MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.
Series C: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE). 1988–2003.
Subseries 6: General Files, 1990–2000.

Box	Folder
50	8

Guiding Issues Study Group. Providence, R.I. meeting. July 1997, June 1997-September 1997.

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

FROM: Dan pekarsky, INTERNET:pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
TO: Chava Werber, 103504,3205
DATE: 6/9/97 3:30 PM

Re: Providence

Sender: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
Received: from mail.soemadison.wisc.edu (mail.soemadison.wisc.edu [144.92.171.111]) by dub-img-8.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)
id PAA27725; Mon, 9 Jun 1997 15:29:44 -0400
Received: from soe#u#1-Message_Server by mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
with Novell_GroupWise; Mon, 09 Jun 1997 14:30:29 -0500
Message-Id: <s39c1385.015@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>
X-Mailer: Novell GroupWise 4.1
Date: Mon, 09 Jun 1997 14:29:57 -0500
From: Dan pekarsky <pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>
To: 103504.3205@CompuServe.COM
Subject: Providence
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Disposition: inline

Actually, I'll be coming to Providence from Cleveland and not from Madison -- and there's a chance that when I leave Providence I'll be going to New York rather than right back to Madison.

Even if it's possible for me to arrive (from Cleveland) on Thursday morning, it might turn out to be better for me to arrive on Wednesday night -- but I'm not sure. By the end of this week, I should be ready to finalize my plans. Thanks for tracking this for me.

PS In the meantime, maybe you could make a reservation for me for Wednesday night in Providence -- just in case....

Talk to you soon.

D.

FROM: Chava Werber, 103504,3205
TO: Dan pekarsky, INTERNET:pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
DATE: 6/9/97 4:59 PM

Re: Copy of: Providence

Dear Dan,

I forwarded your previous e-mail to KJ re expenses.

Regarding the Providence meeting budgeting: KJ suggested that you talk to KAB before speaking with any of the other participants because KAB had some issues regarding Linda Thal and Amy Gerstein's expenses. The lunch and travel for you, Nessa and KAB has been approved.

Regarding travel arrangements: I spoke with Roz and asked her to look into flights from Cleveland and to New York from Providence. Even coming from Cleveland, it would be necessary for you to fly in Wednesday night prior to the meeting. She suggested a Bed and Breakfast might be the most economical and enjoyable accomodation and will get back to me with more information on that issue.

Remaining questions:

1) What is your time frame for leaving Cleveland? How early can you leave and what is the latest time you would like to leave?

2) What are your travel plans before and after? Roz needs to know in order to put together the best package for the entire time you are traveling, including getting to Cleveland and getting back from NY

3) Will you need a hotel with a gym instead of the Bed and Breakfast Roz proposed?

4) Who is the seventh attendee? The list as I have it now is as follows:
   1) You
   2) Nessa
   3) KAB
   4) Linda Thal
   5) Amy Gerstein
   6) Alvin Kaunfer
   7) ???

MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Nessa Rapoport, and Linda Thal

From: Alvan Kaunfer and Daniel Pekarsky

Re: Our upcoming meeting on vision and change

Date: July 7, 1997

We were disappointed to have to change the date of our meeting in Providence but were very pleased that we could find another date when most (and possibly all) of our group could come. It will take place at Alvan's home (50 Sargent Avenue, Providence), beginning at 10 a.m. and will last until 5 p.m.. We will be eating lunch at Alvan's home at around 12:30 p.m..

In consultation with Karen, the two of us have been giving considerable thought to the agenda for this meeting, and we'd like to share with you some of our preliminary thinking. The day will include opportunities to study that will be integrated into our work and will be divided into two major parts.

In the first (and longest) part we will be focusing on critical issues and challenges that we face in our efforts to encourage vision-sensitive educational change that is grounded in Jewish sources and ideas. Our point of departure for discussing these issues will be Alvan's effort this year to help the Rhode Island Jewish community develop a guiding vision that will inform communal deliberations concerning Jewish education. The unfolding of this process is described in the attached document written by Alvan and based on his year-long experience.

As you will see when you read Alvan's document, it suggests a multitude of questions that could usefully be examined. We ourselves were particularly interested in the following:

1. The consensus issue. The tension between, on the one hand, the desirability of a focused vision "with punch" that can elicit enthusiasm and give real guidance and, on the other hand, the desire to be inclusive of a wide variety of ideologies and individual perspectives in a diverse community.

2. The connector-issue. As you will see when you look at the case, at a critical moment the visioning process and product became disconnected from more practical and programmatic conversations and initiatives. How can we organize the process so that there is a strong and ongoing connection between these levels?

3. Related to #2, there is an issue concerning next steps. Speaking as a member of the Rhode Island Jewish community and as someone who has taken the process this far,

that had

Alvan is concerned about strategies for enhancing the likelihood that the vision-statement that's been produced and the process that has created it not become disconnected from life as the community moves forward. What should the next steps be? Or, how might the process as a whole have been organized to make it more likely that the vision and the visioning process will continue to inform the community's deliberations concerning education?

4. You will notice as you read the case that Alvan made a serious effort to introduce various intellectual inputs into this process, e.g. ideas from out of the work of Rosenak and Greenberg. How did and didn't this affect the process? Might there have been other pertinent ways of introducing these ideas? More generally, how and when should Jewish ideas and other intellectual inputs that have the potential to raise the level of discourse be introduced?

5. The time-issue. In this as in many other cases, an organization or community will say, "We're prepared to devote one (maybe two) evenings to visioning." If we believe that the development of a thoughtful vision is a more time-consuming and thoughtful process than is allowable in so limited a time, how should we be responding? What options should be considered?

6. Related to many of the foregoing issues, how do we conceptualize and organize the process so that the vision that is created by a particular sub-group in the community at a particular moment in time continues to live for other sub-groups (e.g. committees charged with implementation issues -- congregations, bureaus, federations) and to evolve at later moments in time?

Alvan's case can be used to launch an examination of all these issues. Given the limited time we will have together in Providence, our suggestion is that we focus on questions 1 or 2 *and* on question 4. We would encourage you, as you read through Alvan's document to come to the meeting with your thoughts concerning these matters. If you have the time to put your thoughts down on paper so that at or before the meeting we could circulate them, that would be great.

Our tentative plan is to preface each of the topics identified above with a brief introduction, grounded in the text, that frames the issue, and then to open it up for discussion. Please let us know if you have other or additional suggestions for this part of the meeting.

In the second part of the day we will begin the process of designing a group (of which we may be the charter-members) made up of individuals who consult to communities, organizations, and institutions concerning vision-sensitive educational change and who come together on a regular basis for the purpose of: 1) Jewish study, pursued both for its own sake and with attention to our work; 2) getting advice and support concerning challenges arising in our work; 3) encountering and discussing new ideas that are pertinent to our work. What such a group might look like, who should be invited to participate, and how it should be organized so as to be both productive and richly rewarding are among the questions we will examine.

We are very excited about both major parts of the agenda and are looking forward to exploring them with you. As noted above, we would welcome any thoughts you have concerning the projected organization of the day. We will be in touch with you again prior to the meeting. In the meantime, all the best from the two of us.

FAX TRANSMISSION

CIJE
15 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 532-2360
Fax: (212) 532-2646

To: Daniel Pekarsky **Date:** July 8, 1997

Fax #: **Pages:** 5, including this cover sheet.

From: Chava Werber

Subject: Providence meeting

COMMENTS:

Dear Dan:

Enclosed is the letter (slightly edited and reformatted) to be sent out the attendees of the Providence meeting as well as the revised budget form for the meeting. Karen Jacobson asked that you sign and fax it back to the office if everything looks O.K with a copy of the agenda for the meeting (which I've just discovered is part of the policy for putting in the budget form).

As we discussed earlier today, I will send out an e-mail this morning to confirm the time and date of the meeting as well as the travel plans for KAB and NR.

Pending questions:

- Should the first page of the letter be sent out on letterhead or is this more informal look more appropriate?

- Any further information on David Purple? Does he need to be added to the budget? Should he receive the mailing at this point?

- Is everything settled with you travel arrangements? Please let me know if you need any help on this. I will e-mail the hotel confirmation number to you later in the day.

Sorry for the delay in sending back the materials to you, but I have cleared my schedule for today in order to get out the mailing in today's mail.

→ of the Professional's group w/ note: Dan P. asked that I send this on to you. He's hoping you'll be able to participate.

KAB:
If LT can only come if airfare provided, do you approve this expenditure?
If yes → call LT to tell

CIJE Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
15 East 26th Street, New York NY 10010-1579

TEL 212-532-2360
FAX 212-532-2646

Chava Werber

July 8, 1997

Dan Pekarsky asked that I send this to you. He's hoping you'll be able to participate.

Sincerely,
Chava Werber

To: Chava Werber at CIJE

From: DP

To be distributed, w/ ~~the~~ letter I developed last week, to ~~the~~ Goals Group (including Purpel).

Thanks.

MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Nessa Rapoport, and Linda Thal

From: Alvan Kaunfer and Daniel Pekarsky

Re: Our upcoming meeting on vision and change

Date: July 8, 1997

We were disappointed to have to change the date of our meeting in Providence but were very pleased that we could find another date when most (and possibly all) of our group could come. It will take place on Monday, July 28 at Alvan's home (50 Sargent Avenue, Providence), beginning at 10 a.m. and will last until 5 p.m.. We will be eating lunch at Alvan's home at around 12:30 p.m..

In consultation with Karen, the two of us have been giving considerable thought to the agenda for this meeting, and we'd like to share with you some of our preliminary thinking. The day will include opportunities to study that will be integrated into our work and will he divided into two major parts.

In the first (and longest) part, we will be focusing on critical issues and challenges that we face in our efforts to encourage vision-sensitive educational change that is grounded in Jewish sources and ideas. Our point of departure for discussing these issues will be Alvan's effort this year to help the Rhode Island Jewish community develop a guiding vision that will inform communal deliberations concerning Jewish education. The unfolding of this process is described in the attached document written by Alvan and based on his year-long experience.

As you will see when you read Alvan's document, it suggests a multitude of questions that could usefully be examined. We ourselves were particularly interested in the following:

1. The consensus issue. The tension between, on the one hand, the desirability of a focused vision "with punch" that can elicit enthusiasm and give real guidance and, on the other hand, the desire to be inclusive of a wide variety of ideologies and individual perspectives in a diverse community.

2. The connector-issue. As you will see when you look at the case, at a critical moment the visioning process and product became disconnected from more practical and programmatic conversations and initiatives. How can we organize the process so that there is a strong and ongoing connection between these levels?

3. Related to #2, there is an issue concerning next steps. Speaking as a member of the

Rhode Island Jewish community and as someone who has taken the process this far, Alvan is concerned about strategies for enhancing the likelihood that the vision-statement that has been produced and the process that has created it not become disconnected from life as the community moves forward. What should the next steps be? Or, how might the process as a whole have been organized to make it more likely that the vision and the visioning process will continue to inform the community's deliberations concerning education?

4. You will notice as you read the case that Alvan made a serious effort to introduce various intellectual inputs into this process, e.g. ideas from out of the work of Rosenak and Greenberg. How did and didn't this affect the process? Might there have been other pertinent ways of introducing these ideas? More generally, how and when should Jewish ideas and other intellectual inputs that have the potential to raise the level of discourse be introduced?

5. The time-issue. In this as in many other cases, an organization or community will say, "We're prepared to devote one (maybe two) evenings to visioning." If we believe that the development of a thoughtful vision is a more time-consuming and thoughtful process than is allowable in so limited a time, how should we be responding? What options should be considered?

6. Related to many of the foregoing issues, how do we conceptualize and organize the process so that the vision that is created by a particular sub-group in the community at a particular moment in time continues to live for other sub-groups (e.g. committees charged with implementation issues -- congregations, bureaus, federations) and to evolve at later moments in time?

Alvan's case can be used to launch an examination of all these issues. Given the limited time we will have together in Providence, our suggestion is that we focus on questions 1 or 2 *and* on question 4. We would encourage you, as you read through Alvan's document to come to the meeting with your thoughts concerning these matters. If you have the time to put your thoughts down on paper so that at or before the meeting we could circulate them, that would be great.

Our tentative plan is to preface each of the topics identified above with a brief introduction, grounded in the text, that frames the issue, and then to open it up for discussion. Please let us know if you have other or additional suggestions for this part of the meeting.

In the second part of the day we will begin the process of designing a group (of which we may be the charter-members) made up of individuals who consult to communities, organizations, and institutions concerning vision-sensitive educational change and who come together on a regular basis for the purpose of: 1) Jewish study, pursued both for its own sake and with attention to our work; 2) getting advice and support concerning challenges arising in our work; 3) encountering and discussing new ideas that are pertinent to our work. What such a group might look like, who should be invited to participate, and how it should be organized so as to be both productive and richly rewarding are among the questions we will examine.

We are very excited about both major parts of the agenda and are looking forward to exploring them with you. As noted above, we would welcome any thoughts you have concerning the projected organization of the day. We will be in touch with you again prior to the meeting. In the meantime, all the best from the two of us.

TO: Karen Barth, 104440,2474
Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370
CC: Dan Pekarsky, internet:danpek@macc.wisc.edu

Re: July 10 Providence meeting

Karen and Nessa:

Dan asked that I update you on flight information for the July 10 meeting in Providence based on a meeting scheduled from 10 - 5.

The flight is one hour and a half long and we are leaving half an hour for travel time to the meeting place. As such, I would recommend the 8 am flight there and the 5:55 on the way back.

Roz informs me that Providence is a popular place in the summer and therefore we should secure reservations as early as possible.

Please let me know if you need further assistance.

Providence July 28

reservation for July 27-DNP
+ David Purple (lunch + lecture +
1 day consulting fee.)

NR + KAB

Delta | 8:30
| 6:05

mail NR ticket to

Empress
PO Box 2187
Westfield NJ 07091
Attn: ~~Cathy~~ Maria

Providence, RI - mtg. 10-5

a popular spot in the summertime
$330 round trip

1½ hr flight - 7:00
7:15
8:00
8:25
9:00
9:20

4:30
5:00
5:55
6:20
last flight out → 7:30

MEMORANDUM

To: Participants of Providence meeting

From: Chava Werber

Date: July 21, 1997

Re: Meeting document

Dan asked that I send the enclosed document to you so that you could read it in preparation for the Providence meeting on July 28. The group will spend some time studying this essay and thinking about CIJE's work.

SELECTED ESSAYS

BY

AHAD HA-'AM

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW

BY

LEON SIMON

PHILADELPHIA
THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA
1912

MOSES

(1904)

The influence of great men on the history of the human race is a subject of much discussion among philosophers. Some maintain that the great men create history, and the masses are nothing more than the material on which they work. Others assert that the masses are the moving force, and the great men of every age are only inevitable products of that age and its conditions. Such discussions make one reflect on the tendency of philosophers to shut their eyes to what lies in front of them, and to seek by roundabout paths what is really so near. Surely it is obvious that the real great men of history, the men, that is, who have become forces in the life of humanity, are not actual, concrete persons who existed in a certain age. There is not a single great man in history of whom the popular fancy has not drawn a picture entirely different from the actual man; and it is this imaginary conception, created by the masses to suit their needs and their inclinations, that is the real great man, exerting an influence which abides in some cases for thousands of years—this, and not the concrete original, who lived a short space in the actual world, and was never seen by the masses in his true likeness.

And so it is when learned scholars burrow in the

dust of ancient books and manuscripts, in order to raise the great men of history from the grave in their true shapes; believing the while that they are sacrificing their eyesight for the sake of "historical truth." It is borne in on me that these scholars have a tendency to overestimate the value of their discoveries, and will not appreciate the simple fact that not every archeological truth is also an historical truth. Historical truth is that, and that alone, which reveals the forces that go to mould the social life of mankind. Every man who leaves a perceptible mark on that life, though he may be a purely imaginary figure, is a real historical force; his existence is an historical truth. And on the other hand, every man who has left no impress on the general course of life, be his concrete existence at a particular time never so indisputable, is only one of the million: and the truth contained in the statement that such an one existed is a merely literal truth, which makes absolutely no difference, and is therefore, in the historical sense, no truth at all. Goethe's Werther, for instance, was a pure fiction; but his influence on that generation was so immense as to cause a large number of suicides: and therefore he is, in the historical sense, much more truly a real person than this or that actual German of the same period, who lived an actual concrete life, and died, and was forgotten, and became as though he had never been. Hence I do not grow enthusiastic when the drag-net of scholarship hauls up some new "truth" about a great man of the past; when it is proved by

the most convincing evidence that some national hero, who lives on in the hearts of his people, and influences their development, never existed, or was something absolutely unlike the popular picture of him. On such occasions I tell myself: all this is very fine and very good, and certainly this "truth" will erase or alter a paragraph of a chapter in the book of archeology; but it will not make history erase the name of its hero, or change its attitude towards him, because real history has no concern with so-and-so who is dead, and who was never seen in that form by the nation at large, but only by antiquarians; its concern is only with the living hero, whose image is graven in the hearts of men, who has become a force in human life. And what cares history whether this force was at one time a walking and talking biped, or whether it was never anything but a creature of the imagination, labelled with the name of some concrete man? In either case history is certain about his existence, because history feels his effects.

And so when I read the Haggadah on the eve of Passover, and the spirit of Moses the son of Amram, that supremest of heroes, who stands like a pillar of light on the threshold of our history, hovers before me and lifts me out of this nether world, I am quite oblivious of all the doubts and questions propounded by non-Jewish critics. I care not whether this man Moses really existed; whether his life and his activity really corresponded to our traditional account of him; whether he was really the savior of Israel and gave

his people the Law in the form in which it is preserved among us; and so forth. I have one short and simple answer for all these conundrums. This Moses, I say, this man of old time, whose existence and character you are trying to elucidate, matters to nobody but scholars like you. We have another Moses of our own, whose image has been enshrined in the hearts of the Jewish people for generations, and whose influence on our national life has never ceased from ancient times till the present day. The existence of this Moses, as a historical fact, depends in no way on your investigations. For even if you succeeded in demonstrating conclusively that the man Moses never existed, or that he was not such a man as we supposed, you would not thereby detract one jot from the historical reality of the ideal Moses—the Moses who has been our leader not only for forty years in the wilderness of Sinai, but for thousands of years in all the wildernesses in which we have wandered since the Exodus.

And it is not only the existence of this Moses that is clear and indisputable to me. His character is equally plain, and is not liable to be altered by any archeological discovery. This ideal—I reason—has been created in the spirit of the Jewish people; and the creator creates in his own image. These ideal figures, into which a nation breathes its most intense aspirations, seem to be fashioned automatically, without conscious purpose; and therefore, though they cannot, of course, escape a certain superfluous and inharmonious embroidery, and though we cannot insist that

every detail shall be organically related to the central idea, yet the picture as a whole, if we look at its broad outlines, does always represent that idea which is the cause of its existence, and as it were the seed from which the whole tree has grown.

I take, therefore, a comprehensive view of the whole range of tradition about Moses, and ask myself first of all: What essentially is Moses? In other words, what manner of thing is the national ideal which has its embodiment in Moses? There are heroes and heroes —heroes of war, heroes of thought, and so forth; and when we examine an ideal picture we must first be clear as to the essential nature of the ideal which the artist had in his mind and attempted to portray.

And as I look at the figure of Moses I go on to ask: Was he a military hero?

No! The whole canvas betrays no hint of physical force. We never find Moses at the head of an army, performing feats of valor against the enemy. Only once do we see him on the battlefield, in the battle with Amalek; and there he simply stands and watches the course of the fighting, helping the army of Israel by his *moral* strength, but taking no part in the actual battle.

Again: Was he a statesman?

Again, no! When he had to confront Pharaoh and discuss questions of politics with him, he was helpless without his brother Aaron, his mouthpiece.

Was he, then, a lawgiver?

Once more, no! Every lawgiver makes laws for

his own age, with a view to the particular needs of that time and that place in which he and his people live. But Moses made laws for the future, for a generation that did not yet exist, and a country not yet conquered; and tradition has made no secret of the fact that many laws attributed to Moses only came into force after several generations, while others have never been put into practice at all.

What, then, was Moses?

Tradition answers in the most explicit terms: "There arose not a *Prophet* since in Israel like unto Moses." This, then, is what Moses was: a Prophet. But he was different from the other Prophets, whose appearance in our history, as a specific type, dates only from the period of the monarchy. He was, as later generations learned to call him, "the lord of the Prophets," that is, the ideal archetype of Hebrew prophecy in the purest and most exalted sense of the word.

Again I take a comprehensive glance at what reading and reflection have taught me about the nature of Hebrew prophecy, and try to define its essential characteristics.

The Prophet has two fundamental qualities, which distinguish him from the rest of mankind. First, he is *a man of truth*. He sees life as it is, with a view unwarped by subjective feelings; and he tells you what he sees just as he sees it, unaffected by irrelevant considerations. He tells the truth not because he wishes to tell the truth, not because he has convinced him-

self, after inquiry, that such is his duty, but because he needs must, because truth-telling is a special characteristic of his genius—a characteristic of which he cannot rid himself, even if he would. It has been well said by Carlyle that every man can attain to the elevation of the Prophet by seeking truth; but whereas the ordinary man is able to reach that plane by strength of will and enormous effort, the Prophet can stand on no other by reason of his very nature.

Secondly, the Prophet is an *extremist*. He concentrates his whole heart and mind on his ideal, in which he finds the goal of life, and to which he is determined to make the whole world do service, without the smallest exception. There is in his soul a complete, ideal world; and on that pattern he labors to reform the external world of reality. He has a clear conviction that so things *must* be, and no more is needed to make him demand that so they *shall* be. He can accept no excuse, can consent to no compromise, can never cease thundering his passionate denunciations, even if the whole universe is against him.

From these two fundamental characteristics there results a third, which is a combination of the other two: namely, the supremacy of absolute *righteousness* in the Prophet's soul, in his every word and action. As a man of truth he cannot help being also a man of justice or righteousness; for what is righteousness but truth in action? And as an extremist he cannot subordinate righteousness (any more than he can subordinate truth) to any irrelevant end; he cannot

desert righteousness from motives of temporary expediency, even at the bidding of love or pity. Thus the Prophet's righteousness is absolute, knowing no restriction either on the side of social necessities or on that of human feelings.

