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## *Study and Moral Action in Contemporary Jewish Education*

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### **Introduction**

One of the central questions of moral philosophy and moral education is the relationship between knowledge and action. To what extent does knowledge and study of the good relate to and influence the performance of the good? This question is of particular concern to the moral educator, since it has direct and immediate implications for the process of teaching and the construction of curricula in the domain of moral education. Jewish education has traditionally been concerned with both study and morality, and learning and the good deed were central contents and concepts of classical Jewish schooling.<sup>1</sup> The question is, what is the perspective of contemporary Jewish education on this dialectic; i.e. how does the modern Jewish school deal with the relationship between study and moral action?

The discussion of this question in contemporary Jewish education is immediately complicated because of the heterogeneity of modern Jewish schooling.<sup>2</sup> The modern Jewish school is the product of both the classical Jewish tradition, and the post-emancipation societies in which Jews now live. Hence, there is no one exclusive or even dominant theory or practice of Jewish education; instead, we have a plethora of Jewish experiences. It is, therefore, difficult to make generalizations about 'modern Jewish education', both because it encompasses several, often disparate phenomena, and because we have few, sophisticated ethnographic studies of these various phenomena.<sup>3</sup> What we do have are descriptions of curricula, programmes, and courses of study within contemporary Jewish education. Hence, we shall examine several representative programmes and curricula to determine the attitudes to the study-moral action dialectic implicit in them. The specific question to be examined is: given the pluralism of modern Judaism, what are the categories in the study-moral action dialectic to be found in today's Jewish schools? The documents I shall examine do not exhaust the contemporary Jewish educational enterprise, nor do they necessarily reflect what actually happens in the field. At the same time, I believe that these documents do represent prevalent—and even predominant—patterns in Jewish education today. This topic should be of specific interest to the student of Jewish education; at the same time, it is a relevant case-study for those concerned with the general subject of alternative curricular approaches to the study-moral action dialectic.

### 'A Curriculum for the Afternoon Jewish School'—United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education

The Conservative Movement is one of the three major denominations of American Jewry. Its typical (although not exclusive) form of Jewish schooling has been the afternoon school, a part-time, supplementary school, which is attended from one to six hours a week after regular-public-school classes.<sup>4</sup>

In 1958, a curriculum for the Conservative afternoon school was produced which continued to be the pervasive curricular document for 20 years. In 1978, a new curriculum was produced.<sup>5</sup> This new curriculum is noteworthy because of its size (720 pages) and detail, because it reflects the input of some extremely thoughtful and experienced educational figures of the Conservative Movement, and because it will potentially be used by a sizeable number of Jewish afternoon religious schools throughout the United States.

There are five prominent characteristics of this curriculum. First, it is motivated by and defines its activities in terms of the attainment of reasonable, measurable, realizable goals stated as clear, immediate instructional objectives. This curriculum clearly represents a reaction against the overly ambitious, grandiose, and presumptuous assumptions and approaches which have characterized many Jewish educational programmes; it makes no lofty statements about 'creating Jews', 'enriching Jewish identity', or 'teaching Jewish values', and, indeed, argues for specifically stated instructional objectives. These objectives generally fall into the cognitive realm, although the prayer and history sections include and suggest procedures and evaluations for affective goals. The cognitive goals suggested are sophisticated and variegated, and conceptual understanding is a central theme throughout the curriculum. Thus, the prayer curriculum aims at a list of synagogue competencies appropriate to observant Judaism as well as inquiry teaching of prayer. The history curriculum calls for an understanding of Jewish history within the context of general historical processes as well as being a vehicle for emphasizing and developing Jewish pride and a sense of *Kedushah*. (*Kedushah* is presented as the underlying theme and goal of the curriculum. The term is used by the authors to refer to the uniqueness and specialness of the Jewish experience and approach to life. They regard this as the value and life-style that the curriculum is concerned with presenting and defending.)

Second, this curriculum is based on, and demands, the principle of selection. It is constructed on a series of subject-area blocks (Hebrew language, Judaism/sources, *Tefillah* [prayer]/*Mitzvah* [religious commandments], history/community) in which specific texts, instructional materials, and methods are suggested. The choice of which blocks are to be taught is left to the decision of the principal, the teachers, and the parents (the document recommends a curriculum conference in the school to discuss options and make curricular choices). Thus, it argues that there will be a need for educational trade-offs, and that a clear decision about what is being opted for, and what is being rejected, is crucial.

