



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
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Folder
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Jewish secondary school leadership initiative. National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar. Planning (Folder 3 of 3), 1998.

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

TO: Participants in upcoming planning meeting for the National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar
FROM: Daniel Pekarsky and Daniel Lehmann
RE: Our upcoming meeting
DATE: August 3, 1998

Thanks very much for agreeing to participate in our upcoming planning meeting, scheduled to take place on August 17, between 9:30 and 1:30 at the CIJE offices in New York City (15 East 26th Street, 18th floor). We are looking forward to the opportunity to think together about how to design our early November conference so as to encourage fruitful thinking, informed by powerful Jewish and other ideas, about the fundamental purposes of our institutions and the relationship between these purposes and our educational practices.

The sense of the group at the conclusion of our March conference was that it would be well worth devoting our second conference to further explorations of the subject of Jewish spirituality and secondary education, and preliminary conversations between the two of us and Professor David Purpel of the University of North Carolina, who has been consulting to this project, have proceeded on this assumption. In these conversations, several possible avenues of stimulating rich and serious thinking were entertained. These included:

- a. Guided reflection, nourished by significant ideas or texts, on some of the issues raised at our last conference – for example, “the place of spirituality in pluralistic settings serving diverse constituencies” or “ways of restructuring our school-environments so as to more effectively nurture spirituality.” One thought was to build a session based on our own struggle, at the last conference, to find an approach to Birkat Ha-Mazon (the Grace after Meals) that would make sense in a pluralistic educational setting. Conceivably, participants would self-select into one of two possible groups, each focused on a different topic.
- b. Enter into a conversation with one or more contemporary voices from the Jewish and possibly the non-Jewish world that speak to questions of spirituality and education. The possibility of struggling with Heschel’s ideas recurred more than once in our discussions; so did the idea of examining the work of Parker Palmer, a Protestant thinker who has long pondered the place of spirituality in education.

- c. Examine a powerful example of spirituality, or the cultivation of spirituality, in literature or film, and use that as a text for reflection (e.g., the recent Robert Duvall film, or Potok's THE CHOSEN).
- d. Share and carefully examine practices or experiments pertaining to the cultivation of spirituality that are going on in one or more of our own schools.
- e. Visit and reflect on the work of a school that is doing interesting work in the area of spirituality and education.
- f. Engage conference-participants in developing an appropriate research-project or educational intervention to be implemented back home.

At our planning meeting we will have a chance to clarify and assess the potentialities of these and other possibilities. We hope to emerge from the day with enough clarity of conception to permit us to move on to more concrete planning activities. Based on our preliminary sense that an encounter with Heschel's ideas might be of interest, we are enclosing some Heschel-materials; please try to read them, as well as review the summary of our March conference, before our August 17 meeting. See you soon!

Useful Next Steps

Follow-up: Review/Read to Summary
Research Undertaken

Pursue Identified Issue

↳ Anarchism - Ed./Moral

Contemp. Thinker

Interesting Examples

Movie/Lit./School/Curric

Spiritual Activity

Spiritual Guide

Pre-S. Assignment

Group Issues → Topics/Inpd

↳ Beyond Convention-mentality
↳ ~ ↑ In-between

Interesting Examples (vs Best Practices)

① Friends Seminary School in
Far Rockaway

② Joel Ziff's *merit*

Challenge: Analyze

- ①. Conception of spirituality
- ②. Educational aims

Other Examples? yeshiva in Far Rockaway

Beyond "Convention" - Practices:

Becoming A Working Group

- ① Commitment to undertake a project annually : $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Curricular} \\ \text{Research} \end{array} \right\}$
- ② "Critical Friends" w/ Comparable Institutions à la Coalition
 - a) Periodic Visit
 - b) Issues-focus

OR

- ③ Building/Implementing the Rosenick-Curriculum:
Texts - Educ/Jewish for Classical

Agenda for NJHSL'S Planning Mtng

9³⁰ - 10¹⁵ - Intro + Study

10¹⁵ - 11⁰⁰ - Achievements/Challenges

11 - 12¹⁵ Program-Concept Discussion

12¹⁵ - 1¹⁵ - Lunch

- Beyond Convention-Mentality

-

Critical Questions Ar: Nov. Mtng

- ① What activities have promise of ↑ Reflection on aims/practices
~ Spirituality
- ② What policies/practices → ↑ Seriousness between meetings
- ③ Other topics - E.g. Relation to outside

Criteria for Activity Selection

- ① Forward mission
- ② Engaging to participants
- ③ Do-able (availability of \$, site)
- ④ Build { Dialogic } Community
{ Self-reflective }

High School Planning Mtng 8/17/98

I. Introductions

II. Day's Agenda

A) Plan next mtng. w/d/t

① Last meeting

② Larger mission

B) Explore { future directions
Issues

Study w/ Lehmann

Starting-Point :

① Mission : Purposes - Via Powerful ideas
~ Practice

② Sense of group at End of Last Mtg

③ Where we got

Where we need to get

Achievements

- A) Att
- B) shared s. practice - why?
- C) Aims

Signif. topic + Absence/Moribund
Obstacles/impediments

- Structural/Cultural

Educ./moral Ge. Re: Place of
of Spirituality in Mission
Pluralistic Inst.

Conceptions of Sp. + Applications
Adolescence - Perspectives

Lenses: Developmental

Conceptual: Tools/Desire/app

Sense of Community - Dialogue
Engaged

From: Dan Pekarsky
To: Chava, Lehmann, Pekarsky, Purpel
Date: 6/5/98 12:59pm
Subject: High School Leaders Group

TO: Danny Lehmann, David Purpel, Chava Werber
FROM: Dan Pekarsky
RE: My conversations with DL and DP concerning a fall meeting of the High School Leaders Group

So that we're all on the same page, I am sending along a summary of my recent conversations with Danny Lehmann and David Purpel.

1. Conversation with Danny Lehmann

We both felt that it would be important to continue with the theme of "Spirituality and Education" that had been at the heart of the first gathering of the group; and, based on a variety of considerations, thought it made sense to look at Oct. 25-26 and Nov. 1 and 2 as possible dates.

Proceeding informally rather than systematically, we identified a number of elements that might make up the nucleus of a second two-day conference. These included the following:

a. A chance to reflect in a systematic way (possibly with the help of new resources) on some of the issues raised at our last conference -- for example, "Nurturing spirituality in pluralistic settings" or "Ways of restructuring our school-environments so as to more effectively nurture spirituality." Conceivably, participants would self-select into groups interested in one or the other of these topics; and there would be carefully designed tracks for each group.

b. Listen to and enter into conversation with some contemporary voices that speak to questions of spirituality and education. These might come from the Jewish world or from the non-Jewish world (Parker Palmer being an example we considered, in which connection I mentioned a student of mine who had offered an intellectual portrait of a fictional school organized around Palmer's ideas).

c. Identify a powerful example of spirituality, or the cultivation of spirituality, in literature or film, and use that as a text for reflection (e.g. the recent Robert Duvall film, or Potok's THE CHOSEN).

d. Offer participants a chance to share and react to practices or experiments pertaining to the cultivation of spirituality that are going on in their own schools.

e. DL identified a student who wrote a powerful piece on the subject of spirituality and pluralism. The possibility of having participants read this piece and interview this student was entertained.

Since both DPs will be out East mid-June, we thought we'd aim for a planning-meeting at this time; unfortunately, it looks like this won't work; but Dan Pekarsky and DL will manage to meet for a couple of hours in Boston on June 21.

2. My Conversation with David Purpel

After trying, unsuccessfully, to find a good time to meet with DL, we agreed to spend some time at CIJE's upcoming Professors Seminar thinking about the High School Group; and as a basis for that conversation, I said I would write up my conversations with DL [This document]. David mentioned that he wasn't as enthused as some people are about Parker Palmer's work; but he added that a number of interesting pieces have been written recently about the subject of spirituality and education, and he said that he would bring them to our attention -- this could be invaluable!