The Prophet, then, is in this position: on the one hand, he cannot altogether reform the world according to his desire; on the other hand, he cannot cheat himself and shut his eyes to its defects. Hence it is impossible for him ever to be at peace with the actual life in which his days are spent. There is thus a grain of truth in the popular idea of the Prophet as above all a man who predicts the future; for, in truth, the whole world of the Prophet consists of his heart's vision of what is to come, of "the latter end of days." This is his delight and his comfort whenever the cup of sorrows is full to the brim, and he has no strength left to pour out his soul in bitter outcry against the evil that he sees around him.

But just as the Prophet will not bow to the world, so the world will not bow to him, will not accept his influence immediately and directly. This influence must first pass through certain channels in which it becomes adapted to the conditions of life. Then only can it affect mankind. These channels are human channels. They are men who cannot rise to the Prophet's elevation, and have no sympathy with his extremism, but are none the less nearer to him in spirit than the mass of men, and are capable of being influenced by him up to a certain point. These men

are the *Priests* of the prophetic ideal. They stand between the Prophet and the world, and transmit his influence by devious ways, adapting their methods to the needs of each particular time, and not insisting that the message shall descend on the workaday world in all its pristine purity.

Thus I picture the Prophet in his purest form.[1] Such, in essentials, were all the true Prophets of Israel, from Hosea and Amos to Jeremiah and Ezekiel; but the type is most perfectly realized in the ideal picture of "the lord of the Prophets."

When Moses first leaves the schoolroom and goes out into the world, he is at once brought face to face with a violation of justice, and unhesitatingly he takes the side of the injured. Here at the outset is revealed the eternal struggle between the Prophet and the world.

"An Egyptian smiting a Hebrew," the strong treading scornfully on the weak—this every-day occurrence is his first experience. The Prophet's indignation is aroused, and he helps the weaker. Then "two Hebrews strove together"—two brothers, both weak, both slaves of Pharaoh: and yet they fight each other. Once more the Prophet's sense of justice compels him, and he meddles in a quarrel which is not his. But this time he discovers that it is no easy matter to fight the battle of justice; that the world is stronger than himself, and that he who stands against the world does so at his peril. Yet this experience does not make

[1] See the essay "Priest and Prophet" [p. 125].

him prudent or cautious. His zeal for justice drives him from his country; and as soon as he reaches another haunt of men, while he is still sitting by the well outside the city, before he has had time to find a friend and shelter, he hears once more the cry of outraged justice, and runs immediately to its aid. This time the wranglers are not Hebrews, but foreigners and strangers. But what of that? The Prophet makes no distinction between man and man, only between right and wrong. He sees strong shepherds trampling on the rights of weak women—"and Moses stood up and helped them."

This is the sum of our knowledge about Moses' life till the time when he stood before Pharaoh—and he was then "eighty years old." Of all that long stretch of years, and what happened in them, tradition takes no account, because they were only the preface, only the preparation for the real work of the Prophet. If an exception was made in the case of these three events, which happened to the Prophet at the outset of his life's journey, and if we see that all three have the same characteristic, that of the Prophet standing up against the world in the name of righteousness, we may believe that the object of the tradition was to throw this conflict into relief, and to show how the Prophet displayed the essential qualities of his kind from the very first. We may therefore infer that throughout the whole of that period, in all his wanderings, he never ceased to fight the battle of justice, until the day came when he was to be the savior of his

people, and teach the world justice, not for his own time merely, but for all eternity.

That great moment dawned in the wilderness, far away from the turmoil of the world. The Prophet's soul is weary of his ceaseless battle, and he would fain rest in peace. He turns his back on men for the shepherd's life, and takes his sheep into the wilderness. There "he came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb." But even here there is no rest for him. He feels that he has not yet fulfilled his mission; a secret force in his heart urges him on, saying, "What doest thou here? Go thou, work and fight: for to that end wast thou created." He would like to disregard this voice, but cannot. The Prophet hears "the voice of God" in his heart, whether he will or not: "and if I say, I will not make mention of him. . . . . then there is in mine heart as it were a *burning fire* shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain."

And the Prophet remembers that in his youth, at his first encounter with life, the same fire burnt in his heart and gave him no rest. From that day to this he has done all in his power to make justice supreme in the world: and the fire is still burning. The best of his years, the flower of his strength, have been consumed in the battle; and victory is not his. Now old age has come upon him; yet a little, and he will be sapless as a withered and barren tree—even like this bush before him. Can he still find new means of reaching his goal? Can his old age succeed where his youth has failed?

What is there to do that he has not done? Why should the fire still burn within him, still disturb his soul's peace?

Suddenly he hears the inner "voice of God"—the voice that he knows so well—calling to him from some forgotten corner of his heart:

"I am the God of thy father . . . . I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt . . . . Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

"The God of his father," "the affliction of his people"—how can he have forgotten all this till now? Faithfully has he served the God of the Universe, fighting a hero's battle for universal justice. In Midian, in every country in which he set foot, he has striven always to deliver the oppressed from the oppressor, has preached always truth and peace and charity. But the God of his father he has forgotten; his people he has not remembered; the affliction wherewith the Egyptians afflict his people—of that he has taken no thought.

Now a new hope springs up in the Prophet's heart, and grows stronger each moment. With this hope, he feels, his strength increases, and the days of his youth are renewed. Now he knows the right way to the goal which he has striven after all his life. Hitherto he has consumed his strength among strangers, who looked on him as an alien even after he had spent years among them; who took no account

of him, and paid no heed to his teaching; who would not believe him even if he called on the name of their own gods. But now, now he will go to his own brethren, his own people, and will speak to them in the name of the God of his fathers and theirs. They will know and respect him; they will listen to all that he says, will listen and obey: and the sovereignty of righteousness, hitherto nothing more than his heart's ideal, will be established in the world by this his people, which he will bring forth out of the house of bondage.

Under the spell of this noble idea the Prophet forgets for a moment all the obstacles in his path, and in fancy sees himself already in Egypt among his people. To Pharaoh, indeed, he will not go alone. He knows beforehand that such a man as he, unskilled to speak smooth words, cannot bend the hearts of kings to his desire. But he will approach first of all his own people; he will assemble the "elders of Israel," men who are known in the royal house; to them first he will reveal the great tidings, that God has visited them. And these men, the flower of the people, will understand him and "hearken to his voice." They will go with him to Pharaoh, and give God's message to the king in a language which he understands.

But how if even they, the elders of Israel, "will not hearken to his voice," "will not believe" in his mission?

In that case he knows what to do. Not for nothing was he brought up in Pharaoh's house on the knees of the magicians. "Enchantments" are an abomination to him; but what can he do if the "elders of Israel" believe only in such things, and are open to no other appeal?

Even the "sons of God" have been known to fall from Heaven to earth; and even the Prophet has his moments of relapse, when the spirit of prophecy deserts him, and his mortal elements drag him down into the mire of the world. But only for a moment can the Prophet cease to be what he ought to be, and needs must be—a man of truth. Scarcely has Moses conceived this idea of gaining credence by means of magic enchantments, when the Prophet in him rises up in arms against this unclean thought. Never! Since first he began to hear "the voice of God" his tongue has been a holy instrument, the outer vesture of that Divine voice within him; but "a man of words," a man whose words are only means to the attainment of his desires, not genuinely connected with his thought —such a man he has never been "heretofore," nor will ever be. That is a price which he will not pay even for the redemption of his people. If there is no way but through enchantments, then let the redemption be achieved by others, and let him alone in his spotless truth, alone in the wilderness:

"Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him *whom* Thou wilt send."

But it is not easy for the Prophet to remain in the wilderness. The burning fire which has just roused all his spiritual forces to action has not yet been quelled; it will give him no rest till he find some way to carry out his thought.

So, at last, the Prophet finds the necessary "channel" through which his influence shall reach the people. He has a brother in Egypt, a man of position, a Levite, who knows how to shape his words to the needs of the time and the place. His brother will need no enchantments to gain him allegiance. He, the "Priest" of the future, will go with the Prophet to the elders and to the king himself. Nay, he will know how to find a way into the hearts of all of them:

"And thou shalt speak unto him . . . . and he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God."

So the *immediate* goal is reached. Pharaoh and all his host lie at the bottom of the Red Sea, and Moses stands at the head of a free people, leading them to the land of their ancestors.

"Then sang Moses . . . ." In this hour of happiness his heart overflows with emotion, and pours itself out in song. He does not know that he is still at the beginning of his journey; he does not know that the real task, the most difficult task, has still to be commenced. Pharaoh is gone, but his work remains; the master has ceased to be master, but the slaves have not ceased to be slaves. A people trained for generations in the house of bondage cannot cast off in an instant the effects of that training and become truly free, even when the chains have been struck off.

But the Prophet believes in the power of his ideal. He is convinced that the ideal which he is destined to

give to his people will have sufficient force to expel the taint of slavery, and to imbue this slave-people with a new spirit of strength and upward striving, equal to all the demands of its lofty mission.

Then the Prophet gathers his people at the foot of the mountain, opens the innermost heavens before them, and shows them the God of their fathers in a new form, in all His universal grandeur.

"For all the earth is Mine," so speaks the voice of the God of Israel "out of the midst of the fire." Hitherto you have believed, in common with all other nations, that every people and every country has its own god, all-powerful within his boundaries, and that these gods wage war on one another and conquer one another, like the nations that serve them. But it is not so. There is no such thing as a God of Israel and a different God of Egypt; there is one God, who was, is, and shall be: He is Lord of *all* the earth, and Ruler over *all* the nations. And it is this universal God who is the God of your fathers. The whole world is His handiwork, and all men are created in His image; but you, the children of His chosen Abraham, He has singled out to be His peculiar people, to be "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," to sanctify His name in the world and to be an example to mankind in your individual and in your corporate life, which are to be based on new foundations, on the spirit of Truth and Righteousness.

"Justice, justice shalt thou follow." "Keep thee far from a false matter." You shall not respect the

strong; "and a stranger shalt thou not wrong. . . . . Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child." But neither shall you wrest justice on the side of the weak: "Neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause." The guiding rule of your lives shall be neither hatred and jealousy, nor yet love and pity, for all alike pervert the view and bias the judgment. "Justice, justice"—that alone shall be your rule.

"Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire" such lofty and majestic words? And the nation that has heard this message, though it may have been sunk for centuries in the morass of slavery and degradation, how can it fail to rise out of the depths, and feel in its innermost soul the purifying light that streams in upon it?

So thinks the Prophet; and the people confirm his belief, as they cry ecstatically, with one voice, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

So the Prophet leaves the camp in peace of mind, and withdraws into solitude on the top of the mountain, there to perfect and complete the law of righteousness. But before he has been many days out of sight the Egyptian bondman rears his head, and in a moment overturns the dream-castle which the Prophet has built on the foundation of his faith in the power of the ideal. "The voice of God" is drowned by "the noise of the people as they shouted"; and the Priest, whom the Prophet trusted, who was his mouthpiece before Pharaoh and the people, this very Priest is carried away by the mob, and makes them "gods"

after their own heart, and builds an altar . . . . This, in his view, is what the hour demands: and the Priest is above all a man of the hour.

The Prophet's grief knows no bounds. All his work, all his visions of his people's glorious mission, all the hope which comforted him in his arduous path, all is vanished into nothing. He is seized by impotent despair. "The tablets of the Covenant" fall from his hand and are broken; his faith in himself and his work is shaken. Now he sees how hard it is to create a "peculiar people" out of such warped material, and for one moment he thinks of abandoning this "obstinate people," and entrusting his tablets to the remnant who are faithful to his covenant. They will observe his law, and win over little by little the best of mankind, till they become "a great nation"; and he will return to his shepherd's life in the wilderness.

But the Prophet is not a Priest: it is not for him to bow to circumstances without a struggle, and to change his way of thought at their bidding. The first impulse passes away, and the Prophet returns to his mission, and resolves to go forward, come what may. Now he realizes the hard task that lies before him. He no longer believes in a sudden revolution; he knows that signs and wonders and visions of God can arouse a momentary enthusiasm, but cannot create a new heart, cannot uproot and implant feelings and inclinations with any stability or permanence. So he summons all his patience to the task of bearing the troublesome burden of his people and training it by slow steps till it is fit for its mission.

Thus the first period passes away. The Prophet teaches, trains, bears, and forgives, borne up by the hope of seeing the fruits of his labor at no distant day, when his people's mission will be fulfilled in their own land.

And then comes the incident of the spies. Here is a nation on its way to conquer a country by force, and there build up its own distinctive national life, which is to be an example to the world: and at the first unfavorable report despair sets in, and the glorious future is forgotten. Even the Prophet's heart fails him at this evidence of utter, fathomless degradation.

Moses now sees, then, that his last hope is groundless. Not even education will avail to make this degraded mob capable of a lofty mission. Straightway the Prophet decrees extinction on his generation, and resolves to remain in the wilderness forty years, till all that generation be consumed, and its place be taken by a new generation, born and bred in freedom, and trained from childhood under the influence of the Law which it is to observe in the land of its future.

It requires unusual courage to go out boldly to meet danger, to fall single-handed on an enemy of vastly superior strength, to plunge into a stormy sea. But far greater heroism is demanded of the man who goes about consciously and deliberately to tear out of his heart a splendid hope, which has been the very breath of his life; to stop half-way when all his feelings tumultuously impel him on towards the goal which seemed so near. With such heroism has this Hebrew

tradition endowed its Superman, the prince of its Prophets. In vain do his followers, now conscious of their error, urge him to take up the work again, and lead them to their inheritance; in vain is their entreaty, "Lo, we be here, and will go up"! The Prophet has decreed, and will not, nay cannot, retract. He is convinced that "this evil congregation" can be of no use for his purpose, and no entreaty will induce the Prophet to act against his convictions. He mourns with them and makes their grief his own; but for their supplications he has one stern answer, "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you."

So the Prophet remains in the wilderness, buries his own generation and trains up a new one. Year after year passes, and he never grows weary of repeating to this growing generation the laws of righteousness that must guide its life in the land of its future; never tires of recalling the glorious past in which these laws were fashioned. The past and the future are the Prophet's whole life, each completing the other. In the present he sees nothing but a wilderness, a life far removed from his ideal; and therefore he looks before and after. He lives in the future world of his vision, and seeks strength in the past out of which that vision-world is quarried.

Forty years are gone, and the new generation is about to emerge from its vagabond life in the wilderness, and take up the broken thread of the national task, when the Prophet dies, and another man assumes the leadership, and brings the people to its land.

Why does the Prophet die? Why is it not vouchsafed to him to complete his work himself? Tradition, as we know, gives no sufficient reason. But tradition recognized, with unerring instinct, that so it needs must be. When the time comes for the ideal to be embodied in practice, the Prophet can no longer stand at the head; he must give place to another. The reason is that from that moment there begins a new period, a period in which prophecy is dumb, a period of those half-measures and compromises which are essential to the battle of life. In this period reality assumes gradually a form very different from that of the Prophet's vision; and so it is better for him to die than to witness this change. "He shall see the land before him, but he shall not go thither." He has brought his people to the border, fitted them for their future, and given them a noble ideal to be their lodestar in time of trouble, their comfort and their salvation; the rest is for other men, who are more skilled to compromise with life. Let them do what they will do and achieve what they will achieve, be it much or little. In any case they will not achieve all that the Prophet wished, and their way will not be his way.

As for him, the Prophet, he dies, as he has lived, in his faith. All the evil that he has seen has been powerless to quench his hope for the future, or dim the brightness of the ideal that illumined his path from afar. He dies with gladness on his face, and with words of comfort for the latter days on his lips: dies, as tradition says, "in a kiss," embracing, as it were,

the ideal to which he has consecrated his life, and for which he has toiled and suffered till his last breath.

When Heine wanted to describe the greatness of the prince of Hebrew poets, Jehudah Halevi, he said that "he was born with a kiss." But that idea is foreign to the Jewish spirit. When the national tradition wishes to describe the greatness of the prince of Prophets, it makes him die, not come to life, with a kiss. That death-kiss is the crown of a work completed and a duty fulfilled to the uttermost, of a life whose burden has been borne from first to last with the steadfastness of a sea-girt rock, which flinches not nor bows, but bears unmoved the onset of the devouring waves.

"The creator," I have said, "creates in his own image." And in truth, our people has but expressed *itself*, at its highest, in this picture of Moses. Well have the Cabbalists said that "Moses is reincarnated in every age." Some hint of Moses has illumined the dark life of our people, like a spark, in every generation. This needs no lengthy proof. We have but to open our Prayer Book, and we shall see almost on every page how constant has been the striving after the realization of the prophetic ideal in all its world-embracing breadth, constant throughout the blackest periods of the Jew's history, when his life has been most precarious, and persecution has driven him from country to country. Israel has never lived in the present. The present, with its evil and its wickedness, has always filled us with anguish, indignation, and bitter-

ness. But just as constantly have we been inspired with brilliant hopes for the future, and an ineradicable faith in the coming triumph of the good and the right; and for these hopes and that faith we have always sought and found support in the history of our past, whereon our imagination has brooded, weaving all manner of fair dreams, so as to make the past a kind of mirror of the future. Our very Hebrew language, the garment of the Jewish spirit, has no present tense, but only a past and a future. The question has been much debated, whether the fundamental characteristic of the Jewish spirit is optimism or pessimism; and extreme views have been propounded on both sides. But all such discussion is futile. The Jew is both optimist and pessimist; but his pessimism has reference to the present, his optimism to the future. This was true of the Prophets, and it is true of the people of the Prophets.

There has, indeed, been one short period in modern Jewish history when Israel grew utterly weary of toil and trouble, and began to long for solace in the present, taking pleasure in the fleeting hour, as other nations do, and demanding no more of life than what it can give. And when once this longing was aroused, and became Israel's ideal (despite its fundamental opposition to the prophetic outlook), the prophetic characteristic at once manifested itself here also: the ideal was pursued to extreme lengths, without any regard to the obstacles that lay in the way of its attainment. The Jews of that period had no pity on the vision of a great future,

to which their ancestors clung throughout history. They wiped it out at a single stroke, as soon as its abandonment seemed to be a necessary step to the attainment of the ideal of to-day. And with the future the past necessarily went, seeing that it had no meaning except as a mirror of the future. But we all know the end of the story. The ideal of to-day was not attained; and all the labor of that period, its attempt to destroy one world and build another, left nothing but ruin and the bitterness that comes of wasted effort.

But this was a mere passing phase, a sort of fainting-fit, a temporary loss of consciousness. The prophetic spirit cannot be crushed, except for a time. It comes to life again, and masters the Prophet in his own despite. So, too, the prophetic people regained consciousness in its own despite, and we see once again some beginning of the "reincarnation of Moses." The Spirit which called Moses thousands of years ago and sent him on his mission, against his own will, now calls again the generation of to-day, saying,

"And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say, we will be as the nations . . . as I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand . . . . will I be king over you."

SENT BY:1 ; 7-23-97 ;12:10PM ; KINKO'S UNIV. AVE. → 532 2646;# 1/12

kinko's
The new way to office:

fax cover sheet

2741 University Ave. Madison WI. • Telephone: (608) 238-2741 • Fax: (608) 238-5392

Date ______________ Number of pages 12 (including cover page)

to: Name Chava Werber **from:** Name Daniel Pekarsky

Company CIJE Company ______________

Telephone 212-532-2360 Telephone 608-262-1718

Fax 1-212-532-2646

Comments Hi Chava. Please prepare a packet for Amy, Linda Thall, ~~and~~ Karen, and Nessa that includes this material. I'll send cover-letter ~~text~~ later today

and Brinker and Rosenak

Thanks!

More than 800 locations worldwide. For the location nearest you, call 1-800-2-KINKOS.

See you soon!

Cover letter

MEMO

To: Providence group

From: DP & AK

Date (to DNP)

B/C Alvan's case deals w/ an attempt to develop a comm. vision to guide ~~J~~ ed. these 2 essays may prove useful background to our disc.

The R. piece is one that all ~~one~~ ~~most~~ of you have examined b/4; The Dorff essay on pluralism may be new to you & of interest

We hope ~~you~~ will have the chance to review them

Take the Black Ave exit off 95

tell him (the driver) that it is by Elm Grove & Morris Ave near the Brown football stadium

His home is approx 20 min from the airport.

If the cab driver does not recognize the address:

~~DND~~ Alvan's address is:

50 Sargent Ave. in Prov.

his phone # is (401) 331-0219.

Amy Bernstein
Coalition for Essential Schools
1 Davol Square
Prov. RI 02903
(401) 863-3789

FAX TRANSMISSION

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

To: Karen Barth
Date: 7/24/97
Fax #:
Pages: 24 , including this cover sheet.
From: Dan Pekarsky
Subject: Providence meeting
COMMENTS:

Karen - here's my second try.
-Chava

** CONFIRMATION REPORT **

TRANSMISSION
INCOMPLETE: RETRANSMIT PAGE(S)

NO.	DATE/TIME	DESTINATION	DURATION	PGS	STATUS	MODE
963	JUL. 23 11:02	KAREN BARTH Z		000	S00000	

MEMORANDUM

To: Providence group

From: Dan Pekarsky and Alvan Kaunfer

Date: July 23, 1997

Because Alvan's case deals with an attempt to develop a community vision to guide Jewish education, these two essays may prove useful background to our discussion.

The Rosenak piece is one that all or most of you have examined before; The Dorff essay on pluralism may be new to you and of interest. We hope you will have the chance to review them.

Alvan's address is: **50 Sargent Avenue in Providence**

His phone number is: **(401) 331-0219**

His home is approximately 20 minutes from the airport.

If the cab driver does not recognize the address, tell him/her that it is between Elm Grove and Morris Avenue near the Brown football stadium. Take the Branch Avenue exit off 95.

See you soon!

NOT FOR CIRCULATION

A Community-Wide Vision for Jewish Education

Michael Rosenak

Our task today is to examine whether we can come up with general conceptions of a community-wide agenda for Jewish life and education.

This is a large order and, we may say at the outset, appears to draw us into a situation of some paradox. It is a large order because we do not know whether we even want a common agenda. The paradox is that, at first sight, "an agenda for a community" seems to be, by definition, a non-problem.

