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Guiding Issues Study Group. New York, N.Y. meeting.
January 1998, December 1997-January 1998.

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Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Disposition: inline

Based on my own conversations with some of you and Chava Werber's efforts to speak with some of you regarding your schedules, it looks like January 19 and January 26 would work out for most (though not all of us for a NYC meeting of our group.

As I have mentioned to some of you, CIJE has agreed that it would be wise to incorporate the totality of its staff into the deliberations o this group concerning vision-sensitive educational change; and we have in effect been given the exciting charge of beginning conceptualizing set of two one-day CIJE staff retreats, scheduled for later in 1998. Joined if possible by Barry Holtz via teleconference from Jerusalsem, part of the tentative agenda for our January meeting is to begin this conceptualizing process. As we do so, we will be paying attention to the following kind of problem:

approaches to trying to encourage vision-sensitive educational practic tend to fall into two very diffrerent categories: a) they are incredib superficial, often relying on one-shot "visioning-exercises" that are not the product of deep reflection and that culminate in vision-statements that have little connection to participants' beliefs

or to practice; OR b) they are conceptualized as enormously complex, time-consuming enterprises that require more time, money, expertise, and patience than one can reasonably expect of most busy educators and lay leaders in the real world. IS IT POSSIBLE TO CONCEPTUALIZE AN APPROACH TO VISION-SENSITIVE EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT THAT AVOIDS THESE TWO EXTREMES -- that is both meaningful, rich with thoughfulness and Jewish ideas, and at the same time respectful of real-world constraint WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE? WHAT INTELLECTUAL, HUMAN AND OTHER RESOURCES WOULD IT REQUIRE?

In thinking about this question, it may prove valuable to carefully review our own ideas concerning vision-sensitive practice and change a they have emerged in our discussions over the last few years (as embodied in varied documents, including formal papers and meeting summaries).

We at CIJE have been thinking that it might be useful for our group to tackle the question laid out above against the background of the materials just referred tyo (to be sent out) at our January meeting. Integrated into this effort would be an opportunity to engage in some text study as well.

Please confirm your availability for one or both of the days specified above (and also if you have a strong preference). Ideally, we'll finalize a day by the end of the week. Also if you have any reactions or questions concerning the proposed topic -- or have some additional suggestions - please let me know.

I was very pleased with our July meeting and am looking forward to our gathering again soon.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best.

Dan

GUIDES GROUP

Updated 12/97

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Next meeting: Monday, January 19, 1997
9:30-5 pm
CIJE Conference room

MEMORANDUM

To: The Guiding Ideas Study Group (Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Alvan Kaunfer, Daniel Pekarsky, David Purpel, Nessa Rapoport, Linda Thal)

From: Daniel Pekarsky

Re: Our upcoming meeting on January 19th

Date: January 12, 1998

Cc: Devora Steinmetz

As you know, we'll be meeting on January 19 at CIJE (15 East 26th St, 18th floor, NYC) from 9:30 to 5 pm, and it looks like all of us will be able to be present for most, if not all, of the day. As discussed at our Providence meeting in the summer, David Purpel will be joining our group at this meeting.

At the heart of our January meeting is a question that is of critical practical importance to the work of CIJE and the institutions that are the focus of this work: namely, how can we help schools and congregations that feel the need for some guiding ideas to develop a powerful vision of what they are about that will express their aspirations as a community and meaningfully guide their efforts?

A guiding CIJE conviction (see, for example, the enclosed article by Daniel Pekarsky) is that one of the most serious problems with contemporary Jewish life and institutions is the absence of powerful visions that give direction and meaning to the activities of the participants. At the same time, our sense is that existing approaches to the challenge of developing a vision suffer from many difficulties, including one or more of the following:

1) They are done "on the fly", or superficially, without sufficient investment of time and reflection, and attention to process;
2) They stay at the level of collective values-clarification and consensus-building, without adequately engaging the participants in encountering rich Jewish texts and ideas that have the power to deepen their thinking about the basic questions they are considering;
3) The vision that is articulated reflects the thinking of only a small sub-group within the community;
4) In order to achieve consensus, the vision that is articulated is so parve or bland as to call forth little excitement and to offer little guidance;
5) For one or more of the foregoing reasons (or for other reasons), the vision remains disconnected from the community's activities and practices, or else is applied to the community's life in superficial or simplistic ways.

It is, however, one thing to point to the problems at work in existing efforts; it is a much more difficult challenge to identify an approach which meaningfully remedies such problems and is also "user-friendly", i.e., not so demanding or cumbersome as to discourage most anyone from taking it on. Hence our challenge: might it be possible for us to jointly develop a credible, real-world approach (at a level of generality and open-endedness to be determined) that we could recommend to institutions that come to us seeking help in developing a guiding vision--an approach that takes seriously the importance of wrestling with powerful Jewish ideas? This question will be at the heart of our January 19 meeting.

AGENDA FOR THE JANUARY 19 GUIDING IDEAS STUDY GROUP:

9:30 - 10:00 Introduction to the day

10:00 - 11:15 Jewish Text Study Session (dealing with the problem of change), led by Devora Steinmetz

11:30 - 1:00 Examining and evaluating how the problem of vision is understood and addressed in the context of several significant approaches to educational change.

1:00 - 1:45 LUNCH

1:45 - 4:00 Towards a more adequate approach to the challenge of vision: Responses to a case.

4:00 - 5:00 Concluding session

In preparation for our 11:30 session, I will be asking some of you to articulate for the group the way the question of vision is addressed in educational change movements that you personally are involved with or familiar with. Also in preparation for this session, I am enclosing:

a) An article describing Linda Thal's change-project with a congregation in Los Angeles, in which she describes how the problem of vision was addressed in that change-process, and

b) A piece that Amy Gerstein wrote for CIJE a year and a half ago in anticipation of the Jerusalem Goals Seminar. Please try to read these pieces in advance of our meeting.

As indicated above, the object of the afternoon session is to work towards an approach to the problem of vision under real world conditions that has a measure of integrity and a chance of being fruitful. In preparation for this session:

a) Please read the "CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM CASE-STUDY," which was recently used in a Synagogue 2000 seminar. This study describes a congregation that has decided to embark on a process of change designed to render it more vital. Notice that, for reasons that have to do with Synagogue 2000 project, attention focuses on religious services. While you may find the whole case of interest, our own work will primarily rely on the first section, which offers a portrait of this congregation.

b) Imagine that at the very start of the change-process, the key-players in this congregation recognize the desirability of articulating a guiding vision that will inform their approach to the religious and social life of this community. They have heard that you have some sophistication about this matter and come to you for advice about how to proceed. With attention to some of the problems articulated on page 1 above, try to lay out a process that you think would be helpful to them. Please come to our meeting ready to describe this process and to explain the rationale that informs it. Please feel free to indicate additional information you might need and to stipulate conditions that you think would need to be in place for the process you recommend to be effective.

Note: If you find it easier to enter into this activity with the Study Questions at the end of Part I, feel free to do so.

Reflections on The Goals Project Conception of Vision

Amy Gerstein

The Goals Project Conception of Vision

As I understand the Goals Project conception of vision it is one deeply rooted in a philosophical approach to vision as a picture of a particular kind of person. This conception involves both a substantive and content-based approach to describing human nature. Once a school holds this conception/definition of a vision, then they can develop strategies for employing this vision and assessing efforts to achieve that vision. Below I describe my initial understanding the dimensions of this conception of vision delineated in the five levels described by Danny Morom.

Level 1: Philosophy

This level is characterized by such questions: What is a human being? What is a Jew?

Level 2: Philosophy of education/Philosophy of Jewish education

What is an educated person or an educated Jew? Here, habits of mind and habits of heart would be articulated. Also, the larger aims of the community are involved at this level.

Level 3: Translation

This level describes moving from philosophical assumptions to a theory of practice in education.

Level 4: Implementation

At this level, the philosophy becomes very practical for education. Goals are defined and are used to create concrete structures and practice. For example, teacher training and curriculum development occurs at this level.

Level 5: Evaluation of Goals

Once the goals are explicit, authentic assessment of progress toward the goals becomes possible.

How the Goals Project conception differs from conceptions of vision within the field of school reform

My reflections regarding the Goals Project conception of vision and other conceptions of vision grow mostly out of my work in school reform. I will draw upon my experience in the field, my understanding of multiple reform initiatives, and a few key authors in this area. I am defining school reform as those initiatives which aim to fundamentally change the whole school. By whole school, I include structures, policies, practice, school culture and vision. These descriptions are broad brush strokes and are not meant to be comprehensive and specific. I describe how the current field of school reform defines vision, uses vision, derives vision, and regards vision as a strategy for change.

The Goals Project conception of vision significantly differs from other conceptions of vision in that the Goals Project conception is much more complex and finely described than ones that are traditionally described and used in reform. For example, vision is often talked about in general terms. What *is your vision? What are the qualities of students you are trying to achieve?* These questions are linked to levels one and two.

Sources and Uses of Vision

Within the field of school reform visions are typically developed out of a variety of sources which include:

1. Research on learning
2. Organizational theory and development
3. Beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning and the purposes of school
4. Experiential or practical wisdom

These cuts on vision are described often in strategic terms: as a lever for change, as a tool for designing curriculum, as a support for guiding the direction of change. These conceptions of vision differ from the Goals Project conception in that they are not mainly rooted in philosophical conception of the substance and content of human existence. They have many different sources: psychology, anthropology, sociology, and practice.

Reformers, inside and outside of schools, talk about the importance of shared vision in order for schools to change. This definition usually implies a strategic use of vision statements. Defining what is meant by a vision apart from a strategy is not typically a commonplace in practice or discourse in reform circles. Peter Senge, author of the Fifth Discipline, suggests that learning organizations need to have a shared vision:

> ...in order to create a sense of purpose that binds people together and propels them to fulfill their deepest aspirations. Catalyzing people's aspirations doesn't happen by accident; it requires time, care, and strategy. Thus the discipline of building shared vision is centered around a never-ending process, whereby people in an organization articulate their common stories--around vision, purpose, values, why their work matters, and how it fits in the larger world. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.298)

Senge is a proponent of vision as a strategy for reinforcing the development of a learning organization (one which is constantly renewing itself.) Yet the source of vision for Senge and others comes not from philosophical deliberation and examination of texts, but rather from peoples' values and experiences. Creating these shared visions involves continual work and attention to eliciting these values.

> [A]t the heart of building shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.299)

Many schools engaged in comprehensive reform engage members of the school community to ask the question: "What do we want our students to know and be able to do when they graduate?" It is this question that supports and guides their work. In the Coalition of Essential Schools members call it "planning backwards." Once a teacher begins with a conception of what type of student the school is aiming for, then he or she can design curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment accordingly. The answer to this essential question is derived from individuals' beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning. Again, the Goals Project approach to vision suggests that teachers would need to be more deeply grounded in philosophy and a set of essential texts to develop the beginnings of a vision. A long term process of developing goals would ultimately result in implementation.

Providing guide posts

Some reform initiatives provide a broad vision (set of principles or beliefs) that schools are encouraged to use to inform their own vision development process. These general statements are used as a set of guide posts for school communities to develop programs and even vision statements that support the larger goals. Initiative-wide vision statements are also meant to inform policy and practice at the school and sometimes district level. Examples include the Coalition of Essential Schools (Ted Sizer), the Accelerated Schools Project (Hank Levin), the School Development Program (James Comer), Harvard Project Zero (Howard Gardner), Paideia Schools (Mortimer Adler).

These initiatives provide direction, establish a set of core values worthy of pursuit and a set of strategies which range from prescriptive to ideological. For example, the Accelerated Schools Project requires schools to engage in a specific set of activities (Taking Stock) as a means of beginning the reform process that will enable a school to embrace the ASP vision. The School Development Program also has a set of activities and even clear guidelines about which role groups and the number of each type that need to participate in any given committee. The Coalition of Essential Schools encourages schools to interpret the nine Common Principles to address the needs and particular strengths of their particular communities without providing these schools with a concrete process to engage in the interpretation.

These initiatives have blurred the 5 levels of vision described by the Goals Project. For some, the derivation of their vision statements is indeed philosophy. For most, however, these vision statements grow out of research and a set of theories about learning.

A skeptical view of the value of vision for reform

Thinking about vision as a strategy for change has been critiqued by Joseph McDonald and by Michael Fullan, two researchers in the field of school reform. McDonald reminds us of the lessons of history and of the complexity of school systems.

> Of course, vision alone is never enough to create change. And there is always the chance that this vision-- like its predecessors of the 1960s and 1930s--will float above most American schools and never come to ground. If so, the fault will likely lie in the folly that Seymour Sarason identifies, namely, that most proponents of good educational ideas consider schools the mere nodes of a complex system rather than complex systems in their own right. Whether school reform is launched from the outside or the inside of schools, it typically follows a linear strategy; hence, the effectiveness of some intervention is presumed to be intrinsic to the intervention itself, rather than a function of whether its impact is managed to good effect inside a turbulent world. (McDonald, 1993, p. 1)

Michael Fullan's view of visions is characterized by his conceptions of schools as dynamic systems. He describes having observed too many "pre-mature visions" which are not used in a compelling way to inspire and support reform. He believes visions should grow over time and be derived from action. These visions ought to be considered provisional after more action causes reflection on the vision: "Ready, Fire, Aim." Like Senge, Fullan believes visions ought to be shared and that schools should engage in a long-term process to develop this shared vision. He cautions:

> Reliance on vision perpetuates cultures of dependence and conformity that obstruct the questioning and complex learning necessary for innovative leadership. (Fullan, 1993,p. 33)

> The critical question is not where visions are important, but <u>how</u> they can be shaped and reshaped given the complexity of change. (Fullan, 1993, p.30)

Both McDonald and Fullan point to the dynamic and complex nature of schools and the complex and multi-dimensional nature of change. They call for a conception of vision that is adaptable to this climate. The Goals Project asserts a type of vision that may be more stable and would withstand the ever-changing nature of schools. Alternatively, a conception of vision as stable may be too rigid to withstand the dynamism.

The opportunities inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

• A complex conception of vision may connect well with the complex nature of educational institutions.

• A multi-level approach to vision allows for more entry points and more opportunities for deep learning along the way.

• In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?

• The power of this conception of vision may be compelling enough to weather the storms of resistance to change.

• The reliance on developing a vision through consulting texts and through including the larger community ought to create conditions that will promote the use and acceptance of this process.

The challenges inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

• If every school/institution has multiple sets of goals operating at any given time (individual/personal, organizational, curricular, grade level, etc.) which level is appropriate for interrogation and intervention?

• How will an individual teacher, team, students, parents, experience the transition from multiple sets of goals to a more unified approach?

• Since the multiple levels of the Goals Project conception of vision require long-term and deep work, how will interest and support for the initiative be maintained?

• If there are a set of "readiness conditions" necessary for piloting this approach to vision, how can the Goals Project support the development and sustenance of these conditions?

• In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?

• Since any "new" reform effort encounters pre-existing efforts at improvement, how will the pursuit of a vision-driven reform initiative interact with and take account of the current terrain?

• What is the current problem statement that Jewish educational institutions are suffering from? Would they define their problem in terms of vision? If not, how will they come to understand this critique and the power of it as a solution?

References

Fullan, M. (1993). Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform. London: The Falmer Press.

McDonald, J. (1993). Vision and Its Foes: Beneath the Surface of School Reform (Studies on Exhibitions (No. 12)): Coalition of Essential Schools.

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., & Smith, B. (1994). The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization. New York: Doubleday.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART I – BACKGROUND

Congregation Rodeph Alpayim (CRA) is a 400 family congregation in a suburb of a major city. It was created eight years ago by the merger of a Reform and Conservative congregation and many members still identify themselves strongly with one of those movements. Although the synagogue has chosen not to affiliate with any movement, the Reform prayer book is used on Friday night and the Conservative prayer book is used on Saturday morning and for the high holidays. The congregation is completely gender-egalitarian.