3. So:

a. I'll meet with David Purpel during the Professors Group and with Danny Lehmann immediately thereafter in Boston. We should probably be thinking of some time when we

could get together for a more lengthy planning meeting -- perhaps in August.

b. It would be great if David could give us bibliographical references or appropriate excerpts from the books concerning spirituality that he thinks might be particularly helpful to us.

c. We should finalize a date soon and send out a letter to possible participants asking them to save the day.

d. I think it would be helpful to think more than we have about ways of encouraging more systematic school-based activities in between our meetings.

I hope this summary helps us along. Please correct, add, etc. as appropriate.

Shabbat Shalom.

-
- A) In-between projects
- a) Investigate
 - b) Try
- } set up at conference
- B) Pluralism and Educ. — "Bansching"
- a) us
 - b) school
- C) Something exponential!!



Council of Jewish Federations 1997 General Assembly Delegate Survey

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Jewish Federations' 66th annual General Assembly (GA) held in Indianapolis in November, 1997, greatly benefited from the support of corporate sponsors. To assist these and other corporations in determining the value of participating in future General Assemblies, a survey was conducted immediately following the GA. Questionnaires were mailed on November 20, 1997, to 1,918 delegates (representing close to half of the over 4,000 attendees). At the close of the field phase on January 5, 1998, 684 questionnaires were returned to Beta Research, an independent marketing research firm that was commissioned to conduct this study. With 23 questionnaires returned by the Post Office as undeliverable, the response rate to this survey is 36%. In conformance with research industry standards, all responses to this survey were anonymous.

SUMMARY

GA delegates are highly committed to and involved in both their communities and the Federation system. They serve multiple leadership roles, and have great influence in product/service purchase and investment decisions.

GA attendees are extremely upscale. 94% graduated college and 58% received post-graduate degrees. Average annual household income is \$219,000. The average value of their primary residence is \$410,000. Nearly nine out of ten are in the prime adult years of 25 to 64.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Attendance

The GA attracts a large number of devoted attendees. Over two-thirds (69%) of the delegates are veteran participants, having attended multiple times, with an overall average of six. Their loyalty to the UJA-Federation system is further confirmed by their intentions regarding future GA's. Over half (54%) plan to attend the 1998 General Assembly in Israel, in spite of the higher travel costs. More impressively, three-quarters plan to be at the 1999 General Assembly in Atlanta, and an even higher proportion (81%) plan to attend the 2000 GA in Chicago.

Involved and Influential

A large number of delegates serve in leadership roles in various organizations. Many sit on the Board of Directors of a Jewish organization (58%), or another type of entity in such fields as business, education, health, or the arts (31%). In addition, half (52%) were involved during the last year in decisions regarding the purchase of major products or services for an organization or business, and nearly half (45%) were involved in decisions regarding investment of the assets of these entities.

► **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

49.4 Years = average age
49% Men
51% Women
84% Married
40% Have child(ren) under age 18 at home

79% Professionals/Managers

55% Professionals
13% Management
11% Business owners

94% College Graduates

58% Post-college graduate degree

\$219,000 = Average annual household income

6% under \$50,000
23% \$50,000 to \$99,999
36% \$100,000 to \$199,999
19% \$200,000 to \$499,999
8% \$500,000 or more

► **PRIMARY RESIDENCE**

\$410,000 = average value of primary residence

15% under \$150,000
38% \$150,000 to \$299,999
21% \$300,000 to \$499,999
16% \$500,000 to \$999,999
7% \$1,000,000 and over

Number of Residences

88% Own one or more homes
18% Own two or more

► **AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP**

95% Own one or more vehicles
78% Own two or more
25% Own three or more
33% Lease one or more vehicles

Types of Vehicles owned

35% Luxury
15% Large
51% Medium
21% Small
17% Mini Van
18% Sport Utility
8% Sports Car

► **FINANCIAL SERVICES USAGE**

64% Have a CPA
59% Have a stockbroker
43% Have a financial advisor

► **BANK AND CREDIT CARD USAGE**

90% Visa
60% Master Card
52% American Express
20% Discover Card
6% Diners Club

► **MAJOR PURCHASE INTENTIONS**

In the next 24 months delegates plan to purchase the following:

41% Personal computer
33% Camera, television or stereo equipment
27% Fine jewelry
25% Case of fine wine or liquor
18% Luxury automobile
11% New home
10% Fine watch
7% Home theater or big screen TV

► FUTURE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

Plan to visit the following in the next five years:

- 90% Israel
- 70% Europe
- 38% Caribbean
- 31% Cruise of 7 + days
- 28% Disney World/Land
- 21% Ski resort in the northern hemisphere
- 16% Asia
- 16% Hawaii
- 16% Middle East (other than Israel)
- 13% Australia

► THEATER AND PERFORMING ARTS

92% have attended live theater, ballet, opera, or symphony in the past six months

► DINING OUT

Dine out 3.8 times per week, on average, at a full table service restaurant

► BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION IN PAST WEEK

- 64% Wine
- 62% Coke
- 26% Pepsi

► BUSINESS SERVICES

Package Courier most frequently used:

- 37% UPS
- 35% Federal Express
- 32% U.S. Postal Service

► READERSHIP

Delegates regularly read the following types of publications:

- 79% Local Jewish newspaper
- 76% News
- 36% Politics
- 30% Business/economics
- 25% Lifestyle
- 21% Personal finance/investing
- 20% Health/fitness
- 14% Fashion

Delegates also regularly read:

- 44% New York Times
- 36% Jerusalem Report
- 26% Wall Street Journal
- 21% Jerusalem Post
- 13% USA Today
- 5% Washington Post

► INTERNET USAGE

71% currently subscribe to an Internet service

► CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Delegates' recall of 1997 General Assembly sponsors is high. All of the 10 sponsors listed in the questionnaire were recalled by at least one-fifth of the delegates.

- 75% Boeing
- 68% New York Times
- 59% Jerusalem Report
- 41% Eli Lilly
- 33% Dreyfus
- 30% Ameritech
- 27% Merrill Lynch
- 27% Westin Hotel
- 21% Toshiba Copiers
- 20% Prudential Securities

(continued on back)

▶ **LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE**

CARRIER

- 53% AT&T
- 24% MCI
- 14% Sprint
- 12% Other

▶ **AUTO RENTAL CHAIN PREFERRED**

- 26% Hertz
- 10% Avis
- 10% National
- 9% Another chain
- 46% No preference

▶ **HOTEL CHAIN PREFERENCE**

- 22% Hyatt
- 18% Marriott
- 12% Westin
- 7% Hilton
- 11% Other
- 30% No preference

▶ **WHERE DELEGATES RESIDE**

- 31% Northeast
- 17% South
- 38% Midwest (including Indianapolis, site of 1997 GA)
- 9% West
- 4% Canada



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April 28, 1998

Dear GA Attendee:

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire evaluating the 1997 GA in Indianapolis. All responses provided were anonymous. No one at CJF, or the independent research firm commissioned to conduct this study, knows how you or anyone else replied. Collectively, the information you and other attendees provided is essential for improving future General Assemblies as well as promoting corporate sponsorship.

You indicated on a separate card that you would like to receive a copy of the Summary Report. As promised, I am delighted to provide a copy to you.

Again, many thanks for helping to improve future GA's.

Sincerely,

Jim Schwartz, Ph.D.
Research Director

C:\WP6\ATTENDEE.WPD

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CJF GA '98
UJA ISRAEL
NOVEMBER 16-19

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

סליח לנו

A Story of When I Asked Forgiveness

The name of the person I hurt is _____

What I did to hurt this person is

The reason I hurt this person is

What I did to ask forgiveness is

What the person did when I asked forgiveness is

The way I felt afterwards is

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

סליח לנו

A Story of When Someone Asked Me for Forgiveness

The name of the person who hurt me is _____

What this person did to hurt me is

The reason this person hurt me is

What this person did to ask forgiveness is

What I did when this person asked forgiveness is

The way I felt afterwards is

Name _____ Date _____

עמידה Journal

סליח לנו

Letter of Forgiveness

Dear _____

You hurt me or made me angry when you

But I forgive you and I want us to be friends again.