Why? Because when people traditionally spoke of "the community," they meant, "an agenda." When people belonged to a community, it was understood to imply that that had a common practices and purposes. They were assumed to agree that there were right and wrong ways to do things. It was self-understood for them that qualified authorities guided the community. These authorities were assumed to know must clearly and definitively what right and wrong ways were, and how one walked on the right path. They were exhaustively educated in the culture and they were master educators. The educational philosopher, R.S. Peters, in his Ethics and Education, speaks of authority as a quality that is always present where people live in community and where they know that "there are rules." The "authorities" interpret and teach the rules and the rules define the community.

Furthermore, a community always constituted "an agenda" in the sense that it had an ideal conception of itself as "an educated public." At its best, it consisted of people who shared a language, especially through the medium of shared books and, most likely through a sacred literature. In a very fine essay by the philosopher Alisdair MacIntrye called "The Idea of an Educated Public" he argues that in a community of "an educated public" there are characteristic features. With specific reference to Scotland in the seventeenth century, he posits that, for example, when people argued about some cultural datum within "an educated public," they knew what they were arguing about. When people studied, they did so about and within texts that they shared. They had criteria of evaluation, so they knew when a speaker or teacher or leader was good or bad or indifferent.

The medieval Jewish community was certainly also such "an educated public" though we, no less than enthusiasts of seventeenth century Scotland, are sometimes prone to romanticize the past in which Jews lived in community, when the community was an "agenda." But today Jews, for the most part,no longer live in such communities. True, there is still a small section of the Jewish people where community is the blatant social reality, but the concepts of identity, authority and "agenda" are generally understood in such authoritarian and fundamentalistic ways there, that they appear as unacceptable models of communal life for all the others, for all who see themselves as living consciously in the modern world.

So for most people, Jews included, community is no longer an agenda. Rather, they consider "community" to be no more than a form of voluntary association. This voluntary association does not usually involve clear-cut commitments, because such commitments are associated by modern or post-modern people with some measure of public coercion. And since all rights and all genuine consciousness is viewed by the majority of contemporary people as residing in the individual, coercive publics are seen to be oppressive or, at least, benighted.It is the individual who has to decide when and how s/he wishes to be associated with others. The community of voluntary association does not possess any inherent character, it has no self-understood rights of its own and it has no self-understand right to impose duties on individuals. If duties are nevertheless accepted by individuals in voluntary communities, they have a different status than the kind of rules that used to be imposed by authorities. And so, the paradox with which we began was just a way of making that point clear, explaining why the subject of our discussion is no longer "paradoxical."

What we still do have, I believe, is a manifest desire on the part of many Jews for community-of-association, and for something common to those thus associated, that may loosely be called "an agenda." Through this desire these Jews, we might say, have "selected themselves in." Those who "select themselves in," recognize or believe that they don't "have to" belong and yet wish to. They are those who wish neither to be assimilated nor to deny themselves participation in modern culture. They are "in the middle" between what they perceive as pre-modern Judaism and the post-modern consciousness of limitless and rootless choice. These Jews "in the middle" wish "to be

together," to do certain things together. But they know that the common purpose, of being together, in community, cannot be defended and honestly cherished without moving it first through the prism of pluralism. They assume that you cannot really speak about "an agenda" for a modern community without asking what is meant by a pluralistic community and how it functions. For one of the characteristics of those "in the middle" is the desire not to give up their right to "be themselves," even while they work towards community and a common agenda.

Now, when they approach pluralism, they discover that there are two ways of looking at it. One point of view maintains that being together does not negate our being different from one another, even radically so. According to this position, all points of view are legitimate, though none of us is required to consider all or any point of view as true. I can maintain that all views are relative or, conversely, that I am right and you are wrong. In any case, you are as much within your rights in maintaining your position as I am in maintaining mine. Hence, when we get together as Jews, it is not because we agree about some vision of Jewishness, but because some perceived needs of all of us are met or at least addressed by our association. For example, we may be getting together for defense. Or for care. We may be getting together simply because we feel comfortable in being re-assured about the quality of an inescapable "Jewish identity."

This is the kind of association that makes Jews build sports clubs, old age homes, defence leagues. It is the kind of association that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of blessed memory once called brit goral - "a covenant of fate." If there were no anti-semitism, if there was not this peculiar status of the Jews among the nations of the world, then we probably would not have to or even want to get together. Certainly, Theodore Herzl and Max Nordau would not have wanted to establish a Jewish commonwealth had there not been "the Jewish problem" (of anti-semitism). If full assimilation were possible and other associations were consistently feasible - and dignified - we might choose them. But we are bound together by common needs created by a common "situation" of Jewishness.

That is one view of pluralism. In the context of this type of pluralism, we are in favor of an "open" society in which each does her or his "own thing," and we wish for a Jewish education in which various positions are

uninhibitedly expressed and played out. According to this approach, as noted, we take no stand on the veracity of any particular position. Our only "stand" is that they are all legitimate and they're all to be judged as "good" for those who need them or authentically embrace them. We do this not because we have philosophically evaluated and legitimated these positions but because we wish to be together. Without brit goral we are going to be in trouble. We have joined together because, without our association, Jews, as individuals or collectively, suffer, or are less comfortable. or more neurotic or are more vulnerable to persecution.

But there is a second view of pluralism, and it creates greater possibilities for a community-wide agenda. It is that pluralism should be based on a "core universe," a basic set of common assumptions and perhaps even some common commitments. The "core universe" that underlies this notion of pluralism, for Jews, involves some common interpretation of Jewish tradition or civilization. It is based on a common understanding of what is particular to this civilization that we can still share.

An example of such a common assumption was once cited by Abba Eban, in the name of Walter Rattenau, a Jewish statesman of the Weimar Republic who was murdered by anti-semitic thugs. Rattenau allegedly said that if a Jew tells you that he enjoys hunting, he's lying. I don't know if this was true in Rattenau's time or if it is still true, but there was certainly a time when an aversion to hunting was a shared premise of Jews about the proper relationship between humanity and the animal kingdom. This assumption dictated an attitude one could expect to find among Jews about the imposition of pain upon other creatures, in the name of "sport."

The late American-Jewish writer, Maurice Samuel, was a great believer in this conception of common assumptions and he had a unique talent for touching up this conception with pithy and literary associations. Samuel once wrote a book entitled The Gentleman and the Jew in which he argued that "gentlemen" are people who, when about to go fight their enemies, first line up, display their arms, shine their boots and adjust their caps. Jews, on the other hand, ask where the enemy is, how one best gets at him and how one gets the thing over with as quickly as possible.

This rhetoric, of course, is meant to represent a kind of "civilizational

language." Is it still shared? Is there anything we "naturally" share as Jews? Because, obviously, if there is nothing we can share, we cannot have a community agenda beyond the minimalistic one dictated by "a community of fate." The question is whether there are still some things we take for granted, things that we hold dear, that we will defend at all costs, things that clearly distinguish, yet without pretension or pomposity, between "Israel and the nations." Is there still an arena in which we communicate as among insiders, in which we engage in controversy "for the sake of Heaven" and know what we are arguing about? Is there anything towards which we can still educate together?

I believe that, however fragile it may sometimes seem, that there still is a common cultural language or what the sociologist Peter L. Berger has called a "plausibility structure," among Jews. And here I shall mention four possible feratures of it, four possible items for a common agenda, in a common "language."

The first is the item of a common sacred literature, that is, the literature that exposes our language of Jewish culture and spirit to view in a primary and foundational way. This sacred literature has traditionally been believed to deal with important things, to delve profoundly into origins and purposes, to treat of ultimate matters. It was studied "in depth" and was believed to itself be "deep." It is true that contemporary Jews no longer agree how it should be studied, what it demands or whether it has the authority to demand much of anything. But Jews still find it legitimate and potentially enriching to open these books together, and to discover points of contact among themselves that come to light when they study it together. They still view those books as singularly "theirs."

The sociologist Charles Leibman once said, with much justice I think, that this aspect of a common language or a common agenda is of primary importance. He posited that there is no Jewish community on record that ceased studying Torah yet survived. If there is no limmud Torah (study of Torah), even if it is not quite clear what is included in Torah, even if the study will lead to diverse understandings and courses of action, then it is unlikely that there will be any community at all.

Secondly: it is possible for contemporary Jews to articulate a common language and find a common vision by "taking off" from a common vocabulary. Certain words that are accompanied by certain associations may be mere scaffolding, but, as an educational enterprise of community-building, it is something to be seriously considered and cultivated. Such a common vocabulary was really the "one-ness" that the renowed Zionist publicist and thinker, Ahad Ha'am ("one of the nation") had in mind for his people-in-crisis. Ahad Ha'am wrote a very short and concise essay entitled Bein Kodesh Vahol, "Between Sacred and Profane." His argument is in this essay is that "sacred" things are to be defined as those cultural artifacts that do not shed their framwork or "shell" even though and when their contents change. Thus, for example, the term "Shabbat" remains sacred even if its "particular historical contents" as a day of rest changes; the Torah remains forever within its "shell" of parchment and handwritten verses, though the "Oral Torah" reflects its changing ideals and norms. Conversely. "profane" matters are those in which the shell is discarded when the content becomes obsolete. We thus "throw aweay" an ancient book of physics that has outmoded scientific conceptions, but we continue to write - and read - "an eye for an eye" even after the Oral Torah has "explained" that the law requires monetary compensation and not the offender's eye.

A common vocabulary may well delineate what our common language of Jewishness, of sanctity, is. It will make a lot of difference, I think, whether Jews refer, in this Ahad Ha'amian spirit, to the Bible as Tanakh or as "Old Testament." It is significant whether they talk about motza'e Shabbat or "Saturday night." It is indeed a fact that language, even as lexicon, invites so many associations that a great deal of tarbut or "culture" comes along with it. After all, nobody could possibly say about "Saturday night" that "it begins this week at seven-forty-two," but it makes eminently good sense to refer motza'e Shabbat to a particular time and minute. As our Yiddish-speaking forbears well knew, the lexicon doesn't even have to be in Hebrew. If a Jew is told that "Shabbat comes in at 6:24" and s/he looks to the door to observe the Sabbath "coming in," there is obvious cultural illiteracy here. He or she lives in a different vocabulary. Those who "live in diverse vocabularies" will find it difficult to build a common community.

An interesting project for educators would be to try to determine what this basic vocabulary is, and to explore some of the ramifications and

"spin-offs" of its various terms. Let us say, for example, that we were to write down one hundred value-concepts, couched in words or phrases. What could we learn from these terms? What would they suggest to us?

In this connection, let me mention a joke or story about "the nine days" (between Rosh Hodesh Av and Tisha B'Av. Here, there are already three possible candidates for our lexicon: "the nine days," Tishah B'Av and Rosh Hodesh.) The story is about a person who comes into a restaurant that has moved from Jewish to Gentile proprietors. Our customer is ignorant of that fact and he sits down in anticipation of a good Jewish meal. When the waiter comes up to him and asks him what he would like to eat, the customer responds as follows: "Well, this week is the nine days, so I can't have meat but have to eat 'milkhik' so bring me a nice piece of fish." The agitated waiter goes out to the kitchen to tell the cook that there is a madman in the restaurant. "He says that there are nine days this week so he can't eat meat, and therefore he has to eat something (about) milk, so I should bring him fish."

Now this is a obviously a "language" or "plausibility structure" joke. It belongs to the same family as the classic story of the young child who runs into his immigrant grandfather's room on New York's Lower East Side of the nineteen-thirties and excitedly tells the old man that Babe Ruth has just hit his sixtieth home-run for the New York Yankees. Whereupon the grandfather solemnly asks: "Is it good for the Jews?" "Iss gut fahr die Yidden?" In both stories, there is clearly a dissonance between the "languages" being spoken. So, we could make a list of one hundred phrases like "the nine days" and ask, "How does it enhance Jewish understanding?" and "What can you do with that?" In our particular case, one of the things you can "do" with it is to understand the restaurant joke. But there are many things beyond that joke. You may learn about matters like halavi (dairy products) and besari (meat products) and so forth. And "the nine days," may, of course, set you thinking about Tishah B'Av and what, if anything, this day of mourning can signify for the modern Jew. Indeed, once you get into the phrases, you have already moved into the controversies. And you can't engage in controversy about them unless you know them.

A third possibility for creating and possessing a "core universe" for a pluralistic yet common agenda is in the realm of some common community practice. Here, of course, matters are invariably more complicated than is the

case in the realm of "vocabulary or even study. In fact, however, practice may itself be viewed as a kind of vocabulary and even a kind of "learning." It is a conversation involving such terms as Shabbat,tzedakah, and kashrut. It raises such questions as: What kinds of activities are or are not conducted on Shabbat by the community? How does the community give tzedakah? Is shrimp ever served at communal functions? Does the community maintain a kosher kitchen?

When I say that in this realm matters invariably become more complicated or "sticky," it is because common practice is easily understood as a concession to the more traditional members of the community. In operative terms, we may say that some of these practices are unlikely to be adopted unless the traditionalist suggests or even demands them. But the other side of that coin is that the community is unlikely to adopt these practices unless the traditionalists agree to throw in their lot with the less "normative" members and segments of the community. The traditionalists too must make a concession, namely to be less "denominational" and more communal. In a sense, everyone has to do so. And for everyone, there is a price to be paid for community. A common language, of practice too, emerges from studying together and using a common vocabulary. A continual negotiation goes on because members of the community wish to say certain things to their co-membersbut they also wish to be heard by them. And one who wishes to be heard, has to take the capacity and willingness of others to listen into account.

A fourth and final item for a common language is the joint goal of identifying problems and dealing with them. This feature of "agenda" is rooted in "the covenant of fate" but quickly grows beyond it. For the ability and willingness to deal with Jewish problems arises not only out of anxiety but also out of caring. And caring is a fundamental aspect of all community. Rosa Luxemburg, as you may know, once said that "merely" Jewish problems were too petty for her concern. She was only interested, she insisted, in universal problems. By which she meant, of course, German or European ones. She had no time or energy to care for Jews. Jewish community was not for her.

In this aspect of "agenda," we find the community that "learns," speaks and acts together, caring about Jews and their problems. Today, for better or for worse, the problems of Jews are manifold. There is the matter of expressing "particularistic" Jewish concerns in the face of an alleged universalism (often, someone else's particularism!) and, conversely, the

problem of defending universal concerns in the (particularistic) Jewish contexts of Israel and Jewish communities. There are problems of ecology in Israel, where it is a specifically "Jewish problem) and elsewhere, where Jews, together with others, have the duty to protect environments and the right to breathe. Perhaps fortunately, the panorama of Jewish problems is today as wide as humanity and particular Jewish concerns need no longer be suspected of parochialism.

In communities struggling to identify a common language, caring refers not only to the community itself and its protection, but to relationships between individuals and groups within it who seem adamantly different yet wish to find themselves culturally in some proximity and kinship to one another.

Permit me to elucidelate by giving two examples. In 1959, there was a heated debate in the Knesset about an educational program proposed by the Minister of Education. It was entitled "Jewish Consciousness," and was meant to impart a love and appreciation for the Jewish tradition among pupils whose homes were largely non-traditional and who studied at non-religious state schools. Some Knesset members from religious parties declared in that debate that there was actually no problem, or rather, that they had the solution. They suggested that the minister, rather than institute a "pathetic" program of "Jewish Consciousness" in the schools, ought to change the school system by instituting the curriculum of the religious schools in all state schools. Then, happily, all "Jewish Consciousness" programs would become superfluous. But that was a triumphalist act of one-uppmanship, not genuinely part of a community conversation. The families of the pupils for whom "Jewish Consciousness" programs were proposed were not going to change their lives, their convictions or their search for Jewish meanings in their own ways! The religious Knesset members who refused to see that, were refusing to engage in the conversation of community.

My second and reverse example: The late Dr. Hanoch Rinot, the first director of the Melton Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora at the Hebrew University, once told me that when television was first introduced into the country a fierce debate was held in the Broadcasting Commission as to whether there should be television broadcasts on Friday evening. And, of course, the view of the religious parties represented on the Commission was that such a desecration of the holy day should not be permitted. The secular

members of that body were annoyed by this. They turned to the representatives of the religious parties and said: "It's all very well for you to oppose television broadcasting on Shabbat but we're living in a culture which naturally associates recreation with electronics. In other words, if you take all the sockets out of the walls, what are people going to do with their leisure time? Now you religious people have this quaint notion that by virtue of a timer ("Shabbat clock") you will still use electricity without touching electrical appliances. But we are not like that and we want to turn on our television sets.

At this point, a representative of the ultra-Orthodox Poale Agudat Yisrael party conceded the point. "I realize," he said, "that some of my neighbours are bored on Friday nights and television may change that. But if I abstain in the vote, can you guarantee - or at least promise - that the programs offered on Friday night will have a spiritual content that differs from weekday fare? This man had a sense of community. He couldn't vote with the secular parties, but the problems of other Jews were his problems. He wanted to make Friday evening more "Shabbisdik" for his neighbours. (My understanding is that the promise was given but later ignored.)

Is there, in these four features of a common agenda for contemporary community, a partially common syllabus, a broadly sketched vision for education that yet relates with care and respect to the differences within our communities? I believe there is.

The last point I wish to make concerns Israel, the place to locate a core universe for the Jewish people and the locus of many variant conceptions of Jewishness. Israel is no substitute for an agenda in the Diaspora, but it has much to teach Jews everywhere about the contours of agenda. In Israel, perhaps uniquely, one may learn how "the covenant of fate" jostles against "the covenant of destiny," and how they two (sometimes) seek accomodations with the other. At times it appears here that all we have in common is "the Jewish problem." We are here together, it then seems, because we have common enemies, common anxieties, mutual concerns for security and survival.

But then there are moments when it is absolutely clear that there is more than that. There is a language (Hebrew!) which is a cultural treasure (and not only a medium to communicate needs and concerns). There is pride, passion,

occasional shame and much love for what Jewish society can be and what potential for community there is in it. Despite our differences and sometimes, because of them.

We look into the future and see it as worrisome and uncertain. At the same time, being Jewishly challenged by it, we discern within it, an agenda. This agenda is imbued with modernity but it is not limited to that. There is freedom within it, but also commitment and community.

From Frontiers of Jewish Thought, Steven T. Katz, ed. (Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1992).

Pluralism

ELLIOT N. DORFF

In political and religious contexts, pluralism is the position that one can affirm one's own views and practices while being open to communication with, and appreciation of, those who think and act differently.[1] Such an open-minded stance, as familiar and attractive as it is to an American audience, entails some serious problems. Specifically, how can I justify my own view while granting legitimacy to others? Will admitting the validity of other views diminish what I am prepared to sacrifice for my own? Are there any boundaries to the legitimacy I should extend to others? That is, when, if ever, should I cease to accept what another says and does and actively fight against it, perhaps even militarily? But if I am not pluralistic, how can I have anything but hostile relations with anyone outside my own group? For Jews, the issue exists on two levels: how Jews should understand and relate to those who are not Jewish; and the subject of this essay, how Jews should interact with their fellow Jews who think and act in a mode different from their own.[2]

Practical Problems and Proposals for Pluralism

Although the philosophical questions entailed in pluralism have been the same for millennia, recent disagreements within the Jewish community have heightened interest in both the practical and theoretical sides of this issue. Problems involving family law have attracted the most attention—definitions of Jewish status, conver-

sions, marriages, and divorces which some recognize and some do not.[3] As bad as these problems are in North America, they are even worse in Israel, where such matters are controlled by the Orthodox chief rabbinate, which is one reason for the alarming disaffection of non-Orthodox, American Jews with Israel.[4]

But other, increasingly vexing, tensions also cause concern for Jewish unity. These include, first, vituperative public outbursts by one group against another, violations of what Charles Silberman calls "the basic rule of American interreligious life"—that is, "one does not publicly deny the validity of someone else's religion, nor does one publicly claim to have a monopoly on religious truth"—whatever one thinks or says in private.[5] A corollary of this is the need to abandon the polemics, distortions, and lies that sometimes characterize presentations of other views—whether in the classroom, in a public oration, or in print.[6] Another corollary of this "religion of civility" is that all groups—including the Orthodox—must stop refusing to sit down together with other Jews within communal agencies such as the local Board of Rabbis or to enter buildings housing other groups for a communal meeting or program.

Aside from eliminating such irritations, laypeople and rabbis now see the need to take positive steps to broaden cooperation and avoid splintering. Rabbi Harold Schulweis (Conservative), for example, has proposed exchanges on a lay level for both youth and adults through joint meetings, socials, retreats, and summer camp experiences.[7] Rabbi Alexander Schindler (Reform) has suggested that rabbis be invited to speak in the synagogues of other denominations; that publications report positive attitudes and activities concerning other denominations; that transdenominational studies be undertaken by members of the faculties of the various seminaries in an effort to resolve the issues of conversion and divorce; and that there be a national forum that meets no less than four times each year to air differences, explore possible compromises, and define issues of common cause.[8] Rabbi Irving Greenberg (Orthodox), who founded the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership largely to overcome divisivenesss within the Jewish community, has fostered ongoing meetings of rabbis and academicians in communities across the continent to get to know each other and discuss matters of common concern. He has also suggested that synagogues of various denominations jointly sponsor

classes taught by rabbis and others from all institutions involved; that teenagers be brought together to discuss how to work together to further unity in the next generation; and that local communities establish task forces to promote intra-Jewish cooperation and programs.[9]

At the bottom of all of this is the assertion that *Ahavat Yisrael* (love of one's fellow Jews) must be taught as a value that transcends denominational differences. This underscores the need for a theory of pluralism that explains how and why one could adopt a given view and yet be willing—at least within some bounds—to respect as Jews those who have different views.