Third, the curriculum, at the same time, implies the legitimacy and centrality of certain sources in Jewish education. The Bible and *Siddur* (the Jewish prayer-book) emerge as primary sources and subject areas in this programme. They are regarded as authentic spokesmen of the Jewish life-style. The history section relies heavily on the use of primary sources and, in a general pedagogic note, the authors suggest the use of source books as much as possible, rather than secondary texts. The

programme demands selection, but does not imply by its total neutrality *vis-à-vis* the role of certain sources in Jewish tradition.

Fourth, the curriculum openly argues against fuzzy and ambiguous talk about Jewish education as 'character education' or 'teaching values'. While it clearly is a curriculum which conceives of Judaism as a value system, it contends that:

We have no evidence to support the notion that the student of the Jewish schools, as a result of having been in that school, adapts for himself the values which the school teaches... there is no evidence that any educational procedure which we use will result in a predictable and/or measurable change in the value patterns of our students. We do not know how to effectively (and measurably) do values education in Jewish schools; hence, we should not espouse the rhetoric of such lofty goals... the best we can do is convey information and provide accessible model teaching behaviour. The purpose of this curriculum, then, is to enable the student to identify certain selected Jewish values.<sup>6</sup>

Fifth, this curriculum reflects and accepts certain contemporary general educational influences and approaches, and rejects others. It is constructed on the basis of a clear, candid reading of the possibilities and limitations of supplementary Jewish education in the US, and attempts to present a programme which is attainable and not illusory. It is concerned with the child, but is not radical in its child-centredness. It is *au courant* with and incorporates techniques of questioning, group dynamics and creative instructional materials. It demands involvement of the teacher. It attempts to be relevant without selling out to 'relevance' as the only guiding principle. It rejects an essentially affective, confluent, experimental, or humanistic approach to curriculum. It does not purport to be a blueprint for an educational community or total institution. It rejects current approaches to values education which focus on creating values, values internalization, values confrontation, and moral behaviour.

This curriculum, then, makes a very clear statement about the centrality of knowledge in the Jewish school: it assumes that knowledge of the Jewish experience should be a central emphasis and concern of the Jewish school. Its sense of knowledge is broad, but the ultimate goal of this curriculum is that the student comes to know 'well', even if this is at the expense of knowing 'a great deal'. The implicit view of knowledge here is not intellectualism *per se*, but, rather, a Platonic assumption that if people know, they will do or feel. The curriculum implies the epistemologic and practical belief that the afternoon school can at the most teach contents, the understanding of which could lead to acceptance, behaviour and identification.

This curriculum could be considered 'traditionally Jewish' in three senses. First, it is clearly committed to knowledge of traditional texts and contents as a central dimension of Judaism and Jewish education. Second, its sense of this knowledge is not fundamentalist or rote-oriented, but is rather concerned with understanding and reflection. Third, it is committed to the role of the intellect in confronting and understanding classic Jewish texts and experiences.

Nevertheless, the curriculum deviates from a classical perspective in three ways. First, it is overtly ambivalent and selective in its view of the knowledges which are necessary. One could conceivably attain a Jewish education according to this curriculum by learning Hebrew and parts of Jewish history. Certain sympathies are

hinted at (for example the Bible and *Siddur*), but they are not mandated as necessary. Second, the curriculum, at least in the introductory statement of credo, protests too much about its lack of concern for values education. A classical Jewish perspective might agree with some of the methodological or practical limitations posited by the curriculum, but it nevertheless would explicitly see its mission as affecting the character of young Jews. This curriculum explicitly retreats from this mission. Third, it is minimalist in its approach to the teacher and the school. The teacher in this curriculum is expected to be proficient in several areas of Judaism (i.e. in several blocks), but little is implied *vis-à-vis* his 'Jewish soul'. Its intention is not to propose neutral technocrats as teachers but its neglect of the personality, style, and soul of the teacher (such a central theme of classical Jewish education) might imply that aspects of the programme could be effected by sophisticated language teachers or graduate students in biblical studies regardless of their 'soul' qualities. This same minimalism is apparent in the curriculum's approach to the school as a social setting. Except for the prayer section, few horizontal connections or references are made to the life of the school, the synagogue, or the community as educative forces. Either because of its assumption about the realities of Jewish life or for ideological reasons, the curriculum turns the school into an isolated, fairly specific type of educational institution.

In terms of our dialectic, then, what emerges is a very new (and radical) attempt to re-emphasize knowledge as a key factor in the Jewish experience, not simply for associational or survivalist reasons, but as a means of truly reflecting the Jewish way. At the same time, this is effected with little emphasis on the interrelating factors to which knowledge was classically related, i.e. teacher, community, moral action. Thus, the curriculum finds itself caught by the tension between the desire to return to an authentic reaffirmation of the notion of study and knowledge as central to Judaism and the recognition of some basic sociological and educational problems of relating this to moral education in today's Jewish world. The authors of the curriculum might well argue that they have reacted to some overly affective and/or behavioural emphases in modern Jewish education; their critics might argue that they have re-emphasized the forgotten other extreme but neglected the crucial question of the integration and interaction between the two.

