THE ALEPH BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION®

2ND EDITION



























THE ALEPH BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION®

A set of core principles, approaches to content, and essential pedagogies that together constitute the building blocks for the field.





עברית מודרנית:

החוויה הישראלית

תרבות וזהות













המחנך: כוח ההוראה וכוח הלימוד





מערך של עקרונות ליבה, גישות לתכנים ובסיסי פדגוגיה המתווים יחדיו את אבני היסוד של התחום.



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The iCenter for Israel Education www.theicenter.org

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PRELUDE

by Parker J. Palmer

I am a Christian of the Quaker variety whose life work has focused on education in secular settings. But the root system of my approach to teaching and learning—which I've been writing and speaking about for the past forty years—reaches deep into the Jewish tradition. That's one reason, among many, that I was grateful for the invitation to write a foreword to this superb collection of chapters on Israel education.

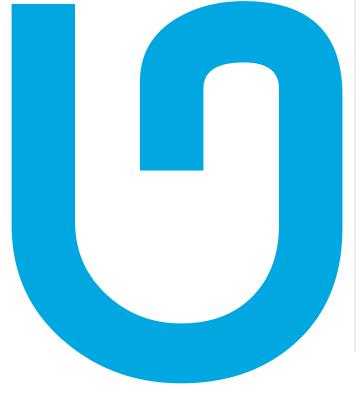
At first glance, Israel education would seem to have little, if any, relevance to the broad sweep of educational issues under debate these days; e.g., the rise of the common core in our public schools or the decline of the liberal arts in higher education. But because the chapters in this anthology are largely concerned with foundational questions of pedagogy—questions about how we teach as well as what we teach—they have an important contribution to make to the larger, long-term conversation about education reform.

What Anne Lanski, Executive Director of The iCenter, says about Israel education in "Welcome to Israel Education: A New Century," I believe, is true of all education rightly understood:

Israel education is as much about shaping character, personality, mind, and social connectedness as it is about 'furnishing an empty room with information.' It's actually a part of what our tradition, thousands of years ago, asked us to love 'with all your heart, soul, and might!'

An I-Thou Education

In 1983, I published *To Know As We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education.*That book—part of my long-time effort to challenge the dominant objectivist model of contemporary education, an effort shaped in part by the early influence of Martin Buber in my life—included these words:



In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel... 'It is impossible to find Truth without being in love.' ... This intimate link between loving and knowing is implicit throughout the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The Hebrew Bible uses the word 'know' to indicate the conjugal relation of husband and wife (as in 'Abraham knew Sarah'), the same word it uses for our knowledge of G-d and of the created world... The images that inform the biblical understanding of what it means to know—images of personal involvement and mutuality—are neither accidental nor antiquated. They reflect the quality of knowing at its deepest reaches, the quality of a truth that draws us into community.2

By objectivism I mean an approach to education that:

- 1 Holds teachers, students and subjects at arm's length from each other for the sake of pure knowledge, uncontaminated by human hands:
- 2 Focuses on downloading objective facts into the learner's mind;
- 3 Treats subjectivity as if it were a disease to be cured rather than an essential component of being human and of knowing;
- 4 Ultimately leads us to respond to each other and the world as a set of I-It rather than I-Thou relationships, destroying community in the process.

I do not need to remind readers of an anthology on Israel education about the immense evil that can result when people objectify each other or, worse still, the other. Objectivism is a deadly toxin for which love, rightly understood, is the only antidote. Any education that hopes to contribute to the healing of our wounded world must have love at its core.

Of course, love is a word that needs to be used with care when it comes to teaching and learning. In popular parlance, the word suggests a kind of attachment, even enchantment, that undermines the capacity for critical thinking that is the fruit of authentic education. The romantic love that gives rise to the old saw, "Love is blind"— and to the conviction that the beloved can do no wrong—has no place in an education that aims at helping us see ourselves and our world more clearly.

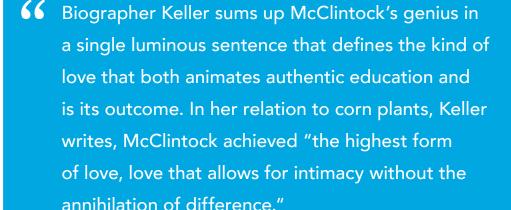
Love Rightly Understood

But there is another kind of love without which there can be no education worthy of the name, a love that is both the origin and the outcome of authentic education. It is best illustrated by a story from the heart of science about the Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Barbara McClintock.

Obviously, McClintock's scientific work met the rigorous standards of logic and empiricism, without which one does not win a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. She was no slouch when it came to objective facts! But her work was also animated by a way of knowing that can only be called intuitive, relational, even mystical, one that is foundational to all great science. When McClintock died at age ninety, she was eulogized by a colleague as "someone who understands where the mysteries lie" rather than "someone who mystifies."

McClintock's work was chronicled in a book by Evelyn Fox Keller, professor of history and philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Keller asked McClintock, in effect, "What's the key to doing great science?", then summarized her answer in these words:

Over and over again [McClintock] tells us one must have the time to look, the patience to 'hear what the material has to say to you,' the openness to 'let it come to you.' Above all, one must have 'a feeling for the organism.'4



When pressed for her scientific secret, this Nobel Prize-winner speaks not of data and logic, though she was a master of both. Instead, she speaks of embodied relationships and feelings. As one writer says, McClintock "gained valuable knowledge by empathizing with [the] corn plants [she studied], submerging herself in their world and dissolving the boundary between object and observer." 5 She regarded these plants not as objects to be held at arm's length but as subjects, as beings. Violating the "arm's length" approach of the objectivist quest for purity, she entered into a live encounter with her subject, brought her own subjectivity or selfhood into the equation, and emerged with knowledge of how genes do their work that broke new ground on which geneticists still stand.

Biographer Keller sums up McClintock's genius in a single luminous sentence that defines the kind of love that both animates authentic education and is its outcome. In her relation to corn plants, Keller writes, McClintock achieved "the highest form of love, love that allows for intimacy without the annihilation of difference."

Love and Critical Distance

This, it seems to me, is what we want for every learner in every field of study: a capacity to draw close to the subject at hand, to feel one's self personally related to it, all the while allowing that subject to be what it is, to speak its own voice on its own terms, never projecting one's preferences, prejudices, or personal needs upon it. Knowing animated by this kind of love forges an I-Thou relationship in which we never blur the boundaries

between each other—or, worse yet, try to remake each other—the way we often do in romantic love.

I-Thou knowing not only allows us to know a subject intimately and well; it also helps us maintain critical distance, which is the essential difference between education and indoctrination. Because it is rooted in respect for the integrity of both the knower and the known, I-Thou knowing allows us to have what theologian William Sloane Coffin called a "lover's quarrel" with the subjects we study. Writing about American notions of patriotism, Coffin made some distinctions that have relevance for an Israel education: "There are three kinds of patriots, two bad, one good. The bad are the uncritical lovers and the loveless critics. Good patriots carry on a lover's quarrel with their country."7

Love, rightly understood, forges the kind of communal relationships in which we can have creative conflicts with one another—conflicts over the nature and meaning of things we care about too much to allow them to suffer from faulty observation or flawed interpretation. Of course, every observation and every interpretation is likely to be partial or penultimate and needs to be checked and corrected. Conflict over what we are seeing and what it means is the engine that advances our knowledge, if we hold conflict creatively in a community of inquiry bound together by love of the subject and of each other.

"Truth," as I have written elsewhere, "is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline." Truth is often thought to reside in the conclusions we reach in conversations. But surely that cannot be right: in every field I know anything

about, from theology to astrophysics, the conclusions keep changing as new observations, new interpretations, and new conflicts arise among us. If we want to live in the truth, we must have the habits of heart and mind to live in the great conversation.

So, to quote Anne Lanski again, the goal of education is not to furnish "an empty room with facts"—though learning the relevant facts as they are currently understood is clearly an important step along the way. The ultimate goal of all education, from pre-school through higher and adult education, is to equip students to participate in an unending process of agreeing and disagreeing, then doing it all over again, hanging in with each other for the long haul. This is not only the process that advances our knowledge—it is the process by which we keep weaving and reweaving the tattered fabric of the human community.

Teaching is Risky Business

This anthology offers a set of deeply insightful explorations into a pedagogy that creates live encounters with a subject—encounters conducted in and for community, animated by conflict, bounded by discipline, and grounded in love. Those are the marks of an authentic education. But none of them will show up in the classroom, or any other educational setting, until a real teacher shows up—a teacher who can hold the uncertainty and complexity of the ever-changing force-field that genuine learning requires.

Despite a century of reasoned, research-based pleading for a



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pedagogy that prepares students for real-life engagement—with themselves, other people, and the needs of the larger world—filling people's heads with facts remains the dominant mode of teaching. There's a simple reason for that sad fact: lecturing at people while protected by a podium and expertise leaves teachers invulnerable by giving them total control over the process.

But creating space for a live encounter between teacher, learner, and subject is risky business. It can take us in unexpected directions, leaving teachers vulnerable when they don't know the answer to a question, or when it becomes clear that they must abandon their agenda and improvise, or when conflicts arise that are difficult to negotiate.

In I-Thou teaching and learning, much depends on what goes on inside teachers at moments of this sort. Are they filled with the ego-driven fear that comes from not wanting to look bad in front of students? Or are they filled with the kind of soulful love of learning and of learners that can normalize such moments as part of the educational adventure, making them easier to handle?

A fearful teacher will fake it or get flustered, defensive, or even angry when confronted with a question he or she cannot answer. But a teacher who works from a more grounded, soulful place who understands that teaching and learning are communal activities—can more easily say, "Great question! I have no idea what the answer is. Let's find out together." Such a teacher models what it means to be a life-long learner, freeing students from the tyranny of having to get it right every time and sending them into the world as people who know how little they know and aren't afraid to learn.

When we take risks, we will fail from time to time, and the very prospect of failure pushes many of us out of our comfort zones. But once again, love rightly understood can take us where the ego fears to go. The kind of love I have in

mind is one I have heard defined as "the willingness to extend yourself for the sake of another person's growth," which is exactly what good teachers do for their students.

This anthology is filled with wise and useful chapters on pedagogical techniques that will make Israel education a live encounter between teachers, learners, and subjects. But, as all these writers know, good teaching can never be reduced to technique. Ultimately, good teaching comes from the selfhood of a teacher who can skillfully navigate the twists and turns of the inner landscape of his or her life.

So as you read these chapters, reflect not only on what and how you teach. Reflect also on who it is that teaches—which is to say, yourself—and the religious tradition in which you stand. That tradition offers all you need to know about the kind of love—love of G-d, world, others, and self in all their confounding complexity and unsurpassed glory—that underlies authentic teaching and learning.

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Parker J. Palmer, Founder and Senior Partner of the Center for Courage & Renewal, is a well-known writer, speaker and activist. He has reached millions worldwide through his nine

books—which have been translated into ten languages—including the bestselling To Know As We Are Known, Let Your Life Speak, The Courage to Teach, A Hidden Wholeness, and Healing the Heart of Democracy. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley, along with ten honorary doctorates, two Distinguished Achievement Awards from the National Educational Press Association, and an Award of Excellence from the Associated Church Press. In 2010, Palmer was given the William Rainey Harper Award whose previous recipients include Margaret Mead, Elie Wiesel, and Paolo Freire. In 2011, he was named an Utne Reader Visionary, one of "25 people who are changing your world."



WELCOME TO ISRAEL EDUCATION: A NEW CENTURY

by Anne Lanski

The early decades of the twenty-first century are an era of renaissance in the field of Israel education. A group of new and experienced Jewish educators in North America, Israel and worldwide, ignited by a love of Israel and education, have come together to carve out a twenty-first century approach to this new field. This vision encompasses a belief in the vitality of contemporary Israel and its significance in the lives of young Jews. It is committed to the notion that excellent Israel education is both excellent education and meaningful Jewish education. Finally, it has been nourished by the thinking of creative general and Jewish educational thinkers and practitioners.

It has been the good fortune of The iCenter to join North American and Israeli colleagues to assume responsibility for this dearest of causes. In a short period of time, The iCenter has assembled a remarkable team of thinkers, practitioners, academics,

curriculum experts, and educational techies to coalesce as a community of thinkers and doers committed to the best Israel education.

The iCenter credo has been rooted in the beliefs of the centrality of the learner, trusting the educational process, and a commitment to both a loving and transparent Israel education. We believe that the subject of Israel is an important priority of American Jewish life and shouldn't be left to social media. Moreover, we shouldn't wait until the young adult years to engage with this subject.

Educating the heart and mind about Israel begins the day a child is born, and must be part of lifelong learning and experience. Israel education is as much about shaping character, personality, mind, and social

connectedness as it is about "furnishing an empty room with facts." It's actually a part of what our tradition, thousands of years ago, asked us to love 'with all your heart, soul, and might!'

Ours is an expansive vision of education as all encompassing: home, preschool, synagogue, day school, youth group, summer camp, retreats, Israel travel, and more. Wherever there are young Jews who can be linked with Israel is where The iCenter wants to be!

The first edition of *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education* was published in 2011. Educators, thinkers, and practitioners associated with The iCenter understood that the creation and advancement of the field required an articulation of core ideas, values, and beliefs. Much thought, discussion, and writing were dedicated to establishing a language and core principles of a twenty-first century approach to Israel education.

Five years later, we have revised the original document and we are thrilled to present this enriched version of our original credo. In addition to a new chapter titled "The Place of Israel in Jewish Tradition" by Rabbi Asher Lopatin, each chapter has been updated by the authors, based on input from thousands of students and teachers who studied and learned with The iCenter over the past years.

The caliber and importance of the key learnings within *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education* have become recognized beyond the fields of Israel and Jewish education. We are privileged to include "Prelude" and "Postlude" chapters written by two distinguished American educationists, Parker Palmer and Lee Shulman.

Our work in Israel education is motivated by dreams, but dreams also imply great responsibilities. The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition is an updated version of our core principles. We encourage you to embrace these pages, to read them with your staff, board, congregants, and colleagues and dream about what they will mean when implemented.



Anne Lanski currently serves as the Executive Director of The iCenter. Israel education has been her personal and professional passion for three decades. As a pioneer in cross-

cultural education and teen travel to Eastern Europe and Israel, Anne is the Founder and former Executive Director of Shorashim, a nationally-recognized Israel education organization. She is regarded as the seminal figure in making the mifgash a central component of Israel educational programs, and is the recipient of numerous grants and awards for her pioneering work in this field. Anne received her M.A. from the Steinhardt School of Education at NYU, and is a graduate of the Senior Educator Program at the Melton Centre of Hebrew University. She served as Director of Education at Congregation Hakafa in Glencoe, Illinois and taught Hebrew at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, where she developed new methodologies of Hebrew language and culture instruction. Anne also has experience in the world of Jewish youth group and camp settings.

THE ALEPH BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION

The foundation of our work is a set of core principles, approaches to content, and essential pedagogies that together constitute the building blocks for the field.

