



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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
42

Folder
4

Fox, Seymour, and William Novak. Vision at the Heart. Planning
and drafts, January 1997-May 1998.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

FAX TRANSMISSION

CIJE

15 EAST 26TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10010
(212) 532-2360
FAX: (212) 532-2646

To: Bill Novak **Date:** January 6, 1997
Fax #: 617-964-1038 **Pages:** 9, including this cover sheet.
From: Chava Werber
Subject: Bibliography and acknowledgments.

COMMENTS:

Nessa asked me to fax you the enclosed pages.

Mandel Institute

Tel: 972-2-5662832
Fax: 972-2-5662837

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

TO: Nessa Rapoport DATE: January 6, 1997
FROM: Seymour Fox PAGES: 8
FAX NUMBER: 212-532-2646

Dear Nessa,

Pardon the enclosed mess.

1. The bibliography is complete if I mention my publications in my biography.
2. As to the acknowledgments. They are merely notes and we need to talk about how to proceed. A phone conversation between you, me and Sylvia could handle it.
3. My biography. Am still a bit uncomfortable, but will have to finish it in order to face you.

Can we schedule two phone calls, one - Nessa and SF, and two - Sylvia, Nessa and SF. Good times for me this week are Tuesday 2:30pm, Wednesday 3pm, and Thursday, 2pm. All of these times are New York times.

Best regards,


Seymour

P.S. It is real chutzpah, but when can I expect to receive Bill's cleaned up copy?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nessa - I don't really know how to begin this.

The following abridged bibliography in lieu of footnotes may be of interest to the reader. I have organized it around themes.

Vision

In / For

- for general education:

Marshall S. Smith, Sara Lightfoot and David K. Cohen present the argument for the importance of vision in determining the impact of educational institutions.

Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systematic School Reform" in *Politics of Education Association Yearbook*, 1990, pp. 233-267.

Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School - Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

David K. Cohen, Eleanor Farrar and Arthur G. Powell, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1985).

Alan Ryan has powerfully described the impact of John Dewey on the intellectual life and on education in America in:

Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and The High Tide of American Liberalism*, (W.W. Norton & Company, New York - London, 1995).

New York London:

For an example of the way that Steiner's students apply Steiner's philosophy to education, see Rudolph Steiner's *Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* by E.A. Stockmeyer, (The Robinswood Press, Stourbridge, England, 1991).

*reverse author
& title*

ROM.

For

- for Jewish education:

Some examples of the power of ideas for Jewish education are found in:

Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the 'Musal' Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

And for Zionist education in:

Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel* (Hebrew, 2 volumes: Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1986 and 1993).

Professor Gerson Cohen argues for the importance of locating the ideas that will lead to a vision for Jewish education and the need to develop a vision for Jewish education in North America in:

Gerson D. Cohen, "From Scholarship to Paideia - A Case Study", in *From the Scholar to the Classroom: Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*, edited by Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfeld, (New York: Melton Research Center at Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), pp.31-58. for Research in

Prof. Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. Prof. Twersky particularly in terms of the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk; and Prof. Scheffler in terms of the vision of John Dewey. Their ideas, as well as mine, will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Camp Ramah and its history

The Ramah Experience: Community and Commitment, edited by Sylvia Ettenberg and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in cooperation with The National Ramah Commission, 1983).

The chapter by Burton I. Cohen, "A Brief History of the Ramah Movement" presents the history of Ramah; however, the entire book

is of importance for those who wish to gain a perspective on the theory and practice of the Ramah movement.

The Relationship of the Cognitive and Emotional Domains for Education:

Professors Joseph Schwab and Israel Scheffler have written key essays on this topic:

1. Joseph J. Schwab, *Eros and Education*, Journal of General Education, 8 (1954, pp.54-71). Rel.
2. Israel Scheffler *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions*, pp. 3-30, Routledge, New York-London, 1991, pp. 3-31. Ital.

The Practical

Joseph J. Schwab has made a key contribution to our thinking concerning the practical nature of the field of education. His ideas were developed in four monographs:

The Practical I - "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," (Washington D.C.; National Education Association, 1970).

The Practical II - "The Practical: Arts of the Eclectic," *School Review* 79 (1971), 493-542.

The Practical III - "The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum," *School Review* 81 (1973), 501-22.

The Practical IV - "The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do," *Curriculum Inquiry* 13:3, (1983), 239-365.

Israel Scheffler, in his volume *"Four Pragmatists"*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), particularly in his chapter on John Dewey, presents a penetrating analysis of the means-ends relationship for the field of education.

An Understanding of the Adolescent

analysts? Our thinking was very much influenced by the writings of two psychoanalysts, Dr. Eric H. Erikson and Dr. Bruno Bettelheim. Erikson's paper "Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," *Daedalus* (Winter 1962), and his books on Luther and Ghandi helped us understand the thinking and feeling of the adolescent as well as the concept of charisma. *Young Man Luther* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1958), and (I will get the listing for Ghandi).

Bruno Bettelheim's volume on the Orthogenic School, *Love is Not Enough*, was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.

(N.Y.: The Free Press, 1950),

Bruno Bettelheim *Love is not Enough*, The Free Press, 1950.

The Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education

The Melton Center was established in 1959 at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton program for the teaching of Bible was ^{initiated} ~~experimented with~~ at the Ramah Camps, and the Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

to the Melton Center.

Louis I. Newman served as the director of the Melton Center from --- to ---, and Joseph J. Schwab was the leading educational consultant for Melton. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

Nahum Sarna's *Understanding Genesis* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966)

Moshe Greenberg's *Understanding Exodus: Part 1* (New York: Behrman House, 1969).

The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the

forefront of the ~~Continuity~~ ^{the movement to revitalize} Movement for Jewish education. Among its publications are:

Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, "Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations", ~~the Mandel Institute,~~ ^{The Mandel Institute}, Jerusalem, 1996.

(NESSA - YOU DECIDE HOW TO FEATURE "A TIME TO ACT" - IT CAN EITHER BE LISTED UNDER THE CATEGORY OF CLJE, OR AS THE CLJE AND THE MANDEL FAMILY EFFORT IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE AREA OF CONTINUITY.)

Another ~~Other~~ publication sponsored by the Mandel Associated Foundations include:

A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991) ^{JCCA} ^{JESNA}

One of those whose recom was to establish of the CJE

Blush. Cummings

J CLJE undertake public wk argued + case for union in the RP publication.

$\frac{1}{2}$

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this ^{essay} ~~interview with William Novak~~. It was her idea, she recruited both me and Bill. Without her persistence, and her role as a creative, diligent and patient editor, it never would have been published.

I was invited to join the Ramah staff in 1950 (?) by Sylvia Ettenberg and Louis Newman. As a result of their invitation, I spent 18 wonderful years in a close association with the Ramah Movement and have continued to watch it grow and flourish since then. My association with Ramah was transformative for me and much of my work in the fields of general education and Jewish education was deeply influenced by my experience as a division head, director, professor in residence and Dean of the Teachers Institute, the institution responsible for the direction of the Ramah Camps. Whatever contribution I made to Camp Ramah, during the years of my association with it, was the result of a partnership between outstanding, talented and committed Jewish educators, sophisticated and deeply committed community leaders, rabbi's and scholars.

(LIST ALL THE DIRECTORS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO LOU NEWMAN, DAVID MOGILNER, GERRY ABRAMS, RAY ARTZ, BURT COHEN, JOE LUKINSKY, - TREAT THEM AS A KIND OF "FOUNDING FATHERS". BE CAREFUL TO REMEMBER THAT THERE WERE OTHERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE BEFORE, LIKE HENRY GOLDBERG, WHERE IS LEVY SHOSHUK TO BE TREATED AND EXPLAIN WHY I AM NOT MENTIONING THE DIRECTORS SINCE 1968.)

(TREAT THE NATIONAL RAMAH DIRECTORS, INCLUDING RESNIKOFF, RETURN TO SYLVIA ETTEMBERG.)

(I WILL WANT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO SHELLEY DORF, WHOM I WATCHED GROW AS A CAMPER, A STAFF MEMBER, PRINCIPAL OF A HIGH SCHOOL AND AS NATIONAL RAMAH DIRECTOR)

(WHO AT THE SEMINARY SHOULD BE MENTIONED, GERSON COHEN AND SCHORCH? WHO ELSE?)

ALL OF THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH SYLVIA

In the interview, I describe the unique partnership that was developed at Ramah between educators, scholars and Rabbi's

1. The members of the educators assembly
2. The Rabbinical Assembly - Wolf Kelman
3. Lay people:
 - Lou Winer
 - Bert Weinstein
 - Maxwell Abbel
 - Oliff
 - Oliff's partner
 - Joe Levine
 - A. Biranbaum
 - Rudi Freid
 - Ruben Koffman
 - (get all the others from Sylvia - including the Canadian, California, Connecticut and Nyak Camps)
4. I will want to thank Scheffler and Twersky for what I have learned from them. It has helped me better understand Camp Ramah and put it in perspective. Scheffler in the area of leadership education and vision, and Twersky on the power of traditional Jewish ideas for Jewish education.
5. I want to thank the Melton family, the Mandel family, the CLJE and the Mandel Institute.
6. I will want to thank Sue in relationship to David Mogilner and as my wife. And thank the Camps for educating my children and Sue's children.

FAX TRANSMISSION

CJE

15 EAST 26TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10010
(212) 532-2360
FAX: (212) 532-2646

To: Bill Novak

Date: January 7, 1997

Fax #: 617-964-1038

Pages: 3, including this cover sheet.

From: Chava Werber

Subject: Phone calls

COMMENTS:

Again, an update from Nessa.

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: Phone calls

Tuesday at 2:30 is fine. I'll stand by for your call tomorrow.

I can't make either of the other two times, but I don't think that matters. Our phone call needs to address all outstanding questions raised by the new material you sent me, particularly the lacunae, which I need filled immediately. I do not need to be part of your conversation with Sylvia about the acknowledgments. All I need is the final text. Whatever you decide is fine with me, as long as I get it right away.

However, if I can offer an editorial perspective: You seem to want to thank anyone who had a role in the success of Camp Ramah. Why? You haven't written a history of Ramah, in any sense. Rather, you've written a description of how Ramah developed from philosophy to practice--and you've made an (eloquent) case for philosophy. Why turn this into the Academy Awards? ("I'd like to thank the greatest cast in the world, the most fabulous director, an incredible crew, my amazing wife--and God, without whom this movie would never have been made.") To me, a sentence such as "I spent 18 wonderful years..." doesn't even sound like the rest of the essay, which is sharp, acerbic, funny and focused. These acknowledgments seem to me appropriate for an honorary degree.

Having said all that, I am not on the line here--and you are. If you, you and Sue, you and Sylvia feel that you're exposed and vulnerable by NOT thanking this long list, go ahead. But then I would consider a simpler paragraph saying something like: "This conversation focuses on the critical role of philosophy in creating the educational experiment of Camp Ramah. I joined this experiment in 1950 and was actively involved for x years. I have mentioned some of the key people with whom.... There were many others, some of them after my tenure at Ramah, whose contributions continue to be felt to this day. For a full understanding of the many people who played a role in Ramah's development, see the bibliography... As for those in the recent present and the future, their story will be the next contribution to our understanding of how to translate vision into practice... I look forward to reading it." Or something like that.

Finally, Bill said that you mentioned to him the possibility of putting "A Conversation with..." on the cover. I am opposed to that on two grounds: One is that the title is already too long. Second, if you're trying to let people know that this is informal and not definitive, the format does that by being question-and-answer. In fact, in my and Bill's experience, we can predict most people will believe that you talked this into a tape recorder in a single afternoon. We know, however, that this essay represents about a year of conversations, revisions (and regressions!) And so "A Conversation with..." is not accurate.

I'll prepare my comments on this material so that when we speak, we can get the necessary work done quickly.

Nessa

Thanks for your entertaining PS. I received Bill's copy today. The more we can minimize the work on the bibliography and the acknowledgments, the faster I can do my final changes on the copy, get it back to Bill, who will get it back to me. I will be delighted to send it to you at

that point. Is there some date by which you need the final copy? Let me know.

Fourth request: When will you be in the States?

Maybe you're actually my Zen master, and this exercise in frustration is really meant for my spiritual development. What do you think?

1/9/97

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: Final details

Here's my proposed text for the end of your bibliography, following the Fox-Scheffler essay reference. (And I'll read it over the weekend, by the way.)

From 1988 to 1990, the Mandel Associated Foundations, the JCC Association, and JESNA in collaboration with CJF convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Its recommendations were published in *A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991). One of those recommendations was the establishment of:

The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz. These volumes argue the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in Jewish education within a range of settings:

Best Practices: Supplementary School Education (1993, 1996).

Best Practices: Early Childhood Jewish Education (1993, 1996).

Best Practices: Jewish Education in JCCs, by Steven M. Cohen and Barry W. Holtz (Sponsors: The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education and the Jewish Community Centers Association, 1996).

Please edit the above as you wish.

As for the editor/writer acknowledgments, here's my suggestion:

"I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this essay. It would never have been written without her persistence and her role as a creative, diligent, and patient editor. I am also grateful to William Novak, who brought both his skill as an interviewer and his knowledge of Camp Ramah to this work."

Let me know what you think about both of these by Monday morning.

Thank you for the Gandhi recommendation, whose prompt arrival represents nothing less than the proverbial paradigm shift. If we can keep this up, there is still time to transform the field by the quality and quantity of its written intellectual discourse. As you know, that was my biggest shock when I entered the CIJE world. (How can we contribute to general education from the uniqueness of our ideas--as you claim is eminently possible--unless we have a way of disseminating those ideas to a range of audiences, intellectual and cultural? And what intellectually respectable field doesn't have a high-level journal and a culture of writing?)

By the way, I had a conversation with Prof. Twersky about something he'd written 30 years ago that I think is the cutting-edge for now. And I'm not going to tell you what it is until I see you in February!

Your last job: I am expecting Lou Newman's dates; your revised acknowledgments; and your biography by Monday.

Next:

I am putting in the mail to you a copy of the final version. Please be sure to give one to Danny Marom immediately, because he told me months ago that it is Mandel Institute policy to publish in Hebrew, and he has been waiting for this copy to get started.

Then:

I need to get one to Shelly Dorph as soon as possible. I think I should wait until Monday, because it would be better for him to see the full document, including the bibliography and the acknowledgments. I'm assuming you agree, but let me know if you don't. He's the natural mechanism to disseminate this essay in the macro, but also in the micro, for your March conference. Sending it to Shelly represents a version of "going public"; we're ready, but I wanted to let you know.

I have asked Annette, by e-mail, how many copies the MI would like initially. I hope you will also be using the piece as curriculum wherever you are teaching vision, both there and here. THEREFORE, please think through any appearances you may be making in North America and let me know as they come up so that, if you think it's appropriate, the CIJE office can ship this essay to the venue ahead of time. I hope you won't be too shy about this to use it widely and well. After all, its entire purpose was to make a complicated idea uncompromisingly accessible.

Looking forward to our brand-new (26-year) relationship. In the glory of our tradition, teshuvah is always possible. And then you'll be on an even higher madregah than if you'd never acted this way in the first place! So that's something to look forward to. (This is the last time I'm mentioning it, you'll be relieved to hear.)

Yours to the sound of one hand clapping,

Nessa

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: The last word!

NOTE: PLEASE DOWNLOAD FOR SEYMOUR IMMEDIATELY!!

The terrific Sylvia E. wants me to point out that you mention only Lou Winer as a layperson, and although you explained why to her, she wants to remind you of Maxwell Abell (SP?) and David Birenbaum.

If you want to put them in, let me know that you do by return e-mail AND be sure to let me know how their names are spelled. But please do not feel obliged. There are already far too many names. I don't want the acknowledgments to approach the length of the essay.

Nessa

PS: You founded Mador in 1959. You founded Melton in 1960. Wolfe was exec. dir. from 1952 to 1989.

1/9/97

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: truly last thought

As I was brushing my teeth before leaving the office, I found myself thinking about my regret that I couldn't justify making the essay more egalitarian. That is, all the great mind "yoatzim" to Ramah in both Jewish and general thought were men. Sylvia is the only woman who's named. Then my mind went to the fact that I had inserted "he or she" wherever justifiable, but the final words of the essay still say "the future Heschel and Kaplans" and no women's names. THEN I started thinking about the three philanthropists-for-Jewish-education who are named, followed by Mort. And then I had this thought: Does Florence Melton's name belong on that page about fund-raising and lay leadership? For the purposes of this piece, was it Sam alone? Or when you name Mort as someone who made a big difference in the "second shift," should Florence's own contribution be part of that shift?

I have been scrupulously unideological about this issue. Either she belongs or she doesn't. Let me know.

Nessa



FROM: INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
Karen, 104440,2474
DATE: 1/9/97 2:53 AM

Re: Ramah reference

Sender: sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by arl-img-5.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id CAA24415; Thu, 9 Jan 1997 02:50:44 -0500
From: <sfox@vms.huji.ac.il>
Message-Id: <199701090750.CAA24415@arl-img-5.compuserve.com>
Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Thu, 09 Jan 97 09:51:39 +0200
Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(128.139.9.117) (HUyMail-V7b);
Thu, 09 Jan 97 09:41:54 +0200
Date: Thu, 9 Jan 97 9:41 +0200
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Subject: Ramah reference
To: <104440.2474@compuserve.com>, <74671.3370@compuserve.com>
X-Mailer: SPRY Mail Version: 04.00.06.17

Dear Nessa,

Prof. Fox asked me to send you the correct Erikeson reference:

Erik Erikson; Gandhi's Truth: On Origins of Militance and Violence; London,
Farber and Farber, 1970.

Best regards,

Suzannah

TO: Annette, Internet:annette@hujivms.bitnet

Re: Mission accomplished!

I believe I have held my final editorial conversation with Seymour. I never thought the following words would leave my lips, but it has all been worth it, because the piece is SUPERB. I got tears in my eyes reading it (for the millionth time); I really believe it illuminates complicated educational issues in a very accessible way, without intellectual compromise.

SO: Now I have a few minor items to clean up, and then: off to the designer. (Seymour will see pages one last time before we print.) My question to you, patient patron, is: Can you now give me a sense of how many copies you think you would like initially? My goal is to publish before the big Ramah meeting Seymour will address in March. I also hope it will be used in the curricula of your various institutions.

Onward and upward. In 1997, at the very least, I am hoping to be a midwife with you to the Agnon case study, which holds the possibility of being one of the very few contemporary case studies in this field. And perhaps other intriguing projects as well.

Nessa

Mandel Institute

7117 1107

Tel: 972-2-5662832

Fax: 972-2-5662837

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

TO: Nessa Rapoport **DATE:** January 13, 1997

FROM: Nicky Pallister **PAGES:** 10

FAX NUMBER: 212-532-2646

Dear Nessa,

Prof. Fox tried to send you the attached by email today, but we seem to have a comms problem so I'm sending it by fax instead. Please could you confirm receipt and also let us know which telecon time is suitable for you.

Prof. Fox has already asked Sylvia to deal with the matters mentioned in the acknowledgments.

Best regards,

Nicky

- X Dr. Walter Ackerman —
- Dr. Chaim Brandwein
- Dr. Gerson D. Cohen
- X Sylvia Ettenberg —
- Dr. Lloyd Gartner —
- Dr. Joel Kraemer —
- X Morton M. Leifman —
- Dr. Shmuel Leiter
- Dr. Yochanan Muffs
- X Louis Newman —
- Dr. Fritz Rothschild
- Dr. Nahum M. Sarna
- X Dr. Joseph J. Schwab —
- Dr. David Weiss

Avraham Holtz

As you can see, I accepted your suggestions for the editor-writer acknowledgments.

Can we speak on the phone to decide on the CJE and any other matters I have forgotten. I can call (New York time) at 3pm on Tuesday, or 3pm on Wednesday. I will then be able to schedule a meeting for February.

My very best,


Seymour

Dear Nessa,

I hope this does it. I have left you with three small assignments, 1) the dates that Lou Newman was Director of the Melton Center (Sylvia said she would find it), 2) the date that Sheldon Dorph assumed the position of National Ramah Director, (Sylvia also said she would get it for us) and 3) the dates that Wolf served as Executive Vice President of the Rabbinical Assembly.

I would like to discuss the way you handled the Commission and the CIJE. I believe that it is excessive, particularly since we have such a short reference to the Mandel Institute.

I would like to make two changes in the Bibliography:

1. The last reference under Vision for Jewish Education, should read:

Profs. Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. Prof. Twersky particularly in terms of the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk, and Prof. Scheffler in terms of the vision of John Dewey and his suggestions concerning leadership education. Their ideas as well as mine will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

2. The Mandel Institute:

The Mandel Institute is an International Center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio.

Then continue with: It has been at the forefront

Also in the text where I describe the Melton Faculty Seminar and list the names, could you make sure that all of the following names are in:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nessa,

I don't really know how to begin this. *This is an amended copy which includes the corrections that I mentioned in my letter.*

The following abridged bibliography in lieu of footnotes may be of interest to the reader. I have organized it around themes.

Vision

- for general education:

Marshall S. Smith, Sara Lightfoot and David K. Cohen present the argument for the importance of vision in determining the impact of educational institutions.

Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systematic School Reform" in *Politics of Education Association Yearbook*, 1990, pp.233-267.

Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School - Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York, Basic Books, 1983).

David K. Cohen, Eleanor Farrar and Arthur G. Powell, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace*, (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1985).

Alan Ryan has powerfully described the impact of John Dewey on the intellectual life and on education in America in:

Alan Ryan *John Dewey and The High Tide of American Liberalism*, W.W. Norton & Company New York - London, 1995.

For an example of the way that Steiner's students apply Steiner's philosophy to education, see *Rudolph Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* by E.A. Stockmeyer, The Robinswood Press, Stourbridge, England, 1991.

- for Jewish education:

Some examples of the power of ideas for Jewish education are found in:

Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the 'Musal' Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1993)

and for Zionist education in:

Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel* (Hebrew, 2 volumes: Jerusalem, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1986 and 1993).

Professor Gerson Cohen argues for the importance of locating the ideas that will lead to a vision for Jewish education and the need to develop a vision for Jewish education in North America in:

Gerson D. Cohen, "From Scholarship to Paideia - A Case Study", in *From the Scholar to the Classroom: Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*, edited by Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfeld, (New York, Melton Research Center at Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977) pp.31-58.

Profs. Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. Prof. Twersky particularly in terms of the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk, and Prof. Scheffler in terms of the vision of John Dewey and his suggestion concerning leadership education. Their ideas as well as mine will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Camp Ramah and its history.

The Ramah Experience: *Community and Commitment*, edited by Sylvia Ettenberg and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in cooperation with The National Ramah Commission, 1983).

The chapter by Burton I. Cohen "A Brief History of the Ramah Movement" presents the history of Ramah, however the entire book is of importance for those who wish to gain a perspective on the theory and practice of the Ramah movement.

The Relationship of the Cognitive and Emotional Domains for Education:

Professors Joseph Schwab and Israel Scheffler have written key essays on this topic:

1. Joseph J. Schwab *Eros and Education*, Journal of General Education, 8 (1954, pp.54-71).
2. Israel Scheffler *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions*, pp. 3-30, Routledge, New York-London, 1991.

The Practical

Joseph J. Schwab has made a key contribution to our thinking concerning the practical nature of the field of education. His ideas were developed in four monographs:

The Practical I - "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," Washington D.C., National Education Association, 1970.

The Practical II - "The Practical: Arts of the Eclectic", *School Review* 79 (1971): 493-542.

The Practical III - "The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum." *School Review* 81 (1973); 501-22.

The Practical IV - "The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do." *Curriculum Inquiry* 13:3, (1983); 239-365.

Israel Scheffler, in his volume "Four Pragmatists", (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), particularly in his chapter on John Dewey, presents a penetrating analysis of the means-ends relationship for the field of education.

An Understanding of the Adolescent

Our thinking was very much influenced by the writings of two psychoanalysts. Dr. Eric H. Erikson and Dr. Bruno Bettelheim. Erikson's paper *Youth: Fidelity and Diversity*, *Daedalus*, Winter 1962, and his books on Luther and Ghandi helped us understand the thinking and feeling of the adolescent as well as the concept of charisma, *Young Man Luther*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1958, and (I will get the listing for Ghandi).

Bruno Bettelheim's volume on the Orthogenic School *Love is not Enough* was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.

Bruno Bettelheim *Love is not Enough*, The Free Press, 1950.

The Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education

The Melton Center was established in 1959 at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton program for the teaching of Bible was experimented with at the Ramah Camps and the Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

Louis I. Newman served as the director of the Melton Center from 1960 to 1973 and Joseph J. Schwab was the leading educational consultant for Melton. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

1973 -
Elaine Harris
Barry Heltz?
Edy Ruch
(1978) 1981 (dis.)

Nahum Sarna's *Understanding Genesis* (New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966)

Moshe Greenberg's *Understanding Exodus: Part 1*, (New York, Behrman House, 1969).

The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the forefront of the Continuity Movement for Jewish education. Among its publications are:

Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler "Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations", the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, 1996.

(NESSA - YOU DECIDE HOW TO FEATURE "A TIME TO ACT" - IT CAN EITHER BE LISTED UNDER THE CATEGORY OF CIJE, OR AS THE CIJE AND THE MANDEL FAMILY EFFORT IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE AREA OF CONTINUITY.)

nr. edit ~~bibliog~~
actn.
no.

Liz
table of c.
tbl intro.

Sylv.
Write date
Shelly date

CUE 9

weekly quot

FEDEX

1/14/97 Ramah - w/ Seymour

p. 18 text Melton Br. Seminar

15 names

Avraham Melitz

Ramah

1/7/97

12

table of contents

1/13/97

tbl intro.

ACKN.

low new

BIBLIOG.

gender

Bio.

new Jeym bio

Melton Br. Seminar
why list?

sentences on Br

bibliog.

CUE biog

Low Newman

bibliog. ✓ changes: just Scheffler: ✓

✓ Newman: 1860-1872 (leaving out office bcc. he's not there) say: 'during my tenure' ^{involve}

✓ CUE: cut

actn ✓ 16 Ramah dirs (+ comp?)

X 4 Modern dirs?

✓ 4 dirs of Nat. Ramah Comm?

biogr. ✓ Syl additions

other ✓ Florence M. major contrib. w/ Jeym

✓ Shelly: How many fir Ramah? with bibli, actn - for:

✓ Copy in way.

Mailing list: March

1/14/97

Dear Seymour:

Just a reminder: You owe me 3 items by Wednesday morning:

1. **Your wording of the Best Practices item in the bibliography.**
2. **Your sentence on the founding of Mador;** ¹⁹⁵⁹ Sylvia will get me the date.
3. **Your sentence on your position at the Melton Research Center, along with the dates of your holding that position.** ¹⁹⁶⁰ Note: Sylvia says she thinks you didn't have a title there, because you founded it and it reported to you as dean of the T.I.!
So let me know what you want to do.

¹⁹⁵²⁻¹⁹⁸⁹
Sylvia is also getting me the dates for Wolfe and for Shelley (I'm also trying the Gail route on the latter).

I have conveyed your heartfelt thanks to Bill and to Sylvia.

Nessa

Nessa

FAX TRANSMISSION

COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

15 EAST 26TH STREET

NEW YORK, NY 10010

(212) 532-2360

FAX: (212) 532-2646

To: Seymour

Date: 1/14/97

Fax #:

Pages: 2 , including this cover sheet.