Rabbinic Approaches to Diversity

The Need for Unity. A play on words based on Deuteronomy 14:1 leads the rabbis to the principle that Jews should not split into factions.[10] The need for unity is, in part, political and social. Only a cohesive community can prevent anarchy and plan joint action to protect and enhance life. For the rabbis, though, the motivation was also theological: "When Israel is of one mind below, God's great name is exalted above, as it says, 'He became King in Jeshurun when the heads of the people assembled, the tribes of Israel together' (Deuteronomy 33:5)."[11] If communities are splintered, the various groups seem to be guided by two different Torahs or even by two different gods,[12] which can undermine respect for religious institutions and, ultimately, for religion itself. Furthermore, a divided Jewish community cannot effectively accomplish its religious mission of being "a light unto the nations" in perfecting the world under the dominion of God.[13]

Those for whom unity is the exclusive or paramount goal sometimes seek to attain it by claiming that there is only one correct view and that all others should be shunned or even attacked. Unfortunately, there is ample precedent for this approach in Jewish history. One account of the relationships between the first-century School of Shammai and its rival School of Hillel, for example, depicts the former as ambushing and killing all but six of the latter,[14] and in the eighteenth century Eastern European Jewry was split between Hasidim and Mitnaggedim, who issued bans of excommunication against each other prohibiting members of each

group from engaging in communication or commerce with members of the other.

Rabbinic Endorsements of Pluralism. But that is not the only—and certainly not the predominant—model for attaining unity. Deuteronomy's commandment not to deviate from the words of the court—the basis for judicial authority and communal conformity—is effectively balanced by the command to "fear no man, for judgment is God's."[15] Traditional sources accordingly document a dynamic pluralism *within* the Jewish community. There are seventy faces to each passage in the Torah, according to the rabbis, and Moses was not told the final decision on each matter of law "so that the Torah may be capable of interpretation with forty-nine points *pro* and forty-nine points *contra*."[16] People should listen to each other and be prepared to change their minds on legal matters, says the Mishnah, and the opinion of a dissenting judge is recorded because in a later generation the court may revise the law to agree with him.[17] Just as the manna tasted different to each person, so too, say the rabbis, each person hears God's revelation according to his own ability.[18] The long tradition of finding varying rationales for the laws and varying interpretations of the biblical stories is the sum and substance of the Midrash Aggadah, and the methodology used in Jewish law encourages debate.[19] That may be frustrating at times, but one must learn to live with it and open one's mind to the multiplicity of meanings inherent in the Torah:

> Lest a man should say, "Since some scholars declare a thing impure and others declare it pure, some pronounce it to be permitted while others declare it forbidden, some disqualify an object while others uphold its fitness, how can I study Torah under such circumstances?" Scripture states, "They are given from one shepherd" (Ecclesiastes 12:11): One God has given them, one leader [Moses] has uttered them at the command of the Lord of all creation, blessed be He, as it says, "And God spoke *all* these words" (Exodus 20:1). You, then, should make your ear like a grain receiver and acquire a heart that can understand the words of the scholars who declare a thing impure as well as those who declare it pure, the words of those who declare a thing forbidden as well as those who pronounce it permitted, and the words of those who disqualify an object as well as those who uphold its fitness. . . . Although one scholar offers his view and another scholar offers his, the words of both are all derived from what Moses, the shepherd, received from the One Lord of the universe.[20]

Indeed, one should intentionally expose oneself to diverse approaches by studying with at least two rabbis, for "one who studies Torah from [only] one teacher will never achieve great success [literally, 'a sign of blessing']."[21]

Some, of course, did not like diversity of opinion. In the second century, Rabbi Jose complained that it makes the Torah seem like multiple Torahs, and he attributed the lack of conformity to insufficient study and/or overweaning pride on the part of contemporary scholars.[22] Ten centuries later, though, Maimonides pointed out that multiple interpretations are inevitable because of the varying temperaments and intellectual capabilities of the Torah's many interpreters.[23] Rabbi Menahem ben Solomon Meiri (1249–1316) maintained that disagreement is not only inevitable but desirable as an integral part of establishing the truth, for without dispute people are not challenged to test and refine their positions.[24] The talmudic section most quoted on this issue, which presents a totally different view of the disputes between the schools of Shammai and Hillel from the one cited above, understands scholarly arguments as not only rationally but *theologically* necessary, for all sides bespeak "the words of the living God":

> Rabbi Abba stated in the name of Samuel: For three years there was a dispute between the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel, the former asserting, "The law agrees with us," and the latter contending, "The law agrees with us." Then a Heavenly Voice announced, "The utterances of both are the words of the living God, but the law agrees with the School of Hillel." Since "both are the words of the living God, what was it that entitled the School of Hillel to have the law fixed according to them? Because they were kindly and modest, they studied their own rulings and those of the School of Shammai, and they [were even so humble as to] mention the opinions of the School of Shammai before theirs.[25]

The goal is thus to educate people to be open to learning from others, similar to the School of Hillel, and to respect those with whom they disagree—so much so as to cite them first. One wants learning with manners, commitment to finding the truth together with respect for others and love of peace.[26]

If each answer is the word of God, though, why exert oneself in pursuit of truth? Vigorous study of the classical texts is required, according to the rabbis, because that is the way one learns and ap-

plies God's will, the postbiblical form of God's revelation.[27] One comes into contact with God in the process of study; it is a religious experience as well as a legal one. Moreover, Jewish law obligates Jews to study the Torah throughout their lives, even if they are poor, and even if such study involves them in debates with their teachers or parents—although there are rules of propriety governing how such debates should be held.[28]

Rabbinic Limitations on Pluralism. The Talmud is full of fractious disputes in which virtually anything could be questioned. There were some limits, though, to this general picture of uninhibited debate. When the Sanhedrin existed, rabbis could challenge decisions in debate, but in practice they had to conform to the Sanhedrin's majority ruling.[29] Rabbinic sources strive to differentiate the high level of dissent to which the rabbis were accustomed and which they thought healthy from that of the biblical figure Korah, whose rebellion the Torah condemns. Korah's dissent, the rabbis said, was not "for the sake of Heaven" but for his own power and love of victory, whereas the disputes of Hillel and Shammai were for the sake of Heaven—that is, to seek the truth. Because that was the case, rabbinic disputes will continue for all time, but Korah's dispute died with him.[30] Thus disputants must argue for the right reasons while following the practice determined by the majority.

Rabbinic literature speaks of Jews whose mode of dissent led the community to exclude them. These include the *min* (sectarian) and the *apikoros* (heretic). In view of the wide latitude of rabbinic debate, one can understand why there is considerable discussion in classical and contemporary literature about exactly what these people held or did that made their modes of dissent unacceptable.[31] Rashi, for example, says that one feature of admissible debate is that "neither side of the conflict cites an argument from the Torah of another god, but only from the Torah of our God."[32]

In addition to such individuals, there have been groups that splintered off from the Jewish people. These include Christians, Hebrew Christians (from the first through the fifth centuries), Karaites (from the eighth century to the present), and Sabbatians (in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries).

Rabbinic Modes of Accommodation in Practice. Jews ruled the people of these splinter groups outside the bounds. Those who remained part of the Jewish people needed to determine how to interact with those with whom they disagreed.

One rabbinic source addresses the degree to which a community can tolerate diversity of practice.[33] For Rabbi Johanon (third century, Israel) and Abayye (fourth century, Babylonia), the principle that the community should remain united precluded multiple practices in one locale, but communities in distinct areas could follow disparate rulings in observing the law. Rava, Abayye's contemporary and sparing partner, is more permissive. For him the principle only prohibits the members of a given court from issuing conflicting rulings; they may disagree in discussion, but they ultimately have to make one coherent decision. Two courts, however, even within the same city, could issue conflicting rulings without violating the principle. In tolerating this diversity, Rava might have been thinking of the circumstances in large cities, where differing groups of Jews might live near each other but practice Jewish law in varying ways.[34]

Members of the schools of Shammai and Hillel, however, served on the same courts. How did they agree on a ruling—and even permit their children to intermarry? According to one talmudic opinion, since the Hillelites were in the majority, the Shammaites accepted their authority in practice but remained opposed in theory. Pluralism, on this model, stops with thought; uniformity is necessary in action, and that must be determined by the majority of the rabbis charged with making the decision. A second talmudic solution is that God prevented any cases prohibited in one view but not in the other from occurring. The third explanation is that each party kept the other informed of problematic cases, and thus marriages between the families associated with the two schools could continue.[35] In other words, they trusted the majority, they trusted God, or they trusted each other.[36]

Modern Approaches to Diversity

The rabbinic sources, as we have seen, tolerate a wide spectrum of opinion and even of practice, but only within a community that shares a commitment to the fundamental beliefs and practices of Judaism. For contemporary Jews, of course, that no longer is the

case. Even if Jews believe in God, they rarely feel commanded to observe the dictates of Jewish law. Thus only a small percentage of the barely half who belong to synagogues observe the dietary or Sabbath laws.[37] Conversely, the Holocaust and the State of Israel have demonstrated that, for better or worse, Jews *are* one, although not on religious grounds. Moreover, the Jewish community is clearly distinct from the various Christian and secular communities in America, and it has rejected the Jews for Jesus.

Any modern theory of pluralism, then, must take account of these new, complicating realities. Specifically, it must explain how we can justify a pluralism within the Jewish community much broader than the rabbinic sources ever contemplated while at the same time excluding those who are not accepted as Jews.

Modern, Orthodox Rejectionism. Some refuse to engage in the effort; they maintain that their view is the only correct one. Most of Orthodoxy has taken this tack, including even the modern Orthodox. Thus Rabbi Norman Lamm, president of Yeshiva University, has claimed that pluralism is not a sacred principle within Judaism. Moreover, "a pluralism which accepts everything as co-legitimate is not pluralism, but the kind of relativism that leads . . . to spiritual nihilism. If everything is kosher, nothing is kosher."[38] Similarly, Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, past editor of the modern Orthodox journal *Tradition,* has said: "Religious pluralism borders on religious relativism, if not outright nihilism. It rests on the assumption that no religion can be true and that it does not really matter what kind of myth we invoke in order to provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose."[39]

Nevertheless, Orthodox spokesmen acknowledge that, as the Talmud puts it, "A Jew, even if he sins, is [still] a Jew."[40] They may not recognize the conversions of non-Orthodox rabbis, but they are also not willing to cut themselves off from those born Jewish, as Wurzburger states positively and passionately: "*Ahavat Yisrael* [love of fellow Jews] is a religious imperative which, according to Rabbi Akiba, consititues the most inclusive principle of the entire Torah and must be extended to every Jew, regardless of his religious persuasion. . . . But our love for . . . fellow Jews by no means precludes our commitment to Torah as *Torat Emet* [a Torah of truth], which entails the rejection of any article of faith or practice which contravenes the teachings of the Torah."[41]

How, then, should an Orthodox Jew relate to the non-Orthodox movements? Rabbi Avi Shafran of Providence, Rhode Island, put the position of most Orthodox spokesmen succinctly: the Reform and Conservative "movements are not, to me, branches of Judaism. Jewish, perhaps, like B'nai B'rith or the Jewish War Veterans, but not Judaism. That position has long been filled."[42]

Other Orthodox spokesmen create theoretical frameworks that soften the starkness of Shafran's statement but do not alter its substance. Their theories provide for cooperation and even a degree of appreciation of the other movements but deny them legitimacy as expressions of God's will.

Lamm, for example, says that the non-Orthodox movements have "functional validity" and maybe even "spiritual dignity" but not "Jewish legitimacy." Noting that the word *validity* comes from the Latin *validus,* meaning strong, he points out that it is simply a fact that the non-Orthodox movements have both numbers and strength: "From a *functional* point of view, therefore, non-Orthodox rabbis are *valid* leaders of Jewish religious communities, and it is both fatuous and self-defeating not to acknowledge this openly and draw the necessary consequences, e.g., of establishing friendly and harmonious and respectful relationships, and working together, all of us, towards the Jewish communal and global goals that we share and which unite us inextricably and indissolubly." Like Orthodox rabbis, non-Orthodox rabbis, according to Lamm, may or may not have *spiritual dignity,* depending on the sincerity with which they struggle to have their conduct conform to the principles of their faith. Non-Orthodox forms of Judaism and their representatives, however, cannot have Jewish *legitimacy,* for legitimacy (derived from *lex,* law) is a normative and evaluative term, the criterion for which is "acceptance of Halakhah [Jewish law] as transcendentally obligatory, as the holy and normative 'way' for Jews, as decisive law and not just something to 'consult' in the process of developing policy. . . . At bottom, any vision of the truth excludes certain competing visions. And so does the Torah commitment."[43]

Wurzburger's usage of the words *validity* and *legitimacy* is apparently the exact opposite of Lamm's (varying definitions of terms is an ongoing problem in these discussions), but his position is similar: "While I cannot recognize the validity of procedures or practices which contravene *Halakhic* [Jewish legal] norms, I do not

seek the delegitimization of non-Orthodox movements. On the contrary, I firmly believe that they can make significant contributions to the extent that they champion causes which reflect the values of our religious tradition."[44]

Liberal Jews have principles that, in some measure, contradict those of the Orthodox. They would therefore reject attempts to reconcile them to Orthodox tenets, practices, or methods, but they are not rejectionists in the sense used above because they would continue to view Orthodoxy as a valid (legitimate), although wrong, version of Judaism.

Covenant of Fate, Covenant of Destiny. A second model also comes from Orthodox spokesmen, but it differs considerably from the first. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggested in the 1950s that all Jews are bound by two covenants, a covenant of fate and a covenant of destiny (which he also called the covenant of Egypt and the covenant of Sinai).

The covenant of fate is the inescapable unity that binds Jews because of their shared fate in history. This covenant is involuntary; Jews are part of it whether they want to be or not. It has four components: (1) shared historical events (Jews feel that they are part of everything that happens to other Jews); (2) shared suffering (the anguish and pain inflicted on other Jews I experience as mine too); (3) shared responsibility (a sense of obligation to help other Jews and a willingness to do so); and (4) shared actions (activities with and for other Jews).

The covenant of destiny, by contrast, is voluntary. It is the act of commitment of the individual Jew and the Jews as a whole to realize historical Jewish values, goals, and dreams. There are significant differences among Jews as to how best to accomplish this commitment, but such arguments must be carried on within the framework of all those who share the covenant of fate.

Soloveitchik devised this model to explain the ties of religious Jews to secular Zionists, but Rabbi Irving Greenberg suggests applying it to intermovement relationships as well. Note how the slippery words *legitimacy* and *validity* here take on yet another set of meanings:

> I would generalize Soloveitchik's insight: one must learn to distinguish validity and legitimacy. Legitimacy is derived from and applies to all groups that share the covenant of fate. Once having extended that legitimacy, one has every right to criticize and disagree with the validity of actions by groups that "violate" the covenant of destiny. . . . All communities, as all marriages, can exist with fights—even hard fights—as long as the fundamental legitimacy of the relationship is not challenged.[45]

Greenberg says that applying this model would rule out Jews for Jesus because by joining Christianity they have separated themselves from Jewish fate. It would also suggest that the Satmar Hasidim, Naturei Karta, radical assimilationists, and anti-Zionist universalists be excluded because of their dissociation from the fate of Jews in Israel.

This analysis examines and articulates more clearly than the rejectionist view the reasons why all Jews feel strong connections to each other and why they should have empathy for other views while also explaining how various groups of Jews can think the others wrong. Jews should not only feel responsibility for each other (the covenant of fate) but genuinely appreciate the many ways they Jews devote themselves to realizing the covenant of destiny.

A Pedagogic Covenant. Rabbi Irving Greenberg suggests another way of justifying pluralism. In the Bible, he points out, God is the dominant partner in the creation and definition of the covenant. Rabbinic literature elevates human beings to a role equal to that of God in determining the law. No voice from Heaven can do that, only the deliberation of the rabbis.[46] Their decisions, however, must be tied to God's revelation in the Written or Oral Torah, and so both God and human beings have a role. In our own time, Greenberg argues, after the Holocaust and the State of Israel, the dominant role has shifted to humanity. The Holocaust has made us question God's willingness (or ability) to intervene in our lives, and the State of Israel has demonstrated that we must take responsibility for ourselves as a people. It is as if God, the ultimate parent, has now given us free rein to make our own decisions, however much we stumble. "To enable people to mature, the teacher/parent/authority must allow them experimentation, even differing judgments, and even the right to err."[47]

In Soloveitchik's model one effectively says of others who differ, "You are wrong, but you are part of my people"; in this model, one says, "We both may be right."[48] The extra bonus in this approach, then, is the positive emotional atmosphere it creates: we share not only mutual responsibility but also a mutual effort to articulate God's will in our time.

Embracing Diversity. As the Orthodox tend to have a low tolerance for diversity, liberals have a high tolerance for it. This is clearly a matter of degree—everyone wants *some* unity and *some* diversity—and it is not exclusively a matter of psychological temper. It is also a matter of philosophical commitments.

Rabbi Jacob Staub (Reconstructionist), for example, denies the centrality of Jewish law in linking the Jewish people historically: "I do *not* regard commitment to the Halakhic system to be the tie that has always united all Jews. The surviving Halakhic sources represent, I believe, the views of a very small minority of the rabbinic elite." Certainly in our postemancipation world, when "Jews have been freed from Halakhic authorities," we should expect and rejoice at the multiple approaches to Jewish life that have emerged. "I believe that Jews have always been, and will continue to be, divided—that *davka* [indeed] it is because of the passion that motivates our diversity that we are likely to survive with vibrancy."[49]

Aside from the obvious need to coordinate efforts on some matters, this view has at least one other disadvantage, which Staub himself notes. Jews working to implement conflicting views of what modern Jewish life should be cannot help but affront each other: "By our very existence, some Jews are offensive and insulting to others—on all sides." He speaks personally about the disappointment and pain his Orthodox relatives feel about his beliefs and practices, and vice versa. We must therefore, he says, "apply ourselves to recognizing, acknowledging, and bemoaning the inadvertent pain we cause to those whom we love so dearly—even as we remain steadfastly committed to the principles we cherish."[50]

Identifying Shared Convictions. Some justify pluralism by pointing out how many convictions Jews share; diversity in the areas that remain are then perceived not as deleterious but as enriching and enlivening.

Rabbi David Hartman, for example, says that religious and nonreligious Jews share the goals of developing character and rejecting idolatry in all its forms, even if they do not agree on appropriate methods or reasons for doing so. They can thus share both behavioral goals and a common theological language. Rabbi Reuven Kimelman claims that all Jews search for retaining Jewish authenticity within contemporary civilization; they seek a share in holiness through living as part of the Jewish community; they know that separation from the Jewish community is detachment from the covenant with the God of Israel; and they participate in discovering the grandeur of the Jewish tradition and the cultural heroes who emerge from it. Rabbi Eugene Lipman stresses that Jews share a mission, that our purpose is not simply Jewish survival but the creation of God's Kingdom on earth.[51]

Those who take this tack often maintain that to the extent that varying positions do exist, they complement each other—a point which, of course, is available to the other theories as well. Thus Rabbi Abraham Kook, former chief rabbi of Israel, appreciates differing views for revealing various aspects of the truth: "For the building is constructed from various parts, and the truth of the light of the world will be built from various dimensions, from various approaches, for these and those are the words of the living God."[52] Kimelman points out that if synagogue options are reduced, affiliation rates are likely to fall even below the current 50 percent. Reform Jews were the first to establish a synagogue movement and synagogue-centered youth groups; Conservative Jews pioneered in religiously centered camping and teenage pilgrimages to Israel; and the Orthodox have sponsored day schools. These institutions now exist in all three movements to the benefit of all.[53]

God Wants Pluralism. Rabbi Simon Greenberg has suggested a theological justification for pluralism. He defines pluralism as "the ability to say that 'your ideas are spiritually and ethically as valid—that is, as capable of being justified, supported, and defended—as mine' and yet remain firmly committed to your own ideas and practices."[54] He defines *valid* not as a term of power, as it is for Lamm, or conformity to a covenant, as it is for Irving Greenberg, but as designating intellectual credibility and worthiness.

Moreover, in contrast to both Lamm and Irving Greenberg, Simon Greenberg uses *legitimacy* as a synonym for *validity*.[15]

But what bestows legitimacy upon varying views such that a person should be pluralistic? Political pluralism, as mandated in the Bill of Rights, can be justified by pragmatic considerations, as James Madison does, but what legitimizes a spiritual or ethical pluralism? Greenberg says that he knows of no philosophic justification for pluralism, for that would entail the legitimation of accepting a position and its contrary or contradictory. There is, however, a religious justification: God *intended* that we all think differently.

Greenberg learns this from, among other sources, the Mishnah, which asks why God initiated the human species by creating only one man. One reason, the Mishnah suggests, is to impress upon us *the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He*, for when human beings mint coins, they all come out the same, but God made one mold (Adam) and no one of them is exactly like another. This physical pluralism is matched by an intellectual pluralism for which, the rabbis say, God is to be blessed: "When one sees a crowd of people, he is to say, 'Blessed is the master of mysteries,' for just as their faces are not alike, so are their thoughts not alike." The Midrash supports this further when it says that when Moses was about to die, he said to the Lord: "Master of the Universe, You know the opinions of everyone, and that there are no two among Your children who think alike. I beg of You that after I die, when You appoint a leader for them, appoint one who will bear with (accept, *sovel*) each one of them as he thinks (on his own terms, *lefi daato*)." We know that Moses said this, the rabbis said, because Moses describes God as "God of the *ruhot* (spirits [in the plural]) of all flesh" (Num. 24:16). It is even the case, according to Rabbi Joshua and all of the later tradition, that righteous non-Jews have a portion in the World to Come, for it is only "the nations who ignored God" who will be denied that—again, a theological consideration.[16] Thus God *wants* pluralism so that people will constantly be reminded of His grandeur.

These sources also indicate that pluralism is a divine creation; human beings have difficulty imitating it. To achieve the ability to be pluralistic is, in fact, the ultimate ethical and spiritual challenge, according to Greenberg. Just as "love your neighbor as yourself"—which, for Rabbi Akiba, is the underlying principle of all

the commandments[17]—requires a person to go beyond biologically rooted self-love, pluralism requires a person to escape egocentricity. It is not possible for human beings totally to love their neighbors as themselves, and neither is it possible to be totally pluralistic; we are by nature too self-centered fully to achieve either goal. The tradition, however, prescribes methods to bring us closer to these aims. Many of its directions to gain love of neighbor appear in that same Chapter 19 of Leviticus in which the commandment itself appears. The tradition's instructions as to how to become pluralistic are contained in the talmudic source quoted earlier describing the debates of Hillel and Shammai; one must, like Hillel, be affable and humble and teach opinions opposed to one's own, citing them first.[18]

Epistemological and Historical Grounds for Pluralism. Finally, I would suggest yet another approach involving epistemological and historical rationales for pluralism—rationales that have their own theological component.