- ISRAEL AS A CORNERSTONE
 OF JEWISH IDENTITIES
- THE PLACE OF ISRAEL IN JEWISH TRADITION
- CURRICULARIZING ISRAEL: PRINCIPLES AND THEMES
- ISRAELI ARTS AND CULTURE: THE ABILITY TO ENGAGE
- DIVERSE NARRATIVES
- RELATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

A LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH

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- ERETZ, MEDINA, AM YISRAEL:
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- THE EDUCATOR: THE POWER OF TEACHING, THE POWER OF LEARNING



ISRAEL AS A CORNERSTONE OF JEWISH IDENTITIES

by David Bryfman and Barry Chazan

"Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You." —Dr. Seuss

It is difficult to imagine something so integral to human existence that has less clarity than the concept of identity. And while there are many theories that inform our understanding of identity, there is also something intensely personal that helps us to better grasp this phenomenon.

Answering questions to help us better understand ourselves (such as what can I know?; what should I do?; and for what can I hope?) provides some of life's more challenging moments.¹ Struggling with these questions, although seldom done publicly, occurs throughout people's lives as they consider their place in the world. These questions are

a variation on questions that many ask of themselves at various stages of their life—who am I? and where do I fit into this world? Dr. Seuss clearly understands the quest to find the true You as one of life's more enduring challenges.

This chapter articulates some of the theoretical underpinnings of identity development, in particular as they relate to contemporary Jews. In the context of The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition, this chapter situates these theories within the broader understanding of the role that Israel plays in the identity of many Jews. What we frame in the next few pages, often as a theoretical journey, is also an intensely personal one. In doing so, we hope to offer educators a framework for understanding their roles in the facilitation of the journeys in which their learners are continuously engaged.

What is Identity?

Identity emerged in the twentieth century as a seminal philosophical, cultural, and psychological concept. Stage theorists constructed rational articulations of the identity development process positing that human beings traveled through life stages as they matured into adulthood. Erik Erikson, the father of modern identity theory, described a series of psychosocial crises that people struggle through, allowing them to progress along a normal trajectory of identity development.² That individuals would progress through sequential stages of development was a commonplace theory in this time period, including Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development,3 and Kohlberg's depiction of moral and ethical development.4

Has anyone ever asked you about your identity? It isn't a particularly easy prompt to respond to. Instead, perhaps, consider: what are some of the core identifiers which describe who you are?

In no particular order—I am David, I am Jewish, I am Australian, I am male, I am the grandson of a Holocaust survivor, I am a family man (a husband, a father, a son, and a brother), I am a Jewish educator, I am a Zionist, and I am a global citizen. These are some of the core aspects of my self that constitute my identity. At various moments in my life, and even in a given day, I elevate different parts of my self to the fore. My personality is rather constant, but even that might fluctuate depending on specific circumstances that I find myself in. These are the labels by which I consider myself, and I believe others may see me. These might be just labels and yet as a whole they constitute who I am in this world. Collectively these labels form my identity.

- >>> Before reading any further, write down your answer to the following: What are ten identifiers that you feel best describe your self?
- >> Then consider for yourself: What are the ten words which other people might use to describe you?

JEWISH IDENTITIES

Other theorists favor a more individual approach towards identity development. They describe identity as being more personal, situational, and ascribing people with more agency and freedom than the more rigid construct of stage theory. As Carl Rogers wrote:

People are just as wonderful as sunsets if I can let them be... When I look at a sunset, I don't find myself saying, 'Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner'... I don't try to control a sunset. I watch with awe as it unfolds.⁵

Contemporary discourse favors an understanding that individuals actually have multiple versions of themselves—namely multiple identities. As Turner and Tajfel (1987) described in their articulation of social identity theory:

A person has not one, 'personal self', but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership. Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel, and act on the basis of his personal, family, or national level of self.⁶

Although the core character of individuals is constant, the self brought to various tables might vary greatly. Leon Wieseltier describes identity this way:

Not my identity but my identities. There is a greater truth in the plural.

I feel like jumping out of my skin—and so you should.

I hear it said of somebody that he is living a double-life.

I think to myself: just two?

The absence of coherence is not yet incoherence.⁷

Accepting that human beings have multiple versions of themselves leads us to understand that identities can also be hybrids. For some people the hyphen may be useful in signaling a combination of two identities (e.g. American-Jew or Jewish-American),8 but even that is insufficient for many people because of the multiplicity of ways in which people increasingly define themselves. In what has been referred to as the saturated self, some have suggested that in the twenty-first century, largely but not only due to technology, there has been even further expansion in the range of selves that people present because of the many new relations that people are engaged in (including those real, virtual, and imagined).9 In this framing, people's identities can best be described as multiphrenic, pieced together from the multiplicity of worlds that they find themselves in.

The multiple versions of individual selves, the hybridization of these various selves, and the fluidity at which people can transition between these various versions all contribute to the complexity of articulating identity today.

That Problematic Thing Called Jewish Identity

The term Jewish identity has proven to be an important, albeit complicating, concept of contemporary American Jewish life. It entered the lexicon of American Jewry in the mid-twentieth century, probably influenced by Erikson's work. It has proven to be a term of great popularity, and at the same time of great ambiguity, used to describe something Jewishly desirable, but with no clear defining characteristics and no

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As Harvard academic Herbert Kelman suggests, social influences can effect identity by three processes:

- » compliance—accepting others' influences in order to elicit favorable reactions from them;
- » identification—accepting others' influences in order to try to emulate them; and
- » internalization—accepting influence because it fits one's own value system and therefore is rewarding.

compelling contents. It became the go-to word to describe the goal of Jewish education—possibly because of its lack of definition and demands. Today there is an increasing distancing from the term with contemporary Jewish educators going as far as to suggest that, "When we talk about Jewish identity, we literally do not know what we are talking about."¹⁰

Critical to understanding this current dissent over the concept of Jewish identity is the important distinction between *identity* and *identification*, as described by social scientist Harold Himmelfarb:

Jewish identification is the process of thinking and acting in a manner that indicates involvement with and attachment to Jewish life. Jewish identity is one's sense of self with regard to being Jewish.¹¹

Identifications are often easier to observe and measure, as they are often the things that people do. They belong to organizations, they perform rituals, and they say specific things. However, to understand identity is to delve beneath these actions to understand what is happening within someone's internal self. Identity is more difficult to observe, more complex to conceptualize, and still far more critical for us to understand if we are to better know about people's lives and how their Jewish selves present in the world today.

Consistent with contemporary notions of identity, we understand Jewish identity as being intensely personal, multifaceted, and highly fluid. It is personal in its understanding that Jews today are choosing how to express themselves from within rather than being dictated to by any external forces.¹² It is multifaceted because Jews, like other people, have multiple identities that connect and repel like molecules to present complex interactions that are highly situational.¹³ It is fluid because Jews, like all other people, experience diverse life journeys and multiple variables over a lifetime.¹⁴

This approach certainly favors the line of thought that sees identity as the way in which people present themselves in relation to the social contexts in which they find themselves. In this framing, identity is seen as the way in which

JEWISH IDENTITIE:

one's personal identity, the enduring aspects of a person's self-definitions, interact with their social influences. As Harvard academic Herbert Kelman suggests, social influences can effect identity by three processes: compliance-accepting others' influences in order to elicit favorable reactions from them; identification—accepting others' influences in order to try to emulate them; and internalization—accepting influence because it fits one's own value system and therefore is rewarding.¹⁵

The multi-faceted nature of Jewish identity has led some to believe that Jewish identity should be defined solely as "whatever makes a person feel Jewish." In a postmodern world this formulation might seem appealing, but it is misleading. Without some criteria of what it means to be Jewish, the phrase Jewish identity essentially loses any coherence. This does not mean that in our day and age we can, or should, predetermine who is the ideal Jew. Indeed, rather than attempting to define the ideally identified Jew, we might better look for traits or dynamics which seem to characterize Jews who are regarded as strongly identified. This model suggests we may not be able to agree on the ideal educated Jew, but we could point to traits of diverse Jews who seem to be highly identified and then develop appropriate educational strategies for developing such traits.

While these advancements in conceptualizing Jewish identity are important and encouraging, Jewish life as a whole has failed to keep up to speed with contemporary developments in the study of identity and the sociology of millennial culture. In many instances when the Jewish community speaks and acts on this topic, it still relates to Jewish identity as the aggregation of

doing certain Jewish things (going to synagogue, lighting Shabbat candles, traveling to Israel), participating in Jewish activities (attending a Jewish film festival, participating in a Jewish book club, or going to Jewish summer camp), or belonging to certain Jewish organizations (synagogue, JCC, or youth group). The well-intended world of Jewish social science research and its funders exacerbate this quantitative notion of identity probably because it is easier to measure the Jew without than the Jew within. While understanding people's identities by looking at their identifications and associations may have served a twentieth century Jewish community focused on survival, advocacy, and communalism, it is less compelling for the twenty-first century post-modern world of Jewish millennials.

Jewish Identity and Twenty-First Century Jewish Education

If we understand Jewish identity to be personal, multi-faceted, and highly fluid, then the discussion around the role and purpose of Jewish education and engagement must adjust accordingly. These are some of the principles that Jewish education needs to adopt if it is to remain relevant to what we understand about Jewish identity in the twenty-first century.

- Jewish identity must be understood within the realm of one's human identity because it is invariably only one part of any individual's existence.
- » Jewish identity should be understood as an ongoing, lifelong, developmental process because we understand it as

dynamic, fluid, and highly influenced by the social contexts that people find themselves in.

- Jewish identity encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions because we are dealing with whole people and not compartments of themselves.
- Jewish identity is not the domain of any one institution because people do not exist within institutions but within a multi-faceted ecosystem that is the world in which we live.
- Dewish identity is not a subject or even a goal of Jewish education, but rather it is an outcome of good Jewish education(s).

These principles along with the next chapter on learner-centered education may be regarded as conceptual educational underpinnings of this rich anthology devoted to Israel education.

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Putting these two chapters together, do not be surprised if one concludes that not only is Jewish identity part of human identity but that good Jewish education is in fact good education.

Identity and Israel

Up until now the focus of this chapter has been on the conceptualization of identity that has influenced our understanding of Jewish identity. Over the last few decades when discussing Jewish identity, and by extension Jewish education, the interventions commonly discussed as influencing these constructs include Torah, Jewish history, Jewish holidays, and Jewish values. But perhaps no other feature of Jewish life has been more dramatic in recent times than the establishment and evolution of the Jewish state. The social influence of Israel on the way that people see themselves as Jews cannot be underestimated. Today the issues of identity and Jewish identity not only have lots to do with Israel, but also the connection between Israel and Jewish identity may be one of the most significant developments for Jewish identity, life, and education that we have known.

While the study of Israel has often been seen through such lenses as a biblical homeland, the realization of the historical Zionist dream, or contemporary Hebrew language, Israel may also be a vivid and accessible kaleidoscope, a panorama, and a supermarket of possible Jewish identities. Contemporary Israel is the story of multiple identities. It is the story of Jewish and general history. It is a saga of the role of kinship, memories,

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peer groups, and diverse value systems in modern Jewish life. It is the ultimate classroom and multiplex of actual Jewish identities and that is why it is an important identity teacher. Introducing our students to the multiplicity that is Israel might provide educators with tremendous challenge, but it also offers limitless opportunities.

We do not speak of the cogency of Israel in Jewish identities with such conviction because of zealous ideological convictions. We do so because we believe that for many Jews today Israel can be a portal into Jewish life that is meaningful and relevant. Indeed, it is an exciting and engaging Jewish portal.

To deprive our learners of this input is to deprive them of one of the entry points that can stimulate them on their life journeys, including the Jewish paths in these journeys. And just as we believe that studying Torah can be a multi-portaled access point to feel more Jewish, we believe that Israel offers a similar and powerful opportunity. And just as we don't expect every student to know every verse of Torah or every important date in Jewish history, we do want them to know, value, and feel how these can be important in their lives. And so too, it is true for the study of Israel—they don't need to know everything there is to know about this little country in the Middle East, but they ought to understand the ways in which Israel has influenced and continues to influence Jewish existence.

For many Jewish educators, the very topic of Israel is either avoided completely or dealt with in the symbolic or historic realm. For them, and perhaps understandably, the conflicts

that are well known to Israel are too troubling or problematic (personally, institutionally, or communally) to deal with. But it is precisely because of these murky modern complexities that constitute Israel that this country might be central to the identity development of twenty-first century millennial Jews. Israel speaks their language of diversity, secularity, spirituality, ecology, ambiguity, lack of coherence, independence, and yes, conflict.

The centrality of Israel to identity development becomes overtly apparent when people experience Israel first-hand for themselves. In a well-orchestrated Israel experience people are able to see the diversities of Jewish life playing themselves out while sitting in homes, while traversing the streets daily, when waking up to a Yom Shlishi and not a Tuesday, and spending their evenings with Jewish peers from around the world. For some it is seeing street signs in Hebrew, living a calendar based on Jewish time, knowing that you are living in a country founded by Jews, or being in a country charged with the promise and pathos of Jewish power for the first time in 2000 years. The impact of the Israel Experience on people's Jewish and overall identities has been well explored and documented. It is profound and enduring.

Israel education outside of Israel offers equally exciting opportunities when looked at through the frame of helping to contribute to one's Jewish and overall identity. In this context Israel education rises above only teaching about maps and dates, food and music, war and peace. Instead its focus is on the people who are learning and how learning about Israel can indeed influence and impact their lives.

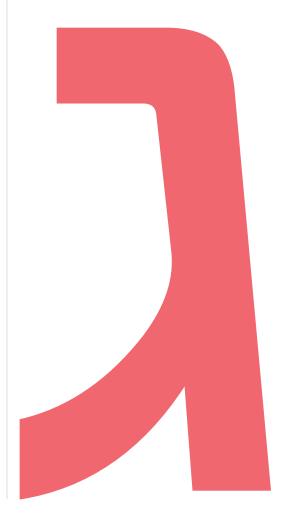
In this framing, learning about Israel's past is a way of connecting Jewish children with the history of their people. Learning contemporary Hebrew language and culture is a way of connecting with millions of people who have the same lineage. Observing Israel's Memorial Day or celebrating Israel's Independence Day are ways to deeply identify with issues of power and struggle, conflict and survival, and the sadness and joy that are a part of one's collective journey. Encountering an Israeli is seen not as a meeting of the other but a meeting of another side of the same coin. These are all examples that help Jews to better understand who they are and where they fit into this world. These are all examples of education that can leave an imprint on one's very being. Israel education is not separate to Jewish education, nor is it separate to the overall development of the human being.

Coda

To learn about Israel, to really learn about all of these things, is not an abstract study of another. To study Israel is to experience one's history, one's people, one's culture, one's language, and one's religion. It is difficult to learn about these without referencing Israel. What else are these elements if they are not some of the fundamental building blocks to helping people answer the questions of where they came from; where they fit into the world; and who they will become? These are not questions of content, but indeed when discussing issues of lineage, linkage, and destiny, they are profound questions about identity. These are also not questions of merely knowledge and

content. To learn about Israel is highly affective—it ought to be palpable and visceral, and yes, even emotional.

In these ways, Israel and identity are intimately related; Israel encompasses core issues of Jewish identities. On the surface, Israel education might be grappling with issues about a country, its politics, and its people, but at a deeper level it is fundamentally examining the ways in which an attachment to Israel can impact one's Jewish and overall identity. To state this categorically, Israel education is first and foremost about the education of human beings.