### **'An experiment that works in teenage religious education'<sup>7</sup>**

This volume describes an innovative experiment in Jewish education conducted in a large mid-Western urban community in the US in the late 1960s early 1970s. The programme was initiated as a result of dissatisfaction with the current state of Jewish education. According to the author, there is:

Universal agreement, irrespective of the segment of the educational establishment under consideration that Jewish schools were imparting neither cognitive skills nor positive attitudes towards Jewishness. In fact, there were those who suspected that Jewish schools were counter-productive. Instead of communicating to their students a body of information needed in order to identify Jewishly, and instead of fostering in their charges the desire to so identify, the schools were at least partly responsible for their rejection of Jewishness.<sup>8</sup>

This particular synagogue school searched for an alternative model to the standard part-time supplementary system which had, in the opinion of its teachers, failed. The alternative model abolished the regular three-day-a-week supplementary school, and replaced it with a framework of nine weekends (Friday afternoon through Sunday) throughout the year, and a weekday (Sunday or Wednesday) planning and Hebrew session. (The project was initially implemented in one experimental group, 'the *Vov* class' [6th grade].) Each of the weekends was to have a theme which was chosen and implemented by the students, together with their teacher-advisor. The mid-week sessions had a twofold aim: (a) planning of the weekends; (b) learning some basic Hebrew.

There was no pre-determined curriculum for the *Vov* class, but rather the curriculum evolved from the interests and needs of the students and the inputs and direction of the teacher-advisor. Among the topics dealt with at the weekends were the following:

- (i) Sabbath.
- (ii) Cycle of life.
- (iii) Friendship.
- (iv) Peace.
- (v) God, the Messiah, life after death, freedom.
- (vi) The holocaust.

The treatment of each theme would usually include reference to and study of relevant Jewish sources on the subject, general sources (films, poems, drama, books), experimental activities, and much discussion.

These raised the possibility of more systematic confrontations with Jewish contents during the year. Thus, the class began to be involved with the Sunday morning prayer-service of the congregation; however, this was eventually discontinued 'when it ceased to be useful to Roger and the class' (because they had gotten very involved with a Russian Jewry demonstration).<sup>9</sup> Hebrew language was to be studied once a week with Mrs Cohen but this eventually disintegrated and was discontinued because students did not like the class and stopped going: 'Hebrew related only peripherally to what came to be the purpose of the *Vov* class.'<sup>10</sup>

A central factor in the programme was the role of the teacher/advisor and his wife, Roger and Sara Wilkinson. They were creative and accessible teachers and friends who were both very American and very Jewishly committed. Their personalities were important educational resources for this experiment.

The volume made clear what came to be the purpose of the *Vov* class: the evolution of the *Vov* class into a Jewish community. The *Vov* class was initially an aggregate of isolated teenagers who did not have intimate ties with Jewish experiences or with the Jewish group; the *Vov* class programme sought to move them from this state into that of a Jewish community which lived and related together, and had pleasurable mutual experiences. Thus, the bulk of the effort in this programme was devoted to the creation of a pleasant, supportive, positive Jewish environment:

The single most important fact about the *Vov* class is that Roger and the students, in satisfaction of their felt need for community, created one of their own. That which Jewish life in Graceville no longer supplied, they supplied for themselves. Nor was the community they created merely a community of people who happened to be Jewish. It was a Jewish community. It was Jewish in that its religio-cultural frame of reference

was Jewish. It was Jewish in that its forebears, its sponsorship, and its hopes of the future were expressed in Jewish terms. It was Jewish in that it chose to relate to the total Jewish community . . . with some intimacy.<sup>11</sup>

*An Experiment That Works* . . . also claims that cognitive contents as aspects of Judaism were key concerns and emphases in the programme. This was apparent in the teacher's continued commitment to Jewish study and to the use of Jewish sources in dealing with discussion topics. Lipnick summarizes the success of the programme as follows:

The *Vov* class experience was more than a transitory educational experience. It was more even than an educational experience which gave promise of exerting lasting influence upon those who participate in it. The *Vov* class experience was midwife to the birth of a living community which gave indication, as the year ended, of persisting in life and performing many of the functions natural to a viable organism. If the students, in one year, did not plumb Judaism to its depth—and who would argue that they did—they both identified the existence of that depth and created an instrument by means of which they could continue to plumb it in the future.<sup>12</sup>