When speaking historically, one must first remember the organic nature of all communities, including the Jewish one. Every community grows like an organism; it changes over time in response to both internal and external circumstances. As a result, one cannot establish limits on the ideology or practice of a community with any degree of confidence in their accuracy or durability; even Moses could not understand the Jewish tradition as expounded in the school of Rabbi Akiba, according to the Talmud.[19] That does not mean that the community is incoherent; we are a community partly because we share a history and its heroes, partly because we are aware of ourselves and are perceived by others as a community, partly because we work together as a community, and partly because we have shared goals—a shared vision and mission. All the legal and intellectual attempts to define the limits and content of Jewish identity gain whatever authority they have from that shared life.

This broad, historical perspective should impart a degree of humility to those trying to set definite bounds and make one somewhat less earnest in doing so. The community *will* define itself in time in the organic, logically haphazard way it has always used; theoretical attempts to do this are post facto rationalizations of what happens in a largely arational way. That does not mean that

they are worthless; on the contrary, efforts to give communal life rational form can contribute immensely to the community's self-awareness and its plans for the future. One just should not exaggerate the degree to which human beings can devise a communal definition adequate to ever-changing historical facts.

Epistemological and theological considerations should also motivate us to embrace a pluralistic outlook. If we have difficulty putting the facts of human history in intelligible form, how much more do we realize our limits when it comes to discovering God and defining what God wants of us. We are not, of course, totally at a loss in either situation; God has given us intellectual facilities and the Torah to guide us. But we each, as the Rabbis recognized, will understand God and His will according to our own individual abilities and perspective.[60] "Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts" (Prov. 21:2); as Rashi explains, this means that God judges each of us by our intentions because a human being cannot be expected to know the truth as God knows it.

Commitment to pluralism is motivated not only by the limitations of our knowledge; as we have seen, God intentionally, according to the rabbis, reveals only a part of His truth in the Torah, and the rest must come from study and debate. Even with study there is a limit to human knowledge, for, as the medieval Jewish philosopher Joseph Albo said, "If I knew Him, I would be He."[61] God as understood in the Jewish tradition thus wants pluralism not only to demonstrate His grandeur in creating humanity with diversity but also to force human beings to realize their epistemological creatureliness, the limits of human knowledge in comparison to that of God. One is commanded to study; one *is* supposed to be committed to learning as much of God, His world, and His will as possible. But one must recognize that a passion for truth does not mean that one has exclusive possession of it; indeed, it is humanly impossible to have full or sole possession of it. Moreover, one should understand that everyone's quest for religious knowledge is aided by discussion with others, for different views force all concerned to evaluate and refine their positions. The paradigmatic disputants, the School of Hillel, reverse their position a number of times in the Talmud, in contrast to the School of Shammai, which did so at most once; the Hillelites understood the

epistemological and theological value of plural views and the need to learn from others.

Thus an appropriate degree of religious humility would lead one to engage in spirited, spiritual argumentation; one should not assume that one knows the truth and attempt to exclude others by fiat or social pressure. One can and must take stands, but one should do so while remaining open to being convinced to the contrary. One should also recognize that others may intelligently, morally, and theologically both think and act differently. From the standpoint of piety, pluralism emerges not from relativism but from a deeply held and aptly humble monotheism.

The Need for Unity with Diversity

Rabbinic sources demonstrate the necessity and legitimacy of vigorous disagreement within a unified, coherent community. It is, of course, not easy to balance the twin needs for unity and diversity; one needs to discover and examine the grounds for one's own beliefs and practices, stretch to see the reasons for why others believe and act as they do, and determine the limits of dissent a community can tolerate. Modern theories attempt to do this in a much more diversified setting than talmudic and medieval rabbis ever contemplated, one characterized not only by physical dispersion but by widely varying forms of being Jewish. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the theories differ considerably in the extent to which they validate the beliefs and practices of others, but the very attempt to articulate such theories bespeaks the strongly felt need to retain unity within our diversity.

According to the Talmud, just as Jews put on phylacteries (*tefillin*), so too does God. The phylacteries which Jews wear bear the verse, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4). God's phylacteries bear the verse, "Who is like Your people Israel, one nation in the world" (1 Chron. 17:21).[62] Neither unity has been sufficiently achieved. Three times each day in the *Aleinu* prayer, Jews pray that God's unity might be acknowledged by all people. The unity of the people Israel, with its vigorous diversity intact, must also be the object of our work and prayers, just as it is on the mind of God.

Notes

In the following, M. = Mishnah; T. = Tosefta; B. = Babylonian Talmud; J. = Jerusalem (Palestinian) Talmud; M.T. = Maimonides' Mishneh Torah; and S.A. = Joseph Karo's Shulhan Arukh.

1. The term *pluralism* has historically been used to define a philosophical position affirming that ultimate reality is not one (monism) but many, but that is not the concern of this essay.
2. I discuss theoretical frameworks for the interaction of Jews with non-Jews in "The Covenant: How Jews Understand Themselves and Others," *Anglican Theological Review* 64 (October, 1982), pp. 481–501.
3. See, for example, Irving Greenberg, "Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?" *Perspectives* (New York, 1986), p. 1.
4. See Steven M. Cohen, *Ties and Tensions: The 1986 Survey of American Jewish Attitudes toward Israel and Israelis* (New York, 1987).
5. See, for example, Charles Silberman's untitled presentation in *Materials from the Critical Issues Conference: Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?* (New York, 1986), p. 88.
6. This point has been appropriately stressed by Eugene J. Lipman in *A CAJE Symposium: Division, Pluralism, and Unity among Jews* (New York, 1986), p. 1.
7. Harold M. Schulweis, "Jewish Apartheid," *Moment* 11 (December 1985), pp. 23–28.
8. Alexander Schindler's untitled presentation in *Materials from the Critical Issues Conference*, pp. 46–47.
9. Document of CLAL entitled "What Communities Can Do to Advance the Cause of Jewish Unity" (New York, n.d.).
10. *Sifre Deuteronomy*, 96, 346.
11. Ibid., 346.
12. Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, 1040–1105) ascribes the fear to the appearance of two Torahs on *B. Yevamot* 13b, s.v. *lo ta'aseh aggudot aggudot*; Ritba (Rabbi Yom Tov ben Abraham Ishbili, ca. 1250–1330) fears the appearance of two gods in *Hiddushei Haritba* on *B. Yevamot* 13b.
13. The image of Israel as a light to the nations is in Isaiah 42:6, 49:6; cf. 60:3. The mission of Israel to perfect the world under the dominion of God is repeated three times daily in the *Aleinu* prayer.
14. *M. Shabbat* 1:4; *J. Shabbat* 1:4 (3c); see also *B. Shabbat* 17a and Josephus, *The Jewish War* Book IV, passim.
15. Deuteronomy 17:11, 1:17. David Dishon suggests this juxtaposition, and he collected and analyzed many of the rabbinic sources discussed in Sections 2–4 in his *Tarbut Ha-Mahloket B'Yisrael* (Tel Aviv, 1984) (Hebrew).
16. *Numbers Rabbah* 13:15–16; *Y. Sanhedrin* 4:2 (22a).
17. *M. Eduyot* 1:4–5.
18. *Pesikta d'Rav Kahana*, Massekhet Bahodesh Ha-shlishi, on Exodus 20:2. See also *Exodus Rabbah* 29:1.
19. David Hartman stresses these features of the Aggadah and the halakha in demonstrating the acceptability of pluralism (*Joy and Responsibility* [Jerusalem, 1978], pp. 130–161).
20. *Avot d'Rabbi Natan* 18:3; *T. Sotah* 7:7; *B. Hagigah* 3b; *Numbers Rabbah* 14:4.
21. *B. Avodah Zarah* 19a.
22. *T. Hagigah* 2:9; *B. Hullin* 7b, and see Rashi's commentary on this there. See also *T. Sotah* 14:9 (Erport MSS.).
23. Maimonides, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, Introduction, ed. Kafah, 1:11–12 (Hebrew).
24. Meiri, *Commentary to Ethics of the Fathers* on *Ethics of the Fathers* 5:17.

25. *B. Eruvin* 13b.
26. *Ethics of the Fathers* 1:12; 3:21; *B. Berakhot* 64a.
27. *B. Bava Batra* 12a.
28. *B. Kiddushin* 29a–b, 40b; *Arukh Ha-Shulhan, Yoreh De'ah* 240:12, et. al. See Israel M. Goldman, *Life-Long Learning among Jews* (New York, 1975), esp. pp. 31–68.
29. See, for example, *M. Rosh Hashanah* 2:8–9.
30. Numbers 16:1–35; *M. Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)* 5:17, and see the commentaries of Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro (ca. 1450 to before 1516) and Rabbenu Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi (ca. 1200–1263) to that Mishnah.
31. For example, A. Buchler, "The Minim of Sepphoris and Tiberias in the Second and Third Centuries," in *Studies in Jewish History*, ed. I. Brodie and J. Rabbinowitz (Oxford, 1956), pp. 245–74.
32. Rashi on *B. Hagigah* 3b, s.v. *Kulan*.
33. *Sifre Deuteronomy* 96, 346.
34. *J. Pesahim* 4:1 (30d); *B. Yevamot* 14a.
35. *J. Yevamot* 1:6 (3b); *B. Yevamot* 14a–b. See also *T. Yevamot* 1:12.
36. Reuven Kimelman put it this way; see his article, "Judaism and Pluralism," *Modern Judaism* 7 (May 1987), p. 136.
37. See Steven M. Cohen, *American Modernity and Jewish Identity* (New York, 1983), pp. 56, 82, 88, 91, 94.
38. Norman Lamm's untitled presentation in *Materials from the Critical Issues Conference*, p. 56.
39. Walter Wurzburger's statement in *CAJE Symposium*, p. 11.
40. *B. Sanhedrin* 44a.
41. Wurzburger in *CAJE Symposium*, p. 7.
42. Avi Shafran's untitled letter in *Moment* 11 (January–February, 1986), p. 55.
43. Norman Lamm in *Materials*, pp. 59–61.
44. Wurzburger's presentation in *CAJE Symposium*, p. 8; p. 11.
45. Irving Greenberg, "Toward a Principled Pluralism," in *Perspectives*, p. 28.
46. That is the message especially of the famous story in *B. Bava Metzia* 59b.
47. Greenberg, "Will There Be One Jewish People," p. 29.
48. Rabbi Greenberg phrased it this way at a lecture on March 8, 1987, at Camp Ramah in Ojai, California.
49. Jacob Staub's untitled presentation in *CAJE Symposium*, pp. 4–5; see. p. 10.
50. Ibid., p. 5.
51. Hartman, "Halakhah as a Ground for Creating a Shared Spiritual Language," in *Joy and Responsibility*, pp. 143–55; Kimelman, "Judaism and Pluralism," p. 144; Lipman's untitled presentation in *CAJE Symposium*, p. 1.
52. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Olat Rayah* (1939; rpt. Jerusalem, 1962), 1:330.
53. Kimelman, "Judaism and Pluralism," pp. 145–47. He uses the metaphor of an orchestra whose harmony depends on all the instruments playing their different parts but for a common goal.
54. Simon Greenberg, "Pluralism and Jewish Education," *Religious Education* 81 (Winter 1986), p. 23. See also p. 27, where he links pluralism to the absence of violence in transforming another person's opinion.
55. This is indicated by the sentence that follows immediately after Greenberg's definition of *validity* quoted above. That sentence begins, "This implication of the term legitimate. . . ."
56. Greenberg, "Pluralism and Jewish Education," pp. 24, 26. The Mishnah cited is *M. Sanhedrin* 4:5; the blessing cited is in *B. Berakhot* 58a; the Midrash cited is in *Midrash*

Tanhuma on Num. 24:16; and the source granting righteous Gentiles a place in the World to Come is *T. Sanhedrin* 13:2, based on Ps. 9:18.

57. *Sifra* to Lev. 19:18. Ben Azzai instead cites "This is the book of the generations of Adam . . . in the likeness of God He made him" (Gen. 5:1)—a principle that extends love beyond Jews ("your neighbor") and ties it directly to God, whose image should be appreciated in every person.
58. *B. Eruvin* 13b.
59. *B. Menahot* 29b.
60. See *Exodus Rabbah* 29:1 and *Pesikta d'Rav Kahana*, Bahodesh Hashlishi, on Exod. 20:2.
61. Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-Ikkarim*, pt. 2, chap. 30, Isaac Husik, trans. (Philadelphia, 1946), 2:206.
62. *B. Berakhot* 6a.

FOR FURTHER READING

Dorff, Elliot N., "The Covenant: How Jews Understand Themselves and Others," *Anglican Theological Review* 64 (October 1982), pp. 481–501. This article explores the theological sources within Judaism which, on one hand, give Jews a sense of their own identity and uniqueness, and, on the other, urge them to appreciate and cooperate with non-Jews. Many of these same sources are relevant to intra-Jewish discussions of pluralism.

Greenberg, Irving. "Toward a Principled Pluralism" and "Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?" In *Perspectives*, pp. 1–8, 20–31, New York, 1986. These are two seminal papers by the man who has sounded the alarm more than any other on the dangers of fragmentation within the Jewish community and the need for, as he calls it, "a principled pluralism" among Jews.

Greenberg, Simon, "Pluralism and Jewish Education," *Religious Education* 81 (Winter 1986), pp. 19–28. In this essay, Rabbi Greenberg examines how sources within Judaism can and should lead to a pluralistic approach in Jewish education within all denominations of Judaism.

Hartman, David, "Halakhah as a Ground for Creating a Shared Spiritual Language." In his *Joy and Responsibility*, pp. 130–61, Jerusalem, 1978. Rabbi Hartman, an Orthodox rabbi, argues that Orthodox education need not, and should not, educate toward the spiritual isolation of its students from Jews holding other views.

Jacobs, Louis, *A Tree of Life: Diversity, Flexibility, and Creativity in Jewish Law*, New York, 1984. Although this book is ultimately an exposition of Jacobs's own philosophy of Jewish law, it is probably the clearest and most thorough demonstration in English of the openness and flexibility of traditional Judaism, with the stated purpose of recapturing such a nonfundamentalist approach in the contemporary Jewish community.

Kimelman, Reuven, "Judaism and Pluralism," *Modern Judaism* 7 (May 1987), pp. 131–50. In this essay, Rabbi Kimelman examines some of the evidence of a friendly but lively process of debate among the rabbis of the Mishnah and Talmud in arguing for Jewish pluralism today. Much of this article is based on the longer treatment of this subject in David Dishon, *Tarbut Ha-Mahlokot Be-Yisrael* (Tel Aviv, 1984), and those who read Hebrew may profitably refer to Dishon's thorough investigation of this evidence.

Matanky, Leonard A., ed, *A CAJE Symposium: Division, Pluralism and Unity among Jews*, New York, 1986. A transcript of a symposium conducted on this subject on August 7, 1986, including presentations by Rabbis Eugene J. Lipman (Reform), Jacob J. Staub (Reconstructionist), Mordecai Waxman (Conservative), and Walter S. Wurzburger (Orthodox), this valuable booklet also includes a record of the question-and-answer period that followed and an annotated bibliography on pluralism.

Materials from the Critical Issues Conference: Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000? New York, 1986. Presentations by Elie Wiesel, Gerson Cohen, Ira Silverman, Alexander Schindler, Norman Lamm, Charles Silberman, and Irving Greenberg, together with a summary of suggestions arising from the presentations and workshops for enhancing Jewish pluralism.

Schechter, Solomon, "His Majesty's Opposition". In *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers*, pp. 239–44. New York, 1915, Reprint. New York, 1959. One of the earliest defenses of Jewish pluralism in English by the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Schulweis, Harold M., "Jewish Apartheid," *Moment* 11 (December 1985) pp. 23–28. An article whose title and substance brought wide attention to the tragedy of "Jewish apartheid" and the critical need to bridge the gaps among Jewish groups.

To: DANIEL PEKARSKY

From: Daniel Pekarsky

Date: 8-5-97

Page 001 of 015

Doc #1: 3 copies + original

Doc #2: 1st 2 pgs. - copies for all

how to pickup Amtrack
ticket near the Sem.

Doc #3: Lehman fax

AGENDA FOR THE GUIDING IDEAS STUDY GROUP ("GUIDES") MEETING
Providence, July 28, 1997

Introduction to the Day

Text Study (Ahad Ha-am's "Moses")

The Providence Project - Session 1: Framing the discussion and "the connector issue"

Lunch

The Providence Project - Session 2: The role of Jewish ideas in the process

Designing GUIDES

The Providence Project - Session 3: The role of Jewish ideas in the process (cont.) and additional issues relating to this case.

Next Steps

PROPOSAL FOR "GUIDES" (Guiding Ideas Study Group)

The Guiding Ideas Study Group (GUIDES)[1] is primarily made up of individuals with the competencies and desire to enhance the quality of Jewish education in one or both of the following ways: by serving as guides, or consultants, to change-ready Jewish educating institutions or to the infrastructure on which such institutions depend[2]; and/or by contributing to the library of intellectual resources such work requires. In some cases, these assignments will arise out of CIJE's efforts; in others, they will grow out of the individual's independent professional work. Our approach to educational improvement is profoundly informed by two ideas: first, by the conviction that Jewish educational institutions, policies, priorities and practices need to be guided by compelling conceptions of the nature of Judaism and of the aims of Jewish education; and second, by the belief that these conceptions can be clarified and deepened through a meaningful encounter with powerful ideas found in classical and more recent products of Jewish religious and cultural creativity.[3]

We believe that much remains to be learned about how to catalyze positive and enduring transformational change in individuals and in institutions; we also believe that there is even more to be learned about how fruitful attention to powerful ideas and to questions of basic purpose can be meaningfully incorporated into change-efforts that concern such critical matters as the reform of educating institutions,, the preparation of leaders for Jewish education, and the setting of communal priorities for education. These learning

---

[1] As is probably clear, the term "GUIDES" is an acronym based on the phrase "**Gui**ding **Ide**as Study Group". The substitution of "Guiding Ideas" for "Goals" is deliberate: "guiding ideas" could include but are not limited to "goals": for example, they include our underlying conceptions of what it means "to be a learning community", a congregation, or "to learn"; guiding ideas also point us towards powerful Jewish ideas that may not be reducible to goals but which inform our thinking in powerful ways. A possible advantage of the shift from "goals" to "guiding ideas" is that it enables us to drop the somewhat "instrumental" connotation of the word "goals". The term "GUIDES" is also suggestive of the role (reminiscent of the "coaches" which we used to speak of) that members of this group will play in relation to varied clients. Finally, calling the group "a study group" is intended to underscore the centrality of meaningful learning to our work together.

[2] This infrastructure would include, for example, national or regional institutions that prepare educators, central agencies for Jewish education, a committee composed of a community's lay leadership, etc.

[3] The intent in this clause is to emphasize the centrality of **Jewish** ideas, not to rule out possibility of stimulating fruitful reflection through the encounter with ideas emanating from the general culture.

challenges bring us together as a community and form the core of our learning agenda.. Twice a year, members of this group retreat from their routine work for seminars that offer three kinds of opportunities: 1) the opportunity to engage in serious Jewish learning and to explore the pertinence of this learning to, and its place in, the kind of professional work, the furtherance of which is our raison d'etre as a group; 2) the opportunity to explore questions, issues, and insights that relate to members' work in the field; and 3) other opportunities to deepen and expand our shared lore concerning vision-sensitive educational practice and change.

As a vehicle of the group's own learning and as a way of building up a library of resources that will infuse our own work and that of others, members of this group agree to write up and make available to the group "cases", "case-studies", and/or other materials that grow out their work in the field.

August 26, 1997

Dear Participants in the Guiding Ideas in Jewish Education Study Group (GUIDES):

Based on my own impressions and those of others with whom I have spoken, our July 28 discussion in Providence was extremely rewarding, and my sense is that it will forward our work together in significant ways. I want to add that I particularly value the seriousness, the warmth, and the complete absence of posturing that animates this group's deliberations. Following our gathering, I reported to the CIJE staff concerning what transpired at our session, and this report was greeted with great enthusiasm and with the sense that this group is on the road to becoming an arena in which some serious thinking concerning CIJE's challenges will be going on.

Enclosed is a copy of my attempt to summarize the major ideas we discussed during our Providence discussions. I'm not sure I did justice to our conversations, but I hope it captures most of it -- especially some of the important questions and insights that were articulated. Please let me know if there are significant omissions, misrepresentations, etc., and I will pass your comments on to the rest of the group.

I will be contacting you in the near-future about possible dates for our next gathering and will include some suggestions concerning possible directions to be explored at that time. If you have some ideas about these matters, please let me know. In the meantime, my best to all of you.

B'Shalom,

Dan

Daniel Pekarsky

w/ summary
participants + David Purpel
DNP
keep copy
KAB
NR
Amy
Linda
David Purpel
Alvan

A Time to Act / עת לעשות
CIJE Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

September 3, 1997

Dear Participants in the Guiding Ideas in Jewish Education Study Group (GUIDES):

Based on my own impressions and those of others with whom I have spoken, our July 28 discussion in Providence was extremely rewarding, and my sense is that it will forward our work together in significant ways. I want to add that I particularly value the seriousness, the warmth, and the complete absence of posturing that animates this group's deliberations. Following our gathering, I reported to the CIJE staff concerning what transpired at our session, and this report was greeted with great enthusiasm and with the sense that this group is on the road to becoming an arena in which some serious thinking concerning CIJE's challenges will be going on.

Enclosed is a copy of my attempt to summarize the major ideas we discussed during our Providence discussions. I'm not sure I did justice to our conversations, but I hope it captures most of it -- especially some of the important questions and insights that were articulated. Please let me know if there are significant omissions, misrepresentations, etc., and I will pass your comments on to the rest of the group.

I will be contacting you in the near future about possible dates for our next gathering and will include some suggestions concerning a possible agenda. If you have some ideas about these matters, please let me know. In the meantime, my best to all of you.

