



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.
Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

Box
73

Folder
8

Core Concepts, Community vision, 1995-1996.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

3) Support for individual institutions -

4) Policy that will encourage

V-D vs. - \rightarrow to institutions.

Vouchers

Q: What would it mean to have a
community mission?

Comm Vision (+ Update)

GPs Assumptions: 1) Critical role of Gs - guide/Evaluate

2) Problematic + why all the more problematic.

3) Our effort - Encourage via Seminars → Work w/ Is.

~ Build Capacity: Know-how + Coaches.

This work: Important + Commitments

2nd Dimensions: "C.V.!" ↑ - Jesus./here

Anxiety re: present + Importance

What is a "C.V."? How encourage? → 4 elements

① Identify shared elements ~ Priorities ... Cleveland

② Who are we as a C? What does it mean to be a JC? What kind want to be?

a) What would C have to be like if enthusiastic Id.
~ needs, Engagement, ideals

b) What does Judaism say

③ Support/Encourage institutional efforts

④ Policy → ↑ Vision-driven: From 12 to Diverse Visions

Such fears are especially powerful at
beginning a fragile consensus.

Tendency to avoid!!

It takes wisdom & courage not to
-- to ask the basic questions at
the beginning,

This is what happened —
Atlanta when a group of
individuals initiated a community
that engaged CITE to
help them address issues of
vision & goals.

To tell you more about this,
it is my pleasure to introduce
MR = Attorney, and good spirits

AGENDA FOR CIJE STAFF MEETING (without Mike Rosenak)
February 8, 1996

1. The Summer Goals Seminar -- towards closure on dates and invitees.
2. Beyond 1996: open-ended discussion of the long-term Goals Project agenda.

I am imagining that we'll begin this meeting by 2:30 or 3 pm and will work for up to 3 hours.

Let me know if you think this is a reasonable way to proceed.

CC: Hoffmann, Pekarsky

AGENDA FOR MIKE ROSENAK CONSULTATION

February 8, 1996

1. Discussion with Mike Rosenak concerning the problem of "community goals" (discussion to be built on his paper).
2. Discussion with Mike Rosenak concerning the Community Mobilization Meeting that has been arranged for next week.
3. Discussion with Mike Rosenak concerning the projected session with the Atlanta High School group.

It is anticipated that this part of the day will be done (and Mike will be freed up) no later than 2:30 pm. A CIJE staff meeting will follow.

DRAFT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-VISION IN THE EFFORT TO IMPROVE JEWISH EDUCATION

Many of the groups CIJE works with have expressed a serious and enduring interest in the theme of 'community-vision' and its relationship to the improvement of Jewish education. CIJE believes that this interest is important, and that, nurtured in the right way, it can contribute to the improvement of Jewish education. Consistent with other priorities, efforts should be made to encourage communities to work towards community-visions that support Jewish education. Several dimensions of such an effort are listed below.

First, rather than assuming that there is little that does or can hold together a diverse Jewish community, an effort should be made to identify certain core-elements that may, perhaps differently interpreted, cut across the various constituencies that make up the community. Such core-elements might, for example, include a commitment to serious study, a commitment to the State of Israel, and perhaps a commitment to certain kinds of practices. The identification of such core-elements could arise through a process of research that focuses on what is already being done by different constituencies and/or through a process that encourages serious dialogue among the many constituencies that make up a community. If successfully identified, such core-elements might offer meaningful guidance for the community when it seeks to develop educating institutions designed to serve the totality of the community.

Second, this attempt to identify shared core-elements should represent one part of a larger effort on the part of the major constituencies of the organized community to wrestle seriously with basic questions concerning what they jointly represent as a community -- who are we as a community? what does it mean to be a member of this community? why would one want to be a member of this community? It should not be assumed in advance that in a diverse Jewish community no meaningful and generally shared answers to such questions could be arrived at. Such questions could fruitfully be explored through study of competing perspectives on this problem. A community that engages in such efforts at self-definition establishes a culture and context that encourages local educating institutions to engage in their own efforts to clarify their guiding visions and goals.