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The Hebrew term for the word identity, coined by Eliezer Ben Yehuda, is *zehut*. Jan Katzew elucidates that from the root of the word *zeh* (this) the term aims to express the thisness of an individual. What is the thisness that you are building for yourself? What is the thisness which you could describe yourself, and that others would describe you? Are there Jewish words or phrases that help describe who you are? Does Israel appear in the words that begin to describe your thisness? We are reminded by the words of the poet Zelda:

לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name שֶׁנַתַן לוֹ אֱלֹהִים given to him by G-d ונַתַנוּ לוֹ אַבִיו וִאַמּוֹ and given to him by his parents לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name שֶׁנָּתְנוּ לוֹ קוֹמַתוֹ given to him by his stature ואפן חיוכו and the way he smiles וְנַתַן לוֹ הַאַרִיג and given to him by his clothing לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name שַׁנַּתָנוּ לוֹ הֶהַרֵים given to him by the mountains וְנַתְנוּ לוֹ כָּתֻלַיו and given to him by his walls לְכַל אָישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name שנתנו לו המזלות given to him by the stars וְנַתְנוּ לוֹ שָׁכֵנֵיו and given to him by his neighbors לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name שַׁנַּתָנוּ לוֹ חֲטַאַיו given to him by his sins וְנַתְנַה לוֹ כָּמִיהַתוֹ and given to him by his longing Everyone has a name לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם שנתנו לו שונאיו given to him by his enemies and given to him by his love וְנַתְנַה לוֹ אַהֱבַתוֹ Everyone has a name לכל אישׁ יַשׁ שׁם שַׁנַּתָנוּ לוֹ חַגַּיו given to him by his feasts and given to him by his work וְנַתְנַה לוֹ מְלַאכָתוֹ לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם Everyone has a name given to him by the seasons שַׁנַתנוּ לוֹ תִקוּפוֹת הַשַּׁנַה ונַתַן לוֹ עורוֹנוֹ and given to him by his blindness Everyone has a name לְכַל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם שׁנַתו לוֹ הַיַּם given to him by the sea and וְנָתַן לוֹ given to him מותו. by his death.

Presumably your name was given to you by your parents or guardians. But what is the name that you are forging for yourself during your life? And what is the name that others will give to you in your death? When you describe yourself, or others describe you, will being Jewish, or having a connection to Israel appear in these descriptions? Perhaps, when it all comes down to it—this is your identity.

Zelda Schnerrsohn Mishkovsky. Translated from Hebrew by Marcia Falk, quoted from "Generations of the Holocaust," by Bergmann and Jugovy.

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A LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH

by David Bryfman

Educators have always tried to strike a balance between the theories of education, the sociology of their learners, and their classroom realities. I am sure many of us can recall a lecture about classroom management, for example, when we rolled our eyes and wondered if that professor had ever stood before a group of rowdy 13 year-olds. Nevertheless, very few of us are naïve enough to suggest that the theory behind classroom management isn't important, but balancing it with our reality is an educator's enduring task.

This chapter of *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition* strives to do just that—outline a framework for Israel education that draws on our knowledge of today's youth and young adults (referred to interchangeably as Millennials or Generation Me) while simultaneously holding the core value of a learner-centered, or what might

be called an I-Centered, approach to education.

The "I" referenced above deliberately connotes a dual reference. On one hand, it feeds into the self-centeredness of Generation Me who largely view the world only through their own eyes. But the "I" also reflects the value of an educator in understanding each individual, not merely as a member of a collective, but as the true essence of who they are. It is this latter understanding, embracing the whole learner as the "I" that they are, that The iCenter adopts in an I-Centered

We complete all of our coursework. We read all there is to know about Millennials and Generation Me. We even succumb to hours of smartphones, tablets, and video games, scanning social media—all in an effort to get inside their teenage heads. We want to be the best educators that we can possibly be, so many of us do everything possible to understand them properly before meeting those kids for the first time.

And then something happens: we enter a classroom, or step onto a bus, walk into a summer camp, or engage in a one-on-one conversation with a real teenager. It's not that we didn't already know this, but each time we are confronted by real youth, we are reminded that despite everything we know about Generation Me, we are actually faced with a whole lot of I's—and each one of them is very, very unique.

approach to education. That is not to say that we don't need to know a lot about our learners as a whole—it's our understanding that when educating about Israel (and indeed anything) that we need both—to understand Generation Me as well as the I's who comprise it.

What is an I-Centered Education?

The understanding of the "I" is not foreign to Jewish thought. When Martin Buber writes about the I-Thou (Ich-Du) relationship, he stresses the holistic interaction of two beings. Buber understands that only in relationships of true mutuality are growth and transformation possible. He contrasts these relationships with ones that might be more reflective of the stereotypical qualities of Generation Me, the I-It (Ich-Es) relationships that are often more one-dimensional and utilitarian by design. An I-Centered approach to Jewish education is one that embraces the I-Thou interactions of educators with their learners, and between the learners themselves.

An I-Centered approach to education, as it relates to child-centered learning (synonymous with learner-centered), is not new. It is a philosophical approach to education that builds upon the works of many who have long argued that the most meaningful and enduring education occurs when the learner is the center of any educational experience. When we at The iCenter speak about a learner-centered or a whole-person approach to education, we infer that the primary focus of the education ought to be the learner. The educator,

the curriculum, and the setting are all important features of the learning experience, but at its core is the individual that we are educating. To provide learning that is both personally meaningful and relevant we must understand these learners as unique individuals.

This child-centered approach is not without its critics—it faces opposition from those who believe that the acquisition of knowledge is the primary purpose of education and that it is the role of the teacher to impart this knowledge to students. While we do not shy away from the significance of knowledge in education, we argue strongly that this content must always be experienced firsthand by learners if it is to be enduring.

In an I-Centered approach, the educator's role is very different than the teacher's in a traditional educational environment. Paulo Freire teaches us that learners should not be treated as empty piggy banks for whom educators merely deposit their coins of knowledge. We also learn tremendously from Janusz Korczak, who strongly believed that such educators must fully respect their learners, because that is the human dignity that they are entitled to. Korczak goes even further than most when describing this respect as truly valuing the paths that young individuals are traveling on:

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. ... They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. ¹

This quote should resonate strongly with Jewish educators who have often cited from the *Book of Proverbs* 22:3, that we should "educate a child

according to his way" as a core value in Jewish education.

We also understand that when the learner is the primary focus of the learning, they are experiencing the learning for themselves. This is not a teacher instructing students about what they should know; instead, a student becomes an active agent in the learning process. This understanding of experiencing education has several theoretical roots from Romantic philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau who writes about a young boy Émile discovering life for himself, to the modern pragmatist John Dewey, who stated that "education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself." Many theorists have long stressed the importance of experience-

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based education, even though it often runs contrary to mainstream Western educational systems.

An I-Centered Approach To Israel Education

Israel education may be understood by some educators as the transmission of important information to our youth. Often in these settings Israel education teaches our learners about important dates and events, shows them maps, and tells them about famous Zionists and Israelis. While these content pieces remain important, an I-Centered approach takes these elements into a new realm. In an I-Centered approach this information is only important

the people of tomorrow, but people today.
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Children are not

—Janusz Korczak

were meant to be.

because it is meaningful and relevant to the lives of individual learners. And as explained in the previous chapter, "Israel as a Cornerstone of Jewish Identities," Israel education ultimately serves the purpose of cultivating the identities of those learners.

As Israel educators, there is no doubt that we need to know the content of Israel that we want to teach. We need to know her history, her culture, her language, and her politics.

But we also need to understand the world in which our learners live. We need to know what characteristics encapsulate today's generation of Jewish children, youth, and young adults. Through this understanding, we need to learn how we can create curriculum and facilitate learning experiences that touch individuals in this generation. Some of the presumed characteristics of Jewish Millennials include:

- **1 Secure:** Born close to or even after the turn of the century, this generation is not preoccupied with the existential threat to Jewish life in America or Israel.
- 2 Proud: There is strength in being defined as part of a collective, largely because almost everyone in America belongs to some other self-ascribed tribal group (including those based on gender, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual-orientation, etc.).
- 3 Multiple, Hybrid, and Fluid Selves: As much as being Jewish is important, it is only one piece of who the youth of today are. In many cases, their Jewish identity is no more or less important than any

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other piece of their identities. What makes this generation different is the relative ease with which they can move between their various identities depending on the specific context and who surrounds them at any given moment.

- 4 Universalists: Despite at times feeling very much at home with fellow Jews, at their core, Jewish Millennials are universalist, global citizens. Whereas their parents and grandparents may have asked why something is "good for the Jews," today's youth are more likely to ask whether it is "good for the world."
- 5 Creative and Challenging
 Generation: Jewish youth are not passive consumers of anything, and have displayed tremendous capacity to invent, build, and adapt to their new realities. Not always dismissive of tradition, youth are challenging conventional norms and building a new Jewish reality.

To be an I-Centered approach to Israel education, we take what we presume to know about Israel, and what we presume to know about this generation of learners, and frame it in a way to reach our individual learners. Ultimately, when we have this combination, we will best succeed in achieving our goals of contributing to the development of well-rounded Jewish people for whom Israel is resonant in their lives.

Some of what we have seen in Israel education that works, involving all three of these elements—knowledge of Israel, knowledge of Jewish Millennials, and a primary focus on individual learners—includes:

- 1 Connected Israel: Israel is taught as a place of people in which learners can meet, connect to, and interact with others. In this way Israel is presented not as an abstract entity, but one of personal and human significance.
- 2 Attractive Israel: Israel is presented in a way that is compelling, dynamic and engaging given that it is competing in a marketplace of opportunities designed to attract the attention of discerning consumers.
- 3 Nuanced Israel: As learners mature they must be presented a sophisticated and nuanced Israel, because it is through understanding these complexities that they will struggle and develop their own personal relationship with Israel. We introduce our learners to all types of people who live in Israel because good education involves exposing learners to multiple viewpoints regardless if we, as educators, agree with them or not.
- 4 Global Israel: Israel must be presented in a way that speaks to youth and young adults who see themselves both as members of the tribe and global citizens. In this regard, educators must strive to relate to both the uniqueness of Israel as well as its role as a normal country among the other nations of the world.
- Diverse Israel: Israel must be presented in a myriad of ways because what is meaningful for one person is not so for all. This diversity must reflect both varied pedagogic techniques, as well as the diversity of lenses through which Israel can be presented, including technology,

arts and culture, sports, politics, environment, social action, pop culture, health, science, business, etc.

6 Action-Oriented Israel: Israel education should inspire learners to act. It should empower them to create projects, develop personal relationships, want to visit Israel, and get to know Israel better. Most importantly, good Israel education will succeed when Jewish learners include Israel as part of their own personal narrative.

Even in these examples one can see how an I-Centered approach to Israel education and engagement allows us to embrace our knowledge of Jewish Generation Me while allowing for individual growth to take place. We offer multiple narratives because Generation Me is critical and challenging, and because we believe individuals have the right to hear others' narratives before determining their own viewpoints. We respect learners by exposing them to the complexity that Generation Me craves, and the belief that critical inquiry is fundamental for individual learning. This approach gives the opportunity to create sophisticated Israel-infused programming that speaks to a generation and always allows for individuals to embark on their own journey.

And finally, it must be emphasized: experiential learning is more than just a series of experiences that a learner undergoes. All of us have thousands of experiences in any given day, but not all of them constitute learning. For learning through experience to occur, David Kolb² and others teach us that reflection of an experience is critical if one is to learn and advance from that experience. True reflection requires us to take a moment and to think about what it was

you learned from that experience, and how that learning might influence your behavior the next time you undergo a similar experience.

And so I leave you with a question to ponder as you reflect upon the chapter that you just read:

What is one thing that stood out in your mind while reading this chapter that might influence the way you next educate about Israel?

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THE PLACE OF ISRAEL IN JEWISH TRADITION

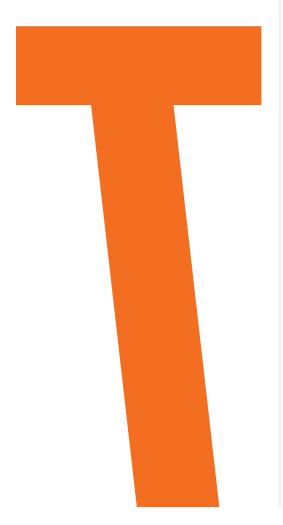
by Rabbi Asher Lopatin

Biblical Times

From the earliest days of the Bible—from the creation story itself—to the lives of most Jews today, the Land of Israel has been an important part of the Jewish story. The first verse of the Torah, "In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the land," was understood by the rabbis as indicating G-d's sovereignty over the world and over all its lands. According to this interpretation, the biblical text implied that the Land of Israel was given to the Jewish people. Throughout the ages, no matter where Jews lived or which books or traditions spoke about the Holy Land, the Land of Israel always captured the imagination of the Jewish people. From the time that the land had no name and was denoted as "the Land I will show you" or "the Good Land" or "the Promised Land," until today, Jews have been guided by a desire to connect with this

piece of real-estate connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe.

In the Torah we read that after G-d created the world, destroyed it (Noah), and then restored it again, Abram and Sarai (as they are initially known in the Torah) abandoned Abram's birthplace to go to the land G-d had chosen. Moreover, G-d commanded Abram to physically walk throughout the land, which he does while, according to rabbinic interpretation, establishing hospitality stations along the way. It is interesting to note that at this point in the Torah, the land was not yet called Israel nor were its boundaries specifically defined. The biblical Abram used the



land as a launching pad for spiritual and moral revival; he prayed for the safety of all the inhabitants of the land, his own relatives, and non-Hebrews.

The Biblical texts indicated that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all worked to establish good relations with the non-Hebrews in the land. They signed treaties and even bought land that they could have seized by right of Divine promise. The three Patriarchs worked the land, built religious sites, and raised their families in the land. Yet, they demonstrated that Hebrews and Israelites had lived in the land alongside the *other*—people who were not part of the Jewish people.

Interestingly, the text indicates that it was the Matriarchs who worked hard to preserve the Israelite *atmosphere* and personality of the land. Whereas the Patriarchs established a contractual model of the land where they lived peacefully with other nations, the Matriarchs attempted to preserve the familial and spiritual nature of the land as *home*.

The subsequent Five Books of Moses traced the ongoing contractual and spiritual relationship of the Israelites to the land. Even when the Israelites were forced to flee to Egypt, the Promised Land beckoned them and eventually they were freed from slavery and began the long journey back to the Promised Land. The Land of Israel was equated with both holiness and freedom; this implied that true freedom is both physical and spiritual; it was connected to belief in the divine and to a setting that is holy.

The biblical texts also very openly recorded the dilemmas and failures of the Israelite people, both spiritually and morally, to uphold the divine covenant

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and the spiritual sanctity of the land. The prophets and others called the people to task for their moral and spiritual failures. At the same time, they emphasized G-d's love for his people, the unconditional connection to the land, and the vision of return and redemption. The biblical account of the relationship of a people, a land, divinity, and moral and spiritual values has served as a sustaining and powerful motif of Jewish life throughout the ages.