From: Nessa

Subject:

COMMENTS:

January 15, 1997

Dear Seymour:

Here are the corrected versions of the: **bibliography; acknowledgments; and author bio.** Since I did not get your changes this morning, I created my own versions of the few outstanding issues, which you can feel free to correct within your 24-hour allotted time. That is, I am handing this material to the designer tomorrow at 11:00 a.m.--and I would like your OK before I do. I am also sending the complete, final version to Shelly Dorph tomorrow, which is all the more reason why I need your sign-off.

It is very important for you to read through these documents with care and in their entirety. In addition to the modest language changes I have made (see the way I phrase your reference to Profs. Twersky and Scheffler), there are some particular things to look out for:

Bibliography: See my proposed change in the CIJE language.

Acknowledgments: See my Resnikoff wording.

About the Author: See my wording on Mador and the Melton Center.

And finally, I'm assuming the Lou Winer mention is sufficient, and that you don't need to add the two names Sylvia suggested. If I'm wrong, and you do, then give me the precise language and the precise spelling.

The text: I asked Bill to enter the revised list of the Melton Faculty Seminar and the changes re Florence Melton. His new disc and new hard copy will arrive Thurs. a.m., at which point I will immediately fedex that copy to you. Please remember that Annette/Danny need a copy for the Hebrew version. And, VERY IMPORTANT, when the copy of the essay I sent by regular mail arrives, be sure to discard it. It is no longer accurate.

I will need your corrections by 4 p.m. Israel time on Thursday, to be extremely precise about it. You can print in the margins and fax these back to me. Or e-mail me the changes with page references. (Since I know it by heart, I won't need the line references!)

Yours,



Nessa

I'm assuming that the British publisher of *Gandhi's Truth* was Faber and Faber, not the "Farber and Farber" that appeared on the e-mail from your office! But this is why I need you to read carefully.

From: Nessa Rapoport

Subject: Vision at the Heart

COMMENTS:

Dear Seymour:

I called in your changes to my assistant, Chava, this morning, who is faxing the final version to you with this note.

Please read it through one last time noting: the new heading for and the way I cited Elboim-Dror's book on p. 1; the question I raise on p. 3 about the date the Melton Center was established; my new language for Shelley Dorph on p. 5; the question I raise on p. 6 in bold type.

Please fax me any changes and your sign-off by Tuesday a.m. New York time, as well as your sign-off on the full text as soon as you receive the essay by Federal Express.

Yours in constant communication,

Nessa

** CONFIRMATION REPORT **				
TRANSMISSION				
TRANSACTION(S) COMPLETED				
NO.	DATE/TIME	DESTINATION	DURATION PGS	STATUS MODE
604	JAN. 17 15:13		972 2 662837 0' 02' 52" 009	OK N ECM

FAX TRANSMISSION

CJJE

15 EAST 26TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10010
(212) 532-2360
FAX: (212) 532-2646

To: Seymour Fox **Date:** January 17, 1997
Fax #: 972-2-566-2837 **Pages:** 9, including this cover sheet.
From: Nessa Rapoport
Subject: Vision at the Heart

COMMENTS:

Dear Seymour:

I called in your changes to my assistant, Chava, this morning, who is faxing the final version to you with this note.

Please read it through one last time noting: the new heading for and the way I cited Elboim-Dror's book on p. 1; the question I raise on p. 3 about the date the Melton Center was established; my new language for Shelley Dorph on p. 5; the question I raise on p. 6 in bold type.

Please fax me any changes and your sign-off by Tuesday a.m. New York time, as well as your sign-off on the full text as soon as you receive the essay by Federal Express.

Yours in constant communication,

Nessa

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following abridged bibliography may be of interest to the reader.

Vision: For general education

Marshall Smith, Sara Lightfoot, and David Cohen present the argument for the importance of vision in determining the impact of educational institutions.

Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systematic School Reform," in *Politics of Education Association Yearbook* (1990), pp. 233-267.

Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

David K. Cohen, Eleanor Farrar, and Arthur G. Powell, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1985).

Alan Ryan has powerfully described the impact of John Dewey on American intellectual life and education in:

Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and The High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995).

For an example of the way that Steiner's students apply Steiner's philosophy to education, see:

E.A. Stockmeyer, *Rudolph Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* (Stourbridge, England: The Robinswood Press, 1991).

Vision: For Jewish and Zionist education

Some examples of the power of ideas for Jewish education are found in:

Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the 'Musal' Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

The power of ideas for Zionist education are explored in:

Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel* (Hebrew, two volumes. Jerusalem:Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1986, 1993).

Gerson Cohen argues for the importance of locating the ideas that will lead to a vision for Jewish

education and the need to develop a vision for Jewish education in North America in:

Gerson D. Cohen, "From Scholarship to Paideia: A Case Study," in *From the Scholar to the Classroom: Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*, edited by Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), pp.31-58.

Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. I am grateful to Professor Twersky for disclosing the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk; and to Professor Scheffler for analyzing the vision of John Dewey and for his suggestions concerning leadership education. Their ideas, as well as my own, will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Camp Ramah and its History

The Ramah Experience: Community and Commitment, edited by Sylvia Ettenberg and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in cooperation with The National Ramah Commission. 1983). The chapter by Burton I. Cohen, "A Brief History of the Ramah Movement," presents the history of Ramah; however, the entire book is of importance for those who wish to gain a perspective on the theory and practice of the Ramah movement.

The Relationship of the Cognitive and Emotional Domains for Education

Joseph Schwab and Israel Scheffler have written key essays on this topic:

Joseph J. Schwab, "Eros and Education," *Journal of General Education* 8 (1954), pp. 54-71.

Israel Scheffler, "*In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions*" (New York-London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 3-30.

The Practical

Joseph Schwab has made a key contribution to our thinking concerning the practical nature of the field of education. His ideas were developed in four monographs:

The Practical I - "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum" (Washington D.C.:

National Education Association, 1970).

The Practical II - "The Practical: Arts of the Eclectic," *School Review* 79 (1971), pp. 493-542.

The Practical III - "The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum," *School Review* 81 (1973), pp. 501-522.

The Practical IV - "The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do," *Curriculum Inquiry* 13:3 (1983), pp. 239-365.

Israel Scheffler, in his volume *Four Pragmatists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), particularly in his chapter on John Dewey, presents a penetrating analysis of the means-ends relationship for the field of education.

An Understanding of the Adolescent

Our thinking was very much influenced by the writings of two psychoanalysts, Eric H. Erikson and Bruno Bettelheim.

Erikson's paper on youth and his books on Luther and Gandhi helped us understand the thinking and feeling of the adolescent, as well as the concept of charisma:

"Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," *Daedalus* (Winter 1962).

Young Man Luther (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1958).

Gandhi's Truth: On Origins of Militance and Violence (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).

Bruno Bettelheim's volume on the Orthogenic School, *Love is Not Enough* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1950), was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.

The Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education

The Melton Center was established in 1960 [**Sylvia says 1960, which is what we put in the author's bio. Your original said 1959. I am assuming Sylvia's correct!**] at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton

program for the teaching of Bible was piloted at the Ramah Camps. The Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

During the years of my direct involvement with the Melton Center, Louis Newman served as its director. Joseph Schwab was the leading educational consultant to the Center. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966).

Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus: Part 1* (New York: Behrman House, 1969).

The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the forefront of the movement to revitalize Jewish education. Among its publications are:

Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, "Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations" (Jerusalem: The Mandel Institute, 1996).

From 1988 to 1990, the Mandel Associated Foundations, the JCC Association, and JESNA in collaboration with CJF convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Its recommendations were published in:

A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991).

One of these recommendations was the establishment of:

The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz.

Best Practices: Supplementary School Education (New York-Cleveland: CIJE, 1993, 1996) argues the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in this setting.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this essay. It would never have been written without her persistence and her role as a creative, diligent, and patient editor. I am also grateful to William Novak, who brought both his skill as an interviewer and his knowledge of Camp Ramah to this work.

I was invited to join the staff of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in 1950 by Louis Newman, the director, and Sylvia Ettenberg, dean of students at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. As a result of their invitation, I spent eighteen wonderful years in a close association with the Ramah movement and have continued to watch it grow and flourish since then.

From 1950 to 1968, I was privileged to work with the staff and the leaders of the Ramah movement: the camp directors, Levi Soshuk and Rabbi David Mogilner, both of blessed memory; and Rabbi Jerome Abrams, Dr. Walter Ackerman, Donald Adelman, Rabbi Raphael Arzt, Dr. Burton Cohen, Rabbi Morton Leifman, Dr. Shmuel Leiter, Dr. David Lieber, Dr. Joseph Lukinsky, Rabbi Marshall Meyer, Dr. Louis Newman, Dr. Chaim Potok, Rabbi Moshe Samber, and Dr. Morton Siegel.

Following Bernard Resnikoff, David Mogilner and subsequently Burton Cohen were appointed directors of the National Ramah Commission, where each offered outstanding leadership to the movement as a whole. In 1989, Dr. Sheldon Dorph assumed the position of director; he is guiding Ramah with inspiration from its fiftieth anniversary into the future.

I learned a great deal from all of them.

Ramah was a partnership of educators, lay leaders, rabbis, and scholars. I have not written a history of Ramah and therefore cannot acknowledge many other people with whom I was fortunate to work. I must, however, mention Lou Winer, who, as a lay leader, was a source of continuous support and encouragement to the camp directors. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, as executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly from 1952 to 1989, helped us develop a common language with the rabbis, who contend with the reality of building Jewish life twelve months a year.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Seymour Fox, who was closely associated with Camp Ramah from 1950 to 1968, is president of the Mandel Institute in Jerusalem, an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Professor Fox was born in Chicago in 1929. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In 1954, he was appointed director of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, the first Ramah camp. After serving in various other capacities at the Jewish Theological Seminary, he was appointed dean of its Teachers Institute in 1959. In that year he founded the Mador program of Camp Ramah. In 1960, he established the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary. **[Seymour: in the bibliography, you wrote that Sam Melton “established” the Melton Center, just as you wrote that the Mandel brothers “established” the Mandel Institute. It is therefore inconsistent -although not untrue- to say in the author’s note that you established the two Melton Centers. Please decide how you want to word these sentences].**

He moved to Israel in 1966 and was appointed Professor of Education and director of the School of Education at the Hebrew University, in Jerusalem. In 1969, he established Hebrew University’s Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora **[see above note]**. He has served as a senior consultant to four Ministers of Education.

Among his current responsibilities in Jerusalem, Professor Fox is chairman of the faculty of the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), a program for leaders in Jewish education, and academic director of the School for Educational Leadership, a program that trains the future leaders of Israeli education.

He is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles in the fields of Jewish and general education, including: *Freud and Education*; *From the Scholar to the Classroom*; *Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*; and *Philosophy for Education*.

Seymour Fox is married to Sue Mogilner-Fox and lives in Jerusalem. He has three children.

William Novak spent ten years at Ramah camps in Canada, the Poconos, and Glen Spey, N.Y., where he was, at various times, a camper, a counselor, a music specialist, and a teacher. Novak is a former editor of the journals *Response* and *New Traditions* and was one of the founders of *Moment* magazine. He is also the co-editor of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*.

As a writer, he has worked with a number of celebrities on their memoirs, including Lee Iacocca (*Iacocca*), Tip O’Neill (*Man of the House*), Magic Johnson (*My Life*), and Natan Sharansky

(Fear No Evil).

William Novak lives in the Boston area with his wife and their three sons.

Table of Contents

Vision at the Heart: Lessons from Camp Ramah on the Power of Ideas in Shaping Educational Institutions

Bibliography

Acknowledgments

About the Author

FROM: INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
DATE: 1/21/97 12:18 AM

Re: Message from Internet

Sender: sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by hil-img-3.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id AAA23389; Tue, 21 Jan 1997 00:16:13 -0500
From: <sfox@vms.huji.ac.il>
Message-Id: <199701210516.AAA23389@hil-img-3.compuserve.com>
Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Tue, 21 Jan 97 07:16:14 +0200
Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(128.139.9.35) (HUyMail-V7b);
Tue, 21 Jan 97 07:14:41 +0200
Date: Tue, 21 Jan 97 7:14 +0200
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
To: <74671.3370@compuserve.com>
X-Mailer: SPRY Mail Version: 04.00.06.17

Dear Nessa,

I tried to reach you yesterday both at home and at the office. Could we speak today, Tuesday, at 3:30 p.m. your time or 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, so that we can finish. I think we need 20 minutes.

Best regards,

Seymour

FOLEY & LARDNER
Suite 3300
One IBM Plaza
330 North Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611-3608
Telephone (312) 755-1900
Facsimile (312) 755-1925

DATE: January 21, 1997
TO: Nessa Rappaport
COMPANY: CJE
FAX NO: (212) 532-2646
FROM: Michael Small
COMPANY: Foley & Lardner
CLIENT/MATTER NO: Firm
PAGES (including this page): 2
MESSAGE (If any):

NOTE TO FACSIMILE OPERATOR:
IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE ALL OF THE PAGES, CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY.

NOTE TO ALL RECIPIENTS:

The information contained in this facsimile message is attorney privileged and confidential information intended for the use of the individual or entity named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible to deliver it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this fax in error, please immediately notify us by telephone, and return the original message to us at the above address via the U.S. Postal Service.

Fax Operator _____

FOLEY & LARDNER

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

MILWAUKEE
MADISON
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JACKSONVILLE
ORLANDO
TALLAHASSEE
TAMPA
WEST PALM BEACH

ONE IBM PLAZA
SUITE 3300
330 NORTH WABASH AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611
TELEPHONE (312) 755-1900
FACSIMILE (312) 755-1925
WRITER'S DIRECT LINE

(312) 755-2546

January 21, 1997

A MEMBER OF GLOBALER
WITH MEMBER OFFICES IN

BERLIN
BRUSSELS
DRESDEN
FRANKFURT
LONDON
PARIS
SINGAPORE
STUTTGART
TAIPEI

VIA FACSIMILE

Ms. Nessa Rappaport
CJJE
15 East 26th Street
N.Y., NY 10010

Re: Interview with Professor Fox

Dear Nessa:

Thank you for returning my call so quickly. It was pleasure speaking with you. Please send a copy of the article to me at my office. After I have read it, I will call you to arrange shipment of the appropriate number of copies for the Ramah weekend in March.

If you have any question or need any information, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Michael Small

Mandel Institute

מכון מנדל

Tel: 9722-566-2832

Fax: 9722-566-2837

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

To: Nessa Rapoport

Date: January 22, 1997

From: Suzannah Cohen

Fax No: 212-532-2646

Pages: 3

Dear Nessa,

Attached is what Prof. Fox received from Ramah.

Regards,


Suzannah

In addition to these five professors, Ramah was also influenced by the Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide the camp. The Seminar, which ran through the late 1950s and 1960s, included some of the younger scholars at the Seminary, such as ^{Drs.} Chaim Brandwein, ^{Dr.} Gerson Cohen, ^{Lloyd Gartner} Abraham Holtz, ^{Joel Krumer} Shmuel Leiter, ^{Dr.} Yochanan Muffs, ^{Lou Newman} Fritz Rothschild, ^{Dr.} Nahum Sarna, and ^{Dr.} David Weiss Halivni. To the best of my knowledge, the Melton Faculty Seminar was the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the United States.

Essentially we tackled two fundamental questions. First, what were the motifs, the essential themes that we wanted the camper to internalize through the Ramah experience? And second, what were the best ways to realize these goals?

We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today. There was a productive dialogue between the ideas of these scholars and their application at Ramah. A professor might teach an exciting course at the Seminary, and the following summer his students would be teaching it at Ramah -- to the staff, or perhaps even to the older campers.

The Seminar was always asking: What is the relevance of this particular Jewish idea, and when and how should it be taught? Some of these Seminar scholars taught at Ramah, because it was a place where you could not only be excited by ideas, but could witness their application in real life situations. In fact, it was taboo to treat theory and practice as separate domains.

IDEAS IN CREATIVE TENSION

Let's step back from the camp community to consider a constituency that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the communal leaders, who as board members assume ultimate responsibilities for the various camps.

These days, communal leaders are more supportive of good educational programs and more active in their support. But that's a fairly recent development. In the 1970s and 1980s, most American Jews of status and means cared mainly about Israel, hospitals, and defense organizations. Jewish education and culture ranked very low. ^{four} Three-notable exceptions, who were interested in education, were Sam ^{and Florence} Melton of Columbus, Philip Lowm of Boston, and Leighton Rosenthal of Cleveland. Ramah, from its inception, was fortunate in recruiting outstanding community leaders.

Today it's different. More and more, people are coming to realize that Judaism's and Israel's best asset is a Jewishly educated Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing significantly in Jewish education. Fortunately, this view has become fashionable, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. Mort Mandel, who established the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, launched this movement in a serious way, which led to Jewish education's being raised to the very top of the agenda of most Jewish organizations and institutions.

Today's communal leaders also insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support, and they tend to be more generally knowledgeable as well. In addition, we have some major assets now that we didn't have then. There are academics and well-educated communal leaders all over North America who care about Jewish education and see it as important. Jewish studies courses in colleges and universities are one of the big success stories of American Jewish life. Families today can draw on a wide variety of programs. There are hundreds of day schools in



Chair

Morton Mandel

January 22, 1997

Vice Chairs

Billie Gold
Ann Kaufman
Matthew Maryles
Maynard Wishner

Seymour Fox
The Mandel Institute
15 Rehov Graetz
Jerusalem, Israel 93111

Honorary Chair

Max Fisher

Dear Seymour,

Board

David Arnow
Daniel Bader
Mandell Berman
Charles Bronfman
John Colman
Maurice Corson
Susan Crown
Jay Davis
Irwin Field
Charles Goodman
Alfred Gottschalk
Neil Greenbaum
David Hirschhorn
Gershon Kekst
Henry Koschitzky
Mark Lainer
Norman Lamm
Marvin Lender
Norman Lipoff
Seymour Martin Lipset
Florence Melton
Melvin Merians
Lester Pollack
Charles Ratner
Esther Leah Ritz
William Schatten
Richard Scheuer
Ismar Schorsch
David Teutsch
Isadore Twersky
Bennett Yanowitz

Here is the true and only authentic final version of the soon-to-be famous essay by Seymour Fox. This version includes all the changes you dictated on Friday, as well as the two previous changes you did not receive (mea culpa: isn't it novel to hear me apologize to you?) These two changes are the revised Melton Faculty Seminar List (p. 18); and the correct mention of Florence Melton (p. 35). (Reminder re the Melton Seminar: You decided to omit Ackerman, Ettenberg, Holtz, Leifman and Schwab from this list).

For your easy review, Chava has placed an arrow in the margin next to each change.

Should you encounter any further sources of dissonance or distress in these pages, do not hesitate to call immediately. Otherwise, please notify me of your sign-off as soon as you have finished reading. Note that I am also sending the newly revised versions of the bibliography, acknowledgments and biography, which also need your final approval.

Thank you for being such a terrific author.

Best,

Nessa

Nessa Rapoport

Executive Director

Alan Hoffmann

1/22/97

Fifty years later, the Ramah movement consists of six overnight camps in North America, with a seventh opening in 1997; four overnight camps in Israel; one in South America; and one in Russia. There are also three day camps in North America, with a fourth opening in 1998, and three in Israel.

Fifty years later, there are eighteen overnight and day camps in North America, Israel, South America and Russia.

RAMAH CAMPS AS OF JANUARY 1997 North America

Overnight

Berkshires . 550 campers; 200 educational staff
 . family camping
 . pre and post season programming
 for schools

California . 500 campers; 175 educational staff;
 . year round weekend camping;
 . family camping . adult retreats; elder
 hostel . 1 week Taste of Ramah for
 pre-campers . Tikvah program - special
 needs kids

Canada . 360 campers, 150 educational staff;
 . family camping . Tikvah program . year-
 round family education program . 1 wk.
 Taste of Ramah

New England . 550 campers, 200 educational staff;
 . family camping . pre and post season
 programming . year round family education
 program . Tikvah program . 1 week Taste
 of Ramah program for pre-camper age kids.

Poconos . 380 campers, 150 educational staff;
 . family camping . camping for families
 with deaf children (Keshet)

Wisconsin . 425 campers, 175 educational staff;
 . Tikvah program . family camping
 . Artists' retreat

Opening Soon

Ramah Darom - Opening summer 1997
 . 200 campers, 80 educational staff
 . will become year-round facility
 similar to California by year 2,000.

Day Camps

Nyack Day Camp - 450 campers;
 200 education staff

Poconos Day Camp in Philadelphia -
 . 100 campers, 30 educational staff,
 . family programs

Central New Jersey Day Camp -
 Opening summer 1998 . 100 campers will
 grow to 300-400

Ramah Programs in IsraelOvernight

Ramah Seminar -230 entering high school seniors; 6-8 weeks in Israel and Eastern Europe

Ramah Semester in Israel - 200 high school students from Australia, U.S., England on a variety of semester programs

Ramah Israel Institute - 1,000 day school, Hebrew high school and synagogue family groups participating in 2-3 week educational programs in Israel

Ramah/NOAM Camp --run by Masorti Movement; 250 Israel Conservative children - 3 weeks.

Day Camps - Goldstein Youth Village

Ramah Hebrew Day Camp in Israel - 400 Israeli children; 3-6 weeks

Ramah English Day Camp - 50 English speaking children whose families are visiting Israel 3-6 weeks

Tikvah Day Camp in Israel - 50 Downs' Syndrome special needs Israel Tikvah kids, 3-6 weeks

Worldwide

Ramah overnight camp in South America - run by individual synagogues in Argentina, Brazil, Chile; independent of NRC

Ramah-Yachad Camp in Russia - 200 Russian children for 3 weeks at camp site near Moscow; run by Bet Midrash in Israel

VISION AT THE HEART:

LESSONS FROM CAMP RAMAH ON THE POWER OF IDEAS

IN SHAPING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

by Seymour Fox, with William Novak

INTRODUCTION

There is nothing as practical as a great idea.

Many of us, if we are fortunate, have at some point in our lives been part of an unforgettable educational experience -- a school, a summer program, an outstanding teacher -- that has touched our souls or perhaps even changed our lives. We look back on such moments with gratitude and awe, and with the hope that others -- our friends, our colleagues, and especially our children -- will be exposed to similar experiences that offer inspiration and purpose.

What does it take to create these kinds of experiences? While Camp Ramah is only one example, it has been a prominent and powerful one ever since its founding by Dr. Moshe Davis and

Sylvia Ettenberg of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The idea for Ramah gained acceptance in 1946, and the first Ramah camp opened in Wisconsin in the summer of 1947. ^A Fifty years later, there are nineteen overnight and day camps in North America, Israel, South America, and Russia.

Ramah emerged out of an ambitious dream, a carefully considered ideal of educational possibilities. Big questions were asked: What kind of Jews, what kind of people do we want to nurture? What ideas will guide this new camp? What happens when compelling but competing philosophies about the meaning and purpose of Jewish life must coexist within one institution? How should Ramah address the various convictions, controversies, and anxieties prevalent among North American Jews? How can Judaism be transmitted to children and to teenagers as vital, engaging -- and necessary?

We live in a time when the Jewish community is searching for ways to revitalize existing institutions and to build new ones, ranging from community high schools to informal educational settings for adults. What can we learn about the centrality of vision to the excellence of an educational institution? How can the experience of Ramah illuminate contemporary efforts to transform Jewish life in North America through education?

Seymour Fox, a central figure in Jewish education, was instrumental in developing Ramah from philosophy to practice.

THE NEED FOR VISION

You've made the claim that every educational initiative should be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem self-evident to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. What makes you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people might view as an introductory or

preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

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

Let me put it another way. Education that is essentially parve -- that's neutral and doesn't take a strong stand -- has little chance of succeeding. In my experience, all effective education has at its foundation a distinct and well-considered vision. The proof of that proposition is all around us. A few years ago, ^{Dr.} Marshall S. Smith, the current Deputy Secretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite a great deal of new legislation and the expenditure of huge sums of money from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. Among the few exceptions were those schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, made a similar point in her 1983 book, The Good High School. In an attempt to discover "what works," she visited and analyzed six well-regarded American secondary schools, of which two were urban, two were suburban, and two were "elite." 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 the 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 visions that animated these schools were loudly proclaimed or quietly whispered, they were present in each of these institutions.

Another book from the mid-1980s, The Shopping Mall High School (by Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen), examines the other side of the coin -- that is, what happens when you maintain a school without a clear vision. In most American high schools, almost everything is available in small doses, and everything tends to have the same weight, the same ranking. The authors contend that in trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, these schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls.

"Both types of institution," they write, "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 an understatement, contemporary high schools "take few stands on what is educationally or morally important."

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it's getting easier. Five or ten years ago you had to convince people about the importance of vision, but today the idea is increasingly accepted -- if only because we've all seen what happens in its absence. There is a professor at Stanford University who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He claims that if a company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes part of the culture and

is internalized, the company can survive periods of weak leadership or even a move toward control by the bureaucracy. I believe this is true of educational institutions as well.

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

A vision is a vibrant entity. It's a portrait of ideal human beings shaped by education -- an image rich and exciting enough to guide your future choices. A vision is inspired by your belief about human possibility, while being influenced by your experience of human fallibility.

An educational vision must be able to answer certain questions: What kind of people will graduate from this school, camp, or other educational setting? What will they understand and believe? How will they behave? What will they know how to do? In what ways will they be able to contribute to the community? And what qualities, intrinsic to your vision, will enable them to keep growing and learning?

Vision, then, is inherently both dynamic and flexible. It is not a mission statement or a declaration of purpose, which often end up as frozen, static assertions.

And a vision is more than a goal. Goals are important, but they are specific to a particular educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching science and another for the study of Talmud. Out of your vision will flow a series of goals for educators, parents, community leaders, and students, who will apply or translate that vision into concrete programs.

A great vision will inspire educators to creativity and even to the invention of new kinds of institutions. Goals certainly matter, but by themselves they're not sufficient. And they are

often so pedantic as to leave no room for vision.

A vision that is intelligent and worthwhile is guided by great ideas that 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.

I would add that it's often easier to inspire people if you're presenting them with a vision that is essentially extremist or fanatic, that depicts the world in stark, well-defined, black-and-white polarities. The challenge is to inspire them with a vision that includes a commitment to concepts such as religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy.

VISIONS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Let's look at some specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind of late because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him and his ideas today, just as I believe that in the Jewish world we will soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan, who viewed himself as a student of Dewey.

Dewey had a vision of the world as ever changing, as people continually tried to modify themselves and their environment. He believed the best way to approach such a world was through rational efforts at perceiving problems and inventing solutions. Dewey had an unlimited optimism about what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education.

Today, _____ it is difficult to appreciate just how significant a place he occupied in American

culture. On the first page of his book, Ryan quotes the eminent historian Henry Steele Commager, who observed that "for a generation no issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken."

Dewey's followers took many of the ideas he wrote about and applied them to practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who established hundreds of Waldorf schools across the country. To this day, his followers discuss every issue, down to what color to paint the walls in order to achieve a particular result that is part of Steiner's vision. Whenever you have a vision that excites and inspires people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate it into practice.

Another example of a successful vision is the one developed at the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence endures to this day. His vision had to do with the centrality of great ideas, which in turn generated the Great Books movement. Over the years, Chicago has probably produced more Nobel Prize winners and university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely dynamic place that was guided by a vision, and it has remained a great center of intellectual excitement.

VISIONS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and many of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish world. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would reflect his concept of Judaism, in which the intellect

played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that to create a new, vibrant society in the Jewish homeland, you had to educate a new type of individual.