The *Vov* class programmes, on the other hand, as described and analyzed in these pages, and as demonstrated subsequently with at least six more groups has shown that *the creation of a small cohesive social enclave, in which the student locates himself psychologically and emotionally, as well as physically, constitutes a powerful instrument for the transmission of Jewish culture and religion.*<sup>13</sup>

*An Experiment That Works* . . . represents, I believe, a Jewish educational model which is reflective of much of the thrust of contemporary Jewish education—and of the contemporary Jewish experience, i.e. the concern for the creation of Jewish group-identification and consciousness. The fact is that the Jew today starts off more and more apart from and ignorant of the fact of his existence as part of the Jewish people. The essence of much of a modern Jewish education, at least initially, is to make him aware of and part of that group, rather than to teach him substantive contents, values, life-style or behaviours of the group. The context of such Jewish education is ethnic education or education for group identification, rather than moral-religious education.<sup>14</sup> Much Jewish education today feels that it has to focus on issues of ties with the Jewish group, rather than on issues of moral and religious behaviour. *An Experiment That Works* . . . is then a reaction to the intellectual or behavioural emphasis of other Jewish education programmes and an argument for the contention that first we must create primary Jewish groups-associations in the expectation that then perhaps Jewish study and life-style can emerge.

The implications of this new dynamic for the study-action dialectic is that it becomes a basically irrelevant conception. The model hardly deals with the issue since it focuses on the creation of identification. Study is not a major force here; when it surfaces, it is only as an instrument for the creation of community. Morality and moral issues do emerge in the week-ends and in the interactions described in the volume, and there clearly is a concern to indicate the relevance of Judaism for the moral sphere. The approach in this instance is to first locate central contemporary moral issues, and then to indicate Judaism's response and contributions to such

issues. The reference to the Jewish source is usually, however, in a concise, distilled form, and does not flow from a painstaking detailed study of tradition or sources. (Other programmes which follow the conceptual frame of this model do not always include the moral dimension as central, but rather emphasize other subjects which are effective for rallying a sense of group and community, i.e. Israel, foods, group rituals. The moral dimension was important to *An Experiment That Works . . .*, but is not structurally implicit in the model.) *An Experiment That Works . . .* then, is about an entirely new dialectic in Jewish education between individual alienation from the Jewish group and group-identification and consciousness. It visibly reflects the metamorphosis of the modern Jewish experience in an open society, and the victory of sociology, social psychology, and group work over theology and axiology.

### The Melton approach

The Melton Research Center was established in the 1960s at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the rabbinical seminary and teacher-training institution of the Conservative Movement. The Center was an attempt to develop a comprehensive programme for American (Conservative) Jewish education in the latter part of the 20th century. Two major parameters define its approach: (a) a concern for the identification and transmission of the values in Jewish traditional sources which one would hope to impart to children; (b) the development of techniques and strategies for relating the teaching of Jewish tradition to character education.<sup>15</sup> The Center's goal, according to Walter Ackerman, was, 'to translate the highly spiritual and theoretical idea of Judaism into practice . . . to lead pupils to internalize Rabbinic ideas, the ethics of the Talmud and the Jewish world-view (Paideia), and to affect the thinking, feeling, and behaviour of our children.'<sup>16</sup>

Melton is a bold reaffirmation of the centrality of tradition (according to Conservative approach) and the classical texts to Judaism and modern Jewish life. It reflects a clear commitment to the importance of knowledge, intellect, and understanding of texts to Jewish education. 'It is the premise of the Melton approach to Genesis that the students must be challenged to apply themselves fully, with reason and feeling to comprehend the text.'<sup>17</sup> The text, in this case, the Bible, is regarded as a cornerstone of the Jewish experience, and its study is presented as basic to the Jewish school.

The Melton approach to the study of the Bible is neither rote nor factual; rather, a critical (but devout) inquiry method evolved. The contention is that both classical Judaism and modern education imply the validity and efficacy of an inquiry approach to the study of the classical text. Hence, the Melton approach to character education does not focus on self-expression or values-clarification, rote learning of moral principles, or moral behaviourism. Rather, it reflects a notion of moral education which emphasizes the importance of study and knowledge to moral action. The original Melton blueprint proposed a total educational programme in which formal study is one factor in the educational process, to be accompanied by an extensive network of informal programmes, summer camps and co-curricular activities.<sup>18</sup> The thrust of the programme which has emerged has centred in the cognitive-intellectual domain—and, indeed, some of the critiques of Melton have argued that it is too intellectual and not sensitive enough to non-intellectual aspects of the school as a Jewish social setting.<sup>19</sup>

The selection of the Bible as the first and still major concern of Melton is significant. Seymour Fox indicates there were two factors which led to the choice of the Bible as the first concern: (i) the availability of appropriate personnel; (ii) the belief that the Bible should become the central subject of the programme of the Jewish elementary school.<sup>20</sup> The approach prescribed in detailed fashion for the study of the Bible clearly indicates that the goal of this approach is not ritual behaviourism or group consciousness; it is too verbal and analytical to be about the inculcation of specific rituals or a sense of belonging. Rather, it clearly implies an approach to text study aimed at expressing and transmitting ideas, rationales, and a religious-moral world-view.