Rabbinic Judaism

With the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE, the Kingdom of Judea ended, and Jews went into exile in Babylon and Egypt. Some Jews may have stayed behind in Israel. Even though only a fraction of Jews returned from Babylon to Israel in 538 BCE (perhaps only 50,000), it was these Israelites who created Rabbinic Judaism when they returned to the land of their ancestors. Rabbinic Judaism interpreted the biblical narratives and laws and ultimately created a resilient religious message, which has developed and re-defined itself over the centuries and lives on today. The prayers, kiddush on Shabbat, Havdallah after Shabbat, the intricate laws of Kashrut, laws of torts, borrowing, dealing with your neighbor's property—all of these are part of Rabbinic Judaism's read of the Torah and tradition, and all were developed by the newly established community in Israel. The community rebuilt the Second Temple, only to have it destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Rabbinic writings say the Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred that ran rampant amongst warring factions and

denominations: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, zealots, and more.

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the subsequent exiles from Jerusalem and other traditional cities in Israel led to traditions of Torah learning and practice that we are familiar with today.

These metamorphoses led to the creation of a religion and belief system that was relevant for life outside a national homeland and a ritual center in Jerusalem. Indeed, the rabbis created a resilient Judaism, not based on the Temple, and, in some ways, not based on where you live but how you live. Learning Torah and engaging in mystical practices became the new standard to get closer to understanding G-d rather than relying on prophets or the high priest.

Yet, even though Jews anywhere were able find a meaningful Judaism based on praying, studying, and being kind to others, the rabbis still made sure that no one forgot to keep Eretz Yisrael in all of their activities. Anyone praying had to face Israel and Jerusalem, wherever in the world they were. Holidays were observed for an extra day outside of Israel, perhaps to remind everyone that they were not truly in the Holy Land. In Eastern European traditions, the priests would only bless the people in the Diaspora on holidays, whereas in Israel the people were blessed daily in the morning prayer. Perhaps most important, the Torah was read twice during the week and on Shabbat, so that everyone knew the story of the origins of the Jewish people in the Promised Land.

Holiday observances were adapted to guarantee the ongoing remembrance of the land. The Passover story highlighted the motifs of freedom along with the



My heart is in the East and I am in the West.

—Yehuda Halevi

beginning of the journey back to Israel. The Shavuot holiday combined the giving of the Torah as part of the return to Israel, along with agricultural ceremonies connected to the Land of Israel, Sukkot was linked to both the fall harvest and the journey in the desert on the way to Israel. Fast Days recalled the tragedy of the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem (over the ages other Jewish tragedies were appended to this day). At the core of almost every custom and every holiday, there were symbolic reminders of the Land of Israel. Thus, while Judaism had become an exilic religion, the land continued to preoccupy the heads and the hearts of the Jewish teachers and the people. The rabbis and scholars over the ages created an elaborate religious system aimed at Jews wherever they lived, for which they never would forsake the connection to the Land of Israel.

Zionist Judaism

In Biblical times and in Rabbinical Judaism, a love of Israel was always at the core of every tradition, of every important religious moment. Weddings were ended with the Seven Blessings talking about a Jerusalem of the future, filled with joy and the sounds of the bride and groom—and, of course the

glass was broken to evoke sadness over the destruction of Jerusalem. Most Jews, however, continued to live outside of Israel and did not attempt to change that reality. Throughout the ages, Jews continued to retain the connection and the feeling for Israel as movingly described by Yehuda Halevi, "My heart is in the East and I am in the West."

As Jewish life confronted modernity, new conceptions of the Land of Israel began to develop, including the call for Jews to physically leave the Diaspora and return to Israel. First, it was fully a religious movement heeding the calls of the poetry of Halevi and the legal and kabbalistic rulings of other rabbis. Then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the notion of a political and secular Zionism, particularly championed by Theodor Herzl, espoused the actual return to Israel and the building of a national, political home in the land. Many agreed with Herzl's idealistic program to enable the Jews to live as a free people in a Jewish homeland. There were also religious Zionists, such as Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Yehuda Alkalai, and Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, who supported the notion of Jews helping to restore the homeland.

In the early twentieth century, important thinkers like Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook supported the vision of a Jewish homeland, building on the effort of religious and secular Jews. Rabbi Kook regarded every kibbutz and every person who planted a tree or built a home in Israel as doing a holy act. Religious Zionism made an important contribution to the rebirth of the Land of Israel.

While the traditional Jewish world remains divided on many of the ideas of Religious Zionism, and Zionism itself,

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it remains united in its commitment to the centrality of Israel for the Jewish people and the need of the Land of Israel to be an integral part of the lives of all Jews wherever they live. Today, the reestablishment of the modern State of Israel is seen by many religious Jews as a fulfillment of shivat zion—"the Return to Zion" and reisheet zmichat geulateynu—"the beginning of the flourishing of our redemption." For others the challenge is to create values and contemporary modernity and tradition. For all Jews, Israel is a very critical link in a never-ending chain.

Endnote

1. Halevi, Yehuda. *The Selected Poems of Yehuda Halevi*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Nextbook, Inc. 2011. Print.



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ERETZ, MEDINA, AM YISRAEL: NAVIGATING MULTIPLE LANDSCAPES

by Zohar Raviv

The word *Israel* in the phrase *Israel education* is a complicated term, and connotes multiple and, at times, disparate meanings which often add confusion rather than consistency to the field.

To begin our conversation we shall look at the opening paragraph of the single most important official document to address the historical context, the vision, and the new reality for Israel: the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel (proclaimed on Friday May 14, 1948 in Tel Aviv).

The Declaration of Independence of the *State* of Israel (מדינת ישראל), interestingly, starts by emphasizing the *Land* of Israel (ארץ ישראל). This modern declaration of statehood (very much influenced by the American Declaration of Independence)

begins with a conceptual association with an ancient historical, theological, and religious contextualization.

Upon examining the evolution of both the idea and the term *Israel* in historical and conceptual perspectives, one indeed finds a fascinating development of five distinct landscapes which are arquably woven into our collective Jewish consciousness and historic memory. For the biblical Exodus generations in the Sinai desert, Israel was a Land of Old (Eretz Yisrael) whose temporary presence-of-absence and position in the Jewish narrative arrested the imagination and enticed national redemptive hope. That Israel was an Imagined Land of which the Hebrews in Egypt had only heard about, without experiencing it firsthand. To the ensuing twelve settling tribes, known as Bnei Yisrael (the People of Israel), Israel was to become a Covenantal Land, which actively embodied their pact with the G-d of Israel at Sinai and whose precise borders had fluctuated during various monarchies and eras.

To the exiled and post-exilic generations, Israel became a Remembered Land, now forcing an ongoing dialogue between the ancient Homeland and the various lands which had become their home. To these generations Israel transformed into a semi-mythic entity whose immediate physical absence was replaced by the fundamental presence of diverse, and often radically different, forms of memory, ritual, poetry, and even pilgrimage. For contemporary generations, since May 14, 1948, Israel is both a Lived Land and an Envisioned Land: a Jewish, sovereign, and democratic State (Medinat Yisrael), which continues to evolve among the family of nations and aims to carve a



Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israell was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood. created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

modern, thriving path into the future while heeding the voices of old and acknowledging the trails of its past.

Indeed, as many experienced educators of Judaism know, general perceptions of Israel usually traverse all these landscapes—Imagined, Covenantal, Remembered, Lived, and Envisioned—albeit with varying emphases or

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breadths of context. For example, contemporary Jews living throughout the world and native Israelis see Israel in very different ways. Without denying the generalization offered here, it is arguably true that Diaspora Jews often view Israel through romantic, religiously oriented, or politically induced lenses (often reflective of the Imagined and Remembered Lands), whereas native Israelis often tend to set aside such views in favor of Israel as a Lived Land—what they perceive as a more realistic, nuanced, and down-to-earth understanding of both the achievements and challenges of a modern state, a national homeland, and the country of their residence.

This somewhat simplistic depiction does little to realize the fuller complexity of the idea and the term *Israel*. At the same time, it does point to the need for greater clarity on this issue and may serve in offering a shared conceptual language to enable a systematic conversation among educators for the benefit of Israel education in particular, and Jewish education in general.

The Imagined Land

The Imagined Israel is the landscape described to the Exodus generations during their wanderings in the deserts of Sinai and Tzin. It is a land which holds allure, from the biblical narrator's perspective, in its standing as unique; that is, different from any other land by virtue of G-d's eternal promise to the patriarchs. In the words of *Deuteronomy* 11:10:

For the land you are entering to take over is not as the land of

Egypt, from which you came out; ... [It is] a land which the Lord your G-d cares for; the eyes of the Lord your G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

This Imagined Land is indeed described in great detail to the bewildered Israelites as they wander the deserts. Scores of mitzvot (religious rituals and intricate sets of laws) are associated with it, to be mastered by the abiding Israelites—yet the land itself remains beyond any foreseeable horizon. This wondrous tension, this moment of disparity between knowledge and experience, serves to amplify anticipation and elevate the people in preparation for encountering the land in the future. The Land of Israel thus functions at this juncture as a significant landmark on two important levels: first, it becomes a perpetual aspiration for a people now forged into a nation—the People of Israel (Am Yisrael), a people that left Egypt, wandered in the deserts of Sinai and Tzin, and are bound to reach this hitherto Imagined Land as a cohesive nation after four decades of anticipation. Second, by being a land not yet physically encountered—a land of future promise—Israel Imagined serves to better articulate the people's own past, bind it in a shared collective narrative, and offer a renewed sense of appreciation in its encounter.

As we move from the historical-mythical and into our contemporary educational domain, we can suggest a fascinating cognitive similarity between the Exodus Israelites and contemporary Jews for whom Israel remains an Imagined Land, as they may have heard or even learned about it, yet have never experienced it firsthand. This moment of disparity

between knowledge and experience may become a powerful educational tool, as we strive to harness imagination and anticipation as positive objectives of contemporary Israel educational settings and curricula.

The Covenantal Land

The distinguished historian Arthur Hertzberg once wrote:

The land of Israel is a central point in the Covenant between the people of Israel and G-d; [a land] which had been set aside for the authentic encounter between the seed of Abraham and the G-d who founded their community... This land was fashioned by G-d for a particular service to Him, that its very landscape should help mold the character and spirit of His beloved people.¹

The traditional Jewish standpoint perceives the Land of Israel as a Covenantal Landscape, an active statement of the binding relationship which is at the heart of Jewish life and discourse. This covenantal theme pervades biblical texts and is persuasively demonstrated in a number of covenantal rites, establishing Eretz Yisrael as a land held to the same standards as the Jews who now inhabit it, and an indispensable player in the covenantal triangle G-d-Man-Land.

Primary among these covenantal rites is the Shabbat. *Exodus* 31 commands the People of Israel:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak thou also unto the

children of Israel, saying: Verily ye shall keep My sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord who sanctify you.

The Land of Israel is also expected to keep its own Shabbat, albeit once each seven years, in what we know as *Shmita*. Thus reads *Leviticus* 25:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.

Brit Milah (circumcision) is another central example of the covenant, or, more precisely in our context, the command to cut off the foreskin (orlah). Genesis 17 reads:

And G-d said unto Abraham:
And as for thee, thou shalt keep
My covenant, thou, and thy
seed after thee throughout their
generations. This is My covenant,
which ye shall keep, between
Me and you and thy seed after
thee: every male among you shall
be circumcised. And ye shall be
circumcised in the flesh of your
foreskin; and it shall be a token of
a covenant between Me and you.

Similarly, the laws that pertain to the fruit of the trees of the Land of Israel are also covenantal signs, as *Leviticus* 19 reads:

And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as forbidden (lit. uncircumcised); three years shall it be as

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forbidden (lit. uncircumcised) unto you; it shall not be eaten.

Even the moral acts of righteousness, helping the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the destitute, expressed in agricultural laws constitute part of the covenantal bond.

Indeed, the covenantal aspect of the Land of Israel has been regarded as so vital that it merits its own Talmud! The Jerusalemite Talmud—composed circa fourth-fifth centuries, roughly a century prior to its gigantic Babylonian brother—revolves almost entirely around mitzvot that pertain exclusively to the Land of Israel (מצוות התלויות בארץ). Eretz Yisrael has thus been seen as an indispensable and inseparable part of the eternal contract between the People of Israel and their G-d.

While certain aspects of contemporary Jewish thought and life would seem to be light years and millennia away from such a conception, the weight of this narrative should be appreciated and addressed by the contemporary Israel educator. The need to face the challenge of dealing with this original and significantly powerful motif in the Jewish experience is arguably central in order to unpack not only past, but also current perceptions and attitudes towards Israel in contemporary discourse. It is also an important step toward a fuller appreciation of the multiple narratives that inform Israeli society in its articulation of connection to the land, as well as a significant contextualization of the landscapes, as discussed below.

The Remembered Land

Beginning with the first Babylonian Exile (586 BCE), and continuing through the destruction of the Holy Temple (70 CE), a failed Jewish revolt in 132-135 CE and subsequent banishments from the Land, Israel became transformed into a Remembered Land for the majority of Jews. Like the Hebrews in Egypt, Jews in Diaspora communities throughout the world related to Israel as an Imagined Land a place whose existence had permeated their daily lives through religious rituals, cultural customs, literary expressions and emotional ties, but nonetheless a land they had never actually experienced. The difference was that Israel



now became both *Imagined* and *Remembered*. As Israel's Declaration of Independence summarizes:

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland.

The above statement may be true for some. In truth, Jewish law, lore, poetry, and life now created a cross-generational romantic desire to return to the Remembered Land. Some Jews did indeed journey to the land, but for most, the perpetuation of Zion as the Jewish Homeland became a powerful motif that informed Jewish texts and reshaped its institutions, architecture, customs, liturgy, and rituals. This Remembering assumed a distinctively religious overtone, often expressing itself in the language of Eretz Hakodesh (the Holy Land) vs. galut (exile).

This motif, however, was not devoid of its own evolution and variants; attitudes toward this Remembered Land ranged from vehement calls to return to Zion, whilst others upheld sanctifying attitudes to Israel's mythical standing as desirable and denying all aspiration to realize it as an actual home for the Jewish people. These views have shaped Jewish discourse around the Land of Israel for centuries, until the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century national movement—known as Zionism—reshaped the lexicon and the impetus from a Remembered Land to an actual land in which Jews would aspire to build, create, inhabit, and live.

The Lived Land

There are undeniably many facets to the ideological-political movement called Zionism; there is no single conceptual canopy to host its different branches, sub-divisions and interpretations, save one—again, articulated in the Declaration of Independence: The move to establish a national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel is based upon "the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State." From this point on, the language of the State of Israel is set to move beyond the realms of the Imagined, Covenantal, and Remembered lands to which it owed its raison d'etre and would inform its vision with contemporary civil, legal, political, and existential vocabularies. Based on a theological constitution of antiquity, and shaped through the memory of a hundred generations of diverse Jewish life in the Diaspora, the State of Israel (מדינת ישראל) is a fascinating tapestry of ancient justification and new vision, religious impetus and secular expressions, ideological fervor and calculated politics, a G-d who may have authored, but men and women who assumed the authority, as the Declaration states:

We, members of the people's council, representatives of the Jewish community of *Eretz Yisrael...*, by virtue of our natural and historic right... hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in *Eretz-Israel*, to be known as the State of Israel [Medinat Yisrael].

The State of Israel—in many ways in accordance with Theodor Hertzl's vision—now aims to master the language of world nations and immerse

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itself in the experience of liberalism, democracy, social, and global welfare. Yet it aims to do so without losing sight of its Jewish backbone, fully cognizant of the impending tensions that are likely to surface once *Jewish* and *democratic* need to negotiate their respective places in the social, legal, cultural, and political spheres.