One of the most important family dynasties in Jewish education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that of the Brisker Rav of Lithuania, whose descendants include the Soloveichiks. The followers of the Brisker Rav established a network of important and influential yeshivot. In some cases, they deliberately chose to teach and study texts that other rabbis felt were impractical, such as the sections on sacrifices or the regulations pertaining to the Temple in Jerusalem. Most other yeshivot in those days concentrated on sections of the Talmud that were more immediately relevant -- texts that dealt with topics such as civil damages, marriage and divorce, the rituals of prayer -- cases of Jewish law that you could actually use.

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more neglected sections of the Talmud was to miss the point. As they saw it, the classical texts constituted a coherent system. If you omitted certain sections, they felt you were not only in danger of distorting the tradition; you were also liable to overlook some great treasures. Who is to say where you will find the most significant ideas? One cannot presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Another major nineteenth-century educational reform movement was the Musar movement, with its emphasis on mitzvot ben adam l'chavero [the commandments pertaining to interpersonal relations]. The Musarists introduced a serious concentration on moral and spiritual issues into the yeshiva world of Lithuania. In most yeshivot, Musar (ethics) had been considered "soft," unworthy of significant attention. But in the late nineteenth

century, the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter established entire institutions that emphasized Musar. They believed that the exclusive emphasis on pilpul [the concentration on subtle, legal, conceptual differences] in most yeshivot could lead to a distortion of Judaism and the inability of the students to develop sufficient social and ethical sensitivities. The Musarists were reacting to a world they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently concerned with morality and personal responsibility.

Their opponents countered that the Musarists were demeaning the power of the text, which in itself contained the power to affect people's behavior. But over time the Musarists prevailed, and their influence penetrated most of the ^{Lithuanian} yeshivot.

THE VISION 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. In the late 1940s, the founders of Ramah could have invested their energies in any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the years following World War II -- problems that we still face 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. In an era when children of immigrants were busily trying to become Americans,

the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. The founders of Ramah wanted to go beyond what a school could achieve. By trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture, they sought to accomplish what the family and the community were no longer willing or able to do.

We wanted to create an educational setting where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives. We hoped this would lead to Jews who were both deeply committed to their tradition and actively involved in American society.

Why a camp? Because even the best school operates only part of the day. We wanted to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole person, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for no more than eight weeks at a time. Within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our aims could be educational in the broadest sense -- not only teaching Hebrew, but grappling with all kinds of social concerns: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child misses his cue during a performance? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living halakhah.

Take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's good to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence people sometimes get hurt. You have to draw a line between the need to win, or to excel, and a concern for people's feelings. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or Hebrew, our goal was to lower the possibility for hurt without seriously compromising the aspiration for excellence.

There was an emphasis on ethics and caring -- but also on growth. Ramah was not a laid-back place. The phrase "not living

up to his/her potential" was heard often, which led to a measure of disequilibrium in the lives of the campers.

The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. Ultimately they chose camping, because the issues that they believed needed to be addressed could not be addressed by a school -- not even a day school. Among other limitations, a school isn't the best place to nurture a child's Jewish emotional development. Ultimately, the challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child -- including his^{or her} mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional and spiritual issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

THE JEWISH IDEAS BEHIND RAMAH

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

I would start with Professor Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism during Ramah's early years. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, when Ramah was established, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s, when the camps flourished. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, a message that spoke not only to Jews but to the larger society as well. In 1951 he was featured in a cover story in Time Magazine as the leader of a Jewish renaissance in America. In 1958 Dr. Finkelstein even wrote an article on business ethics for Fortune Magazine as a result of a meeting with Henry Luce, the magazine's founder, who had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world.

Above all, Dr. Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply

Talmudic principles to the issues raised by living in a modern American society. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify. He wanted to tell the Committee: "I will not answer you, because you have no right to question me this way. America is based on the ideal of human dignity. In our tradition, we also have a conception of human dignity. Parts of it are delineated in the volume Sanhedrin of the Talmud in a concept known as drishah v'chakirah, which deals with how you may question a witness. And you cannot interrogate an individual in this manner."

This was an essential Finkelsteinian response: Americans are sensitive to the Bible, and the Jewish interpretation of the Bible ought to become part of the public discourse. Dr. Finkelstein wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within their own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we Jews have been living on top of the volcano from the very beginning of our history, and we therefore had a great deal to offer a world that was beginning to understand that now we were all living on top of the volcano.

In postwar America, Dr. Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke out of a long and venerable tradition. He delivered the invocation at President Eisenhower's inauguration, and Eisenhower used to consult with him surprisingly often on ethical matters. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the Seminary's Conferences on Science, Philosophy and Religion, where many individuals from a variety of world views and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. Louis Finkelstein's most significant influence on Ramah was his passion to create educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens.

Next, I would cite Professor Saul Lieberman and his emphasis


on the close and careful study of Jewish texts. When the first Ramah camp opened in 1947, people were incredulous: "You're establishing a summer camp that includes classes?" In those days this was almost unheard of. Young people went to camp to get away from classes, although there were some prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent. It was only much later that summer camps were established for the study of science or computers.

In effect, we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own educational director. The daily classes were mostly text-based, and it was quite possible to spend a large part of the summer on just a few verses. Teaching was considered a full-time job, and the teachers on staff were not given other duties, although multiple tasks would have made more sense economically. They therefore had ample time to prepare for class and were available to any camper who might seek them out.

At Ramah we believed in exposing ideas to critique and inquiry rather than presenting them dogmatically. We never sought intellectual obedience. A common question the Talmud asks is: Minah hani mili? How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will pose this same question about the central assumptions of religious belief. How do you know there's a God? How do you know God or Moses wrote the Torah? One must allow these questions, and all questions, while recognizing that a tradition that encourages difficult questions will every now and then produce a Spinoza, an Einstein, or a Freud, who will operate outside of the system.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, which isn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow the ^{Five Books of Moses} to be taught in the Rabbinical School because it would have to be studied critically and scientifically. Biblical criticism was so

rife with controversy, especially the issue of the authorship of the Five Books of Moses, that the Seminary responded by avoiding the study of these texts entirely. The Prophets? Fine. But not the Torah.

Meanwhile, we at Ramah were experimenting with the curriculum on Genesis that was prepared by the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education. (The Melton Center was founded in 1959 at the Seminary; among its activities was a program to develop a new curriculum for the teaching of Bible in Jewish supplementary schools.) To a considerable extent, Ramah served as a testing ground for Melton material. This material, which included Professor Nahum Sarna's important book Understanding Genesis, argued  that whether or not the Biblical text was divine in origin, it contained profound ethical and religious messages.

In the early 1960s the volume on Genesis was in galleys, but we still didn't have official approval to use it. I went to see Professor Lieberman -- not because I had to, but because it would have been irresponsible not to check with the Seminary synagogue's rabbi, who was officially responsible for the interpretation of Jewish law at the Seminary. I took with me a report on the social studies 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 Professor Lieberman, "and this is why we're publishing our book on Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as being divine in origin, we are demonstrating that it offers an enormously important ethical and religious message."

At the time, much of the Seminary's theological position was

roughly equivalent to what you might find today in some quarters of "modern Orthodoxy." Ramah, however, was willing to take risks in order to achieve its educational goals, and the Seminary faculty was generally sympathetic to those needs.

Another important influence was Professor Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization. He defined God as "power that makes for salvation." He wanted to reconstruct traditional Jewish theological ideas so as to transform them from an otherworldly conception to a personal and social this-worldly conception of salvation. He was seen as a heretic by some of his Seminary colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologization of God. Some of Kaplan's colleagues believed that he was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. As the story goes, Kaplan replied that if the Seminary greats, especially Louis Ginsberg and Saul Lieberman, had dealt with theological questions, he would have left them alone; but their failure to address these issues forced him to attempt to fill the vacuum.

Kaplan joined the centuries-old conversation between Judaism and the great philosophers. He wanted Judaism to be in constant relationship with the world around it, and he brought the elements of music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns and expressions.

At the other end of the spectrum, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel's religious vision was a major influence on Ramah. Dr. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message about the way human beings should live. He viewed Shabbat as a great gift to the world, a sanctification of time in a society where that sanctity was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of

certain American holidays were shifted merely for the convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend. "Can you imagine changing Rosh Hashanah so that it always falls on a weekend?" he asked.

For Heschel, prayer was the way for an individual to make contact with his innermost self. The whole question of what t'fillah [prayer] meant at Ramah was deeply influenced by Heschel and his students, including the concept of kavannah [devotional intention] and the idea of t'fillah as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement. But Heschel was also deeply concerned about the role of religion in the larger world. He marched in Selma with Martin Luther King as an expression of his own religious tradition. He believed that the most profound ideas in Judaism speak directly to contemporary social and political concerns.

Finally there was Professor Hillel Bavli, a poet and professor of Hebrew Literature. Dr. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog who made sure we really were using enough Hebrew at Ramah -- no easy task. All of us believed that if you wanted to understand and be part of Jewish history, you had no choice but to master Hebrew; that was how you joined the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the other great commentators and philosophers. Hebrew was also a vital link to the State of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist at first, and neither was I.

After years of success, it may be difficult to appreciate what an ^{outrageous} idea it was at the time to try to run a Conservative movement summer camp in Hebrew. Camp Massad was doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism were Massad's religion. In the Conservative movement, which was competing with other forces in the struggle to define authentic Judaism in the twentieth

century, to have Hebrew as the official language of Ramah was an additional yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and today Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can acquire the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language?

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, would result in young people who were deeply rooted in their tradition through their attachment to Jewish texts, which they could now grapple with because they had already mastered the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the method, anyone can join the ongoing conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: The method must involve Hebrew.

But it's also possible to go too far, to stress Hebrew so much that you distort in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, such as Mexico and Argentina, ^{there are schools where} Hebrew has become the main goal of Jewish education, and content is secondary. While Hebrew is essential, it is not sufficient. You need several other components -- mitzvot, prayer, and a communal consciousness on several levels: one's immediate community, the extended Jewish community, one's national society, and the world at large. At Ramah we tried to bring all of these components together.

I regarded these five men -- Louis Finkelstein, Saul Lieberman, Mordecai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Hillel Bavli -- as our teachers. I spent hours talking with them, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit between this older generation and the next.

IDEAS INTO ACTION: THE MELTON FACULTY SEMINAR

In addition to these five professors, Ramah was also influenced by the Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide the camp. The Seminar, which ran through the late 1950s and 1960s, included some of the younger scholars at the Seminary, such as Chaim Brandwein, Gerson Cohen, Lloyd Gartner, Joel Kraemer, Shmuel Leiter, Yochanan Muffs, Louis Newman, Fritz Rothschild, Nahum Sarna, and David Weiss Halivni. To the best of my knowledge, the Melton Faculty Seminar was the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the United States.

Essentially we tackled two fundamental questions. First, what were the motifs, the essential themes that we wanted the camper to internalize through the Ramah experience? And second, what were the best ways to realize these goals?

We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today. There was a productive dialogue between the ideas of these scholars and their application at Ramah. A professor might teach an exciting course at the Seminary, and the following summer his students would be teaching it at Ramah -- to the staff, or perhaps even to the older campers.

The Seminar was always asking: What is the relevance of this particular Jewish idea, and when and how should it be taught? Some of these Seminar scholars taught at Ramah, because it was a place where you could not only be excited by ideas, but could witness their application in real life situations. In fact, it was taboo to treat theory and practice as separate domains.

IDEAS IN CREATIVE TENSION

Two of the Seminary professors you mentioned, Heschel and Kaplan, had such different outlooks that they're generally seen as representing two opposites poles of contemporary Jewish theology. Did these differences leads to problems in a camp that was searching for a clear religious ideology?

No, because from the start Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be guided by a single perspective. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because philosophers strive for coherence. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was also a practical place where ideas were put into action, and where an eclectic approach could provide a rich source of energy. The fact that both ends of the theological spectrum were represented at Ramah added intellectual tension and excitement.

The Seminary professors who served as mentors represented differing and sometimes conflicting ideas. But their various approaches had already managed to coexist within the framework of the Seminary. Ramah tried, and was often able, to take their different conceptions a step further by building a society that was guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the people embodying these various visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when there is agreement on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Dr. Yochanan Muffs, a Seminary Bible scholar, once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism set forth in Pirke Avot [Ethics of the Fathers, an accessible and well-known section of the Talmud] -- Torah, avodah, and g'millut chasadim [study, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness] -- while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on the study of Torah, and the result will

be disembodied intellects, which was precisely what concerned the Musarists. Focus only on prayer, and you risk becoming excessively inner-directed, which can lead to reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivity that is inconsistent with mainstream Judaism. Finally, mitzvah on its own can lead to a simplistic and mechanical pattern of observance. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in an uncomplicated world, but that's not our reality. The only answer is to try to integrate these three forces so they all form part of the same picture.

THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS BEHIND RAMAH

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. Ramah also made extensive use of experts from the worlds of general education and the social sciences.

Because what we were trying to create required a wider range of expertise, we decided to supplement the Seminary faculty by inviting some of the leading scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and education to join us. We were determined to have the worlds of general and Jewish education "interpenetrate." The additional scholars who formed the Melton Advisory Board included some of the most thoughtful, creative minds in the field, such as Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; Fritz Redl, the psychoanalyst; Ralph Tyler, dean of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, and a powerful force in American education; and Lawrence Cremin, the eminent historian of education.

Two of the scholars in this group were especially important to Ramah: Joseph Schwab, the prominent philosopher of education and curriculum theorist, and Bruno Bettelheim, the renowned

psychoanalyst, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I had written my doctoral thesis about Freud and education under the guidance of both men at the University of Chicago.

The members of our Advisory Board were not paid for participating. They were attracted to Ramah by the scope of the project and were excited by the idea of being part of it. They were also impressed by how serious we were about training educational leaders. Professor Schwab even came to camp before the campers arrived to lead seminars for the staff.

Recently, somebody asked me what motivated these high-profile professors with little or no interest in Judaism, and in some cases, a non-Jewish background, to contribute so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with scholar's wish for immortality, which occurs when people read their books and put their ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he lived to see them acted upon at Ramah, at Melton, and many other places. What we offered these scholars, as well as the Judaic scholars on the Faculty Seminar, was a living laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them a confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around the conference table would actually materialize. What was talked about in November was often part of the camp's program the following summer. Moreover, we never undertook a project without first discussing it with them and paying close attention to their comments. We were giving these scholars an unusual opportunity -- the possibility of making a real impact on a society.

Schwab, in particular, viewed Ramah as an ideal place to create disciples. Certainly he was the most important force in shaping my own ideas about education.

Could you say more about him? Schwab seems to have been the

key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Joseph Schwab was born in a small town in Mississippi, where the entire Jewish community consisted of half a dozen families. Although he grew up knowing little about Judaism, he became intrigued by certain Jewish concepts, such as mitzvah. He devoted a great deal of his time to Ramah; between 1952 and 1966 I spent at least two days a month with him. He helped us think through issues such as the connection between the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (emotional) aspects of education. There was a natural fit between his ideas and our vision.

I should explain that Ramah was built on the belief that you have to make contact with young people on all levels -- the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the aesthetic. Some people are touched by music, while others are tone-deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to the intellectual challenge in the commentaries, or to theology. Ideally, of course, youngsters will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal, and the mind is not the only means of access to it.

In an essay entitled "Eros and Education," Schwab argued that the human mind is not only cerebral but also passionate, and that the intellect is not an emotion-free area. He also believed there were hardly any emotional areas that did not include cognitive elements. Schwab was convinced that there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, or between intellect and emotion.

Schwab wrote in that essay that Eros was all about "the energy of wanting." He believed that the definition of "to know" had to include "to do." The aim of education, he said, was to produce "actively intelligent people," whom he described in this

way:

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.

We also consulted with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. That was familiar territory for him because at the college of the University of Chicago nobody used textbooks, only primary sources. We spent hours with Schwab discussing, for example, how best to teach adolescents the story of Jacob, Rebecca, and Isaac in the book of Genesis. As presented in the text, Jacob and Rebecca are scheming co-conspirators against Isaac. Jacob is deceitful, his mother is less than honest, and together they mislead poor Isaac. How do you explain the larger issue here? How do you teach adolescents about truth and complexity? How do you convey to them that the world is often a terrible place without destroying their natural idealism? This is a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it at length. How do you teach that there are often shades of gray when adolescents tend to see only black and white? 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 outfitted in summer clothing. How do you tell young people the truth about the world without doing damage to their innate idealism and hope?

Schwab was also involved in our work in leadership

education. If you look at how leadership training has evolved in recent years, you will see two main schools of thought. The British school says: Study the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and John Locke will provide you with all the principles you will need. Alfred North Whitehead claimed that everything he had ever required to live the good life he found in the Bible and the literature of ancient Greece.

The American model, as you may expect, is more directly pragmatic. The Harvard Business School says: If we can provide enough case studies that illustrate the principles and include the situations you are likely to encounter during your career, you will succeed in the real world.

Schwab helped us develop a third conception, which was essentially a blend of the other two and which fit in perfectly with the goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these principles. They must then ask themselves: If I acquire, accept, and understand these principles, what will my practice be like?

What was the contribution of Bruno Bettelheim?

First, I must say that although Bettelheim's reputation has been challenged in recent years, that in no way diminishes his important contribution to Ramah. Second, although some members of the Melton Advisory Board responded to Ramah in terms of their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who regarded Judaism and all religions as anachronistic. And yet he clearly appreciated what we were trying to do educationally.

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago I had worked at Bettelheim's Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children. Once, with thechutzpah of youth, I said to him that the school didn't always measure up to his descriptions

of it in his book, Love is Not Enough.

"You're right," he replied. "The book outlines what the school was supposed to be." He acknowledged that it often fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean it wasn't guided and directed by that vision.

One of the distinguishing marks of Bettelheim's school was its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for the children. To make this happen, Bettelheim used every resource at his disposal -- from architecture to food. We believed that a camper's cabin at Ramah should function in a similar way, as a supportive environment against the inevitable pressures and problems created by an intense milieu. Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

I was influenced by Bettelheim when I asked that each camp director show me the menu for the first few days of the summer. I wanted to make sure that all our camps were serving familiar foods like hamburgers -- foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a youngster's home to this new environment. I also made sure that we were prepared to provide as many additional helpings as a camper wanted, so that nobody would leave the table feeling hungry, especially during the first week. We even had the counselors serve extra snacks at night. We were a bit extreme when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board!

Another lesson I learned from Bettelheim was the significance of the school custodian, who, for some students, was a more significant educational figure than the teachers or other professionals. At Ramah we paid close attention to the character of all the people we hired, not only the counselors, specialists, and teachers, but the service staff as well. Many of our dishwashers were students from Ivy League colleges. They didn't know Hebrew, but they wanted to be at Ramah and would accept any

job in order to spend a summer at camp. We responded by giving them the best teachers, including, quite often, the professor-in-residence.

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy -- that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He also taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where campers could be wild and noisy, and another place where a youngster could find peace and quiet. And it was Bettelheim who introduced me to the distinguished Harvard psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed and that history was reversible. This was an idea educators needed to hear, and before long, Erikson's books were being read and discussed at Ramah.

Finally, Bettelheim helped us understand that we had a tremendous built-in advantage that we hadn't fully been aware of: Because Ramah was in opposition to basic American suburban values, the camp was inherently counter-cultural in a way that was attractive and yet constructive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

It seems to me that during its earlier 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 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 succeeded. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was often difficult to get in, and there were waiting lists. We believed that if you invested in the right people, they could change the world. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone could 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 Faculty Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one. How do you fill the enormous gap between a text, the internalization of its message, and its incorporation into behavior? How do you move from mastering an idea to living it? And how does your practical experience affect your theory and help you revise it?

Although we didn't articulate it in exactly these terms, we were working with a process that involved five levels.

The first level is philosophy, and it asks theoretical questions. What is your conception of Judaism, of an ideal Jewish society, and of the individual? What is your conception of knowledge? Does knowledge consist of a mastery of facts? Of basic principles? If you know, will you therefore do?

The second level narrows the scope to the philosophy of education. How does your philosophy guide your conception of education? In our case, how do your ideas about Judaism shape the vision of what education should or can be?

The third level deals with the theory of practice, and takes

the process one step further. How does your philosophy of education shape and alter your educational goals? How does it shape your conception of curriculum, or of teacher education, or of informal education?

The fourth level brings the discussion down to actual practice: pedagogy, in-service education, and classroom management.

The fifth level consists of monitoring and evaluation, which serves as a corrective for each and all of the levels.

But these levels are not linear, and you need not move from Level One to Level Five. Some of the most effective work in education begins with Level Five -- with a careful, critical look at your ongoing program, which often demonstrates that you may not be accomplishing what you set out to do. This may lead you to reexamine your practice or your philosophy of education, which may in turn lead you to reconsider your basic assumptions about Judaism and knowledge. In other words, you return to Level One.

In our discussions about Ramah, we often started from Level Four and then moved on to Levels One through Four. Moving from theory to practice, or from practice to theory, is a dynamic process that forces you to constantly observe, rethink, and -- ideally -- change and improve.

These distinctions are still somewhat theoretical and abstract. Could we look a specific area, such as t'fillah [prayer], in light of these five levels?

If you are considering how to deal with t'fillah in an educational setting, the five levels might apply as follows:

Level One: What is prayer? Why do we praise God, who clearly doesn't need our praises? One answer, suggested by

Maimonides, is that God is a role model. When we praise God for being merciful, we do so in order to articulate and emulate that particular quality. If we restricted our discussion to this sort of issue, we would have a philosophical treatment of prayer.

Level Two might ask: What is the role of prayer in your philosophy of education? What specific ideas about it do you want to convey to children? How do you make contact with the inner spirituality of a child?

With Level Three we move into ideas that will guide educational practice. Can these ideas be taught to younger children? You might decide that you really can't accomplish much in this area until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or chanting certain words will set off something inside you. Or you might ask whether meditation fits into your understanding of Jewish prayer. And if it does, how will you teach it?

Actually, that last question brings us to Level Four, which deals with pedagogy. How, in the classroom, will teachers help students develop a sensitivity to words or to nusach [the traditional chant of the prayer service]? How will teachers be trained to carry out these assignments?

Level Five asks: As you monitor this activity, how will you make the necessary changes as a result of what you observe or learn? Does your experience support your theory?

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

In order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. As Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately respond to. It takes hard work and experience before you appreciate it. Similarly, for t'fillah to succeed you have to work at it and experience it. Eventually it becomes meaningful -- or it doesn't. Rejection is always an option, as long as it's thoughtful and considered.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism at Ramah would become deeply involved in it. Of course, all education works on that premise. If you are introduced to a profound idea by a fine teacher in the right environment, there's a good chance you'll accept it. This is a faith assumption of education.

But while Shacharit [morning] services were compulsory at Ramah, afternoon services were not. This was an important difference between Ramah and the Seminary. Halakhically, the Minchah service is also compulsory, but there were limits as to how much the uninitiated camper could be expected to understand and appreciate. After all, the majority of these youngsters had never experienced any daily prayers. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on Minchah at camp, we were likely to lose much of the impact of Shacharit.

In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional Minchah at Ramah, basing their decision on educational considerations rather than halakhic principles. It was a difficult debate, and ultimately the issue was decided by a single vote.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, not everybody observes Shabbat in exactly the same way?

As we saw it, the camp's public space was to be maintained as a religious preserve. We didn't legislate against the use of a radio in the privacy of a cabin, for we made a distinction between the public space and private space. We enabled campers and staff alike to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible within the public areas of the camp. As with the issue of Minchah, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not a halakhic decision but an educational one.

On the other hand, many other practices and activities at Ramah were non-negotiable. These included Hebrew, daily classes, morning services, kashrut, the recitation of birkat ha-mazon [grace after meals] -- and, in a very different sphere, instructional swim.

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

Level One would begin with general philosophical questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is the conception of a healthy body in our tradition different from that of other traditions?

Then, in Level Two, you might ask: What is the role of sports in your conception of education? You might, as John Dewey did, discuss the importance of rules, fairness, cooperation and competition.

In Level Three you would think about what role sports might play in your program. Are you prepared to let a camper complete the summer with no significant athletic experiences? What about those campers who simply don't like sports? Or swimming?

In Level Four you might think about how you will teach

respect for rules and fairness. How will you teach youngsters to be good losers -- or good winners, for that matter? What are your methods of teaching these values?

And in Level Five you would take a critical look at your program and measure your accomplishments. Have your students internalized the values of fairness and good sportsmanship? What changes or improvements need to be introduced in your program?

That sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really is a link between those ideals and 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, but no matter what we were discussing, or how important it was, at 11:45 PM each night two counselors would rush to this boy's cabin and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they would wake him up and change his sheets so none of the other campers would be aware of the mishap when they woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the principle of ha-malbin et p'nei chaveiro b'rabin -- that you must avoid a situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

That brings to mind another case involving this same principle. We had a problem one summer with adolescent girls who, after lights out, would conduct "bull sessions" -- discussions in which, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl's faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. These sessions invariably ended with girls in tears, and with some of the girls being scapegoated.

I was the camp director that summer, and when this developed into a serious, continuing problem, I was tempted to outlaw these sessions. But I knew that the campers could continue holding bull sessions as soon as the counselor was out of earshot. When the situation finally got out of control, I came in to talk to the girls.

"We don't understand," they told me. "We're just trying to help each other."

"That sounds fine," I said, "but may I sit in?" I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. "You know," I told them, "I appreciate what you're doing. I accept your aims, but I have a problem with your method. One of the things we don't do in a Jewish community like Ramah is publicly embarrass our fellow human beings. What if we studied a text together that deals with how people should behave toward one another, and then each girl can do her own self-evaluation privately?"

At this point, because an alternative was available, the more sensitive girls prevailed and the study session was accepted. Each night we studied the sixth chapter of Pirke Avot and discussed, among other things, what it means to be re'a ahuv -- an intimate friend, someone you could confide in, who would be supportive and would help you muster the strength you need to change and improve. We read this chapter every night for four weeks and had some very good talks. At Ramah, this sort of thing was part of the director's job definition.

INVESTING IN STAFF

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one cabin -- but what about the rest of the staff? There were so many specialists in camp.

We weren't too concerned with conserving our resources! We had three full-time staffs at Ramah -- counselors, specialists in sports and the arts, and teachers. Financially, of course, it was outrageous. There were no dual roles: Different people had different functions. This was part of the audaciousness of the place: We were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pressured you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to problems for the camper. Whether in sports, music, drama, or any other area, competition and striving for excellence can cause problems. Classes were demanding, too, because the teacher would force you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, it was up to the counselor to pick up the pieces.

We also coopted an idea from the kibbutz movement, which saw itself as an edah mechanenet [an educating community], of having the teaching staff available throughout the day. The kibbutz teacher would teach a class in the morning and would continue to debate issues with you through the day. The same was true of our teachers -- at least in theory.

An even more unusual ^{position} for a camp was that of the librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available all day to anyone, whether camper or staff member. And just as some camps have an artist-in-residence, each Ramah camp had a professor-in-residence, generally a Seminary faculty member whose role was to encourage intellectual stimulation. He or she was there to listen, to teach, to prod, to criticize, and to help the camp community respond to halakhic problems that would invariably arise during the course of the summer.

COMMUNAL LEADERS AS PARTNERS

Let's step back from the camp community to consider a constituency that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the communal leaders, who as board members assume ultimate responsibilities for the various camps.