Third, a key element in an adequate community vision needs to be a commitment to do whatever is necessary to encourage and support the efforts of its constituent educating institutions to clarify and more effectively realize their own visions of the kinds of Jewish human beings that they hope to nurture through the process education.

Fourth, communities that imagine a future in which they are

made up of a family of educating institutions, each one animated by a powerful vision of its own and each one attracting constituencies that are sympathetic to the vision, must think carefully about the kinds of policies and structures that are in the long-run likely to bring about this future.

Feb. 1, 1996

Update on M. Rosenak Community Vision Seminar Attendance

New York:

Gail Dorph/ Lester Pollack
John Ruskay/ Lynn Kroll
Jon Woocher/ Billie Gold
Carl Sheingold/ Dan Shapiro?
Dalia Pollack

JCCA:

Alan Finkelstein/ Phil Margolius

Cleveland:

Steve Hoffman/ Chuck Ratner

Baltimore:

Chaim Botwinick/ Lee Hendler

Atlanta:

Pending response from D. Sarnat/ D. Minkin

Milwaukee:

Not attending: On Israel mission

Hartford:

Cindy Chazan/ Paula Steinberg

Philadelphia:

Howard Charish/ Sylvan Tobin: Not attending, but packet sent

Metrowest:

Pending response from Saul Andron/ Lay person?



Chair

Morton Mandel

Vice Chairs

Billie Gold

Ann Kaufman

Matthew Maryles

Maynard Wishner

Honorary Chair

Max Fisher

Board

David Arnow

Daniel Bader

Mandell Berman

Charles Bronfman

John Colman

Maurice Corson

Susan Crown

Jay Davis

Irwin Field

Charles Goodman

Alfred Gottschalk

Neil Greenbaum

David Hirschhorn

Gershon Kekst

Henry Koschitzky

Mark Lainer

Norman Lamm

Marvin Lender

Norman Lipoff

Seymour Martin Lipset

Florence Melton

Melvin Merians

Lester Pollack

Charles Ratner

Esther Leah Ritz

William Schatten

Richard Scheuer

Ismar Schorsch

David Teutsch

Isadore Twersky

Bennett Yanowitz

Executive Director

Alan Hoffmann

CIJE Seminar on Community Vision

Professor Michael Rosenak

Wed. Feb. 14, 1995

4 p.m to 7 p.m.

15 E. 26 St./ 10th floor

Professor Rosenak has asked us to distribute the attached essay, "**A Community-Wide Vision for Jewish Education**," as the starting point of our seminar on the 14th. He is eager to engage in a discussion of the questions raised by the paper as they apply to your own contexts and communities.

Among these questions are:

Is a community vision of Jewish life and Jewish education possible? Desirable?

How might we formulate a vision of the kind of Jews we want our communities and communal institutions to foster?

What roles might communal institutions--such as federations and JCCs--play in advancing such a vision? (Can we/should we move from an idea of communal institutions as facilitators and "umbrellas" to one of catalysts for a vision? What might be the consequences of such a change?)

Please bring your own questions and responses as well. This seminar will be a pioneering discussion of a critical issue.

We look forward to seeing you on Feb. 14.

Schools

Enterprises that support
cause in five areas - too
doctrinaire

Federatio

- Central Agency

Israel



- JCC

Community { Camp
Day School }

Guide efforts to build

- 1) The Problem

- 2) There is another solution

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 MacIntyre 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.

→ Voluntary associations may be more like C's than he acknowledges - clubs, cults from which you can drop out.

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 ^{are} 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."

Community as Agenda vs. Voluntary Assoc

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.

1?
why?

Two Views

A)

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.

B)

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

→ Need not
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.

Does this entail a relativistic view of norms?

B) 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.


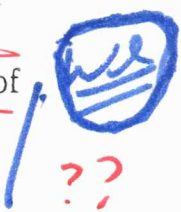
→ or limited by

Hunting
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 features 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 renowned 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 in this essay is that "sacred" things are to be defined as those cultural artifacts that do not shed their framework 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 away" 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-members but 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 elucidate 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-upmanship, 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. Hanoah 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 accommodations 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.

Do share -- Potentially Shareable

האם אנו? -- Relativistic?

Is it enough to elicit passion, "defend at all costs," commitment?