Three issues are of significance in this context: first, given its deep reliance on the idea of *Eretz Yisrael*, the State is now called "a Jewish State" rather than "a State for the Jews." This suggests a notion of a state that is somehow related to certain Jewish values, legal rulings, and national symbols implied by the ancient theological narrative of the Land of Israel. The intricate associations between the *Land* and the *State* are at the backbone of the Zionist idea, although their nature varied dramatically from one Zionist branch to another.

Second, the new entity will be a contemporary state reflective of norms consistent with democratic liberal Western standards of statehood. This central dimension obviously raises important challenges for such subjects as the Jewish nature of *Medinat Yisrael*, the concept of separation of Church and State, and issues of civil law and religious law, and so forth. It poses the profound challenge of harmoniously being both a Jewish and a modern democratic state.

Third, while authority in ancient Israel was rooted in the Covenant, monarchies, or rabbinic rule, the contemporary *State of Israel* is rooted in a *people's council*—a political forum of men and women assuming responsibility for establishing and navigating the State. How does this new form of authority inform Israel's path, and how does it correspond with Israel's vision of being a Jewish State?

The Envisioned Land

Whereas all four previous landscapes are based on our historical knowledge and narrative formation, the fifth one the Envisioned Land—is rooted in the aspirations, hopes, and beliefs of all who have a stake in Israel's ongoing and thriving future, irrespective of the place they call home. The vision of what a modern Jewish State will look like and aspire to may postulate lofty and laudable principles, and usually those are rooted in the highest values of both Jewish tradition and Western culture. The merger of all the aforementioned landscapes into a coherent Jewish narrative in a meaningful contemporary context is nothing short of vital. It has to negotiate the wisdom of old with a viable new vision, and do so in a manner that affords both a seat of honor in the intricate unfolding story of Israel. The vision, however, is only as worthy as the willingness of each generation to see it to fruition—the desire of a people (old and young!) to partake in an evolving story and to assume active responsibility for the path taken must resonate. Not merely remember, but re-member!

The Educator's Challenge

This brief journey clearly highlights the challenge of Jewish educators in Israel education. They must deal with a long legacy of meanings of *Israel*, help explicate them in their diverse and respective contexts, and find coherence amongst them in the contemporary sphere for the young contemporary Jew. This is an educational task of great importance for the practice of Israel education—and it is surely a holy task.

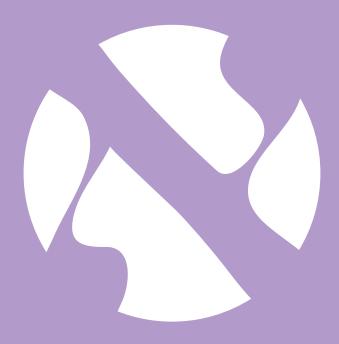
Endnote

1. Hertzberg, Arthur, ed. *The Zionist Idea*. New York: Atheneum, 1982. Print.



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CURRICULARIZING ISRAEL: PRINCIPLES AND THEMES

by Jan Katzew

Many factors shape a curriculum for Israel education. There are ideological issues related to one's vision of Israel. There are educational questions about presenting Israel to diverse ages and making the subject age-appropriate. How do educators handle sensitive topics? How do we deal with potential conflict between what a curriculum presents and the views of families? And perhaps most importantly, are our educators equipped to engage the young with this fascinating but complicated topic?

Many of these questions have surfaced throughout *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition*. My task is to clarify the idea of an Israel curriculum for you who actually make education happen. In this chapter, I propose directions and practices which can guide our work in the field. Let me begin with a few preliminary assumptions.

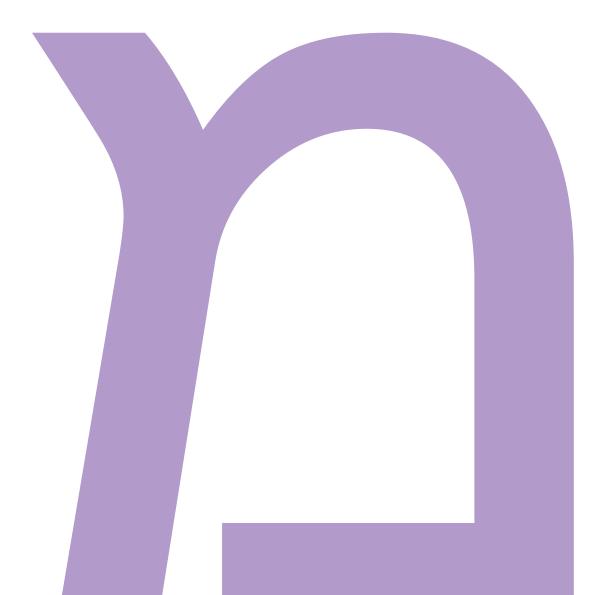
First, as I have hinted, creating a curriculum is one of the most complicated tasks of Jewish education. One doesn't sit down and write a curriculum. As you shall see, a curriculum is more than a list of topics I should teach tomorrow, or what materials should be used. It might be more accurate to talk about the process of curricularizing or curriculum development.

Second, the term curriculum is not just for schools. The term applies to all kinds of Jewish education: schools, camps, and youth groups; educational travel; synagogue life, and family. When educators hear the phrase *Israel*

curriculum, we should understand that it is a dynamic and creative process which applies to everyone who engages in Israel education, and we shouldn't understand it only as school-based.

Third, the issues of curriculum are relevant for everyone involved in Israel education. Whether you are responsible for curriculum design and development or its executor; whether you are an organizational executive, teacher, counselor, unit head, board president, or committee chair, you are involved in making curricular decisions.

My intention is neither to present you with a definitive nor complete Israel



curriculum. Rather, I shall present some key ideas about curriculum, followed by some core values, ideas, overarching rubrics, topics, and framing questions all related to *curricularizing* Israel. In addition, I shall reference some practical examples to help guide your work in this area. My hope and intention is to demystify the curricular process and provide you with guidelines and strategies for making Israel education meaningful and compelling.

What Is Curriculum?

The word curriculum has its origins in ancient Greece as a term used to describe a racecourse and it has come to mean an intentional course of study leading to competency and ultimately to mastery in a field—not only in school, but also and more importantly in life. During the twentieth century, curriculum rose to the top of the educational agenda in the United States under the orchestration of such figures as Ralph Tyler, Joseph Schwab, John Dewey, and Lee Shulman. Curriculum developed into something of a science influenced by psychological, sociological, ethical, and spiritual factors; in a word, it came to suggest the notion of a culture.

Curriculum continues to play a vital role in contemporary general and Jewish education. In the words of the American educator Elliot Eisner, "The field of curriculum resides at the very core of education." Yet there is no consensus on the best curriculum in any discipline. Consequently, there are many theories, approaches, and methods of curriculum design and development. This complex and confusing reality often results in ideological and political disputes.

The domain of Jewish education is no exception. Educators should celebrate this curricular diversity, even when it results in divergence, because multiple curricula honestly reflect the cultures in which we live and the multiplicity of ideological and educational perspectives. Therefore, I propose to understand curriculum as more than one formalized course of study that can be distilled into texts and lesson plans. If education includes a process of enculturation, then Israel education is the process of enculturating Jews to live in a lifelong relationship with Israel; and curriculum is a blueprint to help make that happen. The various chapters presented in this anthology are interrelated and you may want to particularly look at: "Israel as a Cornerstone of Jewish Identities," "A Learner-Centered Approach," "The Educator: The Power of Teaching, The Power of Learning," and "Diverse Narratives." These are complementary pieces in the mosaic of Israel curriculum. I hope that even—and perhaps especially—if you do not agree with every one of my assumptions, you will be open to implementing some of what I believe is integral in facilitating Israel education.

While curriculum creation has become a field unto itself, it is not the exclusive responsibility of specialists. The people who interact directly with learners in school and campers in camp are the individuals who truly implement the curriculum—which may have little similarity to the resources developed by others. If you are a teacher or a camp counselor, or staffing an Israel experience, then you are, by default, delivering curriculum. You are needed as partners in creating a culture of Israel education that will thrive.

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Some Core Assumptions

I would like to briefly enumerate some core curricular assumptions and invite you to personally reflect on these assumptions by considering the guiding questions.

- A curriculum encompasses a document predicated upon values that make claims about what is worth knowing. Therefore, it is critical to uncover and articulate the presuppositions of any curriculum.
 - **Guiding Question:** What document articulates your fundamental ideas and ideals?
- >> The process of creating and developing curriculum takes into account both the explicit curriculum and the intangible aspects of the hidden curriculum.
 - **Guiding Question:** How does your plan reflect both your explicit aims, as well as strategies that may not be apparent to the learners/campers?
- In attempting to curricularize, one needs to be sensitive to books, maps, websites, smart boards, as well as to educator moods and modes, learning space aesthetics, group dynamics, body language, and many other intangible yet palpable factors.
 - **Guiding Question:** How do you assess the existential state of the people involved in delivering the educational messages?
- Curriculum has both scope and sequence. Scope determines curricular breadth which refers to the expanse of issues dealt with, and sequence articulates developmental issues of levels of depth and complexity. Together, scope and sequence define a course of study.
 - Guiding Question: What is the breadth and depth of your immersion in Israel?
- >>> I advocate a *thematic curriculum*, organized around ideas that connect one lesson or session to another, in contrast, for example, to a purely chronological curriculum organized by dates.
 - **Guiding Question:** What are the themes in alignment with your Israel education mission and vision?
- A thematic curriculum is a means of encouraging learners to connect people, events, and values, in an attempt at imprinting ideas to be nurtured and challenged over time.
 - **Guiding Question:** How are you intentionally balancing commitment and openness, respect for tradition and receptivity to innovation?

Israel and Curriculum

There are many ways to look at Israel; small as it is on a globe, there are diverse Israels. Even a simple thing like a map of Israel lends to differing perspectives that reflect deep values. Therefore, every Israel curriculum is partial, in both senses of the word: it reflects the biases and perspectives of the authors, and tells only part of the mosaic-like, often conflicting narratives. This complexity makes *curricularizing* Israel one of the most challenging (yet exciting) of Jewish educational tasks!

The starting point of this curriculum frames the State of Israel as part of a long Jewish legacy; it is a historic, national, political, social, and religious achievement and its potential is still being realized. Educators should see the State of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state that is an emerging experiment in self-determination. We should aim to foster in each learner, camper, and Jew a lifelong relationship with, and ideally, a romance with Israel. I hope that this curricular process will lead to respecting different, even divergent perspectives on Israel. There will be time for thinking, debating, reflecting, challenging, and criticizing Israel. Nevertheless, my curricular point of departure is shehecheyanu, an expression of profound gratitude, and I hope you will join me in that spirit.

The Israel curriculum should be a combination of education and experience, addressing the mind, the heart, and the limbs. We strive to connect learners to the land, people, and state of Israel through intimate knowledge, deep feeling, and responsible action. The Israel curriculum should be part of each of the years of the young person's Jewish

The Israel curriculum should encompass:

- Core values about Israel that we want young people initially to internalize.
- Israel themes that we regard as essential to conveying those values.
- Experiences related to Israel that we see as integral to making these values real.
- Educational resources that are effective in conveying the values we believe learners should internalize.
- Behaviors we hope will emerge as a result of this curricular process.
- Doportunities for learners to interact with role models (ancient, medieval, and modern) that exemplify the values worth preserving and growing.
- Texts that are foundational to appreciating the evolving, dynamic relationship of Jews and Judaism to Israel.

education so that a connection to Israel can grow over time with the learner's increasingly nuanced understanding. This proposition stands in stark contrast to linking Israel education to a particular program, date, or grade.

The Israel curriculum should permeate the culture of the institution, i.e., its aesthetics, its ethics, its staff, and its budget. The Israel curriculum should be intentionally embedded in the context of the larger Jewish educational

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experience of our learners at all ages and stages. Its themes should reflect the educational ideology of the learning community, themes that recur and echo throughout the environment—themes that are brought to life through experience.

The curricular road that leads to compelling Israel education is layered. It encompasses: core values, framing questions, over-arching rubrics, specific topics, and lesson plans. Curricular values are necessary; they provide the foundation upon which the curriculum will be built. The questions need to balance openness and commitment, a field within which the learner can chart her own course, and yet she can also find common ground with people who have walked before her. The curricular design must take into account meaningful types of Israel experiences. Educators are challenged to achieve a dynamic, lifelong relationship to Israel. Apathy may very well present the greatest threat to our curriculum. We can understand and respect conflicting ideas and feelings, but disinterest has the potential to undermine the entire Israel

education enterprise. Israel education cannot be reduced to a rational proposition, and a curriculum cannot be distilled to facts. Instead, we rely upon a reservoir of goodwill and a modicum of trust that allows for the possibility of Israel education as a desirable pursuit. In order to create, sustain, and grow a relationship between a Jew and Israel, i.e., to achieve the overarching curricular aim, the following questions and themes constitute an essential element.

Creating Israel Curricula

There are a series of components important for the development of Israel curricula.

Core Values and Ideas of Teaching Israel

You should regard the following list of core values as suggestive rather than exhaustive:

- The Land of Israel is the birthplace of Jewish people.² It is the site and setting of many core Jewish texts and values.
- The Land and the idea of Israel have been an enduring sacred shared value and a centripetal force for Jews throughout Jewish history in the many lands and eras in which Jews have lived.
- The Zionist Movement and the establishment of the modern State of Israel reflect the commitment of the Jewish people to renew the connection with an ancient birthplace, create a home for Jews

after the Holocaust, and create a center for Jewish creativity and innovation.

- >> The State of Israel is a modern society and a democratic state that at the same time has deep links with a long, varied, religious, and cultural past. It is a physical home to more than seven million Jews, making Israel the one country in which Jews constitute a majority and thereby presents the challenge of being both powerful and ethical. Contemporary Israel is an exciting laboratory for an ancient religious civilization learning to live in a modern world and culture.
- The physical existence of the contemporary State has been threatened since its creation, causing profound challenges.
- The Land of Israel is a spiritual and cultural home for Jews. A link with contemporary Israel can enrich the lives of Jews.
- Wltimately, the most exciting and fruitful way to know Israel is through multiple experiences in Israel. One of the centerpieces of such Israel educational experiences should be the mifgash—the encounter with Israeli peers.
- » Israel education is personal. One can study the history of Israel without embracing that history as his or her own. Such study may have its place, but that place is not our place as educators. In our place, Israel education transforms history into my-story.

Framing Questions

Here are a few framing questions that I believe, over the years, should be the backdrop of the curriculum:

- >>> What does Israel mean to me?
- Why is Israel so important to Jews, Judaism, and Jewish life?
- » How can knowledge of Israel enrich my Jewish beliefs and behavior?
- What is the nature of the relationships with Israel I can have and will have as I grow?

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Overarching Rubrics and Specific Topics

There are five overarching rubrics which, together, encompass a series of topics that seem important for a meaningful core Israel education.

- >>> Roots
- >>> Rebirth
- >> The New Land
- » A Contemporary Society
- >>> My Israel

Scope and Sequence

Finally, there comes the actual task of teaching Israel! There are various ways to create actual lessons out of this evolving process of Israel education. I have found value in a curricular design described as "understanding by design" in the book of the same

name by Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe,3 which aims to go beyond specific classroom activities or lessons as the goal and instead focuses on enduring understandings and enduring dilemmas. Wiggins and McTighe report that these understandings and dilemmas will then become the basis for later learning and living. Rather than proffer a formula for Israel education, I advocate an intentional strategy: teachers and learners should join together to develop modularized units woven from the values and topics I have suggested. This strategy is interdisciplinary—a weave of geography, history, and literature in an attempt to develop a personal, biographical narrative of Israel as a basic element of a Jewish self. You will determine the most effective trajectory in your community.