Also, I ask you to forgive me when I hurt you or made you angry by

Signed: _____

=====

(Your friend fills out this part)

I forgive you. Let's be friends again.

Signed: _____

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

סליח לנו

Letter of Forgiveness to Myself

Sometimes we need to forgive ourselves. We get mad at ourselves for making a mistake or not understanding something or not doing as well as we want.

Tell the story of something you did that made you get mad at yourself.

I forgive myself for doing this. It's OK for me to make mistakes.

Signed: _____

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

הרוצה בתשובה

Think about today. How would your day be different today if you felt ה" with you?

How would you feel inside yourself?

How would you be different with your friends?

How would you be different when you were doing schoolwork?

Is there anything that makes you feel frustrated, angry, sad or scared? What would ה" say to you to help you feel better and solve the problem?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

הַרוֹצֵה בַּתְּשׁוּבָה

Give an example of תשובה, a time when you felt ה"ה with you. Did this happen when you saw something beautiful in nature? when you felt someone special love you? when you felt love for someone else? when you did something you felt proud about? when you were scared or sad? when you doing Tefillot? when you were celebrating Shabbat or a holiday?

Draw a picture of this time:

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

הַרוֹצֵה בַּתְּשׁוּבָה

When we ask ה' to help us return to the Torah, we ask for help to finding what the Torah can teach us which will help us in the coming day. What do you want to remember today that the Torah teaches?

If you remember that teaching, how will your day be different today?

Masheev HaRuach - Rain - eetaroota deleaylah-awakening from above- god acts in response to our effort

moreed hatal - dew -eetaroota deletateh - awakening from below - god acts regardless of our effort -

what's the effort we need to make,

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

רפאנו

Think of someone who is sick, a person whom you want to ask 'ה' to help heal.

Is there any way in which you need healing for yourself in your body, or your feelings, or your spirit. What do you want to ask 'ה' to help heal in yourself?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

רפאנו

Sometimes people are not always able to be cured from sickness. Sometimes they might even die. Can somebody be 'healed' from sickness even though their bodies do not get better?

Can you think of someone who was 'healed' even though they are still sick or even died?

Who was the person?

Why do you think the person was healed?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

על הצדיקים

In this *bracha*, we ask 'ה's blessing for *Tzadikim*, for *Chasidism*, and for *Zeeknai Yisrael*, for people who guide us and inspire us, for people whom we admire and respect, for our elders, for people who have courage, people who love us, people who teach us.

Who do you know who is a *Tzadik* or a *Chasid*?

What did this person do that makes you call him/her a *Tzadik* or a *Chasid*?

What is your *bracha* for this person?

I ask 'ה to bless _____ with

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

על הצדיקים

Can you think of a time when you felt like a *Tzadik*, a *Chasid*, or an 'elder'.

Tell the story of what you did that made you feel that way.

Is there some way in which you would like to be a *Chasid* or a *Tzadik* today? What would you do?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

השיבה שופטינו

When the Israelites wandered through the desert, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam helped the people live in peace. They helped to settle arguments and solve problems, to make sure that the people lived in peace and acted with fairness and justice. We also pray to ה' that we have leaders who are fair and just and help us live in peace.

Can you think of someone - a parent, a teacher, another adult, a kid - who helped solve a problem, who was fair and just and brought peace?

Who was it?

What was the problem and how did this person solve it?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

השיבה שופטינו

Can you think of a time when you were a leader who helped solve a problem, who was fair and just and brought peace?

What was the problem and how did you solve it?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

השיבה שופטינו

Can you think of a leader - a parent, a teacher, another adult, or a kid who you want to ask 'ה' to help be fair and just and bring peace?

Who is the person? _____

What is your prayer for this person

Can you think of a situation in which you are a leader?
What is do you want to ask 'ה' to help you be fair and just and bring peace?

Name _____

Date _____

שמידה Journal

תְּקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵירוּתֵינוּ.

In this *bracha*, we ask 'ה' to bring Jews who have been in exile, living among all the nations, back together again.

Sometimes, we can feel like we are in exile even when we are physically at home: we feel like we do not belong or feel left out. So, we ask 'ה' too take us out of our 'exile' also.

Have you ever felt like you were in 'exile', like you didn't belong or were left out? What happened to you?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גְּדוּל לְחֵירוּתֵינוּ.

Is there any way in which you feel like you are in exile today? like you don't belong or are left out in this class? How do you feel in exile?

What would you like to ask 'ה' to help to make the situation change?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵירוּתֵינוּ.

Is there any way in which you feel like another person is in exile today? like he/she feels left out in this class?

What would you like to ask 'ה' to help to make the situation change? What could you do to help the situation change?

Name _____

Date _____

עמידה Journal

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוּפָר גְּדוּל לְחֵירוּתֵינוּ.

Can you think of a time when you or someone else were in 'exile' and something happened to help you or that person feel like you belonged and weren't left out? Tell the story of what helped end the 'exile'.

Spirituality and Education:

The Difficulty of Making Long-Term Commitments

David E. Purpel

Although we do a lot of teacher bashing in this country, we also do a lot in the way of teacher stroking and often we do a lot of both. A very common stroke is to say something like "the vast majority of teachers are hard-working and dedicated professionals deeply committed to the well being of their students." It is possible to construe such formulations as damning with faint praise, as in "teachers may not be very effective and assertive but the vast majority of them are hard-working and dedicated professionals deeply committed to the well-being of their students". However, for purposes of this essay I will interpret the formulation as profound praise and indeed my focus here is on the celebration of commitment and dedication. (I won't comment on the part on 'hard-working' since I never have been able to understand the awe and rapture our culture has for hard work.) Dedication and commitment for teachers connotes seriousness of purpose, deep personal investment in and genuine devotion to educational goals, and a disposition toward selfless concern for students.

In a culture that is increasingly cynical about commitment, loyalty, and principle and in a society that over-rewards personal achievement and entrepreneurship, a consciousness of dedication is as rare as it is precious. In a time when teachers are viewed more and more as semi-skilled technicians and less and less as moral agents, commitment to principle is a powerful lesson in courage.

And within an educational tradition that over-values cognitive mastery and an intellectual tradition steeped if not mired in materialism, dedication and commitment represent the hope of the spirit. Unfortunately, much of the current discourse on teachers and teacher education is not about commitment nor the spirit but rather emphasizes technical and engineering concerns such as planning, monitoring, and evaluation. We are asked to be "reflective" teachers, i.e., to think carefully and thoroughly about our techniques on how to manipulate children to achieve pre-determined goals. In our teacher training institutions, we often encourage our students to consider and reflect upon a wide range of educational goals but rarely do we urge them to commit themselves passionately to any of them.

However, the more basic and compelling questions are not about whether or not teachers should have commitments but center on the much more urgent ones of the nature of our commitments. It is perfectly possible to be deeply committed to utterly stupid and/or destructive pursuits—just look at the NRA. President Clinton is deeply committed and dedicated to an educational system grounded in a vision of America competing and winning in the global economy while most school principals are passionately committed to orderly and controlled classrooms. What is of utmost importance is to identify the substance of our very deepest commitments, those that provide us with meaning and a sense of fulfillment, those which Paul Tillich calls matters of 'faith and ultimate concern'. Tillich describes faith as:

"... the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of

faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concerns. Man...is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his existence, such as food and shelter. Man in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns-cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group. If it claims ultimacy it demands the total surrender of him who accepts the claim, and it promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name."