The major decision made by Melton in the study of Hebrew is also significant. For both pedagogic and ideological reasons, Melton opted for Biblical Hebrew as a means to study the text, rather than on modern conversational Hebrew. The latter decision reflects an emphasis on the Jews as a people and as a collective, and sees Hebrew in the context of strengthening connection with the Jewish collective experience.<sup>21</sup> The Melton emphasis reflects a view of Judaism as a spiritual heritage in which Hebrew is a vehicle for uncovering the message of that heritage within its classical texts. In this approach, Hebrew is not taught because it makes children (or parents) feel more Jewish, but because it helps to clarify and explicate the religious-moral legacy which defines the Jewish people.

The Melton Center has had to make compromises and adjustments over the years to bring its programmes more in line with the realities of Jewish schools. At the same time, though, it has been consistent in its commitment to the text and its enlightened study, to character education and the interrelation of these two as the major pillars of Jewish education. It has argued that it is not blind to the realities of contemporary Jewish life and children, but that it offers a programme which can work and succeed within that context and is both feasible in terms of contemporary realities and loyal to a genuine Jewish religious perspective.

### The Fryer Foundation 'Middos' curriculum

The typical form of Orthodox Jewish schooling in the United States is the all-day school, i.e. a state-recognized private school in which both Jewish and approved general studies are presented. (The Conservative and Reform Movements also conduct all-day schools.<sup>22</sup>) The student in the typical day-school pursues a regular, secular course of studies (English, mathematics, science, history, etc.) as well as specifically Jewish studies. In 1977, the national organization of Orthodox day-schools, *Torah Umesorah*, established the Samuel A. Fryer Research Foundation 'to deal specifically with the subject of strengthening *Middos* instruction in the nation's Hebrew day schools'.<sup>23</sup> (*Middos* is Hebrew for good virtues or character traits.) The Foundation arose out of a growing sense in the day-school movement that the issue of character education had become neglected in favour of other concerns.

The theoretical assumptions of the Fryer *Middos* programme are delineated in several Fryer Foundation lectures and occasional papers collected in the volume *Building Jewish Ethical Character*.<sup>24</sup> Several such assumptions surface in these lectures and papers: (a) Jewish ethics are inherently related to Torah and

† The word Torah specifically refers to the Five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch), the first of the three main sections of the Bible. The term is used more generally to refer to the study of the holy texts. A Jewish personality is one who lives according to the teaching, laws and life-style of the Torah.



revelation: ethical conduct should be derived from and expressed in Torah and tradition. (This also implies that there is a difference between secular ethics and Jewish ethics.) (b) 'There is an inherent link between the study of Torah and ethical deeds. The study of Torah is significant only when it moulds the character of the individual.' (c) The *yeshiva* (the all-day school) should be centrally concerned with the inculcation of *Middos* and the development of character; this is as essential an educational task as cognitive or ritual objectives. (d) There are several resources for the development of virtues, including: (i) the teacher as a model of a virtuous personality; (ii) Torah as a primary text; (iii) performance of *mitzvos* (religious commandments) as a spring-board for moral behaviour; and (iv) the opportunity to actively do moral deeds.<sup>25</sup>

These theoretical recommendations are translated into a series of practical recommendations for a *Middos* programme in the day school in the following way:

- (1) Traits which children should possess are outlined, located in the Torah and explored in terms of the level and the means by which they should be taught.
- (2) The relationship of these traits to everyday life is examined.
- (3) Ways of teaching these values and traits are considered; it is suggested that the teaching of values must be planned and structured as is the study of *Humash* (Pentateuch), Hebrew, and other subjects rather than being seen as spontaneous and accidental. The teaching of ethical values should employ the same laws of teaching (for example, exposition, repetition, understanding, conviction, application) used in other subject areas.
- (4) Informal classroom situations can be effectively used to teach *Middos*. Also, since ethical behaviour is learned in practical situations, the school should provide opportunities for learning values outside the confines of the school day and building.
- (5) The school should give recognition (marks, prizes, etc.) for achievement in ethical development as it does in other areas.
- (6) The distinctiveness of Torah traits and modes of behaviour must be emphasized in all stages of the programme; 'It is essential that we point out how different our ethical concepts are from those of American society.'<sup>26</sup>