FIRST DRAFT-COMMENTS PLEASE!

COMMUNITY-VISION AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

CIJE's Goals Project has focused primarily on ways of encouraging educating institutions to clarify compelling goals that are anchored in visions of the kind of Jewish human being they hope to nurture. As this project has proceeded, it has been apparent that there is also substantial interest on the part of various lay and professional community leaders in the theme of "community-vision". Though it has been suggested that this interest reflects widespread anxiety concerning the possibility under present circumstances of a compelling vision that can unite the various constituencies that make up American Judaism, the truth is that the source of this interest is unclear. But more is unclear than just the source of the interest in this subject: so too is the subject itself! That is, it is from clear what people are hoping to arrive at when they speak of wanting to come up with a community-vision; and it is similarly unclear how they think coming up with such a vision will be beneficial for Jewish education and for Jewish life, more generally. It is, finally, also unclear how to demarcate "the community" which the hoped-for community-vision will represent, and through what kind of process involving what kinds of participants this vision will be generated.

These uncertainties are noted in order to identify some important challenges that the

effort to tackle the problem of community-vision will need to encompass. They are assuredly not being noted in order to discourage this effort. On the contrary: the sense of engagement that has been generated when issues relating to community-vision have surfaced -- for example, in response to Professor Michael Rosenak's presentation at the Jerusalem Goals Seminar in the summer of 1994 - suggests that this issue may well be a lightning-rod for some important concerns that need to be addressed by Jewish educators and communal leaders who care about the future of the American Jewish community.

Articulating this domain more fully may serve more than one useful purpose. First, the effort at articulation (combined with the clarifications and revisions that will be called forth by the questions and responses it evokes) will help us better understand the nature of the "community-vision" challenge. Second, by indicating what will need to be done in order to make headway on the community-vision agenda, this articulation will put us in a better position to make wise decisions concerning the allocation of our resources. There are at least three possibilities: 1) We will decide that the Community-Vision agenda is important and that we need to find ways to adjust other CIJE activities so as to pursue the Community-vision agenda; 2) we will decide that the Community Vision agenda is important but will determine that pursuing it in a meaningful way will be too costly, given our scarce resources; 3) we will decide that this agenda is not worthy of being pursued for other reasons.

The two sections that follow are designed to lay out what we have thus far done and what, if we think this domain important, we should consider doing to advance this effort. The

first section summarizes CIJE's work-to-date in the community-vision arena, work that can serve as a springboard to continuing efforts. This section is a kind of inventory of issues, insights, *and* materials associated with CIJE's efforts to date in this domain. The second section proposes some concrete tasks that will carry the work forward. The appendices incorporate presentations and documents that have thus far been developed on the subject of community-vision.

CIJE WORK-TO-DATE ON COMMUNAL VISION

1. Some characterizations of the problem.

I begin by identifying significant social realities that may lie behind the interest in communal vision; this discussion is coupled with an attempt to delineate the challenges posed by these social realities. Significant among these social realities is the fact that some of the historical memories, symbols, and social realities which may have served to create a sense of community among diverse American *J*ews are to many increasingly less compelling. With the passage of time, images of the Shtet'l, of the Holocaust, of the establishment of the State of Israel, and even of the Six Day War have lost some of their power to shape a strong collective consciousness among American Jews. In a different vein, the collective identity of American Jews has been dealt a blow by the fact that they are less and less able to view themselves as needed to solve the problems, economic and otherwise, of Jews in Israel, Russia, and elsewhere.

Such circumstances, combined with a decline of the kind of anti-Semitism which in its own way brought Jews together, have contributed to a communal crisis of identity among American Jews - or more accurately, to lay bare a crisis that has been in the making for a long time. Two salient dimensions of this crisis are delineated below.

Y Pluribus Unum? Each of the following poses problems for American Jewish life. 1) While the diversity of American Jewish life may in some ways be a sign of our vibrancy, significant sub-groups that are significantly engaged with Jewish life are often overtly and mutually hostile - sometimes to the point of denying that they are members of the same community. 2) There are sub-groups on the American-Jewish landscape that take Jewish life very seriously but ~~that~~ feel rejected by what is sometimes described as the organized Jewish community; in the other direction, some such groups disavow the moral authority of the organized Jewish community.