These days, communal leaders are more supportive of good educational programs and more active in their support. But that's a fairly recent development. In the 1970s and 1980s, most American Jews of status and means cared mainly about Israel, hospitals, and defense organizations. Jewish education and culture ranked very low. Four notable exceptions were interested in education: Sam and Florence Melton of Columbus, Philip Lown of Boston, and Leighton Rosenthal of Cleveland. Ramah, from its inception, was fortunate in recruiting outstanding community leaders.

Today it's different. More and more, people are coming to realize that Judaism's and Israel's best asset is a Jewishly educated Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing significantly in Jewish education. Fortunately, this view has become fashionable, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. Mort Mandel, who, ^{with his brothers, established} the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, launched this movement in a serious way, which led to Jewish education's being raised to the very top of the agenda of most Jewish organizations and institutions.

Today's communal leaders also insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support, and they tend to be more generally knowledgeable as well. In addition, we have some major assets now that we didn't have then. There are academics and well-educated communal leaders all over North America who care about Jewish education and see it as important. Jewish studies courses in colleges and universities are one of the big success stories of American Jewish life. Families today can draw on a wide variety of programs. There are hundreds of day schools in

North America and any number of excellent organized trips to Israel. There are young Jews in general education who are interested in making a contribution to Jewish education. There are Jewish leaders and philanthropists publicly proclaiming that Jewish education is a top priority. For all these reasons, I'm optimistic.

This may be the right moment to ask for your thoughts on what, for many would-be institution-builders, is a difficult and intimidating process, although it's essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm referring, of course, to the whole question of fund-raising.

This may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is not the biggest problem. Although funds have not always been easily available, these days there are enough resources to support a wide variety of fine projects.

The key factors in successful fund-raising are the strength of your ideas, your commitment to those ideas, and your enthusiasm. I have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I would have been willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're not deeply committed to the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey them to the people you're approaching. And you have to mean it. I believe 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 meeting with is at least as intelligent as I am. There's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it is my job to convince him -- or, better still, to educate him. Only if

you take the time to educate people about a project will they be able to make intelligent decisions about it. If you treat potential donors as people who can join with you and help you in creating this new enterprise, you may get somewhere.

Although the situation is far better than it used to be, the relationship between Jewish educators and communal leaders is still too adversarial. The professionals still ask: "How can this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew?" And the communal leaders still think: "This guy is a shlepper. If he were really successful, he'd be in my business." This is unfortunate, but it's true.

What are the biggest mistakes you see in fund-raising?

I see three common mistakes, and they're connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor as if he or she were naive. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is not disclosing the full truth about the undertaking, including its problems and failures.

Here's my favorite fund-raising story: Sam Melton was visiting Ramah in the Poconos, and one morning we passed a ten-year-old boy on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asked him.

"Chumash," answered the boy.

"Chumash with what?" Sam asked.

And the boy replied, "Chumash with Melton."

At that moment all my fund-raising efforts were vindicated.

How do you respond to those who ask why educational change takes so long and costs so much?

With this analogy: Would it make any sense to study mortality rates in surgical wards where the instruments weren't sterilized? As long as teachers are often untrained or

unmotivated, and certainly underpaid, what can you expect? When your mission is to conquer a disease, you don't withdraw funding because you haven't found a cure despite years of research. On the contrary: You invest additional money until you do. We have just begun doing that in Jewish education. It's too early to ask whether the investment is too great, or whether it will take too long.

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 often. We couldn't always justify the educational investment on economic grounds, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, in which we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high school graduates who agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a purely economic standpoint it was foolish to invest so much money in that program. And what about the professor-in-residence and the camp librarian? These people were expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs? But when you give parents reason to believe that you're helping their child become a mensch, you can ask for a great deal.

When Ramah first started, we had to make a critical decision: Who would head the camps? Should it be an educator with vision who could then hire a talented business manager, or did we need a talented manager who would hire a creative director? The Seminary, in partnership with an outstanding board of community leaders, decided that Ramah should be led by educators, by people with a vision. Each of the camps had a capable business manager, of course, and that job was vitally

important, but the camp was always led by educators.

WHERE RAMAH FAILED

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, even if you start with cognac you'll be lucky to end up with grape juice. Looking back on it, what are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

I can identify five significant failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of our work. Ralph Tyler once told me that not doing this was the educational equivalent of not carrying out diagnostic tests until the patient was leaving the hospital. In other words, we often had 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 evidence. It's amazing that, as far as I can determine, we never asked our campers to write about their experiences at Ramah! We were so busy building something new that we didn't ever stop to evaluate it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and it may sound like a luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a self-evaluation, it's more likely to be used as a fundraising technique rather than a way of improving the enterprise. But it's something we should have done.

Ramah's second failure was that, despite all our efforts, we never really became a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and while Hebrew was the official language at camp, 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 did neither. We had no graduated curriculum for the teaching of Hebrew at Ramah. We had no language labs. We didn't even look to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at it only because Hebrew was their chief concern.

I must accept some of the blame for this failure. My attitude was: If there's a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. In the Melton Faculty Seminar, Gerson Cohen and Shmuel Leiter 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 communal leaders and a nurturer of directors. She was also a great facilitator and a peacemaker between warring factions.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel, which didn't always receive its rightful place on our agenda. On the other hand, the fact that hundreds of former Ramah campers now live in Israel suggests that we must have been doing something right in this area.

For years I did my best to keep Israelis out of our camps, because the Israelis I had met at that point seemed inappropriate as educators for Ramah; many had come to America primarily to buy appliances. But eventually I joined those who decided to bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and specialists. They turned out to make a real contribution.

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. One reason we hired full-time camp directors was our expectation that they would maintain the camp program throughout the year by working with the Conservative movement's youth program, the Leadership Training Fellowship (LTF). 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. In this area we simply quit too early; the idea didn't advance far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum for the camp program as a whole. 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. Over the years, we failed to document or preserve any number of innovative and creative projects. There was far too much reinventing of the wheel and too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: We were afraid of formalizing what we had because it might have inhibited creativity. But this was a mistake.

The fifth failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between the rarefied atmosphere of Ramah and the camper's home community, despite the fact that we paid a lot of attention to this problem and were probably on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help campers, newly excited about Jewish practice, who return to a non-kosher or otherwise non-observant household. Because we respected the campers' family relationships, we did not encourage them to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat, or do, in their own homes.

But more often than we anticipated, the reentry problems arose not with the campers' families but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, campers found it hard to return to a service that suddenly seemed stilted and complacent, and to a rabbi who seemed formal when contrasted with the informality and warmth of camp. We even had youngsters who refused to attend synagogue services after camp because the service no longer felt authentically Jewish to them.

It hadn't occurred to us that in some sense we were creating misfits. We were arrogant enough to think our campers could turn the Conservative movement around. And they did, to some extent, although it took years.

UNEXPECTED SUCCESSES

In addition to the successes we worked hard for, we had a few others that we hadn't really anticipated. Many Ramah campers went on to become rabbis, professors of Judaica at American and Israeli universities, or prominent community leaders. Today, Ramah graduates are extremely well represented in professional Jewish life and in institutions of Jewish culture and education -- in all denominations. And a great many others have made aliyah.

Second, we grew 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 they were decently paid, and we created a new Jewish profession -- camp director. These people were given tenure, just like university faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups, such as staff, campers, parents, rabbis, educators, and communal

leaders, not to mention such complex issues as religious ideology and finance. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant they had a clear and obvious career line -- usually in the pulpit, but sometimes in formal education or Jewish communal life. At Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their future careers -- some of them for years, and others for their entire professional lives.

Despite our failures, Ramah worked. I've been in the Jewish education business a long time, and nowhere else have I seen a closer correlation between what we set out to do and what we actually accomplished. The ultimate proof, of course, are the campers. They may have hated Hebrew school, but they really learned, loved, and lived Judaism at Ramah.

They also loved and appreciated the people at Ramah. I have no idea how many deep and lasting friendships began at Ramah, but there have been a great many. And many marriages, too. All over North American and Israel, you can find young people whose parents -- and increasingly, grandparents -- met each other at Ramah.

LESSONS FOR NEW INSTITUTIONS

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

First, Ramah demonstrates how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can then stretch itself. Second, I think there is something to be learned about how to combine sophisticated approaches to content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty details.

Ramah was also about investing in talent, and the vital importance of communal supporters. In our case, the communal

leaders protected us from attempts to dilute the educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of deep conviction. Ramah made it possible for educators, rabbis, scholars, and lay people to join forces. There was a real generosity of spirit and a genuine attempt to understand the other person's position. Ramah was more than a camp; it was an educational movement.

The success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that still don't exist. At some point we will probably see the creation of institutions that combine the day school with the community center, breaking down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the students of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, such an institution, when it finally comes into existence, will serve as an intensive training ground for Jewish citizenship.

The next challenge, in my view, is to provide for the needs of post-materialist people. More and more, people are looking for meaning in their lives. They want to know what our tradition is all about, and our job is to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms that speak to them. From time to time a genius will emerge, a Heschel or a Kaplan, but you can't sit back and wait for them. It's far better, in my view, to build places where potential Heschels and Kaplans will be nurtured, develop, and flourish.

Jan. 24, 1997

Dear Seymour:

Wonderful to talk to you today--and virtually complete this stage of the project. In reviewing my notes, I arrived at a formulation for the CIJE piece in the bibliography which may be helpful to you, as I know you were planning to send me yours tomorrow.

Under the current heading of the CIJE, how about:

"Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz. *Best Practices: Supplementary School Education* (New York, Cleveland: CIJE: 1993, 1996) argues the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in this setting."

Also attached: A very recent review that I thought would provoke you.

Nessa

Nessa

DE TODAY!

AN

Hillary Clinton
country nowTHE PRESIDENCY IN
NINETIESHIND
THE
OFFICEK
IS
STRATEGIST

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

*An Icon of Psychology
Falls From His Pedestal*

By CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

By the time Bruno Bettelheim committed suicide at 86 on March 12, 1990, his had become a household name in America. As director of the Orthogenic School, the home for emotionally troubled children at the University of Chicago, and as the author of books like "Love Is Not Enough" and "Truants From Life," he had secured his reputation as an expert on child psychology in general and on the condition known as infantile autism in particular. A disciple of Freud, he blamed flawed mothering for the autistic child's apparent withdrawal from reality and insisted that a cure could be worked by detaching the child from the family.

But even as early as the 1960's, when Bettelheim was first broadcasting his success with autistic children, there were those who found fault with him: mothers of impaired children who had reared normal ones and researchers who suspected that autism had a genetic or other physical cause.

Among these critics was Richard Pollak, a journalist whose younger brother, Stephen, had gone to the Orthogenic School until his accidental death as an 11-year-old in 1948. As Mr. Pollak explains in the prologue to his arresting new book, "The Creation of Dr. B.: A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim," he interviewed Bettelheim in 1969 and found his views of Stephen's condition disturbingly confused.

Years later, when Mr. Pollak's first draft of a memoir about his brother prompted an editor to suggest he write a biography of Bettelheim, he began to explore the therapist's background. The contrast between Bettelheim's reputation and the reality behind it moved Mr. Pollak to proceed with the present book.

The results are devastating. With exquisite politeness, Mr. Pollak writes that his subject embraced a philosophy that "held, generally, that because life had no real purpose it was made livable only by pretending through fictions that it did." What he means is that Bettelheim fabricated his life, and that what he made of himself amounted to what he called his book about infantile autism, "The Empty Fortress."

As Mr. Pollak portrays him, the keys to Bettelheim's success seem to

have been his facility with psychoanalytic insights, his ability to tyrannize his students and subordinates and his gifts as a storyteller. With these talents he made plausible the picture he drew of himself as a polymath with the following to his credit, in Mr. Pollak's summary: "14 years at the University of Vienna, studies with Arnold Schoenberg, summa cum laude in three disciplines, two books published, training in all fields of psychology and membership in an organization that studied the emotional problems of children and adolescents."

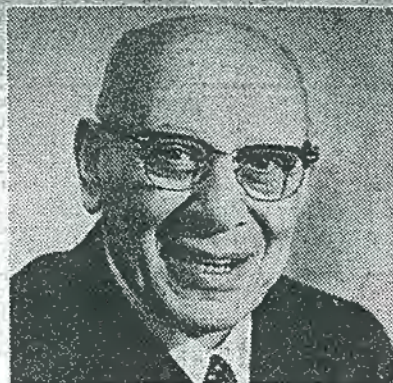
No wonder the public believed him to be the loving therapist who understood children and could cure autism, and who created the Orthogenic School as the very opposite of the concentration camps he said he had studied so systematically as a prisoner.

But the truth that Mr. Pollak unearthed is otherwise. True, Bettelheim had earned a doctorate in philosophy, but his studies were interrupted by his having to run the family lumber business after his father's early death from syphilis. He had published no books; he had never met Freud, and whatever psychoanalytic theory he knew he had learned in order to impress a woman he was trying to win away from one of Freud's students, Otto Fenichel.

As for how Bettelheim ran the Orthogenic School: Mr. Pollak writes that despite the therapist's insistence that hitting the children was strictly forbidden, he evidently smacked and punched his charges, sexually abused several of the girls and relied in general on threats to intimidate his staff. Instead of being the opposite, the school if anything reflected Dachau and Buchenwald, his understanding of which he had in any case greatly exaggerated in his studies of concentration-camp life, Mr. Pollak concludes.

And only because of Bettelheim's later writing did the public come to believe in his ability to cure autism, Mr. Pollak adds. The therapist provided little opportunity to confirm his results. What scanty evidence remains suggests that his patients were not even autistic in the first place.

Having cut Bettelheim down to al-



Jack Manning/The New York Times

Bruno Bettelheim

THE CREATION OF DR. B**A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim**

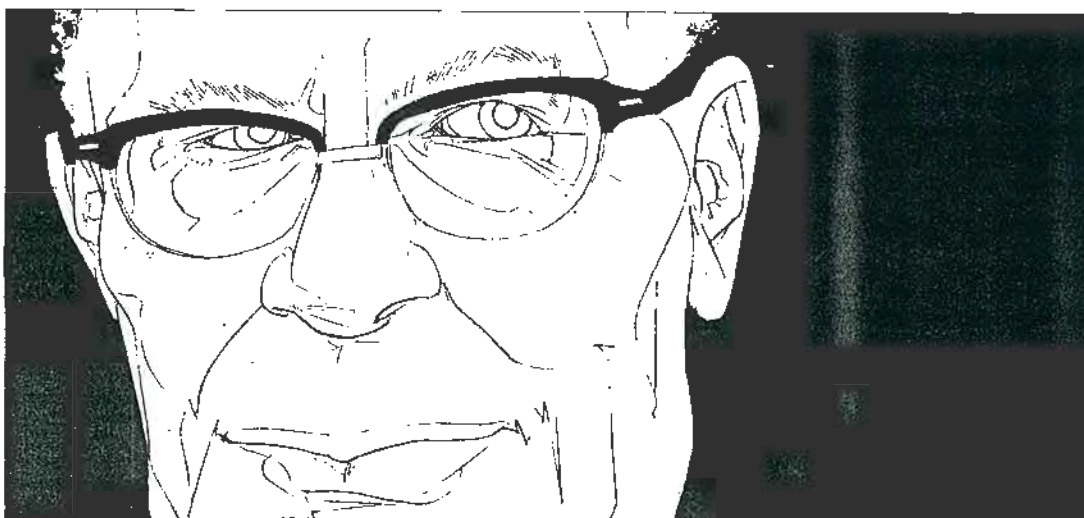
By Richard Pollak

Illustrated. 478 pages. Simon & Schuster. \$28.

most nothing, Mr. Pollak relates the last years of his subject's life with a note of pity. The strain of self-fabrication seemed to tell. Despite being praised and honored in his old age, Bettelheim grew increasingly unhappy and depressed, in part because he felt that the psychoanalytic establishment had never accepted him. When his devoted wife died in 1984, he raged Lear-like at his children and spoke of suicide to his friends. On the 52d anniversary of the Nazis' invasion of Austria, he consumed a quantity of drugs and whisky and tied a plastic bag over his head.

Yet the reader doesn't entirely give up on Bettelheim. True, Mr. Pollak draws a convincing portrait of an insecure yet too clever man who made it all up as he went along, glibly exploiting this country's gullible belief in the easy psychoanalytic fix. Yet his passion for that fix partly redeems him, because despite his lack of real training he told such inspiring stories of the human soul's capacity to understand and heal itself.

He is redeemed in part, too, by his capacity for survival, not to mention the fact that some of the children who attended the school have had successful careers, whatever may have been wrong with them at the time. Yet when all is said and done, Bettelheim seems to have re-enacted the archetypal American success story of inventing a false past, concocting a new formula for snake oil and selling it to the public with flummery. Under Mr. Pollak's magnifying glass, Bettelheim is seen in a new, harsh light, and stands exposed as a brilliant charlatan.



DAVID JOHNSON

The Man He Always Wanted to Be

The Bruno Bettelheim we knew was an invention, says his biographer.

THE CREATION OF DR. B

A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim.
By Richard Pollak.
Illustrated. 478 pp. New York:
Simon & Schuster. \$28.

By Sarah Boxer

BRUNO BETTELHEIM'S new biographer lays his cards on the table right away: he thinks Bettelheim was a pathological liar. Richard Pollak, the former executive editor and literary editor of *The Nation*, got interested in the famous psychotherapist and author in order to learn more about his own younger brother, who died on a family vacation in 1948 when he slipped through a hayloft chute during a game of hide-and-seek. The boy had been at the Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children at the University of Chicago for five years before he died, so, in 1989, Mr. Pollak figured Bettelheim, the director of the school, could tell him about his dead brother.

Instead, Bettelheim called Mr. Pollak's father a simple-minded "schlemiel" and his mother a false martyr. Then he bluntly announced that the child had committed suicide. And, he added, Mr. Pollak's mother was largely to blame, because she had rejected him at birth. "What is it about these Jewish mothers?" Bettelheim fumed.

Mr. Pollak left reeling. On reflection, though, something seemed fishy. He recalled that the hayloft his brother died in was so treacherous that he himself had almost fallen, too. And his mother, whatever her quirks, was not the harpy Bettelheim described. Mr. Pollak began exploring other options. What if the great Dr. Bettelheim, the champion of emotion-

ally disturbed children and the author of "The Uses of Enchantment," "Freud and Man's Soul" and "The Empty Fortress," was in fact a bitter, sadistic, anti-Semitic, mother-hating liar?

That is the hypothesis Mr. Pollak follows in "The Creation of Dr. B." Although Bettelheim declined to be interviewed for the book, Mr. Pollak interviewed two of Bettelheim's three children, his first wife and a slew of colleagues, editors, students and friends. And many of them agreed that, in the words of Jacquelyn Seevak Sanders, Bettelheim's successor at the Orthogenic School, "you couldn't believe anything he said."

The trouble with the book is that Mr. Pollak seems to think he must dig up malice and lies at every turn. The result is a shocking but curiously unnuanced biography of a psychologically complex figure. Here is a man who comes out of a concentration camp with the idea that prisoners are like children, and later turns the idea on its head to suggest children are like prisoners. And here is a biographer who pursues this disturbed man's fibs like an accountant.

According to Mr. Pollak, Bettelheim's alter ego, the self he invented, did everything the real Bettelheim wished he had done: he met Freud, took autistic children into his home, earned three degrees from the University of Vienna, was part of an underground movement to rid Vienna of fascism, stood up to the Nazi guards in Buchenwald and Dachau, was rescued from the camps by Eleanor Roosevelt and never spanked children.

The real Bettelheim felt that "people regarded him as ugly, small and Jewish." He grew up in a bourgeois Viennese family; his father played cards with him and his mother read him Grimm's fairy tales. He wanted to be part of the intelligentsia. So he studied art history at the University of Vienna and read Freud backward and forward.

But when his father died of syphilis,

Bettelheim suspended his intellectual aspirations and took over the family's lumber business. He married a teacher named Gina Altstadt. Then came the Anschluss. In June 1938, Bettelheim was taken by train to Dachau, then to Buchenwald. That seems to have been the dividing line between the real Bettelheim and the false one.

One of Bettelheim's lies, according to Mr. Pollak, was an anecdote about his heroic, uncomplaining survival in Buchenwald that Mr. Pollak calls "the Frostbite Story." Bettelheim said he persuaded a guard to admit him to the camp clinic by asking him first to cut away dead frostbitten flesh, thereby avoiding "pleading, deference or arrogance." Vivid as the story is, Mr. Pollak suggests it is probably false. In real life, he reports, Bettelheim had a comparatively soft job in Buchenwald, mending socks indoors. And, he says, Bettelheim's freedom was probably bought by a bribe to the Nazis in 1939, before the war began.

Whether it was survivor guilt, shame, anger or the chance to start over, once Bettelheim was freed, Mr. Pollak says, he began creating Dr. B. He sailed to New York, was reunited with his wife for a day, then after a few weeks went on to Chicago, where he eventually married Trude Weinfeld, whom he had fallen in love with before the Anschluss.

Soon after, Mr. Pollak says, he began inventing degrees he never earned and even boasting that when he trained to be an analyst (which he never did), Sigmund Freud (whom he never met) said of him, "This is exactly the person we need for psychoanalysis to grow and develop." He ended up claiming a classic Viennese academic record, Mr. Pollak says: "14 years at the University of Vienna, studies with Arnold Schoenberg, *summa cum laude* in three disciplines, two books published, training in all fields of psychology and membership in an organization that studied

Sarah Boxer is an editor at The Week in Review section of The New York Times.

the emotional problems of children and adolescents."

And why not create such a life? The Nazis, Mr. Pollak says, "expunged the real one" and no one in America had the gall to doubt a man who had spent time in concentration camps. Soon, Bettelheim was wowing students with his Viennese accent, his casual references to Freud and his habit of psychoanalyzing students' dreams, memories and parents.

In 1943 he sealed his reputation with the publication of "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," a paper in which he observed that the prisoners in concentration camps were effectively turned into children. He said that rather than fighting their captors, they fought with one another, daydreamed and admired, even emulated, the Nazis. Thus, they were "more or less willing tools of the Gestapo." The paper caused a huge stir, catching the attention of Meyer Schapiro, Dwight Macdonald, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

Mr. Pollak, though, seems most impressed by Bettelheim's shoddy science. He points out that although Bettelheim claimed his article was based on interviews with at least 1,500 prisoners in five different barracks, this kind of research was impossible since he lived in only two barracks.

Then Mr. Pollak goes on to the fib he thinks was the foundation for Bettelheim's career: Bettelheim claimed that Patsy, a troubled girl his first wife had taken in, was autistic and that it was he who cared for her. Neither was true, Mr. Pollak suggests. Later, Bettelheim embellished more, saying there had been two autistic children. Partly on the basis of this putative experience, Mr. Pollak writes, the University of Chicago asked him to take over the Orthogenic School, which he did in 1944.

THERE Bettelheim built a kingdom for children. With another Viennese immigrant, Emmy Sylvester, he created the first formal "therapeutic milieu," which Mr. Pollak describes as a permissive, "all-encompassing healing atmosphere." The children painted their rooms whatever colors they liked and ate from expensive china. Meanwhile, though, in books like "Love Is Not Enough" and "Truants From Life," Bettelheim exaggerated his successes and, Mr. Pollak says, lied about how gentle his methods really were.

Bettelheim "sought to shape the Orthogenic School in the reverse image of the concentra-

tion camps," Mr. Pollak writes, and in that new world, mothers were seen as villains, even Nazis. Bettelheim ordered mothers not to visit their children at the school or take them home. He praised the kibbutzim in Israel for removing parents from their children's lives. And in his 1967 book "The Empty Fortress," he attributed autism to bad mothering.

MR. POLLAK contends that despite Bettelheim's benign mission, he was often cruel. He bullied his staff so much that one counselor called his training style the "Nazi-Socratic method." He made some of his patients undress and shower in front of one another. And though Bettelheim said he was against slapping "because it's a brutal and illogical method," he often spanked his patients. Indeed, Mr. Pollak devotes an entire chapter to Bettelheim and punishment.

When Bettelheim retired from the Orthogenic School in 1973, he lost his strange kingdom and moved to California. There he wrote the work for which he is best known, "The Uses of Enchantment," in which he argued that such bloody tales as "Hansel and Gretel" and "Sleeping Beauty" were a needed outlet for children's fears and anxieties. Mr. Pollak shows that this too was based on a lie; large chunks of the book, he maintains, were plagiarized from a 1963 volume, "A Psychiatric Study of Fairy Tales: Their Origin, Meaning and Usefulness," by Julius Heuscher. Mr. Pollak gives a damning passage-for-passage comparison of the two.

On March 12, 1990, the very date the Nazis had invaded Austria 52 years earlier, Bettelheim, who at 86 was suffering from circulatory problems in his legs, heart trouble, diabetes, arthritis, an enlarged prostate and a blockage in the esophagus, "swallowed some drugs and whisky and tied a plastic bag over his head."

He once said, "We must live by fictions — not just to find meaning in life but to make it bearable." What is striking in "The Creation of Dr. B" is that most of the lies Richard Pollak ascribes to him seem so unnecessary. A counselor at the Orthogenic School, commenting on one of Bettelheim's inflated reports of success there, put it well: "I felt like saying: 'You don't have to exaggerate, Dr. B, it was dramatic enough.'" Mr. Pollak's book is a startling and thorough account of a life of lies. A less vengeful biographer might have paused to analyze the psychic uses of the elaborate fairy tale Bettelheim constructed for himself. □

FROM: INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
DATE: 1/30/97 5:13 AM

Re: Re: Nu?

Sender: sfox@vms.huji.ac.il
Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by hil-img-5.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id FAA01527; Thu, 30 Jan 1997 05:07:30 -0500
From: <sfox@vms.huji.ac.il>
Message-Id: <199701301007.FAA01527@hil-img-5.compuserve.com>
Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Thu, 30 Jan 97 12:07:57 +0200
Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(128.139.9.28) (HUyMail-V7b);
Thu, 30 Jan 97 12:06:59 +0200
Date: Thu, 30 Jan 97 12:06 +0200
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Subject: Re: Nu?
To: Nessa Rapoport <74671.3370@CompuServe.COM>
In-Reply-To: <970129221726_74671.3370_BHW81-5@CompuServe.COM>
X-Mailer: SPRY Mail Version: 04.00.06.17

Dear Nessa,

Fedex delivered this morning. Prof. Fox told me he would read it by Sunday. He wants to speak to you before or on Sunday - could you suggest some times.

Best regards,

Suzannah

TO: Seymour, INTERNET:sfox@vms.huji.ac.il

Re: Nu?

Does your silence mean you got the fedex, in which case you need to tell me right away what changes you want? (They all need to be to the designer next Monday, so that I can send you a clean set of page proofs for your final approval.) I also have two tiny questions for you, in my review of the page proofs.

Does it mean you didn't get it, but you're so busy you didn't notice?

Please answer upon receipt of this e-mail, especially if I need to put another copy in the mail.

Nessa

February 6, 1997

Dear Seymour:

Here is your essay. I have worked through two revisions of the printed version; this is the third, and I am satisfied! It is airy, elegant, and substantive.

Important caveat: I have checked all corrections but have not read through each line of this final version. I intend to do that over the weekend, in advance of our meeting at 8 am on Monday.

Looking forward to seeing you twice!