B'Shalom,

Dan

Daniel Pekarsky

15 East 26th Street, New York, NY 10010-1579 • Phone: (212)532-2360 • Fax: (212)532-2646

GUIDES[1] SEMINAR
Providence, 7/28/97

BACKGROUND

Part of the rationale for the CIJE/Mandel Institute Goals Seminar, organized in cooperation with CAPE in July of 1996, was the need to develop a cadre of talented individuals with the capacity to forward the educational agenda associated with the Goals Project. With this mind, a sub-group of the larger group that had met in Jerusalem was convened in December of 1996 to examine a case-in-progress presented by Dan Pekarsky. The group was convened a second time in July of 1997 in Providence, Rhode Island: this time, the group's work was defined by a twofold agenda: a) reflection on a project that, as a result of his work in the Goals Seminar, Alvan Kaunfer has taken on in Rhode Island; and b) the need to think through how this group of individuals might most fruitfully operate as a group and contribute to the work of CIJE and the Goals Project.

Attending the meeting were Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Alvan Kaunfer, Daniel Pekarsky, Nessa Rapoport, and Linda Thall. Invited but unable to come was David Purpel, who had recently participated in CIJE's Professors Seminar.

CONSIDERING AHAD HA'AM'S `MOSES'

Our work began with a study session organized around Ahad Ha'Am's essay entitled "Moses". In introducing the session, Dan emphasized that our engagement in Jewish study should not be regarded as ritualistic or as incidental to the work that brings us together; for it has the potential to facilitate our creating a kind of learning community amongst us that will contribute to our more task-oriented conversations, as well as to introduce concepts, insights, and questions that will shed light on our discussion of critical educational issues.

Led by Alvan, this discussion focused primarily on Ahad Ha'Am's characterization of þthe Prophetþ (in the person of Moses) as leader, a characterization that emphasized 1) the Prophet's identity as a person of truth, 2) his þextremismþ on behalf of his vision: his wholehearted and uncompromising dedication to a vision, carried deep within his soul, of what ought to be and must be; and 3) the Prophet's need of a priestly figure -- an Aaron, a person of words -- to mediate between himself as bearer of the vision and the þthe situation down on the groundþ. For the very same characteristics that render the Prophet prophetic in the sense specified in 1) and 2) render him

---

[1] **þGUIDESþ** STANDS FOR **þGUIDING IDEAS STUDY GROUPþ**. SEE THE TEXT AND THE ACCOMPANYING **GUIDES-**PROPOSAL FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THIS NAME.

less adept at interpreting and adapting to the needs of the moment.

Our discussion of this article brought out on a number of themes, identified below.

'Truthfulness'. The Prophet is a person of truth in a double-sense. It's not just that he or she sees things as they are, unbiased by subjective feeling, but also that he/she cannot but speak the truth (as he/she sees it) to others (and even to God). It is this inability or unwillingness to tailor his/her presentation of the truth to the audience and the context that necessitates the partnership with the Priest, who is described as "a man of words."

But what does it mean for the Prophet to see things as they are? Two (not necessarily incompatible) views were articulated. On one interpretation to see things as they really are is to be brutally honest with oneself (and others) about what one sees, not letting one's fantasies, fears, hopes, or just lazy thinking contaminate one's assessment of the situation in which we find ourselves. In this context, reference was made to Senge's insistence that efforts to bridge the distance between what is and the vision to which we aspire depend on a willingness to carefully and dispassionately study what he calls 'current reality' [To cite an example from out of our later discussion, in looking at the relationship between the vision a community articulates and existing social and educational arrangements, the Prophet type is the one who does not let us get away with facile efforts to see the vision as already embodied in the present, when in fact it is not; any such claim, this figure insists, needs to be grounded in strong evidence.]

On a second interpretation, "to see things as they are" is not only a matter of being dispassionate but of seeing things **as illuminated by the vision**, a vision which offers one insight into the present which is otherwise unattainable. Thus, the vision functions as a kind of lens through which the present situation and the challenges of the community are interpreted. This interpretation was accompanied by the suggestion that the first one seems to assume that it is possible to see current reality unencumbered by what the observer brings, and this led to some discussion of the following point: granted that the observer's understandings and commitments inevitably enter into what he/she sees, can't one nonetheless meaningfully distinguish (as interpretation #1 insists) between seeing things in a distorted and in an undistorted way?

Prophet and priest. There was considerable interest in the idea that the challenges of leadership require two different "types", both Prophet and Priest, and there was some discussion of how best to understand their relationship in the process of a

community's growth. Does a community need different types at different stages in its development? Do they represent two dimensions of leadership that are constantly in interaction? Should we understand Prophet and Priest as two different roles in the life of a community -- or, as one member of the group suggested, should we understand Prophet and Priest psychologically, as elements of the Self found within the leader?

In any event, there seemed to be agreement that both leadership elements were important to a community's growth -- that the visionary without the capacity to adapt the vision to the needs of the moment risked being too out of touch with the community to be able to guide its development, and that the Priestly type who is always attentive to the mood and desires of the people being addressed is in danger of losing a meaningful connection to the kind of larger vision that the Prophet represents.

Two kinds of genius? There was in this context a challenge to what some felt to be an explicit or implicit hierarchy in Ahad-Ha'am's outlook: the Prophet is the genius, the Priest is the (mere) implementer. It was suggested that **the priest is also a genius -- a genius of implementation.** To this it was added that it is inaccurate to describe the work of the priest as a "watering down" of the vision (compromising it) in the face of a recalcitrant reality; rather, implementation can be understood as an imaginative interpretation of vision that takes into account not just the vision but the situation in which it is to be embedded. [It is, of course, possible to acknowledge both possibilities -- that is, that in the process of implementation, visions are sometimes but not always or inevitably interpreted in 'watered down' ways. How to draw this distinction may be worth exploring.]

The problem of 'readiness'. Although time-constraints precluded serious discussion, our conversation pointed to a second dimension of the Ahad Ha-Am essay that is relevant to efforts to encourage transformational change in an institution (or community, or individual) -- namely, the problem of readiness for change. Here we took note of Ahad Ha-Am's discussion of the traditional view that the Israelites that had come out of Egypt were not ready to wholeheartedly commit themselves to and embody the vision that was put before them: neither the experience of great miracles leaving Egypt, nor powerful moments at the foot of Mount Sinai, nor even efforts at "training and education" seemed capable of overcoming in an enduring way the outlook and the values acquired as slaves in Egypt. Hence the need for the forty years in the desert, for a generation that had not known slavery. There is a sense in which "Moses" offers a pessimistic view of the ability of a group of people to transcend the outlook or culture within which they have been raised; hence the need to cultivate a new generation -- or to turn one's back on

pathological existing institutions and try to create new ones.

THE PROVIDENCE CASE

Relationship to the "Moses" article. Alvan pointed out some natural bridges between our discussion of the "Moses" essay and some of the central concerns growing out of his work with the Rhode Island Jewish community. Ahad Ha'Am's Moses exemplifies the kind of "vision with punch" described in his written case, a compelling vision that is typically the product of an individual who passionately represents it -- the kind of vision that may be sacrificed in the search for a consensus aimed at allowing everyone to feel included (Alvan's "consensus" issue). And Alvan's worries about connecting the vision as arrived at by his committee and ratified by the Federation with the one-going development of education in the community (his "connector" issue) are illuminated in significant ways by Ahad Ha'Am's discussion of the relationship and role of Prophet and Priest.

Alvan's formulation of some pertinent issues. Having identified the "consensus" and "connector" issues as the larger concerns that he hoped we would jointly illuminate on this occasion, Alvan went on to identify other - what he called sub-issues - that he hoped we would address. For example:

> **choice and pluralism:** in relation to the "consensus/inclusivity" issue, he called our attention to the committee's struggle with whether and how much to incorporate the language of **choice** and **pluralism** in its statement of vision.
>
> **the problem of breadth:** Is the kind of vision produced by the Providence community too broad to elicit enthusiasm and to meaningfully guide priority-setting and other facets of practice (as compared, say, with the more focused vision emphasizing Study and Social Justice articulated by Barry Schrage in Boston)?

Discussion of Alvan's case. There was high praise for Alvan's work and for his write-up of the work in the form of a case. The writing, the exercises he used with the committees he worked with, his success in drawing attention to significant issues pertaining to change efforts informed by powerful ideas -- all of these and other virtues of his work will render this case a very useful teaching and learning tool as we proceed with our work. Below is a summary of some of the major ideas that surfaced in response to participants' reading of the case and to Alvan's presentation.

1. How far does the vision have to go? A point that is of conceptual and potentially of practical significance is concerned with how we understand the scope of vision. A vision could be

understood as referring to 1) the ideal outcomes of a Jewish education -- the kind of person and community we hope to cultivate. It could also be understood to refer to 2) the kinds of institutions necessitated by #1. Finally, it could extend beyond 1) and 2) to the inclusion of 3) the kind of infrastructure needed to support and maintain the kinds of values and institutions identified in #s 1 and 2. [While #s 1 and 2 are discussed in DP's piece on vision in Jewish education, attention to #3 pushes that discussion to another level.] All three levels in their inter-relationship are important, and it is of interest to consider how attention to them should be woven into the overall process of envisioning and implementation. [Note that while #s 2 and 3 pertain to the implementation of the ideas envisioned in #1, they are not in themselves stages of implementation; they are closer to ideas about implementation (not unrelated to Seymour Fox's Level 3, or "theory of practice).]

2. The difficulty of maintaining a high energy level. Alvan's process was much more time-consuming than his group had realized it would be, and there may have been a problem of flagging energies along the way. It was suggested that perhaps a less linear approach, one that allowed participants to regularly wrestle with questions of practice and implementation long before their vision had crystallized, might help sustain their energy; well-conceived, it might also help illuminate the developing vision.

3. How might external inputs[2] enrich the process of deliberation, and how can they be incorporated in ways that will have this effect and not seem like a distraction from the work of the group? Raised early in the day, we began - but, alas only began - to explore this question more systematically towards the end of the day when we spent some time considering how Menachem Brinker might have approached the questions addressed by the Providence community, and how an encounter with ideas like his might have enriched the deliberations of the group that Alvan worked with. Some of the pertinent issues in need of further discussion are articulated later in this document.

4. What are the purposes of vision and how might attention to these purposes inform the design of the process of deliberation aimed at articulating a guiding vision? It was suggested that it

---

[2] "EXTERNAL INPUTS" REFERS PRIMARILY TO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN CALLING "INTELLECTUAL INPUTS", TO PERTINENT POWERFUL IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES DRAWN FROM JEWISH AND OTHER SOURCES. BUT AS WAS NOTED IN OUR DISCUSSION, AN EXTERNAL INPUT MIGHT ALSO BE EXPERIENTIAL (AS WHEN A GROUP OF RABBIS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SYNAGOGUE 2000 PROJECT WERE LED INTO A POWERFUL TFILLAH-EXPERIENCE WHICH THEREAFTER AFFECTED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR WORK.

is problematic to assume that there is only kind of a purpose that a vision can legitimately serve; depending on circumstances, it may meet very different kinds of needs. Among the purposes and needs that a vision might satisfy in the life of an educating community are the following:

a) program/curriculum design and evaluation;

b) resource allocation;

c) strategic planning;

d) creating "a big tent" under which the varied members of a community feel they all have a place;

e) symbolic action: through the vision announcing to ourselves and/or others who we are and what we stand for.

Which of these is judged to be primary in a given situation may carry implications for the design of the process that leads to the vision.

5. How narrow or broad, small or large, should be the group that is involved in working towards the guiding vision? In the context of Alvan's case, a concern was raised about the narrowness of the group involved in crafting the vision that was to guide communal decision-making in education. It was suggested by one participant that **the process of working towards the vision is often more important than the final product**; and that for this reason it might have proved important to expand the circle of individuals involved in formulating the Rhode Island vision. It was suggested in this connection that it may not be too late to meaningfully engage significant additional constituencies in this process.

6. The tacit dimension: priorities and commitments embedded - and discoverable - in existing forms of practice and organization. It was suggested that as part of a community's efforts to discover or refine its guiding vision it may be of value to surface priorities, commitments, and compromises that are embedded in existing practice. It may, for example, be instructive to identify the value-commitments at work in an educating community's budget allocations or in a school's schedule. In the case of some such inquiries - for example, analysis of a schedule, the activity may be relatively unthreatening inasmuch as schedules tend to reflect long-standing practice rather than the ideology or idiosyncrasies of any particular individual or body. In any event, the tension between the commitments and priorities at work in existing practice, on the one hand, and those that a community affirms as central can catalyze significant progress at the levels of guiding vision

and/or practice; it can facilitate testing an avowed vision (or a community's commitment to it) and can lead to thoughtful revision at the level of practice.

7. Avoiding self-deception or smugness: insisting on evidence and on the attitude of a trustworthy physician. It was suggested that in looking at the relationship between the avowed vision and existing practice, there may be a tendency in the direction of self-deception, a tendency "to see" the vision at work in practice even when the relationship between the two is at best tenuous. To counteract this tendency, it was urged that exercises aimed at discovering the commitments and values embedded in practice include an evidence criterion -- an insistence that claims about what is embedded in practice and about the relationship between vision and practice be accompanied by the evidence for these claims.

It was suggested that an educating community needs the kind of truth-telling that one would hope for in a physician: an honest account of one's true situation, but one framed in a way that will contribute to the client's ability to respond healthily to the information. Once again, this discussion brought us back to the Ahad Ha'Am's discussion of the place of truth in the priest-prophet equation.

8. How much responsibility should the guide take for sustaining the process of deliberation and change? In the context of our discussion of a period in the Providence-process where the participants seemed to be tiring out, it was observed that at various points in a change-process, energies flag and momentum seems to slow and may be altogether lost. What is the guide's role in this situation? More specifically, under what circumstances (if ever), should he/she take on a measure of responsibility for keeping the process going, and under what circumstances and for what reasons is it appropriate for the guide to allow the process to take its own natural course without heroic efforts on his/her part to sustain it?

9. The significance of "choice" and "pluralism" language. Early in our discussion it was suggested that the prominence of "choice" and "pluralism" language in the Providence deliberation process represents a way of purchasing a sense of inclusivity among a very diverse population of Jews. Later in our deliberation, a different hypothesis was proposed: namely, that choice and pluralism represent traditional American values to which American Jews, like many other Americans, are strongly committed. On this view, the prominence of these categories reflects much more than a strategy that allows everyone to feel included; it also testifies to strongly held American values that are affirmed by the deliberators.

10. From vision to practice: the need for intermediate steps. In Providence, the process has not yet gone to the level of seriously wrestling with the practical educational implications of the vision-statement the deliberation-team arrived at. But it was noted by one member of our group that it would be a mistake to think that programmatic implications and community policy could be derived directly from this kind of a vision. There is, it was suggested, a need for developing a comprehensive strategy (a strategy that would itself rely on a host of empirical and other assumptions that go well beyond the content of the vision) that would mediate between the vision and practice. [Though not referred to in this context, this point calls to mind Seymour Fox's discussion of "the five levels", which highlights the complex and textured character of the relationship between vision and practice.

11. The leader's vision...or discovering the community's vision, OR....

In our initial discussion, there was a tendency to contrast two different approaches to vision: **either** a charismatic leader (a Moses) brings a vision to the people **or** a skilled facilitator helps the community to identify its own shared vision. In the course of our conversation, some other ideas surfaced. It was suggested that one of the challenges and tasks of a community's guide is to find a language through which to articulate this community's heretofore inarticulable understandings and values. Since these understandings and values can probably be articulated in more than one way, the guide's responsibility (for choosing a language that will be fruitful) is an awesome one.

Beyond and after playing an active role in helping the community unearth and find a language for its guiding vision, it may be the role of the guide to help this community deepen the vision by challenging it (e.g., by raising questions concerning ambiguous phrases, by offering different interpretations of key phrases, or by introducing difficult counter-examples). See in this connection #12.

12. The role of disequilibrium in the process of deliberation. The role of the guide, or coach, as a gadfly is a subject that was discussed at some length about two years ago in a CIJE/Mandel Institute consultation with Professor Israel Scheffler. This subject entered into our discussions as well. By confronting participants with the gap between what they say they are committed to and the values embedded in practice, by raising irksome but important questions about what they claim to believe, etc., the guide tries to foster among the participants a more thoughtful understanding of what they are committed to and its implications.

THE PLACE OF POWERFUL IDEAS, GROUNDED IN JEWISH SOURCES, IN THE

PROCESS OF DELIBERATION AND CHANGE

As suggested above, early on a question was raised concerning how to infuse the community's deliberations concerning a guiding vision with powerful Jewish ideas. While some attention was paid to this issue late in the day, it requires much more sustained discussion. As a way of setting the stage for such a discussion (perhaps at our next meeting), you will find below a formulation of some of the issues in need of attention and a summary of a few points made in our discussion.

The challenges we face are a direct consequence of one of our most basic convictions. CIJE strongly affirms that the process of educational deliberation needs to include serious struggle with questions of basic purpose and aspiration; and that this struggle will be enriched through the encounter with insights and perspectives found in Jewish thought. One challenge that grows out of this conviction is to identify ideas that will enrich deliberation in this way; a second challenge (perhaps that of the Priest rather than the Prophet) is to formulate and package those ideas in forms that will engage potential audiences; a third challenge is to find ways of meaningfully introducing these intellectual inputs into an individual's or a group's process of deliberation. Serious work needs to be done in all of these areas.

In relation to Alvan's case, the following questions come to mind as guides to continuing discussion:

1) what external intellectual inputs did Alvan try to introduce into the process he led, and for what reasons?

2) how and when did he try to introduce these inputs, and with what effects?

3) might there have been other fruitful ways through which to infuse the process with pertinent external inputs?

While this is not the occasion to address these issues, for future reference and discussion, the following point from our discussion may be worth incorporating.

While there is a tendency to think of the introduction of external intellectual inputs as taking place through an explicit encounter with Jewish texts or a précis of such texts, this is not the only, or necessarily the best, way to think about how Jewish ideas might be encountered. Consider in this connection the case of psychoanalytic therapy, in which the patient may learn all about projection, the super-ego, sublimation, and the unconscious without ever having read Freud. How does this

happen? Through the therapist's questions, interpretations, and, on occasion, elucidation of concepts and insights that are at the heart of psychoanalytic theory. Offered succinctly at the right time and in the right way, such inputs can powerfully influence the patient's thinking and self-understanding.

Analogous considerations apply to guides helping clients (communities or educating institutions) strive for vision-sensitive educational practice. The guide's questions, formulations, metaphors, analogies, and interpretations at critical points in the process can introduce important new ideas and concepts in ways that powerfully affect the deliberation of participants. If, for example, the client is wrestling with the aims of Jewish education, instead of urging the participants to read certain seminal articles, it might be more fruitful for the guide to offer short but graphic summaries of the ideas found in these essays (with careful attention to the needs of the moment).

If the guide is to play this kind of role, it is essential that he/she be steeped in the appropriate forms of knowledge **and** that he/she have the ability to access and use this knowledge at the right time and in the right (not heavy-handed) way to enrich the participants' deliberations.

DISCUSSION OF 'GUIDES'

This discussion focused on the possible wisdom of developing a serious and on-going group whose members would 1) serve as guides to communities, agencies, and institutions (and to CIJE itself) in their efforts to develop informing visions through a process that takes ideas (not limited to but especially ideas grounded in Jewish thought) seriously; and/or 2) develop materials of various kinds (e.g. theoretical pieces, portraits of vision-driven institutions, case-studies, cases, etc.) that would support and enrich the work described under #1. The proposal for **"GUIDES" (an acronym for "Guiding Ideas Study Group")** was handed out to participants at our meeting and served as the springboard to our discussion; this proposal explains why "guiding ideas" replaces the term "goals" in this document and tries to specify how GUIDES will function. No attempt is made to summarize that document, only to identify issues surfaced in the course of our conversation. As a prelude to this, it is important to note that members of the group that met in Providence reacted with enthusiasm to the possibility that we would constitute ourselves as an on-going group.

Purpose and character of the proposed group. In an effort to clarify how this group fits into CIJE and how, if at all, it differs from the Consulting Firm Without Walls, questions were raised concerning the basic purposes and character of GUIDES. The following points were offered in response:

a. GUIDES offers its members support and advice in their efforts to help Jewish educating institutions and the infrastructure that supports them to develop vision-guided practice through a process that takes ideas seriously.

b. The existence of GUIDES offers an opportunity to develop and expand a body of lore concerning how best to think about and to organize, in different settings and contexts, processes of deliberation and change that give a central role to informed and sustained reflection concerning basic purposes and aspirations. This lore will include a developing body of concepts, insights, powerful examples, cases, case-studies, and theoretical formulations. These materials will provide us with springboards to our own continuing learning; they can also be used as tools in our teaching, in efforts at "seeding the culture", and in work with educating institutions that are struggling with their visional commitments..

c. GUIDES will offer its members an opportunity for growth that is simultaneously professional, personal, and Jewish. Jewish study figures prominently in the life of this group. Its centrality is predicated on the assumption that the insights, ways of thinking, and questions that emerge from the encounter with well-chosen Jewish sources will inform our thinking about the work that brings us together in powerful ways; and also on the assumption that the activity of learning together will contribute to the emergence of a kind of community and culture that will make our work richer and more personally meaningful.

d. While CIJE expects that members in the Consulting Firm Without Walls will be on-board with CIJE's beliefs concerning the centrality of ideas in the process of developing profound forms of Jewish educational practice, what will distinguish GUIDES is that the relationship between ideas and practice is at the heart of its members' professional and learning agenda.

The place of ideas in Jewish educational reform: three dimensions. Ideas being central to the work of CIJE and to GUIDES, it is important to note that our oft-repeated claim that ideas are central to the work of Jewish education is actually a summary of, or a generalization from, a number of distinct beliefs about the importance of ideas, including the following:

a. Judaism is rich with powerful ideas about human existence in its various dimensions, ideas with the capacity to engage mind and heart and to transform the

way we understand ourselves and the world. Unfortunately, such ideas rarely enter into Jewish education as we know it. **It is essential that Jewish education be transformed in such a way that its clients will regularly encounter powerful Jewish ideas in honest and powerful ways.**

b. Too often educating institutions and the infrastructure that supports them operate without clear basic purposes that are capable of eliciting the support and enthusiasm of their constituencies; and even when lip-service (or more) is paid to a particular vision or guiding idea, it rarely suffuses the life of the educating institution or agency in a more than superficial way. **It is essential that Jewish educating institutions come to be informed by guiding ideas, or visions, that identify their central purposes and that suffuse day-to-day practice across contexts.**

c. **The process of clarifying or discovering an institution's, or our own, guiding vision is enriched through the encounter with powerful Jewish ideas that are pertinent to the questions under consideration.** As examples, the attempt to develop a community-vision will be enriched through the encounter with variant Jewish conceptions of what it means to be a community; the attempt to clarify our vision of an educated Jewish human being will benefit from the encounter with philosophically different Jewish views of Jewish existence; and the attempt to develop an Evaluation Institute that will assess the work of Jewish educating institutions will do well to struggle with ethical and other issues pertaining to evaluation, confidentiality, etc. that are discoverable in Jewish sources.