Obviously, people differ as to what they consider to be of ultimate concern-for some it is devotion to family; for others it is love of country, or material success, or enlightenment, and for some it is the quest for God. In pursuing these ultimates we inevitably rely on numerous intermediate processes and institutions, those that make it possible to attend to the matters of ultimate concern. For example, in order to find God people have among other things, developed religions complete with churches, rituals, liturgies, sacred texts, credos, and other modes of establishing a relationship with the Divine. In a parallel manner, those who have sought enlightenment have among other things, created a complex and varied educational apparatus involving media, schools, universities, research programs, and the like as means of facilitating the search for knowledge and truth. These intermediate processes and institutions derive their validity not from their *inherent* worth but from their relationship to what

is accepted to be of ultimate worth. Churches are not of ultimate concern but are important because of their presumed intimate relationship with what is truly of ultimate concern, in this example, the quest for God. By the same token, the University is to be seen, at best, as a useful technique for those whose ultimate concern is enlightenment. In this analysis churches, liturgies, schools, curricula, et.al., can be seen as technology, important as means but of no particular inherent worth. Of course, we are all aware that we have the tendency to blur the intermediate with the ultimate, that is in spite of ourselves we are fully capable of worshipping the University and the Church as if they were of ultimate concern. Tillich calls this confusion idolatry, the worship of false idols; the displacement of ultimacy with technology; preserving the Church instead of communing with God, getting degrees rather than struggling for enlightenment.

I generally see education *per se* in two different aspects: esthetic and/or technological. By esthetic, I mean that which is inherently pleasing, joyful, and beautiful. Much of what goes on in education has esthetic significance -the joys of discovery, insight, and creativity; the beauty in structures, patterns, and designs; the sensual delights of nature and the body. This seems to me to be both universal and particular, i.e., we all have esthetic sensibilities but we all differ in what makes us tingle.

In contrast, when I speak of education as technology, I refer to claims that particular forms of education are conducive to certain goals, as for example, the claim that the study of history

is critical to good citizenship, that the study of mathematics sharpens the thinking process, or that computer competence is essential for a successful career. In this context, History, Mathematics, and computers as well as the process of education itself become not so much sources of inherent delight but emerge more as *techniques* for achieving ends of presumably greater significance.

The notion that we can talk about education in esthetic and/or technological terms, however, still begs the question of to what it is we should be committed. I certainly value an education that responds to the human impulse for joy, play, and delight but I want to temper that affirmation with moral and ethical considerations. I also am happy to affirm an instrumental role for education depending on the crucial issue of what it is that the education is designed to achieve. In that sense, I reject the notion that we should be committed per se to of all things "education". When we view education as inherently good and /or worship it as technology, without consideration of what is of ultimate concern, we are in danger of being idolatrous.

The point of making these distinctions is to sharpen my focus on the question I posed earlier in this paper, namely "to what should educators be dedicated and committed." My position is that above and beyond studying educational processes we as educators are required to wrestle with issues regarding the nature of our culture's highest aspirations and most cherished visions. In addition, we as educators need to ground our work in a vision that

in some significant way resonates with matters of ultimate concern. I've tried to phrase this cautiously and carefully because I believe that figuring out what is of ultimate concern can be an extremely difficult, elusive, and anguishing process since we are dealing here with issues of extraordinary importance, ambiguity, and complexity. A particularly complex and elusive dimension of this process is sorting out the role of spirituality in this quest.

I have to confess at this point that I'm not really sure what spirituality means , and indeed, if the truth be known I'm very unclear on what it (whatever it is) has to do with education. Every so often I do, however, get some momentary and fragmentary sense of the term which is kind of exciting and a little scary. The context of trying to connect education to passionate commitments and to matters of ultimate concern is one that has provided me with one of those moments, for that struggle has certainly not led me to a resolution but clearly has led me to a source of authority. I came to a place where I realized that I would not be able to respond in depth to the question "to what should we be committed?" unless I was willing at some basic level to accept a starting place, a point of departure, a fundamental frame of reference, or to put in more contemporary terms, I would need to be part of an interpretive community. It was at this point that I truly encountered capital M Mystery for I came to this conclusion in part because I realized that what I was looking for involved a process which gives life to existence, which animates, energizes, and gives direction, or as it is written, that which represents the spirits

that reside within our midst. Perhaps this is in part what is meant by the term, spiritual- literally, that which inspires and gives breath to. The first Mystery then has to do with the source of this energizing spirit; although I am prepared to accept, albeit gingerly and hesitantly, the importance and reality of these spirits, I remain among the baffled about what they are, where they come from, how does one find them and what does one do with them when one does. I came to other conclusions: that accepting spirituality *per se* is not nearly enough since some spirits are better than others ; that there are such thing as evil spirits; and that one doesn't easily and blithely select spirits as if they were on a menu, all equally accessible and available .

The second Mystery for me has to do with the reality that I find myself generally drawn to religious issues and particularly and increasingly so, to the study of Jewish religious traditions. At first, I saw my interest as part of the way to provide further justification and validation for an education that focused on equality and social justice and found powerful support for this in such traditions as the writings of the Biblical prophets. However, I quickly realized that what was going on was more than the usual kind of academic scrambling for post-hoc rationalization that passes for carefully considered analysis. I was astonished to find, generally speaking, this material to be simultaneously familiar and fresh, old and new, accessible and remote. It was as if I was revisiting an important and suspended part of my consciousness even though I do not remember ever being in that state, at least in any

systematic, thorough, or direct way. My formal religious training had been minimal, perfunctory, superficial and banal if not counter-productive and misleading and yet it would seem that my work had been significantly influenced by traditions I had largely ignored and misunderstood. I still cannot fully explain why this would be so. Nor do I entirely comprehend why I am still so strongly drawn to examining Jewish sources but I am and I find myself relying increasingly on them for that which animates and informs my work. My reactions to these materials is varied, if not contradictory -I find much that is affirming and energizing; there is a great deal that I do not accept, much I do not even understand; some seems directly relevant to my work and much if seems quite removed from it; some of it troubles me and all of it intrigues me.

All of this is by way of framing what I believe is appropriate to do in a paper on commitment and that is to speak directly to what it is that I am committed and dedicated . I do so not only in the hope that you will resonate with the essence of these commitments but that it will also challenge you to offer your own notions of what might constitute that which is of ultimate concern to you. I have discussed part of my own struggle because I believe that the process of establishing commitments is both individual and cultural, personal and communal, unique and universal. We all ask the same questions, wonder about the same mysteries, anguish over similar fears; however,we respond in a variety of cultural patterns and with individual variations on them.

Will Herberg points out in his book Faith in Biblical Theology, that it is what we *remember* and what we *expect* that shapes our quest for faith. According to Herberg, "...the act of faith is double: the existential affirmation of a history as one's redemptive history and the existential appropriation of this redemptive history as one's personal background history, and therefore in a real sense the foundation of one's existence." (pp.40-41). I seek to ground my work in my hopes as they are informed by what I choose to remember and by what I want to expect.

It seems that one pattern of response to issues of redemption is to dismiss essentialist questions about the meaning of life, human nature, and the course of human destiny as naive, irrelevant, or sentimental if not stupid and dangerous. I will speak from the perspective of traditions that assume quite the opposite, namely that these questions are the *only* ones worth asking and moreover, from the grounding of a tradition that takes commitments very seriously. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel has said, "Socrates taught us that a life without thinking is not worth living. Now, thinking is a noble effort, but the finest thinking may end in futility... The Bible taught us that life without commitment is not worth living; that thinking without roots will bear flowers but no fruit...." (1955, p.216)

I affirm traditions that not only recognize that as humans we are fated to create our world but believes that above all we are called upon to create a world resonant with divine intention- a world of peace, justice, love, community, and joy for all. These

are traditions that accept as givens the potentials of human abilities as well as the limits of human fallibilities; they posit our capacity to be generous as well as to be selfish; to be angelic as well as demonic; compassionate as well as cruel; wise as well as foolish. Such traditions revere knowledge but only as it is tempered with the wisdom that advances justice and mercy; a perspective that acknowledges the enormity of the task but dismisses human despair as sinful; and one that represents a consciousness of unmitigated outrage in the wake of cruelty and injustice but always in the faith that witness, confession, and healing offer the possibilities of transcendence and redemption. What is absolutely crucial to redemption is human responsibility and human agency since these traditions require that we act as God's agents, dedicated and committed to constructing and sustaining intentional communities based on joy, love, peace, and justice.

