canada, England, and Australia. Since its inception in 1986, 17,000 graduates have participated in the FMAMS learning experience.

Florence Zacks Melton celebrated her 90th birthday at a gala evening, which also marked the Mini-School's 15th anniversary, on the last night of Chanukah, December 16, 2001. The black tie affair was organized by the American Friends of the Hebrew University and hosted by FMAMS Institute Board of Directors, Vice-Chairman Don Katz and his wife, Phyllis, at the Boca Club in Boca Raton, Florida. Hebrew University Rector Prof. Haim Rabinowitch presented Florence with an edition of the recently published Jerusalem Crown—Keter Yerushalaim—the Hebrew University's edition of the Hebrew Bible. "You have toiled to make the Jewish people the People of the Book," said Prof. Rabinowitch. "It is thus fitting that tonight we present you with the Tanach, the book of the Jewish people."

It has been my privilege and pleasure to direct the Melton Centre over the past three years. Jewish education currently faces a most thrilling and challenging period. The Centre strives to meet the growing needs of the field and make its contribution to the vibrancy of the Jewish people.

*Be'didut,
Marc Hirshman*



**The Melton
Centre
for Jewish
Education**

The Hebrew
University
of Jerusalem

Mount Scopus,
Jerusalem 91905
msmelton@mscc.huji.ac.il
Tel: 972-2-5882033/4
Fax: 972-2-5322211