MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.
Series C: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE). 1988–2003.
Subseries 5: Communication, Publications, and Research Papers, 1991–2003.

Box	Folder
42	2

Fox, Seymour, and William Novak. Vision at the Heart. Planning and drafts, February 1996-May 1996.

3101 Clifton Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
513.487.3000
AmericanJewishArchives.org

FROM: "Dan Pekarsky", INTERNET:pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
DATE: 2/5/96 10:19 AM

Re: Ramah and my paper

Sender: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
Received: from audumla.students.wisc.edu (students.wisc.edu [144.92.104.66]) by dub-img-4.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id JAA22229; Mon, 5 Feb 1996 09:56:41 -0500
Received: from mail.soemadison.wisc.edu by audumla.students.wisc.edu;
id IAA111626; 8.6.9W/42; Mon, 5 Feb 1996 08:56:40 -0600
From: "Dan Pekarsky" <pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>
Reply-To: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
To: 74671.3370@compuserve.com, 74671.3370@compuserve.com
Date: Sun, 04 Feb 1996 21:12:00 -600
Subject: Ramah and my paper
X-Gateway: iGate, (WP Office) vers 4.04m - 1032
MIME-Version: 1.0
Message-Id: <3115703D.CF87.0EEA.000@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; Charset=US-ASCII
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7BIT

Nessa,

I am finding the in-progress Ramah piece very interesting, and I'm struck by the number of times my own intuitive reactions are mirrored a few lines down by your own comments in the brackets. Below are a few reactions:

1. On p. 1, Marshall Smith was Dean at Stanford, not Harvard. Also Hutchins first and middle names are "Robert Maynard".

2. On P. 3, Seymour refers to Jewish education on the model of a cafeteria. Since he has just gotten done criticizing the "shopping mall" high school, it would be useful for him to clarify how the two differ from each other.

3. Bottom or 3, top of 4: I strongly agreeed with your sense that his view of the families that send kids to Ramah is somewhat harsh, at least with respect to those who sent their kids to the camp some 40 years ago. It is, by the way, interesting to me that you thought his view might have fit more accurately way back then, but not now; whereas I would have thought it's the other way around.

4. It would be worth, as you suggest, exploring with Seymour the tenability of the distinction he drew between camps and schools. Is he suggesting that even if schools become more informal institutions, they cannot by their very nature do the kinds of things that camps can do?

5. I suspect that Dewey's influence on the camp extends considerably beyond the the theme of "inseparability of Jews and social problems." My guess is that his ideas on pedagogy, on the place of experience in learning, and several other matters had an influence on the camp's development. I would be interested in what Seymour would say if asked to elaborate on the ways in which Dewey's ideas influenced the camp's educational philosophy.

6. At the very end there is a reference to lack of continuity between camp and home experiences, and you allude to an ideal that defines the proper connection between camp and the world beyond. I would be interested in hearing more about that ideal. In the ideal, how would the camp experience be followed up in synagogue and home? More generally, how was it expected/hoped that the camp would impact on families, synagogues, and on American Jewish life more generally?

7. Given the harsh assessment of the community in which Ramah emerged, one wonders where the appropriate staff would be recruited from and the kind of training that would be appropriate for them. You allude to this issue, and it's important to develop this further, I think.

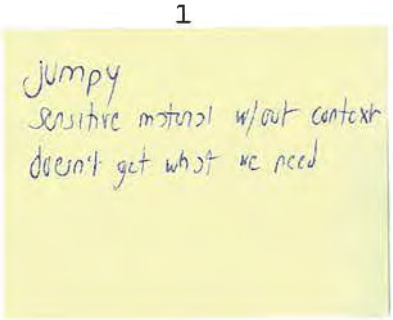
8. Evaluation: In what ways has Ramah been successful - and how do we know? That is, what are the bases for believing that Ramah has succeeded? What kinds of evaluation-processes were built into camp life -- and what kinds of studies of graudates have been done, with what results?

That's it for now. In general, I think it's coming along very well, and that it's going to prove a mighty contribution. The vignettes seem particularly powerful to me. They concisely capture a lot very graphically and can be richly analyzed. I'll look forward to reading more as you progress. If more reactions/questions come to mind, I'll let you know. When are you meeting with Seymour? Is it this week?

How would Friday morning work out as a time for us to sit down and have our conversation concerning the paper I've drafted? We could meet at CIJE or over breakfast at the Roger Smith. Will this work for you?

I hope all is well.

DP



A CONVERSATION WITH SEYMOUR FOX

THE IMPORTANCE OF A VISION

Education that's parve, that isn't driven by a vision, is highly unlikely to work. M. Smith, the undersecretary of education and a former dean of Harvard, wrote a paper analyzing the various attempts to reform American education during the 1980s. But despite an enormous amount of legislation that was passed, very little was actually accomplished -- except in a few schools and institutions that were driven by a vision.

You can see the same thing in Sara Lightfoot's book, The Good High School, where she described a handful of successful schools, each of which had an identifiable vision. Or in David Cohen's book, The Shopping Mall High School. Cohen says that American high schools are the academic equivalent of shopping malls. Virtually everything is available as a course offering, which means that the school stands for nothing.

Or look at the University of Chicago during the Hutchins era. Over the years, Chicago has produced more Nobel Prize winners and more university presidents than any other institution. It was a special place, a uniquely exciting place with a vision, and it still is.

In the Jewish world we've had many educational institutions with a vision, including the great yeshivot of Lithuania, and the pre-state Zionist youth movements.

I believe that the Jews have some special things to say about education, that we have something significant to offer. James Coleman, the sociologist who died recently, was a great friend of Ramah. He visited our operation in Israel, the Mandel Institute. "What's amazing about you people," he said, "is your optimism. You really <u>believe</u> in this. Other educators I meet are so depressed!"

Just as doctors take a Hippocratic Oath, which affirms that they refuse to give up, there's an Educator's Oath that states that we must refuse to accept failure, and that there has to be away to reach the hearts and minds of children -- and adults.

WHAT WAS THE VISION OF RAMAH?

The founders of Ramah made a basic decision. They had a choice: they could invest their energy in day schools, or in summer camps. It could have gone either way. They chose camping because the issues that had to be addressed could not be handled by a school, even a day school. There's an Aramaic phrase, <u>girsa de yankuta rishit</u> -- that what really counts is the learning of an infant. People used to think that if you didn't learn a great deal as a young child, you were lost. But that's not true. Jack Neusner is an excellent example of why that idea is wrong. So was Rabbi Akiva -- although nobody, least of all Neusner, takes that legend seriously.

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education confronted in the 1940s and 1950s -- problems that we still face. First, most Jewish children are not exposed to meaningful Jewish experiences in their early formative years. Second, most Jewish families do not significantly contribute to the Jewish education of their children. And third, most North American Jews live in an environment that does not support the values of Judaism.

In an era when most Jews were too busy trying to becoming Americans, the Jewish home was either negative or neutral. Our response to that was to create a subculture, an enclave, a new opportunity to accomplish what the family and the community were no longer doing.

I was fortunate, because growing up I had all of that. There were no day schools in my day, but I had a better Jewish education that any day school kid. In addition to a rich Jewish family life, I went to an afternoon school from 3 to 8 every weekday, and again on Sundays. The shul didn't offer a junior congregation; our job was to get into the <u>adult</u> congregation. My parents never asked me what happened in school, only in Hebrew school. My extended family rewarded me for how much Hebrew I knew, and how I participated. We were a modern Orthodox family.

My elementary school was mostly Jewish, and our district, which was heavily Democratic, was completely for FDR. In the 1940 election, when I was ten, Wendell Willkie received all of four votes, but still we wondered: <u>who were those people?</u>

The Ramah challenge, as we set it up, was to create a setting for Jewish learning and living.

RAMAH WAS ECONOMICALLY INEFFICIENT

The Mador Program was my idea. This was a unit in one of the camps where a full summer was devoted to the training of high school graduates, who would then serve as Ramah counselors for two additional summers. From a practical or economic standpoint, it was a dumb idea to devote all that money for this one program. What kind of investment was that? But the lay people bought it.

Some of the best talent we had in camp were the dishwashers -- smart Jewish kids who didn't know Hebrew, but who wanted to come. They accepted jobs as dishwashers just to be part of the camp, and we responded by giving them the very best teachers, usually the professor in residence. If you moved from dishwasher to junior counselor -- that was upward mobility at Ramah.

THE CONSULTANTS

We had some terrific people as consultants. Fritz Redl, a student of Freud, wrote a two-volume book, The Aggressive Child. He gave us a real compliment when he said that Ramah was the greatest amateur operation he'd ever seen, that is, that Ramah was full of dedication and real believers.

We had a real mix of experts. Some responded in terms of Jewish tradition, while others came in with their psychological insights. We also had Bettelheim, who happened to believe that Judaism was an anachronism; he couldn't believe that people would take it seriously. He wrote Love is Not Enough, and he ran a school at the University of Chicago for the most disturbed kids. He wanted to create a home setting, and some of his ideas came from August Aichorn, Freud's disciple in Vienna.

The United Synagogue was responsible for the afternoon schools; that wasn't the Seminary's domain. But **Camp Ramah was legally owned by the Seminary.** The approach we took was, Let's talk about what we own -- Ramah, and let's ask ourselves, What is the ideal product of Camp Ramah? What are the themes we want these kids to internalize? This was the subject of the Melton Faculty Seminar, which included Gerson Cohen, Shmuel Leiter, Yochannan Muffs, Nahum Sarna, Fritz Rothschild. We ran this Seminar for four years, once or twice a month. We arrived at a consensus, and then formulated concepts that we're still using today.

One of the participants was Joseph Schwab, my teacher at the University of Chicago, and a major figure in the philosophy of education. Other participants includes Israel Sheffler, James Coleman, Lawrence Cremin, Bruno Bettelheim, and Ralph Tyler (dean of Social Sciences at Chicago and author of Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction).

AN EXAMPLE OF THE RAMAH APPROACH

We had a thirteen-year-old boy at camp who used to wet his bed. Joe Lukinsky and Burt Cohen would run out of staff meetings at 11:45 at night -- these meetings went forever, and didn't end until Elie Shapiro went to sleep and fell off his chair -- to make sure this kid got to the bathroom. When they were too late, they'd wake him up and change his sheets before the other kids woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the religious concept of haMalbin at chaveiro b'rabim -- that you just don't embarrass people in front of others.

SAUL KRIPKE, RAMAH SUCCESS STORY

I once asked Sir Isaiah Berlin to name the greatest young philosopher in the world. He mentioned Saul Kripke, which gave me a shock of pleasure. Saul should have been in physical rehabilitation, because he had no motor coordination. He could hardly walk. He learned about philosophy at Ramah in Wisconsin, and went on to solve several important mathematical paradoxes.

But he learned more than philosophy at Ramah: he also got help for his physical problems. The counselors taught him how to play baseball, and at the end of a big game, the final batter hit an easy pop fly to right field, and Kripke dropped the ball. I was sitting with Joe Lukinsky, who was ready to run on the field to save this boy from the anger of his teammates until I grabbed Joe's hand and said, "We're not going to move." The kids ran up to Kripke, but they couldn't hit him -- they just couldn't.

Kripke never forgot this incident. Every time he comes to Israel, he talks to me about Ramah. And not just to me, either.

If I'm not mistaken, the majority of the mitzvot are bein adam l'chavero, and the Seminary faculty stressed the quality of interpersonal relations. Finkelstein, Heschel, Lieberman -- Ramah was, in a sense, the distillation of their wisdom. Yes, kashrut it important, but what makes you think that what goes into your mouth is any less important than what comes out?

STAFF AT RAMAH

We had three full-time staffs at Ramah, which is outrageous: counselors, specialists, and teachers. By and large, we didn't allow people to cross lines. There were no double-roles, because different people had different functions, although I'm not sure we were right about that.

The utter madness of Ramah is that we were talking about all these things at once. We were trying to do it all.

The purpose of the specialist was to get you to stretch yourself as far as you could. The best specialist was somebody who pushed you and stretched you -- and sometimes that led to serious problems for the camper. Whether you're talking about sports, singing, acting, or anything else, competition and striving for excellence can be a tough business. Classes were tough, too, because the teacher would force you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind.

In the midst of all this stress and competition, the counselor was supposed to create a home haven to help you put it together.

But how, exactly, do you create a home setting for normal kids? I did a little work in Bettelheim's school -- I was taking my Ph.D. at Chicago, and I mentioned to him, with the chutzpah of youth, that this school was not exactly what he described in <u>Love is Not Enough.</u> "No, he said, "the book is a description of what the school was <u>supposed</u> to be." He admitted that the school fell short of its vision.

The Ramah librarian is supposed to do nothing. His job was to sit there and be available, and when you came in he would help you. We got this idea from the kibbutz movement, from a book called Edah Mechanenet. Ideally, the kibbutz teacher would continue the morning's conversation with you in the afternoon. Similarly, the camp teacher was supposed to continue the discussion that you began in class -- the kind of discussion that is a luxury back in the city, where the goal is to cover a certain amount of material. In camp, the discussion is everything.

There were two jobs at Ramah that I would never delegate.

The first was the menu for the first week of camp. I had to see the menus -- to make sure it included foods like hamburgers, that would involve the least difficult transition from home to a new environment. Also, during the first week there had to be as many helpings as a kid wanted, so nobody would leave the table hungry. We even had the counselors serving snacks at night. We were nuts about food, especially with all those Freudians on our board.

The other thing I always checked was the director's schedule. If he had any structured activity on his schedule at the beginning of the summer, I crossed it out. I knew that by the third day he was going to be overwhelmed by failures, and that he'd be too busy for anything else.

EDUCATING LAY PEOPLE

We had to educate lay people to help them change their assumptions. Who ever heard of a librarian at camp? Or a professor in residence? These people are expensive. And why three staffs, with a head of each one? We made our case to the parents in terms of their children. **If you can give a parent any hope that you can help their kid evolve into a mentsch, there's very little that you can't ask for.**

Chicago had wonderful lay leaders, with a lot of money and a lot of drive. The most powerful one of that period was Maxwell Abell, one of the first Jewish Republicans I ever met. He had started out as a social worker, and when he didn't get a pay raise he quit and went into business. He became enormously affluent, and he donated millions to the Seminary. He also made a lot of rabbis wealthy: he built a big hotel and sold off shares, and if you didn't have the money to invest, he'd lend it to you His hotels did brilliantly, and when one of them failed, he still paid off the investors.

Abell had a disturbed son, and he felt that his son was getting more from Ramah than he would ever get from therapy.

The lay people saw how excited the kids were. They saw results. They also saw how hard it was to get in. I once had a call from Louis Finkelstein, who wanted me to admit the grandson of a prominent judge, who was a big contributor to the Seminary.

"Can you do it?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, "but we'll get caught."

"Then forget it," said Finkelstein.

RAMAH CAUSES PROBLEMS, TOO

Wasn't Ramah in direct opposition to many of the homes the kids came from? Well, if the first principle is that there's nothing more precious to parents than their kids, the second principle, which was less evident in those days, is that if parents have to choose between kids adopting the destructive values of society, and refusing to continue eating treif, the parents will swallow it, so to speak. Whenever I fly to Israel, I meet heartbroken parents whose kids have become ultra-Orthodox. Even so, they tell me, it's certainly better than drugs.

There are always disappointments. Professor Shraga Abramson, scholar in residence at Wisconsin, was trying to help a girl who was very upset about returning home to her treif family. He spent hours with her, and talked to her again during the ten-hour train ride back to Chicago. When we got off the train he came over to me, shattered, because he saw her eating a hamburger at the station. How was this possible? Well, she was a teenager, and these things happened.

Ramah is an institution that was created to respond to a challenge. **The problems of Jewish life require the establishment of new institutions.** What we had in those days was Indian camps. Before us there was Interlocken, the music camp. We were very different than Interlocken and the science camps. We wanted to touch every part of the human psyche, which couldn't be done in a school. And yet the cognitive plays an important role: it requires applying.

SAM MELTON'S PHONE CALL

We're weren't always successful. Sam Melton in Columbus had an intense dislike for Orthodoxy. When we set up the program, part of the arrangement was that we'd start a school in Columbus. But he warned us: if we made the place Orthodox, then it's all over. Late one night, during the school's first year, I got a call from Sam, who said, "This school is finished!" Why? One of the teachers had declared that the cookies being served at the synagogue were treif, and that was enough. I went straight to the airport, not even stopping to think if there were flights at that hour. When I finally arrived, I learned that the teacher, a Ramah product, had objected to the ingredients on a box of cookies, whereupon the rabbi, who was no Heschel, and also no Einstein, had thrown a fit.

I went to see Sam, and after he threw his tantrum, I said, "What are you getting exciting about? This is nothing. Wait until we really get successful. What's going to happen when these kids come home and tell their fathers that they can't treat mom that way any more? Or when they tell their fathers that it's not all right to cheat on their taxes?" Sam burst out crying, and said, "Okay, run your program."

ORIGINS OF THE MELTON PROGRAM

It started with his visit to the Seminary in 1959. I was acting dean of the Teachers Institute, and everybody showed up to meet Sam Melton. We thought he was there to announce a big gift, but as he read his speech with his shaking hands, he said, "I'm giving my money to Brandeis because you people have failed. My kids are learning nothing in their school."

Soon the other guys in the room started to slip out until I was the only one left. "Mr. Melton," I said, "let me save you some trouble. Just outside of this building there's a big sewer. Why don't you take your money and drop it in there? Why give it to Brandeis? They don't even have a school of education."

"I'll build one," he said. "No," I replied, "these people are the ones to build it. Plus, we've got Columbia right here. I went to the hotel with him, and for three days we fought it out until I convinced him to give us the money.

People said I used rabbinical accounting. Well, the Melton Center and the brain trust of Ramah were the same, and we would finance each other. The parents' money would come in during the fall, and we'd use it until we received Sam Melton's contributions.

"I want a place that will teach people the Ten Commandments," he told me. That alone was enough to make you give up! I told him we'd build a program, but I asked him why he wanted to teach the Ten Commandments. He explained that his whole upbringing had been one big program of character education.

He came to see us in 1959, and I went to see him in 1961 for a bigger gift. When I walked in he started to scream at me that we

would receive no more money, because we had done nothing for two years. But at the end of that meeting he gave us an endowment. This was the first time I had ever seen a speaker-phone, by the way. To confirm his gift, I asked him to call Finkelstein and announce it. (I didn't know it then, but Melton's word was good.) Finkelstein got on the phone, and Sam said, "All I have is a piece of stationery, and this whole thing is a big nothing. But I'm giving you an endowment anyway." I believe it was for $750,000, but he always increased his gifts to us.

My approach to Jewish education is that of a big cafeteria. Some people will be attracted to religion, while others are tone-deaf. Some will be attracted to the cognitive -- like Maimonides. Others will be touched by music, by the family, or by mitzvot.

Ramah comes out of a belief that **you have to hit on all levels** -- the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, the artistic.

I believe that Mordecai Kaplan will turn out to be greater than we realized, because he saw Judaism as a religious civilization. We need to cast out a wide net.

Michael Steinhardt gave me a good phrase: he said **we're going to have to deal with post-materialist man.** Some people can live on material things, but others are looking beyond that for meaning. They want to know what our tradition is about, and somebody has to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms so that it speaks to people. Sometimes you get a genius like Heschel, or like Kaplan, but you have to build places where those people will come and flourish.

PRAYER

On Friday night I went to Bnai Jeshurun, which is clearly influenced by Ramah. Every Friday night it's mobbed. They have found a way for people to get in before they're ready to get in. They sing the whole service. It's done magnificently, and it can be reproduced in any synagogue. You don't need Pavoratti.

The best prayer experience I had was at the Mador in Palmer in 1970. I remember singing Ein K'erkecha and not being able to stop. Now of course we had the time; we weren't in a hurry.

But it's wrong to channel all our energy into theology. It's important, but it's not the whole story. Do I count? Do my feelings count? And what about the fragility of life? There's a concept that you have to live your life as if today was your final day, but that didn't really touch me until I turned 59.

Yochannan Muffs helped me understand that Judaism is one large system of pedagogy. Take the idea of tefillah, which is quite different from other religions. Catholicism has that grandeur; it provides an awful lot that we don't. We concentrate instead on the power of the word, which will only happen if you let the word speak to you. Prayer isn't something you get automatically.

In order to pray you have to understand the words. You have to learn the technique of letting the words speak to you -- a kind of internal catharsis. Maimonides talked of prayer as the emulation of God. And the largest part of prayer is praising the attributes of God. Why? Maimonides says it's a challenge of emulation -- that we, too, have to become merciful. I find the Elohai N'zor prayer to be very embarrassing -- because of what I said five minutes ago. You've got to be willing to let those prayers speak to you.

Saving world Jewry is no less an undertaking than establishing the state of Israel.

In contrast to systems where an authority knows and you follow, in our system you can't survive without applying principle to practice. And sometimes you have conflicting principles, such as the conflict between to'cheiach to'hiach and not embarrassing a person in public. These are principles in tension, and you can't always be running to the rabbi. In Judaism you have to learn how to sort principles and how to apply them, and that's a very different cognitive assignment than what schools do.

That's what Talmud is supposed to do -- it's a dialectic of principles applying to cases. You're supposed to learn the technique to become spiritually mature. You come to the rabbi only for the extreme situation.

THE NEW SIDDUR

The rabbis were fighting for their identity as conservative Jews, so they developed their own siddur with maybe four small linguistic changes in the entire book. This was the Silverman siddur. **Should we use this new prayerbook at Ramah?**

Aaron Blumenthal, a rabbi in White Plains, and Rabbi Aronson from Minneapolis, said: We don't permit the R.A. [Silverman] prayerbook at Ramah because it would be divisive to the faculty and a few of our campers. There was a big summit meeting at the Poconos, with Cherry of Philadelphia, Blumenthal, Aronson, and others, and Wolfe Kelman saved the day. We said to the rabbis: "You've got to give us some time to build this institution. We can't lose any of these forces. Hold off on the prayerbook." Wolfe produced the votes. He knew how to talk to these guys.

THE BULL SESSION

This was a ritual among adolescent girls under the guise of improving your friends. People sat in a circle, usually at night, and it went on for hours. Everybody was supposed to tell the other what was wrong with her under the rubric of self-improvement. But it always ended up with scapegoats and tears. When this practice became a problem, we decided to make it illegal, like eating treif. But if you simply outlaw it, they'll just do it after you're out.

Bettelheim told me that these groups were led by bullies. He outlined some likely symptoms: a group disliking its counselor, a counselor not coping, certain intergroup tensions. I had a rule: when the symptoms became too severe, I had to be called in. I wouldn't let the counselor handle it. I came into a cabin with some very smart operators. "We don't understand what the problem is," they said. "We want to help each other."

I said, "Okay, I want to participate." Nervously, they agreed. I started listening, and soon I interrupted. "This is fine," I told them, "but Ramah is a Jewish place, and one thing you can't do as a Jew is to embarrass other people. I buy your goal, but I don't like your method. What if we studied a text together that spoke about the way we ought to behave, and each person did the evaluation privately?" Here the healthy girls prevailed over the sadistic ones. But it's hard to win this battle unless you have an alternative. We studied the sixth chapter of Avot, and discussed what it meant to be a good friend. We took each item in turn, and discussed it every night for four weeks. That's what I was doing as the director.

This was a case where the cognitive became the trigger for looking at life situations, or the response to life situations.

SHOULD MINCHA BE OPTIONAL?

Ramah was characterized by a generosity of spirit on all sides.

Prof. Shimshon Rosenthal was an ultra-orthodox Jew from Israel, with a long beard. He cast the deciding role that Mincha at Ramah would be optional. It was that close.

I remember the meeting. The argument was presented that these kids could not davven three times a day as a requirement. Shacharit was enough. Okay, said the faculty, let's make it de facto optional. No, say the educators, that violates the integrity of the camp. If it's truly optional, we have to be straight with the kids and tell them that. They vote to make it optional, and the logic that carries the day is that we have to distinguish between halachah and education.

The bet was, When you give shacharit a fair chance, you might get Mincha.

Rosenthal argued that American Jewry fit into the halachic concept of tinok shenishba, a child that's been kidnapped. If a Jewish child was kidnapped by outsiders, how would you reintroduce him to the tradition? Roserthal said that this applied to the entire community, which had lost its heritage, so you had to develop it pedagogically.

> [Joel Roth in The Ramah Experience]
> If a halakhist/consultant is asked to state which of the three daily services he would recommend as mandatory at Ramah, assuming that the status of the campers is that of tinokot she-nishbu, it is not surprising in any way that he would recommend Shacharit. Whether explained officially or

not, Shacharit is preferable to Minchah because it includes k'riat Sh'ma in addition to an Amidah, and is preferable to Ma'ariv because Ma'ariv has a different legal status than Shacharit, having originally been r'shut.

As a halakhist/consultant he has answered the question. But he has been insensitive to issues that he would not have ignored if he had also been a halakhist/educator. For example: What educational steps are being taken to ensure that campers and staff understand that a heter for tinokot she-nishbu is just that, and is not intended to be a normative prescription? Are adequate steps being planned to ensure that campers and staff who wish to participate in voluntary services may do without being perceived by others as Orthodox and without forcing them to make a difficult choice between the voluntary service and some other camp activity? Are those who are establishing camp policy attuned to the possibility that older divisions, particularly those with a high percentage of returning campers, might progress from voluntary Minchah to mandatory Minchah? Who is worrying that an educational hora'at sha'ah not become halakhah le-dorot?

BUT WHEN THE KIDS COME HOME. . .

Solomon Goldman, a great conservative rabbi in Chicago, and Finkelstein's only competitor, brilliant orator, called me in one day and said: "Young man, **your campers at Ramah come back here and won't davven in our shul.** You're producing a fifth column."

I said to him, "Is your service the ideal, or the optimal?"

> [Moshe Davis interview in Melton Journal]
> One of the most difficult experiences I had was with a rabbi who will remain unnamed....This particular rabbi had an abiding respect for me, and it was mutual. He took hold of me one day and chafed: "Moshe, for heaven's sake, you're destroying my congregation." I said, "What do you mean I'm destroying your congregation?" He said, "The kids come back from Ramah and then they don't want to come to my service!"
>
> "Where do they go?" I asked. "They go downstairs and pray with the older generation where it's all in the original, because they don't like the English." And I retorted: "For the same heaven's sake, since when must Ahavat Olam be read in English? When did that become a cardinal principle of Conservative Judaism? We introduced English readers because we wanted to maintain interest in the service. Now that the children know the prayers in the Hebrew, that's a higher madreiga."
>
> And he countered, "Ramah has become, in my congregation, detrimental to my interests." This is a striking example of one existing tension.

It was critical that the leader of the camp was an educator rather than a businessman. After all, the camps were handling fairly large sums of money. But the boss had to be an educator, and he could hire a business manager. That came from the Seminary. The rest of the world ran the other way, so people had problems with that. But there was no way that our principles were going to be bent to economic viability.

I opposed the Mishlachat at first. I didn't want Israelis coming. I saw them as people who came here to buy refrigerators. I was wrong. Over the years I've made some doozer mistakes.

What about electricity on Shabbat?

We developed an interesting position, which was hard for everybody to buy, which was: No public use of electricity, but complete private use. That isn't the halachic position; it's the educational position. It **wasn't a compromise.** It was an educational decision. You and I have different convictions. I have to be able to live the way I want.

A guy like Ray Arzt was a genius at developing preparation for Shabbat. I think they started on Wednesday.

White clothes on Shabbat began as a way to end the fashion parade. You had girls walking in with twenty suitcases, and they never got a chance to wear it all. It was a constant struggle, and white clothing was the solution. People came up with ideas that fit the problems and the situations.

TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'av was grotesque. It was like Yom Kippur. In Wisconsin, we used to burn down the Beit HaMikdash on an island in the lake.

The lay people loved me. Judah Goldin was dean of the Teachers Institute, and he came to Chicago to offer my candidacy as director of Ramah in Wisconsin. The decision was a unanimous No, because I was impossible.

Finally they took me, because there was no other candidate. But they insisted on some conditions. One was that I wouldn't burn down the Beit HaMikdash again, because it was a fire hazard. I agreed. That summer, two weeks before Tisha B'Av, I explained our new policy. A counselor came up and told me that he had only survived because he had promised his campers that they could burn it down. I called Lou Wyner and offered my resignation. I explained that I had made a promise, but that I couldn't keep it. If I didn't back the counselor, those kids would conclude that a counselor lies, and that's the end of this camp. If a leader breaks faith, he has to go. They board met and they decided to let us burn it down one last time.