Nessa

Seymour Fox
with
William Novak

VISION AT THE HEART

Lessons From Camp Ramah
On The Power Of Ideas
In Shaping
Educational Institutions



Council
for
Initiatives
in Jewish
Education

מכון מנדל
Mandel Institute

edited
1/27/97

Seymour Fox
with
William Novak

VISION

THE AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Lessons From Camp Ramah
On The Power Of Ideas
In Shaping Educational
Institutions

"t" is not aligned

design ✓
breaks ✓
p. #s ✓



Council
for
Initiatives
in Jewish
Education

מכון מנדל
Mandel Institute

Copyright Page

YOUNG AT THE HEART

Seymour Fox
with
William Novak

Introduction

There is nothing as practical as a great idea.

Many of us, if we are fortunate, have at some point in our lives been part of an unforgettable educational experience—a school, a summer program, an outstanding teacher—that has touched our souls or perhaps even changed our lives. We look back on such moments with gratitude and awe, and with the hope that others—our friends, our colleagues, and especially our children—will be exposed to similar experiences that offer inspiration and purpose.

What does it take to create these kinds of experiences? While Camp Ramah is only one example, it has been a prominent and powerful one ever since its founding by Dr. Moshe Davis and Sylvia Ettenberg of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The idea for Ramah gained acceptance in 1946, and the first Ramah camp opened in Wisconsin in the summer of 1947. Fifty years

like cover

Liz: Chk dshes

Liz: Chk dshes
dashes seem very long
compared to p. 3
to ex.

Table Of Contents

later, there are nineteen overnight and day camps in North America, Israel, South America and Russia.

⤴ ✓

Ramah emerged out of an ambitious dream, a carefully considered ideal of educational possibilities. Big questions were asked: What kind of Jews, what kind of people do we want to nurture? What ideas will guide this new camp? What happens when compelling but competing philosophies about the meaning and purpose of Jewish life must coexist within one institution? How should Ramah address the various convictions, controversies, and anxieties prevalent among North American Jews? How can Judaism be transmitted to children and to teenagers as vital, engaging—and necessary?

ROM. Liz ✓

Ⓜ ✓

We live in a time when the Jewish community is searching for ways to revitalize existing institutions and to build new ones, ranging from community high schools to informal educational settings for adults. What can we learn about the centrality of vision to the excellence of an educational institution? How can the experience of Ramah illuminate contemporary efforts to transform Jewish life in North America through education?

Seymour Fox, a central figure in Jewish education, was instrumental in developing Ramah from philosophy to practice.

The Need for Vision

You've made the claim that every educational initiative should be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem self-evident to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. What makes you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people might view as an introductory or preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

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

Let me put it another way. Education that is essentially *parve* — that's neutral and doesn't take a strong stand — has little chance of succeeding. In my experience, all effective education has at its foundation a distinct and well-considered vision. The proof of that proposition is all around us. A few years ago, Dr. Marshall S. Smith, the current Deputy Secretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite a great deal of new legislation and the expenditure of huge sums of money from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. Among the few exceptions were those schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, made a similar point in her 1983 book, *The*



^ e ✓

^ U.S. ✓

Liz

Good High School. In an attempt to discover "what works," she visited and analyzed six well-regarded American secondary schools, of which two were urban, two were suburban, and two were "elite." 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 the 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 visions that animated these schools were loudly proclaimed or quietly whispered, they were present in each of these institutions.

9 Another book from the mid-1980s, *The Shopping Mall High School* (by Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen), examines the other side of the coin — that is, what happens when you maintain a school *without* a clear vision. In most American high schools, almost everything is available in small doses, and everything tends to have the same weight, the same ranking. The authors contend that in trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, these schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls.

"Both types of institution," they write, "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 an understatement, contemporary high schools "take few stands on what is educationally or morally important."

9 ✓

—
Liz

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it's getting easier. Five or ten years ago you had to convince people about the importance of vision, but today the idea is increasingly accepted — if only because we've all seen what happens in its absence. There is a professor at Stanford University who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He claims that if a company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes part of the culture and is internalized, the company can survive periods of weak leadership or even a move toward control by the bureaucracy. I believe this is true of educational institutions as well.

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

A vision is a vibrant entity. It's a portrait of ideal human beings shaped by education — an image rich and exciting,

enough to guide your future choices. A vision is inspired by your belief about human possibility, while being influenced by your experience of human fallibility.

An educational vision must be able to answer certain questions: What kind of people will graduate from this school, camp, or other educational setting? What will they understand and believe? How will they behave? What will they know how to do? In what ways will they be able to contribute to the community? And what qualities, intrinsic to your vision, will enable them to keep growing and learning?

Vision, then, is inherently both dynamic and flexible. It is not a mission statement or a declaration of purpose, which often end up as frozen, static assertions. And a vision is more than a goal.



Goals are important, but they are specific to a particular educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching science and another for the study of Talmud. Out of your vision will flow a series of goals for educators, parents, community leaders, and students, who will apply or translate that vision into concrete programs.

A great vision will inspire educators to creativity and even to the invention of new kinds of institutions. Goals certainly matter, but by themselves they're not sufficient. And they are often so pedantic as to leave no room for vision. A vision that is intelligent and worthwhile is guided by great ideas that 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.

I would add that it's often easier to inspire people if you're presenting them with a vision that is essentially extremist or fanatic, that depicts the world in stark, well-defined, black-and-white polarities. The challenge is to inspire them with a vision that includes a commitment to concepts such as religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy.

Visions in General Education

Let's look at some specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind of late because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him and his ideas today, just as I believe that in the Jewish world we will soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan, who viewed himself as a student of Dewey.

Dewey had a vision of the world as ever changing, as people continually tried to modify themselves and their environment. He believed the best way to approach such a world was through rational efforts at perceiving problems and inventing solutions. Dewey had an unlimited optimism about what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education.

Today, it is difficult to appreciate just how significant a place he occupied in American culture. On the first page of his book, Ryan quotes the eminent historian Henry Steele Commager, who observed that "for a generation no issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken."

Dewey's followers took many of the ideas he wrote about and applied them to practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who established hundreds of Waldorf schools across the country. To this day, his followers discuss every issue, down to what color to paint the walls in order to achieve a particular result that is part of Steiner's vision. Whenever you have a vision that excites and inspires people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate it into practice.

Another example of a successful vision is the one developed at the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence endures to this day. His vision had to do with the centrality of great ideas, which in turn generated the Great Books movement. Over the years, Chicago has probably produced more Nobel Prize winners and university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely dynamic place that was guided by a vision, and it has remained a great center of intellectual excitement.

Visions in Jewish Education

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and many of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish world. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would reflect his concept of Judaism, in which the intellect played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that to create a new, vibrant society in the Jewish homeland, you had to educate a new type of individual.

✓ [Soloveitchiks] One of the most important family dynasties in Jewish education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that of the Brisker Rav of Lithuania, whose descendants include the Soloveitchiks. The followers of the Brisker Rav established a network of important and influential yeshivot. In some cases, they deliberately chose to teach and study texts that other rabbis felt were impractical, such as the sections on sacrifices or the regulations pertaining to the Temple in Jerusalem. Most other yeshivot in those days concentrated on sections of the Talmud that were more immediately relevant — texts that dealt with topics such as civil damages, marriage and divorce, the rituals of prayer — cases of Jewish law that you could actually use.

Irrelevant

~~Soloveitchik~~

אניני

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more neglected sections of the Talmud was to miss the point. As they saw it, the classical texts constituted a coherent system. If you omitted certain sections, they felt you were not only in danger of distorting the tradition; you were also liable to overlook some great treasures. Who is to say where you will find the most significant ideas? One cannot presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

esoteric

Another major nineteenth-century educational reform movement was the Musar movement, with its emphasis on *mitzvot ben adam l'chavero* [the commandments pertaining to interpersonal relations]. The Musarists introduced a serious concentration on moral and spiritual issues into the yeshiva world of Lithuania. In most yeshivot, Musar [ethics] had been considered "soft," unworthy of significant attention. But in the late nineteenth century, the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter established entire institutions that emphasized Musar. They believed that the exclusive emphasis on *pilpul* [the concentration on subtle, legal, conceptual differences] in most yeshivot could lead to a distortion of Judaism and the inability of the students to develop sufficient social and ethical sensitivities. The Musarists were reacting to a world they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently concerned with morality and personal responsibility.

Their opponents countered that the Musarists were demeaning the power of the text, which in itself contained the power to affect people's behavior. But over time the Musarists prevailed, and their influence penetrated most of the Lithuanian yeshivot.

The Vision 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. In the late 1940s, the founders of Ramah could have invested their energies in any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the years following World War II — problems that we still face today. First, most Jewish children were not being exposed to meaningful Jewish experiences during their early, for-



developed



liz



mative 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. In an era when children of immigrants were busily trying to become Americans, the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. The founders of Ramah wanted to go beyond what a school could achieve. By trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture, they sought to accomplish what the family and the community were no longer willing or able to do.

We wanted to create an educational setting where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives. We hoped this would lead to Jews who were both deeply committed to their tradition and actively involved in American society.

Why a camp? Because even the best school operates only part of the day. We wanted to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole person, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for no more than eight weeks at a time. Within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our aims could be educational in the broadest sense — not only teaching Hebrew, but grappling with all kinds of social concerns: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child misses his cue during a performance? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living *halakhah*.

Take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's good to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence people sometimes get hurt. You have to draw a line between the



need to win, or to excel, and a concern for people's feelings. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or Hebrew, our goal was to lower the possibility for hurt without seriously compromising the aspiration for excellence.

There was an emphasis on ethics and caring — but also on growth. Ramah was not a laid-back place. The phrase “not living up to his/her potential” was heard often, which led to a measure of disequilibrium in the lives of the campers. The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. Ultimately they chose camping, because the issues that they believed needed to be addressed could not be addressed by a school — not even a day school. Among other limitations, a school isn't the best place to nurture a child's Jewish emotional development. Ultimately, the challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child — including his or her mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional and spiritual issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

The Jewish Ideas Behind Ramah

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

I would start with Professor Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism during Ramah's early years. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, when Ramah was established, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s, when the camps flourished. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, a message that spoke not only to Jews but to the larger society as well. In 1951 he was featured in a cover story in *Time* Magazine as the leader of a Jewish

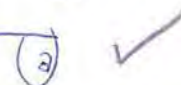
renaissance in America. In 1958, Dr. Finkelstein even wrote an article on business ethics for *Fortune* Magazine as a result of a meeting with Henry Luce, the magazine's founder, who had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world.



Above all, Dr. Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply Talmudic principles to the issues raised by living in a modern American society. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify. He wanted to tell the Committee: "I will not answer you, because you have no right to question me this way. America is based on the ideal of human dignity. In our tradition, we also have a conception of human dignity. Parts of it are delineated in the volume *Sanhedrin* of the Talmud in a concept known as *drishah v'chakirah*, which deals with how you may question a witness. And you cannot interrogate an individual in this manner."



This was an essential Finkelsteinian response: Americans are sensitive to the Bible, and the Jewish interpretation of the Bible ought to become part of the public discourse. Dr. Finkelstein wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within their own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we Jews have been living on top of the volcano from the very beginning of our history, and we therefore had a great deal to offer a world that was beginning to understand that now we were *all* living on top of the volcano.



In postwar America, Dr. Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke out of a long and venerable tradition. He delivered the invocation at President Eisenhower's inauguration, and Eisenhower used to consult with him surprisingly often on ethical matters. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the

Seminary's Conferences on Science, Philosophy and Religion, where many individuals from a variety of world views and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. Louis Finkelstein's most significant influence on Ramah was his passion to create educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens. ⁹Next, I would cite Professor Saul Lieberman and his emphasis on the close and careful study of Jewish texts. When the first Ramah camp opened in 1947, people were incredulous: "You're establishing a summer camp that includes *classes*?" In those days this was almost unheard of. Young people went to camp to get *away* from classes, although there were some prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent. It was only much later that summer camps were established for the study of science or computers.

In effect, we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own educational director. The daily classes were mostly text-based, and it was quite possible to spend a large part of the summer on just a few verses. Teaching was considered a full-time job, and the teachers ~~on staff~~ were not given other duties, although multiple tasks would have made more sense economically. They therefore had ample time to prepare for class and were available to any camper who might seek them out.

At Ramah we believed in exposing ideas to critique and inquiry rather than presenting them dogmatically. We never sought intellectual obedience. A common question the Talmud asks is: *Minah hani mili*? How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will pose this same question about the central assumptions of religious belief. How do you *know* there's a God? How do you *know* God or Moses wrote the Torah? One must allow these questions, and all questions, while recognizing that a tra-

9 ✓

and staff. ✓

✓ ✓

after classes ✓

ROM. ✓

dition that encourages difficult questions will every now and then produce a Spinoza, an Einstein, or a Freud, who will operate outside of the system.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, which isn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow the Five Books of Moses to be taught in the Rabbinical School because it would have to be studied critically and scientifically. Biblical criticism was so rife with controversy, especially the issue of the authorship of the five books of Moses, that the Seminary responded by avoiding the study of these texts entirely. The Prophets? Fine. But not the Torah.

Meanwhile, we at Ramah were experimenting with the curriculum on Genesis that was prepared by the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education. (The Melton Center was founded in 1959 at the Seminary; among its activities was a program to develop a new curriculum for the teaching of Bible in Jewish supplementary schools.) To a considerable extent, Ramah served as a testing ground for Melton material. This material, which included Professor Nahum Sarna's important book *Understanding Genesis*, argued that whether or not the Biblical text was divine in origin, it contained profound ethical and religious messages.

In the early 1960s the volume on Genesis was in galleys, but we still didn't have official approval to use it. I went to see Professor Lieberman — not because I had to, but because it would have been irresponsible not to check with the Seminary synagogue's rabbi, who was officially responsible for the interpretation of Jewish law at the Seminary. I took with me a report on the social studies program of the Westchester public schools, where the students were being taught to distinguish among "science"

uc / uc ✓

tr. ✓

↑ ✓

(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 Professor Lieberman, "and this is why we're publishing our book on Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as being divine in origin, we are demonstrating that it offers an enormously important ethical and religious message."

At the time, much of the Seminary's theological position was roughly equivalent to what you might find today in some quarters of "modern Orthodoxy." Ramah, however, was willing to take risks in order to achieve its educational goals, and the Seminary faculty was generally sympathetic to those needs.

Another important influence was Professor Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization. He defined God as "power that makes for salvation." He wanted to reconstruct traditional Jewish theological ideas so as to transform them from an otherworldly conception to a personal and social this-worldly conception of salvation. He was seen as a heretic by some of his Seminary colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologization of God. Some of Kaplan's colleagues believed that he was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. As the story goes, Kaplan replied that if the Seminary greats, especially Louis Ginsberg and Saul Lieberman, had dealt with theological questions, he would have left them alone; but their failure to address these issues forced him to attempt to fill the vacuum.

Kaplan joined the centuries-old conversation between Judaism and the great philosophers. He wanted Judaism to be in constant relationship with the world around it, and he brought the elements of music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns and expressions.

UC ✓

At the other end of the spectrum, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel's religious vision was a major influence on Ramah. Dr. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message about the way human beings should live. He viewed Shabbat as a great gift to the world, a sanctification of time in a society where that sanctity was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of certain American holidays were shifted merely for the convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend. "Can you imagine changing Rosh Hashanah so that it always falls on a weekend?" he asked.

For Heschel, prayer was the way for an individual to make contact with his innermost self. The whole question of what *t'fillah* [prayer] meant at Ramah was deeply influenced by Heschel and his students, including the concept of *kavanah* [devotional intention] and the idea of *t'fillah* as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement. But Heschel was also deeply concerned about the role of religion in the larger world. He marched in Selma with Martin Luther King as an expression of his own religious tradition. He believed that the most profound ideas in Judaism speak directly to contemporary social and political concerns.

Finally there was Professor Hillel Bavli, a poet and professor of Hebrew Literature. Dr. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog who made sure we really were using enough Hebrew at Ramah — no easy task. All of us believed that if you wanted to understand and be part of Jewish history, you had no choice but to master Hebrew; that was how you joined the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the other great commentators and philosophers. Hebrew was also a vital link to the State

lc



of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein was-
n't a Zionist at first, and neither was I.

After years of success, it may be difficult to appreciate what an outrageous idea it was at the time to try to run a Conservative movement summer camp in Hebrew. Camp Massad was doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism *were* Massad's religion. In the Conservative movement, which was competing with other forces in the struggle to define authentic Judaism in the twentieth century, to have Hebrew as the official language of Ramah was an additional yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and today Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can acquire the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language?

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, would result in young people who were deeply rooted in their tradition through their attachment to Jewish texts, which they could now grapple with because they had already mastered the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the *method*, anyone can join the ongoing conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: The method must involve Hebrew.

But it's also possible to go too far, to stress Hebrew so much that you distort in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, such as Mexico and Argentina, there are schools where Hebrew has become the main goal of Jewish education, and content is secondary. While Hebrew is essential, it is not sufficient. You need several other components — *mitzvot*, prayer, and a communal consciousness on several levels: one's immediate community, the extended Jewish community, one's national society, and the world at large. At Ramah we tried to bring all of these components together.

one line

Liz

Liz: 16-17

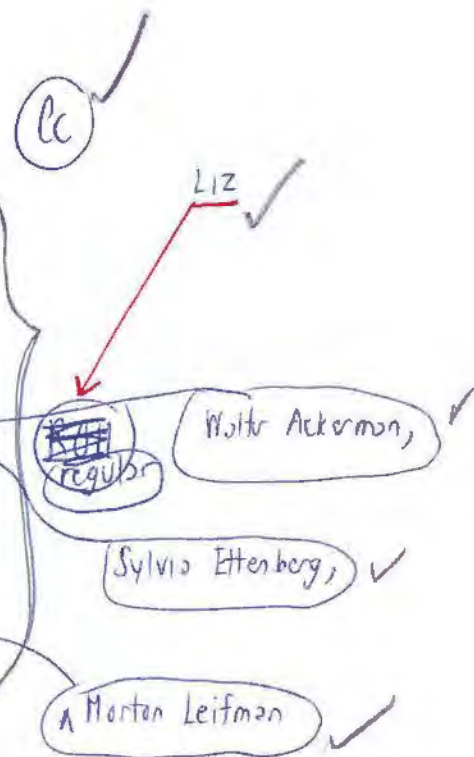
I regarded these five men — Louis Finkelstein, Saul Lieberman, Mordecai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Hillel Bavli — as our teachers. I spent hours talking with them, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit between this older generation and the next.

Ideas Into Action: The Melton Faculty Seminar

In addition to these five professors, Ramah was also influenced by the Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide the camp. The Seminar, which ran through the late 1950s and 1960s, included some of the younger scholars at the Seminary, such as Chaim Brandwein, Gerson Cohen, Lloyd Gartner, Joel Kraemer, Shmuel Leiter, Yochanan Muffs, Louis Newman, Fritz Rothschild, Nahum Sarna, and David Weiss Halivni. To the best of my knowledge, the Melton Faculty Seminar was the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the United States.

Essentially we tackled two fundamental questions. First, what were the motifs, the essential themes that we wanted the camper to internalize through the Ramah experience? And second, what were the best ways to realize these goals?

We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today. There was a productive dialogue between the ideas of these scholars and their application at Ramah. A professor might teach an exciting course at the Seminary, and the following summer his students would be teaching it at Ramah — to the staff, or perhaps even to the older campers.



✓
Abraham
Holtz,

The Seminar was always asking: What is the relevance of this particular Jewish idea, and when and how should it be taught? Some of these Seminar scholars taught at Ramah, because it was a place where you could not only be excited by ideas, but could witness their application in real life situations. In fact, it was taboo to treat theory and practice as separate domains.

Ideas in Creative Tension

Two of the Seminary professors you mentioned, Heschel and Kaplan, had such different outlooks that they're generally seen as representing two opposites poles of contemporary Jewish theology. Did these differences leads to problems in a camp that was searching for a clear religious ideology?

No, because from the start Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be guided by a single perspective. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because philosophers strive for coherence. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was also a practical place where ideas were put into action, and where an eclectic approach could provide a rich source of energy. The fact that both ends of the theological spectrum were represented at Ramah added intellectual tension and excitement.

The Seminary professors who served as mentors represented differing and sometimes conflicting ideas. But their various approaches had already managed to coexist within the framework of the Seminary. Ramah tried, and was often able, to take their different conceptions a step further by building a society that was guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the

people embodying these various visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when there is agreement on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Dr. Yochanan Muffs, a Seminary Bible scholar, once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism set forth in *Pirke Avot* [*Ethics of the Fathers*, an accessible and well-known section of the Talmud] — Torah, *avodah*, and *g'millut chasadim* [study, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness] — while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on the study of Torah, and the result will be disembodied intellects, which was precisely what concerned the Musarists. Focus only on prayer, and you risk becoming excessively inner-directed, which can lead to reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivity that is inconsistent with mainstream Judaism. Finally, *mitzvah* on its own can lead to a simplistic and mechanical pattern of observance. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in an uncomplicated world, but that's not our reality. The ~~only~~ answer is to try to integrate these three forces so they all form part of the same picture.

The Educational Ideas Behind Ramah

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. Ramah also made extensive use of experts from the worlds of general education and the social sciences.

Because what we were trying to create required a wider range of expertise, we decided to supplement the Seminary faculty by inviting some of the leading scholars in the humanities, social sci-



ences, and education to join us. We were determined to have the worlds of general and Jewish education "interpenetrate." The additional scholars who formed the Melton Advisory Board included some of the most thoughtful, creative minds in the field, such as Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; Fritz Redl, the psychoanalyst; Ralph Tyler, dean of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, and a powerful force in American education; and Lawrence Cremin, the eminent historian of education.

UC ✓

Two of the scholars in this group were especially important to Ramah: Joseph Schwab, the prominent philosopher of education and curriculum theorist, and Bruno Bettelheim, the renowned psychoanalyst, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I had written my doctoral thesis about Freud and education under the guidance of both men at the University of Chicago.

The members of our Advisory Board were not paid for participating. They were attracted to Ramah by the scope of the project and were excited by the idea of being part of it. They were also impressed by how serious we were about training educational leaders. Professor Schwab even came to camp before the campers arrived to lead seminars for the staff.

Recently, somebody asked me what motivated these high-profile professors with little or no interest in Judaism, and in some cases, a non-Jewish background, to contribute so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with scholars' wish for immortality, which occurs when people read their books and put their ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he lived to see them acted upon at Ramah, at Melton, and many other places. What we offered these scholars, as well as the Judaic scholars on the Faculty Seminar, was a living laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them a confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around

Ⓢ ✓
H same ✓

others who were not
even Jewish H ✓

the conference table would actually materialize. What was talked about in November was often part of the camp's program the following summer. Moreover, we never undertook a project without first discussing it with them and paying close attention to their comments. We were giving these scholars an unusual opportunity — the possibility of making a real impact on a society.

Schwab, in particular, viewed Ramah as an ideal place to create disciples. Certainly he was the most important force in shaping my own ideas about education.

Could you say more about him? Schwab seems to have been the key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Joseph Schwab was born in a small town in Mississippi, where the entire Jewish community consisted of half a dozen families. Although he grew up knowing little about Judaism, he became intrigued by certain Jewish concepts, such as *mitzvah*. He devoted a great deal of his time to Ramah; between 1952 and 1966 I spent at least two days a month with him. He helped us think through issues such as the connection between the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (emotional) aspects of education. There was a natural fit between his ideas and our vision.

I should explain that Ramah was built on the belief that you have to make contact with young people on all levels — the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the aesthetic. Some people are touched by music, while others are tone-deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to the intellectual challenge in the commentaries, or to theology. Ideally, of course, youngsters will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal, and the mind is not the only means of access to it.

rabbinic ✓

In an essay entitled "Eros and Education," Schwab argued that the human mind is not only cerebral but also passionate, and that the intellect is not an emotion-free area. He also believed there were hardly any emotional areas that did not include cognitive elements. Schwab was convinced that there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, or between intellect and emotion.

Schwab wrote in that essay that Eros was all about "the energy of wanting." He believed that the definition of "to know" had to include "to do." The aim of education, he said, was to produce "actively intelligent people," whom he described in this way:

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.

We also consulted with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. That was familiar territory for him because at the college of the University of Chicago nobody used textbooks, only primary sources. We spent hours with Schwab discussing, for example, how best to teach adolescents the story of Jacob, Rebecca, and Isaac in the book of Genesis. As presented in the text, Jacob and Rebecca are scheming co-conspirators against Isaac. Jacob is deceitful, his mother is less than honest, and together they mislead poor Isaac. How do you explain the larger issue here? How do you teach adolescents about truth and complexity? How do you convey to them that the world is often a terrible place without destroying their natural idealism? This is a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it at length. How do you teach that there are often shades of gray when adolescents

Liz: Is there
one space
here?

for education ✓

THIS ✓
him ✓
we ✓

can be viewed as

*into giving the
birthright to
Jacob instead of
to Esau, the
first-born.

cruel

tend to see only black and white? 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 outfitted in summer clothing. How do you tell young people the truth about the world without doing damage to their innate idealism and hope?

Schwab was also involved in our work in leadership education. If you look at how leadership training has evolved in recent years, you will see two main schools of thought. The British school says: Study the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and John Locke will provide you with all the principles you will need. Alfred North Whitehead claimed that everything he had ever required to live the good life he found in the Bible and the literature of ancient Greece.

The American model, as you may expect, is more directly pragmatic. The Harvard Business School says: If we can provide enough case studies that illustrate the principles and include the situations you are likely to encounter during your career, you will succeed in the real world.

Schwab helped us develop a third conception, which was essentially a blend of the other two and which fit in perfectly with the goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these principles. They must then ask themselves: If I acquire, accept, and understand these principles, what will my practice be like?

What was the contribution of Bruno Bettelheim?

First, I must say that although Bettelheim's reputation has been challenged in recent years, that in no way diminishes his important contribution to Ramah. Second, although some members of the Melton Advisory Board responded to Ramah in terms of

break? Liz

② Liz

their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who regarded Judaism and all religions as anachronistic. And yet he clearly appreciated what we were trying to do educationally.

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago I had worked at Bettelheim's Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children. Once, with thechutzpah of youth, I said to him that the school didn't always measure up to his descriptions of it in his book, *Love is Not Enough*.

"You're right," he replied. "The book outlines what the school was *supposed* to be." He acknowledged that it often fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean it wasn't guided and directed by that vision.

One of the distinguishing marks of Bettelheim's school was its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for the children. To make this happen, Bettelheim used every resource at his disposal — from architecture to food. We believed that a camper's cabin at Ramah should function in a similar way, as a supportive environment against the inevitable pressures and problems created by an intense milieu. Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

✓ We were

✓ Us

✓ We

✓ We

I was influenced by Bettelheim when I asked that each camp director show me the menu for the first few days of the summer. I wanted to make sure that all our camps were serving familiar foods like hamburgers — foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a youngster's home to this new environment. I also made sure that we were prepared to provide as many additional helpings as a camper wanted, so that nobody would leave the table feeling hungry, especially during the first week. We even had the counselors serve extra snacks at

we

night. We were a bit extreme when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board!

Another lesson I learned from Bettelheim was the significance of the school custodian, who, for some students, was a more significant educational figure than the teachers or other professionals. At Ramah we paid close attention to the character of all the people we hired, not only the counselors, specialists, and teachers, but the service staff as well. Many of our dishwashers were students from Ivy League colleges. They didn't know Hebrew, but they wanted to be at Ramah and would accept any job in order to spend a summer at camp. We responded by giving them the best teachers, including, quite often, the professor-in-residence.