Practically, the thrust of this programme is twofold. The first concern is to locate key Jewish ethical values and present them in accessible texts and sources. Thus, a Hebrew text, *B'Ikvo'eihem*, and English edition, *In Their Footsteps*, a teacher's guide and taped model lessons were prepared. The texts contain simple stories and vignettes related to the ethical conduct and attitudes of great rabbis who lived during the last three centuries, and the questions and exercises focus on the understanding and personalization of these lessons, for example 'How can you explain the obligation of a great man to serve a lesser man, as in the mitzvah of *hachmassas orchim* hospitality? If a guest came to your house, what are some of the things you could do to make him feel at home?' The second concern is to utilize creative teaching methods to present and develop these *Middos* in students. Among the instrumental techniques emphasized are: (a) formal instruction in virtues; (b) group discussion in the classroom; (c) group counselling in small groups; (d) socio-drama or role-playing; (e) individual counselling; and (f) parent group counselling.

This programme, then, is concerned with reasserting the teaching of virtues as a central concern of Jewish education. Its approach to virtues sees them as Torah-rooted and as directly related to the performance of *mitzvos* and to being a Torah personality. Its pedagogic approach is to draw upon inspirational techniques as well as open discussions and group dynamics classroom procedures to bring virtues closer to the child.

The Fryer programme reflects an interesting paradox *vis-à-vis* our study-moral action dialectic. The theory underlying this approach to character education clearly sees the knowledge of Torah as directly related to and informative for moral action; indeed, it regards them as inseparable. At the same time, because of the sociological and educational realities of the contemporary Jewish school, the programme moves away from an exclusively (or even basically) Torah and text-oriented pedagogic approach to one which focuses more on inspirational and group-dynamics techniques. Thus, while the theory assumes that Torah leads to action, the practical programme presented assumes that the message and virtues of Torah must be packaged and presented in a way which will make them accessible and palatable to today's young Jew. In other words, the practical moral-education programme proposed by this curriculum locates the transmission of eternal values in inspirational activities and personalities rather than in the direct study of the classical text.

### Jewish values clarification

A new Jewish educational programme which has had some impact in recent years is Jewish values clarification.<sup>27</sup> This approach is based on the assumption that Jewish education (and Jewish life) have become too affectless, too depersonalized, and too irrelevant to the life of the child. The approach proposes educational procedures which are aimed at greater personalization and humanization of the Jewish school.

Advocates of Jewish values clarification cite several influential sources for their views, for example the Jewish mystical movement known as *Hasidism* which developed in Poland in the 18th century; the sociological-philosophical theories of an American Jewish thinker Mordecai Kaplan, humanistic psychology and group dynamics.<sup>28</sup> But clearly, the most important influence is the values clarification technique pioneered by Rath, Harmin, Simon, and Kirshenbaum.<sup>29</sup> Jewish values clarification (VC), like general VC, has emphasized the centrality of the process of valuing as the essence of moral education rather than the transmission, inculcation, or development of specific values. Jewish VC has adapted many of the techniques of VC—value goals, identity games, values whip, values analyses of classical texts to Jewish contexts to encourage self-reflection and expression about one's Jewish preferences and commitments.<sup>30</sup>

Critics of both general and Jewish VC have focused on three sorts of problems: (a) its value neutrality—the contention being that Judaism is a value perspective whereas VC as a system is value neutral; (b) its over-emphasis on process at the expense of content; (c) its basically individualistic focus. These critiques help cast light on the nature of Jewish VC's response to the study-moral action dialectic.

First, Jewish VC's use of knowledge and study appears to be in the pragmatic tradition. (Dewey is frequently cited as one of the key theoretical forebears of VC. In many of the examples of Jewish VC, study only becomes real when it is humanized and experientialized by the application of VC techniques. This claim should not be

distorted; advocates of Jewish VC emphasize that they do not regard it as a denial of the cognitive, but rather as an integration of cognition with affect (just as advocates of general VC adamantly argue that knowledge and reflecting are key dimensions of the valuing process). However, the approach to the study of classical texts is selective and instrumental. Texts are selected and analysed either because they reflect particular values which one wishes to present or suggest, or because they are programmaticaly effective. They are not used because of any inherent worth or authority, and the act of study of such texts is a pedagogic technique in the process of thinking and valuing rather than an inherently motivated activity. Thus, study of texts is neither a central nor a definitive resource for moral action.