The members of the congregation are well-educated, middle to upper-middle class and concentrated in the thirty-five to fifty-five age group. Most members are married and have children, though there is a small group of singles in their twenties and thirties and a few older people. An unusual number of congregants have strong Jewish backgrounds. At least thirty have gone to day schools or Yeshivot as children.

Groups in the congregation

There are four distinct groups in the congregation:

1. **The Right wing** – Most are day school or Yeshivah graduates. They generally subscribe to the theology of Conservative Judaism but are only loosely observant of Jewish Law; they want the liturgy and style of services to be as close as possible to the traditional orthodox service of their childhood. At the first sign of anything "too" innovative, they head for the door (literally).

2. **The Left wing** – They are fans of the renewal movement (*Aleph/Pnei Or*) and frequently attend retreats and services run by renewal groups. They want services at CRA to be much more creative and participative. They have their own "havurah minyan" that meets once per month in people's homes to do a creative prayer service. Past services have experimented with body movement, drumming, chanting and meditation

3. **The Reform classicists** – They grew up with Reform liturgy and view it as "traditional". They are as attached to Reform liturgy as the right wing is to the orthodox liturgy.

4. **The Mainstreamers** – They are not attached to any particular liturgical style but are generally comfortable with the existing services at CRA. They are not opposed to change, but they are a bit wary of it.

5. **The 2-day-a-year attenders** – These are the members who come only on the high holidays. They like some of the melodies, but are bored by much of the liturgy which is in Hebrew.

GROUP	SERVICE THEY ATTEND PRIMARILY	ATTITUDE TO CHANGE	PERCENT OF CONGREGATION	FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE
Right Wing	Saturday AM + holidays	Very resistant to change away from traditional liturgy	10%, but very vocal	Regular
Left Wing	Friday PM, Saturday AM + holidays	Very welcome	10%, but very vocal	Often
Reform Classicists	Friday PM + high holidays	Somewhat resistant to change in liturgy – okay with new music	8%, but many in leadership positions	Intermittent
Mainstreamers	Friday PM, Saturday AM + holidays	Open to gradual change, but wary	22%	Intermittent, some regular
2-Dayers	Rosh Hashanah + Yom Kippur, usually only part of the service	Mixed	50%	

Services

Roughly 35-50 people attend Friday night services. The service, which is co-led by the rabbi and cantor, follows the standard Friday night liturgy in the Reform movement's "Gates of Prayer." There is some congregational singing and a couple of cantorial solos. The cantor plays the clarinet before the service. As an outgrowth of Synagogue 2000 (low hanging fruit), the cantor has added a *niggun* (wordless song) at the beginning of the service, which is very popular with the congregation.

Saturday morning services typically have 100-150 people and up to 300 when there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. There is a policy that two shabbatot per month are reserved for services with no Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The service uses the standard Conservative liturgy (*Sim Shalom*). Parts of the service are led by the rabbi and parts by congregants. There is usually some spirited congregational singing. Services run from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with a lively Kiddush afterward. There have been no "low hanging fruit" changes since Synagogue 2000 started.

High holiday services fill up the sanctuary of roughly 1000 seats in terms of tickets sold but only a few hours of the service are actually full. The second day of Rosh Hashanah has about half the attendance of the first day — 450 - 500. The cantor and rabbi lead most of the service with some led by congregants. It is a lively service with lots of congregational singing, not dissimilar from a lively orthodox service. There are some new English readings compiled by the rabbi.

The Key Players

Shira Cohen is the President and a member of the original Synagogue 2000 team. She is a strong advocate of change in the services and believes that in order to grow; the congregation must make its services more attractive to new members. She most closely affiliates with "**the Mainstreamers**."

Ellen Stone is the Chair of the Ritual Committee and an ardent **Right-Winger**. She attended Yeshiva for 12 years, she is not on the Synagogue 2000 team and is already gearing up for a fight.

Bob Gold is the largest giver to the synagogue and a member of the Board. He has been too busy at work to join the Synagogue 2000 team, but is open to hearing about new ideas. He is a **Reform Classicist**.

Jonathan Newman is the leader of the Synagogue 2000 team and is a strong **Left-Winger**. He is impatient with the Synagogue 2000 process and wants to get moving with some really radical new approaches to the service.

Richard Frum is the only member of the **Right Wing** who is on the Synagogue 2000 team. He is committed to finding a way to make the Synagogue 2000 ideas work and still maintain the sense of tradition that he finds so appealing at CRA.

Rabbi Samuels has been with the congregation for 6 years. He is an enthusiastic member of the Synagogue 2000 team and has played a major leadership role on the project. He has slowly introduced changes into the synagogue services and synagogue life but has dreams of making much more dramatic changes.

The Status of the Synagogue 2000 Project

The Synagogue 2000 team has been meeting two times per month for almost a year. It has been a fabulous year of study and reflection. There has been very little attrition in the group and attendance has been high. The members are brimming with ideas and anxious to start "really doing something." A small sub-group has been meeting and has drafted a vision statement (see box below). There is much contention about the vision statement. There have been arguments over the basic philosophy, the language, the inclusion and exclusion of certain ideas and even about the right of this group to create a vision statement.

At the last meeting before the Ojai conference there was a lengthy discussion about where to go from here. There were four basic ideas on the table:

1. **Shira Cohen's idea** – Hold off on action for another six months. Continue a visioning process involving many more people in study and reflection and culminating in a consensus vision statement. Reasoning: "We are not ready to go ahead with change until we have a better idea of where we are going and until we have more support from the congregation."

2. **Richard Frum's idea** – Revamp the Friday night service. Develop a new service more closely based on the traditional service, perhaps with a different prayer book, a lot more music and singing and a serious study session Maybe even add a meditation piece. Reasoning: "Attendance is pretty low anyway and the standard Reform service is out of synch with the more traditional style that most congregants like. Most of the "Right Wing" does not come on Friday nights anyway so experimentation would be easier.

3. **Jonathan Newman's idea** – Create a "library minyan" on Shabbat morning with a truly creative service that builds on the ideas and experiences of the creative minyan that has been meeting once per month. Reasoning: "We must do something really dramatically different or people will say that nothing really happened from all those hours of meetings. A 'library minyan' would let us experiment with major change without offending people who like the service the way it is. Gradually, people would visit the new minyan and become accustomed to the new ideas, which might eventually be incorporated into the main service."

4. **The Rabbi's idea** – Develop a program for the second day of Rosh Hashanah that would replace large chunks of the service with some new materials including a healing service, a long meditation, some new readings and some new music. Rationale: "Attendance is already very low on the second day. Many members find the repetition of this long liturgy to be boring and not in any way meaningful or spiritual. The more loosely affiliated are voting with their feet." This kind of a change will reach a large number of people at a receptive time.

There was a lively and somewhat heated discussion about these ideas at the meeting and everyone was glad that they were soon leaving for Ojai 1997 where they would have a chance to compare notes with other congregations and discuss this dilemma with the liaison team.

TABLE 1

VISION STATEMENT
(in progress)

PRAYER

- The feeling of a **real** community engaged in a **real** prayer.
- Joyful music and singing with high attendance and participation.
- Steeped in the tradition but open to creative additions or adaptations.
- Congregants participate in leading services.
- Cognizant of different ways of thinking about God.
- Liturgical flexibility within the boundaries of Jewish law.
- Serious study as an act of prayer that is part of every service.
- Healing part of every service.
- A variety of prayer experiences that reflect the diversity of the community

AMBIENCE

- Physical space and human interaction make newcomers and regulars feel welcome 100% of the time.
- New members are integrated into the community in a conscious and thoughtful manner.
- Small groups are available to meet many different interests and needs.
- No one in the congregation feels alone in times of stress or crisis.

PART I – STUDY QUESTIONS

Please come to the first session prepared to **argue** your answers to the following questions. Even if you see pros and cons to other positions, please **argue** your position strongly.

1. What is good about CRA's vision statement? What needs more work?
2. Should CRA go ahead with an action program, or should they continue working on their vision statement?
3. If they do work on their vision statement, how should they do it?
4. If they do decide to take action, which proposal makes the most sense and why? Or is there another venue for change that you would suggest?
5. What would a parallel set of action options look like for a healing track congregation.

Note that there are no right or wrong answers to this case. It is designed to foster discussion on the key issues and not as a test of whether you can find **the** answer.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART II – THE DECISION

After much reflection and discussion at Ojai 1997 and a contentions meeting upon their return that lasted until 1:15 a.m., the Synagogue 2000 team decided to go ahead with the rabbi's idea of revamping the second day of Rosh Hashanah. The major reasons were as follows:

- ¶ It was a way of doing something really different without attacking (yet) the two Shabbat services to which people are most attached.

- ¶ The rabbi's enthusiasm and creative ideas for the second day of Rosh Hashanah got the team very excited.

- ¶ The timing was good in that it allowed a full nine months for planning and processing the change.

- ¶ There was a strong belief that it would set the stage for broader changes the following year.

The team also decided to go ahead with further work on the vision. They decided to move forward with a plan for an on-going series of visioning workshops as well as setting up an opportunity for a second cohort to go through the itinerary.

The beginning of the team's next meeting was devoted to a lengthy discussion of how to move forward with the high holiday idea. One question concerned how to link back to formal structures in synagogues.

Should the idea be brought to the Board? the Ritual Committee? What is the right order? Are there other committees that need to be involved?

Another question was whether there needs to be some input or involvement from the rest of the congregation. Should there be some communication to the congregation (e.g. a letter, an article in the newsletter)? Should there be a congregational meeting?

The most difficult challenge however revolved around the question of how to explain the idea. As John Newman put it, "How can we possibly get them to a place where they understand what we now understand and where they see what we now see? We have been through months of study and reflection together as a group; learning, struggling, challenging each others basic assumptions. How in one, or two or even three meetings could we ever get them to understand the potential of these new ways of thinking."

They left all of these issues up in the air and decided to move on.

The second part of the Synagogue 2000 meeting was devoted to a discussion of the plan for continuing the visioning process.

There were 5 basic questions discussed:

1. Who should be involved in the process (e.g. the original Synagogue 2000 team, another 20 people, the whole congregation)?

2. What should the process look like
   - A repeat of some or all of the itinerary
   - New study materials
   - Deliberation and discussion

3. How should the formal synagogue structures be linked in?

4. What is the goal of the process?

5. When can it be considered completed?

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART II – STUDY QUESTIONS

Tomorrow's session will focus on how to bring the high holiday idea to the rest of the congregation and on how to work with the existing structures in the synagogue to bring about the realization of this idea.

Please come prepared to **argue** your position on the following:

1. What is the best approach to bring this concept to the rest of the congregation? Who are the key groups that need to be brought into the process? What is the best order for these meetings?

2. How would you organize the message to make a compelling case for the project?

We will also discuss ideas about how to move forward with the visioning process.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART III – THE MEETING

After several meetings, the Synagogue 2000 team came up with a plan for moving forward with the high holiday idea. They decided that it was best to go straight to the Board with the idea. Their concern was that if they went to the Ritual Committee first, the Board members would hear about it anyway and would "dig in their heels" even before the Synagogue 2000 team had a chance to present and explain their ideas. The hope was that after the Board approved the plan, then a meeting of the whole congregation could be held to explain the plan and solicit feedback.

The Synagogue team decided that it would be impossible to bring the Board members fully into the thinking and ideas of the Synagogue 2000 process but they came up with a series of presentations through which they would try to give Board members an overview of the most important ideas behind the proposal.

The Rabbi was out of town at a convention that week, but they decided to go ahead with the presentation without him.

The Presentation

The Board meeting began with an introduction by Shira Cohen about the project and the work that the team had done to date. She showed the Synagogue 2000 video. Then John Newman spent 10 to 15 minutes reviewing the philosophy of Synagogue 2000 as well as some highlights of the ideas the team has learned. Richard Frum presented the Synagogue 2000 team's vision-in-progress and the plan for continuing the team's work in this area.

Until this point the meeting went very well. There were lots of questions and concerns about the vision-in-progress but these were quickly diffused by talking about the process and the fact that there would be plenty of opportunity for input from the Board and other members of the community.

Then Shira Cohen presented the proposal for the second day of Rosh Hashanah. She handed out the attached written proposal. Before even a word came out of her mouth, Ellen Stone began to turn red. Then she stated in a raised voice, "This is much worse than I thought. First of all, how **could** you be putting a proposal this radical in front of the Board without sharing it first with the Ritual Committee. I heard about this, you know, through the grapevine. I've had at least 15 phone calls from some of the more traditional members of the Shul who had heard that we might be doing some kind of new age thing on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Let me tell you, they are pretty upset about this and I'm upset about it too. Look, the people who come the second day and sit through the whole thing are the core of our community and most of them are more traditionally minded. I don't think we should do this to them. Also the proposal itself is appalling. Meditation, English readings, healing services. This doesn't seem to fit with what this shul is all about or at least with what it is about for me."

When she stopped her diatribe there were tears in her eyes. There was a moment of shocked silence. Then everyone started talking at once. Shira finally quieted down the group. It was clear that her prepared presentation was not going to work.

Bob Gold said: "I don't like this at all. I don't like the process that was followed here. I don't like getting this proposal at the meeting and having to react off the top of my head."

"It is clear that we have much to discuss about this project but let me remind everyone that this is just a proposal. It is nine months until the high holidays. There is plenty of time for discussion, for input, for adapting the idea, even remaking the proposal. Ultimately, we can throw it out and start again, if we need to. We are trying to get a discussion started tonight, not to make a decision."

Some of the Synagogue 2000 team members then started to defend the proposal. "Why did we sign up for this project if we weren't open to change" said one. "Why don't you just let us try this once and see how it goes" said another. "You haven't even given us a chance to explain the idea" said a third. Another chaotic discussion ensued.

Shira decided that the meeting had deteriorated to such a degree that it was best to adjourn early and regroup. So she suggested " Why don't we have a communal meeting to solicit ideas and input from the members. We could have a Shabbat afternoon meeting with childcare. Let's see how our community feels about these ideas and then we can decide. We need to be open to scrapping this idea completely but I want to ask you, Ellen, and others here who are uncomfortable with the proposal, to come to the meeting, to listen with an open mind and to help me think about whether there might be some solution short of giving up entirely on this idea.

Everyone was happy to see the meeting come to an end and to escape from this uncomfortable conflict situation.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM

Proposal for the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah

Rabbi Samuels
The Synagogue 2000 Team

It has been our custom in previous years that the service on the morning of the second day of Rosh Hashanah is very similar to the service on the first day. Some of the *piyyutim* (medieval poems) are different, and there are more modern readings, but the greater part of the liturgy is similar on both days.

We propose that we take the time on the second day of Rosh Hashanah to explore/experience some different forms of liturgy. These might be based around the three special themes of the Musaph service of Rosh Hashanah: *malchuyot* (sovereignty, healing and power), *zichronot* (memories, tradition) and *shofarot* (praise, revelation).

The traditional liturgy would remain in an abbreviated but halakhically valid form. We think it is critical that the new explorations be embedded in the middle of the traditional service. There is a risk of seeming to encourage two separate observances of Rosh Hashanah, which is not our intent at all. The Congregation should retain its commitment to the traditional liturgy and reflect the diverse interests of the membership.

The time needed to do this could be found by eliminating the repetition of the Amidah in *shaharit* and *musaf* and by eliminating a formal sermon and address by the leadership of the community. We suggest that the rabbi and cantor lead the preliminary sections also, to ensure that we keep to the time schedule.