Summing Up

The overall purpose in developing an Israel curriculum is to nurture a personal, emotional, and reflective relationship with Israel—a connection that is affective as much as it is cognitive, and psychological as much it is historical. A theme that I believe is appropriate to be considered in all settings for all ages is: finding the "I" in Israel, i.e., seeing oneself in direct relationship to Israel. That is my foundational rationale for Israel education. Complementary disciplines include: geography, history, literature, music, theology, and politics. However, they all are means to an end. This thematic curriculum is intended to integrate multiple settings: home, school, and camp, as well as visits to Israel with family and peers.

Although this chapter is entitled "Curricularizing Israel: Principles and

Themes," it is not what you may have previously encountered as curriculum. It is not limited to school. It is not a list of books and resources. It does not restrict Israel to a course or a grade. It purposely does not look like a curriculum with scripted lesson plans. Nevertheless, I am committed to the idea that all worthy education has a curricular core, and furthermore, that all worthy Israel education has themes which cut across time and place. I regard curriculum as a gateway rather than a rubric, an adventure rather than a sealed box. Israel educators need and deserve curricular paths that lead them and their learners to Israel.

To view overarching rubrics and age specific sequences please visit: www.theicenter.org

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CURRICULARIZINO



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MODERN HEBREW: CULTURE AND IDENTITY

by Lori Sagarin

"The golden key to Jewish education is the Hebrew language." —Chaim Nachman Bialik

I can remember the exact moment I knew that I had come to own the Hebrew language. I was sitting in my childhood synagogue shortly after returning from a year in Israel when I looked up to the ארון הקודש (ark) to see the words דע לפני מי אתה עומד emblazoned above. I read it, immediately understood what the words meant, and realized in a quick second that Hebrew was now second nature to me.

Since that day in the synagogue, I have taken great pride in my Hebrew fluency. I have come to naturally link my knowledge of the language with my love of Israel, deepening

than the language of Israel—it is in many ways one of the core threads of Jewish peoplehood, connecting the Jewish people through time and space.

my inherent sense of the inextricable link between the Hebrew on my lips and the Israel in my heart. My Hebrew experience connected me to Israel and Israelis in a profound way that has continued to provide meaning and joy to my life.

Language is a primary factor that binds people to people and people to places. It is used every day, enabling us to navigate and make meaning of our lives. It is the purveyor of culture through musical lyrics, theater, newspapers, literature, and more. Hebrew is more than the language of Israel—it is in many ways one of the core threads of Jewish peoplehood, connecting the Jewish people through time and space. In today's world, which can feel at one and the same time very intimate and very isolating, connection has become essential, something eagerly sought after. If some of the deepest

human connections are forged through language, then it follows that if we want to create a strong sense of Jewish belonging and peoplehood, Jews must own our shared language, Hebrew.

Visiting Israel has been assumed to be of increased importance in the Jewish community's agenda in recent years. With the success of Birthright Israel, an unprecedented number of young adults have visited Israel. At the same time, only small numbers can truly communicate because of the language barrier. The Hebrew that is prominent in contemporary Jewish life is generally linked to sacred texts or prayer, and not to real people and daily life. Despite the hours spent in Hebrew school, our young have no capacity to communicate, nor to connect to the language of the Land.

Questions and Answers שאלות ותשובות

The role of Hebrew in Jewish identity development (see: "Israel as a Cornerstone of Jewish Identities") remains neglected terrain in Jewish education, despite what we know about the centrality of language to identity and cognitive development. We believe that a significant commitment to modern Hebrew language instruction in North America is critical to the future of the Jewish people and their link with the State of Israel.

How Can Knowledge of Hebrew Reinforce Positive Jewish Identity in North American Jews?

Culture is the lifeblood of a people and a nation. Culture is most readily

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transmitted through language. Today, Jewish culture all over the world is deeply influenced by Israeli culture. It is, therefore, difficult to fully embrace Jewish culture and identity without the capacity to engage with Israeli culture in its native tongue. It would be like listening to music without the notes.

The predominant approach to Hebrew in the United States has emphasized liturgical Hebrew and, more specifically, teaching towards Bar and Bat Mitzvah. It is both a holy and, at the same time, frustrating task. Imagine sitting in a classroom in any school, year after year, trying to learn English and emerging five years later barely able to decode and doing so without comprehension. Not only is one's motivation to learn severely diminished, one's attitude towards Hebrew is irreparably damaged.

Why is the Teaching of Modern Hebrew in Supplementary Schools an Exception Rather than the Norm?

Modern Hebrew has the capacity, in a sublimely inductive way, to bring children into Jewish life and to enable them to feel intellectually and emotionally connected to our rich, everevolving and unique community. Hebrew is more than a prayer or a value word here and there. Hebrew is a key gateway into a deep, empowering, engaging modern and ancient culture. However, many Jews are willing to engage in Jewish life without knowing Hebrew, praying with words that they can barely decode and that are devoid of meaning for them.

Students who are products of our religious schools (and many day schools) visit Israel and quickly realize that they are unable to engage with Israelis on their own terms. The Israel

Experience, commonly described as life-altering, finds our young people ill-prepared to engage with the country and its culture on its own terms, in its own language. Learning even a small amount of Modern Hebrew tears down cultural and interpersonal barriers.

Many Jews feel that it is possible to be an engaged and committed Jew without the benefit of knowing Hebrew. One can learn the so-called language and symbols of Jewish life, and read the major texts, including modern Hebrew literature and poetry, in the vernacular and feel very much in the mainstream of Jewish life—all without having a significant grasp of modern Hebrew. However, doing so is like kissing your beloved through a veil: one is a part of but, in subtle ways, apart from. Nevertheless, as long as Jews believe they can live a rich Jewish life without Hebrew, making the case for spending time teaching modern Hebrew in congregational schools will remain a challenge. Indeed, in 1904, Solomon Schechter, the central figure in the emergence of Conservative Judaism. said that "a Jewish community that is not bilingual is a doomed community!"3

As the hours that students spend in the complementary school Jewish classroom have dramatically decreased, educators have given up on the goal of Hebrew language fluency. Instead, the current wisdom says that decoding the prayers in Hebrew without real understanding and reading their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Torah portion in Hebrew, again without understanding, constitutes success in Jewish elementary and middle school complementary education. Bar and Bat Mitzvah continues to serve as the golden carrot luring parents through the synagogue door. In some cases, if

there is time, some modern language learning is offered in Grade 7 in approximately 40% of schools. This and other factors mentioned support Leonard Fein's famous assertion that "Hebrew school is remembered by

most Jews as the place they failed to learn Hebrew," ⁴ leading to a broad sense that Hebrew school (and by association, Jewish education) is a failed enterprise.

There are important lessons we can learn from general linguistics as well as from experts in teaching Hebrew about moving from a grand vision to attainable outcomes.

Let us focus on one example. The connection between learning a new language and learners' identities has been extensively researched in the field of second language acquisition. This helps us to better understand how experiencing a new language can impact learners' views about themselves and their world.

Language Acquisition and Language Ownership

Vardit Ringvald, Middlebury College

Linguistic researcher and educator Stephan Krashan distinguishes between language learning and language acquisition. Language learning is a conscious activity while language acquisition is a subconscious act.¹ This theory believes that the role of learning core rules and structures of a language is important because this helps learners monitor the quality of their language production. The acquisition process allows the target language to be reinforced and internalized in a way that will be used spontaneously and become second nature to its users. Ideally, if language teaching is done in an environment in which learners are being instructionally scaffolded to a reasonable level, they will be freed of stress and anxiety of acquiring language and will develop a positive linguistic attitude and motivation.

Mastery of the target language: Language ownership is achieved when learners become (in their own way) independent users of the language. This spontaneous use of the language reflects a level of ownership, and how the language becomes a part of who they are. Acquiring a new language to this level of mastery is a process with many way stations, but it is attainable and often less challenging than we might presume. The important point is that the new language becomes part of one's identity in some way. Allowing this process to happen enables learners to become users of the language and make it their own.

Motivation: Scholars highlight the importance of motivation and attitude as factors in language learning and acquisition. Some learners have instrumental

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motivation to study a new language—such as Hebrew learning for synagogue skills or reciting a haftorah portion. On the other hand, learners with integrative motivation acquire new language to become part of the group that uses the language as its mode of communication and expression. The learning of the language opens the doors to fully participating as members of this community.

However, even learners who begin to study a new language for instrumental motivation can develop an integrative motivation if they are helped to discover a connection between the language and a new culture. The challenge is to transform motivation from instrumental to integrative. Motivation is perceived as a factor that is controlled by the learners; we might posit the possibility that teachers of Hebrew could play an important role as motivators for motivation. They might open student filters to acquire the mastery of the new language by making it a positive learning experience that motivates them to identify themselves as part of the world of Hebrew speakers.

In order for Hebrew to become an entry point to the new culture and a tool for identity development, teachers need to pay attention to linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical factors that can support them in their efforts to enable students to acquire and master Hebrew and enrich the process of identity formation.

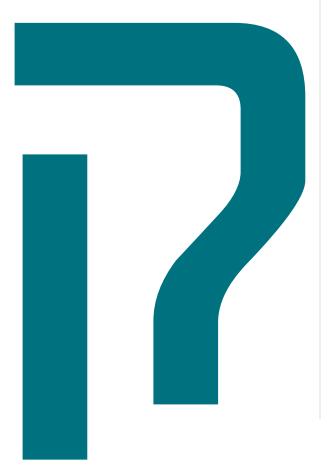
Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University suggests language plays the following roles in identity formation:

- **>>> Boundary maintenance:** Knowing the language means the speaker is a member of the club and naturally allied with other speakers of the language.
- Language as a socializer and conveyer of values and norms: Language is rife with nuance and provides a mode for expressing societal do's and don'ts. Values are named and explained in the language. Although actions also model values, it is the description of the motivation for the act that places it fully in the values domain.
- Language as an emotional act: Emotions are expressed through language and language evokes emotion in the speaker. As with values, language evokes memories and enables the speaker to name the power of those memories.²

Surprisingly, an individual's life is enhanced in diverse ways when one owns Hebrew: one feels a sense of belonging, possesses a deep and visceral understanding of Jewish values that can only be conveyed through language, and builds emotional bonds with Jewish culture and people in Israel and throughout the world.

What is the Role of Jewish Educators and Other Professionals in Making the Case for the Teaching and Learning of Modern Hebrew?

All of the above notwithstanding, we contend that not only is it possible for children in all educational settings to succeed in learning modern Hebrew, it is imperative that we succeed in this area. Success will mean that we can demonstrate rigor and seriousness of purpose in the work of Jewish education. Success will mean that students will feel a sense of deep accomplishment in their ability to master a new language. Success will mean that Jewish life and learning become an open book for students to engage in with confidence and a sense of competence. And, most importantly, success will mean that students will be intimately connected not only to the



Land of Israel, but also to the people and culture of Israel (and consequently Jewish life) on their own terms and in their own language.

What can Jewish educators do to ensure this kind of success for our learners? First and foremost, we must believe in our capacity to succeed in this area. Success might not mean complete Hebrew fluency by high school, but it does mean that teens, for example, are able to engage with their Israeli peers in simple conversations and feel pride in their accomplishments. It will also mean that teens will think they are cool because they know and understand popular Israeli music, or understand what is written on their Israeli T-shirts, or can bang out a few words in Hebrew on social media.

As Jewish educators, we can ensure that our educators (classroom teachers, camp personnel, youth workers, etc.) who are able to teach modern Hebrew are able to take advantage of the requisite professional development opportunities to become proficient Hebrew language educators and to learn to adapt materials for the needs of their learners.

We can also provide multiple frameworks for Hebrew learning in our settings. For example, at the very least, modern Hebrew should be offered as an option in the complementary school setting for eager language learners. In areas where it is possible, synagogues might be able to team up to provide this additional option. Every youth group activity and all camp settings can include modern Hebrew on a regular basis. In order to do this, teachers, youth workers, and camp personnel can be incentivized to take advantage of online Hebrew learning opportunities or other Hebrew language classes.

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With advances in technology and the increased value attached to second language learning in the world of general education, the time is ripe to implement the abovementioned ideas.

Why is now a good time for Hebrew language learning? As Americans have embraced the notion that second language learning is not only possible, but valuable for themselves and for their children, and with the advent of everything from the Rosetta Stone language learning system to online language learning such as eTeacher to language inclusion elementary schools, Jewish parents may now possess an openness to the idea of their children learning Hebrew as a second language. The world has gotten smaller with the advent of technology, and all of our children have friends who come from homes where a native language other than English is spoken. For North American Jews, Hebrew could be a kind of native language, albeit for many a language they have not yet learned.

We need to embrace the notion that Hebrew can be learned, and those who must promote that agenda are the educators, parents, rabbis, and Jewish professionals who understand what Hebrew language learning can provide.

One interesting example of achievement in this field is in several suburban high schools in the greater Chicago area which offer Hebrew as one of the languages students can learn for credit. One student described her public school Hebrew class as an oasis in the non-Jewish desert of a typical American high school. She learned a lot of Hebrew, but she was also part of a Jewish community that met together once a day, five days a week. Hebrew for her and her classmates provided

identity enhancement every day of their high school career.

Jews around the world have known this for decades. The Jews of Mexico, France, South America, Great Britain, and South Africa, among others, have successfully taught modern Hebrew language to generations of students. The professionals in these countries make a commitment to modern Hebrew language learning and work to provide professional development for the faculty, provide materials, and create a culture that supports and celebrates Hebrew learning.

In recent years there has been a renaissance of programs exposing North Americans to modern Hebrew. Whether you are a student of pointillism or pixels, the dots are beginning to form a growing positive picture of modern Hebrew language learning.

So the case can indeed be made that Hebrew should be a significant part of a holistic Israel education curriculum. It is through language that we can most coherently understand a society. For many North American Jews, this significant piece of our connection to Israel is lost in translation. We are doomed to look at Israel from the outside until we possess the secret code. In this case, the code is our birthright, our heritage, and our language. We live in a polarized Jewish world, where every topic is up for debate. Hebrew can be a common symbol of commitment in a time of polarization. We as Jewish educators are responsible for making decisions that determine what our students are exposed to and where they receive their learning. We must seize this day—carpe diem—Ivri Daber Ivrit!5

Further Reading

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ISRAELI ARTS AND CULTURE: THE ABILITY TO ENGAGE

by Vavi Toran

"Music can name the un-nameable and communicate the unknowable." —Leonard Bernstein

Today's Israel is a vibrant kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, tastes, ideas, people, and cultures. Often when teaching Israel, we focus on facts and events, ignoring the dynamic and intense life that is lived. By engaging with the world of arts and culture, however, we are presented with an ideal vehicle for exploring a vibrant vision of Israel.