A corollary of these principles of responsibility and agency is the requirement for the continuous assessment of how well we have done in this stewardship . As Michael Lerner puts it in his book Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation , "If it is possible to remake the world in accord with a notion of the good, then the central story is about how we are doing in relation to what we could and should be doing."(p.66)

I do not want to even try to sum up human achievements across time and space, but I do want to very briefly make a broad assessment of American society and culture in the final years of

this extraordinary and horrendous 20th century. It has been a century of incredible scientific and material achievement and of enormous spiritual devastation- a century when small-pox was eliminated and genocides were perfected, when we have come to believe in the big bang theory for both the beginning and end of life; when God died a most untimely death.

In the U.S. of 1995, we still have far too many poor, far too many rich; we have far more hatred, bigotry, racism, sexism, classism than we say we want; we have a culture that emphasizes achievement, competition, conquest, and domination at the expense of compassion, caring community, and dignity. The abomination of homelessness persists but it has vanished from the media and political platforms except from those who promise to shield us from the unpleasant presence of those who have no shelter. Poverty persists and increases but instead of a discourse of poverty we have a discourse of welfare; instead of a war on poverty we have a campaign for middle-class tax relief. There is a growing gap in incomes, a widening gap of trust among racial and ethnic groups, increasing homophobia, xenophobia, and whatever phobia it is that covers fear and loathing of the other. A dismal record indeed for a talented and enterprising people and a shameful state of affairs for a powerful and wealthy nation that claims sacred status, one explicitly founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The added shame of this situation is that our educational system has contributed to and colluded with much ,if not all, of

this. Our most powerful and influential leaders call upon education to meet the demands of a cruel economy and a meritocratic culture. The great bulk of formal educational policies and practices reflect and facilitate structured inequality, rationed dignity, rationalized privilege, and self-righteous hierarchy. Moreover, much of the rhetoric of justification for this violation of our commitment to a vision of liberty and justice for all comes from the ranks of the school and academy. Perhaps most disturbing of all is the realization that the movers and shakers in government, business, communications, advertising, banking, et.al., that is to say those institutions that shape our lives in critical ways, are people who almost surely have had what we have come to accept as a "good education." It is the very people who have brought us to our present plight who are among the brightest, most articulate, most creative, most imaginative, and most reflective people in the land. It would seem that t the very least, we need to re-consider what we mean by a "good education". In what sense is it good? good in itself? (esthetically) or good because of what it has accomplished? (technological).

As educators we should not be merely committed to education, we should instead be more deeply committed to human dignity; we should not dedicate ourselves to higher learning but to a high standard of living for all; our responsibilities are not to select the best students but to eradicate privilege; our commitment must not be to the market economy but to the Golden Rule. It is idolatrous to commit oneself primarily to the preservation of

History, Biology, or any other discipline or field when there is injustice, inequality, and hatred in the land. We need not be concerned with a decline in test scores; we need to be outraged and obsessed with an increase in unnecessary human suffering. As educators we must not offer justice, joy, and love as rewards or luxuries but affirm them as requirements for a life of meaning. Personal dignity is not something to be rationed and manipulated but cherished as something inherent and inviolable.

Yet in spite of our prior commitments and vows, it is certainly true as well as tragically unnecessary that we have created a world in which justice, love, peace, and joy are unequally distributed and that is why it is truly a blessing when we try to reduce this inequity situation by situation, one person at a time. However, our commitment must extend beyond the enrichment and support of individuals as worthy and commendable as that goal surely is. We must recognize that the sources of the inequality, inequity, and injustice lie not only in within the souls of individuals but also within the structures of our economic, political, and cultural institutions. Our present economy requires poverty, our current culture demands elitism, our existing political system necessitates hierarchy. Our commitments, therefore, extend to the creation of a just world beyond merely making accommodations to an unjust system; we are called upon to both heal the wounded and to create healthy environments, to respond to both the effects and the sources of injustice. As educators we need to be concerned not so much with minimum scores

as with minimum wages, not with classroom deportment as much as with business ethics, less with the distribution of grades than with the distribution of wealth. More accurately, we need to be mindful of the links between classroom pedagogy and social policy as there are, in fact, close relationships between minimum scores, classroom deportment, the distribution of grades and minimum wages, business ethics, and the distribution of wealth.

There is nothing particularly sacred about whole language learning or experiential learning, nothing specially ultimate involved per se in the teaching of poetry or going on field trips or even in journaling. Indeed, it is possible to turn the teaching of imagination and critical thinking into a sacrilegious act when people use their newly augmented imagination and criticality to make a buck at the expense of others, to exploit the environment, to find tax loopholes, or to encourage teen-agers to smoke. The use of portfolios may stimulate imagination, it is surely more sophisticated than conventional, reductionist assessment, and it no doubt will afford more opportunities for advancement to more people. At the same time, portfolios have, can, and will be used to facilitate and enhance elitism, privilege, and hierarchy. On the other hand, however dubious we may be of the value of particular educational technologies, there is something clearly sacred and very special involved in promoting human dignity and social justice and to do so as educators.

Indeed, our deepest commitments should be the same as all other people—they cannot, should not, must not be anything less

than those contained in our culture's highest aspirations and most cherished dreams. Our differences with other groups lie not in the substance and nature of our commitments but only in where and how we act on them. The struggle for creating a community of peace, love, joy, and justice must go on in every sphere, including, of course and perhaps especially in educational institutions. We are not primarily educators, we are first of all God's agents, active partners in the covenant to create a community of peace, justice, love, and joy who, parenthetically, have decided to exercise our responsibilities to this project in places called schools and universities. Educators are called upon to pursue justice, to choose life, to cherish freedom for all, and to love their neighbors as themselves, maybe more but certainly not less than anyone else. Our profession will not be ennobled by feeding the engines of material growth, personal success, intellectual mastery, or national supremacy; it is ennobled by its devotion to spiritual development, individual dignity, moral sensitivity, and universal peace. My view is that if and when teachers commit themselves to the task of participating in the continuing responsibility to create a just and loving world, the nature of their work would change dramatically and profoundly.

Perhaps some will call this a pompous and pretentious platform for something as modest a task as educating the young and indeed that thought often occurs to me. I am prepared to accept that educational institutions have little to do with forming, never mind transforming, a cultural and social vision. If this is true, it

means among other things that the profession will have to be a lot more humble about its role and that I've made a very poor career choice. To avoid that embarrassment and as a way of hedging our bets, I have come to the conclusion that we would all be better off to act *as if* our work as educators is significantly related to the most important issues of human existence, to issues of the meaning of life, and to the course of human destiny. It sure beats the hell out of being, to use Raoul Hilberg's phrase, 'perpetrators, victims, and bystanders' of cruelty, destructiveness, and madness.

Others might properly say that this constitutes a daunting if not overwhelming task for educators, particularly for those in public schools. After all, most educators are under quite strong political, professional, and community controls which work to put enormous pressure certainly not for moral and spiritual transformation but on the intensification of our present consciousness. Most teachers are over-worked and underpaid; and most come out of a tradition that stresses professionalism rather than social reform. Those educators committed to cultural transformation have to struggle valiantly to maintain their faith, hope, and energy in the face of overwhelming resistance. How are we to sustain those who continue in the struggle and how are we to encourage others to act in solidarity with them? How do we explain the miraculous reality that thousands of educators, as well as millions of others in other areas, do in fact engage in this struggle in spite of a future that looks bleak if not calamitous?

These questions take us back to the theme of this conference, for I believe that explanation and hope lie in the realms of the spirit since a rigorous logical analysis of our situation provides us with much that is disheartening and despairing. The teachings of the school of harsh reality would surely indicate that we might best be served by riding out the storm or even more realistically, by learning to adapt to stormy weather perhaps by buying stock in life boat companies.