We propose the following time schedule

8.45 AM	Pesukei deZimrah
9.00 AM	Shaharit
9.45 AM	Torah Service (without "mi sheberakh for healing")
10.40 AM	Shofar blowing
11.00 AM	New Liturgy
12.30 PM	Musaf
1.30 PM	Announcements, Adon Olam

The "new liturgy" section would include a service of healing, new prayers form various recently published sources, English readings, new melodies and psalms/songs of praise, sounding of the Shofar and some quiet, meditative experience.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM

VISIONING PROPOSAL

Over the last year, a team of people from CRA have been involved in a project with 15 other synagogues from around the country. The project has involved a team of 20 people from our congregation in a process of study and reflection about who we are and where we are going. The focus has been on our prayer services and on the ambiance of our community.

One outcome of the project is that we have begun to create a vision statement to help us **articulate** a picture of what we want to build toward as a community. We believe that without such an articulated vision, it will be hard to move forward together in a serious way.

The vision statement we've developed is a good start, but clearly much more work is needed. We therefore propose the following plan:

1. We will set up a second cohort to study the Prayer itinerary from Synagogue 2000. We will ask for volunteers who want to join. Members of the first cohort will teach the second.

2. We will create a visioning team that will hold four visioning workshops during the year. Members will be:
   - four members of the original Synagogue 2000 team
   - four members of the second cohort
   - four members who have not been involved in Synagogue 2000

3. We will have a Board retreat in the fall to engage the Board in this discussion.

We look forward to comments and ideas about this plan.

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART III – STUDY QUESTIONS

Please come to our last session prepared to **argue** a position on the following questions:

1. What went wrong? Why did this meeting blow up? What should the team have done differently?

2. What should they do now?

CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM: A CASE STUDY

PART IV – THE CONCLUSION

The day after the difficult Board meeting Rabbi Samuels met with Shira Cohen and Jonathan Newman. They were discouraged but they did not want to give up. Rabbi Samuels suggested a plan:

1. Speak to each Board member on the phone and understand their perspective.
2. Meet individually with the members of the Board and the community who are most upset about the idea. Include Bob Gold and other large donors. Listen to their objections. Try to solicit their agreement to hold back from voicing their objections at the communal meeting.
3. Amend the proposal based on the input and objections.
4. Take the proposal to the Ritual Committee.
5. Hold a community meeting as planned.
6. Make further adjustments if needed.
7. Bring the plan back to the Board.

"Look," said Shira "It's going to be a lot of work, but we have to do it."

Rabbi Samuels suggested, "I think part of the problem is that people just don't get it. They can't imagine what the new liturgy will be like. I think I should bring some samples to the community meeting and maybe even have Cantor Risker sing some of the new melodies. If they can "taste and see" (to quote one of our psalms) they might feel differently about this."

They all agreed to the rabbis idea and to the plan. The individual phone calls and meetings were held. It turned out that what people disliked most way the feeling of not being involved in the process. There were really only 15 people with objections to the proposal. Their major problems fell into three categories:

- Not rooted in tradition
- Not *Hulachic*
- Too weird and different

The whole Synagogue 2000 committee worked on the proposal and made some important changes to link the new material more strongly to traditional liturgical forms. At the same time, the rabbi and cantor pulled together some of the actual material for the service.

The proposal was revised and an invitation to the community meeting was crafted. Both were sent in advance (see attached) to Ritual committee members.

By the time the meeting was held with the Ritual committee, the proposal was old news. Everyone in the community had discussed it and discussed it. There were surprisingly few objections raised at the meeting. Ellen Stone was not happy but she said, "I think you've made some important changes to the original proposal. Let's see what the rest of the community

thinks. I am never going to be happy with this but I'm willing to suspend judgement until after next Sunday's communal meeting."

The communal meeting invitations went out (see attached). The rabbi and others on the Synagogue 2000 team made phone calls to encourage people to come and to prepare them about the issues. 55 people attended.

The meeting began with the rabbi giving an *halachic* and historic perspective on the development of our liturgical customs. This talk later became a sermon (copy attached) given during the high holidays.

Then he handed out some samples of the new liturgy and Cantor Risker sang some of the new music, including a meditative niggun. The niggun was really the turning point. After it was sung there was silence for a long time and the energy level of the objections seemed to drop significantly.

The proposal was amended again and passed the Board unanimously with one abstention.

Over the summer the rabbi and the cantor crafted the liturgy and a small group including some Synagogue 2000 members and some of the right-wingers reacted and helped refine the material. Originally they had wanted to write it as a group but eventually they decided that a committee cannot create the kind of cohesive art that makes for great liturgical experience.

The liturgy was approved by the Ritual Committee and the Board at the end of the summer. The holidays came and there was an enormous excitement in the community about this experiment. Attendance the second day of Rosh Hashanah was almost as high as the first day. Everyone was curious.

In the end, the new liturgy was very successful. Some of the right-wingers admitted that even they were very moved.

Different people liked different parts of it. Some parts didn't work at all but the overall experience was very positively received by all but a few. Perhaps most importantly, it started a conversation about new forms of prayer throughout the community.

Ten days later, Ellen Stone gave the community address on the morning of Yom Kippur (see attached). Perhaps it was the spirit of *teshuvah* or the mood of forgiveness but she shared with great courage, humility and sense of humor some of the ways her views on changing the services at CRA had changed.

Invitation to a discussion on
services for the second day of Rosh Hashanah

"Many will teach us to be eloquent...who will teach us to be silent"

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Dear members of the community,

Each year as we journey through the liturgy of the High Holidays, it seems that there is so much that we might celebrate together; there are many songs of praise and prayers that express our hopes and dreams. Somehow we do not find much time for silence together and to turn to the compositions of our own era, - because the traditional liturgy, printed in our Siddurim is so long.

The Ritual Committee (concerned with services and religious celebrations) commends to the community a proposal that we make time on the second day of Rosh Hashanah for a creative / reflective service. This will be based on the themes of Rosh Hashanah, incorporating time for silent reflection, prayers, psalms and songs for healing, poetry and prayers drawn from the contemporary teachers, thinkers and rabbis.

The time for this creative liturgy would mainly be found by dispensing with the sermon, leadership address, and some readings. The traditional part of the service would begin a little earlier than usual, and some omissions would be made in the shacharit and musaph amidah. Those concerned about the *halachic* issues should note that these variations are practiced by various Conservative congregations, and are approved by the Rabbinical Assembly.

There will be a seudah shlishit (third Shabbat meal) on Saturday at the Synagogue to discuss this. Cantor Risker and Rabbi Samuels will share some thoughts, and there will be time for open discussion. If you cannot attend please let Rabbi Samuels, or our President, Shira Cohen, or any member of the Board of Trustees know your thoughts on this idea.

PARK SLOPE JEWISH CENTER

Proposal for the Second Day of Rosh Hashannah

After extended discussion within the Avodah Committee, and consultation with the Board and the community, the following proposal is offered for the morning of second day of Rosh Hashanah.

Two new sections of liturgy will be introduced into the service; these sections will include new liturgical compositions, prayers and readings, quiet meditative time and substantial musical content. Rabbi Samuels and Cantor Risker will meet with a small group of shul members to prepare a final version to present to the Ritual Committee and the Board by the end of August.

The new material will take between 75 and 90 minutes. Supplementary leaflets will be produced, so that there will be no need to refer to more than one text during this time. It will remain the goal for services to conclude by 1:40pm, and the time needed will be found in the following ways:

- The rabbi's sermon will be limited to a 5 minute introduction to the new liturgy
- Elimination of the "normal" supplementary readings
- Elimination of the address by the leadership of the congregation
- Eliminating some of the traditional *piyyutim* (medieval poems)
- Commencing the preliminary service at 8:30m rather than 8:45am
- Using a "heicha kedushah" for the musaph (additional) service

The traditional 100 blasts of the shofar will be observed by sounding the shofar during the Torah service, the silent Amidah and the Kaddish Shalem. A few "additional" soundings may be incorporated in the new liturgy.

Much of the motivation for this proposal is to expand the music that the community encounters each year. This approach to the second day of Rosh Hashannah will certainly increase the proportion of time that the community sings together with Cantor Risker.

The first section will address issues of healing and the needs and aspirations of the community. This material will be included at the point that is traditional for community prayers, after the haftarah and leading into the sounding of the shofar. The liturgy will include the shofar blowing section.

The second section will be a creative development of the three liturgical themes of the musaph service on Rosh Hashannah: Malchuyot (themes of power and sovereignty); Zichronot (memory and consciousness); Shofarot (revelation and praise). This material will be included after a "heicha kedushah" for musaf.

Comparison of "Traditional" and "New" models for Rosh Hashannah

Item	Traditional	New
Start time	8:45am	8:30am
Pesukei dezimrah	Included	Included
Hamelech	Included	Included
Shema & Blessings	Included	Included
Shaharit silent Amidah	Included	Included
Reading prior to repetition	Included	Omit
Repetition of shaharit	Included	Included
"Atiti lechanenach"	Included	Omit
"Hashem melekh"	Included	Omit
"Le'el orech din"	Included	Included
Kedushah	Included	Included
Avinu Malkeinu	Included	Included
Introduction to Torah service	Included	Omit
Torah service	Included	Included
Introduction to Torah reading	Included	Omit
Introduction to Haftarah	Included	Omit
Sermon	Included	Reduced
Address by Leadership	Included	Omit
New Liturgy of healing and community	----	Introduced
Shofar Service	Included	Included
Returning Torah	Included	Included
Hineni	Included	Included
Kaddish introducing Musaf	Included	Included
Avot, Gevurot	Included	Included
Unetaneh Tokef	Included	Included
Kevakarat	Included	Included
B'Rosh Hashannah yekateivu	Included	Included
Kedushah	Included	Included
Vekol ma'aminim	Included	Omit
New material on RH themes	----	Introduced
Ohila La-eil	Included	Included
Aleinu	Included	Included
Birkat Kohanim	Included	Included
Hayom	Included	Included
Ein Keloheinu, Aleinu, Kaddish	Included	Included

ELLEN STONE'S COMMUNITY ADDRESS FOR THE MORNING OF YOM KIPPUR

I'm here to talk to you about intimate relationships, prayer experiences, and fish heads. Joining a shul is a little like entering into an intimate relationship, except that you're doing it with about 200 people. You have someone to hang out with in weekends, you take care of and are taken care of, and after the initial relationship-building work is done, you start to create a family within the community. If you become a regular and you're lucky, you soon have about 75 members of your new synagogue family telling you exactly how to raise your children. It's kind of like finding a partner and inheriting a bunch of children, cousins, mothers-in-law and grandparents all at the same time. A bit overwhelming perhaps, but once you get used to it, you realize how incredibly gratifying it is.

But, like any significant relationship, your relationship with the shul involves some giving back, and some giving up, some sacrificing. Over the last year, many of you have received phone calls from some committee chair, asking if you could give up some of your time to paint the shul, attend a meeting, or stuff some envelopes. In the last week, most of you have received phone calls from a Board member, and last night all of us heard a direct appeal, asking us to give up some of our money to the shul. And, even though most of us frequently feel strapped both for time and money, in some ways these are the easy things to give up for our shul. We know exactly what's being asked of us, and we can qualify how much we can give, in minutes and hours or dollars and cents.

What's harder to think about is the intangible things that you give up when you join a synagogue community. Like any other relationship, entering into a shul relationship can involve a certain loss of autonomy, of independence, of the ability to have things the way you alone want them to be. All of a sudden, decisions about some aspects of your life, and particularly your religious life, need to take into consideration anywhere from 50 to 500 other people.

I think that nowhere in the life of a synagogue is this issue more salient than when it comes to prayer services – Friday night, Shabbat morning, weekday mornings, and on the holidays throughout the year and the High Holidays. Each of us has our own ideas about prayer – about whether, how and when we pray, about what form the prayer must take in order to have meaning, about what words we do or don't like to say, and about the context in which we pray. In fact, prayer is an issue that stirs people's passions. Those of us who grew up with certain prayer traditions and memories may feel passionately either about continuing to pray exactly the same way that we used to, or about having an adult prayer experience that's dramatically different from those we experienced growing up. Those of us who don't come with vivid memories or associations may care passionately about creating exactly the right prayer experiences as an adult.

Here at CRA, this diversity of backgrounds, interests and passions is one of our greatest strengths as a community. But, it's also one of the greatest challenges we face. How do we create prayer services that meet the needs and passions of several hundred people with dramatically differing needs and passions? How do we ensure that Shabbat morning is a

meaningful experience for both the most traditional and the least traditional daveners among us? And, how do we remain open to each other's needs, and remain able to listen constructively to each other as we talk about the difficult subject of prayer?

I've been thinking a lot about these questions over the last few years, in my role as chair of the Synagogue's Ritual Committee, and especially more recently since the Synagogue 2000 project has started. There have been times when I've found myself having to struggle very hard to stay open to other people's needs and passions, when I've had to fight hard to make myself listen to others, especially when they were telling me that the traditional high holiday services didn't always "work" for them. I think that while it's easy for us to look at someone else's prayer style and stay, "Oh, that doesn't work for me," it's often harder to remember that the way **we** want to pray may not work for them. I feel like I learned that lesson the hard way this summer, as the Ritual Committee wrestled with our discussions of our high holiday liturgy, and of finding the balance in a prayer experience.

Often it's easier to fall back on the position that my way is the right way, and life – and services at the synagogue – would be perfect if everyone else just realized that. Sometimes on Shabbat morning, when services are getting a bit long, I retreat into a daydream and fantasize about my ideal shul, where everyone does realize that. In my ideal shul, the service is completely traditional – fully egalitarian, but completely traditional. We say every word of every prayer in Hebrew, though we somehow manage to start at 11 am and are always done by 12:30. In my ideal shul, my favorite Torah readers do all the Torah reading, the 'd'var Torah' or sermon is never a second over 15 minutes long – partly because people actually pay attention to my little "time signals" – and nobody uses tunes that I don't like. There are no explanations or interruptions in the prayer service, and at kiddush, somebody has kindly cut the heads off the smoked fish, so I don't have to look at them.

I'm really very happy in my ideal shul, until the moment that I start looking around to check out the crowd. That's when I start noticing that the only thing wrong with my ideal shul is that there's nobody else davening there. All of my friends and community members must have gone to daven in **their** ideal shuls, where services begin and end on **their** schedules, all of **their** favorite tunes are sung, and the prayers are designed to conform to **their** needs and preferences.

Generally at this point in my daydream, somebody sitting next to me gives me a hard nudge, and I come back to reality on a bench at CRA. I come back to the reality that the d'var Torah has been going on for 18 minutes, somebody is doing a very long explanation of one of the prayers, the clock is ticking, and somewhere in the kitchen, I know there's a fish head with my name on it. But, I also see that there are 100 other people in the room participating in a prayer experience that, on some level and in some way, seems to touch each one of them.

As that number of people grows, and as that growth is likely to bring with it even more diversity in people's prayer needs and passions, the challenge will grow even greater to find ways to balance those needs and passions, and to create a prayer experience that allows each of us to find our way in. Each of us has our own path to prayer. For some of us, the signposts are in Hebrew, for others in English. For some of us, the comfortable path is straight and narrow, for others of us, it takes some creative twists and turns along the way. Our challenge remains figuring out

how to make those paths converge, and to create a common experience that touches each of us. I hope that those of you who have been here at our Friday night and Shabbat morning services recently, agree that we've begun to meet that challenge and to create that common experience. And, I hope that those of you who haven't yet shared in those experiences decide to give it a try, and to come find your own path to both prayer and community at Congregation Rodeph Alpayim. It may not be your ideal shul, the one of your fantasies, but as realtiy goes, it seems to work pretty well. And sometimes, we all just need to be reminded of that. So, next time I find myself getting irritated by a tune I don't like, or getting impatient with a long sermon, or sitting through the next presentation from the Synagogue 2000 team, or even catching the eye of a whitefish at kiddish, I'll just remind myself that in prayer, as in so many other things, being part of a real community is worth giving up my fantasies.