I was the leader of a group of fanatics. I was even against staff members taking a day off. If you take a day off, I thought, you're telling a kid that leisure time is when you're not with him. Devotion means that what you want to be is with the kids, so how could you take a day off?

AN UNHAPPY COUNSELOR

Sue Talmy was a gorgeous junior counselor. I just couldn't take my eyes off her. After five days they told me she had to be sent home because the didn't believe in tefillot, and she argued against the rules of the camp, which required the campers to do various thinks. This was mekach ta'ut; she hadn't understood what the place was like.

We met with her, and after several days of conversation we all decide that she should leave. Before she left, she said, "I made a mistake in coming here. But I'll never forget this place, because of the way my situation was treated. There was a genuine attempt to keep me here, and I was respected and taken seriously."

My high school, Marshall, had the best basketball team in Chicago. Although the team was made up of short Jews, we won 99 straight games. The coach taught that the first thing to do was to hit the other guy so as to intimidate the opposition. At Ramah we didn't play that way. Winning was important, but so was being a nice person. **Ramah was a direct confrontation with a series of American values.**

But Ramah didn't always succeed. Some of the things we talked about really happened, but we also had some glaring failures, such as our inability to create the year-round Ramah. There was no excuse for that not happening.

ODDS AND ENDS

I built a building in Wisconsin, a terrible failure, because it had a concrete floor, kids made noise. Leah would stand at the door so no kid would bring in a coke bottle.

Gladys Gewirtz is with me on visitors day Kol Ish Poreit Al Ugavo, every man plays with his organ. The place went bananas, and I just walked out.

Has the educational community taken on the challenge of Jewish continuity, and the problems of assimilation and intermarriage? We need a massive attack on the problem; it won't be solved with a couple of little seminars.

Do you want to affect lay people? You've got to make them think that your project is going to make a difference.

Do you want Jews to be Jewish in this world? You've got to convince them that their being Jewish will make a real difference.

I feel I have a right to plan for the next five years, and then we'll see. How many months do I have? Aniyai Amcha Kodmim. The poor come first. That's what it means legally -- first your family. I've come to recognize the power of that statement.

I have three boys. The youngest is 29, a protege of Chomsky's. He's a great kid. We had dinner, and nobody wanted to leave. This morning we both called each other. Why should we deny this to each other? Are you available for your kids? When I was making it, I had no appreciation for that, and my kids could wait. I'm now understanding that this is a major sin.

I live in Israel because I want to build a model society. There's a way to make a difference because it's small enough.

In rabbinical school I was told that we were studying Jewish texts because we would be changing the tradition. My first wife said I was being taken, and she was right.

Finkelstein used to say that Rabbi Akiva was the first conservative Jew.

Our tradition used to treat women well. How did that change? I was told that we could master the text and make the change.

Having My Fair Lady translated into Hebrew? I thought that was pandering.

Every department thought that the entire camp existed for them. It was a collection of prima donnas.

title

Vision at the Heart: Lessons from Ramah on Transforming Jewish Institutions

subtitle?

A CONVERSATION WITH SEYMOUR FOX

Introduction: There's nothing so practical as a great idea.

— Bill. We'll need the intro, as you and I discussed. We need to say at the outset that great ideas are practical.

THE NEED FOR VISION

You've inserted a question

One of the things you're known for is your conviction that every educational initiative must to be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem ~~self-evident~~ to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. Why are you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people would see as an introductory or preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

Reframe question to focus on vision is the core of SF.

If you begin any new project with serious ideas and lofty ideals, some people will criticize you for being grandiose, or ~~too deliberate~~ for "too much thinking." And it's true that in the natural course of events you will invariably fall short of your carefully thought-out vision. That's the way of the world: if you start out with cognac, you'll be ~~fortunate~~ lucky to end up with grape juice. But that's not a bad result when you consider the alternatives. If you start with grape juice, you'll probably end up with Kool-aid!

Let me put it another way. Education that's essentially

parve -- that's neutral, and doesn't take a strong stand -- stands little chance of working. In my experience, all successful, effective education has at its foundation a specific and well-considered point of view. The proof of that proposition is all around us -- especially these days. Marshall Smith, the Undersecretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite over a thousand pieces of legislation, and the expenditure of billions of dollars from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. The only exceptions were those few schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lightfoot from the Harvard School of Education elaborated on this idea in her 1983 book, The Good High School, where she described and analyzed six successful secondary schools. She found that each of these schools had a distinct vision, and that the attempt to realize that vision was precisely what motivated the headmaster and the staff. In some of these schools, the concerns of teachers, administrators and students were easy to identify because they were articulated explicitly; in others, the "repetitive refrains" and "persistent themes" were expressed in more subtle and indirect ways. But whether the bedrock visions that animated these schools were shouted or whispered, Lightfoot reports, "they emerged at all of the schools I visited."

Another book from the mid-1980s, The Shopping Mall High School, examines the other side of the coin -- that is, what happens when you establish a school without a real vision. The authors contend that by trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, American high schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls. As they put it, "Both types of institution are profoundly

consumer-oriented. Both try to hold customers by offering something for everyone. Individual stores or departments, and salespeople or teachers, try their best to attract customers by advertisements of various sorts, yet in the end the customer has the final word."

In other words, if you offer everything you stand for nothing. Or, as the authors conclude in a real understatement, contemporary high schools "take few moral stands on what is educationally or morally important."

Do they really repeat?!

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it's getting ~~better~~ easier. Five or ten years ago you had to ~~sell~~ convince people ~~on~~ about the importance of vision, but today that idea is increasingly accepted -- if only because we've all seen what happens in its absence. There's a professor at Stanford who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He argues that if your company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes internalized, you can withstand periods of weak leadership -- or even a move toward bureaucracy. In my experience, that holds true for educational institutions as well.

Anyone can claim that a particular idea constitutes a vision, so let's take a moment to establish what a vision is -- and what it isn't.

As I see it, a vision is a living entity. It's not a mission statement, or a declaration of purpose, both of which can be knocked off quickly. More often than not, these end up as frozen, static, and irrelevant assertions.

And a vision is not a goal. Goals are important, but they're specific to a particular educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching

science, for example, and another for the study of Talmud. A vision will offer a series of goals to educators, parents, community leaders and students, who will apply or translate that vision into various concrete programs.

For educators, vision is like oxygen. A great vision will inspire them to be creative, and even to invent new institutions. Goals matter, but they're not sufficient, and sometimes they can be so pedantic that they leave no room for vision.

A vision that is guided by great ideas will survive periods when those ideas are out of favor. In philosophy, for example, trends come and go, but you still find Platonists in every generation.

VISIONS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Let's look at one or two specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind lately because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, John Dewey and the Tide of American Liberalism. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him today, just as I believe that we'll soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan. Dewey had an unlimited optimism ~~for~~ about what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education. "For a generation," wrote Henry Steele Commager, "no issue was really clarified until Dewey had spoken."

Dewey's followers took every line he wrote and transformed it into practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner [1861-1925], who have established dozens of schools across the country. They think about questions like what color to paint the walls in order to

achieve a particular result that's part of Steiner's vision. Whenever you get a vision that excites and involves people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate that vision into practice.

Another example of a successful vision in education is the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence has endured for another half-century. Over the years, Chicago has produce more Nobel Prize winners and more university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely exciting place that was guided by a vision, and it still is.

VISIONS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and most of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish society. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would conform to his concept of Judaism, where the intellect played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that if you educated a new type of individual, he would then create a new vibrant society in the Jewish homeland. The Jews of Israel would become or laGoyim, a light unto the nations.

One of the most important figures in Jewish education in our century was the Brisker Rav, Mordecai Ben Joshua Briszk (1884-1944), who headed the largest yeshiva in Hungary and Transylvania in the years ~~leading up to~~ before the Holocaust. His vision was to build a Jewish elite that would reinfuse Judaism through a critical study of rabbinic texts. His followers built a network of yeshivot, and their influence is felt to this day. They

deliberately chose texts that other Jews dismissed as ~~entirely~~ impractical, such as the sections on sacrifices. Most yeshivot in those days concentrated on those sections of the Talmud that were more immediately relevant -- the ones that dealt with such topics as civil damages, marriage and divorce, ~~and~~ the rituals of prayer, and other examples of halachah that you could actually use.

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more esoteric texts was to miss a great deal. As they saw it, if you skipped over certain sections you were not only distorting the tradition, but you were also neglecting some great treasures. Who's to say where you'll find the most significant texts? Don't presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Or take the Musar movement, which introduced a serious concentration on ethics into the yeshiva world. In most yeshivot this area had been considered too soft, ~~and~~ not worthy of significant attention. But the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter created entire institutions that were concerned with Musar. They believed that the traditional emphasis on pilpul [intellectual argument] in most yeshivot was a distortion of Judaism, because the students failed to develop the proper amount of sensitivity to other people. The Musarists were reacting to a world that they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently ethical.

Their opponents countered that the message of the Musarists was inappropriate because it effectively demeaned the power of the text. In other words, the text already contains within itself the power to affect people's behavior. But eventually the Musarists began to prevail, in that their influence penetrated most of the yeshivot, including the Chassidic ones. The conflict between these two visions continues to this day.

THE FOUNDING OF RAMAH

Let's jump forward a few decades and take a close look at an important Jewish educational institution in which you were intimately involved: Camp Ramah. The founders of Ramah could have put their energy into any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the 1940s and 1950's -- problems that we continue to face ~~in the 1990s.~~ today. First, most Jewish children were not being exposed to meaningful Jewish experiences during their early, formative years. Second, most Jewish families did not significantly contribute to the Jewish education of their children. Third, most North American Jews didn't live in an environment that supported the values of Judaism. During an era when the children of immigrants were busy trying to become Americans, the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. Our response ~~to that~~ was to go beyond what a school could accomplish by trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture that might ~~accomplish~~ what the family and the community were no longer ~~doing~~ able to do.

Even the best school operates only a few hours a day. Our hope was to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole child, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for only eight weeks at a stretch. But within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our issues could be educational in the broadest sense -- not only teaching Hebrew, for example, but grappling with all kinds of social issues: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child screws up a play by forgetting his lines? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living halachah.

Or take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's wonderful to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence, people get hurt. So you have to draw a line -- up to here, and no further. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or speaking Hebrew, our goal was to lower the potential for hurt without seriously compromising the potential for excellence.

The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. But ultimately they chose camping, because the issues they believed had to be addressed could not be handled by a school -- even a day school. Among other limitations, a school -- even a day school -- isn't best place to effect a child's emotional incubation into Jewish life. Ultimately, the challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child -- including, but not limited to, the child's mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

~~THE MEN WHO FOUNDED RAMAH~~

It's generally known that Ramah's Jewish vision was guided by the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. But who were these men, and what, exactly, did they contribute?

I would start with Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism at that time. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, and that this message applied not only to Jews, but to our society at large. He even wrote an article on the subject for Fortune after Henry Luce had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world. [Note: quick twenty-year search of Reader's Guide fails to turn up any

references to Fortune author. But Time put him on its cover in October 1951.]

Above all, Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply Talmudic principles to the issues of modern American life. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify because he was dying to tell the Committee: "I will not answer your questions because you cannot speak to me the way you do. In our tradition we have a position outlined in the Talmud, in Massechet Sanhedrin, known as drisha v'chakirah, ~~It deals with the issue of~~ about how you interrogate a witness. And I say to you that you cannot speak to me this way."

This was an essential Finkelsteinian response. He wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within our own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we were a people who have been living on top of the volcano from the very start, and that we had a great deal to offer to a world that was just beginning to discover that we're all living on the volcano.

In postwar America, Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke from a long and venerable tradition. President Eisenhower would consult with him on ethical matters, and ~~he~~ Finkelstein gave the invocation at Eisenhower's inauguration. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the Seminary's Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, where individuals from a variety of worlds and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. If I had to identify a single influence of Finkelstein on Ramah, it would be his passion to produce educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens in the larger society.

Next comes Saul Lieberman's emphasis on the study of Jewish texts. When Ramah first began, people who heard about it were

slightly incredulous: "You're running a summer camp where the daily schedule includes classes?" In those days this was almost unheard of. Kids went to camp to get away from classes, although there were a couple of prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent, or camps devoted to the study of science.

In effect, we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own principal. The classes were mostly text-based, and it was possible to spend the entire summer on the meaning of a single verse. The teachers were considered full-time members of the staff, so they were not given other duties, although that would have made much more sense economically. They needed enough time to prepare, and to be available to any kid who might seek them out.

We believed in open inquiry rather than dogma. We were never looking for intellectual obedience, because we didn't want to end up with constipated minds. Every now and then the Talmud will ask, Minah Nani Mili?: How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will ask this same question about theological issues. But you have to allow these questions, and all questions. A tradition that encourages tough questions will every now and then produce an Einstein, a Marx, or a Freud.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, although that wasn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow Biblical texts to be taught in the Rabbinical School. You'd have to study them critically or scientifically, and the whole topic was so rife with controversy that the Seminary responded by avoiding it. The Prophets? — fine, but not the Torah.

Meanwhile, we at Ramah were putting out all of this Melton-sponsored material on Genesis. In the early 1960s our book was in galleys, but we still didn't have approval to use it. I went to see Lieberman -- not because I necessarily had to, but

because it would have been irresponsible not to check in with the rabbi of the Seminary Synagogue, to whom Finkelstein deferred on matters of Jewish practice, and even doctrine. I brought along a report on the social science program of the Westchester public schools, where the students were being taught to distinguish among "science" (meaning, The Truth), "philosophy" (meaning, True Ideas), and "religion" -- (meaning, in this context, myths and legends).

"This is what we're up against," I told Lieberman, "and this is why we're putting out our book ~~on~~ Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as having divine origins, we're showing that it has an enormously important ethical and religious message to offer."

Lieberman's response was simple: "Thank you for checking with me, but please understand that this conversation never happened." He didn't want to censor us, but the Seminary was a conservative institution, and Ramah was a few years ahead of its time.

Another important influence was Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization. Kaplan believed that Jewish theology could serve as the basis for the salvation of society. He defined God as the power leading toward that salvation, but he was seen as a heretic by some of his more conservative colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologizing of God. Some people felt that Kaplan was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. He had supposedly said that if the Seminary greats, especially Ginsberg and Lieberman, had dealt fully with theological issues, he would have left them alone, and that it was their failure to address these topics that inspired him to ~~deal with these issues~~.

In any case, Kaplan embodied the centuries-old conversation

between Judaism and the great philosophers. He saw Judaism as being in inter-relationship with the world around it, and he brought elements like music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns. Of course, Kaplan and Heschel represented two completely different points of view. The fact that both sides were represented at Ramah gave us an added degree of theological tension and intellectual excitement.

Which brings us to Heschel, whose religious visions was critical to Ramah's success. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message ~~as to~~ about how human beings should live. He believed that Shabbat was a great gift to the world, and he viewed it as a sanctification of time in a society where the sanctity of time was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of certain American holidays were changed for the mere convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend.

For Heschel, prayer was a way for an individual to get in touch with his deepest self. The whole question of what t'fillah [prayer] meant at Ramah was guided by Heschel and his students, including the concept of kavannah [religious intention] and the idea of t'fillah as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement.

Finally there was Hillel Bavli, a professor of Hebrew and a poet. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog, who wanted to make sure that we were really using Hebrew at Ramah, which was no easy task. But all of us believed that if you wanted to participate in Jewish history over the centuries, you had no choice but to master Hebrew. For that was how you became part of the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the great commentators and philosophers. The Seminary faculty also

appreciated the importance of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist at first, and I wasn't either.

After all these years it may be difficult to appreciate what a crazy idea it was to run a summer camp in Hebrew. Massad was already doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism were ~~their~~ Massad's religion. In ~~a~~ the Conservative movement ~~like ours~~, ~~that~~ which was competing in the struggle to define and live out an authentic Judaism in the twentieth century, to make Hebrew the official language of Ramah was a powerful yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and that trend has continued; today, Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can get the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language? Of course it's also possible to go too far in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, especially in places like Mexico and Argentina, Hebrew became the main goal of Jewish education and content became secondary.

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, will develop ~~a person~~ people who are deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition through an attachment to Jewish texts, which they can grapple with because they have some mastery of the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the method, anyone can join the conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: the method is Hebrew. [Our texts cannot be any translation doesn't do it.]

But while Hebrew is essential, it's not sufficient. You need several other components, too, including text, mitzvot, prayer, a communal consciousness both narrow and wide and an involvement in the larger society. And at Ramah you had all these forces coming together.

I regarded ~~these five professors~~ as my teachers, and I felt I would be violating (the contribution of) any one of them if I didn't allow his

influence to play out. I spent hours talking with these men, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit from the older generation to the future. The Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide Ramah, and which ran through the 1950s and the 1960s, constituted what was possibly the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the history of the Diaspora. We asked ourselves questions like: What is the ideal product of Camp Ramah? What are the themes and values that we want our campers to internalize? We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today.

[Unclear exactly what the Seminar is, and whether these five were part of it.]

Bill: Apparently I'm not! Definitely cross check on process w/in Seminary; Melton Research Seminar; Melton Faculty Seminar.

~~A CREATIVE TENSION~~

Two of the five major influences on Ramah, Heschel and Kaplan, were so different in their respective outlooks that today they're generally seen as polar opposites within the theology of Conservative Judaism. Did these differences causes problems for a camp that was searching for a clear ideology?

No, because from the start, Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be defined by a single vision. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because people feel a natural pull toward consistency. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was a practical place where ideas were put into action, and in that kind of setting an eclectic approach can provide an enormously rich source of energy. It's true that these five professors represented different and

sometimes conflicting ideas, but there was a history here, in that these various approaches had already managed to co-exist within the framework of the Seminary. Ramah was able to take these inconsistencies to the next level by building a society that would be guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the people embodying these particular visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when people agree on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Yochanan Muffs once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism as set forth in Pirke Avot [Ethics of the Fathers, a popular early rabbinic text] -- that is Torah, Avodah, and G'millut chasadim [Study, Worship, and Acts of kindness] -- while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in total harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on t'fillah [prayer], and you become overly involved in theology. Prayer is inner-directed, and by itself it can produce reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivism that the rest of Judaism cannot abide. Focus only on Torah and you'll get disembodied brains, which was exactly what the Musarists were worried about. And Mitzvah all by itself can turn a person into a loose cannon. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in a simple and innocent world, but that's not our reality. The only answer is to try to integrate these three fundamental forces so that they're all part of the picture.

Of course it's much easier to ignite people when you're dealing with extremes. It's harder to produce individuals who are committed to religious tolerance and to democracy, and to get them excited about that. How do you produce people who are genuinely excited about non-fanatic positions? That was our challenge, and I think we achieved it.

THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL IDEAS BEHIND RAMAH

~~JOSEPH SCHWAB AND BRUNO BETTELHEIM~~

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. You also brought in a number of experts from the worlds of general education and social thought.

We had an active and impressive group, known as the Melton Academic Board, whose members included, among others, Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; James Coleman, the distinguished sociologist; Ralph Tyler, a powerful force in American education; Joseph Schwab, the great philosopher of education; and the renown psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I should add that I had written my doctoral thesis under the guidance of both Schwab and Bettelheim at the University of Chicago.

None of these people was paid for participating. They were all intrigued by the ambitiousness of the product, and delighted to be part of it. Schwab even came to camp to lead seminars for the staff before the campers arrived.

Somebody asked me recently what motivated these high-profile professors with little or no interest in Judaism to donate so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with a social scientist's sense of immortality, which can only occur when people read his books and put his ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he actually lived to see them acted upon. What we offered these people was a laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them the confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around a conference table would actually ~~happen~~. Moreover, we never undertook a project without their approval. So we were offering a great opportunity for a professor -- the equivalent of a businessman making a big deal.

Schwab in particular viewed Ramah as a place to produce

disciples, and certainly he was the single most important force in shaping my own ideas about education. In 1985 I contributed to a symposium on his work, and he wrote back to me: "I always said you were the only person who really understood me." I could have died right there.

Tell us more about Joseph Schwab. He seems to have been the key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Schwab devoted a tremendous amount of time to Ramah, and between 1952 and 1966 I used to spend at least two days a month with him. He came in to help us with issues such as the connection between the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (emotional). Ramah was built on the belief that you have to reach kids on all levels -- the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the artistic. I see Jewish education is a kind of big cafeteria. Some kids will be touched by the music, while others are tone deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to intellectual commentaries or to abstract theology. Ideally, of course, kids will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal of wisdom, but the mind is not the only way to access it.

In an essay entitled "Eros and Education," Schwab argued that the mind is not only cerebral but passionate, and that the intellect is hardly an emotion-free area. He also believed there was no emotional area that didn't have cognitive elements. And he was convinced that there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, between intellect and emotion.

As he wrote in that essay, Eros was all about "the energy of wanting." The aim of education, he wrote, was to produce "<u>actively</u> intelligent people," whom he described as follows:

> They <u>like</u> good pictures, good books, good music, good movies. They <u>find</u> <u>pleasure</u> in planning their active lives

and carrying out the planned action. They hanker to make, to create, whether the object is knowledge mastered, art appreciated, or actions patterned and directed. In short, a curriculum is not complete which does not move the Eros, as well as the mind of the young, from where it is to where it might better be.

Schwab believed that the definition of "to know" had to include "to do," and the concept of mitzvah was especially intriguing to him. Although he was never an observant Jew, or even an educated one, there was a natural fit between his ideas and our goals.

We also worked with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. That made sense to him because at the University of Chicago we never used textbooks, only original material. We spent hours with Schwab discussing how best to teach the story in Genesis of how Jacob and Rebekkah conspired to cheat Isaac and Esav. Jacob is a crook and his mother is a liar, and poor Isaac is deceived.

The larger issue here is that when you're working with adolescents, how do you tell them the truth -- that the world is often a terrible place -- without killing their idealism? This was a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it at some length. How do you teach that there are often shades of gray when adolescents normally reject that idea? Freud wrote in Civilization and its Discontents that the way most educators prepare young people for the world is the intellectual and moral equivalent of sending explorers on a polar expedition in summer clothing. How do you tell them the truth about the world without ~~killing or~~ doing damaging to their innate enthusiasm, hope and ~~idealism?~~

If you look at leadership training in recent years, you'll see two main schools of thought. The British school says: Study

the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and Shakespeare will give you the principles you need. Alfred North Whitehead said that everything he needed in life could be found in the Bible and ancient Greece. The American model, as you might expect, is less theoretical. The Harvard Business School says: If we can provide enough case studies, which include the principles and situations you'll encounter during your career, you'll be able to flourish in the real world.

Schwab had a third conception that was really a blend of these other two, and it fit nicely with the goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and then give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these ~~traditions~~ principles.

The other major figure in this group was Bruno Bettelheim. What was his contribution?

While some members of the Melton Academic Board responded to Ramah in terms of their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who saw Judaism, and presumably all religion, as an anachronism. But he was a realist, and he still appreciated what we were trying to do. As a graduate student at Chicago I had spent some time at Bettelheim's school for autistic children, and with the chutzpah of youth, I once mentioned to him that the school did not always measure up to what I had read in his book, Love is Not Enough. "You're right," he replied. "The book is a description of what the school was supposed to be." He acknowledged that it fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean that it wasn't guided and helped by that vision.

One of the great successes of Bettelheim's school lay in its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for these kids. Bettelheim used every available resource -- from the architecture to the food -- to make that happen. I believed that

the camper's bunk at Ramah ought to function in a similar way as a refuge from the inevitable pressures and problems of an intense summer camp; and Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

Because of Bettelheim, there were two jobs at Ramah that I refused to delegate. The first was overseeing the menu during the first week of camp. I wanted to be sure that we were serving familiar foods like hamburgers -- foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a kid's home to this new environment. The other thing I made sure of was that ~~during the first week, especially~~, there had to be as many helpings as a camper wanted, so nobody would leave the table hungry. We even had the counselors serving extra snacks at night. We were a little nuts when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board.

Another thing I learned from Bettelheim was the importance of the school janitor, because for some kids this individual was a more significant educational figure than the teachers and other professionals. At Ramah we always paid close attention to the kinds of people we hired, not only the counselors and teachers, but the service staff as well. Some of our dishwashers were Harvard kids who didn't know enough Hebrew, but who wanted to be at Ramah. They accepted menial jobs in order to come to the camp, and we responded by giving them the very best teachers.

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy -- that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where kids could be wild and noisy, and another place where a kid could find peace and quiet. One of the most important things Bettelheim helped us understand was that we had a great built-in advantage that we hadn't been fully aware of, and that was hugely appealing to our older campers: <u>that</u>

because Ramah was in opposition to some basic American suburban values, the camp was inherently counter-cultural in a way that was attractive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

It was Bettelheim who told me about Eric Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson had portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed, and that history was reversible. That's an idea that educators need to hear. I went to see Erikson at Harvard, and before long his books were being read and discussed at camp.

Our ongoing conversations with Schwab, Bettelheim, and their colleagues created a questioning and dynamic environment. We continually asked ourselves: if this is what serves the needs of children, how can we best offer it within Judaism and the Ramah setting?

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

It strikes me that during its formative years, Ramah was unapologetically elitist in a way that might not be acceptable these days.

Back then, of course, elitism was a commonly shared assumption, and nobody would have questioned it. It was a necessary consequence of a commitment to excellence. The Seminary sought out great scholars and the best possible students, and to a large degree it got them. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was difficult to get in, and there were long waiting lists.

We believed that if you invested in the right people, they would change the world. Judaism may be a classless tradition, but it's an elitist one. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone can make it to the top. But we also believed there is a top.

well done

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE (IN THE REAL WORLD)

We've looked at some of the intellectual background that helped create Ramah. I'd be interested in how some of the ideas and principles that came up in the Melton (Faculty) Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

When Burton Cohen, the first director of our Wisconsin camp, was Schwab's graduate student, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on Exercises in Ethical Reasoning. This was an attempt to get people who have mastered a text to simulate what it would mean to act it out in practice. Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one, so Cohen split it up into five distinct stages.

(these 5 stages are Schwab's, no?)

The first stage is philosophy.

The second stage is philosophy of education.

The third stage is: What does this mean for educational practice?

The fourth stage is actual practice: teacher education, curriculum, and pedagogy.

The fifth stage consists of monitoring and evaluation, and of building a corrective into everything you're doing. Moving from theory to practice should be a dynamic process, where you're constantly observing, improving, and rethinking.

What would it mean to apply these stages to (a specific area, such as) T'fillah, or prayer?

Stage 1: What is t'fillah? Why does ~~man~~ (people) need it? Where does it fit into Judaism? How is Jewish prayer different from prayer in other religions? Where did it come from and how did it develop?

One possible answer is that ~~man is a~~ (we are) spiritual being(s), and prayer is one avenue through which ~~he~~ (we) can express ~~his~~ (our).

Q: Here's how you would use these stages as a grid to help you answer how you would treat the subject of prayer in an educational setting.

spirituality. Or you might say, following Maimonides, that most of our prayer consists of adoration. Does God really need that adoration? Of course not. To Maimonides, God functions as a role model; if God is merciful, then you should be merciful. Our discussion could end here and remain theoretical.

Stage 2: What do we want to teach children about prayer? Is prayer something that small children can engage in, or is it better to stick with simple repetition? How do you teach kids about kavannah -- spiritual intention? How do you tap the innate spirituality in a child?

With Stage 3 we move into educational practice. What is your teaching strategy? You might decide that you really can't do much until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or reciting certain words will set off something inside of you. And what about specific melodies? What about meditation?

Stage 4 has to do with your curriculum. Exactly what are you teaching about prayer, and how are you going about it? How are you going to educate teachers?

Stage 5: How will you monitor this activity and make the necessary changes and improvements? In addition to understanding what they're doing, teachers have to want to do it, and they have to be able to do it.

As long as we're talking about prayer: given the general intellectual openness of Ramah, why was it mandatory for campers to attend services?

Because in order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. And, as Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately love. It takes work and experience before you appreciate it.

For t'fillah to succeed you have to work at it, and eventually it becomes meaningful -- or not. Rejection is always an option, but it ought to be a thoughtful and considered one.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism under at Ramah would become deeply involved in it. Of course, all education works on that assumption, whether you're talking about science, music, or the classics. If you're introduced to something of quality by good teachers, you'll buy it. That's the faith assumption of education.

But while morning services were compulsory at Ramah, we were far more lenient about afternoon services. Halakhically, the Minchah service is no less important than Shacharit, but there's a limit as to how far you can push. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on Minchah at camp, then we'd lose much of the impact of Shacharit. In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional Minchah at Ramah, recognizing that this was an educational position rather than a legal or religious one. It was a difficult fight; and in the end it was decided by one vote.