While our work has sometimes suffered from a failure to distinguish between these related but different ways in which ideas figure prominently in our work, the GUIDES proposal, like the Goals Project that has given rise to it, assumes that GUIDES will be concerned with all three of them.

This formulation of the place of ideas in the work of GUIDES and CIJE brought forth a revised formulation. In contrast to the suggestion that Jewish thought has the capacity to elevate the level of discourse that informs deliberation concerning basic purposes, **it was urged that we make the stronger statement that attention to Jewish ideas and perspective is indispensable in that it offers unique, otherwise unattainable, questions, insights, understandings, and solutions.**

Place of GUIDES in CIJE's work. As suggested above, there was considerable discussion concerning the place of GUIDES in

CIJE'S work, discussion triggered by Karen's concern that, as described in the proposal, it seems very similar to the Consulting Firm Without Walls. A number of different ways of thinking about the place of GUIDES in CIJE were entertained:

a) An area of specialization within the change-process? If the Consulting Firm Without Walls is broken into sub-groups interested in different phases of the change-process, GUIDES would come to represent one such sub-group -- namely, a sub-group concerned with the place of ideas and vision in the change-process.

b) Levels of involvement. One could imagine the Consulting Firm Without Walls as made up of individuals with different levels of involvement. Least involved would be a group of human resources who would consult to different projects; more involved is a group that, in addition to its consulting work, attends a serious annual conference; most involved is GUIDES, a small group which meets a number of times during the year and which plays a central role in defining the agenda and content for the annual conference. It is, in one person's words, the R&D for the Consulting Firm Without Walls; it is to the Consulting Firm Without Walls what a hothouse is to a garden.

c) Where should GUIDES BE LOCATED -- CFWW OR "CORE"? Much of our discussion seemed to assume that GUIDES would be located in the Consulting Firm Without Walls. As we proceeded, the suggestion was made that GUIDES be located in CORE, an altogether different domain, and that CIJE's regular staff actively participate in its periodic Study Group sessions that focus on the relationship between ideas and practice in Jewish education.

There seemed to be considerable support developing for the idea that GUIDES should be located in CORE.

Membership in GUIDES. Who, over and above, the small group that gathered in Providence should be invited to participate in GUIDES? The sense of the group was that the group should be kept small enough to allow for the kind of intense discussion, free of posturing, that has been a hallmark of our work.

This said, some felt that we would be enriched by including in the group some of the institution-based people (like Gordis, Steinmetz, and Lehmann) who had participated in the Jerusalem Goals Seminar in the summer of 1996. As an alternative, it was suggested that such individuals could be invited on one or more occasions to bring a case to the group which would serve as the focus of our discussion on a particular occasion; if the case is

well-chosen, both the group and the individual bringing it would profit from such an opportunity.

Some attention focused on particular individuals who might contribute to the group. It was noted that in the aftermath of the recent Professors Seminar David Purpel was invited to participate in the Providence Seminar; and DP suggested that someone like Phil Miller (the Judaica Director of the St. Louis JCC), who brings an interest in informal education along with an open but very traditional outlook) might be a welcome addition to the group. Since most of those present didn't know these individuals, it was hard for them to react, but no concerns were expressed about incorporating either of them.

Issues for GUIDES to consider. In the course of our discussion of GUIDES, suggestions were made concerning some themes that the group might focus on in subsequent meetings. For example:

> **Leadership vs. grassroots:** when - and why - should the one be emphasized over the other in the development of a community's life? And what does Jewish thought have to say about this problem?
>
> **Ahavat Yisrael** [the love owed to all Jews] **vs. Reproaching Jews who 'go wrong'**
>
> **Americanism and Judaism: the relationship between our identity as Americans and our identity as Jews.**

END OF MEETING

It was agreed at the end of our discussion that we should wait until after CIJE's upcoming staff and steering committee meetings before determining out next gathering date. The sense of the group was that we had made a lot of progress, and we concluded by expressing our gratitude to Alvan and Marcia Kaunfer for their hospitality.

PROPOSAL FOR "GUIDES" (Guiding Ideas Study Group)

The Guiding Ideas Study Group (GUIDES)[1] is primarily made up of individuals with the competencies and desire to enhance the quality of Jewish education in one or both of the following ways: by serving as guides, or consultants, to change-ready Jewish educating institutions or to the infrastructure on which such institutions depend[2]; and/or by contributing to the library of intellectual resources such work requires. In some cases, these assignments will arise out of CIJE's efforts; in others, they will grow out of the individual's independent professional work. Our approach to educational improvement is profoundly informed by two ideas: first, by the conviction that Jewish educational institutions, policies, priorities and practices need to be guided by compelling conceptions of the nature of Judaism and of the aims of Jewish education; and second, by the belief that these conceptions can be clarified and deepened through a meaningful encounter with powerful ideas found in classical and more recent products of Jewish religious and cultural creativity.[3]

We believe that much remains to be learned about how to catalyze positive and enduring transformational change in individuals and in institutions; we also believe that there is even more to be learned about how fruitful attention to powerful ideas and to questions of basic purpose can be meaningfully incorporated into change-efforts that concern such critical matters as the reform of educating institutions,, the preparation of leaders for Jewish education, and the setting of communal priorities for education. These learning challenges bring us together as a community and form the core of our learning agenda.. Twice a year, members of this group retreat from their routine work for seminars that offer three kinds of opportunities: 1) the opportunity to engage in serious Jewish learning and to explore the pertinence of this learning to, and its place in, the kind

---

[1] As is probably clear, the term "GUIDES" is an acronym based on the phrase "**Gu**iding **I**deas **S**tudy **G**roup". The substitution of "Guiding Ideas" for "Goals" is deliberate: "guiding ideas" could include but are not limited to "goals": for example, they include our underlying conceptions of what it means "to be a learning community", a congregation, or "to learn"; guiding ideas also point us towards powerful Jewish ideas that may not be reducible to goals but which inform our thinking in powerful ways. A possible advantage of the shift from "goals" to "guiding ideas" is that it enables us to drop the somewhat "instrumental" connotation of the word "goals". The term "GUIDES" is also suggestive of the role (reminiscent of the "coaches" which we used to speak of) that members of this group will play in relation to varied clients. Finally, calling the group "a study group" is intended to underscore the centrality of meaningful learning to our work together.

[2] This infrastructure would include, for example, national or regional institutions that prepare educators, central agencies for Jewish education, a committee composed of a community's lay leadership, etc.

[3] The intent in this clause is to emphasize the centrality of **Jewish** ideas, not to rule out possibility of stimulating fruitful reflection through the encounter with ideas emanating from the general culture.

of professional work, the furtherance of which is our raison d'etre as a group; 2) the opportunity to explore questions, issues, and insights that relate to members' work in the field; and 3) other opportunities to deepen and expand our shared lore concerning vision-sensitive educational practice and change.

As a vehicle of the group's own learning and as a way of building up a library of resources that will infuse our own work and that of others, members of this group agree to write up and make available to the group "cases", "case-studies", and/or other materials that grow out their work in the field.

A CASE STUDY IN VISIONING: THE METRO EXPERIENCE

Rabbi Alvan H. Kaunfer

The purpose of this case study is to present an account of a visioning process undertaken as part of the work of a Planning Subcommittee on Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater Metro, a community of 17,000 Jews. It is hoped that the data and analysis presented in this case study will aid the CIJE and the Mandel Center in its exploration of the visioning process, by providing material for further deliberation and reflection. I will first present a chronological narrative of the essential steps in the process, followed by a presentation of some key issues raised by this experience.

Background of the Committee and its Charge

As part of its planning and evaluation process in several key areas, the Jewish Federation of Metro President appointed two lay people (A&S) to lead a committee whose goal was to "develop priorities for Jewish education in Metro." The chairs chose a committee of 14 consisting of lay people, professionals involved in various areas of the community or in Jewish education, and a Federation staff person. The committee included the Executive Director of the Bureau and a past Bureau president, as well as other people not involved formally in Jewish education. There was an attempt to involve representatives from the various ideological movements; however, the committee ended with a heavy preponderance of members aligned with the Conservative movement. The chairs early on agreed that part of their review would necessitate having a "vision" of Jewish education which could serve as a basis for evaluating and prioritizing programs. The exact nature of what was meant by such a "vision" was not defined. The general initial plan of the committee was to work in several phases:

1. Set the charge and goals of the committee
2. Explore a "vision" for Jewish education
3. Review programs on a local level
4. Review the best practice and initiatives on a national level
5. Suggest priorities, programs and the need for initiatives for Jewish education
6. Present a written report for Federation

The committee was asked by the Federation president to submit at least an initial report by the end of December. Since the committee's first meeting was in September, time constraints was definitely a factor.

In the context of the broader task of the committee and the deadline for the initial report, the committee chairs planned to devote one to two general meetings to the visioning process, along with several meetings of a subcommittee which would be formed.

The chairs solicited advice on finding an appropriate facilitator for the visioning segment. In consultation with the CIJE, the chairs asked me to facilitate the visioning segment.[1] Despite some reservations about being a member of the committee and perhaps "too close" to the special interests and inner-workings of the community, I agreed to do the facilitation.

The First Visioning Session

In preparation for the first "visioning" meeting of the full committee, the Federation staff person and I had conversations with Daniel Pekarsky in order to define a realistic agenda to deal with "visioning." Through that conversation and a subsequent planning session with the chairs and myself, we decided to focus on three areas:

1. Understanding what a vision is and why having a vision is important
2. Sharing a definition of an "existential vision"
3. Involving members of the committee in an initial exercise of visioning

In preparation for the session, I told the chairs that a full visioning process would require a much longer time than they had allotted, and that our time constraints may produce an incomplete deliberation of the issues. The chairs agreed that a longer time may be needed and that a subcommittee may want to work further on the visioning process; however, the task and deadline only provided limited time for the process.

During the meeting, I attempted to present the three key areas listed above. (See Appendix A for the full session plan.) I introduced the notion of a "vision" by drawing on a personal analogy: "Over the Holidays we have been thinking about having perspective on what's important in our lives. Take a few moments to write down some principles or philosophies that guide your life."

There were some fascinating responses offered, such as:

-- To make a difference in the lives of others
-- Don't complain -- affect change
-- Empower others to give their "all"
-- To be a leader in the Jewish community

After asking how this statement guides them in life, I asked them to offer an example of some decision or action they took which was guided by that idea.

---

[1]Daniel Pekarsky was particularly helpful in advising the chairs at the initial stages of the process, and in consulting with me throughout each and every step of the process described in this case study. His questions and insights were invaluable.

Then I moved the discussion of how a vision might operate as a guiding principle on a communal level by asking a "loaded" question, "Does this community have a guiding vision that helps it to make decisions and set priorities?" After a brief discussion of the almost unanimous "no" response, I moved to a definition of an "existential vision" which would be the model that we would use in our visioning process. I defined an existential vision as, "The kind of community or human being we would want: A vision of the ideal Jewish community and individual, rooted in compelling Jewish ideas." I distinguished between an existential vision which is content oriented, and an "institutional vision" which focused on the work of the institution. I also suggested that a vision had to be better defined than most "mission statements" which often used undefined slogans such as the one in the Federation mission statement, "to create a vibrant Jewish Community." What is a "vibrant Jewish Community?"

That question served as my transition into the group exercise. I divided the group in half, creating two subgroups each with some professionals and some lay people. Group #1 had the task of answering the question "What are the key (5) Jewish elements that should mark us as a Jewish Community?" They also were asked to answer, "What is the essential role of the community (vis-a-vis its constituent parts)? Is the community a 'facilitator' of each institution's own ideology, or does the community have its own Judaic vision?" They were also asked to suggest an apt metaphor to describe the Jewish community (a body, a family, partners, etc.).

Group #2 was given a parallel task regarding the Jewish individual. They were asked: "What would be the essential (5) elements/characteristics of an ideal, modern educated Jew?" They were also asked to give two <u>non-essential</u> characteristics: "One who does <u>not</u> have to ..." (For the group worksheets, see Appendix B).

After 20 minutes, the group came together and shared their findings which were tabulated on a large pad. As each entry was listed, I made a column on the right and asked some further clarification questions in order to stretch their thinking and avoid being satisfied with potential slogans.

Group #2 on the Individual gave their answers first:

I. <u>The Individual</u>	<u>My Questions</u>
* Motivated to turn to the teachings of Judaism to guide him/her in action	--Which teachings
* A person who studies text	--Which "texts"
* Some bundle of core practices	--What practices are

(eg. kashrut, shabbat) "core"?

* Serious about choices made (why one does/doesn't do something Jewishly) --Define "serious"

Then there were several statements that the group could not agree upon as to whether they were essential.

* Belief in God
* Primarily identifies as Jewish
* Performs acts of loving kindness
* Performs rituals

Group #1, working on the Community area, first provided their definition of community. (They did have the advantage of having in their group, one of the chairs of the committee, who is a sociologist and Jewish demographer, and who was able to "rattle off" this definition):

"Definition of a Community: A collection of individuals who share similar values and experiences, build and support institutions that foster and enhance those values."

I asked some clarifying questions and listed them on the pad:

-- How does the individual relate to the community?
-- Is experience sharing essential?
-- Can you have a Jewish community without shared values (if you respect each other's values)?

The group then offered the following items as key elements in a Jewish community:

* Caring and supportive of individuals and institutions

* Pluralism - inclusiveness; values all members for what they bring; values individual identification (finds a place within this pluralistic community)

* "Time" - rhythm of Jewish calendar and cycle of Jewish life

* Shared Jewish values and experiences, including:
  -- Tikkun Olam
  -- T'zedakah
  -- Israel
  -- Jewish learning

I raised an additional question about what "pluralism" means, since that is often used as a slogan without careful definition. Does it mean, for instance, that everyone "tolerates" everyone else in the community, or does it mean that the community has some

shared values?[2]

I had hoped to continue with two other exercises, however there was not enough time to do so. One exercise would have had them then look at summaries of the main points of articles about an ideal educated Jew and the ideal Jewish community, and compare those points to the ones they created. The second exercise would have asked them to suggest institutions, programs or structures which each point suggested.

At this point the chairs asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to work with me to draft a "vision statement" based on the responses of the larger group, and to bring a draft of that statement to our next meeting. Three people volunteered: the Executive Director of the Bureau, a lay person from a Reform synagogue, and a young woman working as a staff person for a Jewish Foundation. We set two subcommittee meetings.

The Subcommittee: First Meeting

I suggested to the subcommittee that we proceed by looking at the summaries of the articles on the educated Jewish person and on the ideal Jewish community, and compare those points to the ones on our list. That might help us also to clarify some of the statements our group made as well as help us to consider areas not suggested by the larger committee. It would also give us an opportunity to encounter the thinking of others on these challenging questions.(The article summaries are presented in Appendix D.)[3]

After reading the summaries, the subcommittee considered the "Individual" area. They decided to make an overall statement in the beginning which would frame the sub-points in the context of a vision for Jewish education in the community:

"What we hope Jewish Education in this community would accomplish for individuals and for the Jewish Community to confront the marketplace of life using Jewish perspectives and values."

The group recognized the cumbersome nature of the phrasing, however, they decided that it was best to get down the basic ideas, and save the refining of the language for a later stage.

"The Individual" topic was revised to now include the following:

---

[2]See especially the set of questions in Appendix C which were developed in a conversation with Daniel Pekarsky and which were helpful in clarifying issues of "community." See also the [Book on Democracy--Title].

[3]Due to the condensed time frame, shortened outlines of longer articles were used. The issue of using such a condensed format is discussed later in this paper.

The Individual

Will be equipped with skills and motivated to make serious choices:

* To turn to the teachings of Judaism as a guide to interpersonal morality and action

* To study sacred Jewish texts and the literature and thought which expresses our language of Jewish culture and spirit

* To observe some bundle of core practices/rituals (eg. Shabbat, kashrut)

* To successfully address his/her relationship to God

* To freely identify as Jewish and a member of the Jewish community

Note that point two was expanded from the original, "A person who studies text", to include language from the Rosenak article. "Belief in God" which the larger group had on the questionable list of key elements was included now, and expanded using language from the Lauer article. The introductory statement "equipped with skills and motivated to make serious choices" was combined from segments of the previous large group version, and emphasizes the groups tendency toward a focus on "individual choice." This point will be addressed more fully in the analysis of key issues in the second part of this paper.

The subcommittee ended its first session there, and agreed to focus on the community area at its next meeting.

<u>The Subcommittee: Second Meeting</u>

I decided to open the meeting by calling attention to the tendency to favor "choice" language and to avoid more definitive statements. I asked them to consider how strong we wanted the statements to be as we worked ahead.

The community area was expanded and revised to include the following:

The Jewish Community will provide venues that foster and enhance its shared values and/or experiences by:

* Providing multiple points of access to the community

* Caring for individuals within the community, based on mitzvot and the principle of gemilut hesed

* Valuing all members of the community in their varying

ideologies and explorations of Judaism

* Coming together around shared Jewish values (study, Shabbat)[4]

* Establishing a universal Jewish literacy as a communal ideal

* Expanding opportunities to put Jewish ideals such as Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah into action

* Connecting to Israel both historically, and as a modern state struggling with Jewish issues and democratic principles

Note especially, that the subcommittee addressed the issue of defining "pluralism" by eliminating the term "pluralism" and splitting the issue into bullets number 1, 3 and 4.

At this point in the subcommittee there were two major kinds of reservations voiced. One was about where this whole process was "going." There was concern about the practical outcome of the larger committee's work. This was expressed strongly by the Bureau Executive Director, who was concerned with funding implications. The second reservation was a "closure hesitation." Before we ended this stage of the draft, other issues not included were raised and added as "footnotes" to the draft:

* An educational philosophy that addresses the learner and teachers needs to be formulated

* We need to take into account research on "what works best" in education

* We need to define target groups for educational services and programs

* We need to review what exists and note gaps and needs.

---

[4]The "coming together around shared Jewish values" statement was sparked by two interesting examples raised: One was a "downtown" study group conducted in a lawyer's office, led by an Orthodox Rabbi, and including participants from all the movements. The second example was an experimental community-wide Shabbat program done in another community, where a certain Shabbat was designated a "Community-Wide Shabbat," and all the institutions: synagogues of various denomination, the JCC, the Bureau, the Family Service, all offered programs that people were free to choose to attend according to their individual interest. Those two examples, however, actually represent two very different models of "coming together around Jewish values." The study example is actually people from various ideologies sharing together in one activity, while the community Shabbat is a collection of separate venues happening simultaneously but not with everyone together.

However, when the larger committee looked at these added points, they agreed that they belonged under "implementation" and not as part of a "vision."

The Final Vision Statement: The Full Committee

The subcommittee draft was sent to the larger committee for review at the next full committee meeting. I began that discussion by reviewing how the subcommittee proceeded in its work, and highlighting some of the key additions and changes. I then asked for comments and clarifications.

After a lengthy discussion of the meaning of several phrases ("successfully address", "valuing all members", "shared values"), the committee suggested some additions such as adding "lifelong learning" to universal literacy, "Hebrew Language" to Jewish texts, and "Jews world-wide" to the Israel point. The committee also suggested that the Individual and Communal sections make reference to each other. This was included in the final bullets of each section.

After refining the wording in a number of areas, the committee felt satisfied that the statement reflected a consensus of its views. It left the final drafting to a small group. The final draft of the vision is included on the next page.

Proposed Vision Statement for Jewish Education

Jewish Education in the RI Jewish community will enable individuals and the community to engage life using Jewish perspectives and values in the following ways:

For the Individual, skills and motivation to:

* Turn to Torah and the teachings of Judaism as a guide to interpersonal morality and action

* Become Jewishly literate through the study of sacred Jewish texts, Hebrew language, literature, arts, and thought which express Jewish culture and spirit

* Observe some group of core practices, rituals, mitzvot (e.g. Shabbat, holidays, kashrut)

* Meaningfully address one's relationship to God

* Freely and proudly identify as Jewish and as a participating member of the Jewish community

* Identify with and recognize an obligation toward the entire Jewish people (Am Yisrael)

* Adopt the goals of the Jewish community as outlined below

For the Jewish Community, opportunities and venues that foster and enhance the community's shared values and/or experiences by:

* Establishing lifelong Jewish learning and universal Jewish literacy as a communal ideal

*Providing multiple points of access into the community

* Caring for all individuals within the community, based on mitzvot and the principle of gemilut hesed (deeds of loving kindness)

* Valuing all members of the community in their varying ideologies and explorations of Judaism

* Coming together around shared Jewish values

* Sharing "Jewish Time" -- the rhythm of the Jewish calendar and cycle of Jewish life

* Expanding opportunities to put Jewish ideals such as tikkun olam and tzedakah into practice

* Enabling a connection to:

  - Israel both historically and as a modern state struggling with Jewish issues and democratic principles

  - The entire Jewish People (Am Yisrael) locally, nationally, and world-wide

* Facilitating the growth of individuals as outlined above

At that point, I tried an exercise to see if we could prioritize the areas under the "Community" section, by asking the group to chose "the most critical area." It was my plan to then be able to focus the group's attention on one area and expand the program implications of that priority area. However, the "voting" exercise ended with a scattered and inconclusive result.

A Shift in Direction

The chairs then abruptly changed the focus of the meeting. They moved to a discussion of suggestions for specific programming ideas. The chairs recommended that our vision statement be used as a "framework" in considering our priorities for programs in Jewish education. Some of the program areas suggested were:

-- Recruitment and retention of educators
-- Publicity and marketing of programs and services
-- Support for day schools
-- Programming for marginal Jewish populations

The switch in level from the general areas considered in the vision to the rather specific programmatic areas seemed not only abrupt, but on a completely different level of discourse. The pressure to present a list of educational program priorities to Federation and the concerns about "what Federation might fund" were evident in the conversation.