D'var Tefillah on the Liturgy – Yamim Nora'im

We have grown accustomed to our services – their look and feel, their melodies and moods, the words and gestures. Even when we do not understand, there is a comforting familiarity. Our rituals seems to be as old as our religion – to stretch back to Moses and the founding of our faith.

Yet… if Moses were to walk out of the pages of the Chumash and into any synagogue of our time – Orthodox, Reform, Hassidic, Reconstructionist, whatever – he would not have the faintest idea what was going on. He knew of no blessings, no set prayers at all, no psalms, no reading of the Torah, and our melodies were not yet a dream in the inner ear of a cantor, composer or rabbi. In fact Moses never met a cantor – or a rabbi. It is a supreme irony that our tradition calls him Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses our rabbi) for Moses was never ordained – he never attended Yeshivah or opened a page of Talmud.

We read, and believe, that Moses came close to God, closer than any human being ever did again, that Moses was filled with awe and reverence, - and even fear; that he fell to his face in wonder, that his face shone with a luminosity that could not be dimmed as a result of what he saw. He heard the proclamation of God's attributes, that we still chant each year – and yes he would recognize the proclamation "Shema Yisrael…" – for he wrote it.

They knew of "services" in the time of Moses – but the service was of offerings and sacrifice; his own brother was annointed as the High Priest. "Avodah" – service was the scattering of wine and oil and blood – the burning of incense and animal flesh, and providing tithes to support the priests, levites and the poor.

It would take more than a thousand years for our People to innovate the concept of the blessing – of ordered prayers, or rabbis and cantors. This innovation happened slowly – and creatively. At first, the leader of the service had no book of prayers (to write such a book was forbidden). There was an outline of themes – of creation and Divine love – of salvation from Egypt, of recalling our ancestors, of God's power and holiness, of offering thanks and praying for peace, - to name a few.

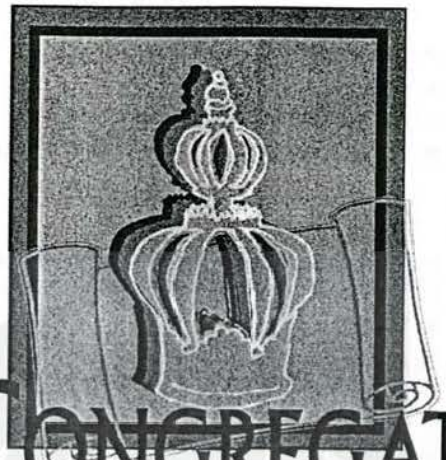
The leader would improvise the words around these themes and the prayers could be different every day of the year.

Much later the words were written down – and regional variances developed, now called "minhag" – custom, and cherished or resented according to personal disposition. The surrounding prayers and poems (or piyyutim) grew and became fixed over time.

Now, with historical consciousness and a sense of our (sometimes limited) spiritual stamina balancing our love for the tradition, we look at our own forms of service. Where do we hold fast to the words, nuances and cadences of our parents and grandparents. Where do we look for the spiritual bravery of our sages of thousands of years ago. They survived the destruction of the Temple, the end of the form of service they knew. They created new forms that reflected the needs of their time.

They had a vision and taught: "Yes there is an avodah; but now it must be an avodah – a service – of the heart/mind. What will this avodat halev be? It must be prayer!"

Let us strive for their bravery – to create a service that touches our hearts and minds, even as we strive for the echoes of our childhood, and the presence of our beloved parents and grandparents. We can — we must work together, this year, and in the years to come, to make CRA a place where the service of the heart and mind are real, relevant and meaningful to us and to new people who walk through our doors. We must find a way to do this without losing the traditional feeling that makes CRA so special. We can do it … it will be hard work…we can do it if we keep our eye on **why** we are doing it. As our sages said: "Know before whom you stand." We must remember the One who is listening.



A CONGREGATION OF LEARNERS

TRANSFORMING THE SYNAGOGUE INTO A LEARNING COMMUNITY

Edited by
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Introduction by
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An Opening Caveat

It is difficult to tell a story while one is at its midpoint. The conclusions drawn today will undoubtedly appear simplistic, perhaps even mistaken, in the light of tomorrow's developments. Even more difficult is the challenge of locating the proper voice with which to recount a story one is witnessing from multiple perspectives. By academic training I am an anthropologist, by profession a Jewish educator, by affiliation a congregant, by birth and personal commitment a member of *Am Yisrael* with a stake in its future, by religious need a Jew in search of deeper connections to the wisdom and meaning inherent in Jewish tradition. The voices attached to these various perspectives all appear in this paper. Often they are mixed—or shift without warning—as they do inside me, as I witness the process of educational change unfold. Consequently the view presented in this paper must be considered a personal one, although I do believe its elements are broadly shared. It has benefited from the suggestions of and feedback from many of those who have participated in the process it attempts to describe.[1]

THE SETTING—AN INTRODUCTION TO LEO BAECK TEMPLE

Leo Baeck Temple is a Reform synagogue on the Westside of Los Angeles, an affluent community neither fully urban nor quite suburban. Since it was founded in 1948, the congregation has had only two senior rabbis.[2] Its first cantor served the congregation from 1954 until his retirement in 1988. Congregants became accustomed to this stability of clergy, and to a large degree they identified the temple and its culture with the values, interests, and styles of these three men.

The congregation's membership, as well as its leadership, remained remarkably stable, especially compared to that of other synagogues in the Los Angeles area. In large measure this could be attributed to the congregants' respect for and personal loyalty to their rabbis and cantor. It could also have been the result of the temple's decision to limit its membership. Although waiting lists have existed only a few times in the temple's history, the ideology of limited membership contributed to the congregation's sense of itself as being unique.[3]

The defining ethos of Leo Baeck Temple was social justice. The congregation embraced the Reform movement's conception of prophetic Judaism and was proud of its reputation as a "social action temple." What Leo Baeck Temple was and what being Jewish meant were clear. An unspoken corollary of the congregation's strong identification with social action was a sense that too strong an endorsement of or too much attentiveness to particularistic Jewish practices and beliefs would distract congregants from devotion to the universalism of the prophetic message.

The synagogue developed a style of both worship and program that was characterized by dignity, self-reflectiveness, a sense of esthetics, and decorum. The Leo Baeck Temple Way meant a certain elegance of style. In the domain of aesthetics, standards were diligently maintained. In matters of Jewish belief or practice, the value of individual autonomy was paramount. Adult education was highly intellectual. It often focused on the issues of social justice current in the secular culture. Questions about God or prayer tended to be explored in the context of comparative theology. As was generally true in the 1960s and 1970s, discussions about personal religious experience or meaning were rare. Jewish practice and skills were taught infrequently. Children's education operated in a separate sphere. The detached set of classroom buildings was emblematic. One went out (the doors) and down (several sets of stairs) from the temple to the school.

At approximately the same time that the cantor and the founding rabbi retired, the congregation established an early childhood center that offered both preschool and toddler programs. The decision to expand the congregation's program in this direction was the direct result of the leadership's realization that the congregation's membership was aging. Even though the number of temple members had remained stable, the population of religious school-aged children was declining dramatically.[4]

Thus two significant changes were introduced into the

congregational system simultaneously: a new group of young families and new (women) clergy.[5] The latter accelerated the emergence of women into lay leadership roles, placed greater emphasis on the connection between study and personal experience, and introduced new forms of spiritual expression.

The nature of the new families was different as well. Many were attracted to the temple less by its reputation for social activism or intellectual solidity than by its early childhood center, which had won an award for its architecture and accolades for its developmentally sound educational program. These families were joining the temple at an earlier point in their family's life cycle than previous generations of new members had. They also made different demands on the temple. They wanted programs that served their needs directly, particularly programs that were child- and family-centered. Although most of the adults had relatively little Jewish knowledge or experience, they were receptive to Jewish practice and celebration if they strengthened their families and connected them to community. Similar value changes were taking place in both the secular and Jewish communal culture at that time. Separating out the influences of each factor is less important for this analysis than noting that the process of educational change was introduced during a transitional period in the congregation's history. The opening of the Early Childhood Center and changes in the clerical leadership were as responsible as anything else for the fact of change. Educational planning helped to give the change shape, direction, and intentionality.

Initiating a Process of Educational Change

In response to the changes the congregation was beginning to experience, it was proposed that my part-time position as principal of the Sunday morning religious school be made full-time. Supervision of the heretofore separate afternoon Hebrew school would be added to my responsibilities.[6] This proposal provided me with the opportunity to think about education at Leo Baeck Temple systemically, and I concluded that both the types of educational programs we were offering and the role of education itself in the life of the congregation required reexamination. It seemed impossible to teach about prayer if a praying community did not exist, futile to teach a Hebrew heritage vocabulary of ethical concepts in the classroom if no one in the synagogue was using these words in reference to the acts of *gemilut chasadim* they performed, shortsighted to proclaim Jewish study a lifelong pursuit if only

preadolescents and retirees were engaging in study with regularity. I concluded that I was not interested in an expanded position if educational programs continued to be defined as discrete spheres of activity with religious school, Hebrew school, adult education, early childhood education all separated from one another and from other aspects of temple life. Unless we viewed education from a holistic, congregational perspective, it felt that my work would be limited to the introduction of small-scale, incremental changes that would leave the real educational – and Jewish – issues unaddressed.

Consequently I recommended that my new job include the development of this kind of perspective. Suggesting that the reenvisioning of education at Leo Baeck Temple would require "a process that would have broad congregational support, involvement, and investment in whatever direction(s) we might choose to go," I proposed the creation of a special task force on congregational education that would do the following:

- Explore the issues of our vision and goals for education on all levels of congregational life.
- Brainstorm many and experiment with the implementation of a select number of educational programs.
- Examine the goals and structure of our children's educational program in the context of this new, larger congregational perspective.
- Develop a set of proposals based on its year of study, discussion, and experimentation.
- Take responsibility for introducing the congregation to and involving congregants in the new programs.

Neither the congregation nor I knew exactly what we were undertaking. Had we known the enormous investment of time the process would require, the amount of energy each change would demand, the impact that every educational decision would have on other aspects of congregational life, or the fact that our work would result in the need to find new sources of funding, we might have hesitated to begin.

In fact, when I first proposed this agenda, "educational improvement" and "long-range planning for education" were the only concepts that were effective in explaining my goal to the participants and the congregational leadership. The notion of developing a new educational vision made little sense to them. Moreover, had it been possible in those early stages to spell out the vision that was to

emerge, that vision would probably have been perceived to be unrealistic, if not altogether threatening.

The realization that this process was about fundamental change[7] emerged slowly. As the ramifications of the ideas we were discussing became apparent, participants began to realize that we were not just dealing with the educational system. While our mandate may have been to reenvision education at Leo Baeck Temple, participants began to remark, "If we really do this, *everything* could change!"

CHANGE AS A PROCESS

The process of change that has emerged at Leo Baeck thus far appears to be less linear and our organizational model less "rational" than what is outlined in much of the planning literature we originally consulted.[8] We invented as we proceeded. I believe that we functioned in this way because it was an effective means of introducing change in a congregation that was accustomed to stability. Understanding and working within the culture of a congregation is critical, even if the ultimate goal is to change that culture.

Chronology and Structure of the Planning Groups

Until now, our process has occurred in three phases. Over time, these phases have become overlapping rounds of planning and implementation that have lost their discreteness. The first phase lasted ten months. It dealt with vision, mission, and philosophy. Phase two dealt with the further development and application of these abstract principles to two specific aspects of our educational program. At the end of six months, the philosophy and goals for family education and Hebrew education had been developed and the initial steps for programmatic change had been proposed. By phase three, each planning group was working on several levels: implementing the first round of change, developing plans for more profound change, and working toward an understanding of how their work fits into the larger vision.

Phase One

Although Leo Baeck's established programs of children's and adult education were strong, they existed in a vacuum. During a period of low volunteerism in the temple as a whole, the Religious School Committee dissolved itself, saying that "things are great – call if you ever need us." The Adult Education Committee sponsored

excellent programs but did not work from an overview of the congregation's educational needs or mission. At one point it briefly considered renaming itself the Adult Programming Committee because that name better described how it saw its role. There was no setting nor shared language in the congregation for serious discourse about Jewish education—its importance, goals, or complex nature. Therefore, the first challenge was to help the new Educational Task Force reach a level of reflectiveness and sophistication about Jewish education that would enable its members to enter into such a conversation.

The Educational Task Force met twelve times over ten months. Early meetings combined discussion of a series of articles that task force members read as "homework" with exercises designed to help them explore and articulate their own Jewish values and goals. For example, in preparation for one meeting every member was asked to present a metaphor about Jewish education. We used these metaphors to elucidate the issues we would need to address in future deliberations.

One member suggested that Jewish education was "like pearl formation: There has to be an irritant," she said, "to stimulate development." Two members argued about whether Jewish education was more like a jigsaw puzzle that can be assembled starting with any piece or more like a house whose foundation must be laid first. Such conflicting metaphors stimulated the group to debate whether there is a basic core of Jewish information, skills, and competencies that everyone needs to have. The member who compared Jewish education to "trying to grab a handful of sand" provoked us into looking at the way defeatist attitudes limit our vision.

The metaphor that has been reinvoked most frequently throughout our planning process is the one that compares Jewish education to a health food restaurant.

> It serves meals that are tasty, attractive, nourishing, and good for you. People come because it has wonderful food and they *can* get some*thing* special here that they don't ordinarily eat at home or at other restaurants. There is a philosophy or set of values that underlies what is served. Sometimes people come because of that. Sometimes they just come in for something different. Then they are exposed to the values espoused by the restaurant and may start to think differently about how they eat. The restaurant becomes so successful that it opens a take-out counter so that people can take home the food

> they've sampled and enjoy it in their own home and share it with friends. Finally the restaurant opens a health food market so that people can learn to make this kind of food for themselves, experiment with the ingredients, use their own creativity, and put the ingredients together in new ways that suit their own tastes.[9]

The health food restaurant metaphor has helped us discuss the extent to which Jewish education should be consumer-driven and the extent to which it should be vision-driven. It has been particularly important in helping us remember that this is not an either-or choice, and it has helped us clarify the dynamic and complex relationship between the vision that motivates educational leaders and the interests, felt needs, and receptivity of the congregants they serve.

At another early meeting we broke up into groups to answer the question: If we had the most solid and successful program of congregational education imaginable, how would things appear five years from now on a Sunday morning at Leo Baeck Temple? At the Ploni family's Shabbat table? In a car pool going home from Hebrew school? On Super Sunday? While the task force was not yet able to imagine wildly, its members found this exercise liberating. They saw that they could search for new possibilities.

Eventually common themes began to emerge in our discussions. Over several months we wrote our Mission Statement, an elaboration or commentary on the Mission Statement that we call our Rashi,[10] and a set of eighteen We Believe Statements (containing other ideas, both philosophical and methodological, that we had come to believe about Jewish education). Over several months, drafts of these documents were introduced and discussed with nine stakeholder groups.[11] Revised versions, along with a proposal for the next phase of the planning process, were adopted by the Board of Trustees. (See Appendix for these documents.)

Phase Two

The proposal for this next phase *of* planning mandated the establishment of a standing committee called the Coordinating Committee for Education. It replaced the original Educational Task Force. The chair of the Coordinating Committee for Education became a member of the Board of Trustees. The core of the new CCE was composed of *vatikim,* "old-timers," from the original task force. The committee was expanded to include members of the other temple committees whose programs had educational components, as well as additional members at large.

Both the structure and content of phase two were influenced by the need to address a particular educational issue: the time required for the study of Hebrew. Had we not needed to turn our attention to Hebrew school issues at this point, the process might have taken shape quite differently.