While, as sociologist Lewis Coser has suggested in his writings on the social functions of group conflict, it would be naive to expect that in a well-functioning community there would be no traces of these phenomena, their pervasiveness today is a sign of great distress to many students and leaders of American Jewish life. They have given rise to fears of Balkanization, of a community that self-destructs because of attitudes and policies that encourage mistrust and divisiveness among what would seem to be its natural constituents.

Questions like the following arise: Is there a vision of "who we are" as a community which can be enthusiastically embraced by the varied sub-groups engaged in American-Jewish

life - a vision that unites them even as they go their very different ways? Is there a core which we can all embrace and is this core sufficient to establish amongst us a sense of membership in a single community that feels worthy of our loyalty?

The Wise Child's Siblings. While mutual mistrust among sub-groups that are in their own ways deeply committed to Jewish life represents one of the problems that calls forth an interest in communal vision, there are also others. Prominent among them is the fact that there are many contemporary American Jews who do not view the Jewish community - or what they take to be "the Jewish community" - as a fitting object for their energies, their sense of commitment, and their loyalty. The Passover Haggadah's "Wise Child" is engaged by Jewish life and traditions. Not so with the siblings: angry, indifferent, or so removed from it all that they wouldn't even know what questions to ask about Jewish life, they are either negatively engaged or in a state of disengagement. They look elsewhere to meet their existential, social, and other basic needs. According to some recent studies and observers, increasing numbers of American Jews fall into this category.

If the term "Balkanization" evokes the image of a community actively tearing itself apart, the phenomenon of progressive disengagement from Jewish life being pointed to here suggests the image of a community whose light shines ever less brightly as its members slowly pull away. Viewed from this direction, the question of communal vision has a different character: what must the Jewish community be like - and equally important, be perceived as being like - if it is to

call forth the idealism, the loyalty, the pride, and the human energies of the many American Jews who are drifting away from active engagement in the life of this community?

Shared, clear AND compelling??? A problem that is implicit in the foregoing but which deserves to be highlighted concerns a tension amongst the elements that might be thought integral to an adequate communal vision: namely, that it be shared by a multitude of varied constituencies; that it elicit enthusiastic support; and that it fruitfully inform communal deliberations. Can all of these desiderata be honored at once? Is it possible to find a communal vision that is broad enough to encompass very disparate constituencies, while at the same time being clear enough to give guidance to policy and compelling enough to elicit enthusiastic support. Skeptics might well wonder whether the quest for consensus among very different groups will not inevitably give rise to a shared vision that is too vague to guide decision-making and to parve to invite enthusiasm.

2. Miscellaneous Insights and Ways of Thinking about Communal Vision.

While our work-to-date has served to identify, highlight and interpret some central problems, it has also suggested some insights into these problems. I briefly summarize some of them below.

Why think about community vision? As noted above, this question is worthy of more

explanation than can be offered here, and certainly the answer to the question depends in part on how we interpret the concept of a communal vision. Still, some intuitive points can at this point be made.

From the standpoint of education, there are some fairly straightforward answers: A communal vision may, for example, carry implications for the kinds of practices and institutions that central agencies should be supporting; it may also prove invaluable in helping an educating institution that identifies itself as "communal" and pluralistic rather than parochial (say, a communal Day School or a JCC camp), to organize itself around a set of compelling educational goals.

But the foregoing discussion also suggests what is perhaps a deeper reason to work towards a shared and compelling communal vision: for such a vision may play a critical ^{role} in giving diverse American-Jewish sub-groups the sense that they are valued members of the same community - a community which, by virtue of its animating vision, seems worthy of our loyalties. *Indeed.*

Significant elements of a shared vision may already exist! There is a tendency among some to despair of finding more than trivial commonality among the varied constituencies that make up the American Jewish community. Not only is such despair paralyzing, it is also probably unwarranted. *Indeed,* As Professor Michael Rosenak recently suggested, it may be that we already share quite a bit. In his presentation to the Jerusalem Goals Seminar in the summer of