On the other hand, Ramah never used the Rabbinical Assembly prayerbook because a phrase or two had been altered on the subject of sacrifices. The Seminary faculty refused to approve that edition, and the rabbis were furious. But we wanted to be inclusive. We wanted the Seminary faculty to participate in our services, and we didn't want a civil war over four words.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, people observe Shabbat in a variety of ways?

We were somewhat more flexible about Shabbat observance. As we saw it, the camp's public space had to be maintained as a religious preserve. That is, while I couldn't stop you from

turning on the radio in the privacy of your bunk, we wanted people to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible. As with the issue of Minchah, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not, of course, a halakhic position. It was an educational decision.

But many things at Ramah were simply non-negotiable, including Hebrew, classes, services, kashrut, and instructional swim. If I were doing it all over again, however, I probably wouldn't insist on the recitation of birkat HaMazon after every meal.

Let's return to the five stages that move us from the theoretical realm to the practical. We've already seen how they might apply to prayer. But what about a very different area, like sports?

With sports those five stages might look something like this. Stage 1 would begin with general questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is a healthy body in our tradition different than a healthy body in Hellenism?

Then, in Stage 2, you might ask, What is the role of sports in education? You might talk about the importance of fairness and rules, and about issues such as cooperation and competition. In Stage 3 you would think about more practical issues. What is the role of sports going to be in your institution? How important is it? To what extent will you allow it to compete with other activities? Are you prepared to let a student graduate who shows absolutely no interest in sports? What about a student who doesn't respect and value his body?

In Stage 4 you might think about issues of curriculum and teacher education. How will you teach kids to be good losers? And good winners, for that matter. Finally, in Stage 5, you

would take a critical look at your program and figure out what needed to be changed or improved.

It sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about its being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really is a link from those ideals to the real world?

If you develop your ideals carefully and thoughtfully, and you constantly reinforce the message that they really matter, you can make those principles come alive. We once had a thirteen-year-old camper who used to wet his bed. We used to have late-night staff meetings, and I clearly remember that no matter what we were discussing, or important it was, at 11:45 PM each night Joe Lukinsky and Burt Cohen would run to this kid's bunk and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they'd wake him up and change his sheets before the other kids woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the principle of haMalbin at chaveiro b'rabim -- that you avoid any situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

The professors at the Seminary used to stress the importance of mitzvot pertaining to ben adam l'chavero -- social and interpersonal relations -- and Ramah was, in a very real sense, the distillation of their wisdom. Yes, kashrut is important, but what makes you think that what goes into your mouth is any less important than what comes out?

That reminds me of another case involving the principle of not causing embarrassment to a fellow human being. We had a problem one summer in a bunk where adolescent girls would have a "bull session" -- a late-night discussion during which, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl's faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. But these sessions invariably ended in tears, with some of the girls being scapegoated.

When this turned into a serious problem, we wanted to outlaw these sessions. But of course if you do that, the kids will continue doing it as soon as the counselor leaves. When the situation became severe, I came into the bunk to talk to the girls. "We don't understand what the problem is," they told me. "We just want to help each other."

"That sounds fine," I said, "but I'd like to sit in." I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. "You know," I told them, "I appreciate what you're doing. I buy your goal, but I have a problem with your method. Ramah is a Jewish community, and one thing you can't do as a Jew is embarrass other people. What if we studied a text together that talked about how people should behave toward each other, and then each girl did her own self-evaluation privately?" At this point, because I had provided an alternative, the healthy girls prevailed over the sadistic ones. We studied the sixth chapter of Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), and discussed, among other things, what it means to be re'a ahuv -- an intimate friend. We took each item in turn, and we discussed it every night for four weeks. That was part of my job as the director. This was a case where the cognitive approach served as a response to a difficult life situation.

INVESTING IN STAFF

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one bunk -- especially at Ramah, where there were so many specialists.

We weren't too concerned about conserving our resources. We had three full-time staffs at Ramah, which is outrageous: counselors, specialists, and teachers. There were no double roles because different people had different functions, although I'm not sure we were right about that. But this was part of the utter madness of Ramah: we were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pushed you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to serious problems for the camper. Whether it's sports, singing, acting, or anything else, competition and striving for excellence can be a tough business. Classes were tough, too, because the teacher would force you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, the counselor was there to pick up the pieces.

[What kind do you mean?]

Perhaps the most unusual position at Ramah was that of the camp librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available to anyone who needed his help. We got this idea from the kibbutz movement, which produced a book called Edah Mechanenet. [translate] Ideally, the kibbutz teacher would continue the morning's conversation with you privately in the afternoon. Similarly, the camp teacher was supposed to continue the discussion that you began in class -- the kind of discussion that's a luxury back in the city, where the usual goal is to cover a certain amount of material in a specific amount of time. In camp, the discussion -- or the process, if you prefer -- was everything. [relationship unclear between librarian and this book]

LAY PEOPLE AS PARTNERS

~~WORKING WITH LAY PEOPLE~~

Let's step back from the camp itself to consider a constituency that is often overlooked, but that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the lay people who support it.

These days, lay people are more supportive of good educational programs, and more active in their support than in the past. Until the mid-1980s, most American Jews of means and status cared about Israel, hospitals, and the defense organizations. Jewish education and Jewish culture ranked very

low. There were a few exceptions, such as Morton Mandel in Cleveland, Philip Lown in Boston, and Sam Melton in Columbus. But during the 1960s and 1970s you could probably count on one hand the number of influential lay people who really cared about Jewish education.

Today, all that has changed. More and more, people are coming to realize that Israel's best asset is a strong Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing more in Jewish education. Fortunately, this point of view has recently become fashionable, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. In addition, today's lay people insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support. They also tend to be more knowledgeable.

Of course, the content issues are also different today. When the Melton Center was established, the underlying question was: What claim does Judaism have on me if I don't necessarily believe that its origins are divine? Today, the question is somewhat different: With the entire world at my reach, and with Judaism as one choice out of many, why should I commit myself to this particular journey? Why do I need all these restrictions on what I do and who I marry? An educational system has to answer that question on several levels. But how do you communicate your message to somebody with a thirty-second attention span? What is your vision? What is your content? What is your didactic method going to be? These are the questions for today.

But we now have some major assets that we didn't have then. There are professors and well-educated lay people all over North America who care about Jewish education. And families can draw on a variety of different programs. There are hundreds of day schools in North America, some fine university programs, and several excellent trips to Israel.

As long as we're on the subject of lay people, I'd like your

advice on what for many would-be institution-builders is a difficult and intimidating process, although it's absolutely essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm talking about fundraising, of course, which is an area where you've been especially successful.

I realize this may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is the least of our problems. That hasn't always been true, but these days there's more than enough money around to support a wide variety of excellent projects.

The key thing is your own enthusiasm. I have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I was willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're not enthusiastic about the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey your vision and your commitment to the people you're approaching. And you really have to mean it. I believe that we're all transparent, and that as human beings we're continually judging each other and asking, "Is this person genuine? Is he sincere?"

Another thing: I always start with the assumption that the person I'm asking is at least as smart as I am. And that there's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it's my job to convince him -- or better, to educate him. Only if you take the time to educate people about your project will they be able to make informed decisions. Treat donors like a cow to be milked, and they'll be resentful -- with good reason. But treat them instead as people who can join you and help you in creating this new enterprise, and you may well get somewhere.

Now although the situation is far better than it used to be, **the relationship between Jewish educators and wealthy givers is still largely adversarial.** The professionals still ask, How can

this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew? And the lay people still think: If this guy were really successful, he'd be in a business like mine. It's unfortunate, but it's true.

I see three common mistakes in fundraising, and they're all connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor like a dope. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is failing to disclose the full truth about what you're doing, including your problems and your failures.

I'll tell you my favorite fundraising story. I was walking with Sam Melton at Ramah in the Poconos, and we pass a kid on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asks him.

"Chumash," answers the kid, who had no idea who this man was.

"Chumash with what?" Sam asks him.

"Chumash with Melton," the kid replies.

At that moment I didn't need to do any more fundraising.

VISION VS. BUDGET

Still, there must be times when a well-developed educational vision and a prudent business plan are at odds with each other.

At Ramah that happened all the time. The camp was economically inefficient, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, where we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high school graduates, who then agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a practical standpoint it was dumb to devote so much money to this one program. And what about the camp librarian, and the professor in residence? These people are expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs, with a talented person heading up each one? But when you can give parents reason to hope that you can help their kid evolve into a mentsch, there's very little you can't ask for.

It was critical that the camp director was always an educator rather than a businessman. The rest of the world worked the other way, especially an institution that was handling reasonably large sums of money. But we refused to allow our principles to be dependent on their economic viability, and fortunately, the Seminary supported us in that view. Each camp had a business manager, of course, which was an extremely important job. But Ramah was always led from the educational side.

WHERE RAMAH FAILED

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, visions of cognac usually turn into grape juice -- and that's if you're lucky. What are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

Looking back on it, I see five major failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of the enterprise. This was a major mistake for two reasons. First, we weren't able to catch problems in time to fix them. Ralph Tyler once told me that not conducting evaluations was the educational equivalent of testing the patient as he's leaving the hospital. In other words, we were getting no feedback on what we were doing until it was too late to do anything about it.

If our results were really as promising as they seemed, we should have been documenting the testimonies. It's amazing that we never once asked our campers to write about their experiences! We were so busy building something new that we didn't even stop to look at it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and to some people it sounds like a

luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a serious evaluation, more often than not it's a fundraising technique rather than as an attempt at self-improvement. But it ought to be done.

Ramah's second failure was that for all our efforts, we didn't really become a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and we simply didn't do well enough in this area. It's true that most of our counselors didn't know enough Hebrew, but that's no excuse. We could have taught them Hebrew in the off-season, perhaps in a series of regional centers. We could have sent them to Israel. But we didn't do either.

We had no real curriculum for Hebrew at Ramah, and no language labs. We didn't even look to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at Hebrew because that's all they were doing.

I have to share in the blame on this one, because I failed to give Hebrew enough emphasis. My attitude was if there's ever a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. In the Melton Faculty Seminars, Moshe Greenberg, Gerson Cohen, and Moshe Davis all fought for more Hebrew and they were right. So did Sylvia Ettenberg, whom I consider the great hero of Ramah, and who represents the only coherent continuation from the founding of the camp until her recent retirement, a span of forty-five years. She was both an anchor for lay people and a nurturer of directors.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel. For years I kept Israelis out of the camp, because the ones I had met had come to America to buy appliances. But eventually I became convinced that we should bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and

specialists, and I personally chose the first members in 1967. [A sentence about their contribution.]

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. Our original hope was to hire full-time directors to maintain the camp program during the year by working with the Conservative Movement's Leadership Training Fellowship program. The summer months could have served as the climax of the year, or perhaps the launch of a new year -- or both. All the camps could have been winterized. On this one we simply quit too early. We didn't even get far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum. It's amazing, but we never formalized the various camp programs, although some of them were remarkable. There was some sharing of ideas among the camps, but not nearly enough. There was far too much re-inventing of the wheel, and probably too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: we were afraid of formalizing what we had and thereby killing it.

The final failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between Ramah and the camper's home community. We paid a lot of attention to this problem, and I think we were on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help the kid who returns to a non-kosher home. Because we respected the camper's relationship to his family, we did not encourage kids to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat.

To our surprise, the problem with returning campers was not with their families, but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, it was enormously hard for our kids to return to a service that was led by a rabbi who was pompous -- or who might seem pompous when contrasted with the informality of camp -- and a service that often seemed stilted and complacent. and intensity

It hadn't occurred to us that in some sense we were creating misfits. We were arrogant enough to think that our campers could turn around the Conservative movement. And to some extent they did, although that process took years. Many, many Ramah campers went on to become Conservative rabbis. When I first arrived at the Jewish Theological Seminary, it was filled with refugees from Orthodoxy, but there's been a dramatic change in the demographics. And of the people active in professional Jewish life, especially in institutions of Jewish culture and learning, Ramah is extremely well represented. The same holds true for North Americans who have made aliyah.

And we did succeed in growing our own tomatoes. That is, much of our staff consisted of former campers. We had some terrific directors, and most of them, too, came up through the ranks. We made sure our directors were well-paid. We created an actual profession, and these people got tenure, just like faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups and issues, including lay people, staff, rabbis, educators, kids, parents -- not to mention complex issues like money and religious ideology. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant that ~~aside from us~~ they had a clear and obvious career line -- usually in the pulpit, or in education or Jewish communal life. But with Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their careers -- some of them for years, and others for the rest of their lives.

LESSONS FOR NEW INSTITUTIONS

What would you identify as the most significant lessons that other institutions can possibly learn from Ramah?

Above all, Ramah shows how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can stretch itself. Second, I think there's something to be learned by the way Ramah combined sophisticated

content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty. For example, at what point in the weekly camp cycle do you start preparing for Shabbat? Ramah was a place where you constantly saw solid theory and serious ongoing reflection paying off in practice.

Ramah was also about investing in ~~your~~ talent, and about the vital importance of lay supporters. In our case, the lay people protected us from outside attempts to cut down on our educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of real conviction. Ramah made it possible for rabbis, scholars, and lay people to join forces and look beyond their normal reference groups. There was a real generosity of spirit (consistency) and a genuine attempt to understand the other guy's position. Ramah was more than a camp: It was a movement.

Beyond that, I believe that the success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that <u>still</u> don't exist. At some point we will probably see a Jewish boarding school, and presumably other new institutions that will break down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the followers of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, this school, if it should ever come into existence, would serve as a training ground for Jewish citizenship.

As a friend of mine told me recently, <u>our next challenge is to deal with post-materialist man</u>. people More and more, people are looking for meaning beyond their physical realities. They want to know what our tradition is all about, and somebody has to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms so that it speaks to them. Sometimes you get a genius like Heschel or Kaplan, but you can't spend your life waiting for these people to come along. Far better, in my view, to build places where future Heschels and Kaplans will develop and flourish. [END]

[bio of Seymour]
[bibliography in guest and Jewish education or goals, vision]

Schwab
Dewey
Tyler
Bettelheim
Coleman

Komish - Seymour Cambridge 2/6/96 Gemiin

Why u vision so imp?

2-3 yrs ago, you'd have to sell vision

now y don't have to argue it cuz he strongly

Stanford prof. of bus. - vision for bus. v nec imp than its Idship

- If clear & intern, part of will of it & starts, it persists even w/ dips in Idship.
- vision will keep y going thr. and periods when y don't have it kind of Idership y want
- true at universities too

Distinc bet vision & mission statement

- frozen
- but vision is a view that is constantly being developed
- Dewey: responded to, what you by educ in progr. period
- Rest of Dewey
- Sean: Kaplan
- When great ideas guide a vision, they can have impact but they represent competing philosophies; they don't disappear

What vision, how wd you know what he do? What cd guides educ practice? } Intro

- Inspires practice; educ.; by people
- Vision: a conception that moves them - educ. inspired.
- that's what Dewey & progr. movement did - resp to D's vision of what man cd be like & cd transform society

powers of science & intellect

~~A vision~~ If educ. v not going to affect society, it's sty limited.

A great J vision has - vision for himself, family, people, society & larger society } Intro
role of Js in the world

∴ In J life, all visions dealt w/ these elements.

ex. Maimonides: his concept. of educ, if adopt, wd transform people intellect plays a powerful role. Signif develop, mk it poss for people to live by values that otherwise be impossible.

Zionism - Katz, Brenner. If y educ a new person, he wd create a new society in a land that he & J people. - פתרון

Zvi Lomer - youth movements ignited by this - they really did transform Israel

2/

Vision - What else do y plr + walk h attain these results? (Steiner)

Dewey - Vision: then: What might that mean for educ?

Students at t vision stl what it wd tk to apply thu h practice.

Dewey - Discipline in t classrm - Teacher shd get class h agree on rule at game, and hu role is umpire - remind them at t rules

Youth movements in Israel

Ramah - Campers planned their own activities. Gamble: low planning lds h failure; then kids will have a lousy exp. But lessons

'you don't plan; you have a lousy time.'

Extremes - Excesses.

A vision is true h offer goals & insp h every person a common law.

But educ. try h transl. that vision into t most concrete examples.

(Goals-on t way h apply.

Vision - Ramah: Build an enclave, an ~~Hard life + prof → poem~~ educ setting wh yg people wd be able h discv their Jud & learn how t live it in their daily lives. ~~Educ.~~ Deeply comm h hu Jud but ~~less~~ involv. in Amer Society } Check Vision of Ramah

Consol, philos., mixed

Goals - specific. Teaching of text: ABC

No J movement of reform that wasn't guided by a great vision. Prophetic Jud. over law. Ethics } (Intro.)

p.1 Brisker rav: Solov.'s grandfather Reacting h corrupt of yeshivas & what they claimed was practical: halachah h be used

Building on elite of Js who wd reinforce & und. of Jud. thr. critical study of t text. Built a attack on yeshivas. } Brisk

Intl in Amer & Isr. h today. Chose t texts that were impractical - sacrifices. Yeshivot taught only Talmud on

damages, marr & div - relev. h life, not (prayer). But they claimed

לימוד התורה שלנו. But they studying Ke. Kedoshim - קדושים כי אני ה' אלהיכם; essence h be fd in their texts.

~~All way of the Jud to be fd~~ will

(It's a coherent system) you can find it anywhere, and it's a distraction h leave it out. Prax. neglected.

How do we know?

They wrote bks & created insts wh were diff. Texts were used by their elites.

Was among yeshivot were clev & precoc.

Musser movem & Yisroel Salanter introduced t musser shiur - lessons on ethics [Concl. by other sch. a waste of time. "It's obvious!"] Some yesh. as extr. only ethics, not text study. Novardok. (Musar) (wars)

3/ Musser - 1

People bec. secretive. Encour. sensitivity & ethical behavior. Emph on intell, character, pulpit analysis was a culprit — Musser mind over concerns for others.

Chassidism vs Mitnagdim. Basil Shem Tov & fllwr. argues for a core of relig that speaks & to common man. At long time bef yeshivot of their own

No evolutions. but polemics among them (Emanuel Etkes's bk)

Today, transplanted & used. Brisker-elitist. Hoc, tho. Soloveitchik great example. YU.

Began w/ a disagreement.

See J hist. thru eyes of educ vision (intro.)

Gershon Cohen: Baeides - Jags - 3 vol. bk

Broader concept than theory of educ (Childrearing & educ thru society & power of society of Gk & Rom. world develop

Greek

From t Scholar h t Classroom

Js of medieval period. the chimney Sweeps would wait a psedes for every single period. of J hist.

What is t educ vision y have? Educ ideal?

Heroes & role models: In Us, many a Pisn

Here, intellect & artists not so great. Role models - men of means

What are influences that affect & educ people? (last, media)

Larry Cremin: People educ in 'ecology.' (definition) transmission of culture across generations

What are t shaping forces?

Today, many have argued that (Glazer, Moynihan) schools affect nothing; His only t family. Race class status, bec rich people succeed. Middle-class will succeed. Normal educ.

Many wd say tat school is not t most effective instru for educ

Visions have guided ed act throughout hist & gen educ. But exc - Rema.

Yeshivot, Musser motion, Brisker)

Zionist Mizrachi.

Romans guided by Jew's Faculty vision.

4/

5 strains: ① Finkel's emph on the ethics of the Talmud (eg corrupt business practices)

A great ethic mess in the Talm for us a mankind. (Finkelst)

② Lieberman: Critical study of the text in the lit of the society when the text was created (6th c BCE Palestine)

Large sections of Talm (BK & J) reflections of the world the sages lived in. You cannot understand your text without understanding the society in which it was developed & what it was reacting to. (Lieb)

③ Heschel: Believed that J behavior & symbols embodied very deep & great meaning for how people should live. Should connect. of time; prayer & way to get in touch w/ deepest self

④ Kaplan: Believed that J theology was meant to serve as a basis for solving of society's problems God does not & never will bring about salvation

⑤ Hillel Bailis: Great emph. on Hebrew Hebrew poets in America.

All lived together. (Hebrew)

Everybody believed that ~~that~~ you should not talk to God in Yinglish.

All ways of doing. in Eng - pedagogical device but not optimal

Prayer - Greenberg said prayer poem in reconstructor - never caught on!

At Ramah: Kids didn't understand the Heb boy. (failure of Ramah)

I was once called in: 'You're ruining my camp.' Kids prayed in Hebrew at mid-week. Had some service (See 'It's not Jewish')

Is your service optimal or the most you can achieve today? He shook down

Cozy idea that one's siddur comp in Heb OK for Mainl. Their reality was Heb, Zionism, assimilation. But in a movement Complaining for decades I rely in 20th C. to adopt Heb as central not a symbolic value

Dayenu - Can't teach Heb in supp. school - not enough time. But living power in doing it.

In some places, Heb as end in itself & ideas were second (Hebrew failure/S. America)

Heschel said: J educ, effect. carried out, wd develop a person who was deeply rooted in J trad. for an attach to J trad. wh is bec. inv. in by means skills & grapple w/ texts. Wh requires at mastery of Heb lang. Have it and that w/in a trad, there is a trad of commentary, a and trad. is commentary. If y mastered them, you'd find people wh wd live at their civ spirit, ethics, & intellect among us - wh means pers, fam, J community. They wd feel & rep & participate in Igr soc & speak to it that's long of dud.

(Heschel)

You can't speak about:

- text
- law
- אגדה - הלכה
- לימודים - מחשבה
- J people
- inv. in larger society לא כפי שהוא? - have to get along w/ them (minority) but position - don't have to participate

Finkelst, Heschel, Kaplan

(Fink)

Amer. based on conception of human dignity In our tradition:

(Finkel - עמדה & clarity. I will not answer yr quest bec y can't speak to me as y do. Dignity of man (כבוד האדם) ?. I speak out of my relig trad: That's my und. of my role as an Amer. Ethics it Talmud & compete to & metaphor & ideas, for w/in my tradition. Learning ethics & carry on & conversation.

Common denom: J have something & offer America

(Heschel: things just slip. (Can y learn. changing בגד & to coincide w/ long ideal?)

(Heschel)

(Heschel w/ King out of his trad)

(Heschel)

Fink - Hebrew calls to Ethics on ethical matter. Deeply immed in Gospels, Teller business. Fink viewed as stage speaking out of love yr of trad in & society. Cont on Sec Phil & Relig. Opening & Luth. Church.

America has got room for infl. out of complex conception of Judaism, human dignity, - sensitive & Bible. Our interpret of Bible shd enter & discussion.

(Fink)

Unlike Rel, source of orgs from entire trad., other than shipping of prophets.

6/

First: Just a few living on top of volcano for 1st beginning. (Oppen h. hearings) ∴ a lot to offer to a world that has just discovered we're all living on top of a volcano.

At Ramah - [1st prof at Semin taught a gt course (displaced on Jeremiah), they will replicate it.]

Ramah as lab

These 5 guys were my ego-ideal

Constant consult. w/everyone of them. Okking ideas.

Conduit.

Text:

Liebeman; Heschel: Bad bedfellows.

Camp formal study-unheard of. Kids come to get away fr that. Sports & Indians. Make a little science camps, only exc.

(Bored in winter; more in summer?)

Purp here: Discovering 1st very basic ideas & there is value for 1st life of 1st child.

Expr. in choice of texts & how they were taught.

Experimental use

Left Melton Center. Tried out at U. Ramah. Study of Bible in terms of basic ideas.

"What are y studying?"

"Chumash w/ Melton."

Schmab, Stern & Segman taught there. for 8-9 yr old kids gt ideas on 8-9 yr-olds

or else?

siddur

Uncover basic ideas for what?

Terrified as Melton shld come out bec. of critical texts. Theory. Handle it by avoiding it.

Taught DJ.

"No text was taught at 1st Semin!"

This whole thing can be skipped. "You don't put out shtt like this!"

Student did an MA on social scie progr. in Watch schools. Sci-truth; phil-true opinions; relig-Bible accounts legends

SF: "Prof. Liebeman, this is what we're up against!"

"So what do y want?"

"I want to put this like Steve that text has as many chy rels, messages, whatever as divine!"

7/

'Thank y for asking me. Let's agree y never asked me.' (Lieberman)

If y didn't ask him, (you're) big idiot. Irresponsible.

Why Lieb inst. at Frankel?

Leg., Lieb's rabbi at Semin. syn. the usu rabbi, lder, teacher at commun.

Time on Ramah, not at Ramah

How does vision play itself out?

What are elements of vision?

Heb-speaking camp see 'attract that y won't going to do nothing' - Bovis - guys should like watchdog. Didn't und that if y hang tough on Heb, you win.

A place that teaches that: (Whole go down summer teaching one week)

Long lab) real curriculum. Inst. a failure

Greenberg, Cohen, Davis, Ethnberg taught like tigers; JT lessons + image remains

Teachers are full-time staff. Time to prep, to talk through + day

Ethical, spirit growth of + camper is central goal of place (Classes at camp)

Not how much of a musician does camper see but how spirit. growth been enhanced?

If kids are not inv. in J ~~camp~~ commun when they go home, all basics ab how JLife would be played out in + mod. world.

Long:

(If J will partic in hut, how + music long can't partic in comm w/ Hamondes) Heb

long for how it is + Hebr long

+ Israel: Sees commit + loc is Zionism > anti-Zion: Anti; Fox

Teachers in Amer Js will save + world fr/a here

Lieb, Hoch, Berl, Heschel

(שלום) (Where is mitzvah?)

Most pervasive infl in whole place

Connect + Heschel, Lieb, Frank, even Kaplan

(Creator הבורא : Place why y cd play out J practice in > this society.) Anti > Kapl on שבת/ אדם

Weren't the many day schools then. But even so, how do (y live out idea + practice) How it treated camps, Kelsey, Kelp

8/

rep. th homesickness - bec essential issues. Disciplined problems · Nu bchsi is breaking rules. Basic source - explicit & culture

was one of (מצוות, שלוח הקינים). Rep for שכנה th how y prep for 30 overnight hike

Clearly R was an ethical, caring place. Not sh t use a hachsha. Have spent w/ scholar-in-residence, on הרצאה & בוקר

Rebuke a kid in class. Kid screws up play bc he doesn't practice his lines. You want a kid n excel, th wins,

try in improv becomes better

Excellence w/out competition. Every attempt at excellence risks hurting people.

Even private for indiv th push himself, excel. (excellence)

Ethics, caring but also growth.

~~Nurture~~ 2 opposing poles in tension: Nurture people but put demands on them.

First, Cohen: An ethical mind, but anyone can be an ethicist if he possesses. Talent not it.

Put premium on that.

Not Individual place. 'Not living up th his potential?' ✡

Caused disequilibrium in t life of t kid.

Likes t trouble you

Art stretches y th new levels

Sports

Scheffler: 'In praise of cognitive emotions'

Rom: (You w/ get excited at ideas, art, basketball game.)

Integration. Taboo to think of them separately. (Schwab 'Ends & Education') (Integration-Schwab)

Text & mitzvah

Schwab has a grad student - Burt Cohen. Doct. thesis 'Exercises in ethical reasoning': An attempt to get people who have mastered t text th simulate what it's not in reality. People shd be given an opp th play out life of t texts

Big step but text & incorp behavior. Internal. stance (How do y move fr mastering an idea th living it?) (Burt Cohen)

Lib. is concerned w/ theory of practice. As distinct fr systems int in theory or practice

Dist of Talmud. Practical exer. Derive or apply principle.

q/

Fink - Apple of Jud. th + world th large (Fink)

Speak fr particulr th general, enriched by insights + ideas of yr fnds

Exper. in Gm partic when y come back.

Broad liberal agenda. Leadership + shdt immersed in it. (Cent. of Sci, Inst of Religious + Social Studies)

Heschel

Heschel: Mitzvah + larger issue. Public issue. Whole theol. add th specific issues.

Each committ th some notion: Jud. spoke th immed, realistic situations.

Tefilah: What tefil. meant. Info + guided by Heschel. Kurt Jacob; concept of kavanah

Diff minyanim are th task + development.

Mgyun. Time. Emph in underst. Tefilah fr contempl, self-improvement.

Daily tefilah. Add at each meal.

Creative tension

2 poles of theol inputs

Kaplan: Intrid.