Second, the focus in VC moves to the quality of and motivation behind the individual's experience. Jewish VC is clearly a reaction to a mechanized, behaviouristic Judaism which neutralizes the dispositions and emotions of the individual. In that sense, Jewish VC is a reaction against Jewish survivalism, and an argument for Jewish internalism. The terms 'person' and 'ecstasy' are highlighted, and this approach clearly is about maximalizing individual experience. Awe is not the central concern of Jewish VC, for awe is too distant. Rather, ecstasy (or *Hasidic joy*) is the desired mental state, and such ecstasy would seem to be, in contradistinction to awe, a basically non-moral category. The state of ecstasy may or may not be related to study or to tradition, but the relation is neither absolute, *a priori*, nor automatic. Moreover, it seems that Jewish VC frequently feels that certain forms of study or text-centred Jewish education destroy ecstasy rather than encourage it.

Third, Jewish VC seems to have particularly focused on qualities 4 and 5 (*Prizing*) of VC rather than 1-3 (*Choosing*) or 6-7 (*Acting*). It is not anti-intellectual nor anti-behavioural, but it does seem to argue (at least from the type of exercises it has emphasized) that *Prizing*—acceptance, commitment, motivation—is the great lack in Jewish education. Thus, while moral issues may be drawn upon from within the classical texts of Jewish tradition, they are not the essence. Jewish VC in that sense is indeed much more about Jewish ecstasy than either about Jewish study or Jewish moral behaviour.

### **The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) curriculum**

The Reform Movement is the third of the major denominations of American Jewry. Its typical form of school had been the one-day-a-week supplementary Sunday school (where children spend from one to four hours on a Saturday or Sunday morning) although it has increasingly been moving to a two or three day a week supplementary school model (and even to the establishment of all-day Reform day-schools).<sup>31</sup> The Education Department of the UAHC (the national organization of Reform synagogues) has regularly produced and updated curricula for its supplementary religious schools. In 1977, an 'interim' curriculum was produced which both reflects the major guidelines of previous UAHC curricula, while also pointing to several cornerstones of an imminent new curriculum document.<sup>32</sup>

The curriculum begins with an elaborate section on goals which includes a general statement of the goal of Reform Jewish education, followed by specific goals for eight subject areas. The general objective is as follows:

What emerges in the UAHC curriculum is an interesting response to the study-moral action dialectic. The moral sphere is central to the curriculum; indeed, it is one of its basic pillars. Jewish ethics are regarded as being informed by Jewish tradition, particularly the prophetic faith. However, access to the traditional view of the moral sphere is not offered by way of study of the classical text, but through contemporary textbooks, readers, and teaching techniques whose task is to reveal the relevance of traditional views for today. There are two radical shifts here from the classical position. First, the act of study as a legitimate epistemological and moral procedure for realizing moral action is replaced by experiential learning via creative, relevant translations. The shift here is not solely away from the holiness or authority of the text, but also in its view of how children best learn. The second shift is from the centrality of the classical text and its content as reference points for individual moral action to the primacy of the flow of Jewish history and prophetic peoplehood. Torah as the central force is replaced by a Torah-inspired people and history. The UAHC curriculum closely aligns itself with a major theme of classical Judaism and with several new trends in contemporary education, i.e. the central emphasis on the moral sphere and education. It distinguishes itself from the classical view by a new theory of how moral action is to be realized and of the role of study in that process.

### The views compared

What emerges from our analysis of these six programmes are three categories of responses to the question of the relationship between study and moral action in modern Jewish education.

One category, represented by the Melton and Fryer curricula, assumes an integral and dynamic relationship between study and moral action. This category assumes that the classical texts are valid and authoritative, and that study of them would lead to moral action. The two programmes disagree as to the nature of the authority of the text, and the appropriate processes of exegesis. Melton regards the text as authoritative, without definitely entering into the issue of its exclusively divine authorship; Fryer regards the text as authoritative and exclusively divine in origin. Melton opts for an analytic approach to textual analysis, while Fryer proposes a homiletic-inspirational approach to exegesis. What is common to both approaches—and unique in terms of contemporary programmes of moral education—is the total commitment to a classical text and its exegesis as an indispensable resource for moral action. The assumption is that there is a direct link between certain classical documents, intellect, and moral behaviour.

The second category, represented by the new Conservative and the UAHC curricula, breaks apart the study-moral action dialectic. The new Conservative curriculum affirms the centrality of study—but, it either de-emphasizes or despairs of the possibility of a direct impact by study on the moral sphere. Thus, it de-emphasizes the role of study in Jewish education, while de-emphasizing its relationship to moral action. The UAHC curriculum affirms the centrality of the moral sphere and moral action to Judaism but it dissociates the moral sphere from the direct study of classical texts. While morality is crucial for the programme, it is not to be reached by way of the careful exegesis of the great classical texts. This

The goal of Jewish education within the Reform movement is the deepening of Jewish experience and knowledge for all liberal Jews, in order to strengthen faith in God, love of Torah, and identification with the Jewish people through involvement in the synagogue and participation in Jewish life. We believe that Judaism contains answers to the challenges and questions confronting the human spirit, and that only a knowledgeable Jew can successfully discover these answers.<sup>33</sup>

The more specific goals encompass 25 statements related to knowledge and 20 goals related to values, attitudes, habits, and appreciations. Both categories of goal statements in this curriculum emphasize the moral sphere (for example 'to create Jews who further the causes of justice, freedom, and peace').