For several years there had been mounting pressure from parents to reduce the educational program for children who were studying Hebrew from three days a week to two. This change had already been made by virtually every other Reform congregation in our city. With the senior rabbi's support I had maintained that a decision about the days and hours of Hebrew school could only be made in the context of larger educational issues. After ten months of discussing vision, mission, and goals (and after a further year's delay due to my sabbatical), it became clear that this issue had to be addressed.

In order to keep the discussion about the Hebrew school schedule related to educational goals, we decided that the CCE would be divided into two working task forces: one on Hebrew education and one on family education.[12] We believed that if the CCE understood itself to be a unified body with an educational agenda, the Hebrew Education Task Force's recommendations would more likely be educationally sound as well as politically acceptable.

The strategy worked well. By meeting together as a group twice before breaking up into separate task forces, the Coordinating Committee for Education did, in fact, come to perceive itself as responsible for looking at specific areas of education from a holistic or congregational perspective. The two task forces understood that their mission was to implement the foundational documents that had been created by the original planning group. Their subsequent joint meetings combined study sessions that reinforced this perspective with opportunities to consult with one another on work-in-progress.

During the six months of phase two, each task force met five to six times; the entire CCE met four times. The Hebrew Education Task Force made changes in the structure of the Hebrew school, reducing the number of days of study for the Alef class but increasing the number of hours of study per week for all other students. It also mandated the introduction of Hebrew into the curriculum of the primary grades of the religious school and the hiring of a Hebrew specialist who would facilitate the incorporation of Hebrew into the religious school program. It recommended the development

of a program of Hebrew cultural literacy that would be based in the school but would extend to the adult community. Finally the Hebrew Education Task Force committed itself to exploring and promoting the role of Hebrew for the entire congregation.

The Family Education Task Force mandated a number of new projects: a weekly family education newsletter, an opening-day-of-school program and a series of follow-up meetings in homes designed to get the family education message across, a family *Shabbaton*—"Shabbat retreat"—a project to get Jewish books into families' homes, the expansion of our home sukah-building project, the creation of family study *chavurot*—"fellowship groups"—a new pre-Bar and-Bat Mitzvah program that included twelve parent-child sessions, a new consecration ritual, and the development of congregation-wide *Gemilut Chasadim* Days (opportunities for congregants of all ages to participate in community service projects linked to the study of texts about *gemilut chasadim*—the "doing of good deeds").

Phase Three

Phase three has combined the implementation of the two task forces' program and policy decisions with processes of formative evaluation and continued planning. The Hebrew Education Task Force invited consultants from the Bureau of Jewish Education to work with it and the faculty on a process of goal-free evaluation. That evaluation has led to a decision to reorganize the Hebrew curriculum around syntactic structures instead of vocabulary. The Hebrew Education Task Force has also begun to develop programs and projects that address its primary goal: the development of a synagogue culture that supports and affirms the importance of Hebrew and Hebrew education.

The Family Education Task Force has continued to develop its vision of a comprehensive plan for congregational education.[13] It has applied for two grants that will enable it to implement its program.

The work of this third phase has brought us face-to-face with a new set of questions: How do we assure that what we are doing is not just adding programs to a congregation that is already rather well programmed? How do we knit things together? How do we develop each project so that it is rich and multifaceted, so that it has a deep and lasting effect on individuals and on the culture of the congregation? How do we make sure that the cumulative effect of our programs does, in fact, move us toward our emerging vision of an integrated learning community?

The CCE realized that before it continued to generate more programs, a new round of system-wide envisioning and planning was needed to address the above questions. A third task force, which includes four past presidents of the congregation, has been assigned the task of tending to the larger vision. Their tripart mandate includes:

1. Promoting awareness of, support for, and participation in all levels of education at Leo Baeck Temple. Articulating the message that Leo Baeck Temple is (becoming) a "learning community."

2. Conceptualizing and strategizing the planning process as it moves forward. Determining which steps come next.[14] Thinking about how to integrate the pieces. Being the keepers of "the big picture." Asking the underlying goal/philosophy questions.

3. Finding resources for implementation. Looking at the personnel, space, and monetary needs created by the changes in our program.

The third task force, composed as it is of experienced temple leaders (including the chairs of the Family and Hebrew Education Task Forces), has moved ahead with policy and programmatic decisions more quickly than the preceding groups did. For example, it tends to imagine on a grander scale, proposing a set of educational goals to be achieved by the congregation's fiftieth anniversary (in 1998). Although education was not previously an area of primary concern for most members of this task force, their collective learning curve has been rapid. Most would have had little patience for the slow, deliberative, nonlinear style of the previous task forces' early work. Now that the direction in which we want to move is becoming clearer, these well-seasoned congregational leaders who "know how to make things happen" have an important role to play.

*Admit*tedly there *is* a somewhat cumbersome nature to the structures that have emerged. There was far more elegance to the design of the CCE as it was originally proposed to the Board of Trustees. However, the congregation's need to resolve "the Hebrew question" called for something else. The organizational culture of the congregation was also a factor in shaping the process. Because the temple had little prior history of serious educational deliberation by congregants, it was most effective to focus the work of the task forces on discrete areas of educational interest or concern. By concentrating on the specific issues of Hebrew

and family education, it was possible to develop a large group of knowledgeable and reflective educational advocates and planners.

The Nature of the Process

Like the planning structures themselves, the process unfolds in ways that are often unanticipated. We often plan two or three meetings ahead but just as frequently revise our plan as we approach each meeting. We encounter points of turning, moments when it clearly seems time to move on to the next task, but we cannot always predict precisely when these moments will occur. Particularly for the early stages of each task force, we have devised exercises and strategies to help move the group forward and give structure to its discussion. Frequently, however, the group's energy cannot be contained by the structure, and the conversation takes on an excited and somewhat jumbled quality. Time for unstructured exploration needs to be allowed before the group can refocus.

The CCE chairperson has described this process as "a ritual dance—a lot of back and forth before everyone can agree on how the work will be done." The result is often close to what she and I have anticipated, but the plan sometimes has to reemerge from someone in the group before there is consensus about proceeding. There are frequently a few members who protest and ask, "Do we know enough? Are we really ready to go on?" The rest of the group usually convinces them to try. Eventually we reach a critical moment at which time the work plan emerges.

Although the process doesn't have linear neatness, we've isolated a number of elements that have been important in moving us forward: constructing the planning group, establishing the leadership team, focusing and investing the group, engaging in a process of self-education through reading assignments and inviting guest experts, distributing narrative meeting minutes, and procuring the support and participation of the full temple staff, especially the senior rabbi.

1. Constructing the Planning Group

Our goal was to include as broad a representation of the congregational membership as possible. It was important that the many voices and perspectives that exist in our temple be heard. We also wanted to insure our ability to reach back into the congregation through the committee's members to engage and enlist the support of the congregation's many constituencies. We included members at different stages of the life cycle and different stages

of temple membership (ranging from founding members to members affiliated less than a year) on each task force. There were supporters and critics, educational consumers and congregants on the periphery, women and men, religious school faculty members and older students, people who hold leadership roles and former activists whom the senior rabbi hoped to reinvolve in congregational life. The members represented many Jewish perspectives and many professions. Representatives of key temple committees (Adult Education, Early Childhood, Youth, Social Action, Finance, and Membership) were included.

2. Setting Up the Leadership Team

The single most important step in establishing the planning group was selecting the chair of the original Educational Task Force and its successor, the CCE. The chair needed to be someone of long-standing stature in the congregation; someone with good leadership skills, particularly in areas that would complement mine; someone who grasped the mission and was excited by it; someone who would be an advocate and ally for Jewish education but whose Jewish background and communal experience were strong enough to provide her with an independent perspective. We used similar criteria in selecting the chairs of the three task forces within the CCE.

Achieving the proper balance between lay and professional leadership was critical. This can be a complex, even delicate matter. In many ways the goal of this process is the empowering of lay people to take responsibility for and give direction to their own Jewish lives. At the same time rabbis and educators have Jewish expertise and passions that can both inspire and guide the process. Moreover, they are the professionals who will be responsible for implementing the new vision and the new programs. It is a challenge for the professionals to provide guidance without being overly directive, to maintain momentum without pushing too forcefully *in their own preferred direction.*[15] How the lay-professional roles evolve in each congregation will be influenced by personal leadership styles and skills, but they also must fit (or be consciously designed to change) the organizational culture of the congregation.

3. Focusing and Investing the Planning Group

The initial process of group formation is critical. It was essential to give each group a clear sense of its mission and to assure participants that their service would be stimulating, their time well

spent. The rabbi's presence and his charge to each group at its first meeting sent a powerful message about the importance of their work. The introductory activities, which extended over several meetings, were designed to provide information about the current educational program and clarify the group's mission. The activities also foreshadowed the complex and challenging issues with which we would be dealing. We introduced planning language and concepts, engaged in envisioning exercises, and assigned reading and other homework.

4. Engaging in a Process of Self-Education through Reading

Reading assignments have played an important role in all phases of the process. They have provided both general orientation and specific information for participants who had previously done little systematic thinking about Jewish education. Committee members have consistently come to meetings well prepared and stimulated by their reading. They have spoken with excitement about this process of self-education. They value the insights they have had about their own Jewish commitments as much as their new appreciation of the complexities of Jewish education.

More than anything else, the reading assignments gave participants a shared language and a common set of conceptual frameworks. A paper by Jonathan Woocher[16] provided the CCE with a set of concepts for exploring what it means to be a learning community. That paper crystallized the CCE's understanding that education was the vehicle through which we could create the kind of community in which the education that we really want to be doing will "make sense."

The reading assignments required and helped to elicit a serious commitment from task force members. During the six months of phase two, the whole CCE read three papers and each task force read four or five additional articles. It was important for the selected readings to be directly relevant to the specific issues a task force was confronting at the time and appropriate for the level of sophistication its members had developed until that point.

5. Inviting Guest Experts

Inviting guest experts has been another key element in the CCE's self-education process. At the first meeting of the Hebrew Education Task Force, Dr. William Cutter, professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at HUC, spoke about the role Hebrew has played throughout history in the life of the Jewish community, the role language plays in cultural transmission, and the particular

ways in which Hebrew plays this role within Jewish culture. Had the members of the task force not been provided with this kind of background, it would have been very difficult to move them away from their immediate preoccupation with the narrow problem of how many days per week the Hebrew school should meet.

Dr. Cutter provided some of the concrete information about Hebrew and language acquisition that the group members needed in order to wrestle with their dilemma, but his visit also had symbolic importance. The presence of a scholar and the intellectually challenging nature of his presentation underscored the importance of the Hebrew Education Task Force's deliberations and the significance of the issues the task force would be addressing. By the end of that first meeting, the group was already talking about extending the use of Hebrew in the congregation. One of the most ardent proponents of a two-day-a-week (rather than a three-day-a week) program remarked, "You know, I'd never realized that studying Hebrew is about more than Bar and Bat Mitzvah. I just didn't get it. We have to let parents know that Hebrew connects you to the Jewish people across history and geography!"

When Dr. Isa Aron, professor of Education at HUC, presented the first draft of her article that appears in this volume to the combined task forces of the CCE, it had a similar impact. Both task forces could hear in that paper echoes of the issues they had been discussing. Dr. Aron's paper excited them because it restated some of the things they had been saying to one another, because it helped crystallize some of their still inchoate thoughts, and especially because it invited them to think more boldly. It gave them permission to depart from existing paradigms.

All guests have been carefully selected and briefed on the work of the task forces. In each case, the experience of interacting with someone from outside our own system has had the dramatic effect of moving the group to a new level of sophistication and insight.[17]

6. Distributing Narrative Minutes

Another important tool in our process has been the use of narrative minutes. Six to eight pages of single-spaced minutes are sent to task force members after each meeting. The notes bring anyone who missed the meeting up-to-date; they also remind those who attended of what was said.

Because the early discussions of each task force are often conversational and meandering, the meetings result in few definitive conclusions, making it easy to forget all but the key

view of education when he meets with potential new members. His sensitivity to and support of the space, budget, and support staff needs of our changing educational program are critical. When the Family Education Task Force suggested that consecration be recognized as a rite of passage for the parents of children beginning their religious education, as well as for the children themselves, it was the cantor who helped fashion the new ritual.

Inclusion of the religious school faculty proved to be a particularly sensitive matter. Teachers who had been at Leo Baeck for a number of years suddenly found themselves being asked to implement ideas and programs that had been generated by strange new groups called task forces. Although members of the faculty sat on these task forces, the change was disconcerting for some, especially because in their early stages, it was difficult to explain what these groups were and what could be expected of them.

The Up Side and the Down Side of Process

Although the full vision toward which we are working may not be clear yet, the process itself has been transformational. Among its by-products are the expanding circles of congregants who can enter into increasingly sophisticated discussions of the kind of Jewish lives they want to create for themselves and their families, the renewed energy for programmatic experimentation and risk-taking, the emergence of new congregational leaders, and the lively intergenerational exchange that takes place between newer and older temple members. Engagement in this process is exciting, at times exhilarating, for both staff and lay people. Ideas and insights often come with stunning rapidity. As one CCE member noted, "No matter how tired I am before a meeting, I am always energized by the evening's combination of unstructured dialogue and structured goal setting."

There are also, however, periods of confusion and uncertainty.[19] Progress is uneven. At times we seem to be stalled in our tracks; there are moments when it seems like everything we have been working toward is about to fall apart. Every decision made, confirmed, and even acted upon at one meeting may need to be rediscussed and reconfirmed several months later. When attendance at an experimental program is low, we are reminded how much groundwork still needs to be laid before the rest of the congregation's thinking catches up to that of the CCE. Only persistence and *emunah* sustain us through these moments of retrenchment. We have learned to regard them as episodes from

which we can learn about the areas of genuine tension that exist in the synagogue and those that are inherent in the process of change itself.[20]

Anatomy of a Hot Spot

It is not surprising that our most difficult moments to date have occurred as a result of the Hebrew school issue. This "hot spot" predated the planning effort and was, although somewhat indirectly, intimately linked to its initiation. Certainly it would be preferable to begin a planning process free of such back-burner issues, but that may not always be possible. While we did anticipate many of the difficulties the Hebrew Education Task Force encountered, we were unable to navigate a smooth course around them.

By the time the Hebrew Education Task Force got underway, there was intense pressure from parents to reduce the number of days per week that students preparing for Bar and Bat Mitzvah attended Hebrew school. The issue had been raised several times, both by the Board of Trustees and by the membership committee. Several members of the task force were themselves advocates of such a change. The task force, nevertheless, accepted the challenge of trying to make decisions about the Hebrew program based on educational goals as well as parent satisfaction and membership retention. The conflict between what the task force members came to believe about the importance of Hebrew education and the obligation they felt to be responsive to the legitimate needs of congregants proved to be wrenching. There were several tense, even anguished meetings.

The Hebrew Education Task Force struggled with the different meanings that the term "time" has in this issue. Is it clock time: i.e., hours and days and numbers of trips to the temple? Seen from this perspective, time is a scarce resource. Families feel pressed for time, and each additional hour taken away from a child's homework or after-school activity time or added to a parent's commute time is perceived as adding stress to the family's life. But time has more symbolic meanings as well. Statements about time can be statements about degree of commitment. Time can be treated like a yardstick that measures a family's priorities, with the number of hours of a child's week devoted to Hebrew study compared to the number of hours spent in other extracurricular activities.[21] It is no easy matter to separate these various meanings.

Pressed by time, the task force made an initial decision that

precipitated significant upset. There was bad feeling about both the decision and the decision-making process. In hindsight, we can identify four factors that contributed to the creation of this brief crisis. They represent areas of unresolved ambiguity both in the political culture of the synagogue and in the change process itself.