Paul Ritterband, Rebecca Imber - Reconstr theol excitement in the camp

Selma Abramson - Orthe

Century Philos

Century conv. w/great Amer thinkers - Dewey, Bergson, Whitehead

Jud. is a introd. w/th wrld. Jud is > relig civilization

music, drama, etc. Israel

Dom info by Kaplan

A vision is Steiner. Rigidity.

Creative tension

A lot of inputs. Sitting at table, Cacophony. An eclectic theoretically is prescriptive [An eclectic in > practical domain like cook is diff enriching, vibrant.] Inst. that th > way th have th diff schools of thot they are. Ind th. in some have th build practice in wh th people said: Much more common than we assum.

Hattin Ex. Semin.

MTA Semin: Assign: What are th models that y wd want + child th internalize of { Romm?

(Lieb)

Weiss Halivni; Cohen (contr); Rosh (1); Chaim Soloveitchik (Brisk, he wrote); Fritz Rothschild (Heschel interpr th Hasidic)

Shmuel Leiter (Lieb)

Ivy

They devel > charts A grid to guide C Romish

themes	how held? accep truth? to be und? to be acted upon? to be lived by?
God	slf. concept of theol
+ interpers.	
+ intrapers	
+ esthetic	
+ V holy	

A
Blueprint for J. Educ

Continued: Taken each activity & asked how it fit in. & Didn't fulfill itself but represented > vision

Next step: Texts & materials.

Determin to have worlds at yu ed & J/educ 'interpenetrate'.

They repres. what we thot were t smartest, most creative people.

Thinking vy big in > parochial J world.

Fritz Redl 'The Aggy Child' psychoanalyst Romish + greatest 'amateur' experiment in educ

Goodwin Watson - + ~~style~~ social psychol

Ralph Tyler - Dean of Soc Sciences at Chic head of Comm on Ad Study of + Behav. Science in Bic & Hlth

Joseph Schwab - phil of educ

L Cremin - great hist of educ; Istr pres. of T College Close & Senior

James Coleman - greatest sociologist

Bettelheim - great educ exp self-hating Jew

Dewey - great infl in Cremin, Tyler, Schwab
4X/yr

Schwab, Tyler - members of Melton, Faculty Seminar

more names in gen. educ.

Vy intrigued by ambitiousness of project & fact that people believed in it

Much time devoted + training... for Romish success stuff

No distinction bet. Romish & Melton in > continuum

IV/

Connect it legally.

Schwab - Connect but cognitive & affective. Collapses distinction. Mind guesses great passions

(Meaning for what y learn & why y do.

We offered: Reading Hebr. after they die,

Act on ideas.

'Help me recruit & academic bd of f Melton Ctr.'

Tyler: Called up everybody.

Ernest Hilgard: intro & text to psychology

Kimball Romney:

Lary Cremin:

Nevitt Sanford: Professions for can a psych should

Bruno Bettelheim

Phil und. Schwab & Bettelheim

Ramah > JTS

Sylvia, SF

Lab

פיקוח; spreading f gospel

Place to produce students - Lee Shulman

The Four Commonplaces

'Viability of Theory in Schwab's Concept of f Practical'

Schwab - Key architect of Melton program. Fight bet Akiba & Schechter sb who wd ld Junior high

Architects: Azriel Eisenberg; Schwab: 'A Relig. Oriented School in f US.' 'Conflict of faith & reason

2 days/mo fr 1952-1966

'Practical Three' - role of scholarship for educ (Acad. Bd.)

- 2 things: No sharp dich, but int & emer. f def. of 'f know' had f include 'f kc.' שלוש so intriguing f him

A tot! culture JNF wd do educ. Helped set up f Master. Hu conceptions of training guided me f this day

Relat. of theory f practice $T \xrightarrow{X} P$ $T \circlearrowright P$

Jud.: A discrete system whose focus was theory of practice.

Key role in Melton Schwab wd fight w/ sons sb meaning of text. Schwab architect of BSCS (new biology)

Schwab

12/ Contributions of Academic Ed

How to move texts into minds of kids. U of Chic - original texts. (Tyler, Schwab, Allen, Bettelheim)

A power of texts for educ people / yg people. Original texts & small children.

Year-rd of dirz, מנהג ישראל, וכו'.

Training:

2 schools of thot ab ldship training: British: Study + precis. (Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare) You get principles to govern India

(Formul. by Whitehead: 'All Phil is Plato's + precis of ancient Greeks.')

American: We study samples. Harv. Bus School: Case studies containing principles

You'll enc. in life

Schwab: You teach people + pres that have guided your prof. & give them exercises in analyzing practice; get them reflective ab their principles; stretch: 'If I got new principles, what's wd my practice be like?'

Schwab's 'Reflective Practitioner' - deriving principle only from own practice.

Schools on ldship training

Tyler: Gt mvr of curriculum. & evaluation

Cremin: Pushed us toward practice (vs hist. perspective). 'Picky' - Bds. infl in Amer. educ

Tyler

Cremin

Got us to ask: Is like: How wd y develop / derive a theory of educ out of J sources? to be competitive in W. society

VA Prolegomenon

Lics. J Fiskdist.

G Schulen: invented a field out of J sources. but invented / new field: myth cum

we cd develop out of J educ that wd be competitive w/ + Whitehead's, Dewey's, Montessori, etc.

U. competes w/ notions of educ process

(insights on relat of theory to practice; cognitive to affective)

Educ Jew - Greenberg: Man is a spiritual being. Compete w/ Freud, Adler's conception of man

Why didn't we? Didn't write, develop ideas; just built institutions

Ask Schwab: 'The Religiously Oriented School in the United States'

13/

Bettelheim: 'Love is Not Enough' - Orthogenic School

Great record of success. Notion of a closed institution - wonderful model for Romah - a culture.

A place that was a school / total culture.

Worked at the school. So impressed.

Checked menu of the week & days. Hamburgers & french fries. Food to their bunks. Ice boxes w/ free treats.

Power of janitor in school. Claimed that for these kids are more educ. figures than teachers.

Terror of normal kids not having fits from home.

Kid removed from home environment to get another culture.

Conception that ~~his~~ parents can handle kids only a limited amt of time.

Combin of suppl. school / commun ctr. - parents just talk to their kids instead of 'do ur homework!'

Piano → music

Lyr poetry → שירה

Kids all over. Sundays home to parents.

We didn't take needs seriously. 'Who cares what they do.'

You had to have rooms with kids could go crazy; quiet rooms. Bunks built on that lines.

Distinc. bet sensitivity to kids and therapy. Ed Bunk is home haven. Counselor is supportive person. Romah being counter-cult built on needs of adolescence to be counter-cult. Not accepted in bogus culture (both Amer & Jewish).

Dewey's concept of cont. sees educ as therapeutic. Each of us is a product of his experience. If I have to give kids exp. that teach them that a classroom is not boring, exciting, kids will change their attitude.

'Hygienic environment' - educationally - healthy
emotionally - supportive.

Bettelheim sent him to Erikson. 'Young Man Luther.' 'Gandhi.' 'Characterbe person is in narcissistic adolescence. Believes world can be changed; history is reversible. Older people who are tired, on verge of giving up, find these charismatic people irresistible.

14/

Text z idea it r trad. believe: Everything can be changed.

Dewey: If ms persist, they can change r world.

You'd converse w/ R Akiba z r Rambam. Just learn r lang, level of discourse (Hebrew)

As z yeshiva bucher, he goes r Spiegel's course on Jeremiah.

... כי יאיבו כן ...

2 kinds of נביאים - נביאים in family or בני הנביאים, priests in temple

other sacrificed outside of Jews - illegal. Not part of r establishment. He is a prophet will attack r establishment for being immoral. But people will hear: he's attacking bec he's not part of it.

In Talmud: All descend. of Evyatar died young. ∴ Why take him seriously?

Differences bt. Jeremiah z Socrates. Last ~~first~~ of Laws of Plato: Socrates says: Listen, philos, don't get yr hands dirty in r real world. Lk what happ'd to me. Spiegel: Jeremiah was r first prophet, who takes r yoke of an ox, puts it on his neck in public Jews: 'I will break this yoke on yr neck' (proving he's a real prophet. But he can't stop בגיד בלבבי ∴ I can't stop bec I have a passion

Rabbinical school students turned out to read it.

J educ. wins if we're more exciting than r public schools.

How do y teach Jacob's/Rebecca's deception of Yitzhak? How spent w/ Schwab on how to teach that. (יעקב/רבקה)

How do y tell them r truth w/out killing idealism (giving up)? How do y teach morality is shades of grey?

Freud: 'Civilz. Greeks z its Discontents' 'Educ. prepare r young for r world by sending them on a polar expedition in summer clothing.'

In a great curve, you start up w/ cognac z end up w/ grape juice

How do y reconstruct influence?

Org. wh depend on charismatic guys disappear later. W/ great ideas, y don't depend on charismatic leaders ☆

How were they influenced?

Schwab's deep concern that his daughter be more as a Jew. That he bound as a Jew

Cronin.

15/

Bettelheim: Lectured in synagogues.

A questioning, inquiring environment. (Ramah)

If thru u what t find u all ab, what u educ supp t be?

If thru u what children need, what does Jud. have t offer?

P 3: Shopping mall h-school: Everyone gets everything in small doses. Everything has t some ranking.

Thru u such a rich tradition & people are so vy diff that t impose a given style or a limited style u educ. dumb. Some will be moved by a legal, literary, pov. (an eclectic)

Is it intrinsic t a vision-guided init. that t vision be multi-faceted? contradictory?

2 of returns at Ramah: Enormous.

One of t toughest problems in gen educ - Easy t ignite people ab extremes.

Hard t prod. people passionate ab moderating tolerance. Center loses out.

Excited ab. non-binate positions. We believed t truth: People ab diff pts of view cd live together. (moderation)

(& gender)

Why do kids have t go t אולפנא?

Anyone can get t the top - but ~~you~~ there is a top.

Elitism - commonly shared assumption. Engrained at Senior

Not every comp was elite. Limited resource. Vy hard t get in. Why? Won. Great patron. Reputation.

Parents: Greatest asset is kids. Kids came ot w/o winderful feeling that they knew was educational. There's lit.

Toin rite up - carefully planned.

16/

If I were bdg > high school today, I wd have 2 decide: Do I want it 2 be elitist, and if so: why?
If I be you, I wd say: In order 2 achieve our goals, we need > homogeneous student body.
Or:
~~But~~ I want 2 teach people of diff cult bkgds 2 learn 2 speak 2 each other. (hschool)

① לכוון את עצמו to optimal
לכוון: In order 2 reject something, y have 2 have exp it. Rejection ought 2 be > science one
Thru u > relig. comp. (fulfillish)

② לכוון (Schwab): Public educ sub-specialty. I learnd frm u not something y intrinsically love.
You had 2 exp it 2 love it. לכוון - understand, exp it, wk at it.
Komah made seriousness fun.

Faith assumpt: Anyone who exp Jud. under optimal conditions wd become deeply involved.
∴ Educ becomes so imp
All educ. operates this way

In > comm hs, 2 only hand 2 expl > rich conception of relig Jud. and admit לכוון
Both. 2 Reform - requires great idealism & ingenuity 2 get > common 2 agree on > justifiable approach (hschool) (לכוון)
2 לכוון that wd not satisfy anybody. Hammered out in practice

Schools attract rich kids bc their parents bel you'll get into Oxford & Harvard.
∴ textual analysis 2 teach kids how 2 read > lit (crossover)
carry on > deliberation

Other non-negotiables:
Public domain protected & an observance preserve We want people 2 exp שבת as close 2 ideal as possible.
To create an environment. Concept fine-tuned by Komah.

The Administrator Robert M. Hutchins

17/

Close

Hebrew - public

Swimming - lessons

Yaacid program

Not eating

[illegible] on Shab - optional

Kashrut imposed - whole time

We discuss other than that if a kid said: My bus unit kosher. What should I do?

Never: You can't eat.

Value: Kids don't disrupt their home.

Produce much.

We, read + movement that + children.

Lk how many be rabbis, J studies, shlyah, prof. J like, educ: In all movements. (Impact)

(no longer refugees for Orthodoxy)

phil th phil of ed th trou of great th classrm th eve!

What have we learned fr Ramah applic + other last?

Other unique aspects of Ramah & how they're affec

[illegible] Spots

failures

by people - rabbis - educ - scholars - enabling of

A dialogue w/ living thinkers (feedbk)

1. Ideas - ruin. Wear & burn, could set of ideas, fr get it

2 Universal pos leaders - teachers & administ.

3. A core of what + praise & culture will be That's different

4. A group of comm by people who have internalized it, partners + + lies, navigate thru + real world Society

5. To + extent that y can get great intellect, exciting educators, parents involved... partnership

18/

Need long, mid-, & short term plan. (by people)

How long can a society hold out w/out getting rewards?

Give quick rewards to buy more time. If y don't give by people & thru ...

2/7/96

Are there new questions if starting today?

Most people only think once in their lifetime. 'Substantive structure' - every res. likes to a problem the hu glasses

You won't it for the unconscious unless y know it exists.

People don't change their substantive structures. I hope I have

I have diff formulations today.

1. Not a diff ?, but situ. diff. The clients. Who are they? Diff today - Who are I going to be working with?

Poverty, kids, robbers, policy makers

Lay people potential source of power, partnerships. Always, but much more so. Used to be a major distinction - State people ~~[illegible]~~ cared about Israel, ADL (defense), Mt. Sinai Hospital. Today, different. Jewish was for 2nd-rate people. Jewish not on the ladder. Part - major announcement. Sam Melton-Fresh. 1959-2 guys w/influence that could move a community. (by people: Sam Melton, Phil Lown, Layton Rosenthal (they & JEWISH)

Th was a WASP, not a JEWISH. Era in decorum, seniority, synagogue. Today, a controversy concerns us a top item - whether buzz word, slogan or diff, it's fashionable. Today, a covert agreement. Younger people want to have a lot to say. Most of women will not take it by fair from the past. Some lay people are very knowledgeable.

2. Content issues are diff. When Melt Chr was created, key? was for non-fund. Is (Conserv.) why does it not stand (B & Tim) have a claim on y if y don't're not sure it's divine?

No longer it major? I more serious?: With the world at my reach and God. Just another un, why should I get into it? Why not marry the lovely person? For money, limitations, restrictions: Why? That's the great challenge.

Have to answer it quickly. You have one shot w/a parent, teenager. How do y catch them in a net? What are y going to tell him on one foot? How d y convince this stuff to a person who has an attn span of 30 seconds?

Arab student: You have 3 minutes (to persuade minister) In any interview of the policy makers

He sends me to Ex. I kill him 5 times until we get to that 3 minutes. The minister was convinced

What do y say to keep a person in for a yr? Staggered rewards.

19/

3. Major wreck today. (So many sad. see J educ as imp.) (There were no Arnie Ewens then.)
Not many success stories. Ramah, exciting day school, Israel exp, J studies at univ.

4. Potential today to do something y couldn't do then. Today I'd build ATTT place – research is a low priority, but y'd demonstrate that it would make a diff

5 Young people who want to contrib

6 Way to capture the J mind in a way diff from Wl or money

7 "I am the educ. Change." Never a time for educ west of Talmud.

An institute created that didn't exist before

Principal at J school at 17: The most ennobling experience

"I came at 20 & I left at 22"

I've been in this biz for a couple of days. If I were 30 or 40 today, y'd see big breakthroughs in new inst.

8 Foundations

The whole thing is waiting to be conquered. You need a Manhattan Project type-fig out what's involved. (future)

My mother taught me that failure is not in the lexicon.

We have a lot of good ideas. You need 1 bad idea. What does it mean to be? Is it feasible?

Never in my life has there been more similarity but what we're not to do and what we learned. (Ramah eval.)

didn't expect
x Full-time dir

x Yr round prog

x major tn activity

x guided by gen ed, J stud faculty

x diff climate

Biggest Question: Set up a Comm. to do zero-based budget. Intellectual zero-based budgeting.

So it's not up for grabs: It is a high sch

Well, how do y think it is to be? What will it be like? Why will it be like that? What will it take to do it?

First-rate people, first-rate ideas. מנהיגות

20/

Progr. for educ. journalists

Portraits of high schools.

Money u t least of t problem. Our prob u th convince these educ in gen ed Th' thu u w/th their time.

Not sec. I don't like glory or power. No one has ever accused me of that.

I think thu u > great moment.

On fundraising, I haven't asked anyone for > penny Th' I, w/ it I had hu money, wouldn't give as much or more for > cause. ~~Value~~ Do y convey t vision? Are you conveying your own commitment? Are y ready t pay t price?

You are control money. Its > vy imp thing. But somehow I have > feeling it's not yr but mistel. But we're Conveying control our lives. Commitment!

You're not going t find anybody. Everyone's transparent, asking: U thu for real or not for real?

We develop indices t measure that. Every guy I'm asking for $ u at least > smarter or smarter than me. I'm happy There's no inherent reason th give t me visit of others. It's my assign t convince them. 'A new firm of adult educ.'

H > kid throws spitballs, its > challenge. A boy accuse says something stupid, we say he's an idiot. Why? Joy

Mutual educ. In educ, t last researched fin-thing was u I relat of educ t society's politics Almost no lit., research unlike society, sociology of educ. Bus t educ think politics is dirty > they have t stay out of it - even statements But if y can't join forces w/them, yr impact is small. Here u > major ~~State~~ Educ statements of t J people.

What it means t navigate the reality. That's what I do. You have t tell people > comp wh kids don't like their sys, how do handle that?

END OF 3/B

4/A

How do y get good ideas th wh? How do y look in your commitments?

Lobby - Meridor, Olmert, Begin

Peres, Gorg

Hammer, Den

Preventive medicine. In lt of what he finds out, he changes his positions at center level.

Don't make [illegible]

21/

Power of linking up w/statesmen who have mast. + ideas & then helped found them.

Tan O: Want it to go to things they're committed to. Really and it, have ownership

Tells it best. Annette

MLH

Seymour

Today + relat. is adversarial - why should they have anything to say? They can't read 'em I call'n.

Or: If he was successful, he'd be in my business. He's a shlepper.

Schwab: 'On + teaching of science' Oppenheimer

One of + imp ?s he deals w/: How + Jeffersonian democ. says the int populace will ch mstly.

But in explosion of knowledge, experts'll take over + system. How

Answer: De partibus animalium - Bk 2 - Aristotle

Green, Dewey

If y'll trust the generalists + have assumptions of + system - then does Opp lk at a problem?

Thm + pol'c, statesmen, citizens are no less equipped than + expert.

Jeff: You have to trust + lay people

∴ Not a con + be milked but a people w/ + power & rt + to decide policy. I'm an idealist, but I'm open + you.

Or we're wrong - and we ought + to find out.

If it's a wrong idea, let's get rid of it.

If it's right, let's learn.

Taking lay as a dope. Not about + full truth. He didn't get them by being a dope.

22/

5 levels: Moving fr phil to reality of educ.

1. Conception of J/J society – field of philosophy: Source of what y want to do in educ. (What is nature of soc? / do not)
   What is theory, what is method?
2. Phil of educ: What is t nat of soc fr educ? Its place in t phil conception
3. What will this mean for educ practice? Strategy of how to translate into practice
4. Teacher ed; curriculum; pedagogy (Practice)
5. MEF: Be a corrective into everything you're doing.

(check 5 levels)

1. What is tefila? Why does man need it? (Even if you'll never touch it) Why does it fit into t system called Jud.? (How diff fr Xianity, Islam?)
   A question: Man is a spiritual being. Prayer is a way to express his spirituality. (Heschel, Greenberg)
   Maimonides: Not a obligation, God needs y to tell him how great? Not are prayers of praise. (פרשת)
   תפילה היא עבודה שבלב. Prayer is a way to emulate God.
2. What would חינוך be for phil of educ? Deal w/ such questions or is this something that child can handle? (Nature of child, adult, learning, content.)
   Maybe its pure repetition. What does להתפלל mean? (How do y top spirituality in a person?) A phrase I have used להתפלל להתפלל. How do you pierce that? Get rid of that?
3. What is yr strategy, if this is what y want to do? By saying: I want them to be sensitive to words, getting in touch w/ their feelings, meditation? Our society doesn't believe in words.
4. Curriculum? Teacher ed. Informal exp? Camp? How do y put them together? (Content + pedagogy)
5. How will y monitor this activity + change yr conception + on all other levels? (What if it's a great idea but teachers won't do it?)
   Teachers feel and it, want to do it, be able to do it.

23/

Roman - Wisc. [illegible] 44
hand of J cover 50
dir 51
dir 52

Yhe seminary Sports

1, Hand Rebt. of mind + body? Why healthy body? Wht is diff ob J. position vs Hellenism? Body doesn't belong 2 you. Healthy body > commandment.

2. Role of body sports in educ. Learning rules., competition, be fair. What does it mean 2 cooperate? Create rules & live by them. Educ goes out of yr theory. Social as prct. Dirt of > person is.

3 Role of sport in instr? Emph, not? How? Imp or minor? Compete w/sci teaching or not? Wht if someone has an interest? Will y tolerate that diversity?

4 Curriculum, teacher ed. To lose w/some measure of dignity. Teacher-ed. How do you teach kids 2 lose?

5. How do y change yr progr. as > result of seeing its impact?

2 debates:

Limit is אגודה: Our educ אחריות taught us we'd lose תלמידים. Limit is 2 how for. Faculty under the אגודה can't they know? תפקיד אגודה לפי תלמיד.

We not hishtalmut. Hishtalmut is hishtalma for educ

A Semin: How 2 women sat separately. We didn't have tfn at Ramah. Too unbthimoshlu - syn, foreign - why this setting?

They can swim tog.

Didn't we RA prayerbook Shiloh

(4 changes תפילות מחנה ישראל)

To what extent is inclusiveness imp? Faculty in camp?

Playing on שבת.

Psychosocial school: Sports v healthy way 2 express aggression

2 conflicting ideas on role of women:

Failures:

Hebrew; yr-rd progm;

Luxury

Ed: The fact that we never did eval evaluation. Cd never catch things in time. Tyler by no does eval, running > hoop first attempt at > medical test. When patient is leaving. We feed be, input into what's offered & until it's the 6th.

OK + story is as one as I think, year's feel of common if testing documents. (Com. mob)

24/

like stock. Nature is reflect.

Why: Guys that do don't eval. So busy bldg something new didn't stop to do that. Moved entirely intuitively. Expensive, hard to sell, sounds like a luxury. Only for front-to using. Not to learn from it.

48/

Hebrew: Clearly some goal, central to phil of place. We didn't do a gd job. 1) Cons didn't know enough Heb (Teach in winter, dunny summer) (Sent them to Israel) esp. leadership = Sbtk. 2) Kids: Had there been a camp for Heb, bldg at those days, cd have achieved a great deal. (There shd have been a graded program.) Give an attn to it. (Otherwise, a cripple in entering the 'Great Conversation.') Not much homework (It at Hazon)

Yr-rd activity: Cost was hire full-time director to have camp year full-time to LTF: Camp climate or bound of 1 yr; it never happ Ray Arzt

People did not persist. ('We quit too early.') ☆

Curric.

(Achieved at camp.) (Achieved at home)

(We shd have at least failed seriously.) Great exp but. breaking down

Curriculum: Never was formaliz, structure of a program... : you each camp cd but learn from each other. Continuously updating. A lot of ~~relearning~~ improvising. (Didn't build an infrastruct of next office w/ educ staff. Cd have gotten t money) ∴ Rabbi: 'Greater amateur oper.' (Formalize = freezing (argument) but up-with)

Success: (Great success in recruitment.) (success)

Sbtk - (We created a profession (much better to term principles). They got tenure-like faculty

Burt Cohen was 1st camper in Camp Ram. (We grew our own teachers)

- Aliyah
- More Friendships - Networking
- Scholarship
- Rabbinate
- involved in Jewish goals
- Academia

(Sylvia)

great hon - Sylvia. Only current continuation for beginning to retirement. 45 years. A nucleus of direction. Greater structure for the Centrality of Ramah in the movement. Anchor for by people. Great facilitator a peace maker but. warring factions.

25/

We really bel we're were going to turn t world upside down

Constant training of people

Summer camps are supp to be fun: hts it are y doing it so seriously?

Rethink Ramah in lt of changes in society,

Either excitement gone down or society changed.

The greatest place to be.

Lern fr Ramah

① What a vision can do for a staff, how they can grow. All trained & rabbis, all clear career line (pulpit, schol, educ)

but inst. went out on a limb, brought inst in (Jerry Abram, Burt Cohen, Ray Arzt as head, Solett.

No turnover.

② Faculty had loyalty, alw. available. A fusion. A belief that people were really trying to have vision inh complete.

③ Sophistic content, there. does w/t most nitty-gritty

When do you start prep for race.? Worth skipping girls to putting on curlers?

Enor. time devoted to:

White to elim. class. What shd שבת be? ראשי: 'Most moving time I've ever spent on שבת in my life'

Leibel Waldman, Steve Shaw. Theory pays off in what you do in practice. There was a continuum

An argument as why ① deleb is worth it

② Investing in people is worth it.

③ Spending has ear off by people (prof. us fr Semin in financial attempts. ; educ for ex 2 people: they stuck up for it, conduits to parents – educ; on a boards

④ Dohm, schol, by t join forces, discard their ref. groups

Conclusions

A lot of generosity of spirit: To what extent did people extend themselves to und t other side.

⑤ Ramah was a movement, not a camp.

Gave us cour. to think of inst. tht didn't exist - and others don't. A Ramah in t winter in t city.

Ramah has taught us we need this inst. (Summer is this culture; this is an exclusive)

New inst. that break down t walls of formal or informal – Int. 2s

Dewey on school's purpose: To prod us to be active member in a democr. society

School is training ground for citizenship.

∴ J. citizenship, membership, involvement.

A person who gets rich Horiz. but is a mensch (ethic, spirit value is signif. re. intellect achievements) ✡ neu inst.

'Nobility of the ideas that drove us' (Sports) (end)

These ideas enabled us: How do you get someone to compete w/ himself for greatness but not foul intentionally?

How do you prod a guy who is a team player?

Prayer is a way to touch their insides. If you concentrate on vocal, emotions, thots, self-cont will follow. (i) Concentrate on words

Discipline of saying: אמת is here. Stop.

In yeshiva, you were encouraged to argue w/the אמיתך - You're wrong. It can't be

But when אלקים said אמת, that's it.

(End of question of system) Prof Abramson: How does each case begin: 'How do you know?'

איך אתה יודע - how do you know that this is so?

Danger: A guy will say that is theological value as well*

But we built in the danger.

Kennedy's wanted a Jew rep on their film (special ed.) Even. Shanes, chr. He said. 'I Cath Church says give me 0-5 devoted Catholic Jews: a 'foothipple kop' (Not obedience but openness. Otherwise, can't turn the world upside down.

(Role of intellect in this tradition:

Kids hate Heb school. Well, they didn't hate Roman

(8) - spend the year/course

People say close the school. Well, if you keep doing the same things, of course it stays bad.

Once had a big argument w/ Prof Avram Minkovich (ed psych, learned Jew) bcuz: educ reform of Aron Zolman was a failure, why was he supp it? 'I'll tell you something, think. Let's do this experiment. Write down 10 elements required for a successful school. How many of those we say on exist in the schools? Ans. on 11; couldn't find more than 4. 'Studies in Deceit' Chas ed in 1927 in Amer.

27/

Prof Sun schools th u/untr teachers.

Wd y studied ~~surg~~ mort. rates in surg words when instr ~~unedu~~ untrained?

Wch, if teachers are untrained & unmotiv., what do y expect?

What wd it take to meet this problem?

A bit o yr.

end of 4

If we succ, what cd J ed give gen ed.? (J educ to give gen. ed)

Emph on ~~spirit~~ educ of spirit even in gen ed (not religion)

Und. of technical & human exp.

Deep involvem in ethical. – pervading science educ

Role of by people, philanthropy in educ. (power, role of)

Diff concepts of leadership educ.

New synthesis intl by Talmud – theory & practice – dialectic – back & forth from principle to practice

Embodiment of spirit, ethical

Complex ones: (leadership)

Toughest theoretical problems in classical psychoanalysis:

Invest yr libido in t therapist; then unsticks you from wh y were;

You're stuck; Invest it by transf to therapist.

Theoretical prob: How d you get libido fr t therapist? J concept of מלאכי הכנאים ש"א ~~evolution~~ מלאכי הכנאים evol. his ethical behav in usual explan but SF believes: method. How to attack problems. (If y teach method, you are not dependent on a person.) (charisma)

Any kid can be R Akiva & Moshe (משה) (Invest in everyone bec y don't kn who's got it.) Belief the greatest guys will be in t future. The future represents t ultimate. In that entire bus, t way y prod guys who are t dependent on t rebbe (end) ~~is~~ not a secret, anyone can join t frd of Lamed, can be a לומד: the minute y do that, neither שפעת devotion nor control ~~קבלת~~ קבלת consideration of alternatives

28/ (leadership)

Leaders are born, not made. For t birds. Both exp & theory tell me: No.