④ ✓

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy — that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He also taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where campers could be wild and noisy, and another place where a youngster could find peace and quiet. And it was Bettelheim who introduced me to the distinguished Harvard psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed and that history was reversible. This was an idea educators needed to hear, and before long, Erikson's books were being read and discussed at Ramah.

Finally, Bettelheim helped us understand that we had a tremendous built-in advantage that we hadn't fully been aware of: Because Ramah was in opposition to basic American suburban values, the camp was inherently counter-cultural in a way that was attractive and yet constructive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

④ ✓

A Philosophical Commitment To Excellence

It seems to me that during its earlier 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 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 succeeded. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was often difficult to get in, and there were waiting lists. We believed that if you invested in the right people, they could change the world. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone could 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 Faculty Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one. How do you fill the enormous gap between a text, the internalization of its message, and its incorporation into behavior? How do you move from mastering an idea to living it? And how does your practical experience affect your theory and help you revise it?

Although we didn't articulate it in exactly these terms, we were working with a process that involved five levels.

SP. $i \rightarrow 0$ ✓
Cc ✓

Cc ✓

The first level is philosophy, and it asks theoretical questions. What is your conception of Judaism, of an ideal Jewish society, and of the individual? What is your conception of knowledge? Does knowledge consist of a mastery of facts? Of basic principles? If you know, will you therefore do?

The second level narrows the scope to the philosophy of education. How does your philosophy guide your conception of education? In our case, how do your ideas about Judaism shape the vision of what education should or can be?

The third level deals with the theory of practice, and takes the process one step further. How does your philosophy of education shape and alter your educational goals? How does it shape your conception of curriculum, or of teacher education, or of informal education?

The fourth level brings the discussion down to actual practice: pedagogy, in-service education, and classroom management.

The fifth level consists of monitoring and evaluation, which serves as a corrective for each and all of the levels.

But these levels are not linear, and you need not move from Level One to Level Five. Some of the most effective work in education begins with Level Five — with a careful, critical look at your ongoing program, which often demonstrates that you may not be accomplishing what you set out to do. This may lead you to reexamine your practice or your philosophy of education, which may in turn lead you to reconsider your basic assumptions about Judaism and knowledge. In other words, you return to Level One.

In our discussions about Ramah, we often started from Level Four and then moved on to Levels One through Four. Moving from theory to practice, or from practice to theory, is a dynamic

process that forces you to constantly observe, rethink, and — ideally — change and improve.

These distinctions are still somewhat theoretical and abstract. Could we look ^Xat a specific area, such as *t'fillah* [prayer], in light of these five levels?

at ✓

If you are considering how to deal with *t'fillah* in an educational setting, the five levels might apply as follows:

Level One: What is prayer? Why do we praise God, who clearly doesn't need our praises? One answer, suggested by Maimonides, is that God is a role model. When we praise God for being merciful, we do so in order to articulate and emulate that particular quality. If we restricted our discussion to this sort of issue, we would have a philosophical treatment of prayer.

Level Two might ask: What is the role of prayer in your philosophy of education? What specific ideas about it do you want to convey to children? How do you make contact with the inner spirituality of a child?

With Level Three we move into ideas that will guide educational practice. Can these ideas be taught to younger children? You might decide that you really can't accomplish much in this area until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or chanting certain words will set off something inside you. Or you might ask whether meditation fits into your understanding of Jewish prayer. And if it does, how will you teach it?

Actually, that last question brings us to Level Four, which deals with pedagogy. How, in the classroom, will teachers help students develop a sensitivity to words or to *nusach* [the traditional chant of the prayer service]? How will teachers be trained to carry out these assignments?

Level Five asks: As you monitor this activity, how will you make the necessary changes as a result of what you observe or learn? Does your experience support your theory?

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

In order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. As Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately respond to. It takes hard work and experience before you appreciate it. Similarly, for *r'fillah* to succeed you have to work at it and experience it. Eventually it becomes meaningful — or it doesn't. Rejection is always an option, as long as it's thoughtful and considered.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism at Ramah would become deeply involved in it. Of course, all education works on that premise. If you are introduced to a profound idea by a fine teacher in the right environment, there's a good chance you'll accept it. This is a faith assumption of education.

But while *Shacharit* [morning] services were compulsory at Ramah, afternoon services were not. This was an important difference between Ramah and the Seminary. *Halakhically*, the *Minchah* service is also compulsory, but there were limits as to how much the uninitiated camper could be expected to understand and appreciate. After all, the majority of these youngsters had never experienced any daily prayers. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on *Minchah* at camp, we were likely to lose much of the impact of *Shacharit*.

In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional *Minchah* at Ramah, basing their decision on educational considerations rather than *halakhic* principles. It was a difficult debate, and ultimately the issue was decided by a single vote.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, not everybody observes Shabbat in exactly the same way?

As we saw it, the camp's public space was to be maintained as a religious preserve. We didn't legislate against the use of a radio in the privacy of a cabin, for we made a distinction between the public space and private space. We enabled campers and staff alike to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible within the public areas of the camp. As with the issue of *Minchah*, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not a *halakhic* decision but an educational one.

On the other hand, many other practices and activities at Ramah were non-negotiable. These included Hebrew, daily classes, morning services, kashrut, the recitation of *birkat ha-mazon* [grace after meals] — and, in a very different sphere, instructional swim.

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

Level One would begin with general philosophical questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is the conception of a healthy body in our tradition different from that of other traditions?

Then, in Level Two, you might ask: What is the role of sports

in your conception of education? You might, as John Dewey did, discuss the importance of rules, fairness, cooperation and competition.

In Level Three you would think about what role sports might play in your program. Are you prepared to let a camper complete the summer with no significant athletic experiences? What about those campers who simply don't like sports? Or swimming?

In Level Four you might think about how you will teach respect for rules and fairness. How will you teach youngsters to be good losers — or good winners, for that matter? What are your methods of teaching these values?

And in Level Five you would take a critical look at your program and measure your accomplishments. Have your students internalized the values of fairness and good sportsmanship? What changes or improvements need to be introduced in your program?

That sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really is a link between those ideals and 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, but no matter what we were discussing, or how important it was, at 11:45 PM each night two counselors would rush to this boy's cabin and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they would wake him up and change his sheets so none of the other campers would be aware of the mishap when they woke up in the morning. The



driving force here was the principle of *ba-malbin et p'nei chaveiro b'rabim* — that you must avoid a situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

That brings to mind another case involving this same principle. We had a problem one summer with adolescent girls who, after lights out, would conduct “bull sessions” — discussions in which, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl’s faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. These sessions invariably ended with girls in tears, and with some of the girls being scapegoated.

I was the camp director that summer, and when this developed into a serious, continuing problem, I was tempted to outlaw these sessions. But I knew that the campers could continue holding bull sessions as soon as the counselor was out of earshot. When the situation finally got out of control, I came in to talk to the girls.

“We don’t understand,” they told me. “We’re just trying to help each other.”

“That sounds fine,” I said, “but may I sit in?” I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. “You know,” I told them, “I appreciate what you’re doing. I accept your aims, but I have a problem with your method. One of the things we don’t do in a Jewish community like Ramah is publicly embarrass our fellow human beings. What if we studied a text together that deals with how people should behave toward one another, and then each girl can do her own self-evaluation privately?”

At this point, because an alternative was available, the more sensitive girls prevailed and the study session was accepted. Each night we studied the sixth chapter of *Pirke Arot* and discussed, among other things, what it means to be *re’a ahuv* — an intimate

friend, someone you could confide in, who would be supportive and would help you muster the strength you need to change and improve. We read this chapter every night for four weeks and had some very good talks. At Ramah, this sort of thing was part of the director's job definition.

Investing In Staff

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one cabin — but what about the rest of the staff? There were so many specialists in camp.

We weren't too concerned with conserving our resources! We had three full-time staffs at Ramah — counselors, specialists in sports and the arts, and teachers. Financially, of course, it was outrageous. There were no dual roles: Different people had different functions. This was part of the audaciousness of the place: We were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pressured you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to problems for the camper. Whether in sports, music, drama, or any other area, competition and striving for excellence can cause problems. Classes were demanding, too, because the teacher would force you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, it was up to the counselor to pick up the pieces.

We also coopted an idea from the kibbutz movement, which saw itself as an *edah mechaneket* [an educating community], of having the teaching staff available throughout the day. The kibbutz teacher would teach a class in the morning and would continue to debate issues with you through the day. The same was true of our teachers — at least in theory.

An even more unusual position for a camp was that of the librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available all day to anyone, whether camper or staff member. And just as some camps have an artist-in-residence, each Ramah camp had a professor-in residence, generally a Seminary faculty member whose role was to encourage intellectual stimulation. He or she was there to listen, to teach, to prod, to criticize, and to help the camp community respond to *halakhic* problems that would invariably arise during the course of the summer.

Communal Leaders as Partners

Let's step back from the camp community to consider a constituency that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the communal leaders, who as board members assume ultimate responsibilities for the various camps.

While today, these days, communal leaders are more supportive of good educational programs and more active in their support. But that's a fairly recent development. In the 1970s and 1980s, most American Jews of status and means cared mainly about Israel, hospitals, and defense organizations. Jewish education and culture ranked very low. Four notable exceptions were interested in education: Sam and Florence Melton of Columbus, Philip Lown of Boston, and Leighton Rosenthal of Cleveland. Ramah, from its inception, was fortunate in recruiting outstanding communal leaders.

Now Today it's different. More and more, people are coming to realize that Judaism's and Israel's best asset is a Jewishly educated Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing significantly in Jewish education. Fortunately, this view has become fashion-

way
were ahead
of their time and

↑ Jack and Joe, ✓

able, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. Mort Mandel, who, with his brothers, established the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, launched this movement in a serious way, which led to Jewish education's being raised to the very top of the agenda of most Jewish organizations and institutions.

✓ In general, ✓ are more knowledgeable and
Today's communal leaders also insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support, and they tend to be more generally

✓ knowledgeable as well. In addition, we have some major assets now that we didn't have then. There are academics and well-educated

✓ cared communal leaders all over North America who care about Jewish education and see it as important. Jewish studies courses in colleges and universities are one of the big success stories of American Jewish life. Families today can draw on a wide variety of programs. There are hundreds of day schools in North America and any number of excellent organized trips to Israel. There are young Jews in general education who are interested in making a contribution to Jewish education. There are Jewish leaders and philanthropists publicly proclaiming that Jewish education is a top priority. For all these reasons, I'm optimistic.

This may be the right moment to ask for your thoughts on what, for many would-be institution-builders, is a difficult and intimidating process, although it's essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm referring, of course, to the whole question of fund-raising.

This may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is not the biggest problem. Although funds have not always been easily available, these days there are enough resources to support a wide variety of fine projects.

The key factors in successful fund-raising are the strength of your ideas, your commitment to those ideas, and your enthusiasm. I

helped ✓

As a result, ✓

has been ✓

launch

informed ✓

✓ (9) [institution builders]

have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I would have been willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're not deeply committed to the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey them to the people you're approaching. And you have to *mean* it. I believe 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 meeting with is at least as intelligent as I am. There's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it is my job to convince him — or, better still, to educate him. Only if you take the time to educate people about a project will they be able to make intelligent decisions about it. If you treat potential donors as people who can join *with* you and help you in creating this new enterprise, you may get somewhere.

Although the situation is far better than it used to be, the relationship between Jewish educators and communal leaders is still too adversarial. The professionals still ask: "How can this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew?" And the communal leaders still think: "This guy is a shlepper. If he were really successful, he'd be in my business." This is unfortunate, but it's true.

What are the biggest mistakes you see in fund-raising?

I see three common mistakes, and they're connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor as if he or she were naive. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is not disclosing the full truth about the undertaking, including its problems and failures.

Liz
one line? (break)

Here's my favorite fund-raising story: Sam Melton was visiting Ramah in the Poconos, and one morning we passed a ten-year-old boy on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asked him.

"Chumash," answered the boy.

"Chumash with what?" Sam asked.

And the boy replied, "Chumash with Melton."

At that moment ~~all~~ my fund-raising efforts were vindicated.

How do you respond to those who ask why educational change takes so long and costs so much?

With this analogy: Would it make any sense to study mortality rates in surgical wards where the instruments weren't sterilized? As long as teachers are often untrained or unmotivated, and certainly underpaid, what can you expect? When your mission is to conquer a disease, you don't withdraw funding because you haven't found a cure despite years of research. On the contrary: You invest additional money until you do. We have just begun doing that in Jewish education. It's too early to ask whether the investment is too great, or whether it will take too long.

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 often. We couldn't always justify the educational investment on economic grounds, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, in which we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high

del. ✓
del. ✓
del. ✓

~~new~~ ~~std~~

school graduates who agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a purely economic standpoint it was foolish to invest so much money in that program. And what about the professor-in-residence and the camp librarian? These people were expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs? But when you give parents reason to believe that you're helping their child become a *mensch*, you can ask for a great deal.

When Ramah first started, we had to make a critical decision: Who would head the camps? Should it be an educator with vision who could then hire a talented business manager, or did we need a talented manager who would hire a creative director? The Seminary, in partnership with an outstanding board of community leaders, decided that Ramah should be led by educators, by people with a vision. Each of the camps had a capable business manager, of course, and that job was vitally important, but the camp was always led by educators.

Where Ramah Failed

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, even if you start with cognac you'll be lucky to end up with grape juice. Looking back on it, what are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

I can identify five significant failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of our work. Ralph Tyler once told me that not doing this was the educational equivalent of not carrying out diagnostic tests until the patient was leaving the hospital. In other words, we often had 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

Two? SEMA

SEMA: Casuality

they seemed, we should have been documenting the evidence. It's amazing that, as far as I can determine, we never asked our campers to write about their experiences at Ramah! We were so busy building something new that we didn't ever stop to evaluate it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and it may sound like a luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a self-evaluation, it's more likely to be used as a fundraising technique rather than a way of improving the enterprise. But it's something we should have done.

Ramah's second failure was that, despite all our efforts, we never really became a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and while Hebrew was the official language at camp, 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 did neither. We had no graduated curriculum for the teaching of Hebrew at Ramah. We had no language labs. We didn't even look to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at it only because Hebrew was their chief concern.

I must accept some of the blame for this failure. My attitude was: If there's a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. In the Melton Faculty Seminar, Gerson Cohen and Shmuel Leiter 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 communal leaders and a nurturer of directors. She was also a great facilitator and a peacemaker between warring factions.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel, which didn't always receive its rightful place on our agenda. On the other hand, the fact that hundreds of former Ramah campers now live in Israel suggests that we must have been doing something right in this area.

For years I did my best to keep Israelis out of our camps, because the Israelis I had met at that point seemed inappropriate as educators for Ramah; many had come to America primarily to buy appliances. But eventually I joined those who decided to bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and specialists. They turned out to make a real contribution.

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. One reason we hired full-time camp directors was our expectation that they would maintain the camp program throughout the year by working with the Conservative movement's youth program, the Leadership Training Fellowship (LTF). 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. In this area we simply quit too early; the idea didn't advance far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum for the camp program as a whole. 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. Over the years, we failed to document or preserve any number of innovative and creative projects. There was far too much reinventing of the wheel and too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: We were

✓
who wanted to work in an American summer camp

until then ✓

afraid of formalizing what we had because it might have inhibited creativity. But this was a mistake.

The fifth failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between the rarefied atmosphere of Ramah and the camper's home community, despite the fact that we paid a lot of attention to this problem and were probably on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help campers, newly excited about Jewish practice, who return to a non-kosher or otherwise non-observant household. Because we respected the campers' family relationships, we did not encourage them to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat, or do, in their own homes.

But more often than we anticipated, the reentry problems arose not with the campers' families but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, campers found it hard to return to a service that suddenly seemed stilted and complacent, and to a rabbi who seemed formal when contrasted with the informality and warmth of camp. We even had youngsters who refused to attend synagogue services after camp because the service no longer felt authentically Jewish to them.

but It hadn't occurred to us that in some sense we were creating misfits. We were arrogant enough to think our campers could turn the Conservative movement around. And they did, to some extent, although it took years.

✓ Syn: Contr-culture
41/54/02/03

Unexpected Successes

In addition to the successes we worked hard for, we had a few others that we hadn't really anticipated. Many Ramah campers went on to become rabbis, professors of Judaica at American and

Israeli universities, or prominent community leaders. Today, Ramah graduates are extremely well represented in professional Jewish life and in institutions of Jewish culture and education — in all denominations. And a great many others have made aliyah.

Second, we grew 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 they were decently paid, and we created a new Jewish profession:

camp director. These people were given tenure, just like university faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups, such as staff, campers, parents, rabbis, educators, and communal leaders, not to mention such complex issues as religious ideology and finance. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant they had a clear and obvious career line — usually in the pulpit, but sometimes in formal education or Jewish communal life. At Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their future careers — some of them for years, and others for their entire professional lives.

Despite our failures, Ramah worked. I've been in the Jewish education business a long time, and nowhere else have I seen a closer correlation between what we set out to do and what we actually accomplished. The ultimate proof, of course, are the campers. They may have hated Hebrew school, but they really learned, loved, and lived Judaism at Ramah.

They also loved and appreciated the *people* at Ramah. I have no idea how many deep and lasting friendships began at Ramah, but there have been a great many. And many marriages, too. All over North America and Israel, you can find young people whose parents — and increasingly, *grandparents* — met each other at Ramah.

Lessons for New Institutions

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

First, Ramah demonstrates how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can then stretch itself. Second, I think there is something to be learned about how to combine sophisticated approaches to content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty details.

Ramah was also about investing in talent, and the vital importance of communal supporters. In our case, the communal leaders protected us from attempts to dilute the educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of deep conviction. Ramah made it possible for educators, rabbis, scholars, and lay people to join forces. There was a real generosity of spirit and a genuine attempt to understand the other person's position. Ramah was more than a camp; it was an educational movement.

The success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that *still* don't exist. At some point we will probably see the creation of institutions that combine the day school with the community center, breaking down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the students of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, such an institution, when it finally comes into existence, will serve as an intensive training ground for Jewish citizenship.

The next challenge, in my view, is to provide for the needs of post-materialist people. More and more, people are looking for meaning in their lives. They want to know what our tradition is

all about, and our job is to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms that speak to them. From time to time a genius will emerge, a Heschel or a Kaplan, but you can't sit back and wait for them. It's far better, in my view, to build places where potential Heschels and Kaplans will be nurtured, develop, and flourish.

end ornament?

liz

Bibliography

The following abridged bibliography may be of interest to the reader.

Vision: For general education

Marshall Smith, Sara Lightfoot, and David Cohen present the argument for the importance of vision in determining the impact of educational institutions.

Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systematic School Reform," in *Politics of Education Association Yearbook* (1990), pp. 233-267.

Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

David K. Cohen, Eleanor Farrar, and Arthur G. Powell, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1985).

Alan Ryan has powerfully described the impact of John Dewey on American intellectual life and education in:

Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and The High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York, London: WW. Norton & Company, 1995).

For an example of the way that Steiner's students apply Steiner's philosophy to education, see:

E.A. Stockmeyer, *Rudolph Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* (Stourbridge, England: The Robinswood Press, 1991).

Vision: For Jewish education

Some examples of the power of ideas for Jewish education are found in:

Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the 'Musar' Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

The power of ideas for Zionist education are explored in:

Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Hebrew Education in Erez Israel* (Hebrew, two volumes. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1986, 1993).

Gerson Cohen argues for the importance of locating the ideas that will lead to a vision for Jewish education and the need to develop a vision for Jewish education in North America in:

Gerson D. Cohen, "From Scholarship to Paideia: A Case Study," in *From the Scholar to the Classroom: Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*, edited by Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), pp.31-58.

Liz

type is too small
(see Sam's)

RON

Liz

his

RON

UC

Liz
indent] Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. I am grateful to Professor Twersky for disclosing the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk; and to Professor Scheffler for analyzing the vision of John Dewey and for his suggestions concerning leadership education. Their ideas, as well as my own, will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Camp Ramah and its History

The Ramah Experience: Community and Commitment, edited by Sylvia Ettenberg and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in cooperation with The National Ramah Commission, 1983). The chapter by Burton I. Cohen, "A Brief History of the Ramah Movement," presents the history of Ramah; however, the entire book is of importance for those who wish to gain a perspective on the theory and practice of the Ramah movement.

The Relationship of the Cognitive and Emotional Domains for Education

Joseph Schwab and Israel Scheffler have written key essays on this topic:

Joseph J. Schwab, "Eros and Education," *Journal of General Education* 8 (1954), pp. 54-71.

Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions* (New York-London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 3-30.

The Practical

Joseph Schwab has made a key contribution to our thinking concerning the practical nature of the field of education. His ideas were developed in four monographs:

The Practical I — "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum" (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1970).

The Practical II — "The Practical: Arts of the Eclectic," *School Review* 79 (1971), pp. 493-542.

The Practical III — "The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum," *School Review* 81 (1973), pp. 501-522.

The Practical IV — "The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do," *Curriculum Inquiry* 13:3 (1983), pp. 239-365.

Israel Scheffler, in his volume *Four Pragmatists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), particularly in his chapter on John Dewey, presents a penetrating analysis of the means-ends relationship for the field of education.

An Understanding of the Adolescent

Our thinking was very much influenced by the writings of two psychoanalysts, Eric H. Erikson and Bruno Bettelheim.

Erikson's paper on youth and his books on Luther and Gandhi helped us understand the thinking and feeling of the adolescent, as well as the concept of charisma:

"Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," *Dacalus* (Winter 1962).

Young Man Luther (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1958).

Gandhi's Truth: On Origins of Militance and Violence (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).

Bruno Bettelheim's volume on the Orthogenic School, *Love is Not Enough* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1950), was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.

THE MELTON CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN JEWISH EDUCATION

The Melton Center was established in 1960 at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton program for the teaching of Bible was piloted at the Ramah Camps. The Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

During the years of my direct involvement with the Melton Center, Louis Newman served as its director. Joseph Schwab was the leading educational consultant to the Center. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966).

Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus: Part 1* (New York: Behrman House, 1969).

THE MANDEL INSTITUTE

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the forefront of the movement to revitalize Jewish education. Among its publications are:

Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, "Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations" (Jerusalem: The Mandel Institute, 1996).

Liz

one line?

upper & lower

UC ✓

CC ✓

del. ✓

From 1988 to 1990, the Mandel Associated Foundations, the JCC Association, and JESNA in collaboration with CJF convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Its recommendations were published in:

A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991).

One of these recommendations was the establishment of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE).

THE COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION (CIJE)

CIJE is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the transformation of North American Jewish life through education. Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz.

Best Practices: Supplementary School Education (New York-Cleveland: CIJE, 1993, 1996) argues the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in this setting.

too much # Liz

one line? Liz

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this essay. It would never have been written without her persistence and her role as a creative, diligent, and patient editor. I am also grateful to William Novak, who brought both his skill as an interviewer and his knowledge of Camp Ramah to this work.

I was invited to join the staff of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in 1950 by Louis Newman, the director, and Sylvia Ettenberg, dean of students at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. As a result of their invitation, I spent eighteen wonderful years in a close association with the Ramah movement and have continued to watch it grow and flourish since then.

From 1950 to 1968, I was privileged to work with the staff and the leaders of the Ramah movement: the camp directors, Levi Soshuk and Rabbi David Mogilner, both of blessed memory; and Rabbi Jerome Abrams, Dr. Walter Ackerman, Donald Adelman, Rabbi Raphael Arzt, Dr. Burton Cohen, Rabbi Morton Leifman, Dr. Shmuel Leiter, Dr. David Lieber, Dr. Joseph Lukinsky, Rabbi Marshall Meyer, Dr. Louis Newman, Dr. Chaim Potok, Rabbi Moshe Samber, and Dr. Morton Siegel.

Following Bernard Resnikoff, David Mogilner and subsequently Burton Cohen were appointed directors of the National Ramah Commission, where each offered outstanding leadership to the movement as a whole. In 1989, Dr. Sheldon Dorph assumed the position of director; he is guiding Ramah with inspiration from its fiftieth anniversary into the future.

I learned a great deal from all of them.

Ramah was a partnership of educators, lay leaders, rabbis, and scholars. I have not written a history of Ramah and therefore cannot acknowledge many other people with whom I was fortunate to work. I must, however, mention Lou Winer, who, as a lay leader, was a source of continuous support and encouragement to the camp directors. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, as executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly from 1952 to 1989, helped us develop a common language with the rabbis, who contend with the reality of building Jewish life twelve months a year.

Dr. ✓

not blessed memory, ✓

About the Authors

Seymour Fox, who was closely associated with Camp Ramah from 1950 to 1968, is president of the Mandel Institute in Jerusalem, an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Professor Fox was born in Chicago in 1929. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In 1954, he was appointed director of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, the first Ramah camp. After serving in various other capacities at the Jewish Theological Seminary, he was appointed dean of its Teachers Institute in 1959. In that year he founded the Mador program of Camp Ramah. In 1960, he founded the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

He moved to Israel in 1966 and was appointed Professor of Education and director of the School of Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

the In 1969, he founded Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. He has served as a senior consultant to four Ministers of Education.

Among his current responsibilities in Jerusalem, Professor Fox is chairman of the faculty of the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), a program for leaders in Jewish education, and academic director of the School for Educational Leadership, a program that trains the future leaders of Israeli education.

He is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles in the fields of Jewish and general education, including: *Freud and Education*; *From the Scholar to the Classroom*; *Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*; *and Philosophy for Education*.

Seymour Fox is married to Sue Mogilner-Fox and lives in Jerusalem. He has three children. *Sara, David, Eitan, and Danny.*

William Novak spent ten years at Ramah camps in Canada, the Poconos, and Glen Spey, N.Y., where he was, at various times, a camper, a counselor, a music specialist, and a teacher. Novak is a former editor of the journals *Response* and *New Traditions* and was one of the founders of *Moment* magazine. He is also the co-editor of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*.

As a writer, he has worked with a number of celebrities on their memoirs, including Lee Iacocca (*Iacocca*), Tip O'Neill (*Man of the House*), Magic Johnson (*My Life*), and Natan Sharansky (*Fear No Evil*).

William Novak lives in the Boston area with his wife and their three sons.

(lc) ✓

become ✓

(S)

chk
formal name

of

[the Hebrew University
of Jerusalem]

(i) ✓

(S)

(Rat) ✓

chk: All books?

[over]



Chair
Morton Mandel

Feb. 13, 1997

Vice Chairs
Billie Gold
Ann Kaufman
Matthew Maryles
Maynard Wishner

Honorary Chair
Max Fisher

Dear Sylvia:

Board
David Arnov
Daniel Bader
Mandell Berman
Charles Bronfman
John Colman
Maurice Corson
Susan Crown
Jay Davis
Irvin Field
Charles Goodman
Alfred Gottschalk
Neil Greenbaum
Lee M. Hendler
David Hirschhorn
Gershon Kekst
Henry Koschitzky
Mark Lainer
Norman Lamm
Marvin Lender
Norman Lipoff
Seymour Martin Lipset
Florence Melton
Melvin Merians
Lester Pollack
Charles Ratner
Esther Leah Ritz
William Schatten
Richard Scheuer
Ismar Schorsch
David Teutsch
Isadore Twersky
Bennett Yanowitz

Here, at last, is a final draft of the Ramah essay, which will be published by CIJE at the beginning of March. (There are a few very minor changes still to be included, but they won't affect your reading experience!)

Seymour and CIJE thank you for your invaluable help and prodigious memory, without which the essay would not have stood the test of accuracy.