Arts and culture provide a reflection on the heart of the people and the pulse of society; they bring to the surface themes and ideas that may not find expression in

other ways. They frequently serve as commentary on a particular culture by showing an x-ray of life under certain circumstances at a given time and place. The artists who comment on Israeli culture and society through visual art, literature, poetry, film, dance, music, theater, and other artistic expressions provide the educator with material to delve into Israeli society in a way that speaks not only to the minds of students, but also to their hearts and souls. It is through the common language of art—a language not always verbal—that one gets a hands-on appreciation of a society in the deepest sense.

As a result of the subjectivity in their exploration of a theme and the multiplicity of interpretations they offer, arts and culture provide students with a nuanced experience and a unique understanding of Israel. There is no black or white when examining a piece of art, reading a poem, or listening to



music; this kind of exploration allows multi-faceted beliefs, approaches, opinions, and feelings on the subject of Israel. Just as life exists beyond the scientific and intellectual realm, so do our students, who react with curiosity and excitement when presented with the world of arts and culture.

The philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey noted that art expresses the life of a community.¹ By exploring Israeli art we open for our students a world of wealth and allow them a taste of Israeli society at a particular time and place, as well as a taste of the past. While culture evolves over time, certain traditions within a culture remain over many years, and as such, the culture of a community says much about its people, their beliefs, and their aspirations.

Growing up in the United States and studying its history and culture, students are often presented with works of art that illustrate the visual and intellectual flavors of different eras. They might encounter the poem "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman, which celebrates American workers; The Robie House by Frank Lloyd Wright; the painting Portrait of the Artist's Mother by James McNeill Whistler; illustrations of idyllic small-town America by Norman Rockwell: the anthem of the U.S. civil rights movement, "We Shall Overcome;" pop art by Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol; and present-day hiphop music and graffiti art. These iconic examples paint a picture of American societal history as observed through artistic prisms.

How will we create similar experiences for our students around Israeli history and society? How will we touch their hearts and minds?

How We Put the I in Identity

To illustrate the potential of Israeli arts and culture as a means to engage and affect our students, we must explore a theme that is universal, personal, and relevant to their lives. Through Israeli artistic prisms, we can examine the concept of identity and ask questions that are the core of Jewish education:

- >> What is Israel's place in the identities of American Jewish students?
- >> How do these students connect to Israel, its people, and its culture?
- >> Do these students see themselves as members of a larger community?
- >> How might these students come to view Israel as their own?

As we examine oral and visual texts, we will explore ways in which individual writers, musicians, and visual artists have asked about their own complex identity, sense of belonging (or alienation), and what, for them, constitutes home. Through their art, we learn that the many factors that inform their answers—factors such as religion, gender, history, and ethnicity—also inform our answers to these questions.



The Engaged by Reuven Rubin

In this 1929 self-portrait of Rubin with his soon-to-be bride, we observe a visual duality of East meets West and urban meets rural. The couple is situated on a balcony overlooking the urban landscape of early Tel Aviv. Rubin dressed the characters in European attire with native or oriental hints portrayed in a flowery scarf around the groom-to-be's shoulder. Rubin portrays the couple's connection to the land and the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* by the lamb sharing their tight sitting space.

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"Oren" (Pine) by Leah Goldberg

כאן לא אשמע את קול הקוקיה, כאן לא יחבוש העץ מצנפת שלג, אבל בצל האורנים האלה כל ילדותי שקמה לתחיה. Here I will not hear the voice of the cuckoo, Here the tree will not wear a cape of snow, But it is here in the shade of these pines my whole childhood reawakens.

צלצול המחטים: היה היה אקרא מולדת למרחב השלג לקרח ירקרק כובל הפלג, ללשון השיר בארץ נכריה. The chime of the needles: Once upon a time I called the snow-space homeland, and the green ice at the river's edge, was the poem's grammar in a foreign place.

אולי רק ציפורי מסע יודעות כשהן תלויות בין ארץ ושמים את זה הכאב של שתי המולדות. Perhaps only migrating birds know suspended between earth and sky the heartache of two homelands.

איתכם אני נשתלתי פעמים, איתכם אני צמחתי, ארנים, ושורשי בשני נופים שונים. With you I was transplanted twice, with you, pine trees, I grew, roots in two disparate landscapes.

In her poem "Pine," written shortly after her arrival in pre-state Israel in 1935, Leah Goldberg expresses homesickness and longing for her native Russia while residing in a new homeland. With metaphors from nature, Goldberg conveys the pain of being uprooted and planted in the new soil of a different landscape, and of hovering between two beloved homelands, forever unsettled. At the time the poem was written, such a sentiment was not at all popular; the national Zionist ethos of homecoming expected Jewish immigrants to Israel to shed their Diaspora mentality and memories, immerse themselves in their new society, and embrace a new identity as a new Jew in a new land.

כדי לקנות שורש

אניתי חנות בדיזינגוף I bought a store on Dizengoff

ורש Corder to strike roots

כדי למצוא מקום ברוול In order to find a place at Roval's

In order to buy roots

אבל But

The people at Roval

אני שואל את עצמי l ask myself

מי הם האנשים ברוול Who are the people at Roval

What have the people at Roval

What goes with the people of Roval

אני לא פונה לאנשים ברוול I do not address the people of Roval

When the people at Roval address me

אני שולף את השפה l pull out my speech

מלים נקיות, Clean words,

כן אדוני, Yes sir,

Please sir,

עברית מעודכנת מאוד, A very up-to-date Hebrew,

The buildings which stand over me here,

גבוהים כאן עלי, Tower over me here,

And the doors that are open to me here

Are impenetrable to me here

בשעה אפלולית At a dark hour

In a store on Dizengoff

אני אורז חפצים I pack belongings

To return to the outskirts

אחרת And the other Hebrew

Erez Biton, who immigrated to Israel as a child from Morocco and grew up in the development town of Lod, conveys another kind of ambivalence towards his place in Israeli society. In this poem, he is torn between the reality of his childhood home in rundown housing projects in Lod and Tel Aviv's Café Roval, known for its bohemian, intellectual, and celebrity clientele. His attempt to

fit in and become a true Israeli—by buying a shop on Dizengoff Street in order to strike a root and belong to the predominantly Ashkenazi mainstream society—proves futile. He feels alienated not only by the elitist, pretentious incrowd that sits in Roval, but also by his own language, one that betrays him by revealing his roots and exposing him as an outsider in his own land.

ARTS AND CULTURE



Fortuna 1 by Ronit Chernika

In a series of paintings entitled Family (2001-2005), artist Ronit Chernika presents mainly female figures that lack facial features and therefore lack an individual identity. Other elements of identification are used to create representations of different sectors of Israeli society.

In Fortuna 1, it is the artist's mother who serves as model and inspiration for the piece. Painted on simple plywood, her faceless portrait is still recognizable as a middle-aged, heavyset woman wearing a simple dress and head kerchief, suggesting she is traditional, possibly Sephardic. The word "Israel," written in the same manner and similar font as on the Emblem of the State of Israel. connotes that this, among many others, is a representation of Israeli identity. It could be the case that in her creative work, Chernika is observing the official collective Israeli identity, and tries to present alternative identities that make up this multicultural nation.

"Elohay" ("The Lord My G-d") by Kobi Oz

... I have so much to tell you yet you know everything
I have so many requests of you but you anyway want the best for me
I give you a little smile
for everything of beauty I notice impressive or delicate...

While we, as Jewish educators, are wondering about the place of Israel in North American Jewish identity, many Israelis are exploring the place of Judaism in their Israeli identity. For decades, there was a clear line of separation between the religiously observant and the secular, with nonobservant Jews mostly refraining from embracing more than just the basic Jewish rituals and being resistant to the study of traditional text. In the past few years, there has been a renewed interest in Judaism among secular Israelis, who are rediscovering and embracing Jewish heritage and learning.

Artists are no exception to this phenomenon, and they express this search for Jewish meaning in all media. Musician Kobi Oz recently released an album Psalms for the Perplexed— a result of explorations of his relationship with Jewish texts, beliefs, and family traditions in conjunction with contemporary life in Israel. In his song "Elohay," he pays tribute to his late grandfather, Rabbi Nissim Messika, who was a religious poet/rabbi in his congregation in Tunisia. Not long after his grandfather's death, Oz discovered old cassettes that Messika had recorded. and he integrates them seamlessly into this song.





Natala (Netilat Yadayim cup, container for washing hands) by Roie Elbaz

An exhibition at Beit Hatfutsot entitled Judaica Twist reveals how product designers and other artists of applied art deal with similar questions regarding their connection to Judaism. As part of this exhibition, artist Roie Elbaz designed a container for the ritual hand-washing which mimics a military jerrycan used primarily for carrying fuel. The jerrycan is beautifully carved with traditional Hebrew lettering spelling natala, declaring its purpose, and army dog tags hanging from one of its two handles. By sanctifying an object associated with the military, Elbaz is commenting on the central role of the military in Israel and how it filters into all parts of Israeli culture and society, religion being no exception. The colors of blue and khaki that he uses symbolize the combining of kodesh and chol (sacred and mundane), Judaism and militarism, and religion and secularism.



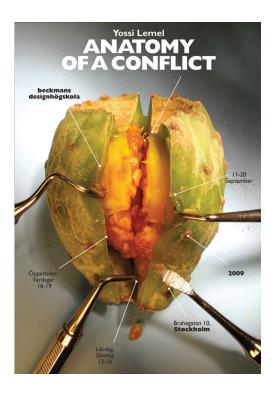
Untitled (The Last Supper) by Adi Nes

Israeli photographer Adi Nes deals directly with the issues of identity in many of his works, tackling difficult subjects like homelessness. homosexuality, life in the army, and soldiers. In one of his most famous pieces Untitled (The Last Supper), he reimagines Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper with Israeli soldiers taking the roles of the twelve Apostles and Jesus. For Nes, every detail is carefully staged to the last detail, so when he inserts an additional soldier in this scene famous for having precisely thirteen people in it—it is deliberate. The additional soldier is watching the scene, causing us to wonder: Who is he? Who does he represent? There is an uneasy feeling lingering in this scene of fraternal camaraderie so typical of the macho Israeli army where eighteen-year-olds face the knowledge that they may never see their next birthday. "I wanted to express the idea that in Israel, death lingers," says Nes.²



Cactus by Durar Bacri

Bacri, an Israeli Arab born in Acco, depicts his landscape as a busy, somewhat ugly urban area which he observes from his rooftop. In this piece, he paints the view from his apartment in South Tel Aviv, a neighborhood which is home to many foreign workers. Ironically, the metaphor for Israeliborn Jews, the Sabra (cactus pear in Arabic)—prickly on the outside, sweet on the inside—is also an Arab symbol of resilience and tenacity, and is a natural fence that keeps in livestock and marks the boundaries of family lands. In many of his paintings, Bacri situates the cactus on the boundary or ledge of the roof. This may symbolize boundaries, but in his case, the cactus might also stress the fact that this is his home—albeit a temporary one—just like a portable plant. Bacri states, "My paintings are made by melting ideology, politics, biology, geography all together and translating them into a new reality that can exist only in my works."3



Anatomy of a Conflict by Yossi Lemel

Yossi Lemel, Israel's foremost graphic artist and poster designer, nails this dichotomy of narratives by dissecting the symbolic cactus pear on the surgeon's table. An open-heart surgery, if you will. Lemel sees himself as an X-ray technician, someone who reflects on the condition or situation of a patient. In this case, Lemel diagnoses the condition of a society in order to create awareness and hopefully inspire action.

Srulik

In order to examine what was believed to be typical Israeli identity, we turn to the mythical Israeli-born Sabra. The first native Israelis in a new land saw themselves as a new breed of Jew: free, young, direct, innocent, and patriotic. A well-known artistic and symbolic representation of the Sabra was published in the daily Ma'ariv in 1956, when Srulik ("little Israel") was born. Illustrator and caricaturist Dosh (Kariel Gardosh) gave him several items characteristic of the Sabra: shorts, biblical sandals, and a "Tembel hat" (dunce cap). For the next forty-four years, until his death in 2000, Dosh continued to comment on Israeli life, society, and politics through Srulik, who remained forever young.

Several decades later cartoonist Dudu Geva, known for creating characters that are the antithesis of the innocent and sweet Srulik, gave his rendition of this mythic Sabra in a tribute to Dosh. In this cartoon, Srulik is depicted as an overweight, middle-aged couch potato, losing his eternal youthfulness.

In 2008, the postal service announced a competition for a 60th anniversary postal stamp featuring a representation of the "typical Israeli." The competition, won by illustrator Eli Kameli, drew much criticism for promoting a redesign of the irreplaceable Srulik and the very idea that there even exists a "typical Israeli."



Srulik, by Dosh



Srulik, by Dudu Geva



Srulik, by Eli Kameli



Street Art and Graffiti

The walls are talking to you in neighborhoods across Israel. The popular global phenomenon of street art and graffiti caught on in Israel several years ago and artists have transformed many inner city streets into an outdoor canvas for their art and opinions. Walking through these streets and enjoying the clandestine oeuvres is not the whole story behind that genre. While many of the works could be universally understood, a distinct local flavor emerges upon closer examination. Many of the artists declare their identity, and address historical, political or social issues; street and graffiti artists are making a statement and creating a visual public forum for interaction, dialogue, and sometimes banter. The very nature of street art is its transience and therefore its need to be relevant and succinct in real time. Encountering street art and graffiti, whether it is in an urban area or on the separation wall, is the visual manifestation of the artists' diverse identities and the country's zeitgeist.





Rabin's Assassination Graffiti in Florentine

Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995 sparked a huge public mourning that took the form of candle lighting and public graffiti on the walls around what is now Rabin Square in Tel Aviv. The walls, drawn mostly by adolescents and youth, were later painted over leaving but a small portion of the graffiti aptly saying "Slicha" (forgiveness). They serve as a testament to a generation's expression of their grief in their own distinct way. Approximately a year later, on a large concrete structure in Tel Aviv's Florentine neighborhood, Yigal Shtayim painted an ominous black and white graffiti version of the assassination, based on a well-recognized home video that documented this pivotal moment a moment that is etched in the nation's collective memory. Unlike most street art, which by nature has a short life, this one is still there thanks to the public's insistence and the respect of other artists.

Poetic-Graffiti

A unique combination of Hebrew poetry and street art might reach out from a small alley and deliver a message. Nitzan Mintz says she has a million things to say. Her succinct poetry and images are publicly published and address a wide range of issues: personal, political, and philosophical — sometimes all at the same time. The medium affects the message and therefore the poems are short, in broken verses, without punctuation or title. They declare an idea on a wall or a tree and lets bypassers glance at it or take a second look and ponder on its deeper meaning.



If the future turns into present it seems that my greatest fears are happening right now



The hole becomes smaller and smaller and doors shut in my face my name is not Alice and this is not Wonder Land

ARTS AND CULTURE

Shirey Moledet | Songs of the Homeland

"Kan" (Here) by Uzi Chitman

באן נולדתי ... Here I was born,

כאן נולדו לי ילדי here my children were born

כאן בניתי את ביתי בשתי ידי Here I built my home with my own two hands

כאן גם אתה איתי Here you are also with me

וכאן כל אלף ידידי and here are all of my thousand friends

ואחרי שנים אלפיים And after two thousand years

...יםף לנדודי... an end to my wandering...