Forces y t grapple w/ theory vs theory & theory vs practice

The pl thinks dialectic says if you mix them, you're destroying t dialectic

Ult u math: Ideas in tension w/each other

Thus u & Rad vh is heavily ~~for~~ emphasizes theory of practice, will not be satisfy w/theory, will not ship w/practice.

only devout only skill only skillfull

Yochanan Muffs: Our whole trad u dialectic. מצוה , מצוה , מצוה

מצוה מצוה מצוה

Diff readers of dialectic theory.

They don't live in harm but in tension. They're tragic & are meant to be tragic.

Thus u supp t teach people how t deal w/ tragic situations

מצוה

מצוה

מצוה מצוה

מצוה: Internal, not boring, not fine distinctions

מצוה: fine distinctions

One t t exclusion of others u & מצוה distinction.

One ext. u t person who is disembodied intellect (Platonic ideal)

מצוה - Celebration of emotion/passion; mellow, passive person; devout

מצוה - על מנת t act in t world but w/out contemplation, & thinking

Leave comm. מצוה מצוה מצוה מצוה

Tragic ethical dec can't be made simplistically,

Piety in theory u great, but 'which arm do y cut off?'

(28) ו"כ

9:30 till dinner

9:00 til 3

Dimah is an example of a vision-ye. inst.

Why vision is so imp for educ - and not a luxury

Define bet mission & vision

Mission is frozen vision

When JS studied, in t 1st of postmod, people were cont trying to und:

What does this mean?

What does this mean for me?

end: vision pays off
It is feasible
labor-intensive
vision attracts people
the journey is the thing
goals:

} ending

Applied lessons

enabling of lay ppl / prof

partnership at 2 what it can mean - time-consuming

in It at back at know, what's a practical approach to deal with?

answer:

Schwab: How can a democ. synd. prob at 1 specialists running it? Enlightened populace

T only way: If y'd get ~~people to~~ experts to direct their basic assump & how they move to policy. Competing positions presented. Unint. person is no less competent than exp. to choose.

2/

Politics & educ: Educ don't realize it.

Partnerships bet educ & lay people - A volunt. system: least popular choice (over art, symphony)

Values play an imp. role. An attempt to stretch educ. & prof.-

What is the curriculum for policy decisions? (Curric. for lay people)

Hutchins: The administrator - Pres. of the University

Leader

Admin. has to be a philosopher. Lead consists in a constant search for the ends of the best. Then: A responsibility to be sure all parties are working dec. for these ends.

What ed the relationship be?

Who are the best, if not, ed change the world?

Cotton

Boyd's Law - Theory of probability

At what pt is it useful to take a gamble?

NESSA 532-2646

Monday

Dear Nessa,

I've been working through the material we discussed, and it's slow going. As we both expected, it was better as talk than it is on paper. And so much of it! But I'm continuing....

About ten days ago you mentioned that a check for me was "in the mail." Can you, er, check on that please?

Had a nice talk with Estelle Z. yesterday. Some day I've got to visit them out in western Florida.

You should have received my book proposal by now regarding the heart lady. If not, maybe today.

Yours,

B—

FROM: INTERNET:CAPE@vms.huji.ac.il, INTERNET:CAPE@vms.huji.ac.il
TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
DATE: 2/13/96 2:18 AM

Re: RE: William Novak

Sender: cape@vms.huji.ac.il
Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by arl-img-4.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id BAA27431; Tue, 13 Feb 1996 01:53:38 -0500
From: <CAPE@vms.huji.ac.il>
Message-Id: <199602130653.BAA27431@arl-img-4.compuserve.com>
Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Tue, 13 Feb 96 08:53:41 +0200
Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(128.139.9.82) (HUyMail-V7b);
Tue, 13 Feb 96 08:51:32 +0200
Date: Tue, 13 Feb 96 8:51 +0200
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Subject: RE: William Novak
To: 74671.3370@compuserve.com
X-Mailer: SPRY Mail Version: 04.00.06.17

Dear Nessa,

Received your inquiry from Barbara Piperno. I do apologize for the delay but have not yet received an O.K. from the tax authorities here that allows our bank to issue the check. The moment it arrives -- it should be this week -- a check will be issued and Fedexed to Novack. Unfortunately, we have a sizable bureaucracy here and they move at times at their own pace. Please apologize in our name for the delay and assure him that he will receive it as fast as humanly possible. Thanks for keeping on top of it.
Sincerely, Estelle

TO: Barbara Piperno, internet:alanhof@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: Etc.

I've faxed you everything you need for Hartman. Hope it came through OK.

Could you please ask Estelle the exact status of Bill Novak's payment--and have her e-mail me her response ASAP? He is (rightfully) inquiring, and I know not what to say. I had told him two more weeks from whenever she and I spoke, but I suspect the two weeks are up.

Thanks.

Nessa

WILLIAM NOVAK
3 Ashton Avenue
Newton Centre, Mass. 02159
(617) 964-0293

Feb 20

Dear Nessa,

Here is a write-up of our two Boston interviews. There was, as you'll recall, a large amount of material, and some of it was thin, or scattered, or both.

This is the better stuff.

Assuming you want to move further -- and that's your call, we would, of course, want to integrate all (or parts) of this with the previous material.

I assume that some of this material can go, but I'll leave that to you. When we met, you had spoken of turning out a much shorter document than you originally anticipated.

In any case, this is what I have for you now, after quite a few hours of work.

Yours,

B.

FAX FROM TUESDAY

NESSA 532-2646

Tuesday afternoon from Novak

Dear Nessa,

A busy day. First, the check arrived, Fedex from Israel, so that's taken care of. Thank you for moving it along.

About ten minutes later, SF called to add a few points to our recent discussion. We spoke for about ten minutes, whereupon I told him the truth -- that everything he had just given me on the phone was a repetition from the hotel. But he wanted me to know that now he felt more <u>secure</u> about the points he had previously made about Brisk, Musar, and about goals vs. visions. All of this was done very pleasantly, but there's no new material.

After talking to SF on the phone, I was inspired to spend the rest of the day on this material, and you should have it soon. What I send you will be in pretty good shape, but I'm sure there's more to do. Before we taking it any further, however, I want to see what you make of it.

This is considerably more time-consuming that I expected. Some months back, when you asked me to come up with a formula, I estimated that I'd need a day at the keyboard for every day of conversation. That has usually been true for me in the past, but here we're dealing with a different -- and more difficult -- kettle of fish. (The kettle is different, and so is the fish. Actually, we're still trying to figure out the kettle, right?)

We'll probably have to talk business at some point, but first let's see what you make of this new material that is now on its way to you.

Yours,

B.

FEBRUARY INTERVIEWS

We were talking last time about the need for vision in the establishment of new educational institutions.

Five or ten years ago you would have had to sell people on the importance of vision, but today this idea is widely accepted. There's a book by a Stanford professor who claims that in business, vision is even more important than leadership, and he may be right. If your vision is clear and becomes internalized, you can withstand periods of weak leadership -- or even a move toward bureaucracy.

A vision should not be confused with a mission statement, or a statement of purpose, which can be knocked off very quickly. These usually end up as frozen, static assertions. A true vision is constantly being developed, improved, and tinkered with. The vision of Ramah was that you could build an enclave, an educational setting, where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives.

Is a vision different than a goal?

A vision is more broad, whereas goals are more specific. With a vision you paint a macro picture of what you want to achieve. A vision exists to offer goals and inspiration to educators, parents and community leaders, who will apply or translate that vision into concrete programs. A goal is specific to a

particular educational setting, or a specific class or text, as in, The purpose of studying math is X or Y.

When a vision is guided by great ideas, those ideas might lose influence at times, but they seldom disappear. In philosophy, for example, trends come and go, but you still find Platonists in every generation. **For educators, vision is like oxygen.** A great vision will inspire them to be creative and to invent new institutions. But a vision that isn't responsible can be overly abstract, while goals can be so pedantic that they leave no room for vision.

Let's talk about some specific visions in education.

Okay. Recently I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism. There's a renewed interest in Dewey today, just as I think there will soon be a renaissance of Mordecai Kaplan. For all its weaknesses, the progressive movement was a response to Dewey's vision of what man could be, and how he could transform society. Dewey had unlimited optimism of what could be achieved with the powers of science and intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in education. His followers saw every word he wrote as a challenge. Alan Ryan quotes Henry Steele Commager: "For a generation, no issue was really clarified until Dewey had spoken."

His followers took every line he wrote and transformed it into practice. So do the followers of Rudolph Steiner in the Waldorf schools. They ask: "What color do you paint the walls if you want to achieve certain results?" When you get a vision that excites and involves people, they keep asking: What would it take to translate this into practice?

Can you give us an example?

Dewey described what discipline could be like in a classroom. He compared the teacher to the umpire in a baseball game, whose job is to apply the rules of the game. But he viewed the teacher as the kind of umpire who first gets the class to agree on the rules of the game.

That's giving the kids a lot of power.
Yes, and that entails certain risks. At Ramah we took a big gamble when we decided that the campers would learn a great deal if they were responsible for planning some of their own activities. The danger, of course, is that poor planning will lead to failure, which produces a lousy experience. If the end experience is your only goal, you might not want to take that risk. But we thought it was valuable for kids to learn that if you don't plan a program thoughtfully, you'll get lousy results.

(3) **Going back to the idea of the vision. Can you help us identify two or three significant educational visions in recent Jewish history?**
Certainly. We should be aware that most of these visions, either explicitly or implicitly, were directed at the larger society as well. Maimonides' conception of education was aimed at trying to get people to live according to his concept of Judaism, where the intellect played a central role. Later, in a very different period, the modern Zionists believed that if you educated a new type of individual, he would then create a new society in the -Jewish homeland. The Jews of Israel would become or laGoyim, a light unto the nations. More recently, Zvi Lamm, an Israeli scholar, has written a book about how the Israeli youth movements were able to transform their society.

(3) **How about some visions that deal directly with Jewish education?**
Take the Brisker Rav, who was Soleveichick's grandfather. His

vision was to build a Jewish elite that would reinfuse Judaism through a critical study of the texts. His followers built a network of yeshivot, and their influence is felt to this very day. They deliberately chose texts that everybody else thought of as entirely impractical, such as the sections on sacrifices. Most yeshivot in those days concentrated on those sections of the Talmud that appeared to be relevant, such as damages, marriage and divorce, and the rituals of prayer. This was halachah you could actually use.

But the Brisker's followers insisted that to ignore the more esoteric texts was to miss a big part of the tradition. They believed that if you skipped over certain sections, you were not only distorting the culture, but you were also missing out on great treasures. Their position was: Who's to say where you'll find the most significant texts? Don't presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Or take the Musar movement, which introduces a serious concentration on ethics. In most yeshivot this area was considered too soft, a waste of time. Israel Salanter introduced this idea into the yeshiva world, and his followers eventually created entire institutions that were concerned with Musar. The Musarists believed that the intellectual emphasis on pilpul in most yeshivot was a distortion, because it didn't develop the proper sensitivity to other people. They were reacting to a world that they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently ethical.

The Musar movement developed as a response to the Brisker yeshivot. The Musarists said, in effect, You people have made an important correction, but you're losing sight of the fact that you can study all sorts of texts and not become a more ethical person. The Musarists began to focus on specific ethical texts

-- including a few existing texts, but mostly newer texts that they themselves composed on the subject of how people should be treating each other.

You can argue that Musar won the war, and that they achieved their victory on two different fronts -- in both the Chassidic and Litvak yeshivot. But the argument continues to this day. Some opponents of Musar claim that its message is inappropriate because it demeans the power of the text. What they mean is that the text already contains within itself the power to affect people's behavior.

(6) THE FIVE JEWISH INFLUENCES ON RAMAH

Let's take a closer look at Ramah, and at the specific visions of the educators from the Seminary faculty who were most involved in its creation and early development. While this exercise may entail some oversimplification, it would be helpful if you could tell us about a few key professors whose visions helped to shape the camp.

I think you're right to stress the significance of several people, because Ramah recognized the fact that Judaism is simply too complex to be defined by a single vision. You had a lot of inputs here, and if you sat them down together around the table, you probably couldn't have produced much besides cacophony. An eclectic approach in a theoretical realm can be a problem, but in a practical domain like a summer camp it can be an enormously rich source of vibrancy. Ramah found a way for these different approaches, which had already co-existed reasonably well within a single institution, the Seminary, to build another, very different society, where people of differing views were willing to affirm that we had far more in common than not.

1. Louis Finkelstein's emphasis on the ethics of the Talmud

Let's start with Finkelstein, who headed the Seminary during those years. Finkelstein believed there was a great ethical message in the Talmud, and that it applied not only to Jews, but to our society at large. He even wrote an article about it for Fortune after Henry Luce had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world. [Note:

quick twenty-year search of Reader's Guide fails to turn up any references to Finkelstein as a Fortune author. But Time put him on its cover in October 1951.]

During the McCarthy hearings, Finkelstein had hoped to be called to testify, because he was dying to tell the Committee: "I will not answer your questions because you cannot speak to me the way you do. In our tradition we have a position outlined in the Talmud, in Massechet Sanhedrin, drisha v'chakirah. It deals with the question of how you interrogate a witness. And I say to you that you cannot speak to me this way."

That was an essential Finkelsteinian response. He wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within our own tradition, especially with regard to issues of ethics and social behavior. He believed that the Jews would make a greater contribution to America if we were armed with the particular insights and ideas of our tradition. He once said that ours is a tradition that has been living on top of a volcano from the beginning, and that we had a lot to offer to a world that was just beginning to discover that we're all living on the volcano.

In his time, Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke from a long and venerable tradition. He used to get calls from President Eisenhower on ethical matters. And every Tuesday at the Seminary we had a conference on science, philosophy, and religion. There would be a basic theme, like equality, and you'd have people speaking from different traditions, both scientific and religion, trying to create a common language.

At Ramah we believed that you had to produce people who were going to be active in the greater society. That's the influence of Finkelstein, and also Heschel and Kaplan.

2. Saul Lieberman's emphasis on the study of texts

When Ramah first began, a lot of people were incredulous: "You're running a summer camp where the daily schedule includes classes?" In those days this was almost unheard of. Most kids went to camp to get away from that, although there were exceptions, such as the music camps for kids with exceptional talent, and the science camps.

In effect we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own principal. The classes were mostly text-based, and you could spend the entire summer on a single verse. The teachers were considered full-time members of the staff; they needed enough time to prepare, and enough time to be available to the kids.

If a Seminary professor taught a course that was particularly moving, such as Shalom Spiegel's course on Jeremiah, you would see that same course being taught in several Ramah camps by Spiegel's students.

We believed in open inquiry. We were never looking for intellectual obedience, because we didn't want to end up with constipated minds. Every now and then the Talmud will ask, Minah HaNi Mili? How do you know? The danger is that people will ask such questions about theological issues as well. But you have to allow these questions, and all questions. And if your tradition encourages tough questions, every now and then you'll produce an occasional Freud, Einstein, or Marx.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, although it wasn't always that simple. For

example, the Seminary didn't allow the Pentateuch to be taught in the Rabbinical School. You'd have to study it critically, and the whole topic was simply too controversial, so the Seminary dealt with it by avoiding it. The Prophets, fine, but not the Torah.

Meanwhile, we were putting out all of this Melton material on Genesis. In the early 1960s the book was in galleys, and we still didn't have any approval to teach it. I went to see Lieberman, and showed him a study done by a student of mine who looked at the social science program of the Westchester schools. The students had been taught to disguise among science (meaning, the truth), philosophy (meaning, true ideas), and religion (meaning, myths and legends).

"This," I told Lieberman, "is the attitude we're up against, and this is why we want to put out our book. Whether or not the reader views the Torah as divine in its origins, we're making clear that still has an enormously important ethical and religious message to offer."

Lieberman's response was simple: "Thank you for checking with me, but please understand that this conversation never happened."

Why did you have to check with Lieberman?

I didn't <u>have</u> to, but it would have been irresponsible not to. After all, he was the rabbi of the Seminary Synagogue. He was the teacher of our community. When you went to Finkelstein with a question about Jewish practice, he would always send you to Lieberman.

3. Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization

Kaplan believed that Jewish theology could serve as the basis for the salvation of society. He defined God as the power leading toward that salvation, and was considered a heretic by some of his colleagues, who saw his views as a demythologizing of God. One popular view is that Kaplan was a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. Allegedly, Kaplan once said that if the Seminary greats, especially Ginsberg and Lieberman, had dealt fully with theological issues, he would have left them alone, and that it was their failure to address these topics that inspired him to think with them.

What Kaplan represented was a continuing conversation with great philosophers. He saw Judaism as being in inter-relationship with the world around it, and he brought elements like music, art, and drama into central focus.

Of course, Kaplan and Heschel represented two completely different points of view. The fact that both sides were represented at Ramah gave us an added degree of theological tension and intellectual excitement.

4. Heschel's religious vision

Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message of how human beings should live. He described Shabbat, for example, as a sanctification of time in a society where the sanctity of time was continually being violated. He was amazed, for example, that the dates of certain American holidays were being changed merely to have them coincide

with a long weekend. He believed that Shabbat was a great gift to the world, a day when normal time simply stops.

Just as Shabbat was a sanctification of time, prayer was a way for an individual to get in touch with his deepest self. The whole question of what t'fillah meant at Ramah was guided by Heschel and his students, including the concept of kavannah and the idea of t'fillah as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement.

Many people feel out of touch with their inner lives today, and they're seeking it so passionately. The idea of Jewish prayer is that if you concentrated on words, that would bring up emotions and thoughts. How do you do that? First, you have to learn how to concentrate on words. If you say the Elohai N'zor prayer, for example, and you really mean it, it can be very embarrassing.

5. Hillel Bavli, a professor of Hebrew and a poet

Hillel Bavli was a watchdog who wanted to make sure that we were really using Hebrew at Ramah. We believed that if you wanted to participate in Jewish history over the centuries, you had no choice but to master Hebrew. Otherwise you couldn't become engaged in the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the rest. The Seminary faculty also appreciated the importance of Israel, although Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist and I wasn't much of one, either.

You have to realize what a crazy idea it was to run a summer camp in Hebrew. Massad was already doing it, but Hebrew and Zionism were their religion. In a movement that was competing as to how to define Judaism in the 20th century, to adopt Hebrew as central was a terrific yoke. One argument for the day school was that

you needed the extra time to teach Hebrew, but today Hebrew is diminishing in many of these schools. People ask, if you can get the ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language? But you can go too far in the other direction, too. In some societies, such as Mexico and Argentina, Hebrew ended up as the goal, and the content became secondary.

Ramah believes that Jewish education, effectively carried out, will develop a person who is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition through an attachment to Jewish texts, which he can grapple with because he has already mastered the necessary skills. And this requires a full knowledge of Hebrew. If we taught classical Jewish texts in a healthy environment, we would produce people with an attachment to Judaism who would live out that attachment spiritually, intellectually and ethically among their peers, their families, and the Jewish community. Ramah graduates would also feel a responsibility to participate in the larger society, and to address that society in the language of Judaism.

To look at it another way: Once you introduce people into the method, anyone can join the conversation. And that is how you produce liberated students. If you do this you no longer have slavishness, but you're also giving up complete control. Method is the dialectic which forces you to grapple with theory against theory, and theory against practice. In our tradition, method means Hebrew, which is the key tool.

Not that Hebrew is enough. You need several other components, including text, mitzvot, t'fillah, the Jewish people, and involvement in the larger society. And you had all these forces coming together at Ramah.

I saw those five professors as my teachers, and I felt I would be violating one of them if I didn't allow his influence to play out. These five professors, together with the members of the Melton Seminar, represented the smartest and most creative people we could find. I spent hours with these men, discussing ideas, and to some extent I saw my job as being the conduit from the older generation to the future.

(7) THE DELICATE BALANCE WITHIN JUDAISM

Could you say more about how Ramah balanced these various -- and sometimes competing -- understandings of Judaism?

Yochanan Muffs once pointed out to me that our whole tradition is didactic. Torah, mitzvah, and t'fillah -- or better, Torah, avodah, and g'milut chassadim -- are not necessarily in harmony with each other. There's a conflict, a tension among them.

Focus only on t'fillah, and you become overly involved in theology. T'fillah is inner-directed, and by itself it produces monkishness, a removal from the world, a passivism that Judaism cannot abide. Focus only on Torah and you'll get disembodied brains. Rabbi Meir said that to be admitted into the Sanhedrin you had to produce 150 arguments as to why a lizard could be kosher. You don't want Torah without the mitigating forces of t'fillah and mitzvah. If you take any of these to the inclusion of the others, then you're out of balance.

Mitzvah by itself can produce a loose cannon. Piety is lovely in a simple and innocent world, but that's not the world we live in.

(5) WHAT RAMAH WAS REALLY ABOUT

How much can you really accomplish in a school? Ramah was a real and total society, operating 24 hours a day. Our issues were educational in the largest sense, such as how counselors treated campers, how the administration treated the kitchen help, how we handled a child who was homesick, how we handled discipline. What should you do about a kid who screws up a play because he forgets his lines? Our basic source, often explicitly, was one of a vibrant, living halachah.

On the sports field, it's wonderful to improve your skills, and it's wonderful to win, but you also have to draw a line: up to here -- and no further. In sports, or the arts, when you're seeking excellence it's very easy to hurt people. **Our goal was to lower the hurt without compromising the excellence.**

There was a tremendous drive for a kid to improve himself, whether in the arts, in class, or on the ball field. One role of the counselor was to pick up the pieces from any hurt that was caused by the teachers and the specialists. The classroom was supposed to trouble you. The arts were supposed to raise you to new levels of aspiration. We wanted an ethical, caring culture, but we also wanted growth and excellence. We wanted to nurture people while putting terrific demands on them.

(8) "Translating Jewish into Jewish education: The Melton Faculty Seminar"

THE MELTON FACULTY SEMINAR

The Melton Faculty Seminar was set up to determine the motifs and values that we wanted the child to internalize at Ramah.

The group included David Weiss HaLivni, Gerson Cohen, Yochanan Muffs on the left, Chaim Brandwein, who fit into the Bavli mode; Fritz Rothschild, the great interpreter of Heschel; Avram Holtz, literary mode; Shmuel Leiter, a great student of Midrash. These people spent four years thinking about the themes of Ramah.

They developed a chart. On the vertical axis were the themes:

God
The Interpersonal
The Intrapersonal
The aesthetic
The Holy

On the horizontal grid were:

Accepted Truth,
Something to be understood
Something to be acted on
Something to live by.

Had we continued with this exercise, we would have looked at each activity and each text in terms of where it fit in on the grid. We didn't finish it, but the chart, which was published in 1963, was a blueprint for Jewish education.

(9) What were the main educational ideas influencing Ramah's vision?

The Melton Academic Board

This group consisted of Fritz Redl; Goodwin Watson, a social psychologist; Ralph Tyler, a powerful force in American Education; Joseph Schwab, the great philosopher of education; Lawrence Cremin, the great historian of education at Columbia; James Coleman, the great sociologist who died in 1995; and Bruno Bettelheim, who saw Ramah as a marvelous experiment. (I had written my PhD at Chicago under Schwab and Bettelheim.)

Reidl told me that Ramah was the greatest amateur educational experiment he had ever seen. By "amateur" he meant non-professionalized, a product of enthusiastic people.

None of these people was paid for participating. They were enormously intrigued by the ambitiousness of the product. There was a lot of time devoted to training, and Schwab would come to Poconos and Nyack to lead seminars for the staff before the camp season started. Melton and Ramah were seen as a continuum; if you were involved in one, you were involved in the other. Ramah was a place to test the Melton theories.

What motivated these various high-profile professors from well outside the Jewish world to give so much time and energy to Ramah?

What is immortality for a scholar? It comes when people read his books and carry out his ideas. Schwab actually lived to see his ideas acted upon. We were offering these people a laboratory to try out their ideas, and somehow we inspired in them the confidence that it would actually happen.

Schwab saw Ramah as a place to produce disciples. He saw himself

adored. He was the most important force in shaping my mind in education. In 1985 I wrote a piece for a symposium on his work, and he wrote back to me: "I always said you were the only person who really understood me." I could have died right there.

Some of these men followed me to Israel three weeks a year. And we, in turn, never undertook anything without their approval. That's a lot of power for an academic -- the equivalent of a businessman making a big deal.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHWAB

Joseph Schwab was the key architect of the Melton Program, and he also devoted a tremendous amount of time to Ramah. Between 1952 and 1966 I spent at least two days a month with him. He came in to help us with issues like the connection between the cognitive and the affective. How do you move from what you learn to what you do? In "Eros and Education," Schwab wrote that the mind is passionate, that the intellect is hardly an emotion-free area. He believed there was no emotional area that doesn't have cognitive elements. Indeed, Schwab believed that there was no sharp or meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, intellect and emotion.

Schwab also believed that the definition of "to know" had to include "to do." The concept of mitzvah,, then, was intriguing to him, and so was Ramah as an educational setting. He helped us set up the Mador program, and his conceptions of training have guided me to this day.

We worked with Schwab on how to move text into the minds of teachers and kids. At the University of Chicago we had always

studied original texts -- no textbooks. We spent hours with Schwab discussing how to teach the joint deception of Jacob and Rebekkah against Isaac and Esav. Jacob is a crook and his mother is a liar, and poor Isaac is deceived.

Now when you're working with adolescents, how do you tell them the truth -- that the world is often a terrible place -- without killing their idealism? This was a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it. How do you teach that there are shades of gray when adolescents reject that idea? Freud wrote in Civilization and its Discontents that educators prepare young people for the world by sending them on a polar expedition in summer clothing. We teach them that the world is good. How do you avoid killing enthusiasm, hope and idealism?

There are two main schools of thought about leadership training. The British school says, Study the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and the right poetry and Shakespeare will give you the principles you need. This idea was formulated by Whitehead, who said all he needed in life could be found in the Bible and ancient Greece. The American conception is the work-study mode. The Harvard Business School says, If we can provide enough case studies, which include the principles and situations you'll encounter during your career, that's the best education you can have.

Schwab had a third conception: Teach people the principles that have guided your tradition, and then give the students exercises in analyzing practice in the light of these traditions.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BETTELHEIM

Bettelheim's great work was Love is Not Enough, about his school for autistic children -- the most severely disturbed kids. He had a great record, and his idea of a closed institution struck us as a wonderful model for Ramah. I was a student of his, and I had worked at his school. Bettelheim believed in using every asset you had, including the food and the architecture. I saw disturbed kids coming in who were terrified of not having enough food, so food was also available. Bettelheim also taught me the power of the school janitor, because for some kids these guys are more significant educational figures than the teachers.

Bettelheim advised us not to have a Visiting Day at Ramah. But when we insisted, he warned us to be prepared for a terrible letdown when the parents left. He taught us that you needed rooms for kids where it was all right to go crazy, as well as quiet rooms. And he used to stress the distinction between education and therapy: education could serve great therapeutic purposes, but you shouldn't confuse the two.

Bettelheim gave us the idea of the bunk as home haven, and of the counselor as supportive person. And he helped us understand that **Ramah was counter-cultural in a way that was beneficial and attractive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.**

Bettelheim sent me to Eric Erickson, who, in his book about Martin Luther and Gandhi, described charismatic people as unreconstructed adolescents who believe the world could be changed, and that history was reversible. Older people on the verge of giving up find these ideas terrifically attractive. I went to see Erickson at Harvard to talk about his books, and they began to be read in camp.

Intro

These are pretty lofty ideas for a summer camp.
We had lofty ideas and high ideals, and we always fell short. We started with cognac and ended up with grape juice. Only a small part of our grandiose intentions came through, but still, that was something. If you get grape juice you're still doing well. The question is, How great is your cognac? Because if you start out with grape juice, you'll end up with kool-aid. ✓

All our conversations with these men created a questioning, inquiring environment. We continually asked ourselves: if this is what children need, how does Judaism offer it? If you're worried about the rights of children, how is an ancient tradition gong to handle this? Our Seminary professors came up with wonderful conceptions, like how you can't impose strict halachic rulings for people who are not ready for it.

(10) A philosophical commitment to excellence

During its formative years, Ramah must have been unabashedly elitist in a way that might not be possible today.
Yes. We believed that if you invested in the right people, they would turn the world on its head. Judaism may be a classless tradition, but it's an elitist one. We believe that anyone can make it to the top given the ability and hard work. But there is a top.