Kol tuv,

Nessa

Nessa Rapoport

CC: Seymour Fox

Executive Director
Alan Hoffmann

Thursday late 2/20/17

Dear Chava:

Attached are cover letters for Sylvia Ettenberg and Shelly Dorph, both of whom are in our data base. Please send out the letters and a copy of the Ramah essay to each, TODAY, but wait for a call from me after my meeting with Seymour (beginning at 9 am) before you post them! (Just in case....)

I took care of all the Liz Sheehan material and disc today. I'd be grateful if you'd do two things:

See if Tova Halbertal's essay arrives before you go. If not, call her at the number on my rolodex to find out what happened.

Call the Cataloguing-in-publication data office, the ISBN office, and copyright office to be sure we get answers on both by Tuesday am. (Make sure they have our fax number.) For us to create the copyright page, we need to get this info to Liz on Tuesday.

Thanks,

Nessa

Vision at the Heart: Notes from Shelly Dorph (2/23/97)

Editorial Comments:

Interesting, well-written

More on the role of the directors, especially Mogilner, Arzt and Ackerman
How they translated these ideas into camp life
Education that took place with the directors themselves
Schwab and Fox in the directors' meeting

Suggests follow-up papers on Levels 3, 4 and 5

Clarifications:

P. 4: Near bottom, "both types of institutions": not clear whose quote (which book? or from 3rd book?)

P. 5: Peter Drucker?

P. 10: Nurture

P. 16: Add connection between Heschel/King and social action at Ramah: This was the impetus.

P. 23: Page ref. for *Eros and Education*

P. 27: Meaning of "But...there is a top."

Dissemination:

Camp committees: 500

Directors

Rabbinical students

Ed. students

Shelly to meet with Seymour and let me know.

NR Comments

Under Ramah unanticipated successes: Chavurah movement; Jewish feminism.

1. Autobiography/Narrative

Embeds principle in story.

2. Explicitly dialectical

Anticipates, legitimizes and justifies critique--and addresses it.

3. Conversational

Replicates conversation in order to generate conversation.

4. Civilian discourse

Names the locus of the effort in the civilian arena.

To: Danny Marom, INTERNET:marom@vms.huji.ac.il
CC: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
From: Chava Werber, CWerber
Date: 5/29/98, 6:09 PM
Re: Ramah Essay

Just writing to let you know that we have sent the disk containing the Ramah essay for arrival on Tuesday.

The package contains: a disk with the essay and fonts used in the essay (in Quark and tiff files) as well as a list of the disk's contents.

Seymour Fox

with

William Novak

VISION AT THE HEART

Lessons From Camp Ramah
On The Power Of Ideas
In Shaping
Educational Institutions



Council
for
Initiatives
in Jewish
Education

מכון מנדל
Mandel Institute

TABLE of CONTENTS

The Mandel Institute

P.O.B. 4556

Jerusalem 91044, Israel

Telephone: (972) (2) 566-2832

Fax: (972) (2) 566-2837

E-Mail: mandel@vms.huji.ac.il

*The Council for Initiatives in
Jewish Education (CIJE)*

15 E. 26 St.

New York, NY 10010-1579

Telephone: (212) 532-2360

Fax: (212) 532-2646

Vision at the Heart
1

Bibliography

46

Acknowledgments

50

About the Author

51

Copyright © 1997 by The Mandel Institute and
The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

All rights reserved.

No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without
the prior written consent of the publishers.

ISBN 0-9657110-0-5

VISION AT THE HEART

Seymour Fox
with
William Novak

Introduction

There is nothing as practical as a great idea.

Many of us, if we are fortunate, have at some point in our lives been part of an unforgettable educational experience—a school, a summer program, an outstanding teacher—that has touched our souls or perhaps even changed our lives. We look back on such moments with gratitude and awe, and with the hope that others—our friends, our colleagues, and especially our children—will be exposed to similar experiences that offer inspiration and purpose.

What does it take to create these kinds of experiences? While Camp Ramah is only one example, it has been a prominent and powerful one ever since its founding by Dr. Moshe Davis and Sylvia Ettenberg of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The idea for Ramah gained acceptance in 1946, and the first Ramah camp opened in Wisconsin in the summer of 1947. Fifty years

The Need for Vision

later, there are nineteen overnight and day camps in North America, Israel, South America, and Russia.

Ramah emerged out of an ambitious dream, a carefully considered ideal of educational possibilities. Big questions were asked: What kind of Jews, what kind of people do we want to nurture? What ideas will guide this new camp? What happens when compelling but competing philosophies about the meaning and purpose of Jewish life must coexist within one institution? How should Ramah address the various convictions, controversies, and anxieties prevalent among North American Jews? How can Judaism be transmitted to children and to teenagers as vital, engaging—and necessary?

We live in a time when the Jewish community is searching for ways to revitalize existing institutions and to build new ones, ranging from community high schools to informal educational settings for adults. What can we learn about the centrality of vision to the excellence of an educational institution? How can the experience of Ramah illuminate contemporary efforts to transform Jewish life in North America through education?

Seymour Fox, a central figure in Jewish education, was instrumental in developing Ramah from philosophy to practice.

You've made the claim that every educational initiative should be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem self-evident to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. What makes you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people might view as an introductory or preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

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

Let me put it another way. Education that is essentially *pareve* — that's neutral and doesn't take a strong stand — has little chance of succeeding. In my experience, all effective education has at its foundation a distinct and well-considered vision. The proof of that proposition is all around us. A few years ago, Dr. Marshall S. Smith, the current U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite a great deal of new legislation and the expenditure of huge sums of money from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. Among the few exceptions were those schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, made a similar point in her 1983 book,

The Good High School. In an attempt to discover “what works,” she visited and analyzed six well-regarded American secondary schools, of which two were urban, two were suburban, and two were “elite.” 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 the 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 visions that animated these schools were loudly proclaimed or quietly whispered, they were present in each of these institutions.

Another book from the mid-1980s, *The Shopping Mall High School* (by Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen), examines the other side of the coin — that is, what happens when you maintain a school *without* a clear vision. In most American high schools, almost everything is available in small doses, and everything tends to have the same weight, the same ranking. The authors contend that in trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, these schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls.

“Both types of institution,” they write, “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 an understatement, contemporary high schools “take few stands on what is educationally or morally important.”

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it’s getting easier. Five or ten years ago you had to convince people about the importance of vision, but today the idea is increasingly accepted — if only because we’ve all seen what happens in its absence. There is a professor at Stanford University who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He claims that if a company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes part of the culture and is internalized, the company can survive periods of weak leadership or even a move toward control by the bureaucracy. I believe this is true of educational institutions as well.

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

A vision is a vibrant entity. It’s a portrait of ideal human beings shaped by education — an image rich and exciting enough to guide your future choices. A vision is inspired by your belief about human possibility, while being influenced by your experience of human fallibility.

An educational vision must be able to answer certain questions: What kind of people will graduate from this school, camp, or other educational setting? What will they understand and believe? How will they behave? What will they know how to do? In what ways will they be able to contribute to the community? And what qualities, intrinsic to your vision, will enable them to keep growing and learning?

Vision, then, is inherently both dynamic and flexible. It is not a mission statement or a declaration of purpose, which often end up as frozen, static assertions. And a vision is more than a goal. Goals are important, but they are specific to a particular

educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching science and another for the study of Talmud. Out of your vision will flow a series of goals for educators, parents, community leaders, and students, who will apply or translate that vision into concrete programs.

A great vision will inspire educators to creativity and even to the invention of new kinds of institutions. Goals certainly matter, but by themselves they're not sufficient. And they are often so pedantic as to leave no room for vision. A vision that is intelligent and worthwhile is guided by great ideas that 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.

I would add that it's often easier to inspire people if you're presenting them with a vision that is essentially extremist or fanatic, that depicts the world in stark, well-defined, black-and-white polarities. The challenge is to inspire them with a vision that includes a commitment to concepts such as religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy.

Visions in General Education

Let's look at some specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind of late because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him and his ideas today, just as I believe that in the Jewish world we will soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan, who viewed himself as a student of Dewey.

Dewey had a vision of the world as ever changing, as people continually tried to modify themselves and their environment. He believed the best way to approach such a world was through rational efforts at perceiving problems and inventing solutions. Dewey had an unlimited optimism about what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education.

Today, it is difficult to appreciate just how significant a place he occupied in American culture. On the first page of his book, Ryan quotes the eminent historian Henry Steele Commager, who observed that "for a generation no issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken."

Dewey's followers took many of the ideas he wrote about and applied them to practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who established hundreds of Waldorf schools across the country. To this day, his followers discuss every issue, down to what color to paint the walls in order to achieve a particular result that is part of Steiner's vision. Whenever you have a vision that excites and inspires people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate it into practice.

Another example of a successful vision is the one developed at the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence endures to this day. His vision had to do with the centrality of great ideas, which in turn generated the Great Books movement. Over the years, Chicago has probably produced more Nobel Prize winners and university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely dynamic place that was guided by a vision, and it has remained a great center of intellectual excitement.

Visions in Jewish Education

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and many of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish world. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would reflect his concept of Judaism, in which the intellect played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that to create a new, vibrant society in the Jewish homeland, you had to educate a new type of individual.

One of the most important family dynasties in Jewish education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that of the Brisker Rav of Lithuania, whose descendants include the Soloveitchiks. The followers of the Brisker Rav established a network of important and influential yeshivot. In some cases, they deliberately chose to teach and study texts that other rabbis felt were impractical, such as the sections on animal sacrifices or the regulations pertaining to the Temple in Jerusalem. Most other yeshivot in those days concentrated on sections of the Talmud that were more immediately applicable — texts that dealt with topics such as civil damages, marriage and divorce, the rituals of prayer — cases of Jewish law that you could actually *use*.

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more esoteric sections of the Talmud was to miss the point. As they saw it, the classical texts constituted a coherent system. If you omitted certain sections, you were not only in danger of distorting the tradition; you were also liable to overlook some great treasures. Who is to say where you will find the most significant ideas? One cannot presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Another major nineteenth-century educational reform movement was the Musar movement, with its emphasis on *mitzvot ben adam l'chavero* [the commandments pertaining to interpersonal relations]. The Musarists introduced a serious concentration on moral and spiritual issues into the yeshiva world of Lithuania. In most yeshivot, Musar [ethics] had been considered “soft,” unworthy of significant attention. But in the late nineteenth century, the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter developed entire institutions that emphasized Musar. They believed that the exclusive emphasis on *pilpul* [the concentration on subtle, legal, conceptual differences] in most yeshivot could lead to a distortion of Judaism and the inability of the students to develop sufficient social and ethical sensitivities. The Musarists were reacting to a world they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently concerned with morality and personal responsibility.

Their opponents countered that the Musarists were demeaning the power of the text, which in itself contained the power to affect people's behavior. But over time the Musarists prevailed, and their influence penetrated most of the Lithuanian yeshivot.

The Vision 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. In the late 1940s, the founders of Ramah could have invested their energies in any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the years following World War II — problems that we still face 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. In an era when children of immigrants were busily trying to become Americans, the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. The founders of Ramah wanted to go beyond what a school could achieve. By trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture, they sought to accomplish what the family and the community were no longer willing or able to do.

We wanted to create an educational setting where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives. We hoped this would nurture Jews who were both deeply committed to their tradition and actively involved in American society.

Why a camp? Because even the best school operates only part of the day. We wanted to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole person, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for no more than eight weeks at a time. Within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our aims could be educational in the broadest sense — not only teaching Hebrew, but grappling with all kinds of social concerns: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child misses his cue during a performance? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living *halakhah*.

Take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's good to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence people sometimes get hurt. You have to draw a line between the

need to win, or to excel, and a concern for people's feelings. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or Hebrew, our goal was to lower the possibility for hurt without seriously compromising the aspiration for excellence. The phrase "not living up to his/her potential" was heard often, which led to a measure of disequilibrium in the lives of the campers. There was an emphasis on ethics and caring — but also on growth. Ramah was not a laid-back place.

The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. Ultimately they chose camping, because the issues that they believed needed to be addressed could not be addressed by a school, not even a day school. Among other limitations, a school isn't the best place to nurture a child's Jewish emotional development. The challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child — including his or her mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional and spiritual issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

The Jewish Ideas behind Ramah

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

I would start with Professor Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism during Ramah's early years. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, when Ramah was established, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s, when the camps flourished. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, a message that spoke not only to Jews but to the larger society as well. In 1951, he was featured in a *Time* Magazine cover story as the leader of a

Jewish renaissance in America. In 1958, Dr. Finkelstein even wrote an article on business ethics for *Fortune Magazine* as a result of a meeting with Henry Luce, the magazine's founder, who had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world.

Above all, Dr. Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply Talmudic principles to the issues raised by living in a modern American society. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify. He wanted to tell the Committee: "I will not answer you, because you have no right to question me this way. America is based on the ideal of human dignity. In our tradition, we also have a conception of human dignity. Parts of it are delineated in the volume *Sanhedrin* of the Talmud in a concept known as *drishah v'chakirah*, which deals with how you may question a witness. And you cannot interrogate an individual in this manner."

This was an essential Finkelsteinian response: Americans are sensitive to the Bible, and the Jewish interpretation of the Bible ought to become part of the public discourse. Dr. Finkelstein wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within their own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we Jews have been living on top of a volcano from the very beginning of our history, and we therefore had a great deal to offer a world that was beginning to understand that now we were *all* living on top of a volcano.

In postwar America, Dr. Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke out of a long and venerable tradition. He delivered the invocation at President Eisenhower's inauguration, and Eisenhower used to consult with him surprisingly often on ethical matters. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the Seminary's Conferences on Science, Philosophy and

Religion, where many individuals from a variety of world views and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. Louis Finkelstein's most significant influence on Ramah was his passion to create educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens.



Next, I would cite the great Talmudic scholar Professor Saul Lieberman and his emphasis on the close and careful study of Jewish texts. When the first Ramah camp opened in 1947, people were incredulous: "You're establishing a summer camp that includes *classes*?" In those days, young people went to camp to get *away* from classes, although there were some prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent. It was only much later that summer camps were established for the study of science or computers.

In effect, we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own educational director and staff. The daily classes were mostly text-based, and it was quite possible to spend a large part of the summer on just a few verses. Teaching was considered a full-time job, and the teachers were not given other duties, although multiple tasks would have made more sense economically. They therefore had ample time to prepare for class and were available after classes to any camper who might seek them out.

At Ramah we believed in exposing ideas to critique and inquiry rather than presenting them dogmatically. We never sought intellectual obedience. A common question the Talmud asks is: *Minah hani mili?* How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will pose this same question about the central assumptions of religious belief. How do you *know* there's a God? How do you *know* God or Moses wrote the Torah? One must allow these questions, and all questions, while recognizing

that a tradition that encourages difficult questions will every now and then produce a Spinoza, an Einstein, or a Freud, who will operate outside of the system.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, which isn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow the Five Books of Moses to be taught in the Rabbinical School because they would have to be studied critically and scientifically. Biblical criticism was so rife with controversy, especially the issue of the authorship of the Five Books of Moses, that the Seminary responded by avoiding the study of these texts entirely. The Prophets? Fine. But not the Torah.

Meanwhile, at Ramah we were experimenting with the curriculum on Genesis that was prepared by the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education. (The Melton Center was founded in 1960 at the Seminary; among its activities was a program to develop a new curriculum for the teaching of Bible in Jewish supplementary schools.) To a considerable extent, Ramah served as a testing ground for Melton material. This material, which included Professor Nahum Sarna's important book *Understanding Genesis*, argued that whether or not the Biblical text was divine in origin, it contained profound ethical and religious messages.

In the early 1960s, the volume on Genesis was in galleys, but we still didn't have official approval to use it. I went to see Professor Lieberman — not because I had to, but because it would have been irresponsible not to check with the Seminary synagogue's rabbi, who was officially responsible for the interpretation of Jewish law at the Seminary. I took with me a report on the social studies 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 Professor Lieberman, “and this is why we're publishing our book on Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as being divine in origin, we are demonstrating that it offers an enormously important ethical and religious message.”

At the time, much of the Seminary's theological position was roughly equivalent to what you might find today in some quarters of modern Orthodoxy. Ramah, however, was willing to take risks in order to achieve its educational goals, and the Seminary faculty was generally sympathetic to those needs.



Another important influence was Professor Mordecai Kaplan's view of Judaism as a civilization. He defined God as “power that makes for salvation.” He wanted to reconstruct traditional Jewish theological ideas so as to transform them from an otherworldly conception to a personal and social this-worldly conception of salvation. He was seen as a heretic by some of his Seminary colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologization of God. Some of Kaplan's colleagues believed that he was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. As the story goes, Kaplan replied that if the Seminary greats, especially Louis Ginsberg and Saul Lieberman, had dealt with theological questions, he would have left them alone; but their failure to address these issues forced him to attempt to fill the vacuum.

Kaplan joined the centuries-old conversation between Judaism and the great philosophers. He wanted Judaism to be in constant relationship with the world around it, and he brought the elements of music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns and expressions.



At the other end of the spectrum, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel's religious vision was a major influence on Ramah. Dr. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message about the way human beings should live. He viewed Shabbat as a great gift to the world, a sanctification of time in a society where that sanctity was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of certain American holidays were shifted merely for the convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend. "Can you imagine changing Rosh Hashanah so that it always falls on a weekend?" he asked.

For Heschel, prayer was the way for an individual to make contact with his innermost self. The whole question of what *t'fillah* [prayer] meant at Ramah was deeply influenced by Heschel and his students, including the concept of *kavannah* [devotional intention] and the idea of *t'fillah* as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement. But Heschel was also very concerned about the role of religion in the larger world. He marched in Selma with Martin Luther King as an expression of his own religious tradition. He believed that the most profound ideas in Judaism speak directly to contemporary social and political concerns.



Finally, there was Professor Hillel Bavli, a poet and professor of Hebrew literature. Dr. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog who made sure we really were using enough Hebrew at Ramah — no easy task. All of us believed that if you wanted to understand and be part of Jewish history, you had no choice but to master Hebrew; that was how you joined the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the other great

commentators and philosophers. Hebrew was also a vital link to the State of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist at first, and neither was I.

After years of success, it may be difficult to appreciate what an outrageous idea it was at the time to try to run a Conservative movement summer camp in Hebrew. Camp Massad was doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism *were* Massad's religion. In the Conservative movement, which was competing with other forces in the struggle to define authentic Judaism in the twentieth century, to have Hebrew as the official language of Ramah was an additional yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and today Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can acquire the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language?

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, would result in young people who were deeply rooted in their tradition through their attachment to Jewish texts, which they could now grapple with because they had already mastered the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the *method*, anyone can join the ongoing conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: The method must involve Hebrew.

But it's also possible to go too far, to stress Hebrew so much that you err in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, such as Mexico and Argentina, there are schools where Hebrew has become the main goal of Jewish education, and content is secondary. While Hebrew is essential, it is not sufficient. You need several other components — *mitzvot*, prayer, and a communal consciousness on several levels: one's immediate community, the extended Jewish community, one's national society, and the world at large. At Ramah we tried to bring all of these components together.

I regarded these five men — Louis Finkelstein, Saul Lieberman, Mordecai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Hillel Bavli — as our teachers. I spent hours talking with them, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit between this older generation and the next.

Ideas into Action: The Melton Faculty Seminar

In addition to these five professors, Ramah was also influenced by the Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide the camp. The Seminar, which ran through the late 1950s and 1960s, included some of the younger scholars at the Seminary, such as Walter Ackerman, Chaim Brandwein, Gerson Cohen, Sylvia Ettenberg, Lloyd Gartner, Avraham Holtz, Joel Kraemer, Morton Leifman, Shmuel Leiter, Yochanan Muffs, Louis Newman, Fritz Rothschild, Nahum Sarna, and David Weiss Halivni. To the best of my knowledge, the Melton Faculty Seminar was the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the United States.

Essentially we tackled two fundamental questions. First, what were the motifs, the essential themes that we wanted the camper to internalize through the Ramah experience? And second, what were the best ways to realize these goals?

We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today. There was a productive dialogue between the ideas of these scholars and their application at Ramah. A professor might teach an exciting course at the Seminary, and the following summer his students

would be teaching it at Ramah — to the staff, or perhaps even to the older campers.

The Seminar was always asking: What is the relevance of this particular Jewish idea, and when and how should it be taught? Some of these Seminar scholars taught at Ramah, because it was a place where you could not only be excited by ideas, but could witness their application in real-life situations. In fact, it was taboo to treat theory and practice as separate domains.

Ideas in Creative Tension

Two of the Seminary professors you mentioned, Heschel and Kaplan, had such different outlooks that they're generally seen as representing opposite poles of contemporary Jewish theology. Did these differences lead to problems in a camp that was searching for a clear religious ideology?

No, because from the start Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be guided by a single perspective. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because philosophers strive for coherence. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was also a practical place where ideas were put into action, and where an eclectic approach could provide a rich source of energy. The fact that both ends of the theological spectrum were represented at Ramah added intellectual tension and excitement.

The Seminary professors who served as mentors represented differing and sometimes conflicting ideas. But their various approaches had already managed to coexist within the framework

of the Seminary. Ramah tried, and was often able, to take their different conceptions a step further by building a society that was guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the people embodying these various visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when there is agreement on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Dr. Yochanan Muffs, a Seminary Bible scholar, once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism set forth in *Pirke Avot* [*Ethics of the Fathers*, an accessible and well-known section of the Talmud] — Torah, *avodah*, and *g'millut chasadim* [study, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness] — while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on the study of Torah, and the result will be disembodied intellects, which was precisely what concerned the Musarists. Focus only on prayer, and you risk becoming excessively inner-directed, which can lead to reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivity that is inconsistent with mainstream Judaism. Finally, *mitzvah* on its own can lead to a simplistic and mechanical pattern of observance. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in an uncomplicated world, but that's not our reality. The answer is to try to integrate these three forces so that they all form part of the same picture.

The Educational Ideas behind Ramah

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. Ramah also made extensive use of experts from the worlds of general education and the social sciences.

Because what we were trying to create required a wider range of expertise, we decided to supplement the Seminary faculty by inviting some of the leading scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and education to join us. We were determined to have the worlds of general and Jewish education "interpenetrate." The additional scholars who formed the Melton Advisory Board included some of the most thoughtful, creative minds in the field, such as Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; Fritz Redl, the psychoanalyst; Ralph Tyler, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, and a powerful force in American education; and Lawrence Cremin, the eminent historian of education.

Two of the scholars in this group were especially important to Ramah: Joseph Schwab, the prominent philosopher of education and curriculum theorist, and Bruno Bettelheim, the renowned psychoanalyst, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I had written my doctoral thesis about Freud and education under the guidance of both men at the University of Chicago.

The members of our Advisory Board were not paid for participating. They were attracted to Ramah by the scope of the project and were excited by the idea of being part of it. They were also impressed by how serious we were about training educational leaders. Professor Schwab even came to camp before the campers arrived to lead seminars for the staff.

Recently, somebody asked me what motivated these high-profile professors — some with little or no interest in Judaism, others who were not even Jewish — to contribute so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with scholars' wish for immortality, which occurs when people read their books and put their ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he lived to see them acted upon at Ramah, at Melton, and many other places. What we offered these scholars, as well as the Judaic

scholars on the Faculty Seminar, was a living laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them a confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around the conference table would actually materialize. What was talked about in November was often part of the camp's program the following summer. Moreover, we never undertook a project without first discussing it with them and paying close attention to their comments. We were giving these scholars an unusual opportunity — the possibility of making a real impact on a society.

Schwab, in particular, viewed Ramah as an ideal place to create disciples. Certainly he was the most important force in shaping my own ideas about education.

Could you say more about him? Schwab seems to have been the key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Joseph Schwab was born in a small town in Mississippi, where the entire Jewish community consisted of half a dozen families. Although he grew up knowing little about Judaism, he became intrigued by certain Jewish concepts, such as *mitzvah*. He devoted a great deal of his time to Ramah; between 1952 and 1966 I spent at least two days a month with him. He helped us think through issues such as the connection between the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (emotional) aspects of education. There was a natural fit between his ideas and our vision.

I should explain that Ramah was built on the belief that you have to make contact with young people on all levels — the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the aesthetic. Some people are touched by music, while others are tone-deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to the intellectual challenge in the rabbinic commentaries, or to theology.

Ideally, of course, youngsters will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal, and the mind is not the only means of access to it.

In an essay entitled “Eros and Education,” Schwab argued that the human mind is not only cerebral but also passionate, and that the intellect is not an emotion-free area. He also believed there were hardly any emotional areas that did not include cognitive elements. Schwab was convinced that for education there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, or between intellect and emotion.

Schwab wrote in that essay that Eros was all about “the energy of wanting.” He believed that the definition of “to know” had to include “to do.” The aim of education, he said, was to produce “*actively* intelligent people,” whom he described in this way:

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.

We also consulted with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. This was familiar territory for him because at the college of the University of Chicago nobody used textbooks, only primary sources. We spent hours with him discussing, for example, how best to teach adolescents the story of Jacob, Rebecca, and Isaac in the Book of Genesis. As presented in the text, Jacob and Rebecca can be viewed as scheming co-conspirators against Isaac. Jacob is deceitful, his mother is less than honest, and together they mislead poor Isaac into giving the birthright to Jacob instead of to Esau, the first-born.

How do you explain what is at stake here — the future of the people of Israel? How can you help adolescents discover that what appears to be a story about personal gain, about acquiring the birthright and its privileges, is actually a story about the future of the Jewish people: Which of Isaac's sons is qualified to forge a nation? How can you teach teenagers to consider the idea that a great leader can have great flaws, a persistent theme in the Torah? How do you convey to them that there are often shades of gray, when adolescents tend to see only black and white?

This is a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it with Schwab at length. 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 outfitted in summer clothing. How do you tell young people the truth about the world without doing damage to their innate idealism and hope?

Schwab was also involved in our work in leadership education. If you look at how leadership training has evolved in recent years, you will see two main schools of thought. The British school says: Study the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and John Locke will provide you with all the principles you will need. Alfred North Whitehead claimed that everything he had ever required to live the good life he found in the Bible and the literature of ancient Greece.

The American model, as you may expect, is more directly pragmatic. The Harvard Business School says: If we can provide enough case studies that illustrate the principles and include the situations you are likely to encounter during your career, you will succeed in the real world.

Schwab helped us develop a third conception, which was essentially a blend of the other two and which fit in perfectly with the

goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these principles. They must then ask themselves: If I acquire, accept, and understand these principles, what will my practice be like?

What was the contribution of Bruno Bettelheim?

First, I must say that although Bettelheim's reputation has been challenged in recent years, that in no way diminishes his important contribution to Ramah. Second, although some members of the Melton Advisory Board responded to Ramah in terms of their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who regarded Judaism and all religions as anachronistic. And yet he clearly appreciated what we were trying to do educationally.

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago I had worked at Bettelheim's Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children. Once, with thechutzpah of youth, I said to him that the school didn't always measure up to his descriptions of it in his book, *Love is Not Enough*.

"You're right," he replied. "The book outlines what the school was *supposed* to be." He acknowledged that it often fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean it wasn't guided and directed by that vision.

One of the distinguishing marks of Bettelheim's school was its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for the children. To make this happen, Bettelheim used every resource at his disposal — from architecture to food. We believed that a camper's cabin at Ramah should function in a similar way, as a supportive environment against the inevitable pressures and problems created by an intense milieu. Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

We were influenced by Bettelheim when we asked that each camp director show us the menu for the first few days of the summer. We wanted to make sure that all our camps were serving familiar foods like hamburgers — foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a youngster's home to this new environment. We also made sure that we were prepared to provide as many additional helpings as a camper wanted, so that nobody would leave the table feeling hungry, especially during the first week. We even had the counselors serve extra snacks at night. We were a bit extreme when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board!