A detailed analysis of both the goals section of the curriculum, as well as of the actual grade-by-grade delineation of topics and textbooks, reveals a dual emphasis in this programme: (a) socialization into Jewish life; and (b) the teaching of Jewish values.

The socialization goal is approached in several ways. Grades 1-3 are almost exclusively devoted to Jewish holidays; subsequent grades also devote much time to holidays. Grades 3-12 deal with Jewish personalities, Jewish history, Jewish life-style, contemporary Jewish issues, problems, and society. Moreover, this document devotes several pages to the centrality of extra-curricular factors in the development of a positive sense of Jewishness, for example co-curricular school activities (drama, music, library), worship, sermons, parent education, UAHC camps. In short, a good part of this curriculum is about exposing the student to basic signposts, moments, symbols, personalities, *realia*, and events of the Jewish experience.

The second avowed goal of this curriculum is to teach Jewish ethics: 'The true consequence of Jewish belief is the decision to live a certain kind of life. Reform Judaism's prime emphasis has been on the importance of ethical living.'<sup>34</sup>

The curriculum emphasizes Jewishness as an ethical system which has roots in tradition and the Prophetic vision, and which is relevant to social and personal lives today. Thus, in Grade 3, Molly Cone's *Who Knows Ten* is introduced; ('this book presents tales and stories which illustrate some of the great moral truths of the Ten Commandments').<sup>35</sup> In Grade 4 (age 9) formal study of Jewish ethics begins. This is not done by teaching a series of maxims or rules, but by explaining personal insights by examining the guidance of Jewish tradition on moral matters through group discussion, role playing, and values clarification. Among the books used are Helen Fine's *At Camp Kee Tov* ('This volume unfolds ethical problems which arise within the context of children's lives and deals with them in terms of Jewish sources and values. Many suggestions for pupil thought and action are included').<sup>36</sup> Subsequent years see this structured concern for the study of Jewish personal and social ethics developed via a series of specially written high-school texts on Judaism and ethics (for example sex, social justice, economic justice, war).

There is no systematic or textual study of the Bible or Talmud in this curriculum. Bible stories, personalities, events, and values are dealt with in the context of other areas, for example Jewish history, holidays or ethics. In the upper grades of the school, there is some thematic study of issues in the Bible, but this is generally done without detailed analyses of Biblical texts. The legacy of the Bible for contemporary Jewish values is conveyed to the student through contemporary textbooks and workbooks which translate and elucidate the Biblical message.

second category, then, represents a reduction of the study-moral action dialectic to one of its two components, and it consequently offers a one-dimensional moral-educational programme. In that sense, this second category would seem to be close to many secular moral-education programmes and farther from a classical Jewish educational approach than the first category.

The third category makes the study-moral action dialectic irrelevant. Thus *An Experiment That Works*... neither accepts nor rejects the dialectic; instead, it focuses on an entirely different issue—group identification and association. While this particular project did not call explicitly for the rejection of the dialectic, in practice it implies its replacement by a socialization concern. This category reflects the increasingly predominant tendency in Jewish and general education to deal with other than moral issues, i.e. identification, ethnicity, consciousness-raising.

The Jewish values clarification approach stands either in category 2 or 3. General values clarification is, at least theoretically, about the moral sphere, with its emphasis on reflection and emotional involvement of the individual in the valuing process. In this sense, Jewish VC would fit into category 2. However, in practice, Jewish VC seems to have particularly focused on encouraging and strengthening a child's positive feelings and attitudes towards his Jewishness; it seems to have been used to raise the student's consciousness of and positive reactions to his being Jewish. In this sense, Jewish VC would fit into category 3.

We see, then, three categories of educational programmes which reflect alternative responses to the relationship between study and moral action. In terms of Jewish education, one has the feeling that category 3, the concern for Jewish identification and association, has emerged as the dominant educational approach. This has meant, in many cases, the demise of a concern for either study or moral action in the life of the young Jew. In the light of this, it may well be that category 1, which has both modern and classical Jewish exemplars, should be an interesting and relevant alternative to contemporary moral-education programmes.

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