In those days elitism was a commonly shared assumption, and nobody would have argued against it. It was ingrained. The Seminary sought out great students and great faculty, and it certainly succeeded. It was hard to get into Ramah, and there were long waiting lists.

If I were building a high school today, I'd have to decide: Do I want it to be elitist, and if so, why? I might decide that in

order to achieve our goals we need a fairly homogeneous population. To stretch people the way we intend to, we are looking for kids with certain qualities. At the same time, I might also want to teach people of different cultural backgrounds to appreciate each other.

+1 p. 27

(11 A) **Why did Ramah campers have no choice but to attend services?** Because in order to reject something you need to have experienced it. Ramah is a religious camp, where you could experience religious services under the best conditions. Second, as Schwab used to say, the sonata form isn't something you immediately love. It takes work and experience before you appreciate it. For t'fillah to succeed you have to work at it, and eventually it will become meaningful -- or not. But the rejection has to be a serious one.

We believed that most people who experienced Judaism under optimal conditions would become deeply involved. All education works on that assumption, whether its science, music, or the classics. If you're introduced to it the right way by good teachers, you'll buy it. That's the faith assumption of education.

By the way, I would insist on t'fillah in a community high school because it's difficult to justify any rich conception of religious Judaism without it. If you're school includes the entire spectrum of Jews, you'll need to work out some communal agreement on what kind of t'fillah would satisfy them.

Although morning services were compulsory at Ramah, wasn't was a little more flexibility when it came to observing Shabbat? The camp's public space had to be maintained as a religious preserve. I couldn't stop you from turning on the radio in your

bunk, but we wanted people to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible. Some things were non-negotiable. Hebrew, classes, services, kashrut, and instructional swim. If I were starting over, I wouldn't necessarily insist on birkat HaMazon.

What about the question of Minchah? Traditional Jews view it as compulsory, but Ramah said otherwise. Why?
An excellent question. Our educational analysis made clear that if we insisted on Minchah at camp, then we'd lose the impact of Shacharit. There's a limit as to how far you can push. The Seminary faculty voted for an optional Minchah at Ramah, although they knew this wasn't halachic. It was a close decision, and in the end it was decided by one vote.

Along the same lines, there was never a mechitzah at Ramah. On the other hand, we didn't use the Rabbinical Assembly prayerbook, where all of about four words had been changed -- concerning sacrifices. The Seminary faculty refused to use that edition, and the rabbis were furious. But we wanted to be inclusive. We wanted the JTS faculty to participate in our services, and we didn't want a civil war over four words. Wolfe Kelman and Heschel helped me win that battle, and the Silverman siddur was never used.

Did you give much thought to how the campers would re-enter their normal lives when the summer was over?
We often discussed how to help the kid who returns to a non-kosher home. We never told kids to tell their parents how they should or shouldn't eat, because the camper's relationship to his family was something we had to respect. At the same time, it was enormously hard for our campers to return to a synagogue with a pompous rabbi and a Protestant service.

We didn't know in advance that we were creating misfits. We were arrogant enough to think we could turn around the conservative movement, and to some extent we did. Look at how many Ramah kids became rabbis. When I first came to the Seminary, it was filled with refugees from Orthodoxy. Later, it attracted a lot of Ramah graduates. Of the people in professional Jewish life, the rabbinate, Americans in Israel, a large proportion came from Ramah.

LAY PEOPLE AND JEWISH EDUCATION

Lay people have always been a potential source of power and but that's more true today than ever. Until around ten years ago, most Jews of means and status cared mainly about Israel, hospitals, and the defense organizations. Jewish education and Jewish culture ranked very low. For Morton Mandel in Cleveland to have gone into Jewish education was highly unusual. There were other exceptions, such as Philip Lown in Boston and Sam Melton in Columbus. But during the 1960s and 1970s you could count on one hand the number of influential lay people who really cared about Jewish education.

The same was true within the denominations, where most people cared about seminaries, congregations and rabbis. But not education. Today, that has changed. Education has become fashionable, especially as part of the continuity agenda. And lay people are much different than they were. They want more say, and they tend to be much more knowledgeable.

The content issues are also different today. When the Melton

Center was established, the key question was: What claim does the tradition have on you if you don't necessarily believe that its origins are divine? Today the question is: with the world at my reach, and with Judaism being just one choice out of many, why should I commit myself to this particular journey? Why do I need all these restrictions on what I do and who I marry? An educational system has to answer that question on several levels. And how do you communicate that to somebody who has an attention span of thirty seconds? What is your vision? What is your content? What is your didactic method going to be? These are the questions for today.

We now have several major assets that we didn't have then. Today we have academics all over America who care about Jewish education. And these days you can draw on a variety of different programs. You have Ramah. You have exciting day schools, some fine university campus programs, some excellent trips to Israel. These are all assets you can use.

GOOD IDEAS ARE NOT ENOUGH

With Mandel, if one of us gets an idea, the first approach is to try to shoot it down. Sometimes we spend months on that. If we can't find what's wrong, even after we bring in the opposition, only then do we go ahead. My students come to me with ideas, and I ask, Why is this a good idea? There are a lot of good ideas, so you have to rank them. There's a limited amount of time, money and energy, so a "good" idea isn't necessarily good <u>enough</u>. It has to be the <u>best</u> idea. Then you have to ask, what does it mean to do this? And finally, is it feasible?

With zero-based budgeting, you take your current budget and assume no commitments. It's a wonderful way to examine your present reality. I'd like to the intellectual equivalent of zero-based budgeting, where all ideas are up for grabs.

THOUGHTS ON FUNDRAISING

First, I believe that money is the least of our problems. These days, especially, there's enough money around to support a wide variety of excellent projects.

Second, I have never asked a person for money unless I would give that same amount myself if I had it. If you're not enthusiastic about the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money. You have to convey your vision and your commitment.

Third, I believe we're all transparent. All of us are continually judging each other and asking, "Is this person for real?"

Fourth, I always start with the assumption that the person I'm asking is at least as smart as I am. I assume that there's no inherent reason for him to give me the money, because he has many other claims. It's my job to convince him -- or better, to educate him. My own relationship with Mort Mandel has been one of mutual education. One thing I have learned from Mort is what it means to navigate through reality. If you're running a summer camp where the kids will return home and not like their synagogue, you've got to deal with that.

There is no reason why the professionals can't educate the lay people about their chief concerns. In <u>On the teaching of Science</u>, Schwab posed an important questions. An informed populace is supposed to choose wisely, but how is that really possible in view of our recent explosion of knowledge? For example, how can Congressman decide between Teller and Oppenheimer?

Schwab concluded that if you can teach lay people the basic assumptions of the argument, and the worldview of each of the parties, they can act thoughtfully. Similarly, if you educate lay people about Jewish education, they can make informed decisions. If you treat them like a cow to be milked, they'll be

resentful -- and they'll be right. But if you treat them as people who will help you think about policies, you'll get somewhere.

Although the situation is far better than it used to be, **the relationship between Jewish educators and wealthy individuals is still adversarial.** The professionals still ask, How can this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Chumash? And the lay people still think, If he were really successful, he wouldn't be in that business; he'd be in mine. That's terrible, but it's true.

The three biggest mistakes in fundraising: treating the donor like a dope, not disclosing the full truth about what you're doing, and arrogance. Remember, Everybody has to start somewhere. Sam Melton wanted to start by teaching the Ten Commandments.

(11) **MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

When Burton Cohen was Schwab's graduate student, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on Exercises in Ethical Reasoning. This was an attempt to get people who have mastered a text to simulate what it would mean to act it out in reality. The step from the maxim to behavior is a big leap, with several stages in between.

The first stage is philosophy.

The second stage is philosophy of education.

The third stage is: What does this mean for educational practice?

The fourth stage is actual practice: teacher education, curriculum, is pedagogy.

The fifth stage is monitoring and evaluation, and building a corrective into everything you're doing. You may find that a great philosophy is not one you can apply in education.

(11A) **APPLYING THESE FIVE STAGES TO T'FILLAH**

Stage I

What is t'fillah? Why does man need it? Where does it fit into Judaism? How is it different from prayer in other religions? Where did it come from and how did it develop?

Man is a spiritual being, and prayer is one way to express his spirituality. That's one answer. Or you might say, with Maimonides, that most of our prayer is adoration. Does God really need you to tell Him He's great? Of course not. Maimonides says that God is a role model. If God is merciful, then you should be merciful. Our discussion could end here and remain theoretical.

Stage II

Is prayer something that small children can handle? For little kids, maybe it's best to stick with pure repetition. How do you deal with kavannah and children? How do you tap spirituality in children?

Stage III

Here we move into educational practice. What is your strategy going to be? Perhaps you can't really start until you make people sensitive to words. After all, the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or saying words will set something off inside of you. But then, what about meditation?

Stage IV

Curriculum. Exactly what are you teaching, and how are you teaching it? How are you going to educate teachers?

Stage V

How will you monitor this activity and make the necessary changes and improvements? Teachers have to understand what you're doing, they have to want to do it, and they have to be able to do it.

APPLYING THESE FIVE STAGES TO SPORTS

Stage I What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is a healthy body in our tradition different than a healthy body in Hellenism?

Stage II What is the role of sports in education? Learning about rules, competition, fairness, and cooperation.

Stage III What is the role of sports going to be in your institution? How important is it? Does it compete with other activities? Are you prepared to let a student graduate who doesn't respect and value his body? Or who has no interest in sports?

Stage IV Curriculum and teacher education. Example: How do you teach kids how to lose?

Stage V Evaluation and change. How do you change your program as you see it develop?

(16) Evaluation

(16A) **FOUR MAJOR FAILURES AT RAMAH**

1. The failure to institute evaluations

We never conducted any systematic evaluation, which was wrong for two reasons. First, we weren't able to catch problems in time. Ralph Tyler once said: "By not conducting evaluations, it's as if you're doing medical testing as the patient is leaving the hospital. You're getting no feedback on what you should be doing until it's too late to do anything about it."

Second, if our story was really as encouraging as it appeared, we should have had these testimonies documented. It's amazing that we never even asked the campers to write about their experiences! We were so busy building something new that we didn't even stop to look at it.

As for a more serious evaluation, that's time-consuming and expensive, and to some people it sounds like a luxury. Even today, most institutions have evaluations not because they might learn something, but because they see them as fundraising tools.

2. The failure of Hebrew

Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and we didn't do well enough in this area. To start with, First, our counselors didn't know enough Hebrew. But that's not a good reason. We could have taught them Hebrew in the off-season in regional centers. We could have sent them to Israel. But we didn't do either.

Second, we had no real curriculum for Hebrew at Ramah, and no language labs. We didn't even look at Camp Massad! We

figured they were successful at Hebrew because that's all they were doing.

I have to share in the blame, because I didn't give Hebrew enough emphasis. My attitude was, Look, if there's a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. Moshe Greenberg, Gerson Cohen, Moshe Davis, and Sylvia Ettenberg all fought for Hebrew, and I loosened the reins. We should have hung tough on Hebrew. We should have dedicated part of the day to Hebrew. We should have had a Hebrew curriculum and language labs.

I blew it with regard to Israel, too. For years I kept Israelis out of the camp, because the Israelis I had met had come to America to buy appliances. But I was convinced that we should bring over an Israeli delegation, and I personally chose the first members in 1967.

3. The failure to establish a year-round program

We wanted to hire full-time directors to maintain the camp program during the year through LTF. The summer was the climax of the year, or perhaps the launch of the year, or both. All the camps could have been winterized. Here we simply quit too early. We should have at least failed, but we didn't even do that.

4. The failure to establish a curriculum

There was never a formalization of the various camp programs. We had some sharing of programs among the camps, but not enough. There was far too much re-inventing the wheel, and a great deal of improvising. We didn't build an educational infrastructure in the central office. We were afraid of formalizing what we had and freezing it, and killing the juices.

(16E) Successes

But we did grow our own tomatoes. That is, much of our staff grew up in the movement. We had some terrific directors, and most came through our system. We made sure they were relatively well-paid. We created a profession, and these people got tenure, like faculty. This was a complex job, which involved dealing with lay people, staff, rabbis, education, kids, parents, money.

Unanticipated successes: networking, aliyah, Jewish scholarship, people going into the rabbinate; friendships and marriages; community leadership. Graduates of Ramah often remained involved in Jewish communal life, and many went into academic life.

Sylvia Ettenberg is the great hero of Ramah. She represents the only coherent continuation from the beginning until her recent retirement, a span of 45 years. She was a nurturer of directors. She was my boss, and then I became her boss, but we never fought -- thanks to her. She was stubborn beyond words on behalf of the centrality and importance of Ramah. She was an anchor for lay people. She was great facilitator and peacemaker between warring factions.

everyone lost needs [illegible]

(17)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM RAMAH?

We can learn how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can stretch itself. Most of the directors were trained as rabbis, which gave them a clear and obvious career line -- scholarship, pulpit, or conventional education. But with Ramah they went out on a limb -- some for years, some for the rest of their lives.

At Ramah we combined sophisticated content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete nitty gritty. For example, when in the camp cycle do you start preparing for Shabbat? How much effort was it worth to discourage hair curlers? Or the whole question of dressing in white for Shabbat. Or the enormous efforts to grapple with t'fillah.

Ramah was a place where you saw theory paying off in practice. Ramah was also about investing in your talent, and about the importance of lay people. The lay people protected us from outside attempts to cut down on education. They believed in it, they understood it. People acted out of deep conviction. Ramah made it possible for the rabbis, scholars and lay people to join forces and to discard their normal reference groups. There was a real generosity of spirit, and a genuine attempt to understand the other guy's position. Ramah was a movement, not just a camp.

Looking Ahead: New ideas, new structures

(18)

Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and still don't exist. Perhaps we'll see a boarding school or some other new institution that will break down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. And just as the Dewewian school hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, the Ramah school would serve as a training ground for Jewish citizenship.

ODDS AND ENDS

** One of Paley's goals might be to produce a mentsch who can also get into Harvard, a scholar who understands that ethical and spiritual values are no less significant than academic achievements.

** If we continue doing the same old thing in Jewish education, people will continue to hate it. Some people think we should close the afternoon schools because they're a failure. I'd rather see them changed.

** American Jews should be spending their philanthropic money on Jewish education. Israel's best asset is a strong Diaspora. All the contributions that come to Israel from the Diaspora represents only about 1% of Israel's GNP.

Corrections to First Interview

** Marshall Smith, former dean of Stanford

** yes, over a thousand pieces of legislation.

** Robert Maynard Hutchins

** Lightfoot found that each school had its own vision, and the attempt to realize that vision was what motivated the headmaster and the staff.

(1) Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture (New York, 1983). She looked at six good American schools, both public and private.

She writes:

> In my visits to the schools, I did not enter with preconceived notions of key themes or a specific list of predetermined questions, but tried to learn early what the inhabitants regarded as central issues. Sometimes teachers', administrators', and students' concerns were easily identifiable because they were spoken of by large numbers of people or pointed out by respondents who were the best informed by virtue of their roles or positions.
>
> In St. Paul's, for instance [an elite academy in New Hampshire], everyone made reference to the shaping and determining influences of history, the power and certainty of tradition, and the comforts they provide....
>
> At George Washington Carver in Atlanta, there was an equally strong and identifiable theme. The principal, with his passion, force, and energy, was fighting against historical imperatives and trying to forge a new image. Everything he did was calculated to undo old perceptions, reverse entrenched habits, and inculcate new behavioral and attitudinal forms.
>
> **Sometimes the repetitive refrains, the persistent themes, were not voiced as forcefully and clearly as they were at Carver and St. Paul's, but I found that they emerged at all of the schools I visited.**

(13,14) ** I'm walking in Ramah in Poconos with Sam Melton, and a kid walks by and Sam says, What are you studying? Chumash. Chumash with what? he asks. Chumash with Melton. I didn't need to do any more fundraising. The Melton program was begun at Ramah.

THE SUPER HEBREW SCHOOL

Many parents can handle their kids for only a limited amount of time. I got this idea from the kibbutz, where you'd see the kids having juice with their parents at 4 in the afternoon. I thought of a combination of supplementary school and community center. The kids would come home at 6 pm for dinner with all their homework done. I'd also keep the kids all day on Shabbat, and I'd give them back on Sunday. We'd teach them lyrical poetry to help them deal with t'fillah. We'd teach them music to be sensitive to sounds. We'd have them every day from 3 until 6.

** There is so much at Ramah that we hadn't planned for in the beginning. Full-time directors. Year-round programs. Training for staff, and for the directors. The teachers and the specialists. The Israeli delegation.

** It's easy to ignite people when you're dealing with extremes. It's harder to produce people who are committed to tolerance and democracy, and to get them excited about that. The center often loses out. How do you produce people excited about non-fanatic positions? We were terribly excited about our middle position, but we didn't see it as monolithic.

The Shopping Mall High School (by Powell, Farrar and Cohen; (1) Boston 1985), begins as follows:

> "It's a big job to make up a curriculum that everybody can do." That was how one student explained why her high school contained hundreds of courses and dozens of programs. Her words caught the essence of a widespread American belief that nearly everybody should attend high school, nearly everybody should graduate from high school, and nearly everybody should find the experience constructive....
>
> High schools take few moral stands on what is educationally or morally important. Pluralism is celebrated as a supreme institutional virtue, and tolerating diversity is the moral glue that holds the school together. But tolerance further precludes schools' celebrating more focused nothings of education or of character. "Community" has come to mean differences peacefully coexisting rather than people working together toward some serious end.
>
> **Such accommodations make many high schools resemble shopping malls.** Both types of institution are profoundly consumer-oriented. Both try to hold customers by offering something for everyone. Individual stores or departments, and salespeople or teachers, try their best to attract customers by advertisements of various sorts, yet in the end the customer has the final word.

The shopping mall high school says that everybody gets everything in small dosages, that everything has the same ranking. The cafeteria model is different. It says: This is such a rich tradition, and people are so different that it's educationally dumb to impose only one style as a way to make contact. Some people are tone deaf, but might be moved by the legal or literary aspects, or music, or art. **Every attempt to box in Judaism only makes us poorer.**

NESSA, this just in . . .
-- Bill

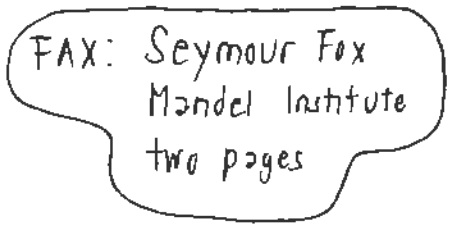
JOSEPH SCHWAB, from "EROS AND EDUCATION"

Eros, the energy of wanting, is as much the energy source in the pursuit of truth as it is in the motion toward pleasure, friendship, fame, or power. Any means or method of education taps this energy source to the extent that the method is at all effective, and the best means of education will be one which taps it most effectively. (Though the best educational means must be measured against other criteria as well.)

Not only the means, however, but also the ends of liberal education involve the Eros. For the end includes not only knowledge gained but knowledge desired and knowledge sought. The outcome of a successful liberal curriculum is actively intelligent people. They like good pictures, good books, good music, good movies. They find pleasure in planning their active lives and carrying out the planned action. They hanker to make, to create, whether the object is knowledge mastered, art appreciated, or actions patterned and directed. In short, a curriculum is not complete which does not move the Eros, as well as the mind of the young, from where it is to where it might better be.

Enquiry into the means of liberal education must then seek answers to two questions concerning the affective factor in education. To what objects does the youthful Eros readily attach? Which of these can be sufficiently ambiguous to serve not only in satisfaction of present needs, but also to generate or bring to consciousness more enduring satisfactions?

From the Journal of General Education 8 (1954), 54-71. Reprinted in Joseph K. Schwab, Science, Curriculum, and Liberal Education (Chicago, 1978), 105-132.



February 29, 1996

Dear Seymour:

I am delighted to have retrieved for you the famous Cuban army analogy. (Please note--confirming the aptness of my nimshal--that the number of fighters Castro marched past the *New York Times* reporter corresponds precisely to the number of professors of Jewish education in North America!)

Status of the Ramah piece: I have just received from Bill a 36-page edited transcript of our work together. Its individual pieces are coherent and strong; it now needs to be structured as an essay. The next steps are: Nessa restructures this draft and integrates the previous draft into this material. Bill and Nessa have a comprehensive editorial conference, after which Bill reorganizes the piece. Nessa then line-edits, adding the missing connections (where you speak in "insider" shorthand) and the missing pieces for you to fill in.

At that point, we should have the first complete draft of the essay for your reading and reaction. Both Bill and I imagine that we will then need a session with you (approximately one afternoon) to review and record your responses. In addition, when you see the draft and its sequence, you will probably have a couple of brainstorms about questions we may not have raised that would make the piece even stronger.

I do want to make clear that we are well on the way now. These are simply the necessary stages of doing a serious piece of work.

If you have plans to be in North America within the next couple of months, please let me know and I'll organize us around your schedule. If not, I can send you the draft when it's ready, and we can work together this summer.

Right now, I'm the one that has to knuckle down. But your time will come!

Meanwhile, and separately, am yisrael on this side of the ocean is with medinat yisrael on that side of the ocean in this painful time.

Shabbat Shalom.

Nessa

April 16, 1996

נכונה	מקס
1. תיק שוטף	העתקים:
3. [illegible]	2. [illegible]
5.	4. [illegible]
	6. לתיק:

To: Seymour Fox
From: Nessa Rapoport

Rumor has it that you will be in our area shortly. I don't know if I'll need more input from you at this point in my work on the Ramah piece, but it would be a great incentive for me to know where you are and how to find you!

Please send me your general schedule of cities and phone numbers. Will you get to New York? Boston? I'd like to touch base.

Nessa

DEAR NESSA,

I WILL BE IN TOUCH. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE WITH BILL NOAH

4/18/96

Notes on the Ramah publication

Seymour Fox
Interviewed by Bill Novak

A publication of the CIJE/Mandel Institute Goals Project

NR:

Retrieve questions from Nov. 3 letter
Review notes from Cambridge for missing material
Xerox two mss. and send to Novak; schedule long call Formalize interviewing style
Get disc from Novak; transfer Cambridge material to office computer
Seymour's schedule; role.
Create July schedule. When first used? December? July in draft? Disc to Israel? Tape/transcribe?

Gimmicks: "The Five Educational Principles Behind..."

Categories for translating vision: Include? The grid of five? The Prolegomenon? (Add Dewey from this.)

Ramah: Structure (4/18/96)

Introduction: "There's nothing as practical as a great idea." The role of vision (philosophical R & D) in building a great institution. (What can we learn from Camp Ramah that can illuminate contemporary efforts to transform Jewish life in North America through Jewish education?) "We're living in a time when the North American Jewish community is looking for ways to transform existing educational institutions or is building new ones, especially community high schools or informal educational settings for adults and children. What can we learn about the centrality of vision to the greatness of a Jewish educational institution? How can Ramah as a case study be illuminating?"

1. Why is it important for an institution to have a distinct vision?

2. Visions from general education

3. Are there models of Jewish educational institutions guided by a vision?

4. What can Jewish education contribute to general education?

5. What was the vision of Ramah? (Why a camp?)

6. What were the great Jewish ideas infusing Ramah's vision?

7. Balancing competing Jewish ideas in an educational setting

8."Translating" the ideas into Jewish education: The Melton Faculty Seminar

9. What were the great educational ideas infusing Ramah's vision? (parallel to question 6.)

10. A philosophical commitment to excellence

11. Moving from theory to practice at Ramah
    - 11A. Tefillah
    - 11B. Sports
    - 11C. Human relationships

12. Investing in people: Staff (correlates to 14C)

13. Lay people and Jewish education; role of lay people in formulating, implementing, and supporting the vision of Ramah

14. Fundraising

15. What was the relationship between vision and budget/business?

16. Evaluation

16A. Four major failures at Ramah
16B. Success, unexpected; problems of

17. What can we learn from Ramah today?

18. Looking ahead: New ideas, new institutions

Bibliography/Further Reading

April 24, 1996

Dear Bill:

Here are four documents:

1. Your "February Interviews"
2. My "First Draft" (12/95)
3. My editorial letter to you (11/95)
4. My newly created structure (4/96)

What I've done: I have gone through documents 1.-3., in that order, numbering the sections according to the numbered topics/questions in the structure document (4.)

My goal is to have an integrated manuscript--not a completed one, but an integrated one--for me to work on in June. That is, to create one document that includes all relevant material in the sequence I am positing in my structure. Almost everything fits, I think, except for some topics in the November editorial letter. I deliberately reviewed it, however, to see if we omitted anything in subsequent work. And I'll be happy to question Seymour about anything we haven't covered when I'm in Israel in July.

We can talk more concretely on Tuesday. At this point, I am imagining an expanded and slightly reorganized version of your February interviews that attempts to follow the thematic flow of the structure. If there are missing bridges or transitions, you can either invent them or put all the material in as logical a sequence as possible--and I'll invent them.

As I said, I'll be reviewing my extensive notes from February, to see if there's anything else to be retrieved in Seymour's voice. And I'll go through my (extensive) file as well, to see if he said anything I meant to highlight but did not include.

To be continued on Tuesday.

With thanks,

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: Last e-mail 1996

I was pleased to hear about your phone meeting with Bill, which he felt was very successful in meeting our goals. This note is just to let you know that I will need the final material--bibliography with a one-sentence annotation of purpose; and acknowledgments--no later than Jan. 2, by fax. All materials must be at the designer's by the end of the first week in January, and I must read them first.

Please convey to Sue how impressive her editing is. The work she did was superb-and I don't say that often. I admired her suggestions enormously.

The next thing you see will be a set of page proofs, to be turned around very quickly.

MY THIRD REQUEST FOR THE FOLLOWING INFO: Please let me know your travel plans in Jan. and Feb., so that I can time the project properly. I will also send Shelly a copy of the final manuscript; and Danny Marom, for the Hebrew translation.

My target date is timed for the March meeting. But I hope I see you before that.

Nessa

CIJE Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
Time to Act עת לעשות

PLEASE TRANSMIT TO SEYMOUR

April 24, 1996

Dear Seymour:

Here's an update on Ramah:

I have:

1. Reviewed Bill's 36-page interview transcript from February; my "first draft" from December; and my initial editorial letter from November in order to create a structure around which all this discrete material can be thematically organized into a finished piece.

2. Numbered each page or, where relevant, each individual paragraph of those three documents according to the 18 numbered sections of the structure, so that Bill can integrate all three documents into one thematically coherent manuscript.

3. Scheduled an editorial call with Bill next Tuesday to review this material.

4. Am about to review my own 26 pages of detailed notes on the February conversations to see if there is other material to be retrieved that Bill may not have included.

5. Suggested to Bill that I receive the integrated manuscript in time for me to work on it extensively in June. (We'll talk further about this on Tuesday.)

My goal is to bring my edited, revised work on Bill's integrated manuscript to Israel in July so that you and I can work together to "fill in the blanks" and answer the outstanding questions. (That is, the manuscript I bring will be close to a completed essay--but I can already see that some material needs to be fleshed out. Where I cannot do it, I'll need to sit with you to do it.)

That's where we are. I am starting to see the fruits of our labors and am quite pleased, although considerable work remains.

Do let me know how to reach you in the U.S.

Tessa

15 East 26th Street, New York, NY 10010-1579 • Phone: (212)532-2360 • Fax: (212)532-2646

(1) first notes

Ramah: Notes from Transcripts (4/30/96-7/1/96)

Introduction: Without vision, how would you know what to do? What would guide your educational practice?

There has been no Jewish movement of reform that wasn't guided by a great vision. If education is not going to affect society, it's very limited. A great Jewish vision contains: vision for the person; for the family; for Jewish society and for larger society (the relationship of Jews in/to the world).

You could see Jewish history through the eyes of the various educational ideals that have been held. What are the shaping forces of that society?

m We really believed we were going to turn the world upside down.

m Cremin: People are educated in an ecology, not just in an institution. Society, media: All have an impact. His definition of education: The transmission of culture across generations.

ap. 2-3 **Shopping mall high school:** Everyone gets everything in small doses. Everything has the same ranking.

> Dewey

Brisk: Building an elite of Jews who would reinfuse an understanding of Judaism through critical study of the text. They built a network of yeshivot. They're an influence in America and Israel until today. They claimed: It's a coherent system.

Musar: Ethics was considered by others soft and a waste of time. "It's obvious." People became ascetics, with an enormous sensitivity to ethical behavior. They thought the emphasis on intellectuality, dialectic, pilpul analysis was a distortion: concern about the mind over concern for others.