1994, Professor Rosenak suggested that it is possible to discover amidst the diversity of Jewish life five elements which are already shared or readily shareable among American Jews, and which have the capacity to establish amongst us a non-trivial shared universe. The elements suggested by Professor Rosenak are the following:

1. Study of a sacred literature. We share a literature that speaks to origins and purposes, a literature that addresses matters of ultimate concern. Though we will doubtlessly approach this sacred literature in very dissimilar ways, study of this literature is capable of uniting us.
2. A common vocabulary. As different as we are from each other, we share a common vocabulary that is wonderfully rich in its associations. The multitude of words, phrases, and concepts that we share - from Tsimmes to Motza-ay Shabbat; from Pareve and Milchig to "Tikkun Olam" - go a long way towards establishing a shared universe amongst us.
3. Shared practices. Even though we largely go our own ways as Jews, it is entirely possible for us to agree on the desirability of certain shared practices - for example, in the arena of Tzedaka or in the determination of the kinds of ritual observances that are appropriate at communal functions.
4. The problems of Jews are Jewish problems. In the midst of our diversity, a measure of unity can be established by the determination to regard the problems

faced by some Jews as problems for all Jews -- that is, by a determination on the part of all not to wash their hands of problems experienced by any segment of the Jewish people.

5. Israel. While identification with Israel is no substitute for a shared agenda, it should be ^{not} ignored as we set about identifying and/or forging a unifying core.

While Jews may interpret the significance of Israel differently, they can come to a shared understanding that it is a special and important place -- not just another place where Jews happen to live.

Taken alone, any one of these elements is perhaps not very powerful; but jointly, Rosenak's account suggests, they establish a framework of commonality, within which controversy and discussion can go on. Community policy, including Jewish education, can be designed with an eye towards strengthening the power of these elements to keep the community intact.

One need not subscribe to Rosenak's list of elements to accept the general point that we may already share much more than we think, and that, properly built upon, what we already share may have some capacity to hold us together as a community. The challenge is, through research or dialogue, to discover these shared elements that cut across the community's varied constituencies.

Generality does not entail vagueness. In a similar vein, Professor Israel Scheffler suggested at the CIJE staff seminar in February 1994 that amidst all the talk of the splintering of the American Jewish community, there is an underestimation of what can be meaningfully shared among a broad range of constituencies. Speaking about communal Day Schools, Scheffler noted that the ideal of a "general Jewish citizen" need not suffer from vagueness. It is by no means unthinkable that the membership of a communal school could agree on a body of knowledge and skill - and even on certain attitudes - that all students would need to acquire. This is, of course, entirely consistent with the likelihood that with respect to certain domains the institution would remain agnostic (while choosing either to exclude them altogether or to "teach about" them in a non-committal way.)

The need for an honest, in-depth search for a compelling communal self-definition. It is essential that the constituencies that make up American Jewish communities find ways of meaningfully reflecting on and dialoguing concerning what they already share -- or what they could come to share -- as a community. Efforts at self-definition at a communal level establish a context and a culture that encourage similar efforts on the part of educating institutions.

Such efforts must wrestle with difficult questions: Who are we as a community? What do we represent? What must ^{we} be like, and be perceived as being like, if are to keep the loyalty of our varied constituencies and draw back those that are drifting away? What human needs must we meet, what activities and opportunities for human growth and expression must we feature, what ideals must we embody if these constituencies are to find participation in this community

meaningful?

Beyond the mystique of vagueness and the fear of authentic dialogue. Discussion of basic questions concerning the nature and point of Jewish existence, the kind of discussion that might eventuate in a shared communal vision or, more minimally but importantly, in a meaningful community of discourse, is often avoided. One of the reasons for this avoidance is that, as individuals, many are uncertain concerning their own basic beliefs, and sometimes embarrassed to share their sense of ignorance or uncertainty with others. In addition, there is often a fear that the attempt to discuss such matters seriously will surface profound and possibly divisive disagreements. The preferred alternative of avoidance is achieved by agreeing to sign on to certain general platitudes that, because they are so vague, are difficult to reject.