I take a different view, namely, that we should renew our commitment to creating a world of peace, love, justice, and joy with greater determination, passion, and vigor precisely *because* these are such desperate times. It is surely proper to count our blessings and to affirm our vision at times of genuine cultural and social advancement but we have an even greater responsibility to remind the community of its covenant in times of danger. This is a time when we must vigorously and passionately counteract the cynicism and despair which only deepens and extends the danger. The times call not for capitulation or curtailment of our commitments but in affirming, as Herberg suggests, what we remember and what we expect. We ought to remember the enormous amount of unnecessary human suffering and we ought to remember our vows to redeem that suffering with the creation of a better world. We must expect that this requires a great deal of human agency, determination, and will, and we must have faith that these efforts will ultimately succeed. We must remember the magnificent acts of courage and sacrifice that millions have offered in the struggle

for a just and loving world.

Let me now repeat some of what Paul Tillich says about faith: "Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned;...If [something] claims ultimacy it demands the total surrender of him [her] who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfillment, even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name." Let us as educators, citizens, and human beings have that kind of faith in our ultimate commitment to the creation of a just and loving community.

Easy to say, hard to do. Unless we take into account our amazing human capacities and that mysterious spirit that is the source of that faith that energizes and inspires them. Let me conclude this essay with three quotations that serve to inform and shape my own faith. Writing in 1994, Michael Lerner says, "The ultimate Force governing the world, the Force that has created the entirety of Being, is the energy that presses for transcendence toward a world in which all Being manifests its fullest ethical and spiritual potential, a world in which human beings recognize one another both in our particularity and in our ability to manifest ethical and spiritual possibility. That Force exercises a spiritual pull within all Being to move beyond what is to what it ought to be....[T]he God of Moses is a Force that transcends all limits and makes it possible for us to do the same. This God is the Force that makes for the possibility of possibility."(p.65)

Michael Lerner's teacher, Rabbi Abraham Heschel wrote in 1951 : " Only one question... is worthy of supreme anxiety: How to

live in a world pestered with lies and remain unpolluted, how not to be stricken with despair, not to flee but to fight and succeed in keeping the soul unsoiled and even aid in purifying the world."
(p.179)

And without a doubt , Rabbi Heschel was himself influenced by the Talmudic teaching in the second century that says , "The task is not ours to finish, but neither are we free to take no part in it."

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TO: CIJE staff
FROM: Dan Pekarsky
RE: the National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar
DATE: August 3, 1998

I am sorry not to be able to participate in our Staff Retreat this week. I hope it proves productive and otherwise rewarding. Since we'll be considering the possibility of cutting certain projects from out of the core of our work, and since my impression is that the National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar is one of the programs that could suffer this fate, I want to use this occasion to explain why I think it is a significant and appropriate CIJE initiative.

The nature of the project. As most or all of you know, this project brings together lay and professional leaders from Jewish high schools for periodic conferences designed to encourage serious and content-rich discussions of fundamental questions pertaining to institutional aims and to the relationship between these aims and educational practice. While such questions are especially pressing for emerging community schools, other kinds of institutions also seem to recognize the importance of wrestling with such matters. In any event, a group representing close to ten institutions, including at least three emerging community high schools, participated in a two-day conference at Harvard in March, 1998 that focused on spirituality and Jewish secondary education. Bernie Steinberg of Harvard Hillel and Art Green of Brandeis enriched the group's thinking with, respectively, Maimonidean and Hassidic ideas concerning spirituality, and Joe Reimer offered a developmental perspective on the problem. Based on our own impressions and on formal and informal feedback, our sense is that this conference was extremely successful, and there was a lot of enthusiasm for the idea of meeting at regular intervals. Moreover, representatives of a number of institutions that were unable to participate in the first conference have expressed an interest in being involved with this project. A second conference is scheduled for this coming November, to be preceded by a planning meeting on August 17 in New York. The planning group will include myself, Danny Lehmann, and David Purpel, who have been guiding this project up to the present, as well as representatives of several of the participating institutions.

Pertinent considerations. Several considerations favor CIJE support of this project:

1. The National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar is, in a significant sense, the Goals Project in action. It brings together a cluster of educating institutions that seem hungry for the kind of thinking that the Goals Project has been trying to encourage, i.e., careful thinking about goals and their relationship to practice, informed by Jewish sources and rich conversation among the critical stake holders of participating institutions.
2. A number of participating and potentially participating institutions are at a critical phase of their development. Careful thinking on the part of their lay and professional leadership about their mission and its institutionalization at this stage could be as important as it is rare; for CIJE to contribute to this effort would be a great service. There is reason to think that seminar-related activities may result in a measure of institutional change grounded in serious reflection about vision and its relationship to practice; indeed, some seminar activities are being developed so as to encourage greater thoughtfulness and practical initiatives "in the field". A pertinent by-product is the potential PR value -- in particular, our ability to point to another significant instance of "making a difference" in the field.

3. Some of the leaders associated with these institutions have the power to shape educational practice not only in their own institutions, but also, through their participation on the boards of other institutions and community agencies, in other arenas. One of the expectations animating the National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar is that these individuals will, through the seminar, come to think in new ways about their challenges as Jewish educators and as champions of Jewish education and about how best to approach to these challenges. In this way, the project is designed to build capacity for Jewish education.

4. This project allows us to build fruitful relationships with a number of interesting secondary schools around the country. Since part of the project's conception is that participating institutions will, as part of their participation, launch and document appropriate experimental ventures, this project may give rise to fruitful pilot-projects from which we will learn a lot. Moreover, some of these projects may turn into demonstration-sites that testify to the power of serious thinking about fundamental purposes.

5. There is a lot of enthusiasm concerning this project on the part of critical individuals. Danny Lehmann and myself have found it exciting, and it is proving a fruitful way of engaging David Purpel in CIJE's work. As mentioned above, participant-response (both lay and professional) to the first conference has been very gratifying. And Mike Rosenak, to whom Karen B. and I mentioned the project in Israel recently, seemed very interested in it, and eager to participate in some fashion in the late winter.

Next steps. As I understand it, CIJE is committed to this project at least through the November conference, and our deliberations concern the wisdom of a continuing commitment to the project -- and if so, what kind -- beyond November. As suggested above, I personally think that it would be worthwhile for this project to continue. But I am certainly aware that our resources are scarce, and that it would be best if we could find significant external support for the project in the future. Much of the cost of the upcoming November conference will be covered by an anonymous donor who is interested in the project. Whether this is a one-time gift or a long-term commitment is not yet clear. If it is a long-term commitment on his part to partner with CIJE on the financing of this project, this might make it considerably easier for CIJE to support this effort.

We are also in conversation with the AviChai Foundation about the possibility of their partnering with us on this project. It is not clear yet whether they are interested (KAB and I will be meeting with them on the 18th of August); but even if they are, we would need to make sure that the price of partnership is not a serious distortion of the project's conception.

DP's recommendation. I am personally very interested in this project and think it has rich potential to forward our work as an organization. For me, the best-case-scenario is that the anonymous donor will declare himself ready to undertake a long-term commitment to this project by splitting the cost with CIJE, and I think this matter needs to be explored. In the worst case scenario (i.e., this donor is unwilling to view his commitment as long-term, and the AviChai Foundation proves uninterested in the kind of Leadership Seminar we are interested in encouraging), I would still be hopeful that CIJE would offer significant support for this project; but it may make sense to defer any decision on this matter until we have concluded discussions with potential partners and until we have had a chance to undertake and evaluate the November conference.



THE
SOLOMON
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HIGH SCHOOL
OF NEW YORK

March 30, 1998

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Dear Dan & Dan:

You guys did a fantastic job! The National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar was terrific. It was well planned, exciting, and motivating.

Thanks for giving us all some time out for some serious thinking and discussion. The networking opportunity, though secondary to the workshop, was very beneficial.

I look forward to the second seminar. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. Again, my thanks for a very worthwhile two days.