Vision of Ramah: Build an enclave, an educational setting where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives. The result would be people deeply committed to their Judaism but involved in American society.

Asking the questions: If this is what the tradition is all about, what is education supposed to be? And: If this is what children need, what does Judaism have to offer?

Ramah as a lab: Professors at the Seminary might teach a great course, and then it would be replicated for staff and translated for children at camp. What was the relevance of great Jewish ideas to the lives of nine-year-olds? These questions interested the scholars, some of whom actually taught in Ramah (Schwab, Sarna). The Melton Center used its new curricular materials for Bible experimentally at Camp Ramah. Ramah as a place where you could get excited about ideas and integrate them with life. It was taboo to think of them separately (**Schwab**).

Finkelstein: There's a great ethical message in the Talmud for Jews and mankind.

America is based on a conception of human dignity. In our tradition, we also have a conception of human dignity. I speak out of my religious tradition, which is my right as an American. We speak from the particular to the general, enriched by insights and ideas from our tradition. Jews have something to offer America. America has great room to be influenced by competing conceptions of justice, human dignity. Americans are sensitive to the Bible; our interpretation of the Bible should enter the discussion. And the essence of the arguments should be from our entire tradition, rather than stopping at the Prophets, as some classical Reform scholars did.

Lieberman: Critical study of the text in light of the society when the text was created. Therefore, you can't understand the texts without understanding the society and its dreams/goals.

"Professor Lieberman, this is what we're up against." [Definition of religion as myth]
"So what do you want?"
"I want to publish this book [Melton]. It shows that the text has an enormous ethical/religious message--whether or not it's divine in origin."
"Thank you for asking me. Let's agree you never asked me."

So why did you [SF] ask him? "If you didn't ask him, you're a big idiot. Irresponsible."

Heschel: Can you imagine changing Rosh Hashanah to coincide with a long weekend?

Heschel marched with Martin Luther King out of his religious tradition.

Judaism speaks to immediate, realistic situations.

Hebrew (Bavli): We all believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, would develop people who were deeply rooted in Jewish tradition through an attachment to Jewish texts--which they would become involved in by mastering skills to grapple with those texts. This required a mastery of the Hebrew language. They would have to understand that there is a tradition of parshanut; if they mastered it, they could live out their Judaism spiritually, ethically, and intellectually among Jews--which means peers, family, and community. They would feel the responsibility to participate in the larger society and speak to it through the language of Judaism. (See above, **Vision of Ramah**.) The idea was: You are entitled to converse with Rabbi Akiva, with Maimonides, but if you want to be part of the conversation with Maimonides, you have to master the language.

Crossover of ideas: Schools attract kids because their parents believe they'll get them into Oxford or Harvard. Therefore, textual analysis that teaches kids how to read a book will be valuable, because they'll know how to carry on a deliberation.

Creative tension/eclectic vision: These thinkers' ideas existed in creative tension with each other. An eclectic vision in a practical domain like education is enormously enriching, vibrant.

Judaism is such a rich tradition and people are so very different that to impose a given style or a limited style is educationally dumb. Some will be moved by law, some by literature, etc.

[Bill: I remain very confused about the distinction between the two that follow, who attended which, how often each met, etc. I think these notes aren't accurate.]

The Melton Faculty Seminar: Assignment: What are the motifs that you would want a child to internalize at Ramah? Schwab and Tyler were members; it met 4X/year.

The Melton Academic Advisory Board: We were determined to have the worlds of general and Jewish education "interpenetrate." These people represented the smartest, most creative minds. We were thinking very big in a parochial Jewish world.

Fritz Redl: *The Aggressive Child*. Psychoanalyst. Thought Ramah was "the greatest amateur experiment in education."

Goodwin Watson: Social psychologist.

Ralph Tyler: Dean of Social Sciences at Chicago. Head of Center for Advanced Study of Behavioral Science in Palo Alto. Great man of curriculum, evaluation.

Joseph Schwab: Philosopher of education.

Lawrence (sp.?) Cremin: Great historian of education. Later president of Teachers College. Close to the Seminary. Pushed us toward a historical perspective. "Piety": Biblical influence on American education. Got us to ask questions like: How would you derive a theory of education out of Jewish sources to be competitive in Western society? [The idea that we could compete with the Whiteheads, Deweys, Montessoris, etc.

James Coleman: Greatest sociologist.

Bettelheim: Great education experiment. (Self-hating Jew)

Dewey: Great influence on Cremin, Tyler, Schwab. From Seymour's writing: "For John Dewey...the world we live in is a flux created by the effects of living things constantly attempting to modify themselves and their environment. Every effort at change instigated by a need leadds to changes, and so on ad infinitum. The only way for a man to approach such a world is by rational efforts at perceiving problems and inventing solutions--the method of inquiry, or, in more popular terms, the 'scientific method'" Dewey saw man therefore as primarily an inquiring animal; one who felt needs as do all living things, but also one who sought to anticipate and identify his needs; one who sought to invent and develop an armoury or variety of means for their solution."

Why were they involved? They were very intrigued by the ambitiousness of the project and the fact that people believed in it. Impressed by how much time was devoted to training. We offered the possibility of acting on their ideas.

We were the beneficiaries of their greatness, but they were influenced by their work with us, too, especially in relation to their own Jewishness.

Schwab: Moving from what you learn to what you do. No sharp distinction between intellect and emotion. You definition of "to know" has to include "to do." Mitzvah so intriguing to him. Helped set up the Mador. His conception of training guides SF to this day. Judaism as a didactic system whose focus was theory of practice. He played a key role in Melton. Would fight with Sarna about the meaning of the text. Schwab was the architect of the BSCS (new biology).

[After British, American schools on leadership]: Schwab on leadership training: You teach people the principles that have guided your tradition and give them exercises in analyzing practice; get them reflective about their principles; then stretch: "If I acquired these new principles, what would my practice be like?"

Schwab: "The Religiously Oriented School in the United States."

Hours spent with Schwab on how to teach Yaakov/Rivkah.

Seymour said to Tyler: Help me recruit the academic board of the Melton Center. Tyler called up everybody.

Tyler:
Therefore: Intro. text to psychology.

Kimbell Romney.

Cremin.

Nevitt Sanford: Professions from a psychological standpoint.

Bettelheim.

(Seymour did his Ph.D. under Schwab and Bettelheim.)

The board met 2 days/month from 1952 to 1966. Its contribution: A discussion of how to move texts into the minds of kids; thinking about the power of texts for educating young people. Rooted in the University of Chicago's emphasis on teaching with original texts, rather than summaries in textbooks.

Study: Classes at Ramah: "You could spend the whole summer teaching one verse, because the ethical, spiritual growth of the camper was the central goal of the place."

Prayer: In order to reject something, you have to have experienced it. At its optimal, rejection ought to be a serious one. Ramah was a religious camp.

In a community high school, for example, it's hard to explain a rich conception of religious Judaism and omit tefillah. From Orthodox to Reform requires great leadership and ingenuity to get a community to agree on a justifiable approach tefillah. It has to be hammered out in practice.

Mitzvah: This was the area of the greatest innovation. Ramah was a place where you could play out Jewish practice in a total society, where you could live out ideas (ben adam l'chavero). A vibrant, alive halakhah.

These three don't live in harmony but in tension. They're tough, and they're meant to be tough. Education is supposed to teach people who to deal with tough situations.

On growth, excellence: There was an emphasis on ethics and caring--but also on growth. There was pressure for the individual camper to push him/herself. It was not a laid-back place. The phrase "not living up to his potential" was commonly heard. This caused disequilibrium in the lives of the kids. There were ideas to trouble you; arts to stretch you to new levels.

On elitism: New institutions: If I were building a high school today, I would have to decide: Do I want it to be elitist, and if so, why? If I decide yes, I would say: In order to achieve our goals, we need a homogeneous student body. Or: I want to teach people of different cultural backgrounds to learn to speak to each other.

On moderation: Easy to ignite people about extremes. Hard to produce people passionate about moderation and tolerance. The center loses out. People excited about non-fanatic positions. We believed that people with different point of view could live together.

The five stages: How do you fill the gap between text and its incorporation into behavior? How do you move from mastering an idea to living it? Judaism is concerned with theory of practice, as distinct from systems that are purely theoretical or only dealing with practice. We draw on the dialectic of the Talmud, which describes practical cases. The rabbis either apply principles to those cases or derive principles from them.

Moving from philosophy to the reality of education:
1. Conception of Judaism, Jewish society.
2. Philosophy of education: What is the nature of this conception for education?
3. What will this mean for educational practice?
4. Teacher education; curriculum; pedagogy.

5. MEF: Build a corrective into everything you're doing.

Tefilla:
1. How different from Xianity, Islam? Maimonides: Most prayer is adoration. But does God need you to tell Him He's great? Most are prayers of praise. Rather, prayer is a way to emulate God.
2. How to you tap spirituality in a person?
5. What if it's a great idea, but the teachers won't do it?

Sports: p. 23.
CHK

Lay people:

"You're contributing money, but we're contributing our lives!"

On attitude to lay people: "If a kid throws spitballs in class, we call it an educational challenge. But if a lay person says something stupid, we say he's an idiot. Why?" Today the relationship between lay and professional is adversarial, but why should it be that way? The professionals say: Why should the lay people have any input? They can't read chumash and Rashi. And the lay people say: If he was successful, he'd be in my business. He's a shlepper.

In light of lay people's lack of knowledge about educational theory, what would a genuine partnership look like?

Answer: Schwab, who asked: How can a democracy avoid the problem of the specialists running it? He said: An enlightened populace. If you could get experts to disclose their basic assumptions and how they move from principles to policy; present competing positions; and then, Schwab believed, the uninformed person is then no less competent than the expert to choose.

The question is: Who are the key lay leaders who, if informed, could change the world? What are the criteria for choosing them?

Enobling of lay people/rabbis/educators/scholars: What do you need?

1. A dialogue with living thinkers: Without a burning, central idea, forget it.
2. Unusual leaders: teachers and administrators.
3. A concern with what the practice and culture of the institution will be that's different?
4. A group of committed lay people who have internalized the vision, who are partners to the idea, who can help navigate through society, the real world.
5. To the extent that you can get great intellects, exciting educators, and parents involved, you have the dynamic partnership you need.

There should be mutual education going on.

Today: Are there new questions, if you were beginning again today?

Most people think only once in their lifetimes. Everyone has a "substantive structure": Every researcher looks at a problem through his glasses. Most people don't change their substantive structures. And yet the times demand different things:

1. The questions may be the same (How can you live a rich Jewish life and live in the world?) But the times demand different formulations. The clients are different today: Parents, kids, rabbis, policy makers.

Lay people are a potential source of power, partnership. More than in the past. [hospitals, etc.].

History: Sam Melton was a freak as one person who could move a community. Who did we have? Melton, Lowin, Layton Rosenthal (key to JESNA). That was a mezuman, not a minyan. Younger people have a lot to say. So do women. They will not accept things by fiat from professionals. Some lay people are very knowledgeable.

Content issues are different. When the Melton Center was created, the key question was for non-fundamentalist Jews (Conservative): Why does the tradition (Bible, Talmud) have a claim on us if we're not sure it's divine?

That's no longer the main question. Today it's: With the world at my reach and Judaism just another "ism," why should I choose it? Why not just marry this lovely person? That's the great challenge. And we have to answer quickly; you get one shot with a teenager, a parent. How are you going to capture their attention in the three minutes everyone has? Then, how do you keep a person in for a year? There have to be staggered rewards: You need a long, mid- and short-term plan. No society can hold out only for the long-term plan, without seeing any rewards from the work. Quick rewards buy more time. Lay people need to be educated to understand this.

On the other hand, you have major assets today: So many academics see Jewish education as important. Jewish studies at the university level is one of the big success stories in American Jewish education.

4. Potential today to do something you couldn't do then. Research can be a higher priority; you could demonstrate that research can make a concrete difference.

5. You have younger Jews in general education who want to contribute to Jewish education.

6. Need a way to capture the Jewish mind and heart that is different from the desire to succeed in work and make a lot of money.

7. You have Jewish leaders publicly declaring that Jewish education is a priority.

On leadership/leadership training: Hutchins, when president of the University of Chicago, said: The administrator has to be a philosopher. He/she has to lead the constituency in a constant search for the purposes of the institution. Then he/she has to be a watchdog to be sure that all parties are making decision toward those ends.

Failures of Ramah: The kids couldn't return to their synagogue service, because, they said, "It's not Jewish."

Hebrew: We criticized Massad, because there Hebrew was an end in itself and ideas came second. Could have taught in the winter, with a curriculum at home; and in summer, with a curriculum at camp. Sent them to Israel. There should have been a graded program. We quit too early. We should have at least failed seriously. Without it, you're a cripple in the Great Conversation.

Curriculum: Didn't build an infrastructure of the national office with the educational staff. Could have gotten the money to do it. We thought it you formalize, you freeze the creativity. But that's a cop-out.

Evaluation: We didn't write things up because we were busy building institutions.

Successes:

SF: "I've been in this business for a couple of days. Never in my life has there been more similarity between what we set out to do and what we launched."

Innovations:

1. Full-time directors as profession. No turnover.
2. Year-round programs.
3. Major translation activity.
4. Guided by general education and Jewish studies faculty.
5. Different staffs for different goals.

Outcome: Kids may have hated Hebrew school, but they loved Ramah.

Enormous rate of returns to camp. Emphasis and payoff on professional training for staff.

Lifelong friendships, creating a network.

We redid a movement through the children. Look how many campers became rabbis, Jewish studies professors, academics, made aliyah, or became professionals in Jewish life, or educators--in all movements/denominations.

Ramah made seriousness fun.

Ramah was a movement, not a camp.

Sylvia: A nurturer of directors. Greatest advocate for the centrality of Ramah in the Conservative movement. Anchor for lay people. Great facilitator and peace make between warring factions.

New institutions: How do you think about a high school? What will it look like? Why will it look like that? What will it take to do it? First-rate people and first-rate ideas. The new institutions will break down the barriers between formal and informal education. They will see schools as training for Jewish citizenship and involvement. They will want to create the person who gets into Harvard but is a mensch, for whom ethical and spiritual values are as significant as achievement. Such a person will be encouraged to question the status quo: Every Gemara begins with the question: Mina hani mili: "How do you know this is so?" Encourage not obedience but openness; otherwise, how are you going to turn the world upside-down?

Ending: Vision is not a luxury. Theory pays off in what you do in practice. It's a continuum. It's labor-intensive, but it attracts people. The journey is the thing. Lessons learned: A vision approach enobles lay people and professionals.

1. Deliberation is worth it.
2. Investing in people is worth it.
3. Spending hours with lay people is worth it. They stuck up for the educational vision in the face of financial constraints and were conduits to parents.
4. Rabbis, scholars and lay people can join forces, discarding their reference groups.
5. Vision elicits an enormous generosity of spirit, shows to what extent people would extend themselves to understand the other side.
6. Vision gives you courage to think about institutions that don't yet exist.

On politics and education: Educators don't realize the role politics play. Values, too, play an important role. In education, the least researched, least thought-about area is the relationship of education to society and politics. There's almost no literature. Most educators think that politics is dirty and they have to stay out of it. But if you can't join forces with the larger society, your impact is small. You have to understand what it means to navigate an educational vision through reality.

An organization which depends on charismatic guys can disappear when they disappear. But with great ideas, you don't rely on charisma alone. With method, you're not dependant on a person.

Question: There are those who say: Why does change take so long and cost so much? Why haven't we finished the job?

Answer: Would you study mortality rates in surgical wards where the instruments weren't sterilized? Well, if teachers are untrained and unmotivated, what do you expect?

Question: What might Jewish education give general education?

1. Emphasis on education of the spirit.
2. Understanding the richness of human experience.
3. Deep involvement in the ethical, in realms such as science education, for example.
4. Role of lay people; power and role of philanthropy.
5. Different conceptions of leadership education.
6. Dialectic--influenced by the Talmud--back and forth from principles to practice.

Future: I think this is a great moment. The whole thing is waiting to be conquered. You need a Marshall Plan, to figure out what's involved. We have a lot of good ideas: You need the best idea. What would it mean? Is it feasible? And you need the best people. We learned from Ramah: Invest in everyone, because you don't know who's got it. Judaism is not a secret; given the tools through education, anyone can join the tradition of commentary, and can offer a chidush--something new. It's not true that leaders are born, nor made. That's for the birds. Both experience and theory say so.

My mother taught me that failure is not in the lexcion.

532-2646

May 2

Dear Nessa,

No jokes today. But because your directions were so clear, I've been hard at work on the Fox project. Despite a heavier-than-usual schedule, I'll be sending you an integrated and improved manuscript before the month is over.

Yours,

B.-

Barry's copy

May 28, 1996

Dear Alan, Barry, and Dan:

I have just finished reading Bill Novak's first complete draft of Seymour's Ramah piece. Although there are some things Bill got wrong, sentences that need to be cut, and some sections that are underdeveloped, the essay will fulfill my own goals: A piece that would educate Michael Paley and Michael Steinhardt about what it takes to create a "vision-guided institution." I found it both fluid and exciting to read--and, believe me, I've read these words many, many times.

My intention has been to work with Bill through June so that I can take Seymour a close-to-final draft that includes in the text the additional questions we have for him. But before I go any further, I need your sense of whether you think we're on the right track.

Important note: Please do not show this draft to anyone--or even discuss it. I want to honor Seymour's privacy, particularly since he has not yet seen this.

I will need your responses by Wed. May 5, in whatever form is easiest for you.

Thanks,

Nessa

I loved it! It's not really Seymour's voice, but it is his head. There is a need to clarify the melton + Ramah relationship. I think that's the most confusing part to a non-insider.

I was surprised that he didn't mention Moshe Davis z"l, but in Davis' interview about Ramah in the Melton Journal, Davis didn't mention Seymour!

Note: Some of my comments are to be ignored.

- the agenda for + Melton FS was + curriculum for C Ramah. CR & Melton had a link from + begin.
- Lab to try out ideas to filter ideas that wd affect synagogues
- CR as a training ground for teachers for Melton new curriculum.
- Mentor concept as a prof. dev. idea
- "I often heard: 'the role model' counselor how does that fit in? Where does it come from? Schwab on 'accessible role model'.

A CONVERSATION WITH SEYMOUR FOX

THE NEED FOR VISION

One of the things you're known for is your conviction that every educational initiative must to be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem self-evident to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. Why are you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people would see as an introductory or preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

If you begin any new project with serious ideas and lofty ideals, some people will criticize you for being grandiose, or too deliberate. And it's true that in the natural course of events you will invariably fall short of your carefully thought-out vision. That's the way of the world: if you start out with cognac, you'll be fortunate to end up with grape juice. But that's not a bad result when you consider the alternatives. If you start with grape juice, you'll probably end up with Kool-aid.

Let me put it another way. Education that's essentially

parve -- that's neutral, and doesn't take a strong stand -- stands little chance of working. In my experience, all successful, effective education has at its foundation a specific and well-considered point of view. The proof of that proposition is all around us -- especially these days. Marshall Smith, the Undersecretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite over a thousand pieces of legislation, and the expenditure of billions of dollars from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. The only exceptions were those few schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lightfoot from the Harvard School of Education elaborated on this idea in her 1983 book, The Good High School, where she described and analyzed six successful secondary schools. She found that each of these schools had a distinct vision, and that the attempt to realize that vision was precisely what motivated the headmaster and the staff. In some of these schools, the concerns of teachers, administrators and students were easy to identify because they were articulated explicitly; in others, the "repetitive refrains" and "persistent themes" were expressed in more subtle and indirect ways. But whether the bedrock visions that animated these schools were shouted or whispered, Lightfoot reports, "they emerged at all of the schools I visited."

Another book from the mid-1980s, The Shopping Mall High School, examines the other side of the coin -- that is, what happens when you establish a school without a real vision. The authors contend that by trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, American high schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls. As they put it, "Both types of institution are profoundly

consumer-oriented. Both try to hold customers by offering something for everyone. Individual stores or departments, and salespeople or teachers, try their best to attract customers by advertisements of various sorts, yet in the end the customer has the final word."

In other words, if you offer everything you stand for nothing. Or, as the authors conclude in a real understatement, contemporary high schools "take few moral stands on what is educationally or morally important."

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it's getting better. Five or ten years ago you had to sell people on the importance of vision, but today that idea is increasingly accepted -- if only because we've all seen what happens in its absence. There's a professor at Stanford who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He argues that if your company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes internalized, you can withstand periods of weak leadership -- or even a move toward bureaucracy. In my experience, that holds true for educational institutions as well.

Anyone can claim that a particular idea constitutes a vision, so let's take a moment to establish what a vision is -- and what it isn't.

As I see it, a vision is a living entity. It's not a mission statement, or a declaration of purpose, both of which can be knocked off quickly. More often than not, these end up as frozen, static, and irrelevant assertions.

And a vision is not a goal. Goals are important, but they're specific to a particular educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching

science, for example, and another for the study of Talmud. A vision will offer a series of goals to educators, parents, community leaders and students, who will apply or translate that vision into various concrete programs.

For educators, vision is like oxygen. A great vision will inspire them to be creative, and even to invent new institutions. Goals matter, but they're not sufficient, and sometimes they can be so pedantic that they leave no room for vision.

A vision that is guided by great ideas will survive periods when those ideas are out of favor. In philosophy, for example, trends come and go, but you still find Platonists in every generation.

VISIONS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Let's look at one or two specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind lately because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, John Dewey and the Tide of American Liberalism. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him today, just as I believe that we'll soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan. Dewey had an unlimited optimism for what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education. "For a generation," wrote Henry Steele Commager, "no issue was really clarified until Dewey had spoken."

Dewey's followers took every line he wrote and transformed it into practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner [1861-1925], who have established dozens of schools across the country. They think about questions like what color to paint the walls in order to

achieve a particular result that's part of Steiner's vision. Whenever you get a vision that excites and involves people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate that vision into practice.

Another example of a successful vision in education is the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence has endured for another half-century. Over the years, Chicago has produced more Nobel Prize winners and more university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely exciting place that was guided by a vision, and it still is.

VISIONS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and most of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish society. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would conform to his concept of Judaism, where the intellect played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that if you educated a new type of individual, he would then create a new vibrant society in the Jewish homeland. The Jews of Israel would become or laGoyim, a light unto the nations.

One of the most important figures in Jewish education in our century was the Brisker Rav, Mordecai Ben Joshua Briszk (1884-1944), who headed the largest yeshiva in Hungary and Transylvania in the years leading up to the Holocaust. His vision was to build a Jewish elite that would reinfuse Judaism through a critical study of rabbinic texts. His followers built a network of yeshivot, and their influence is felt to this day. They

deliberately chose texts that other Jews dismissed as entirely impractical, such as the sections on sacrifices. Most yeshivot in those days concentrated on those sections of the Talmud that were more immediately relevant -- that dealt with such topics as civil damages, marriage and divorce, and the rituals of prayer, and other examples of halachah that you could actually use.

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more esoteric texts was to miss a great deal. As they saw it, if you skipped over certain sections you were not only distorting the tradition, but you were also neglecting some great treasures. Who's to say where you'll find the most significant texts? Don't presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Or take the Musar movement, which introduced a serious concentration on ethics into the yeshiva world. In most yeshivot this area had been considered too soft, and not worthy of significant attention. But the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter created entire institutions that were concerned with Musar. They believed that the traditional emphasis on pilpul [intellectual argument] in most yeshivot was a distortion of Judaism, because the students failed to develop the proper amount of sensitivity to other people. The Musarists were reacting to a world that they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently ethical.

Their opponents countered that the message of the Musarists was inappropriate because it effectively demeaned the power of the text. In other words, the text already contains within itself the power to affect people's behavior. But eventually the Musarists began to prevail, in that their influence penetrated most of the yeshivot, including the Chassidic ones. The conflict between these two visions continues to this day.

THE FOUNDING OF RAMAH

Let's jump forward a few decades and take a close look at an important Jewish educational institution in which you were intimately involved: Camp Ramah. The founders of Ramah could have put their energy into any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the 1940s and 1950's -- problems that we continue to face in the 1990s. First, most Jewish children were not being exposed to meaningful Jewish experiences during their early, formative years. Second, most Jewish families did not significantly contribute to the Jewish education of their children. Third, most North American Jews didn't live in an environment that supported the values of Judaism. During an era when the children of immigrants were busy trying to become Americans, the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. Our response to that was to go beyond what a school could accomplish by trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture that might accomplish what the family and the community were no longer doing.

Even the best school operates only a few hours a day. Our hope was to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole child, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for only eight weeks at a stretch. But within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our issues could be educational in the broadest sense -- not only teaching Hebrew, for example, but grappling with all kinds of social issues: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child screws up a play by forgetting his lines? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living halachah.

Or take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's wonderful to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence, people get hurt. So you have to draw a line -- up to here, and no further. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or speaking Hebrew, our goal was to lower the potential for hurt without seriously compromising the potential for excellence.

The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. But ultimately they chose camping, because the issues they believed had to be addressed could not be handled by a school -- even a day school. Among other limitations, a school -- even a day school -- isn't best place to effect a child's emotional incubation into Jewish life. Ultimately, the challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child -- including, but not limited to, the child's mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

THE MEN WHO FOUNDED RAMAH

It's generally known that Ramah's Jewish vision was guided by the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. But who were these men, and what, exactly, did they contribute?

I would start with Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism at that time. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, and that this message applied not only to Jews, but to our society at large. He even wrote an article on the subject for Fortune after Henry Luce had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world. [Note: quick twenty-year search of Reader's Guide fails to turn up any

references to Finkelstein as a Fortune author. But Time put him on its cover in October 1951.]

Above all, Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply Talmudic principles to the issues of modern American life. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify, because he was dying to tell the Committee: "I will not answer your questions because you cannot speak to me the way you do. In our tradition we have a position outlined in the Talmud, in Massechet Sanhedrin, known as drisha v'chakirah. It deals with the issue of how you interrogate a witness. And I say to you that you cannot speak to me this way."

This was an essential Finkelsteinian response. He wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within our own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we were a people who have been living on top of the volcano from the very start, and that we had a great deal to offer to a world that was just beginning to discover that we're all living on the volcano.

In postwar America, Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke from a long and venerable tradition. President Eisenhower would consult with him on ethical matters, and he gave the invocation at Eisenhower's inauguration. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the Seminary's Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, where individuals from a variety of worlds and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. If I had to identify a single influence of Finkelstein on Ramah, it would be his passion to produce educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens in the larger society.

Next comes Saul Lieberman's emphasis on the study of Jewish texts. When Ramah first began, people who heard about it were

slightly incredulous: "You're running a summer camp where the daily schedule includes classes?" In those days this was almost unheard of. Kids went to camp to get away from classes, although there were a couple of prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent, or camps devoted to the study of science.

In effect we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own principal. The classes were mostly text-based, and it was possible to spend the entire summer on a single verse. The teachers were considered full-time members of the staff, so they were not given other duties, although that would have made much more sense economically. They needed enough time to prepare, and to be available to any kid who might seek them out.

We believed in open inquiry, rather than dogma. We were never looking for intellectual obedience, because we didn't want to end up with constipated minds. Every now and then the Talmud will ask, Minah Hani Mili? How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will ask this same question about theological issues. But you have to allow these questions, and all questions. A tradition that encourages tough questions will every now and then produce an Einstein, a Marx, or a Freud.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, although that wasn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow Biblical texts to be taught in the Rabbinical School. You'd have to study them critically or scientifically, and the whole topic was so rife with controversy that the Seminary responded by avoiding it. The Prophets -- fine, but not the Torah.

relation btwn Ramah and Melton will be confusing here.

Meanwhile, we at Ramah were putting out all of this Melton-sponsored material on Genesis. In the early 1960s our book was in galleys, but we still didn't have approval to use it. I went to see Lieberman -- not because I necessarily had to, but

because it would have been irresponsible not to check in with the rabbi of the Seminary Synagogue, to whom Finkelstein deferred on matters of Jewish practice, and even doctrine. I brought along a report on the social science program of the Westchester public schools, where the students were being taught to distinguish among "science" (meaning, The Truth), "philosophy" (meaning, True Ideas), and "religion" -- (meaning, in this context, myths and legends).

"This is what we're up against" I told Lieberman, "and this is why we're putting out our book on Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as having divine origins, we're showing that it has an enormously important ethical and religious message to offer."