Note, though, that the assumption that it is not possible for members of the contemporary Jewish community to think thoughtfully and to dialogue honestly and productively concerning basic matters of Jewish existence is untested. There is, moreover, good reason to think it possible to organize settings in which such discussion would be fruitful and non-divisive. Even if such discussions did not eventuate in agreement concerning specifics, they would establish a community of inquiry around questions of ultimate concern. And it is likely that the participants would come away relieved that they are finally encouraged to think and speak with one another concerning existentially important matters.

As an example, when in the context of a Goals Seminar in Milwaukee, the representatives of a Communal Day School were invited to share with one another their own

portraits of what an ideal graduate would look like, there was great anxiety among a number of participants; for their sense of being very different from one another had, up to that moment, given rise to a tabu against discussing such matters. The assignment lifted the tabu, at least temporarily; and much to their relief and surprise the participants discovered that such a discussion could be extraordinarily rich and non-divisive, even when their views were very different.

Identifying and implementing policies that will encourage a rich family of vision-driven educating institutions. An adequate community-vision has as one of its elements a commitment to a future in which ^{each of} its constituent institutions ^{is} are all animated by compelling guiding visions, of the kind of person ^{it} they would hope ^{to} nurture. In part, this may mean no more than encouraging and supporting the efforts of existing institutions to clarify their respective guiding visions. Such an effort, which is at the heart of the Goals Project, is rendered difficult by virtue of the substantial ideological diversity represented even in institutions which, in principle, are associated with a particular identity.

Though this effort is important and should be encouraged, it may ~~be that it needs~~ ^{be} to be complemented by something more radical: namely, the introduction of policies that allow new educating institutions to spring up organized around distinct and varied ideologies and which encourage like-minded individuals to self-select into such institutions based on ideological affinities. A Jewish version of the kinds of choice-plans now being explored in public education may be worth entertaining.

The community as a family of communities. In a related vein, given the pluralistic character of American Jewish life, an adequate communal vision will be one that supports the efforts of the varied groups that make up the community to live and educate according to their respective visions of the nature of Jewish existence. To say that these sub-groups are a family is to intimate a number of important things.-- for example, that they share a sense of being related, and that patterns of similarity, difference, agreement, and disagreement are often complex and fluid. Professor Brinker's article on "the Educated Jew" is a valuable resource in understanding this perspective on communal vision. (See also Robert Nozick's piece entitled "A Framework for Utopia.") — Anarchy, the State, and Utopia)

Note that this vision of a community as a framework that supports a variety of sub-communities each committed to its own vision of Jewish existence cannot, for a variety of reasons, be infinitely open-ended. The vision will also need to ~~It is likely to find it necessary to~~ articulate or imply the limits outside of which such support will not be forthcoming.

The place of Jewish tradition in the effort to arrive at a communal vision. Pekarsky's presentation to the Colman sub-committee of the Board in April, 1995 articulated another dimension of a community's effort to arrive at a shared vision. Jewish thought and history offers a variety of interpretations and examples of what it means - or might mean - to be a community. Texts and historical materials that present such interpretations and examples have much to teach us as we struggle to forge shared visions for our respective communities.

Communal vision and broad-based, community-wide educating institutions. Institutions like JCC camps and community Day Schools are of special interest because their efforts to arrive at compelling visions of what they are about are relevant to both dimensions of the Goals Project. On the one hand, attention to such institutions is consistent with the Project's interest in encouraging educating institutions to clarify and better embody their guiding vision, on the other hand, the effort to help such institutions arrive at a shared vision that honors the pluralism they embody will forward our understanding of what a community-wide vision might look like and of the challenges, issues, obstacles and strategies that are worth keeping in mind in the effort to encourage such a vision in the community at large. *its development.*

UPCOMING TASKS AND CHALLENGES

The foregoing is prelude to the identification of what we need to be doing if we are serious about pursuing the community-vision agenda. I suggest the following activities:

1. Encourage the Mandel Institute to work with Rosenak on editing his

presentation, with an eye towards using it as a catalyst to discussion of this topic with various groups that are interested in this problem.

2. In the aftermath of the Jerusalem Goals Seminar, a year-long Goals Seminar was held in Cleveland for senior educators, educational planners, and lay leaders. Much of the seminar was organized around the effort to articulate a Communal Goal Statement for Hebrew that representatives of various denominational and other sub-groups would all find acceptable. The effort did in fact yield such a statement.