Sincerely,

Roslyn B. Stein
Principal

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בית ספר תיכון ע"ש ש.ג. שכנר בניו יורק

Devarim* - to discuss continuity, to continue the discussion

Each generation interprets Judaism unto itself, implying, in the words of Gershom Scholem, the great scholar of mysticism, "that there is no way to define what Judaism is once and for all... I don't suppose that everything that's in it has already come out. I assume there are sublime and concealed things to be found in it, and who can foresee them!"

As Jews living at the beginning of the third millenium we find ourselves undergoing processes of re-formulation and re-formation. Ancient Jewish communities such as those in Iraq and Egypt, Syria and Yemen are dying out. Europe's destroyed communities are seeking revival. After many years of oppression, the large Jewish community of Russia is undergoing re-construction. Western communities enjoy remarkable confidence, have achieved considerable prosperity, hold and wield significant political power. Indeed, there is a growing interest in Jewish arts and literature, a significant ammelioration of interfaith relations, an international acknowledgement of the injustices inflicted upon Jews and a decline in established anti-Semitism. However, the future of the Jewish people as an organic human entity is in question. Many Jews can no longer realize a viable connection with each other, unable to marry among themselves or to reach agreement on a common meaning of Jewish peoplehood.

Many Jews find neither rhyme nor reason to afford their children even minimal Jewish education; others find no sense in the existence and maintenance of communal frameworks. The Jewish community in France, one of the largest in the world, has about 15000 members, out of an estimated 700000 Jews. The educational networks in South America are closing and established Jewish periodicals and newspapers have disappeared. Although there is a surge of Internet sites that adress various Jewish issues is growing, there is a marked decline in real-life Jewish involvement. More and more Jews are reducing their Judaism to the memory of the Hollocaust alone; a considerable number of them have lost interest in the "Jewish question" altogether. A turbulent and painful struggle over its Jewish identity agitates the Israeli polity, which recently celebrated its Jubilee year. War-like competition over the "truthful" interpretation of Judaism and Jewish memory and their rightful ownership and appropriation threaten to split asunder the possibility of a shared sense of Jewish destiny. Close to two thirds of Israeli Jews view the religious-secular controversy as the central problem facing Israeli society and as "the most crucial danger facing it today".

Our common cultural continuity can no longer be taken for granted. None the less, there is no general forum which airs paramount issues of Jewish culture and identity, Jewish social and educational challenges, a forum where diverse voices in the Jewish world can speak their minds.

Most forums for Jewish discussion are of a sectarian – local or ideological - nature. They address specific audiences, advance a certain agenda and promote organizational interests. Too often they fail to produce pluralistic and fruitful dialogue between the various Jewish constituencies. So here comes *Devarim*.

Devarim is the initiative of Jewish educators from all over the world grappling with these issues, who meet at the Mandel School in Jerusalem, both at the Jerusalem Fellows program and at the School for Educational Leadership. We vision it as a vital international and interdisciplinary “place of meeting” between people, communities, trends and ideas in Jewish context. Our aim is to create a trans-denominational Jewish periodical loyal to the classical format of Jewish culture--the ever-emerging written text. *Devarim* originates from educational concern and commitment, is grounded in them and guided by them. It is intended as a tool to expose hidden powers, to offer directions and outline possible ways for ideas to illuminate and inspire, to critically review the given and examine the desired.

The first modern textual Jewish deliberation originated with the publication of the first Jewish newspaper, *Gazetta de Amsterdam* some 325 years ago. The issue of the day was “Who is a Jew?” - a question that has remained with us ever since. That discussion continues, tackling new challenges and confronting new crises. At the beginning of the 21st century, some tens of thousands Jewish papers and periodicals, havocs, tragedies, revolutions and hopes away, we would like to continue this grand, creative, intensive and rich tradition, and to add a brick to its spirit.

To reach out to a new creation from the innermost depth of our ancient culture is for us a Jewish obligation, indeed a burden set on the shoulders of all learned Jewish individuals who consider themselves a link in a long and demanding chain. We believe that this shared textual and contextual bond can materialize and embroider great creative vitality, nurtured by deep roots, mighty legacy.

Devarim will elaborate on Jewish challenges as well as Jewish viewpoints on the challenges that plague general society. We would like to voice dissenting opinions in order to enhance the debates. As a cultural-educational project *Devarim* will follow the times, collect data and facilitate debate of the various phenomena and developments. It will raise dilemmas and will analyze answers and solutions on a wide scope and from deep perspectives.

We want to set-off the sides about sensitive and complicated themes, hoping to pierce the depths of issues often difficult to discuss, to circulate new thoughts and revive ancient discussions. Through essays, reports, interviews and columns, knowledgeable and encompassing, we intend to look at the present remembering the past and knowing our obligation towards the future.

Jewish creativity always mix the old with the new, the novel with the common and the revolutionary with the traditional. We want *Devarim* to travel along this well-trodden unpaved ancient road. One eye looking to the spiritual and the abstract, the other to the practical and the concrete. Our mission-impossible is to touch the hearts of youngsters without pushing aside the wisdom of the elders. To enable a real conversation between Haredi, Orthodox, Reform and Conservative, secular and independent; to bring to the conversation feminists and green-peacers, heretics and born-again, fundamentalists and radicals, Zionists, post-Zionists, New-Age folks and others, from all corners and roads. To draw to discussion Old-guards and path-breakers, undefined and veteran ideologists, desperate adventurers and angry youths side by side with optimistic loafers and many other forces at conflict, real or virtual, on the Jewish tension axis.

The term 'Devarim' (Deuteronomy) suggest multifold senses, from talks, words, discourses, speeches, articles, affairs, matters, businesses, issues, statements and claims, interpretations and meanings, visions and messages, through logoi, reasons, senses, thoughts, ideas and opinions, deeds and actions, subjects, objects and things. The term 'Devarim' also means purposes and intents, teachings and directives, directions and followings: a multitude of pluralities and possibilities.

The new quarterly will be published in Jerusalem. It will be sensitive to the vicissitudes of Israeli society yet keenly sensitive to the critical issues facing Jewish communities worldwide. It will be edited in English and in Hebrew and will be distributed world wide, together with a complementary Internet site. As we believe in dialogue, we would invite the best thinkers in the Jewish world and outside it, to a piercing discourse that will focus on a specific subject and will continue in successive issues. After a noted thinker will be asked to write a polemical essay, others will be invited to reflect on it, and the author will be given the opportunity to respond. The attempt at opening straightforward and honest dialogue among all those who cherish Jewish culture oblige us to lend equal stand to the outsider, the different and the distant other. Barring racist incitement, this quarterly will be opened to any opinion whatsoever from the Jewish and general public. We hope that thinkers and researchers will find in *Devarim* a forum for their words, along diverse voices brought from the field. *Devarim* invites anyone who has a stake in Jewish identity and who deems important the existence of Jewish culture to its conversation. It calls upon educators, in order to energize their thinking and inspire them to deal creatively with dilemmas of Jewish life. It calls upon professionals and intellectuals who wish to deepen their study of current issues from Jewish perspectives and to refine their questions. It addresses the enlightened public at large, Jews and non-Jews alike, in the hope of sparking the imagination and diffusing inspiration. We hereby are introducing an instrument that seeks to realize these tasks. We would welcome your contribution in the form of any comments, critiques and feedback you may have to the nature and directions of *Devarim* that we have presented here.

From: Dan Pekarsky
To: Chava, Lehmann, Pekarsky, Purpel
Date: 6/5/98 12:59pm
Subject: High School Leaders Group

TO: Danny Lehmann, David Purpel, Chava Werber
FROM: Dan Pekarsky
RE: My conversations with DL and DP concerning a fall meeting of the High School Leaders Group

So that we're all on the same page, I am sending along a summary of my recent conversations with Danny Lehmann and David Purpel.