Lieberman's response was simple: "Thank you for checking with me, but please understand that this conversation never happened." He didn't want to censor us, but the Seminary was a conservative institution, and Ramah was a few years ahead of its time.

Another important influence was Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization. Kaplan believed that Jewish theology could serve as the basis for the salvation of society. He defined God as the power leading toward that salvation, but he was seen as a heretic by some of his more conservative colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologizing of God. Some people felt that Kaplan was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. He had supposedly said that if the Seminary greats, especially Ginsberg and Lieberman, had dealt fully with theological issues, he would have left them alone, and that it was their failure to address these topics that inspired him to deal with these issues.

In any case, Kaplan embodied the centuries-old conversation

between Judaism and the great philosophers. He saw Judaism as being in inter-relationship with the world around it, and he brought elements like music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns. Of course, Kaplan and Heschel represented two completely different points of view. The fact that both sides were represented at Ramah gave us an added degree of theological tension and intellectual excitement.

Which brings us to Heschel, whose religious visions was critical to Ramah's success. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message as to how human beings should live. He believed that Shabbat was a great gift to the world, and he viewed it as a sanctification of time in a society where the sanctity of time was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of certain American holidays were changed for the mere convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend.

For Heschel, prayer was a way for an individual to get in touch with his deepest self. The whole question of what t'fillah [prayer] meant at Ramah was guided by Heschel and his students, including the concept of kavannah [religious intention] and the idea of t'fillah as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement.

Finally there was Hillel Bavli, a professor of Hebrew and a poet. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog, who wanted to make sure that we were really using Hebrew at Ramah, which was no easy task. But all of us believed that if you wanted to participate in Jewish history over the centuries, you had no choice but to master Hebrew. For that was how you became part of the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the great commentators and philosophers. The Seminary faculty also

appreciated the importance of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist at first, and I wasn't either.

After all these years it may be difficult to appreciate what a crazy idea it was to run a summer camp in Hebrew. Massad was already doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism were their religion. In a movement like ours, that was competing in the struggle to define and live out an authentic Judaism in the twentieth century, to make Hebrew the official language of Ramah was a powerful yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and that trend has continued; today, Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can get the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language? Of course it's also possible to go too far in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, especially in places like Mexico and Argentina, Hebrew became the main goal and content became secondary.

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, will develop a person who is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition through an attachment to Jewish texts, which he can grapple with because he has some mastery of the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the method, anyone can join the conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: the method is Hebrew.

But while Hebrew is essential, it's not sufficient. You need several other components, too, including text, mitzvot, prayer, a communal consciousness, both narrow and wide, and an involvement in the larger society. And at Ramah you had all these forces coming together.

I regarded these five professors as my teachers, and I felt I would be violating any one of them if I didn't allow his

influence to play out. I spent hours talking with these men, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit from the older generation to the future. The Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide Ramah, and which ran through the 1950s and the 1960s, constituted what was possibly the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the history of the Diaspora. We asked ourselves questions like: What is the ideal product of Camp Ramah? What are the themes and values that we want our campers to internalize? We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today.

[Unclear exactly what the Seminar is, and whether these five were part of it.] See my comment on p. 10. I think none of these five were actually in the seminar.

A CREATIVE TENSION

Two of the five major influences on Ramah, Heschel and Kaplan, were so different in their respective outlooks that today they're generally seen as polar opposites within the theology of Conservative Judaism. Did these differences causes problems for a camp that was searching for a clear ideology?

No, because from the start, Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be defined by a single vision. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because people feel a natural pull toward consistency. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was a practical place where ideas were put into action, and in <u>that</u> kind of setting an eclectic approach can provide an enormously rich source of energy. It's true that these five professors represented different and

sometimes conflicting ideas, but there was a history here, in that these various approaches had already managed to co-exist within the framework of the Seminary. Ramah was able to take these inconsistencies to the next level by building a society that would be guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the people embodying these particular visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when people agree on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Yochanan Muffs once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism as set forth in Pirke Avot [Ethics of the Fathers, a popular early rabbinic text] -- that is Torah, Avodah, and G'millut chasadim [Study, Worship, and Acts of kindness] -- while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in total harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on t'fillah [prayer], and you become overly involved in theology. Prayer is inner-directed, and by itself it can produce reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivism that the rest of Judaism cannot abide. Focus only on Torah and you'll get disembodied brains, which was exactly what the Musarists were worried about. And Mitzvah all by itself can turn a person into a loose cannon. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in a simple and innocent world, but that's not our reality. The only answer is to try to integrate these three fundamental forces so that they're all part of the picture.

Of course it's much easier to ignite people when you're dealing with extremes. It's harder to produce individuals who are committed to religious tolerance and to democracy, and to get them excited about that. How do you produce people who are genuinely excited about non-fanatic positions? That was our challenge, and I think we achieved it.

JOSEPH SCHWAB AND BRUNO BETTELHEIM

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. You also brought in a number of experts from the worlds of general education and social thought.

We had an active and impressive group, known as the Melton Academic Board, whose members included, among others, Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; James Coleman, the distinguished sociologist; Ralph Tyler, a powerful force in American education; Joseph Schwab, the great philosopher of education; and the renowned psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I should add that I had written my doctoral thesis under the guidance of both Schwab and Bettelheim at the University of Chicago.

None of these people was paid for participating. They were all intrigued by the ambitiousness of the product, and delighted to be part of it. Schwab even came to camp to lead seminars for the staff before the campers arrived.

Somebody asked me recently what motivated these high-profile professors with little or no interest in Judaism to donate so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with a social scientist's sense of immortality, which can only occur when people read his books and put his ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he actually lived to see them acted upon. What we offered these people was a laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them the confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around a conference table would actually happen. Moreover, we never undertook a project without their approval. So we were offering a great opportunity for a professor -- the equivalent of a businessman making a big deal.

Schwab in particular viewed Ramah as a place to produce

disciples, and certainly he was the single most important force in shaping my own ideas about education. In 1985 I contributed to a symposium on his work, and he wrote back to me: "I always said you were the only person who really understood me." I could have died right there.

I love

Tell us more about Joseph Schwab. He seems to have been the key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Schwab devoted a tremendous amount of time to Ramah, and between 1952 and 1966 I used to spend at least two days a month with him. He came in to help us with issues such as the connection between the cognitive and the affective. Ramah was built on the belief that you have to reach kids on all levels -- the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the artistic. I see Jewish education is a kind of big cafeteria. Some kids will be touched by the music, while others are tone deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to intellectual commentaries or to abstract theology. Ideally, of course, kids will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal of wisdom, but the mind is not the only way to access it.

In an essay entitled "Eros and Education," Schwab argued that the mind is not only cerebral but passionate, and that the intellect is hardly an emotion-free area. He believed there was no emotional area that didn't have cognitive elements. And he was convinced that there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, between intellect and emotion.

As he wrote in that essay, Eros was all about "the energy of wanting." The aim of education, he wrote, was to produce "<u>actively</u> intelligent people," whom he described as follows:

> They <u>like</u> good pictures, good books, good music, good movies. They <u>find</u> <u>pleasure</u> in planning their active lives

and carrying out the planned action. They hanker to make, to create, whether the object is knowledge mastered, art appreciated, or actions patterned and directed. In short, a curriculum is not complete which does not move the Eros, as well as the mind of the young, from where it is to where it might better be.

Schwab believed that the definition of "to know" had to include "to do," and the concept of mitzvah was especially intriguing to him. Although he was never an observant Jew, or even an educated one, there was a natural fit between his ideas and our goals.

We also worked with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. That made sense to him because at the University of Chicago we never used textbooks, only original material. We spent hours with Schwab discussing how best to teach the story in Genesis of how Jacob and Rebekkah conspired to cheat Isaac and Esav. Jacob is a crook and his mother is a liar, and poor Isaac is deceived.

The larger issue here is that when you're working with adolescents, how do you tell them the truth -- that the world is often a terrible place -- without killing their idealism? This was a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it at some length. How do you teach that there are often shades of gray when adolescents normally reject that idea? Freud wrote in Civilization and its Discontents that the way most educators prepare young people for the world is the intellectual and moral equivalent of sending explorers on a polar expedition in summer clothing. How do you tell them the truth about the world without killing or doing damaging to their innate enthusiasm, hope and idealism?

If you look at leadership training in recent years, you'll see two main schools of thought. The British school says, Study

the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and Shakespeare will give you the principles you need. Alfred North Whitehead said that everything he needed in life could be found in the Bible and ancient Greece. The American model, as you might expect, is less theoretical. The Harvard Business School says, If we can provide enough case studies, which include the principles and situations you'll encounter during your career, you'll be able to flourish in the real world.

Schwab had a third conception that was really a blend of these other two, and it fit nicely with the goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and then give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these traditions.

The other major figure in this group was Bruno Bettelheim. What was his contribution?

While some members of the Melton Academic Board responded to Ramah in terms of their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who saw Judaism, and presumably all religion, as an anachronism. But he was a realist, and he still appreciated what we were trying to do. As a graduate student at Chicago I had spent some time at Bettelheim's school for autistic children, and with the chutzpah of youth, I once mentioned to him that the school did not always measure up to what I had read in his book, Love is Not Enough. "You're right," he replied. "The book is a description of what the school was supposed to be." He acknowledged that it fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean that it wasn't guided and helped by that vision.

One of the great successes of Bettelheim's school lay in its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for these kids. Bettelheim used every available resource -- from the architecture to the food -- to make that happen. I believed that

the camper's bunk at Ramah ought to function in a similar way as a refuge from the inevitable pressures and problems of an intense summer camp, and Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

Because of Bettelheim, there were two jobs at Ramah that I refused to delegate. The first was overseeing the menu during the first week of camp. I wanted to be sure that we were serving familiar foods like hamburgers -- foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a kid's home to this new environment. The other thing I made sure of was that during the first week, especially, there had to be as many helpings as a camper wanted, so nobody would leave the table hungry. We even had the counselors serving extra snacks at night. We were a little nuts when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board.

Another thing I learned from Bettelheim was the importance of the school janitor, because for some kids this individual was a more significant educational figure than the teachers and other professionals. At Ramah we always paid close attention to the kinds of people we hired, not only the counselors and teachers, but the service staff as well. Some of our dishwashers were Harvard kids who didn't know enough Hebrew, but who wanted to be at Ramah. They accepted menial jobs in order to come to the camp, and we responded by giving them the very best teachers.

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy -- that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where kids could be wild and noisy, and another place where a kid could find peace and quiet. One of the most important things Bettelheim helped us understand was that we had a great built-in advantage that we hadn't been fully aware of, and that was hugely appealing to our older campers: <u>that</u>

because Ramah was in opposition to some basic American suburban values, the camp was inherently counter-cultural in a way that was attractive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

It was Bettelheim who told me about Eric Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson had portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed, and that history was reversible. That's an idea that educators need to hear. I went to see Erikson at Harvard, and before long his books were being read and discussed at camp.

Our ongoing conversations with Schwab, Bettelheim, and their colleagues created a questioning and dynamic environment. We continually asked ourselves: if this is what serves the needs of children, how can we best offer it within Judaism and the Ramah setting?

It strikes me that during its formative years, Ramah was unapologetically elitist in a way that might not be acceptable these days.

Back then, of course, elitism was a commonly shared assumption, and nobody would have questioned it. It was a necessary consequence of a commitment to excellence. The Seminary sought out great scholars and the best possible students, and to a large degree it got them. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was difficult to get in, and there were long waiting lists.

We believed that if you invested in the right people, they would change the world. Judaism may be a classless tradition, but it's an elitist one. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone can make it to the top. But we also believed there is a top.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

We've looked at some of the intellectual background that helped create Ramah. I'd be interested in how some of the ideas and principles that came up in the Melton Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

When Burton Cohen, the first director of our Wisconsin camp, was Schwab's graduate student, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on Exercises in Ethical Reasoning. This was an attempt to get people who have mastered a text to simulate what it would mean to act it out in practice. Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one, so Cohen split it up into five distinct stages.

these 5 stages are Seymour's, not?

The first stage is philosophy.

The second stage is philosophy of education.

The third stage is: What does this mean for educational practice?

The fourth stage is actual practice: teacher education, curriculum, and pedagogy.

The fifth stage consists of monitoring and evaluation, and of building a corrective into everything you're doing. Moving from theory to practice should be a dynamic process, where you're constantly observing, improving, and rethinking.

What would it mean to apply these stages to T'fillah, or prayer?

Stage 1: What is t'fillah? Why does man need it? Where does it fit into Judaism? How is Jewish prayer different from prayer in other religions? Where did it come from and how did it develop?

One possible answer is that man is a spiritual being, and prayer is one avenue through which he can express his

spirituality. Or you might say, following Maimonides, that most of our prayer consists of adoration. Does God really need that adoration? Of course not. To Maimonides, God functions as a role model; if God is merciful, then you should be merciful. Our discussion could end here and remain theoretical.

Stage 2: What do we want to teach children about prayer? Is prayer something that small children can engage in, or is it better to stick with simple repetition? How do you teach kids about kavannah -- spiritual intention? How do you tap the innate spirituality in a child?

With Stage 3 we move into educaticnal practice. What is your teaching strategy? You might decide that you really can't do much until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or reciting certain words will set off something inside of you. And what about specific melodies? What about meditation?

Stage 4 has to do with your curriculum. Exactly what are you teaching about prayer, and how are you going about it? How are you going to educate teachers?

Stage 5: How will you monitor this activity and make the necessary changes and improvements? In addition to understanding what they're doing, teachers have to want to do it, and they have to be able to do it.

As long as we're talking about prayer: given the general intellectual openness of Ramah, why was it mandatory for campers to attend services?

Because in order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. And, as Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately love. It takes work and experience before you appreciate it.

For t'fillah to succeed you have to work at it, and eventually it becomes meaningful -- or not. Rejection is always an option, but it ought to be a thoughtful and considered one.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism under at Ramah would become deeply involved. Of course, all education works on that assumption, whether you're talking about science, music, or the classics. If you're introduced to something of quality by good teachers, you'll buy it. That's the faith assumption of education.

But while morning services were compulsory at Ramah, we were far more lenient about afternoon services. Halachically, the Minchah service is no less important than Shacharit, but there's a limit as to how far you can push. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on Minchah at camp, then we'd lose much of the impact of Shacharit. In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional Minchah at Ramah, recognizing that this was an educational position rather than a legal or religious one. It was a difficult fight, and in the end it was decided by one vote.

On the other hand, Ramah never used the Rabbinical Assembly prayerbook because a phrase or two had been altered on the subject of sacrifices. The Seminary faculty refused to approve that edition, and the rabbis were furious. But we wanted to be inclusive. We wanted the Seminary faculty to participate in our services, and we didn't want a civil war over four words.

I never knew that. I thought it was Sprance there was English in the RA siddur.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, people observe Shabbat in a variety of ways?

We were somewhat more flexible about Shabbat observance. As we saw it, the camp's public space had to be maintained as a religious preserve. That is, while I couldn't stop you from

turning on the radio in the privacy of your bunk, we wanted people to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible. As with the issue of Minchah, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not, of course, a halachic position. It was an educational decision.

But many things at Ramah were simply non-negotiable, including Hebrew, classes, services, kashrut, and instructional swim. If I were doing it all over again, however, I probably wouldn't insist on the recitation of birkat HaMazon after every meal.

Let's return to the five stages that move us from the theoretical realm to the practical. We've already seen how they might apply to prayer. But what about a very different area, like sports?

With sports those five stages might look something like this. Stage 1 would begin with general questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is a healthy body in our tradition different than a healthy body in Hellenism?

Then, in Stage 2, you might ask, What is the role of sports in education? You might talk about the importance of fairness and rules, and about issues such as cooperation and competition. In Stage 3 you would think about more practical issues. What is the role of sports going to be in your institution? How important is it? To what extent will you allow it to compete with other activities? Are you prepared to let a student graduate who shows absolutely no interest in sports? What about a student who doesn't respect and value his body?

In Stage 4 you might think about issues of curriculum and teacher education. How will you teach kids to be good losers? And good winners, for that matter. Finally, in Stage 5, you

would take a critical look at your program and figure out what needed to be changed or improved.

It sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about its being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really <u>is</u> a link from those ideals to the real world?

If you develop your ideals carefully and thoughtfully, and you constantly reinforce the message that they really matter, you can make those principles come alive. We once had a thirteen-year-old camper who used to wet his bed. We used to have late-night staff meetings, and I clearly remember that no matter what we were discussing, or important it was, at 11:45 PM each night Joe Lukinsky and Burt Cohen would run to this kid's bunk and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they'd wake him up and change his sheets before the other kids woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the principle of <u>haMalbin at chaveiro b'rabim</u> -- that you avoid any situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

The professors at the Seminary used to stress the importance of mitzvot pertaining to <u>ben adam l'chavero</u> -- social and interpersonal relations -- and Ramah was, in a very real sense, the distillation of their wisdom. Yes, <u>kashrut</u> is important, but what makes you think that what goes into your mouth is any less important than what comes out?

That reminds me of another case involving the principle of not causing embarrassment to a fellow human being. We had a problem one summer in a bunk where adolescent girls would have a "bull session" -- a late-night discussion where, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl's faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. But these sessions invariably ended in tears, with some of the girls being scapegoated.

When this turned into a serious problem, we wanted to outlaw these sessions. But of course if you do that, the kids will continue doing it as soon as the counselor leaves. When the situation became severe, I came into the bunk to talk to the girls. "We don't understand what the problem is," they told me. "We just want to help each other."

"That sounds fine," I said, "but I'd like to sit in." I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. "You know," I told them, "I appreciate what you're doing. I buy your goal, but I have a problem with your method. Ramah is a Jewish community, and one thing you can't do as a Jew is embarrass other people. What if we studied a text together that talked about how people should behave toward each other, and then each girl did her own self-evaluation privately?" At this point, because I had provided an alternative, the healthy girls prevailed over the sadistic ones. We studied the sixth chapter of Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), and discussed, among other things, what it means to be re'a ahuv -- an intimate friend. We took each item in turn, and we discussed it every night for four weeks. That was part of my job as the director. This was a case where the cognitive approach served as a response to a difficult life situation.

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one bunk -- especially at Ramah, where there were so many specialists.

We weren't too concerned about conserving our resources. We had three full-time staffs at Ramah, which is outrageous: counselors, specialists, and teachers. There were no double roles because different people had different functions, although I'm not sure we were right about that. But this was part of the utter madness of Ramah -- we were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pushed you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to serious problems for the camper. Whether it's sports, singing, acting, or anything else, competition and striving for excellence can be a tough business. Classes were tough, too, because the teacher would force you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, the counselor was there to pick up the pieces.

Perhaps the most unusual position at Ramah was that of the camp librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available to anyone who needed his help. We got this idea from the kibbutz movement, which produced a book called Edah Mechanenet. {translate} Ideally, the kibbutz teacher would continue the morning's conversation with you privately, in the afternoon. Similarly, the camp teacher was supposed to continue the discussion that you began in class -- the kind of discussion that's a luxury back in the city, where the usual goal is to cover a certain amount of material in a specific amount of time. In camp, the discussion -- or the process, if you prefer -- was everything. [relationship unclear between librarian and this book]

WORKING WITH LAY PEOPLE

Let's step back from the camp itself to consider a constituency that is often overlooked, but that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the lay people who support it.

These days, lay people are more supportive of good educational programs, and more active in their support than in the past. Until the mid 1980s, most American Jews of means and status cared about Israel, hospitals, and the defense organizations. Jewish education and Jewish culture ranked very

low. There were a few exceptions, such as Morton Mandel in Cleveland, Philip Lown in Boston, and Sam Melton in Columbus. But during the 1960s and 1970s you could probably count on one hand the number of influential lay people who really cared about Jewish education.

Today, all that has changed. More and more, people are coming to realize that Israel's best asset is a strong Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing more in Jewish education. Fortunately, this point of view has recently become fashionable, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. In addition, today's lay people insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support. They also tend to be more knowledgeable.

Of course, the content issues are also different today. When the Melton Center was established, the underlying question was: What claim does Judaism have on me if I don't necessarily believe that its origins are divine? Today, the question is somewhat different: With the entire world at my reach, and with Judaism as one choice out of many, why should I commit myself to this particular journey? Why do I need all these restrictions on what I do and who I marry? An educational system has to answer that question on several levels. But how do you communicate your message to somebody with a thirty-second attention span? What is your vision? What is your content? What is your didactic method going to be? These are the questions for today.

But we now have some major assets that we didn't have then. There are professors and well-educated lay people all over North America who care about Jewish education. And families can draw on a variety of different programs. There are hundreds of day schools in North America, some fine university programs, and several excellent trips to Israel.

As long as we're on the subject of lay people, I'd like your

advice on what for many would-be institution-builders is a difficult and intimidating process, although it's absolutely essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm talking about fundraising, of course, which is an area where you've been especially successful.

I realize this may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is the least of our problems. That hasn't always been true, but these days there's more than enough money around to support a wide variety of excellent projects.

The key thing is your own enthusiasm. I have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I was willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're you're not enthusiastic about the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey your vision and your commitment to the people you're approaching. And you really have to mean it. I believe that we're all transparent, and that as human beings we're continually judging each other and asking, "Is this person genuine? Is he sincere?"

Another thing: I always start with the assumption that the person I'm asking is at least as smart as I am. And that there's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it's my job to convince him -- or better, to educate him. Only if you take the time to educate people about your project will they be able to make informed decisions. Treat donors like a cow to be milked, and they'll be resentful -- with good reason. But treat them instead as people who can join you and help you in creating this new enterprise, and you may well get somewhere.

Now although the situation is far better than it used to be, **the relationship between Jewish educators and wealthy givers is still largely adversarial.** The professionals still ask, How can

this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew? And the lay people still think, If this guy were really successful, he'd be in a business like mine. It's unfortunate, but it's true.

I see three common mistakes in fundraising, and they're all connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor like a dope. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is failing to disclose the full truth about what you're doing, including your problems and your failures.

I'll tell you my favorite fundraising story. I was walking with Sam Melton at Ramah in the Poconos, and we pass a kid on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asks him.

"Chumash," answers the kid, who had no idea who this man was.

"Chumash with what?" Sam asks him.

"Chumash with Melton," the kid replies.

At that moment I didn't need to do any more fundraising.

Still, there must be times when a well-developed educational vision and a prudent business plan are at odds with each other.

At Ramah that happened all the tine. The camp was economically inefficient, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, where we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high school graduates, who then agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a practical standpoint it was dumb to devote so much money to this one program. And what about the camp librarian, and the professor in residence? These people are expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs, with a talented person heading up each one? But when you can give parents reason to hope that you can help their kid evolve into a mentsch, there's very little you can't ask for.

It was critical that the camp director was always an educator rather than a businessman. The rest of the world worked the other way, especially an institution that was handling reasonably large sums of money. But we refused to allow our principles to be dependent on their economic viability, and fortunately, the Seminary supported us in that view. Each camp had a business manager, of course, and this was an extremely important job. But Ramah was always led from the educational side.

WHERE RAMAH FAILED

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, visions of cognac usually turn into grape juice -- and that's if you're lucky. What are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

Looking back on it, I see five major failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of the enterprise. This was a major mistake for two reasons. First, we weren't able to catch problems in time to fix them. Ralph Tyler once told me that nct conducting evaluations was the educational equivalent of testing the patient as he's leaving the hospital. In other words, we were getting no feedback on what we were doing until it was too late to do anything about it.

If our results were really as promising as they seemed, we should have been documenting the testimonies. It's amazing that we never once asked our campers to write about their experiences! We were so busy building something new that we didn't even stop to look at it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and to some people it sounds like a

luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a serious evaluation, more often than not it's a fundraising technique rather than as an attempt at self-improvement. But it ought to be done.

Ramah's second failure was that for all our efforts, we didn't really become a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and we simply didn't do well enough in this area. It's true that most of our counselors didn't know enough Hebrew, but that's no excuse. We could have taught them Hebrew in the off-season, perhaps in a series of regional centers. We could have sent them to Israel. But we didn't do either.

We had no real curriculum for Hebrew at Ramah, and no language labs. We didn't even look to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at Hebrew because that's all they were doing.

I have to share in the blame on this one, because I failed to give Hebrew enough emphasis. My attitude was, if there's ever a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. Moshe Greenberg, Gerson Cohen, and Moshe Davis all fought for more Hebrew, and they were right. So did Sylvia Ettenberg, whom I consider the great hero of Ramah, and who represents the only coherent continuation from the founding of the camp until her recent retirement, a span of forty-five years. She was both an anchor for lay people and a nurturer of directors.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel. For years I kept Israelis out of the camp, because the ones I had met had come to America to buy appliances. But eventually I became convinced that we should bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and

specialists, and I personally chose the first members in 1967.

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. Our original hope was to hire full-time directors to maintain the camp program during the year by working with the Conservative Movement's Leadership Training Fellowship program. The summer months could have served as the climax of the year, or perhaps the launch of a new year -- or both. All the camps could have been winterized. On this one we simply quit too early. We didn't even get far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum. It's amazing, but we never formalized the various camp programs, although some of them were remarkable. There was some sharing of ideas among the camps, but not nearly enough. There was far too much re-inventing of the wheel, and probably too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: we were afraid of formalizing what we had and thereby killing it.

The final failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between Ramah and the camper's home community. We paid a lot of attention to this problem, and I think we were on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help the kid who returns to a non-kosher home. Because we respected the camper's relationship to his family, we did not encourage kids to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat.

To our surprise, the problem with returning campers was not with their families, but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, it was enormously hard for our kids to return to a service that was led by a rabbi who was pompous -- or who might seem pompous when contrasted with the informality of camp -- and a service that often seemed stilted and complacent.

It hadn't occurred to us that in some sense we were creating misfits. We were arrogant enough to think that our campers could turn around the Conservative movement. And to some extent they did, although that process took years. Many, many Ramah campers went on to become Conservative rabbis. When I first arrived at the Jewish Theological Seminary, it was filled with refugees from Orthodoxy, but there's been a dramatic change in the demographics. And of the people active in professional Jewish life, especially in institutions of Jewish culture and learning, Ramah is extremely well represented. The same holds true for North Americans who have made aliyah.

And we did succeed in growing our own tomatoes. That is, much of our staff consisted of former campers. We had some terrific directors, and most of them, too, came up through the ranks. We made sure our directors were well-paid. We created an actual profession, and these people got tenure, just like faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups and issues, including lay people, staff, rabbis, educators, kids, parents -- not to mention complex issues like money and religious ideology. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant that aside from us they had a clear and obvious career line -- usually in the pulpit, or in education or Jewish communal life. But with Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their careers -- some of them for years, and others for the rest of their lives.

What would you identify as the most significant lessons that other institutions can possibly learn from Ramah?

Above all, Ramah shows how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can stretch itself. Second, I think there's something to be learned by the way Ramah combined sophisticated

content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty. For example, at what point in the weekly camp cycle do you start preparing for Shabbat? Ramah was a place where you constantly saw solid theory paying off in practice.

Ramah was also about investing in your talent, and about the vital importance of lay supporters. In our case, the lay people protected us from outside attempts to cut down on our educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of real conviction. Ramah made it possible for rabbis, scholars and lay people to join forces and look beyond their normal reference groups. There was a real generosity of spirit, and a genuine attempt to understand the other guy's position. Ramah was more than a camp. It was a movement.

Beyond that, I believe that the success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that <u>still</u> don't exist. At some point we will probably see a Jewish boarding school, and presumably other new institutions that will break down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the followers of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, this school, if it should ever come into existence, would serve as a training ground for Jewish citizenship.

As a friend of mine told me recently, <u>our next challenge is to deal with post-materialist man</u>. More and more, people are looking for meaning beyond their physical realities. They want to know what our tradition is all about, and somebody has to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms so that it speaks to them. Sometimes you get a genius like Heschel or Kaplan, but you can't spend your life waiting for these people to come along. Far better, in my view, to build places where future Heschels and Kaplans will develop and flourish. [END]

May 30, 1996

Dear Seymour:

I'm betting you'll find the *nimshal* of this article as interesting as I did, in terms of Jewish education and a theory of change. What does Jewish education have to do with the lower crime rate of New York, you may wonder? Read and find out! (Then we can discuss the "tipping point" for change.)

I am very pleased with the progress of the Ramah piece. Bill and I are in the final stage of work before you receive a complete draft and a list of questions for you to answer. In July, I want to review the piece with you line by line and raise whatever questions still remain to be addressed. We may need one more day with Bill. And then we'll be done.

Please mentally set aside some serious time for us in July.

Yours,

Nessa Rapoport