1. The issues with which the Hebrew Task Force was struggling were incredibly complex. Members had been exposed to an enormous amount of new information – about the history and structure of the Hebrew language, about various rationales for teaching Hebrew, about the multiplicity of goals possible for Hebrew instruction in supplementary schools, about the existing Hebrew programs in our community, about the structure and curriculum of our own program. They had also discussed the nature of children's schedules, the stresses on working parents, traffic and carpooling problems. Members were on information overload. Their questions sometimes indicated that they were having difficulty processing so much new information. At times task force members could not see the logical inconsistences in the solutions they were proposing. It remains unresolved in my own mind how much complexity can be handled by a group that starts out with little educational expertise. Such a group is dependent on the educator's or on guest experts' interpretations of educational information. Given the limited amount of time they can spend on research and self-education, lay people may find themselves having to accept or reject interpretations that they are not fully able to evaluate independently.

2. While the task of the CCE was defined as educational planning, the Hebrew Education Task Force was playing on a political as well as educational field. Issues of parent satisfaction and even membership retention were discussed, but how the political factors were to be weighed against the educational issues was not adequately addressed. Consequently some task force members contended that "certain voices weren't being heard," while others believed that illegitimate (noneducational) points of view were being given too much weight.[22]

3. The relationship between lay authority and professional authority was also not confronted directly. When lay people are asked to devote a great deal of time and thought to issues, can their role be merely advisory? To what extent are educators or rabbis willing to empower lay people to make decisions that they will not want to implement? Ambiguity was built in from the

which we can learn about the areas of genuine tension that exist in the synagogue and those that are inherent in the process of change itself.[20]

Anatomy of a Hot Spot

It is not surprising that our most difficult moments to date have occurred as a result of the Hebrew school issue. This "hot spot" predated the planning effort and was, although somewhat indirectly, intimately linked to its initiation. Certainly it would be preferable to begin a planning process free of such back-burner issues, but that may not always be possible. While we did anticipate many of the difficulties the Hebrew Education Task Force encountered, we were unable to navigate a smooth course around them.

By the time the Hebrew Education Task Force got underway, there was intense pressure from parents to reduce the number of days per week that students preparing for Bar and Bat Mitzvah attended Hebrew school. The issue had been raised several times, both by the Board of Trustees and by the membership committee. Several members of the task force were themselves advocates of such a change. The task force, nevertheless, accepted the challenge of trying to make decisions about the Hebrew program based on educational goals as well as parent satisfaction and membership retention. The conflict between what the task force members came to believe about the importance of Hebrew education and the obligation they felt to be responsive to the legitimate needs of congregants proved to be wrenching. There were several tense, even anguished meetings.

The Hebrew Education Task Force struggled with the different meanings that the term "time" has in this issue. Is it clock time: i.e., hours and days and numbers of trips to the temple? Seen from this perspective, time is a scarce resource. Families feel pressed for time, and each additional hour taken away from a child's homework or after-school activity time or added to a parent's commute time is perceived as adding stress to the family's life. But time has more symbolic meanings as well. Statements about time *can* be statements about degree of commitment. Time can be treated like a yardstick that measures a family's priorities, with the number of hours of a child's week devoted to Hebrew study compared to the number of hours spent in other extracurricular activities.[21] It is no easy matter to separate these various meanings.

Pressed by time, the task force made an initial decision that

beginning because while these key questions were considered, they were left unresolved.

4. Finally the Hebrew Education Task Force was working against a deadline. As the end of the year approached, parents of third-grade students were waiting to be informed about the structure of the Hebrew program that their children would begin in the fall. At its final scheduled meeting for the year, the task force found itself trying to make a complex set of decisions under enormous time pressure. The hour was late, but everyone was too exhausted and tense to suggest that an additional meeting be held. Repair of both the decisions the task force made that night and its equanimity took several weeks and the senior rabbi's facilitation.

These factors were not, of course, working in isolation. It was their combined force and the messy way in which they were intertwined that brought us to crisis. Had we not been working against a deadline, it is possible that we could have negotiated our way through the first three elements of systemic "irrationality." With or without the pressure of time, however, it is important to recognize the potential inherent in these factors to act as land mines. Nevertheless, the overriding lesson is that with enough good will, openness, and genuine dedication to Jewish learning on everyone's part, even moments of crisis can be worked through to a positive end.

It is probable that the task force was able to weather this difficult period because the group had participated together in a process of study that committed it to the importance of Hebrew. That commitment became the common ground upon which all members stood. After six weeks (and three very difficult meetings), the Hebrew Education Task Force got itself "back on track." The group spent time analyzing what had gone amiss in its process as well as reconsidering and revising its original decision. In the year since its crisis, the task force has worked harmoniously and productively.

The task force perceives the revised set of decisions it reached to be a workable compromise. While it made some concessions to families' needs to make fewer trips to the temple, it added both time and resources to the program in order to enhance the quality of Hebrew education. The task force also committed itself to work toward the development of a synagogue culture that supports and affirms Hebrew and Hebrew education.

Change Begins to Break Out of the Structures and Becomes System-wide

There are certain kinds of trees that, once they are established, drop shoots of their own and after a fashion give birth to unanticipated offspring. A good change process probably works like that, too, and we are beginning to experience something comparable at Leo Baeck. Here are a few examples:

- Congregants have begun to propose and take responsibility for implementing programs they want to see happen. Historically programming at Leo Baeck Temple has been largely staff generated. In the past when program ideas did come from congregants, the primary responsibility for their implementation has been assumed by the staff. But now, particularly in the areas of family programming, parents are developing their own vision of what could or ought to be. In those cases in which the staff responds, "Yes, that's a terrific idea, but the staff [or current committees] can't take on one more program," congregants are beginning to respond, "Well, what if *we* can make it happen?" A programmatic approach to High Holy Day child care and a congregation-wide program of *Gemilut Chasadim* Days have been developed with the staff's providing guidance and resources but with congregants' bearing more responsibility for designing as well as implementing these programs than in the past. These changes represent more than new or enhanced programming. They may prefigure a fundamental shift in the role that congregants take in shaping their own Jewish lives and their synagogue community.

- Members of the CCE have begun to introduce both the concepts and the visions they have been discussing in the task forces to other committees on which they sit. The Families with Children Committee incorporated *divrei Torah*—literally, "words of Torah"—into their meetings because its chair had been present when the idea was developed in the Congregational Education Task Force. "Starting with a *d'var Torah* has changed the whole tone of our meetings," she reported back. It was at an earlier meeting of the same committee that a member of the Family Education Task Force, exasperated at committee members' hesitation to move ahead on a particular project, cited the article she'd been reading in the task force and said, "Come

on! We just have to suspend our disbelief and act as if we already are the community we want to become!"[23]

- Hearing that discussions about the need to create community in the temple were also taking place in the educational task forces, the membership committee proposed a monthly Sunday morning bagel bar. They set up tables with coffee and Jewish periodicals over which parents could meet and schmooze after bringing their children to religious school. Coordination between the Membership Committee and the Family Education Task Force has furthered both groups' agendas.
- The CCE's ongoing articulation of the need to develop a vision has begun to affect other areas of temple life. As the idea of developing a vision penetrates the thinking of the Board of Trustees and various temple committees, there is some confusion about how the emergence of a truly shared vision can be fostered in a congregation that seems so much more diverse than it once was. A strategy for creating a coordinated vision has not yet been clarified, but the very fact that the question is being asked is likely to contribute to the creation of greater synergy among the groups that are doing the asking.

THE CONTENT OF CHANGE

Does the Emperor Have Any Clothes Yet?

Sometimes I wonder where this is all leading or whether it is leading anywhere at all. Is change really taking place or does the process merely feel exciting? Are the changes cosmetic and superficial, or will they be deep and profound? Will lives be changed and the synagogue transformed? Is a unifying vision emerging, one that will help us articulate who and what we want to become, one that can guide its own further unfolding? Or will we be one of the congregations about which Shevitz would write "more of the same but thoughtfully" or "business as usual"?

About the process of personal transformation, Adin Steinsaltz makes the following observation:

> At every rung in [the] ascent... [one] perceives mainly the remoteness. Only in looking back can one obtain some idea of the distance already covered, of the degree of progress.[24]

Looking back at the process of institutional transformation from our current vantage point, this is what we see. Leo Baeck Temple is

no longer the synagogue it once was, although it is not yet fully clear what it is becoming. Nevertheless, some of us do have what we like to call an "emerging vision" of our future. It is not yet widely shared, and its articulation is sometimes vague.[25] Moreover, even those of us who see the vision most clearly are not certain about the extent to which it is achievable.

Since, as Steinsaltz notes, remoteness from the goal makes it difficult to trust that one is really on the path, pausing to reflect on the distance traveled is a helpful exercise. The issues, questions, solutions, and new understandings that have emerged along the way serve as signposts of our progress. Below I briefly discuss three of the areas in which educational discourse in our temple has deepened significantly.

Expanding the Meaning of Being Jewish at Leo Baeck Temple

When the Mission Statement and the We Believe Statements were complete, I found myself vacillating between two opposite reactions. "Have we accomplished anything at all?" I wondered. "This sounds like the motherhood and apple-pie version of Jewish education." When I reread the statements, I was incredulous that these documents had been written at Leo Baeck Temple. Suggesting that Jewish study is not merely an intellectual pursuit but something that should have an impact on one's life was a new concept for this community. Stating that Jewish study ought to be a lifelong activity for everyone and not just a personally satisfying leisure-time pursuit for our "adult-edniks" was unusually prescriptive for Leo Baeck Temple. Asserting that the values of peoplehood and ritual practice must be stressed equally with ethical action could have been regarded as "not Reform." Arguing that the home—and not just the synagogue—was the locus of Jewish living was likely to be perceived as "meddling." As benign as these statements sounded to my Jewish educator ears, cloaked as they were in language that was purposefully gentle, I knew that their content represented dramatic change. So did the Educational Task Force. Each of these statements had been the subject of lively, often heated, debate. There had been disagreement and compromise about both the statements' substance and their exact wording.[26]

In spite of the task force's long evenings of debate, discussions with congregational stakeholder groups about the Mission Statement and other documents produced little opposition. The

conversations were animated but abstract. No one, including the members of the Educational Task Force, was really clear about what these statements would mean once they were operationalized.

Noteworthy, however, was the fact that almost every stakeholder group expressed concern that the statements did not address the issue of "how we fit into the American or non-Jewish world."

> "I don't feel as if I 'live Jewishly'; that's not universal enough for me; I live as a human being."
>
> "We need to be committed to world issues, not just Jewish issues."
>
> "To identify with Israel sometimes [makes me] feel out of step with the rest of the community. We need to find the ways in which we fit in as well as understand our own marginality."
>
> "How do we relate to, include, and affirm our non-Jewish relations (especially grandparents)?"

The Educational Task Force briefly considered adding a We Believe Statement that would address such concerns but after much debate concluded that the proposed statement sounded too apologetic.[27] The majority believed that the Mission Statement's reference to "the world" was adequately universalistic and saw "no need to defend or dilute the strong Jewish messages we are trying to send."

While few changes were made in the original documents as a result of discussions with stakeholder groups, those sessions accomplished several important things. They extended the new conversation about Jewish education to wider circles within the congregation. They solidified the task force's commitment to the "strong Jewish message" the task force had chosen to send. And they foreshadowed themes to which the CCE has returned as it has continued its work. The Education Task Force's final report to the Board of Trustees contains the following conclusions based on discussions with stakeholder groups:

1. *Participation* continues to be a nettlesome issue. Adult learners were frustrated that adult education programs are not better attended and that a relatively small percentage of the adults in the congregation engage in serious Jewish study.

   Parents of school-aged children exhibited an ambivalence about family education. They clearly understand the

importance of adult learning and parent participation. Nevertheless, many are reluctant to commit time to them.

If Jewish education is truly to be viewed as "a lifelong pursuit" that "requires commitment of time and resources for individuals and families as well as for the temple," we will need to educate toward this goal.

With the exception of adults already engaged in regular Jewish study, the congregation still tends to view Jewish education as an activity for children.

2. *The experience of community* (or lack thereof) is a key concern. Every group expressed a strong desire to provide opportunities for people to feel included, welcomed, and connected. Some see an organic connection between the experience of gathering together for ongoing Jewish study and the natural formation of community, while others see Jewish educational programs from a utilitarian perspective – as a means of providing social connections for temple members. The interplay between Jewish study and social connectedness needs to be thought about in a way that acknowledges its complexity.

   The tension between serving the special needs of the diverse groups that make up our congregation and bringing the whole congregation together in communal activity needs to be resolved.

3. *Jewish ambivalence/minimalism* continues to characterize discussions about Jewish education. On the one hand, there is a very healthy looking outward to the world, acceptance of diversity, and welcoming of a multiplicity of perspectives. On the other hand, there is excessive concern about being "too Jewish," too insular, too limited. One of our educational goals must be to help individuals balance their universalistic and particularistic concerns.

In the two and a half years since the original Education Task Force made its report to the Board, the culture of the congregation has begun to change and there is less concern or tension around some of these issues. The role of parents as active partners in their children's education has been widely accepted, and many parents have begun to look at opportunities for adult Jewish study as addressing their own needs as much if not more than their children's. As more adults of all ages engage in Jewish study, especially text-based study, the congregation is beginning to define Jewish learning as normative Jewish behavior, not merely

the activity of a small, interest-based subgroup of the congregation. As the Hebrew Education Task Force continues to support the introduction of a particularistic Hebrew vocabulary for universal as well as particularistic concepts, the perceived tension between these two perspectives has dissipated. For those who remain uncertain, the senior rabbi acts as the articulator of the message. "If we want to build community here by becoming *ba'alei rachmanut* and if we then want to extend that *rachmones* into the world around us, first we must be grounded more deeply, more firmly in our tradition. [The educational task forces have] launched us on a search for deeper Jewish life by challenging us to know more and do more, and the agenda... is profoundly right."[28]

Was Hebrew Education Too Narrow a Focus for an Effort That Aspires to Fundamental Change?

The changes made by the Hebrew Education Task Force and its endorsement of the importance of Hebrew may seem like rather limited manifestations of the CCE's vision, but the task force's work has begun to have a significant impact on the congregation. Both the task force members and the staff talk about the importance of Hebrew whenever the opportunity arises. The task force's specific decisions are described as part of a larger effort to reexamine the role of Hebrew in the congregation. Because the importance of Hebrew has been officially endorsed, it is possible to use more Hebrew vocabulary in messages sent home to parents and to include a weekly lesson for parents in *L'Mishpacha* (our family education newsletter) on the school's *Milat Hashavuah*—"Word of the Week." A column on Hebrew has begun to appear in the temple bulletin each month. Often it deals with Hebrew cultural literacy and the heritage vocabulary that is being taught that month in the school. Sometimes it contains an explanation of how the three-letter root system of Hebrew allows for a kind of intellectual playfulness and religious contemplation. Once it included a poem about falling in love with Hebrew. Enrollment in the adult Hebrew Marathon program has increased, as has the attendance in our two-year Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class. It is clear that there are more Hebrew readers at Shabbat services, and the rabbi has recently been writing the Hebrew words he uses in his *d'var Torah* at the beginning of Board meetings on the chalkboard in Hebrew letters as well as their transliteration, although many Board members don't yet read Hebrew. The "Hebrew message" is becoming ubiquitous. As one congregant remarked, "You have to be asleep not to know that something new is afoot at Leo Baeck."

Was Hebrew education too narrow a focus? In our case, necessity was the proverbial mother of invention. Working from the premise that language lies at the core of a culture and is one of its most potent elements, the Hebrew Education Task Force has come to believe that steady, persistent emphasis on Hebrew can have a dramatic impact on the congregation and on congregants. Since language conveys the key concepts and values of a culture, possession of a Hebrew heritage vocabulary gives Jews a set of Jewish categories with which to experience and think about the world. Knowing Hebrew can serve as a key to a sense of one's authenticity as a Jew and a perception of oneself as an insider – a member of *Am Yisrael*. The task force believes that Hebrew has the power to transform Jewish life on both the individual and the institutional level. The very fact that Hebrew and Hebrew education is such a locus for conflict is probably indicative of its transformational power. Hebrew lies at the heart of the universalistic-particularistic tension that is undergoing readjustment at Leo Baeck Temple.