It would be important to ask Walter Ackerman to write a short piece explaining the genesis of, and motivation for, Cleveland's decision to focus on a communal goal in the area of Hebrew, as well as an account of what happened. The piece should include the following: a) what the process looked like; b) what were the critical issues that needed to be addressed; c) what difficulties were encountered; d) in addition to the formal goals-statement, what other outcomes emerged out of this process; e) how, in the view of the participants and Ackerman's own view, would arriving at a shared goals in the area of Hebrew be useful in Cleveland.

3. Building on and developing some of the questions, issues, and insights discussed above, Pekarsky should develop a broad concept-paper to frame the discussion of community-vision.

special

4. In view of the interest in community expressed by the Colman sub-committee (including David Sarnat, Maurice Corson, and David Teutsch), organize a meeting of this group (along with, perhaps, additional resource-people) aimed at further clarifying the issues, challenges, and needs in this domain.
5. Develop a bibliography of articles and books, drawn from Jewish and general sources, that have a bearing on the question of community-wide visions.
6. Work with Nessa R. to conceptualize ways of using the issues associated with the Goals Project, in general, and those pertaining to Communal Vision, in particular, as a tool of community-mobilization.
7. Possibly enter into preliminary conversations with the professional and/or lay leadership of one American Jewish community with an eye towards clarifying pertinent challenges, needs, concerns, and ways of addressing the community-vision problem.

APPENDIX I

THE ROSENAK PRESENTATION ON ELEMENTS WE ALREADY SHARE
SHOULD BE INCLUDED HERE

APPENDIX II: DOCUMENT CONCERNING COMMUNITY-VISION PRESENTED AT THE
FEBRUARY, 1995 CIJE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-VISION IN THE EFFORT TO IMPROVE JEWISH
EDUCATION

Many of the groups CIJE works with have expressed a serious and enduring interest in the theme of 'community-vision' and its relationship to the improvement of Jewish education. CIJE believes that this interest is important, and that, nurtured in the right way, it can contribute to the improvement of Jewish education. Consistent with other priorities, efforts should be made to encourage communities to work towards community-visions that support Jewish education. Several dimensions of such an effort are listed below.

First, rather than assuming that there is little that does or can hold together a diverse Jewish community, an effort should be made to identify certain core-elements that may, perhaps differently interpreted, cut across the various constituencies that make up the community. Such core-elements might, for example, include a commitment to serious study, a commitment to the State of Israel, and perhaps a commitment to certain kinds of practices. The identification of such core-elements could arise through a process of research that focuses on what is already being done by different constituencies and/or through a process that encourages serious dialogue among the many constituencies that make up a community. If successfully identified, such core-elements might offer meaningful guidance for the community when it seeks to develop educating

institutions designed to serve the totality of the community.

Second, this attempt to identify shared core-elements should represent one part of a larger effort on the part of the major constituencies of the organized community to wrestle seriously with basic questions concerning what they jointly represent as a community -- who are we as a community? what does it mean to be a member of this community? why would one want to be a member of this community? It should not be assumed in advance that in a diverse Jewish community no meaningful and generally shared answers to such questions could be arrived at. Such questions could fruitfully be explored through study of competing perspectives on this problem. A community that engages in such efforts at self-definition establishes a culture and context that encourages local educating institutions to engage in their own efforts to clarify their guiding visions and goals.

Third, a key element in an adequate community vision needs to be a commitment to do whatever is necessary to encourage and support the efforts of its constituent educating institutions to clarify and more effectively realize their own visions of the kinds of Jewish human beings that they hope to nurture through the process education.

Fourth, communities that imagine a future in which they are made up of a family of educating institutions, each one animated by a powerful vision of its own and each one attracting constituencies that are sympathetic to the vision, must think carefully about the kinds of policies and structures that are in the long-run likely to bring about this future.

APPENDIX III

NOTE: Appendix III is an excerpt from a larger conceptual piece on the Goals Project that was distributed to core-staff prior to the Jerusalem Goals Seminar. It represents an early effort to begin thinking about the community-vision question; it is included not as anything authoritative but as another piece of material that might serve as a springboard to discussion.