1. Conversation with Danny Lehmann

We both felt that it would be important to continue with the theme of "Spirituality and Education" that had been at the heart of the first gathering of the group; and, based on a variety of considerations, thought it made sense to look at Oct. 25-26 and Nov. 1 and 2 as possible dates.

Proceeding informally rather than systematically, we identified a number of elements that might make up the nucleus of a second two-day conference. These included the following:

a. A chance to reflect in a systematic way (possibly with the help of new resources) on some of the issues raised at our last conference -- for example, "Nurturing spirituality in pluralistic settings" or "Ways of restructuring our school-environments so as to more effectively nurture spirituality." Conceivably, participants would self-select into groups interested in one or the other of these topics; and there would be carefully designed tracks for each group.

b. Listen to and enter into conversation with some contemporary voices that speak to questions of spirituality and education. These might come from the Jewish world or from the non-Jewish world (Parker Palmer being an example we considered, in which connection I mentioned a student of mine who had offered an intellectual portrait of a fictional school organized around Palmer's ideas).

c. Identify a powerful example of spirituality, or the cultivation of spirituality, in literature or film, and use that as a text for reflection (e.g. the recent Robert Duvall film, or Potok's THE CHOSEN).

d. Offer participants a chance to share and react to practices or experiments pertaining to the cultivation of spirituality that are going on in their own schools.

e. DL identified a student who wrote a powerful piece on the subject of spirituality and pluralism. The possibility of having participants read this piece and interview this student was entertained.

Since both DPs will be out East mid-June, we thought we'd aim for a planning-meeting at this time; unfortunately, it looks like this won't work; but Dan Pekarsky and DL will manage to meet for a couple of hours in Boston on June 21.

2. My Conversation with David Purpel

After trying, unsuccessfully, to find a good time to meet with DL, we agreed to spend some time at CIJE's upcoming Professors Seminar thinking about the High School Group; and as a basis for that conversation, I said I would write up my conversations with DL [This document]. David mentioned that he wasn't as enthused as some people are about Parker Palmer's work; but he added that a number of interesting pieces have been written recently about the subject of spirituality and education, and he said that he would bring them to our attention -- this could be invaluable!

3. So:

a. I'll meet with David Purpel during the Professors Group and with Danny Lehmann immediately thereafter in Boston. We should probably be thinking of some time when we



15 East 96th Street, New York, NY 10010-1579

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| TO: | Dr. Daniel Rokonsky | FROM: | Chava Werben | | | |
| COMPANY: | University of Wisconsin-Madison | DATE: | 5/15/98 | | | |
| FAX NUMBER: | (608) 262-9074 | FAX NUMBER: | 212-532-2646 | | | |
| PHONE NUMBER: | (608) 262-1718 | PHONE NUMBER: | 212-532-2360 | | | |
| RE: | | TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: | 3 | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | URGENT | <input type="checkbox"/> | FOR REVIEW | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | PLEASE REPLY | <input type="checkbox"/> |

NOTES/COMMENTS:



May 15, 1998

Professor Ruth Wisse
Harvard University
Address to be added

Dear Professor Wisse:

In early March you honored me and my colleagues with a visit to our conference for Jewish secondary school leaders organized around the theme of spirituality in Jewish high school settings. We didn't have a chance to talk at the time—something which I regret because I would have been grateful for your feedback. As we begin to think about the future development of this group, I am all the more eager to get your thoughts—both about what we did do and about what we might profitably do, or do better, in the future.

With this in mind, I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to spend a few minutes, over the phone if not in person, responding to our conception of this project and to the kinds of things we have been, and are thinking about, doing. I am confident that we would profit from your thoughts. Thanks for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Daniel Pekarsky
Consultant, CIJE

P.S. In case you are interested, I am enclosing a copy of the conference proceedings and some related materials.



May 15, 1998

Yossi Prager
Executive Director
Avi Chai Foundation
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, NY 10017-3808

Dear Yossi,

Karen Barth mentioned to me that you might have some interest in partnering with CIJE (or being otherwise involved) in our effort to build a group of Jewish high school leaders dedicated to serious study and discussion focusing on questions of mission. As I think you know, this group called the National Jewish High School Leadership Seminar has already gathered for a two-day conference organized around the theme of spirituality in Jewish secondary education. Overall the conference seemed to us quite successful, and the participants expressed both enthusiasm and a desire to continue meeting.

Karen's comment concerning your possible interest in this project greatly excited me, and, if you are still interested, I'd enjoy meeting with you about this project when I am next in New York City. Please let me know (either by mail or by leaving a message with CIJE) if such a meeting would interest you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Pekarsky

P.S. Enclosed is a summary of the conference proceedings and some related materials.

*Since we
already receive
the invitation
materials, how
about smeth
like?*

*As you may
recall from
the materials
we sent to
you in
February...*

February 20, 1998

Dear Conference Participants:

We are looking forward to your participation in our upcoming conference dealing with the nature of Jewish spirituality and its place in Jewish secondary education. Enclosed is a tentative conference schedule and some articles to be read in advance of the seminar. In addition, we ask that in advance of the seminar, you do the assignment described on the next page, which will be the basis for some of our discussions.

We are excited about the conference and are looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

DL

DP

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

PRE-CONFERENCE ASSIGNMENT

In addition to reading the enclosed articles, please complete the following assignment in advance of the seminar. It will be used as a basis for some of our discussions.

In the enclosed article entitled "Spirituality", Art Green says the following:

"Spirituality as an essential value of the Jewish tradition is a striving for the presence of God and the fashioning of a life of holiness appropriate to such striving. As such, the spiritual life that stands at the center of Judaism is the shared goal of biblical priest and prophet, of Pharisee and Essene sectarian, of Hellenistic contemplative and law-centered rabbi, of philosopher, kabbalist, and *hasid*. Among them there are vast differences of opinion as to precisely how life in the presence of God is to be defined and achieved, but all would assent to the importance of this value."

Using this general definition of spirituality as a guide:

A. Write up an explanation of how your school understands spirituality, and of how, if at all, spirituality fits into the school's mission. Go on to describe the most significant contexts and ways in which the spiritual dimension of your mission is expressed in the life of your school. **One representative of the school should be prepared to discuss these matters during our opening session on March 8.**

B. Articulate the issues and questions relating to spirituality that are on your mind or on the minds of other segments of your school-community.

C. In preparation for the seminar, please be sure to read the enclosed essays.

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

CAMBRIDGE, MA, MARCH 8 -9, 1998

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

9 - 9:30 **Registration and Coffee**

9:30 - 11:15 **Introductory Session: Concepts, Issues, Questions**

Led by: Rabbi Daniel Lehmann, Director, New Jewish
High School of Boston [Is this title right?]

11:15 - 11:30 BREAK

11:30 - 1 **Encountering a Powerful Conception of Spirituality**

Led by: Bernard Steinberg, Director of Harvard
Hillel Ph.D. 7

1:00 - 1:45 LUNCH

1:45 - 2:45 **Further Developing and Reacting to Conception #1**

2:45 - 3 BREAK

3 - 5 **Spirituality and Adolescence**

Led by: Professor Joseph Reimer, Brandeis
University

5 - 6:30 BREAK

6:30 - 7:30 **Listening to the Voices of Recent Graduates**
(with Hors d'oeuvres)

7:30 - 8:30 DINNER

8:30 - 9:45 **Informal Small Group Activity**

MONDAY, MARCH 9

8:30 - 9 **Review Proceedings of Day 1**

9 - 11:30 **Encountering a Second Conception of Spirituality**

Led by: Professor Arthur Green, Brandeis
University

11:30 - 12:30 **On Taking an Aim Seriously**

Led by: Professor Daniel Pekarsky of the
University of Wisconsin and CIJE.

12:30 - 1:15 **LUNCH**

1:15 - 3:15 **Translating a conception of spirituality into
educational practice (in sub-groups)**

3:15 - 3:30 **BREAK**

3:30 - 4:15 **The Personal and the Professional: Reflecting on
the encountered conceptions of spirituality.**

4:15 - 5 **CONCLUDING SESSION**