Family Education Becomes Congregational Education

From the charge to the Family Education Task Force:

> We currently have a strong family education program in the religious school and a number of other family education experiences such as the Family Retreat, our Simchat Torah program, etc. In order to create a coherent program, however, we need to examine the premises on which family education programs are based and to articulate (and sometimes choose among) the various goals that family programs are designed to meet. Should the primary goal of family education programs be to provide knowledge, skills, and motivation for families to intensify their Jewish home life or should the main goal be to provide a positive Jewish experience for families in the context of a synagogue community? Should family education be school-based or completely separate from the school structure? What is a family? Is it possible to create truly intergenerational experiences that include older and younger singles and couples without children, as well as families that are defined by a parent-child relationship? What is the relationship between family education and other congregational programming and holiday celebrations?

Although some parents had expressed resistance to the increase in parent-child programming in the religious school, there were no

pressing issues or time-bound decisions confronting the Family Education Task Force. Moreover, in order to compensate for the Hebrew Education Task Force's narrow focus, this group was encouraged to be expansive in its thinking and to define family education as broadly as possible.[29] It was important to remind members regularly to maintain a congregational perspective and not merely imagine programs targeted for families with school-aged children. Indeed, an all-inclusive definition of family emerged early in the process, and the task force defined its target population as "the whole Leo Baeck Temple family." By doing so the task force – like the Hebrew Education Task Force – signaled its understanding of the fact that transformation must occur on two levels: the individual (or individual family) and the community, which nurtures and supports individuals and families.

Early meetings of the Family Education Task Force focused on the need to build community and on the tension between participation based on "enticement" and participation based on "expectations."[30] The themes adumbrated in the original task force's report to the Board of Trustees (participation, community, minimalism/ambivalence) reemerged without any effort by members to raise them directly. For this task force in particular, reading assignments played an important role by introducing educational concepts and Jewish content into discussions that might otherwise have focused on the rather abstract goal of "creating community." An article by Jonathan Woocher[31] gave the task force language for understanding the dialectical relationship between education and community.

When the task force began to generate specific proposals, they fell into two categories. Therefore, one subcommittee devoted itself to creating family education programs (a family *Shabbaton*, a home-starter library project, a Shabbat tape, family study *chavurot*, *Gemilut Chasadim* Days). Another concentrated on projects that would "communicate the family education message" (i.e., education about education, such as a first-day-of-school program, a series of parents meetings in members' homes, a family newsletter, parent forums). The two agendas were, of course, intimately interconnected and reflect, but do not exactly parallel, the enticement-expectations debate. As the Family Education Task Force moved into phase three, it began to conceptualize its goal in a fashion that one member dubbed "spiraling *na'aseh v'nishma*."[32] The label was an acknowledgement of the dialectic between doing and understanding – program and message. The Family Education Task Force has begun to explore the role that consciousness and

self-reflection play in Jewish growth both for families (or individuals) and for a congregation. Woocher's insight that we must "suspend our disbelief" and "act as if we were the community we wish to become" is the *na'aseh. V'nishma* is the vision, the articulated understanding of what we wish to become as individuals (and families) and as a community. *V'nishma* is thus both the understanding we gain by doing and the inspiration that can further motivate the leaps of faith that *na'aseh* so often requires.

The process of applying for grants helped the Family Education Task Force consolidate its ideas into a comprehensive program of congregational education – a program based on its understanding of the interconnection between doing and understanding and of the power of Jewish study to both affect individuals' lives and create the foundation of a supportive Jewish community.

Toward a Holistic Educational Vision

A central challenge of phase three has been the weaving together of the work of the CCE with the work of other committees and constituencies within the congregation. This task is most easily accomplished by finding areas in which the work of one group connects to that of another.

- The Maot Chitim[33] Committee is composed of older adults. Unless we work with them to be sure that the religious school schedule is taken into account when they plan the distribution of Pesach food baskets, we will miss an opportunity for family education in the area of *gemilut chasidim.*

- The home sukah-building committee of the Family Education Task Force wants to extend sukah building to more congregants who do not have school-aged children. It, therefore, needs to make an alliance with the Environmental Task Force, which wants to use the Sukot festival to sponsor adult study on Judaism and the environment.

- The Hebrew Education Task Force plans to ask the congregational choir to participate in a program on the role of Hebrew in Jewish life. Preparation for such a program could create an educational opportunity for choir members, as well as enable them to make an educational contribution to the congregation.

- The new Task Force on Congregational Education has recommended that every temple committee meeting begin with a *d'var Torah* led by congregants. The task force plans to develop a manual explaining how to prepare a *d'var Torah*, create a *d'var Torah* resource center in the temple library, hold an orientation session at the beginning of each year to introduce committee chairs to the idea, and sponsor workshops to help congregants use study resources.

Much of the work of phase three might be summarized as the CCE's effort to implement We Believe Statement 18: We believe that there should be an element of Jewish study in all temple work.

Interfacing with other committees has not been easy. When other temple committees recognize the commonality of their work with that of the CCE, the difficulties of collaboration are primarily logistical and administrative. At times, however, the CCE's proposals have been perceived as impositions by other committees. The introduction of new ideas or the establishment of a collaborative relationship requires an attitude of respect for the other committee's agenda and a sensitivity to the fact that the perspectives (and especially the jargon) that have developed in the CCE are not yet shared.

The issue of collaboration is only the beginning of a process of more integrated synagogue-wide planning. The Board of Trustees and the Membership Committee, as well as the CCE, are feeling the need to reimagine the temple's future. How central a role the CCE will play in this reimagining is yet to be seen.

Stitching Together the Garment

And of the emperor's new clothes? The pieces of the vision are still being stitched together, but the participants themselves let us know that their lives have already been affected:[34]

> "I am particularly aware of the difference it has made to me personally. I am more deeply convinced of the importance of Judaism in my family's daily life. Shabbat has come to our family. Holidays, too. I see this in other families as well."
>
> "This process has helped me reevaluate the attitudes I held when my two daughters were growing up. I regret that this process didn't happen then. I see how much more I could have done to build their Jewish identity. I want to share my new understanding and excitement with other temple members."

> "Before I got involved in this process, I didn't even know I had a spiritual side. I was brought up in Israel, and my family was secular. I've learned a lot about education, but I've learned more about myself."
>
> "My husband, who was confirmed at Leo Baeck Temple but had no Bar Mitzvah, is now a student in the Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class. His involvement can be traced directly to the changing and inviting environment that's being created at our temple. The two of us have learned that Jewish learning is a lifelong process, that adults can "pick up the pieces" they missed as children, and that families can and must grow together."

There are moments when it is possible to imagine that Leo Baeck might someday be a radically different place. The transformative vision that has begun to emerge, however, is hardly radical. In Steinsaltz's words it can be understood as "return to prototype."[35]

For a long time, I was puzzled by the frequency with which CCE meetings strayed from the subject of education and focused on the desire for community. At first I concluded that in this increasingly impersonal and fragmented city, people are hungry for a refuge of familiarity, a more intense set of social networks. Until this emotional hunger is satisfied, it seems that congregants cannot think about education (a postmodern version of *Im ayn kemach ayn Torah*, "If there is no sustenance there is no Torah"). Upon further reflection, however, I have begun to believe that what we are really hearing is the expression of a deep longing to be part of a community of meaning, a religious yearning to be a *kehillah kedoshah*—"holy community."

Can a Reform Temple really become a *kahal*, "community"? A *kehillah kedoshah*? It won't be easy. The centrifugal forces of postmodern life are powerful. Most of us experience our lives as so fragmented that it may be difficult for us to imagine wholeness of person, let alone wholeness of community. Belonging to community – particularly a community that strives toward holiness – requires a kind of surrender that challenges the autonomy, rationality, and universalism that Reform Judaism once glorified. How do we begin to build such a *kehillah*?

We are told that the world stands, and consequently any authentic Jewish community must stand, on the pillars of Torah, *avodah*—"worship"—and *gemilut chasidim*. These pillars are also portals, gateways for reentry into Jewish life. We must be prepared

to greet congregants at each of these gateways because each individual and family may choose a different point of entry. We must also be sure that the community into which we usher those people who cross any of these thresholds is so vibrant and contains such a richly woven tapestry of Jewish possibilities that they will be drawn from their particular antechamber of welcome into the inner sanctuary of vital Jewish living. This vibrancy depends upon using our stories, our symbols, our language, our rituals, and our texts. It is the interconnectedness of the pathways that lead from one portal to another, that provides the possibility of personal integration and allows individuals and families to experience Jewish life as a whole garment.

That is why no program can be purely Jewish study. At the least it must have threads of spiritual connection. At the least it must indicate how study informs the way we live our life in the world of action. That is why the work of groups like the choir, the Environmental Task Force, the Maot Chitim Committee, and the educational planners needs to be integrated in a manner that goes far beyond coordination or occasional joint efforts. The vision we offer must be one of organic integration for the individual and for the *kahal*.

CODA

When I proposed that David (not his real name) be invited to sit on the CCE, I was recalling a conversation I had had with him at a *shivah minyan* for his brother. "I wish there were other families who were interested in celebrating Shabbat," he told me. "It's hard to get started. It would be easier if there were other families to share it with." I was also remembering a parents' meeting at which David had spoken passionately about his experience growing up at Leo Baeck Temple. "We felt proud to be Jews," he said, "especially proud to be members of Leo Baeck Temple. And we knew what that meant. We knew that being a Jew meant being committed to social justice. It was a clear and powerful message." At the same time David confessed, "We didn't learn much about Jewish practice or about our tradition. I don't know the Torah stories my children are learning in religious school. I feel as if I missed a lot." At the first Family Education Task Force meeting I was surprised and a bit dismayed by David's assertion that the congregation was already asking too much of parents. Instead of insisting that parents join their children at occasional religious school programs, David felt that the congregation ought to be serving the real needs of families.

> My question is: How can temple be of service to families with crazy Westside lives? The temple community needs to draw families in and offer help in running their complex lives, perhaps by providing services that also require participation (like cooperative child care). The temple needs to give first. Then people will be ready to give back.
>
> In our family, shopping is a "together" activity. It's something we need to get done, but we make it into family time. We're likely to go to a place where this activity of family shopping can feel like an event, where we get what we need emotionally as well as practically. The temple has an enormous parking lot. Maybe we should hold a farmer's market in our parking lot on Sundays so that families can get their shopping done after religious school. That would also provide an opportunity for families to get to know one another and make us feel like a community.

This suggestion did not strike me as a propitious way to begin our discussion of family education. I wondered where David's desire for a deeper connection to Judaism had gone.

David's fantasy of a Leo Baeck Temple farmer's market resurfaced from time to time. More popular was his suggestion that we establish a mini-café on Sunday mornings so that parents could hang out and read the Sunday papers while their children were in class. However, the task force's efforts moved in other directions.[36]

When I decided to launch a project to encourage members to build sukot at their homes, David was one of the parents I called. "I want every child in our school to know that Sukot is a home holiday," I told him, "and I need a sukah for your daughter's class to visit. I'll be holding a workshop on sukah building and on the celebration of Sukot at my house for every family that agrees to build a sukah and host other temple members." David and his family decided to participate.

At the end of Sukot, David called. His family had loved having a sukah, and he offered to put together inexpensive prefab sukah frame kits that could be provided to other families in the congregation. Although he now sits on the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee, as well as on the Family Education Task Force, in some temple circles David's primary identity is "The Sukah Man."

The Family Education Task Force hasn't mentioned David's farmer's market fantasy in a long time, but periodically I think

about it. I imagine grocery sacks (the ecologically sound canvas ones, of course) with the *brachot* for different kinds of food printed on them. Perhaps there would be signs reading *Pri Ha'adamah*, "Fruit of the Earth," above the vegetable stands and *Pri Ha'etz*, "Fruit of the Tree," above the stands where fruit is sold. I imagine committees that check weights and measures and establish some sort of reapings, gleanings, and *peah*[37] policy that would provide food for homeless shelters. My fantasy includes David's café, with copies of the *Jerusalem Report, The Jewish Journal*, and other Jewish periodicals, as well as the *Sunday Times*. Herschel the Puppet, who tells stories in our religious school along with his ventriloquist friend Ilene, would be there to hang out with the children. Parents would be welcome to listen to the stories they missed when they were kids. Our new library cart with Jewish books, audiotapes, and videos could be wheeled out to the parking lot café.

Why do I find myself musing over such an unlikely possibility? Initially I understood David to be saying that if the temple would serve members' immediate needs, he and others might then be willing to pay attention to its Jewish agenda. But perhaps David was really asking us to address his deeper, existential issues in a way that validated their spiritual essence. Perhaps at the core of his vision lay these profound questions: What would it mean to market as a Jew? How would I feel not to have to separate my role as a consumer from my identity as a Jew? How do I reconcile my desire to be an attentive, nurturing Jewish father and my participation in a world whose demands pull me away from my family?

The synagogue must become a community that addresses these questions not only by engaging members in abstract or philosophical speculation but by weaving opportunities for encounters with Torah, *avodah*, and *gemilut chasadim* into the fabric of daily living. That is the first step to transforming it into a *kehillah kedoshah*, a community of sacred meaning. If the synagogue could become a place in which an ever-increasing number of our human needs are filled—using the idioms, rituals, and values that are specifically Jewish—we would *indeed* become the kind of community for which our congregants seem to yearn. As long as the synagogue addresses only the Jewish parts of our lives, the notion that our Jewish identity is but one among many coequal roles is reinforced. If, on the other hand, we can make the synagogue into a community that helps us find sanctity in all parts of our lives, we will have established the kind of place that allows us to live with a sense of wholeness.

And the role of *talmud Torah,* "Torah study"? Jewish education is both the object of change and its agent. In our era, Jewish study may be the portal through which Jews most easily reenter the tradition. We need both *Torah lishmah,* "Jewish study for its own sake," and Torah for the sake of revitalizing Jewish practice, Jewish prayer, and Jewish participation in *tikun olam.* In our era *Talmud Torah keneged kulam* may truly mean "The study of Torah is equal to them all because it leads to them all."[38]

APPENDIX

LEO BAECK TEMPLE EDUCATIONAL TASK FORCE
January 27, 1992

The following is a succinct statement of the educational mission of Leo Baeck Temple. In order to make it useful as a planning tool, we have kept it concise and focused. In order to capture some of the richness of thought and meaning that informs the statement, a sentence-by-sentence commentary (referred to as Rashi) has been attached.

Sound planning must not only be based on clarity about our institution's mission but must also be informed by a set of understandings and shared assumptions about the educational enterprise. Accompanying the Mission Statement are a series of statements that lay out what we believe about Jewish education.

Using These Materials

The materials can be used for several purposes:

1. To guide groups and committees as they plan their educational programs.

2. To make an overall evaluation of the temple's educational programs.

3. To set individual goals for adults who want to broaden and deepen their Jewish learning.

Mission Statement

At Leo Baeck Temple we view Jewish education as a lifelong pursuit, leading people to live their personal and communal lives in consonance with Jewish values.

Our educational programs provide the knowledge and teach the fundamental skills of Jewish living so that individuals can feel comfortable as Jews at home, in the synagogue, and in the community and create their own way of living Jewishly. We strive to develop a temple community that embodies Jewish values and looks outward to the world with a sense of responsibility. We foster in individuals and families a sense of belonging to a series of communities: the temple, the Jewish community, Israel, and the world. Our educational programs are designed to help people find personally meaningful ways to worship, participate in Jewish ritual, and encounter the Sacred in their lives.