TOWARDS VISION-DRIVEN COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITY-WIDE VISION

CIJE'S Goals Project is primarily focussed on the development of vision-driven institutions, not on vision-driven communities. Still, there is much that can be said about "vision-driven communities" that is pertinent to the work of the Goals Project. Some thoughts concerning this matter are sketched out below, beginning with the observation that the kinds of communities that have become engaged in the CIJE process are all communities that have announced their commitment to the cause of Jewish continuity. But what does it mean for a community to say that it cares about Jewish continuity? What is it committing itself to if it seriously announces this as its central concern? Reflection on this question offers a sterling-opportunity to work towards a community-wide vision.

Imagine, then, that a group of key stake holders are convened and invited to think, first individually and then jointly, about the following question: if our community is serious about Jewish continuity, what would it be committing itself to, what would its character have to be?

(and using some structured exercises)

There is more than one way to answer this general question. A community might, for example, interpret its "caring about Jewish continuity" as entailing the following:

1. We are a caring community. We are a community that in varied ways communicates to its members that they are cared about and that their basic needs will be met. To say that we are a caring community is also to say that we offer our members meaningful opportunities to be the givers of care to others (not just the receivers).

2. We are a community that offers its members opportunities for activities they will find personally meaningful. What these activities are -- whether in the realm of celebration or prayer, social action, study, meeting the needs of others - needs to be determined; but the key is for the community to offer its members opportunities for engagement that they might not otherwise have.

3. We are a community that takes education seriously.

Just as it is not self-evident what it means to be a caring community or a community that provides its members with avenues for meaningful engagement, so too, it is not self-evident what it means to be a community that takes education seriously. But here is one thing it does not mean: it doesn't mean that the community announces works towards a vision of an ideal Jew and then proceeds to try to actualize it. Such matters, which are at the heart of the Goals Project, are

more appropriately addressed at local, institutional levels.

But to say that a community shouldn't be in the business of articulating and trying to actualize its own vision of an ideal Jew doesn't mean that it is stuck with articulating "motherhood and apple pie" kinds of goals. On the contrary, a community that announces itself to be serious about education can articulate a coherent vision of itself with some real bite. Here are some possible elements:

1. We are a community that works hard to encourage its constituent institutions to develop an adequate personnel base. We are committed to their being an able educational director working full-time in each sizeable institution and we will do what we can to raise the educational level of the educators.
2. We are a community in which everybody - including lay and professional community leaders - is engaged in serious learning, and will work hard to make this image of ourselves a reality.
3. We are a community that develops meaningful educational opportunities for those (say, inter-marrieds) who may be currently excluded from our purview.
4. While we as a community do not have a vision of a meaningful Jewish existence which we represent, we believe it important to do what we can to encourage our constituent, local institutions to become vision-driven, and we

commit ourselves to using our energies and resources to making this happen.

The foregoing represents one way to approach the challenge of developing "a vision-driven community", that is, a community that establishes practices and priorities based on a vision of the kind of community it would like to be, a vision that incorporates its core values and commitments. One way to work towards such a vision is for members of a community to imagine that they have been successful in their efforts to encourage Jewish continuity, and then to answer the following question:

To what do you owe your success? What pattern of priorities did you establish, and what goals, objectives, and activities, flowing out of these priorities, gave rise to your success in creating a flourishing Jewish community?

It should be clear that to have a vision-driven community does not entail any particular existential or institutional visions. Although there are communities of meaning that are vision-driven in this strong sense, e.g. the Lubavitch community, most American Jewish communities (like Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Cleveland) are pluralistic in ways that preclude congruence between community-vision, on the one hand, and existential and institutional visions, on the other. This said, the preceding discussion suggests that even under contemporary conditions of pluralism there is an intimate connection between "community-wide vision" and vision in the other senses. The point is this: a vision-driven pluralistic community must be one that encourages its various constituencies to work toward vision-driven educating institutions, while

at the same time working to preserve an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual respect, and dialogue amongst individual and institutional representatives of different existential visions.