At the following full-group meeting, there was an attempt to prioritize the suggested program areas. Yet, there was an uneasy sense among the group during that prioritization process, that this deliberation was now divorced from the prior discussions of the vision. This disparity became evident when a member asked the basis of our prioritization which was followed by a discussion of what was the "communal will."

Since the December deadline was rapidly approaching, at the end of this meeting the chairs suggested that they along with the Federation staff worker would draft a report to be presented to the full committee.

During the meetings of the chairs and the Federation staff worker, a rather surprising change in approach occurred. They decided that rather than present the report in two parts -- a vision statement and programmatic recommendations -- that they should emphasize the vision and delete the programmatic recommendations. Their thinking was (1) that the Federation would just attend to the programmatic recommendations and ignore the vision statement, and (2) that the vision statement really had to serve as the basis of developing programmatic priorities -- a process which they realized did not really take place at the final group meetings.

At the next full-group meeting, they presented their

rationale and a draft report which emphasized the need for Federation to adopt the vision statement and create a follow-up committee to consider programmatic priorities and specific recommendations based on the vision. This approach was approved by the larger committee. A copy of excerpts of the full report is in Appendix E.

The Federation Executive Committee

The chairs met with the Federation President and Executive Director to explain their rationale for focusing on the vision statement in their report. The chairs asked for time at the next Federation Executive meeting to do a brief visioning exercise and to give the Federation time to respond to the vision statement. The purpose of the "mini" visioning exercise would be to involve members of the Executive in an interactive experience which would give them a "taste" of the process that the committee went through in developing the vision statement. The goal of the presentation to the Executive would be to have them "adopt" the vision statement and endorse a reconstituted committee to explore programs based on the vision. The Federation President and Executive Director were impressed by the approach and the idea of the presentation to the Federation Executive.

The chairs, the Federation staff person, and I met to plan the strategy of the 50 minute segment we were given. We decided on a three part presentation. S. would give a brief introduction to the committee and its process and to why they decided to present the vision statement rather than prioritized programs. Then I would divide them into groups and do a mini visioning exercise based on the first one I did in the committee. Finally A. would lead a discussion on the actual vision statement. We decided to emphasize that the purpose of the visioning exercise was not to re-invent a new vision or even change it substantially, but to give a flavor of the process. Since we could not be sure how many new and unexpected points would be raised in the visioning exercise, we decided that we would take "some" (undefined) but not all of the new input and incorporate it into the vision. We could surmise, though, that there would be some "Federation agendas" which would be emphasized (as indeed happened). Copies of the report were sent in advance to the Executive Committee, and our committee members were invited to attend.

At the meeting, things went essentially as planned. The exercise took longer than the allotted time, because people began to discuss the points I listed on the pad as I took responses from each group. Interestingly enough, most of the responses coincided with points already on the vision statement. There was indeed an emphasis on "Federation" concerns as expected. For example, many more responses focused on "social welfare" areas (caring for basic human needs, etc.); and two new items not included in the vision statement were:

* Being active in the general community as a citizen

* Being a "light" to the non-Jewish world

seemed also to reflect a Federation concern with being involved in the non-Jewish world, and not just in the Jewish community. In addition, Jewish observance was not one of the categories mentioned in any group.

When A. conducted the next part of the discussion on the actual vision statement, there was almost no response. The statement was endorsed unanimously. A. reiterated the next steps which included appointing a reconstituted committee which would include representation of synagogues and agencies, to begin to develop programs based on the vision.

After the meeting A. expressed to us great consternation and disappointment that there were virtually no comments on the vision statement. My feeling was that a) we explicitly stated that we did not want them to "re-invent" the statement, which may have been interpreted as, "leave it alone"; b) the visioning exercise did produce a large overlapping of points already on the vision statement which may have induced the group to be more accepting of it; and c) Federation Executive Committees are used to "rubber stamping" especially philosophical statements, and they were eager to move on to the more "nitty gritty" budget agenda.

One interesting and unexpected result of the vision exercise happened during the budget discussion. On several budget issues people spoke of their "philosophical" stances, referring specifically to the previous exercise and discussion of vision. Thus, in spite of the silence during the discussion of the vision statement, the visioning deliberation did seem to have some impact, at least for the moment.

As of this writing, Federation has not yet reconstituted the committee, and things seem to be on hold. I don't know yet if this means that the process will stop here, or whether the next phase will indeed get going. If it does continue, it will be interesting to see how the vision statement is used in developing the next stages of educational planning.

Key Issues Raised by the Case

This case study raises a number of key issues in the actual practice of moving communities to a visioning process.

The first issue involves the role of the facilitator. In this case, the facilitator was a member of the community and a member of the committee charged with developing a vision for Jewish education in that community. The initial reservations both of the facilitator and of the chairs in using an "insider" were dispelled as the process unfolded. Although an "insider" might lack some objectivity, and may not engender the initial aura of an "outside expert," the insider-facilitator may, on the other hand, have a sense of the key players, the real underlying issues, and the inner dynamics ("culture") of the community that an outside consultant would not have. In addition, there can be a trust for an inside-facilitator that an outside consultant may not achieve for a long time. This experience suggests that the CIJE could "train" visioning facilitators from within communities embarking on a planning process. The process of identification, selection and training of such personnel would require more exploration.

The second key issue raised by the case study involved the context of the committee's task. Here, Federation defined the task as focusing on priorities in programs, and it set a limited time frame for the committee to complete its report. The programmatic focus framed the initial goals and phases of the committee's work. Both the programmatic focus and the time pressures created the tension in the last meetings between dealing with the broader issues raised by the visioning process, and the "need" to present Federation with a prioritized list of specific programs in Jewish Education. In what has been described as a rather unexpected shift of the chairs in the final stages of writing the report, there was a decision to return to the vision and to hold the specific programmatics until the vision was adequately dealt with by the Federation Board and by a subsequent follow-up committee. This case raises two key questions in conducting visioning sessions for community groups:

(1) How do we work with the pre-set agendas, frameworks and directions established before the visioning process begins?
(2) Often there is predilection to jump to specific programmatics and funding concerns. How do we keep the focus on the vision?

Had the chairs not "realized" that the vision was being left aside in favor of the programmatic "need," the outcome of the process would have been quite different.

The next issue raised in this case is whether in communal visioning deliberations, a "consensus" vision can be achieved.

Many of the models of visions which the CIJE has considered in its seminars have been developed by individuals. The Educated Jew papers, and the Arthur Green monograph, for example, are the work of individuals. However, when you work with a diverse committee, sometimes including differing movement ideologies, how do you reach a vision which is both agreeable to all, and which is strong in its statement? In this case there was a fascinating process taking place. The first tendency was to avoid specific strong statements and employ the language of choice ("motivated to make serious *choices*"). Yet at the final level of reaction by the larger committee, the ambiguities of choice were eliminated in favor of more definitive statements ("skills and motivation to..."). How do we balance the need for specificity and strong statements, with the need for broad consensus in a diverse group or organization? Was the move from "choice" to definitive statements a natural process which happens in such deliberations, or was it unique to this case?

There is also often an avoidance of "tough" issues in order to reach consensus or not to "offend" those with a differing opinion.[5] How do we help the group confront such "tough" issues, and not dilute their visions by avoiding that confrontation? Do such consensus visions tend to be too all-encompassing and, therefore, unwieldy as instruments of decision making. If so, how can we focus them? We will need more experience to answer such questions and to guide us in developing procedures for working with visioning in diverse settings.

Another major procedural issue is whether we can condense the visioning process. Sometimes, as in this case, one of the pre-set criteria is a given time-frame which may not be adequate for developing a full vision. The initial plan was to spend only one or two meetings on the visioning process. In actuality, the time and attention spent on the vision increased as the process unfolded. Yet, the procedural question of what can be done with "visioning" in one or two sessions was a crucial one at the outset. The directed exercise involving the development of a list of key elements for the ideal Jewish individual and Jewish community seemed to work well. Yet it raised other questions. Is there a tendency in such exercises to focus on unexamined slogans? How do we expand brief language into clear, carefully worded, and well-defined statements which truly reflect what the group means? At what point and in what form should we introduce written material on visioning? Are short summaries of articles adequate for visioning discussions? These questions will need to be answered in order to develop better tools for conducting visioning

---

[5]There was a long digression when we came to the issue of listing "kashrut". The woman from the Reform synagogue said it should not be listed as an example of a key element for a Jewish individual. When challenged about community-wide events being kosher, she agreed, but she distinguished between that and individuals needing to keep kosher as a criterion for an "ideal Jewish individual."

deliberations. The exercises in Appendices A-B are a beginning, but they will need to be developed and refined.

A related question regarding condensing the visioning process is, Can a vision be expressed in a one-page "vision statement" as was developed in this case? Need a "genuine" vision be a more fully expanded document (as with the Educated Jew papers)? Perhaps, on the one hand, brevity is more useful as a tool for later planning and decision making. Yet, on the other hand, brief statements may leave the true intention of the group vague and ambiguous.

These related questions surrounding the condensing of the visioning process and the production of a concise vision statement are key issues in developing approaches and strategies for the visioning process.

Finally, I would like to suggest that we need to look at the place of visioning in the wider planning process. What is the relationship of visioning and the "vision" (in whatever form it appears) to, for example, the examination of existing programs, the development of a set of "needs", the creation of new programs, the setting of priorities, the funding of programs, and the implementation process. These are some of the questions that arose both during the visioning process and at the juncture at the end of the Federation Executive presentation. How was the process to continue and lead to program implications? Other questions such as who should be involved at each stage of the visioning and implementation process were raised. Who are the "stake-holders?" At what point should congregation and school representatives be brought in? How is the vision "sold" to the wider group or community? What should be the next steps?

These issues are related to other basic issues regarding the place of visioning in the overall planning process: Need visioning be done first? (Compare Michael Fullen's "Ready, fire, aim.")[6] Should it be done continually throughout the process of planning? These questions relate to such key philosophical issues as the relationship of theory and practice, vision and implementation, the approaches to change in complex organizations, and the issue of the place of aims in education. In this case study, the tension between vision and program was evident throughout the process. The practical questions of funding, existing programs, agency agendas, also were constantly present in the not so distant background as we attempted to deal with our ideals in the foreground. How do we get from the vision to the implementation? These are all crucial questions as we attempt to refine the art of visioning.

---

[6]See also the discussion in Amy Gerstein's paper, "Different Approaches to Educational Change: Choosing a Route that Makes Sense," CIJE, December 1996.

Appendix A

Discussion Plan for Visioning Session with Planning Subcommittee on Jewish Education, Jewish Federation of RI

I. What is a "vision" and why is it important?

A. Personal Analogy

• Over the Holidays we have been thinking about having perspective on what's important in our lives. Take a few moments to write down some principle(s) or philosophies that guide your life. For example:
- Giving to others is the most important principle to me
- I want to always be growing in my life: professionally and personally
- You have to have love for others--that's what's most important in life

• [put some on the board, and ask:]
- How does that guide you? Your actions?
- Give an example of some decision/action you took that was driven by that idea.
- Are any of these "Jewish"--Rooted in Jewish thought/ideas/values?

• How might a vision be important in helping the community shape its priorities (in Jewish Education)?

[open]

B. Two examples of having/ not having a vision:

1. The story of Twersky articulating his vision of what an ideal Jew might be--assimilated his vast knowledge of Maimonides and his personal philosophy. He will now never go back and see Maimonides school in the same light--is what they are doing reflecting that vision? (cf. Waldorf or Montessori schools; research that schools with strong visions are better schools)

2. Does this Jewish community have a guiding vision which helps it to make decisions--on funding, priorities etc.? [no]
-How might it be different if it had one?
- (There may be an <u>implicit</u> philosophy that a community /institution operates by in reality, but is not articulated. Once it is articulated, it may surprise people & change their ideas about what the vision <u>ought</u> to be.)

C. Existential vision vs. Institutional vision

-The model of visioning we will be using is one of Existential vision:

*The kind of community or human being we would want: ideal Jewish community and individual. Rooted in compelling Jewish ideas/ philosophy

-Institutional vision by contrast would focus on the kind of institution we wanted (eg. a warm school climate)

D. Problem with Mission statements:

-Too brief--don't explain what people mean by key terms--
eg. "Love of Israel"--whose? Netanyahu's? Peres's? Herzl's Ahad Haam's?
- eg. Federation Mission Statement:
The mission of the Federation is to perpetuate and enhance a vibrant Jewish Community...
What's a "vibrant Jewish Community"??--That's the question I'd like us to explore

---

II. Creating a Vision of a Jewish Community/ Jewish Individual

A. Split into 2 groups:

Group # 1. What are the key (5) Jewish elements that mark us as a Jewish Community?

* What is the essential role of the community (vis a vis its constituent parts)?
(Is the community a "facilitator" of each institution's own vision?ideology?
or-- Does the community have its own Judaic vision?
or--Is it the catalyst for cooperation among institutions?)

* What would be an apt metaphor to describe the Jewish community?
(eg. a body, a family, partners...)

Group # 2 What would be the essential elements/ characteristics in a ideal, modern educated Jew?
"An ideal, modern Jew would be a person who..."

* Give two <u>non-essential</u> characteristics of a modern Jew--"One who does <u>not</u> have to.."

B. Tabulate answers on big chart

-Ask for general reactions
- My role--ask to clarify, what you meant by...
- Share some other questions from"What does it mean to be a Jewish Community" document

C. Encounter with other visions

-Send Group 1 back with summary of Rosenak and/or Shrage summaries

-Group 2 with Lauer and/or Greenberg 4 highlight points

Tasks:

1. Reformulate the key elements of Community/Individual
2. Chart out what Structures/Institutions/Programs might facilitate each key element (eg. "Lifelong Learning"--community network of mentors for adults)

Appendix B

Group # 1. --A Vision of a Jewish Community

*What are the key (5) Jewish elements that mark us as a Jewish Community?

-
-
-
-
-

* What is the essential role of the community (vis a vis its constituent parts)?
(eg., Is the community a "facilitator" of each institution's own vision?ideology?
or-- Does the community have its own Judaic vision?
or--Is it the catalyst for cooperation among institutions?)

* What would be an apt metaphor to describe the Jewish community?
(eg. a body, a family, partners...)

--What are the implications of that metaphor?

An Existential Vision: The kind of community or human being we would want: ideal Jewish community and individual; rooted in compelling Jewish ideas/ philosophy

Group # 2-- A Vision of an Ideal Jewish Individual

*What would be the essential (5) elements/ characteristics in a ideal, modern educated Jew?
"An ideal, modern Jew would be a person who..."

-
-
-
-
-

* Give two non-essential characteristics of a modern Jew--"One who does not have to.."

An Existential Vision: The kind of community or human being we would want: ideal Jewish community and individual; rooted in compelling Jewish ideas/ philosophy

Appendix C
What does it mean to be a Jewish Community?

-What is our purpose as a Jewish Community?
-How does the larger community relate to the constituent parts?(Does the community just facilitate its constituents in their own Judaic visions, or does the community itself have a Judaic vision?)
-What is the relationship of the constituent parts to each other?
-What is the relation of the individual Jew and the community?
-What are the key Jewish elements that mark us as a Jewish Community? (eg. lifelong learning, giving tsedakah)(Where are they found within the body of the community?)(What structures (institutions) are crucial?)
-What concept of "what Judaism is all about" underlies our conception of a Jewish Community?
-What holds us together as a community? What do we share? (values, practices, commitments, beliefs, Hebrew language)
-What do Jewish Communities around the world/ in history share in common?
-What don't we (they) need to share?
-What divides us as a community? (lines of division)
-Who aren't we--What isn't essential/ defining characteristic(s) of us?
-What are the terms of membership? (Who is a member? What are the "dues"? What do you have to do, or don't you have to do that makes you a member "in good standing"? an "active" member?--minimum vs. maximum; What is a "member in bad standing"?)
-Who is outside the community? (boundaries)
-What would be an apt metaphor in describing the Jewish Community? (family, body...)
-In your ideal Jewish Community, how would you know who was a Jew?

Appendix D
Four Items for a Community-Wide Agenda

1. Sacred Literature--the literature that exposes our language of Jewish culture and spirit (limmud- "study of" Torah)

2. Common Vocabulary-- eg. "shabbat", "Tanakh" vs Old Testament

3. Common Community Practice-- eg. Tzedakah, kashrut

4. Identifying problems and dealing with them--eg. "continuity" problem

*(based on "A Community-Wide Vision for Jewish Education" by Michael Rosenak, Mandel Institute for the Advanced Study and Development of Jewish Education, Jerusalem, 1994)

A New Paradigm: A Community of Torah and Justice

Torah and Tzedek are inextricably bound. They are the theory and practice of our continuity. The study of Torah links us to our ancestors, provides a foundation on which to base our actions in the world, and lead us to an encounter with the transcendent. the practice of Tzedek grows out of our understanding of our tradition and our role in the world. Through Tzedek, we fulfill our spiritual destiny of repairing the world. Without torah, there can be no uniquely Jewish vision of social justice, learning has no meaning.....

Establishing universal Jewish literacy as a communal norm for adults as well as children must be our highest priority.

Torah without Tzedek is empty principles. Expanding opportunities to put Jewish ideals into action must be at the core of our communal agenda.

**(excerpted from "Building a Community of Torah and Tzedek: A New Paradigm for the Jewish Community of the 21st Century" by Barry Shrage, in *At the Crossroads: Shaping Our Jewish Future*, CJP and Wilstein Institute, 1995)

The Goals of Jewish Education

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL: to maintain Jewish cultural integrity and values within a larger and accommodating society.

In this context THE GOAL OF JEWISH EDUCATION would be: to train each Jewish individual in such a way so that he or she is

* equipped to successfully address his/her relationship to God,

* able to confront the challenges of the marketplace of life using Jewish perspectives and values,

* and willing and capable of participating as a constructive, contributing member of the Jewish community.

*(from "Towards the Soular Wars: Planning, Advocacy and Funding for the Future of Jewish Education by Chaim Lauer, BJE of Greater Washington, 1991)

The Educated Jew

Jewish education is to be evaluated according to its success in fostering in its graduates four qualities:

1. Love of learning Torah (i.e. the fundamental books of Judaism)

2. Love of the fulfillment of the commandments between man and God (symbols which point to the transcendent realm, eg. Shabbat, Prayer, kashrut).

3. Acceptance of the Torah as a guide in the area of interpersonal morality, with the recognition that the ethical decrees of the Torah are the fruit of unceasing interpretive activity.

4. Living a lifestyle which creates a Jewish community and Jewish environment

5. A relationship to the Jewish people in both Israel and the diaspora (a shared consciousness of unity of the Jewish people)

**(based on "We Were as Those Who Dream: A Portrait of the Ideal Product of an Ideal Jewish Education"--Draft-- by Moshe Greenberg, Mandel Institute for the Advanced Study and Development of Jewish Education, Jerusalem, 1994)

Appendix E
Excerpts of Final Report to Federation

Report of the Planning Subcommittee on Jewish Education

Introduction

The Subcommittee on Jewish Education was established with the goals of understanding trends in education planning, of identifying communal needs in the field of Jewish education in this State, and of providing direction for major decision- making as we enter the next century.

Work of the Subcommittee

The initial goal of this Planning Subcommittee on Jewish Education was to develop priorities for programming for Jewish education in Greater Metro. In the course of our deliberations, however, we realized that priorities could be set only if an overall vision of our community were available to provide direction and guidance. A vision statement thus became an integral part of the subcommittee's work.

Vision statement development

Sessions were also devoted to developing a vision statement for the goals of Jewish education, for both individual Jews and the Jewish community in Rhode Island. The vision statement is designed in the long term to provide an ideal towards which Jewish education can strive, and, more immediately, to guide the community's decisions in setting priorities to be implemented soon. In doing so, we acknowledge that the ideal presented in the vision statement seeks to effect a transformation in our community; but we also recognize that such a change must be achieved one step at a time. Realizing the vision may require reordering of existing priorities and funding. Our formulation of the vision statement was facilitated by Rabbi Alvan Kaunfer, using a methodology he studied with the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE).

Recommendations

I. The Vision Statement

We strongly recommend that the Jewish Federation of Greater Metro fully endorse the vision for Jewish education in the state. Federation alone is uniquely positioned in the community to ensure its wide acceptance and to ensure its implementation. This vision statement should provide guidelines for future decision making.

Specific programmatic initiatives are not appended to this report for three reasons:

1) Adoption of the vision statement transforms the way we as a community address Jewish education:

a. in relation to the individual;
b. to its role in leadership development; and
c. in relation to the community.

2) Initial adoption of the visions statement is crucial to program development since programs will need strong inter-agency and community support.

3) Proper development of programs to be submitted for funding consideration will take more time than is available for submission of this interim report.

Next Steps

We recommend a successor committee to this subcommittee to further define the Jewish education priorities of the community and to develop specific recommendations for their implementation. Once the vision statement is adopted by the Federation, the priorities imbedded in it will direct the next phase in the planning process. While the vision statement has inherent value as a long-range guiding force for this community, additional work is necessary to fully meet the charge of the subcommittee and to reach the full potential of the concepts outlined in the vision statement.

After the Federation Board adoption of this vision statement for Jewish education, next steps should include:

* Establishment of an on-going planning committee with representation of the congregations;

* Adoption of the vision statement by the entire Jewish community, reinforcing linkages between the Federation and the agencies and congregations;

* Undertaking a thorough environmental scan of Jewish educational services throughout the state;

* Continuing consideration of the vision and modifying it as necessary; Setting goals based on that vision;

*Specifying programs that will further the realization of the vision; and

* Evaluating programs in terms of their quality and effectiveness in moving us toward the vision.

CONCLUSION

... The creation of the Planning Subcommittee on Jewish Education has been one of the Federation's responses. In turn, the subcommittee has responded, as detailed in this report, by developing a vision of a transformed Jewish community in which the values, learning, literature and culture of the Jewish people are part of the daily life of its members and are reflected in individual and communal behavior. place in Judaism.... We look forward to seeing it placed in a prominent position on the community agenda and to experiencing its transformational role in our community.