Rashi on the Mission Statement

1. At Leo Baeck Temple we view Jewish education as a lifelong pursuit, leading people to live their personal and communal lives in consonance with Jewish values.
   a. Jewish education at Leo Baeck Temple should generate an ongoing learning community.
   b. Jewish education should foster in individuals an eagerness to grow Jewishly throughout their lives and a pattern of setting personal Jewish learning goals.
   c. Adults as well as children should be engaged in ongoing Jewish study.
   d. The educational process itself should teach the value of Jewish study and create the expectation that the active pursuit of Jewish learning continues throughout one's lifetime.
   e. Jewish study is not merely an intellectual pursuit; it is a valuing enterprise that affects the way one lives.
   f. Jewish values are manifest in both the personal and the social domains.
   g. Jewish values address both ethical and ethnoreligious concerns.
2. Our educational programs provide the knowledge and teach the

fundamental skills of Jewish living so that individuals can feel comfortable as Jews at home, in the synagogue, and in the community and can create their own way of living Jewishly.

a. Knowledge, understanding, and the ability to put what one knows into practice empower individuals to make meaningful Jewish choices in their life.

b. Although they may be flexibly defined, there are basic bodies of Jewish information and sets of Jewish competencies and understandings that provide a foundation for Jewish comfort and self-esteem.

c. While personal choice about Jewish belief, values, and practices are both honored and encouraged by Reform Judaism, an individual's decisions must be based on knowledge of Jewish texts and traditions.

3. We strive to develop a temple community that embodies Jewish values and looks outward to the world with a sense of responsibility.

a. Our educational programs should strive to facilitate the formation of community at Leo Baeck Temple, as well as meet the needs of students as individuals.

b. The community we wish to create will be one that is informed by a commitment to Jewish values.

c. Concern with Jewish values directs us to consider ever-increasing circles of social awareness, responsibility, and action.

4. We foster in individuals and families a sense of belonging to a series of communities: the temple, the Jewish community, Israel, and the world.

a. An essential part of an individual's experience of himself/herself as a Jew is the sense of being a member of a larger community or a series of communities.

b. Members should experience the temple as a community and not merely as a place that services their Jewish needs.

c. The individual's sense of Jewish community should extend beyond synagogue affiliation to the larger Jewish community.

d. Israel refers to *Am Yisrael*, the "Jewish People," *Eretz Yisrael* refers to the "Land of Israel," and *Medinat Yisrael* refers to the "State of Israel." Our educational programs should help individuals establish and define their particular relationship to

each of these aspects of Jewish peoplehood,

e. Jewish education must also help a person define his/her place/role in the world at large.

f. Membership in any of the communities includes both a feeling of belonging and a sense of responsibility.

5. Our educational programs are designed to help people find personally meaningful ways to worship, participate in Jewish ritual, and encounter the Sacred in their lives.

a. Our programs should not only familiarize students with the structural and conceptual aspects of Jewish worship but should also help students explore the ways in which prayer can be meaningfully brought into their life.

b. Our programs should not only teach traditional forms of ritual practice but should also offer opportunities to experiment with Jewish ritual and explore its role in our life.

c. Our programs should help people identify religious moments in their life and provide individuals with the language that will help them conduct their spiritual explorations.

d. Our programs should recognize and encourage people to explore many different ways of relating to God.

We Believe Statements

1. That Jewish education addresses life's important questions * and can touch the deepest parts of people's lives. Our educational programs should help people understand these questions as religious issues and help them develop the inner strength to confront them.

2. That Jewish education should engage the whole person – the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual sides of every student.

3. That a basic knowledge of our tradition enhances one's Jewish experience. Our programming strives to provide this, covering the complete spectrum of Jewish content areas: Torah, history, literature (traditional and contemporary), holidays and celebrations, Hebrew, prayer, practice, ethics, values, and the arts.

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* For example, What does it mean to be a human being? What is the meaning of life? How do I face death? How do I go on in the face of crisis?

4. That study of Jewish tradition and texts helps one develop a system of values for the contemporary world.

5. That Jewish education should result in the building of strong and positive personal Jewish identities. It should help people see themselves as a link in a chain, connected not only to the past but also responsible for the door into the future.

6. That shared Jewish experiences, practice, and discussion in the home are central *to* a person's Jewish development. Our educational programs foster the creation and strengthening of Jewish homes and provide opportunities for shared Jewish experiences.

7. That Jewish education requires a serious commitment of time and resources on the part of individuals and families as well as on the part of the temple.

8. That the primary responsibility for funding Jewish education rests with the temple community as a whole.

9. That our educational programs must reach out to people of diverse backgrounds and foster respect for different ways of living and believing.

10. That while there are diverse groups with particular needs within the congregation, our temple educational programming must be broad enough to serve the entire congregation, encompassing crossgenerational programs that appeal to participants of varied ages, family status, and Jewish backgrounds.

11. That learning may require nontraditional structures and may employ a wide variety of forms and modes of study (intellectual, emotional, interactive, artistic, structured, informal, etc.).

12. That Jewish education should be both creative and joyful. It should challenge as well as inform and attract.

13. That Jewish education must take place in an environment in which people feel free and safe to question and explore. Our educational program should affirm a multiplicity of Jewish beliefs, perspectives, and practices.

14. That those who take on the honorable role of Jewish teacher, whether in formal or informal education, whether as classroom teachers or as parents, serve as models of Jewish values and behavior. This requires them to be dedicated to their own Jewish growth.

15. That Reform Jewish education helps people address the concept and practice of *mitzvot* in their life.

16. That the Hebrew language is a basic component of the Jewish experience. We strongly encourage both adults and children to study Hebrew, and we offer programs that provide students with a meaningful foundation in this part of our people's culture and tradition.

17. That *Torah lishmah,* "Jewish study for its own sake," is as important as goal-oriented learning and leads to a different kind of knowing. We encourage both kinds of Jewish study.

18. That an element of Jewish study should be embedded in all temple work.

PROPOSED IDEAS FOR COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
January 26, 1992

Format and Structure

1. Chairs (or appointed representatives) of all committees with educational roles (e.g., Adult Education, Early Childhood Center, Families with Young Children, 20/30/40's, Festivals, Outreach).

2. Seven to nine members at large (initially members who served on the Educational Task Force).

3. The chair of the CCE should be a member of the Board of Trustees or the Board of Trustees should appoint a liaison to sit on the CCE.

4. Staffed by director of education.

5. Should meet monthly in the first year, at least bimonthly thereafter.

Function

To stimulate and encourage various bodies of the temple to implement the educational Mission Statement and conduct themselves in accordance with the We Believe Statements (via their representatives on the CCE).

Tasks

1. The committee's first task is programmatic: developing new educational program ideas and strategies that would further the implementation of the Mission Statement. The committee would also take initial steps to put these programs in place.

2. The second task is establishing liaison with all the other educationally related groups (preferably the chair of each group will sit on the CCE).

   Communication between the CCE and the various educationally related groups should result in:

   a. The review of existing or scheduled programs to see whether they further the goals of the Mission Statement and reflect the philosophy of the We Believe Statements.

   b. The coordination of educational efforts temple-wide in order to:

   - Coordinate calendar, avoid duplication of efforts, and combine resources and constituencies where beneficial.
   - Provide a forum for making an overall assessment of our educational programming.
   - Issue an Annual State of Jewish Education at Leo Baeck Temple Report at the annual meeting.
   - Review and revise the Mission and We Believe Statements every three to five years.

Notes

[1] I am particularly indebted to Rabbi Deborah Bronstein who not only read with care, critiqued, and proposed modifications of this paper but who for five years was my partner in educational development. Her insights often helped me determine what steps needed to be taken next; her unwavering optimism and steadfast support helped me negotiate moments of confusion and frustration. In writing I have also been able to call upon several volumes of detailed, frequently verbatim meeting notes and the written reflections that have periodically been solicited from educational task force members.

[2] The current senior rabbi served as the congregation's first assistant rabbi in the 1960s and returned to the congregation as associate rabbi in 1972. He became the senior rabbi upon the founding rabbi's retirement in 1986.

[3] "In a huge, impersonal, and sometimes dehumanizing city, it's important to have a place where there is an attempt to keep things on a human scale, a place where clergy can get to know congregants and congregants can get to know each other in a more human and intimate way." Rabbi Sanford Ragins, opening remarks at the Conference on Reconfiguring Congregational Education, Malibu, May 1993.

[4] A number of factors accounted for this decline: The general school-age population of West Los Angeles had decreased significantly and the cost of housing had risen dramatically, making it difficult for young families to buy homes near the temple. The congregation's limited membership policy functioned to discourage the active recruitment of new members as the temple's founding generation aged.

[5] The assistant rabbis and the cantor who have served Leo Baeck Temple since 1986 have been women.

[6] The Hebrew school had first been directed by the former cantor and then by the new assistant rabbi.

[7] See Larry Cuban's paper in this volume.

[8] In the recently published book *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform* by Michael Fullan, New York: Faliner Press, 1993, the chapter titled "The Complexity of the Change Process" helps to explain why this is so.

[9] This metaphor originated with my colleague Melanie Berman at a retreat of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education's clinical faculty. I shared it with the Educational Task Force, which found it very suggestive.

[10] Calling the document Rashi was the beginning of our attempt to use Jewish language to describe what we are doing. What began as a desire to make use of an educational opportunity (i.e., to teach about the importance of the eleventh-century Torah commentator) quickly evolved into something more. Once we applied the name Rashi to the elaboration of our planning document, the process in which we were engaged could be conceptualized in a Jewish way.

[11] Board of Trustees, Families with Young Children, Adult Learners, Parents of School-Aged Children, Adult Education Committee, Membership Committee, The Outreach Committee, Early Childhood Center Advisory Board.

[12] There were a number of reasons for our selection of family education as the second area of concentration:

* In 1991 we had increased the number of class-based parent-child activity days in the religious school program and had invited parents to spend the previous Sunday morning in parallel, preparatory study with one of the rabbis. The individual programs (both the parent-child sessions and the adult study sessions) met with a great deal of praise, but the *idea* of family education did not. A small but vocal number of parents resented "losing" their Sunday mornings. They made it clear that they had enrolled their *children* in religious school, not themselves. It seemed important to explore the resistance and develop strong lay support for family education.

* Concentrating on family education had the potential to move the CCE's thinking about education beyond the notion of schooling.

* If "family" were defined broadly enough, we would really be dealing with congregational education. "Family education" was a term that did have some meaning to people; "congregational education" was too vague for this stage in our development.

[13] The Leo Baeck definition of "family" includes families of all configurations (including singles) and at all stages of the life cycle. This inclusive definition means that family education is really congregational education. While some programs are especially targeted for families with children at home, most have elements that are inclusive of the entire congregational family.

[14] For example, at what point will we no longer need a full task force concentrating on Hebrew education? In what order should we begin to reexamine other areas of our educational program, such as Adult Education, the religious school structure and

curriculum, and the link between the families of the Early Childhood Center and the congregation?

15 See "*Tzimtzum*: A Mystic Model for Contemporary Leadership" by Eugene Borowitz in *What We Know About Jewish Education*, edited by Stuart Kelman, Los Angeles, Torah Aura, 1992.

16 Jonathan Woocher's "Jewish Education: Crisis and Vision" (for full citation see note 31).

17 Other guest experts have included Vicky Kelman (family education), Aviva Kadosh (Hebrew), Ron Reynolds (evaluation), and Sara Lee (the ECE project). One of the most powerful presentations was made by a panel of four congregants who spoke about their personal relationships to Hebrew.

18 Sometimes my notes summarize the key discussions that have taken place at a meeting; sometimes they are almost verbatim transcripts of the meeting; sometimes they cluster comments made at different points in a discussion in order to bring the dialogue—or sometimes the dialectic—of the meeting into sharper focus.

19 Shevitz's suggestion in this volume that this kind of planning resembles "organized anarchy" evoked in me the same kind of relief I experienced when, as a mother of a six-week-old infant, I discovered the term "periodic irritable crying" in Dr. Spock. Naming the chaos and knowing that someone else has survived to tell the story is of great consolation!

20 Here, too, a metaphor that comes from the experience of parenting can provide perspective. Child development specialists claim that major developmental leaps are often preceded by a period of behavioral disintegration and even regression.

21 Joseph Reimer's paper (in this volume) deals with a different set of symbolic meanings that may be attached to the debate about Hebrew. Loyalty to classical Reform Judaism and sensitivities about intermarriage do not seem to have been major factors in the Hebrew school issue at Leo Baeck Temple, although they are not entirely separable from the issues of commitment and priority. Debates within the congregation about how much Hebrew is used in services often do make reference to understandings of what Reform Judaism values, the efficacy of prayer in the vernacular, and the alienation and sense of exclusion experienced by congregants who do not know Hebrew. What is important to note is that Hebrew education does have the potential to be a magnet for a large number of unresolved tensions within a synagogue community. This should not be particularly surprising since language plays such a complex (and largely unconscious) set of roles in shaping individuals, cultures, and communities.

22 The jumbling of educational and political issues is reminiscent of the term "garbage can planning" introduced in Shevitz's paper (in this volume). Solutions and problems are only loosely connected to one another when the multiple agendas on which the group is working are not clearly acknowledged.

23 Her reference was to Jonathan Woocher's "Jewish Education: Crisis and Vision" (for full citation see note 31)

24 Adin Steinsaltz, "On Repentance," *The Thirteen Petal Rose*, New York: Basic Books, 1980.

25 The process of developing a shared vision based on dialogue among individuals who are simultaneously developing and clarifying their personal vision is analyzed in *The Fifth Discipline* by Peter Senge, New York: Doubleday, 1990. Although we were introduced to this "learning organization" literature only recently, it has been helpful in conceptualizing the process in which we have been engaged. Michael

Fullan (ibid.) argues that "vision emerges from more than it precedes, action.... Ready, fire, aim is the more fruitful sequence.... Productive change is very much a process of mobilization and positive contagion."

26 The use of the words *mitzvot* and *God* were most controversial. *Mitzvot* made the cut; *God* became "The Sacred," although the word *God* did make it into the Rashi.

27 The proposed statement read: "We believe that our status as a minority in America is the source of creative tension. Our educational programs should encourage individuals to develop strong Jewish commitments without becoming insular and strong Jewish identities without denigrating the traditions or interests of other groups."

28 Rabbi Sanford Ragins, sermon at the installation of temple officers given on June 3, 1994.

29 The fact that there is no clear agreement on the definition or goals of family education in the field made it possible to encourage the task force to think expansively.

30 "Enticement" and "expectations" became part of our task force lingo. The tension was between the belief that if congregants understood why Jewish study was so important they would accept or internalize the expectation that they participate and the somewhat opposing position that the congregants' participation had to be wooed by offering programs that were irresistibly enticing.

31 Woocher, "Jewish Education: Crisis and Vision" in *Imagining the Jewish Future*, edited by David Teutsch. Albany, New York: State University Press, 1992.

32 *Na'aseh v'nishma*, "We will do and we will hear/understand," was the Israelites' response to receiving the Torah on Mt. Sinai. The rabbis comment on the order of the verbs, noting that the Jewish people committed themselves to doing the commandments even before they fully heard or understood them

33 *Maot Chitim*, "wheat money," is a form of *tzedakah* that, since the talmudic era, Jewish communities collected annually before Pesach in order to provide matzah, Pesach wine, and other Pesach essentials for the poor. At Leo Baeck Temple, congregants pack and deliver over 200 bags of Passover food goods for immigrant and elderly Jews each year.

34 At the end of each year, all task force members are asked to reflect in writing on their year of service.

35 Steinsaltz, see note 24.

36 Ultimately, David's concept resurfaced in the Membership Committee's Sunday Bagel Bar.

37 The corners of the field, which are to be left for the poor. (Leviticus 19:9)

38 From *Gates of Prayer*, the Reform siddur.