Another lesson I learned from Bettelheim was the significance of the school custodian, who, for some students, was a more significant educational figure than the teachers or other professionals. At Ramah we paid close attention to the character of all the people we hired, not only the counselors, specialists, and teachers, but the service staff as well. Many of our dishwashers were students from Ivy League colleges. They didn't know Hebrew, but they wanted to be at Ramah and would accept any job in order to spend a summer at camp. We responded by giving them the best teachers, including, quite often, the professor-in-residence.

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy — that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He also taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where campers could be wild and noisy, and another place where a youngster could find peace and quiet. And it was Bettelheim who introduced me to the distinguished Harvard psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed and that history was

reversible. This was an idea educators needed to hear, and before long, Erikson's books were being read and discussed at Ramah.

Finally, Bettelheim helped us understand that we had a tremendous built-in advantage that we hadn't fully been aware of: Because Ramah was in opposition to American suburban values, the camp was inherently countercultural in a way that was attractive and yet constructive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

A Philosophical Commitment to Excellence

It seems to me that during its earlier 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 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 succeeded. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was often difficult to get in, and there were waiting lists. We believed that if you invested in the right people, they could change the world. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone could 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 Faculty Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one. How do you fill the enormous gap between a text, the internalization of its message, and its incorporation into behavior? How do you move from mastering an idea to living it? And how does your practical experience affect your theory and help you revise it?

Although we didn't articulate it in exactly these terms, we were working with a process that involved five levels.

The first level is philosophy, and it asks theoretical questions. What is your conception of Judaism, of an ideal Jewish society, and of the individual? What is your conception of knowledge? Does knowledge consist of a mastery of facts? Of basic principles? If you know, will you therefore do?

The second level narrows the scope to the philosophy of education. How does your philosophy guide your conception of education? In our case, how do your ideas about Judaism shape the vision of what education should or can be?

The third level deals with the theory of practice, and takes the process one step further. How does your philosophy of education shape and alter your educational goals? How does it shape your conception of curriculum, or of teacher education, or of informal education?

The fourth level brings the discussion to actual practice: pedagogy, in-service education, and classroom management.

The fifth level consists of monitoring and evaluation, which serves as a corrective for each and all of the levels.

But these levels are not linear, and you need not move from Level One to Level Five. Some of the most effective work in education begins with Level Five — with a careful, critical look at your ongoing program, which often demonstrates that you may not be

accomplishing what you set out to do. This may lead you to reexamine your practice or your philosophy of education, which may in turn lead you to reconsider your basic assumptions about Judaism and knowledge. In other words, you return to Level One.

In our discussions about Ramah, we often started from Level Four and then moved on to Levels One through Five. Moving from theory to practice, or from practice to theory, is a dynamic process that forces you to constantly observe, rethink, and — ideally — change and improve.

These distinctions are still somewhat theoretical and abstract. Could we look at a specific area, such as *t'fillah* [prayer], in light of these five levels?

If you are considering how to deal with *t'fillah* in an educational setting, the five levels might apply as follows:

Level One: What is prayer? Why do we praise God, who clearly doesn't need our praise? One answer, suggested by Maimonides, is that God is a role model. When we praise God for being merciful, we do so in order to articulate and emulate that particular quality. If we restricted our discussion to this sort of issue, we would have a philosophical treatment of prayer.

Level Two might ask: What is the role of prayer in your philosophy of education? What specific ideas about it do you want to convey to children? How do you make contact with the spirituality of a child?

With Level Three we move into ideas that will guide educational practice. Can these ideas be taught to younger children? You might decide that you really can't accomplish much in this area until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or chanting certain words will set off something inside you. Or you might ask whether

meditation fits into your understanding of Jewish prayer. And if it does, how will you teach it?

Actually, that last question brings us to Level Four, which deals with pedagogy. How, in the classroom, will teachers help students develop a sensitivity to words or to *nusach* [the traditional chant of the prayer service]? How will teachers be trained to carry out these assignments?

Level Five asks: As you monitor this activity, how will you make the necessary changes as a result of what you observe or learn? Does your experience support your theory?

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

In order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. As Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately respond to. It takes hard work and experience before you appreciate it. Similarly, for *t'fillah* to succeed you have to work at it and experience it. Eventually it becomes meaningful — or it doesn't. Rejection is always an option, as long as it's thoughtful and considered.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism at Ramah would become deeply involved in it. Of course, all education works on that premise. If you are introduced to a profound idea by a fine teacher in the right environment, there's a good chance you'll accept it. This is a faith assumption of education.

But while *Shacharit* [morning] services were compulsory at Ramah, afternoon services were not. This was an important

difference between Ramah and the Seminary. *Halakhically*, the *Minchah* service is also compulsory, but there were limits as to how much the uninitiated camper could be expected to understand and appreciate. After all, the majority of these youngsters had never experienced any daily prayers. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on *Minchah* at camp, we were likely to lose much of the impact of *Shacharit*.

In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional *Minchah* at Ramah, basing the decision on educational considerations rather than *halakhic* principles. It was a difficult debate, and ultimately the issue was decided by a single vote.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, not everybody observes Shabbat in exactly the same way?

As we saw it, the camp's public space was to be maintained as a religious preserve. We didn't legislate against the use of a radio in the privacy of a cabin, for we made a distinction between the public space and private space. We enabled campers and staff alike to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible within the public areas of the camp. As with the issue of *Minchah*, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not a *halakhic* decision but an educational one.

On the other hand, many other practices and activities at Ramah were non-negotiable. These included Hebrew, daily classes, morning services, kashrut, the recitation of *birkat ha-mazon* [grace after meals] — and, in a very different sphere, instructional swim.

Let's return to the five levels that move us from the theoretical realm to the practical and back again. We've

already seen how they might apply to prayer. But what about a very different area, such as sports?

Level One would begin with general philosophical questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is the conception of a healthy body in our tradition different from that of other traditions?

Then, in Level Two, you might ask: What is the role of sports in your conception of education? You might, as John Dewey did, discuss the importance of rules, fairness, cooperation and competition.

In Level Three you would think about what role sports might play in your program. Are you prepared to let a camper complete the summer with no significant athletic experiences? What about those campers who simply don't like sports? Or swimming?

In Level Four you might think about how you will teach respect for rules and fairness. How will you teach youngsters to be good losers — or good winners, for that matter? What are your methods of teaching these values?

And in Level Five you would take a critical look at your program and measure your accomplishments. Have your students internalized the values of fairness and good sportsmanship? What changes or improvements need to be introduced in your program?

That sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really is a link between those ideals and 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, but no matter what we were discussing, or how important it was, at 11:45 PM each night two counselors would rush to this boy's cabin and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they would wake him up and change his sheets so none of the other campers would be aware of the mishap when they woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the principle of *ha-malbin et p'nei chavero b'rabim* — that you must avoid a situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

That brings to mind another case involving this same principle. We had a problem one summer with adolescent girls who, after lights out, would conduct "bull sessions" — discussions in which, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl's faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. These sessions invariably ended with girls in tears, and with some of the girls being scapegoated.

I was the camp director that summer, and when this developed into a serious, continuing problem, I was tempted to outlaw these sessions. But I knew that the campers could continue holding bull sessions as soon as the counselor was out of earshot. When the situation finally got out of control, I came in to talk to the girls.

"We don't understand," they told me. "We're just trying to help each other."

"That sounds fine," I said, "but may I sit in?" I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. "You know," I told them, "I appreciate what you're doing. I accept your aims, but I have a problem with your method. One of the things we don't do in

a Jewish community like Ramah is publicly embarrass our fellow human beings. What if we studied a text together that deals with how people should behave toward one another, and then each girl can do her own self-evaluation privately?”

At this point, because an alternative was available, the more sensitive girls prevailed and the study session was accepted. Each night we studied the sixth chapter of *Pirke Avot* and discussed, among other things, what it means to be a *re'a ahuv* — an intimate friend, someone you could confide in, who would be supportive and would help you muster the strength you need to change and improve. We read this chapter every night for four weeks and had some very good talks. At Ramah, this sort of thing was part of the director's job definition.

Investing in Staff

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one cabin — but what about the rest of the staff? There were so many specialists in camp.

We weren't too concerned with conserving our resources! We had three full-time staffs at Ramah — counselors, specialists in sports and the arts, and teachers. Financially, of course, it was outrageous. There were no dual roles: Different people had different functions. This was part of the audaciousness of the place. We were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pressured you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to problems for the camper. Whether in sports, music, drama, or any other area, competition and striving for excellence can cause problems. Classes were demanding, too, because the teacher would force

you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, it was up to the counselor to pick up the pieces.

We also co-opted an idea from the kibbutz movement, which saw itself as an *edah mechanekhet* [an educating community], of having the teaching staff available throughout the day. The kibbutz teacher would teach a class in the morning and would continue to debate issues with you through the day. The same was true of our teachers — at least in theory.

An even more unusual position for a camp was that of the librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available all day to anyone, whether camper or staff member. And just as some camps have an artist-in-residence, each Ramah camp had a professor-in-residence, generally a Seminary faculty member whose role was to encourage intellectual ferment. He or she was there to listen, to teach, to prod, to criticize, and to help the camp community respond to *halakhic* problems that would invariably arise during the course of the summer.

Communal Leaders as Partners

Let's step back from the camp community to consider a constituency that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the communal leaders, who as board members assume ultimate responsibilities for the various camps.

Ramah, from its inception, was fortunate in recruiting outstanding communal leaders. While today, communal leaders are more supportive of good educational programs and more active in their support, that's a fairly recent development. In the 1970s and 1980s, most American Jews of status and means cared

mainly about Israel, hospitals, and defense organizations. Jewish education and culture ranked very low. Four notable exceptions were way ahead of their time and were interested in education: Sam and Florence Melton of Columbus, Philip Lown of Boston, and Leighton Rosenthal of Cleveland.

Now it's different. More and more, people are coming to realize that Judaism's and Israel's best asset is a Jewishly educated Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing significantly in Jewish education. Fortunately, this view has prevailed, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. Mort Mandel, who, with his brothers, Jack and Joe, established the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, helped launch this movement in a serious way. Jewish education has now been raised to the very top of the agenda of most Jewish organizations and institutions.

In general, communal leaders are more knowledgeable and insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support. In addition, we have major assets now that we didn't have then. There are academics and well-informed communal leaders all over North America who care about Jewish education and see it as important. Jewish studies courses in colleges and universities are one of the big success stories of American Jewish life. Families today can draw on a wide variety of programs. There are hundreds of day schools in North America and any number of excellent organized trips to Israel. There are young Jews in general education who are interested in making a contribution to Jewish education. There are Jewish leaders and philanthropists publicly proclaiming that Jewish education is a top priority. For all these reasons, I'm optimistic.

This may be the right moment to ask for your thoughts on what, for many would-be institution builders, is a difficult

and intimidating process, although it's essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm referring, of course, to the whole question of fund-raising.

This may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is not the biggest problem. Although funds have not always been easily available, these days there are enough resources to support a wide variety of fine projects.

The key factors in successful fund-raising are the strength of your ideas, your commitment to those ideas, and your enthusiasm. I have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I would have been willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're not deeply committed to the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey them to the people you're approaching. And you have to *mean* it. I believe 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 meeting with is at least as intelligent as I am. There's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it is my job to convince him — or, better still, to educate him. Only if you take the time to educate people about a project will they be able to make intelligent decisions about it. If you treat potential donors as people who can join *with* you and help you in creating this new enterprise, you may get somewhere.

Although the situation is far better than it used to be, the relationship between Jewish educators and communal leaders is still too adversarial. The professionals still ask: "How can this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew?"

And the communal leaders still think: "This guy is a shlepper. If he were really successful, he'd be in my business." This is unfortunate, but it's true.

What are the biggest mistakes you see in fund-raising?

I see three common mistakes, and they're connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor as if he or she were naive. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is not disclosing the full truth about the undertaking, including its problems and failures.

Here's my favorite fund-raising story: Sam Melton was visiting Ramah in the Poconos, and one morning we passed a ten-year-old boy on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asked him.

"*Chumash*," answered the boy.

"*Chumash* with what?" Sam asked.

And the boy replied, "*Chumash* with Melton."

At that moment all my fund-raising efforts were vindicated.

How do you respond to those who ask why educational change takes so long and costs so much?

With this analogy: Would it make any sense to study mortality rates in surgical wards where the instruments weren't sterilized? As long as teachers are often untrained or unmotivated, and certainly underpaid, what can you expect? When your mission is to conquer a disease, you don't withdraw funding because you haven't found a cure despite years of research. On the contrary: You invest additional money until you do. We have just begun doing that in Jewish education. It's too early to ask whether the investment is too great, or whether it will take too long.

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 often. We couldn't always justify the educational investment on economic grounds, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, in which we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high school graduates who agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a purely economic standpoint it was foolish to invest so much money in that program. And what about the professor-in-residence and the camp librarian? These people were expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs? But when you give parents reason to believe that you're helping their child become a *mensh*, you can ask for a great deal.

When Ramah first started, we had to make a critical decision: Who would head the camps? Should it be an educator with vision who could then hire a talented business manager, or did we need a talented manager who would hire a creative director? The Seminary, in partnership with an outstanding board of communal leaders, decided that Ramah should be led by educators, by people with a vision. Each of the camps had a capable business manager, of course, and that job was vitally important, but the camp was always led by educators.

Where Ramah Failed

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, even if you start with cognac you'll

be lucky to end up with grape juice. Looking back on it, what are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

I can identify five significant failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of our work. Ralph Tyler once told me that not doing this was the educational equivalent of not carrying out diagnostic tests until the patient was leaving the hospital. In other words, we often had 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 evidence. It's amazing that, as far as I can determine, we never asked our campers to write about their experiences at Ramah! We were so busy building something new that we didn't ever stop to evaluate it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and it may sound like a luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a self-evaluation, it's more likely to be used as a fund-raising technique rather than a way of improving the enterprise. But it's something we should have done.

Ramah's second failure was that, despite all our efforts, we never really became a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and while Hebrew was the official language at camp, 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 did neither. We had no graduated curriculum for the teaching of Hebrew at Ramah. We had no language labs. We didn't even look

to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at it only because Hebrew was their chief concern.

I must accept some of the blame for this failure. My attitude was: If there's a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. In the Melton Faculty Seminar, Gerson Cohen and Shmuel Leiter 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 communal leaders and a nurturer of directors. She was also a great facilitator and a peacemaker between warring factions.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel, which didn't always receive its rightful place on our agenda. On the other hand, the fact that hundreds of former Ramah campers now live in Israel suggests that we must have been doing something right in this area.

For years I did my best to keep Israelis out of our camps, because the Israelis I had met who wanted to work in an American summer camp seemed inappropriate as educators for Ramah. But eventually I joined those who decided to bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and specialists. They turned out to make a real contribution.

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. One reason we hired full-time camp directors was our expectation that they would maintain the camp program throughout the year by working with the Conservative movement's youth program, the Leadership Training Fellowship (LTF). 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. In this area we simply quit too early; the idea didn't advance far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum for the camp program as a whole. 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. Over the years, we failed to document or preserve any number of innovative and creative projects. There was far too much reinventing of the wheel and too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: We were afraid of formalizing what we had because it might have inhibited creativity. But this was a mistake.

The fifth failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between the rarefied atmosphere of Ramah and the camper's home community, despite the fact that we paid a lot of attention to this problem and were probably on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help campers, newly excited about Jewish practice, who return to a non-kosher or otherwise non-observant household. Because we respected the campers' family relationships, we did not encourage them to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat, or do, in their own homes.

But more often than we anticipated, the reentry problems arose not with the campers' families but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, campers found it hard to return to a service that suddenly seemed stilted and complacent, and to a rabbi who seemed formal when contrasted with the informality and warmth of camp. We even had youngsters who refused to attend synagogue services after camp because the service no longer felt authentically Jewish to them.

In a sense we were creating misfits, but we were arrogant enough to think our campers could turn the Conservative movement around. And they did, to some extent, although it took years.

Unexpected Successes

In addition to the successes we worked hard for, we had a few others that we hadn't really anticipated. Many Ramah campers went on to become rabbis, professors of Judaica at American and Israeli universities, or prominent community leaders. Today, Ramah graduates are extremely well represented in professional Jewish life and in institutions of Jewish culture and education — in all denominations. And a great many others have made aliyah.

Second, we recruited and developed our own personnel. 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 they were decently paid, and we created a new Jewish profession: camp director. These people were given tenure, just like university faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups, such as staff, campers, parents, rabbis, educators, and communal leaders, not to mention such complex issues as religious ideology and finance. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant they had a clear and obvious career line, usually in the pulpit, but sometimes in formal education or Jewish communal life. At Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their future careers — some of them for years, and others for their entire professional lives.

Despite our failures, Ramah worked. I've been in the Jewish education business a long time, and nowhere else have I seen a

closer correlation between what we set out to do and what we actually accomplished. The ultimate proof, of course, are the campers. They may have hated Hebrew school, but they really learned, loved, and lived Judaism at Ramah.

They also loved and appreciated the *people* at Ramah. I have no idea how many deep and lasting friendships began at Ramah, but there have been a great many. And many marriages, too. All over North America and Israel, you can find young people whose parents — and increasingly, *grandparents* — met each other at Ramah.

Lessons for New Institutions

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

First, Ramah demonstrates how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can then stretch itself. Second, I think there is something to be learned about how to combine sophisticated approaches to content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty details.

Ramah was also about investing in talent, and the vital importance of communal supporters. In our case, the communal leaders protected us from attempts to dilute the educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of deep conviction. Ramah made it possible for educators, rabbis, scholars, and communal leaders to join forces. There was a real generosity of spirit and a genuine attempt to understand the other person's position. Ramah was more than a camp; it was an educational movement.

The success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that *still* don't exist. At some point we will probably see the creation of institutions that combine the day school with the community center, breaking down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the students of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, such an institution, when it finally comes into existence, will serve as an intensive training ground for Jewish citizenship.

The next challenge, in my view, is to provide for the needs of post-materialist people. More and more, people are looking for meaning in their lives. They want to know what our tradition is all about, and our job is to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms that speak to them. From time to time a genius will emerge, a Heschel or a Kaplan, but you can't sit back and wait for them. It's far better, in my view, to build places where potential Heschels and Kaplans will be nurtured, develop, and flourish.



Bibliography

The following abridged bibliography may be of interest to the reader.

Vision: For general education

Marshall Smith, Sara Lightfoot, and David Cohen present the argument for the importance of vision in determining the impact of educational institutions.

- Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systematic School Reform," in *Politics of Education Association Yearbook* (1990), pp. 233-267.
- Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
- David K. Cohen, Eleanor Farrar, and Arthur G. Powell, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1985).

Alan Ryan has powerfully described the impact of John Dewey on American intellectual life and education in:

- Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and The High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995).

For an example of the way that Steiner's students apply his philosophy to education, see:

- E.A. Stockmeyer, *Rudolph Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools* (Stourbridge, England: The Robinswood Press, 1991).

Vision: For Jewish education

Some examples of the power of ideas for Jewish education are found in:

- Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the 'Musal' Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

The power of ideas for Zionist education are explored in:

- Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel* (Hebrew, two volumes. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1986, 1993).

Gerson Cohen argues for the importance of locating the ideas that will lead to a vision for Jewish education and the need to develop a vision for Jewish education in North America in:

- Gerson D. Cohen, "From Scholarship to Paideia: A Case Study," in *From the Scholar to the Classroom: Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*, edited by Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), pp. 31-58.

Israel Scheffler and Isadore Twersky have helped me understand the significance of vision for Jewish education and for general education. I am grateful to Professor Twersky for disclosing the visions of Jewish education of Maimonides and Brisk; and to Professor Scheffler for analyzing the vision of John Dewey and for his suggestions concerning leadership education. Their ideas, as well as my own, will appear in a forthcoming publication:

- *Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of Jewish Education*, edited by Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler with the assistance of Daniel Marom, to be published by the Mandel Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Camp Ramah and its History

- *The Ramah Experience: Community and Commitment*, edited by Sylvia Ettenberg and Geraldine Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in cooperation with The National Ramah Commission, 1983). The chapter by Burton I. Cohen, "A Brief History of the Ramah Movement," presents the history of Ramah; however, the entire book is of importance for those who wish to gain a perspective on the theory and practice of the Ramah movement.

The Relationship of the Cognitive and Emotional Domains for Education

Joseph Schwab and Israel Scheffler have written key essays on this topic:

- Joseph J. Schwab, "Eros and Education," *Journal of General Education* 8 (1954), pp. 54-71.
- Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions* (New York-London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 3-30.

The Practical

Joseph Schwab has made a key contribution to our thinking concerning the practical nature of the field of education. His ideas were developed in four monographs:

- The Practical I — “The Practical: A Language for Curriculum” (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1970).
- The Practical II — “The Practical: Arts of the Eclectic,” *School Review* 79 (1971), pp. 493-542.
- The Practical III — “The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum,” *School Review* 81 (1973), pp. 501-522.
- The Practical IV — “The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 13:3 (1983), pp. 239-365.
- Israel Scheffler, in his volume *Four Pragmatists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), particularly in his chapter on John Dewey, presents a penetrating analysis of the means-ends relationship for the field of education.

An Understanding of the Adolescent

Our thinking was very much influenced by the writings of two psychoanalysts, Eric H. Erikson and Bruno Bettelheim.

Erikson's paper on youth and his books on Luther and Gandhi helped us understand the thinking and feeling of the adolescent, as well as the concept of charisma:

- “Youth: Fidelity and Diversity,” *Daedalus* (Winter 1962).
- *Young Man Luther* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1958).
- *Gandhi's Truth: On Origins of Militance and Violence* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).
- Bruno Bettelheim's volume on the Orthogenic School, *Love is Not Enough* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1950), was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.



The Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education

The Melton Center was established in 1960 at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton program for the teaching of Bible was piloted at the Ramah camps. The Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

During the years of my direct involvement with the Melton Center, Louis Newman served as its director. Joseph Schwab was the leading

educational consultant to the Center. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

- Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966).
- Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus: Part I* (New York: Behrman House, 1969).



The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the forefront of the movement to revitalize Jewish education. Among its publications are:

- Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, “Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations” (Jerusalem: The Mandel Institute, 1996).



From 1988 to 1990, the Mandel Associated Foundations, the JCC Association, and JESNA in collaboration with CJF convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Its recommendations were published in:

- *A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991).

One of these recommendations was the establishment of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE).



The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

CIJE is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the transformation of North American Jewish life through education. Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz.

- *Best Practices: Supplementary School Education* (New York-Cleveland: CIJE, 1993, 1996) argues the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in this setting.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this essay. It would never have been written without her persistence and her role as a creative, diligent, and patient editor. I am also grateful to William Novak, who brought both his skill as an interviewer and his knowledge of Camp Ramah to this work.

I was invited to join the staff of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in 1950 by Louis Newman, the director, and Sylvia Ettenberg, dean of students at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. As a result of their invitation, I spent eighteen wonderful years in a close association with the Ramah movement and have continued to watch it grow and flourish since then.

From 1950 to 1968, I was privileged to work with the staff and the leaders of the Ramah movement: the camp directors, Levi Soshuk, Rabbi David Mogilner, and Rabbi Marshall Meyer, all of blessed memory; and Rabbi Jerome Abrams, Dr. Walter Ackerman, Donald Adelman, Dr. Raphael Arzt, Dr. Burton Cohen, Rabbi Morton Leifman, Dr. Shmuel Leiter, Dr. David Lieber, Dr. Joseph Lukinsky, Louis Newman, Dr. Chaim Potok, Rabbi Moshe Samber, and Dr. Morton Siegel.

Following Bernard Resnikoff, David Mogilner and subsequently Burton Cohen were appointed directors of the National Ramah Commission, where each offered outstanding leadership to the movement as a whole. In 1989, Dr. Sheldon Dorph assumed the position of director; he is guiding Ramah with inspiration from its fiftieth anniversary into the future.

I learned a great deal from all of them.

Ramah was a partnership of educators, communal leaders, rabbis, and scholars. I have not written a history of Ramah and therefore cannot acknowledge many other people with whom I was fortunate to work. I must, however, mention Lou Winer, who, as a communal leader, was a source of continuous support and encouragement to the camp directors. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, as executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly from 1952 to 1989, helped us develop a common language with the rabbis, who contend with the reality of building Jewish life twelve months a year.

About the Authors

Seymour Fox, who was closely associated with Camp Ramah from 1950 to 1968, is president of the Mandel Institute in Jerusalem, an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Professor Fox was born in Chicago in 1929. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his rabbinical ordination from The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In 1954, he became director of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, the first Ramah camp. After serving in various other capacities at the Jewish Theological Seminary, he became dean of its Teachers Institute in 1959. In that year he founded the Mador program of Camp Ramah. In 1960, he founded the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

He moved to Israel in 1966 and was appointed Professor of Education and director of the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1969, he founded the Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. He has served as a senior consultant to four Ministers of Education.

Among his current responsibilities in Jerusalem, Professor Fox is chairman of the faculty of the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), a program for leaders in Jewish education; and academic director of the School for Educational Leadership, a program that trains the future leaders of Israeli education.

He is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles in the fields of Jewish and general education, including: *Freud and Education*; *From the Scholar to the Classroom*; *Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*; and *Philosophy for Education*.

Seymour Fox is married to Sue Mogilner-Fox and lives in Jerusalem. He has three sons, David, Eytan, and Danny.



William Novak spent ten years at Ramah camps in Canada, the Poconos, and Glen Spey, N.Y., where he was, at various times, a camper, a counselor, a music specialist, and a teacher. Novak is a

former editor of the journals *Response* and *New Traditions* and was one of the founders of *Moment* magazine. He is also the co-editor of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*.

As a writer, he has worked with a number of celebrities on their memoirs, including Lee Iacocca (*Iacocca*), Tip O'Neill (*Man of the House*), Magic Johnson (*My Life*), and Natan Sharansky (*Fear No Evil*).

William Novak lives in the Boston area with his wife and their three sons.



The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio, the Institute focuses on the development of educational leadership, professional and lay, for Jewish communities around the world and for Israel. In 1992, it established the School for Educational Leadership (SEL), which prepares senior professionals for Israel's educational system. In 1996, it established the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), an institution dedicated to the professional development of leaders in Jewish education throughout the world.

The Mandel Institute has undertaken a research and development program to articulate ideas that can form the basis for effective educational policy and practice. In its activities and publications, the Institute seeks to infuse the field with compelling theoretical and practical ideas relating to areas such as the content of Jewish education, the preparation of educational leaders, and conceptions of educational intervention.

The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

Created in 1990 by the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, CIJE is an independent, non profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Jewish life through education.

Its mission is to be a catalyst for systemic educational reform by: preparing visionary educational leaders capable of transforming North American Jewish education; developing informed and inspired communal leaders as partners in the reform effort; cultivating powerful ideas to illuminate Jewish learning and community; undertaking and advocating rigorous research and evaluation as a basis for communal policy; and creating a strategic design for strengthening the profession of Jewish education and mobilizing support for it.

In its pilot projects, CIJE identifies and disseminates models of excellence in Jewish education; and brings the expertise of general education to the field of Jewish education.

CIJE works in partnership with Jewish communities, institutions and denominations to make outstanding Jewish education a continental priority.