We will conclude our case study by examining the song "Kan" (Here) by Uzi Chitman, which won third place at the 1991 Eurovision Song Contest. It starts with the same word as Leah Goldberg's poem "Pine," and therefore closes a circle. Songwriters are no longer writing Shirey Moledet (Songs for the Homeland), once the staple of Zemer Ivri (Hebrew songs). Today, any love songs for the homeland have an element of protest or lament for lost innocence. Uzi Chitman's song brilliantly leads us from the personal to the national and to Klal Israel (the Jewish people), and serves as a reminder of who we were and what we could still become. "Here" is where we still are, and "there's no other place in the world" for us—whether we reside in it or hold it in our hearts.

Soon after the song was written, Barry Sakharof and Rami Fortis, two of Israel's foremost rock stars, reinterpreted the song in a style that was anything but nostalgic or romantic. More recently, DAM, an Arab/Palestinian hip hop group based in Lod, released a single called "Born Here" in Arabic and Hebrew. The song derives its lyrics and music from the song "Kan" (Here), using it to protest inequality and the

frustration of being second-class citizens in their hometowns.

These two examples serve to highlight the role Israeli artists play in keeping us in check and in diagnosing the state of the nation and its people in creative and engaging ways. What can these examples teach us? What kinds of conversations and reflections can they prompt? How can we make them relevant to our students? How can we encourage our students to creatively express their own relationship with Israel? As the case study demonstrates, exploration of themes and values through the arts creates an engaging, interactive classroom by encouraging dialogue and interpretation.

The Ability to Engage

The arts bring the classroom environment alive; they create stimulating experiences by engaging students with various learning styles and expressions, thus motivating and inspiring each student. Depending on the construction of the lesson or unit, Dewey, John. Art as Experience. New York: Putnam, 1934. Print.
 Hamlin, Jesse. "His photos are lovely, erotic, even a bit disturbing." SF Gate. 2004. Web. http://www.sfgate.com/

Endnotes

3. Bacri, Durar. "CV and Exhibitions." Web. http://www.durarbacri.com/durar-bacri-cv-and-exhibitions/.

entertainment/article/His-photos-are-

lovely-erotic-even-a-bit-2789869.php.

students can interact with the material on many levels, gaining aesthetic appreciation, engaging in critical thinking, analysis and interpretation, drawing meaning, understanding historical and cultural context, and actively participating in creative work.

While recognizing the importance of the integration of arts and culture in Israel education, it is unfortunate that little has been written on the subject; there are but a handful of curricular units in existence. The Internet, however, is an incredibly rich resource. In fact, all of the examples used here—from poems and video clips to visual art—were purposefully lifted from the Internet to demonstrate its potential as an accessible research tool.

In summary, bringing arts and culture into Israel education provides depth and context for students, helping them bridge the knowledge they have acquired on both the intellectual and experiential levels. History, geography, archaeology, and other fields are all invaluable in studying and making Israel real for students, but without the arts, Israel remains one-dimensional and distant. Infusing the curriculum with arts and culture brings Israel to life, making it relevant to today's students, who experience life through their own culture and art. Our students connect to society through music, literature, dance, theater, visual art, and film—all of which show them to be parts of a larger whole.

As teachers, we have the capacity to engage our students in artistic exploration and creative expression. Imagine them gaining an appreciation of Israel and strengthening connections with their homeland while doing so. Go forth and unleash the power of art!



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Drawing at the Bezalel Art Institute in Jerusalem. Vavi joined the Israel Center of the San Francisco-based Jewish Federation in 1996. As the Director of Cultural and Educational Resources of the organization, she helped fashion the Arts and Culture programs that have since become a model locally and nationally. In 2003 she was assigned the position of Director of the Israel Education Initiative, a joint project of the San Francisco-based BJE and the Israel Center. Today, Vavi is the Israel Arts and Culture Specialist at Jewish LearningWorks in San Francisco.

ARTS AND CULTURE



CREATING IMMERSIVE AND INTEGRATIVE ISRAEL EDUCATION

by Alex Pomson and Barry Chazan

The usual questions about Israel education are:

- >> What is Israel education?
- >> What are the contents of Israel education?
- >> How do we do Israel education?

But we believe there is a fourth question, "where should Israel education take place?"



teach them to your children when you sit at home and when you walk on the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

—Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Why Ask Where?

In one sense, the question is misleading. Obviously, we should do Israel education wherever young Jews (or Jews of any age) are: in day schools, complementary schools, camps, JCCs, youth programming, Israel trips, retreats—in the many venues where Jewish education is implemented. But the where question we are asking is not geographical; it's ecological and environmental. What we are really asking is: where does Israel education live in the ecosystem of an educational institution or framework?

To answer that question we are required (of course!) to refer to a prior question cited above: what is Israel education? As many of the chapters in *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition* have made clear, Israel education is a multidimensional activity concerned with the development of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. It involves the nurturing of:

- 1 An understanding of the origins of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, changing narratives of Israel in Jewish life throughout the ages, the rebirth and creation and lifestyle of a modern State of Israel.
- 2 An emotive appreciation of Israel in Judaism and Jewish life.
- 3 Development of a meaningful personal relationship with the State and people of Israel.

With such a full agenda of aims, it is no wonder that the question of how to do Israel education never seems to go away. The agenda of these goals is important, but also hefty.

What would it take to achieve these multiple aims ascribed to Israel education? It requires seeing Israel not as a distinct subject (such as history, geography, or current events) but as an integral dimension of all aspects of the educational settings in which it takes place. To make the same point differently: no matter how powerful the Israel curriculum we develop might be, it is likely to fall short unless we expand our notion of the venues of Israel education. Israel education should live everywhere in the life of an educational framework. It should be part of an immersive environment.

Immersive Environments

Consider how children ordinarily learn the ideas and principles that are valued most by their parents and their communities. Such learning takes place over time and it is not achieved through a specific course of instruction. It occurs

through interaction with significant others who embody and are committed to such values. It is advanced through formative experiences which enable young people to participate in these ideas and values in their own lives. It is enriched by being part of a community that shares these ideas and values. It is realized through opportunities to ask and answer questions that make it possible to deeply understand the meaning of the ideas and principles. Indeed, it truly occurs "when we sit in the house, when we walk by the way... when we lie down, when we rise up!"

Thus, learning about the most important things in life is not, in these terms, delimited by the outcomes of instruction. Such learning occurs through being immersed in certain kinds of educative environments, through experiencing a certain kind of life. Historically, it has been families, local communities, and enveloping cultures that have had the capacity to make such learning possible. These institutions are at the heart of immersive environments where learning is advanced through conversation, practice, ritual, and relationships.

The educational institutions that have come closest to achieving such outcomes are those that possess many characteristics of what twentieth century sociologist Erving Goffman called "total institutions." They are settings—such as boarding schools, army cadet programs, summer camps, or long-term retreats—which can co-opt the full range of experiences in a day, a week, and a month to "speak" the language of the desired ideas and values. The chief characteristics of "total institutions" are:

- All aspects of life are conducted in a similar place and under the same authority.
- Each phase of a member's life is carried on in the company of others.
- All phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled and sequenced.
- The various activities are brought together in a single plan aimed to fulfill the goals of the institution.³

For Goffman, the paradigmatic total institutions were (ironically) prisons and mental hospitals, places that obviously don't offer a desirable template for Jewish education.

However, it is no coincidence, as Jack Wertheimer has argued, that over the last 25 years, the educational forms that have provided the Jewish community with the greatest hope for increased vitality are those that tend to be the most immersive. He essentially is referring to those settings that come closest to possessing the comprehensive qualities of total institutions.4 Camps, Jewish day schools, and Israel experiences seem to be the educational forms that share a readiness to immerse participants in intensive educational settings, minimally for entire school days, or else for weeks at a time, round the clock.⁵ And they seem to have demonstrated a track record of success that has attracted great community support in recent years.

To be clear: the educational power of these programs derives not only from the amount of time they involve (although that often helps), but more significantly from their immersive nature,

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from their capacity to submerge young people in a total experience. It suggests that, if we are to do better at achieving the multidimensional outcomes of Israel education, we need to more effectively utilize the full immersive capacity of our educational institutions.

It is for this reason that we have introduced a new question that we believe is of central importance: where should Israel education take place? Our answer is that Israel education should take place in the totality of the framework in which it exists. It needs to exist in the school mission—and not simply in the written credo. The institutional leaders and owners of the framework must believe in it. Educational leaders are indispensable to the Israel mission. And if the Israel mission does not live in their hearts, the enterprise is threatened or even doomed from the outset. The curriculum, program, or itinerary—the formal contents of the institution must breathe the Israel mission. The non-human artifacts that inhabit the venue—walls, halls, trees, busses, music, holiday foods—must all radiate this mission. Remember Goffman: his belief was that the non-verbal, non-cognitive,

- The extras in Israel education a song, a story, a person, a fable, a recipe, or a picture—may be educational essence.
- Think immersively. Be aware of conditions, intensifiers and vehicles that help create the framework, environment, and forces that upgrade the Israel immersion.

non-discursive elements of a culture are as important, or more so, for conveying cultural norms than the written word or the classroom lesson. Numerous studies of unique schools, from Bettelheim's Orthogenic School in Chicago to Redl and Wineman's Pioneer House in Detroit to Peshkin's Bethany Baptist Academy echo this point.⁶

When Extras Are Essence

There is a tradition that has developed in education whereby there are core contents and subjects and then there are extras. Thus, in general education, the notion has developed that the curriculum should be the focus of schools, with extracurricular activities being supplementary activities (clubs, sports, hobbies, arts and culture) that enrich and embellish. The so-designated extracurricular activities add, enrich and broaden, but they are extra. Moreover, in times of financial or personal difficulties, it is usually the extra that is regarded as dispensable. Indeed, such activities are sometimes denoted as fluff (soft, downy, moss-like), also the name of a popular marshmallow topping for a cake.

In Israel education, it is these extras that may be educational essence. Sometimes a song, a story, a person, a fable, a recipe, or a picture connected to Israel touches those thousands of neurons in the mind, which leads to feeling, thinking, and doing. The immersive approach to Israel education argues that the distinction between *extra* and *intra* is not clear, since people learn and are affected in diverse ways. Don't regard the fluff as extra trim; for some it may be the entryway into the heart of the matter.

Thinking Immersively

Thinking immersively involves a sophisticated approach to education, which calls upon educators to engage a totality of foci.⁷ First, educators must be cognizant of the conditions that constitute the given framework (age level, ideological or denominational affiliation, size of institution, physical factors, and personnel). Second, educators should co-opt overt visionary factors (clear mission, bold leadership, accessible models, people and institutional features that might be denoted as intensifiers) to highlight and upgrade the Israel immersion of the institution. Third, there are a host of vehicles in an educational framework that are potentially educative forces. The curriculum is the most obvious, but it is only one of many. Other important vehicles include: the flow and timing of



a program, venue, decor, food, attire, music, aesthetics of a venue, mix of participants, weather, group dynamics, constellation of staff, and interaction of staff. When searching for shaping forces, the art of the educator is to consider the unlikely factors that could affect the educative moment—and harness them!

Educators must be, as it were, master conductors of a symphony, master chefs and restaurateurs, or hosts of a massive party of diverse guests. The ideal situation occurs when all the components of an immersion experience integrate; but that doesn't always happen. Too often educators are forced to become harried hosts of a smorgasbord that becomes messy and non-aesthetic or conductors of orchestras with dissonant instruments. The challenge for the immersive educator is to turn the buffet of diverse foods into an aesthetic dining experience or to turn the collection of dissonant instruments into a glorious symphony.

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What Will It Take?

Some might argue that we have painted an unrealistic picture of what it will take to do Israel education well. Nurturing an immersive culture can seem like an overwhelmingly complex task. We don't think it is. If the concept of the intensifiers and vehicles of Israel education is used as a heuristic cognitive and organizational device, it is possible to give order to something amorphous and complex that has challenged many institutions until now. By focusing on the different parts of an institution in light of the overall vision, it is possible to start the work of institutional and cultural

change. It is possible to think with precision about how we have impact on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Cultures, we believe, can and do change in ways that are significant if we pay attention to their particulars.

Indeed, almost all Jewish educational settings have the potential to be immersive and to achieve the multidimensional aims of Israel education. Teaching and learning can occur in these places in intensive fashion and can also evolve over time in ways that are developmentally appropriate. If we act with careful planning, Jewish learning can occur—powerfully—in nested communities of the young, and of adults, near-peers, and additional significant others. Because of these special conditions, Jewish education in its diverse forms has the capacity to transform the next generation of contemporary Jews' relationships to Israel. Together, the vehicles of Israel education can take us to places we might otherwise never reach.

Endnotes

- 1. Adapted from Deuteronomy 6:7-9.
- 2. Goffman, Erving. Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961. Print.
- 3. Ibid. 6.
- 4. Wertheimer, Jack. "American Jewish Education in an Age of Choice and Pluralism." International Handbook of Jewish Education, eds. Helena Miller, Lisa Grant, and Alex Pomson. Houten: Springer, 2011. 1087-1104. Print.
- 5. Ibid. 1093.

- Bettelheim, Bruno. Love Is Not Enough: The Treatment of Emotionally Disturbed Children. Glencoe: Free Press, 1950. Print.
- 7. To support this argument, see iCenter research conducted over the last few years by a research team at The Melton Centre for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University with the support of the AVI CHAI Foundation, the Jim Joseph Foundation, and the Schusterman Family Foundation. This research concentrated on some 300 denominational, communal and and modern-Orthodox North American day schools, but its findings have relevance for camps and for supplementary schools, as well as for all institutional providers of Israel education. See Pomson, Alex and Howard Deitcher. "Day School Israel Education in the Age of Birthright." Journal of Jewish Education. 76.1 (2010): 52-73. Print.



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DIVERSE NARRATIVES

by Barry Chazar

"The camera makes everyone a tourist in other people's reality, and eventually in one's own." —Susan Sontag

Cameras

The invention that has intrigued me most is the camera. To this day, I do not understand how it works, but I think it is a magical invention. Things are *out there*—in space, on the street, or in the house—and by pushing a button on a once rather bulky, now svelte black or silver box, that *thing* can be transferred onto a piece of paper or computer screen. Tooth fairies and superheroes may be stretches of the imagination,

but a camera with its diverse lenses seems to be the ultimate miracle. I once met the remarkable photographer, essayist, and teacher Susan Sontag, who explained that photography is as much about the person taking the picture as the picture itself. A photograph depends not so much on the *thing* out there, but rather on the person holding the camera, the spot where he or she is standing, and the angle from which he or she is shooting. The educationist Parker Palmer has said.

We cannot see what is out there by simply looking around. Everything depends on the lenses through which we see the world. By putting on new lenses, we see things that otherwise would be invisible.¹

[Israel] education today is not about facts, knowledge, history, or geography, but rather diverse versions (narratives) of how facts, history, or geography happen.

Narratives, Lenses, and Israel Education

The lenses paradigm is related to what is today popularly called *narratives*. Narratives are ways of looking at the world, and according to this approach, in education we don't teach facts, knowledge, history, or geography, but rather diverse versions (narratives) of how facts, history, or geography happen.

Five Views of the Western Wal











Narratives are not falsehoods; they are rooted in empirical facts, observation, and reflective research by scholars, and are organized and presented to help us find meaning in our past and present. There are few subjects that are more camera and narrative related than Israel. There are few ideas, sites, and things that invite more diverse photographs than Israel. One photographer could take a picture of the Western Wall in Jerusalem and have the image emerge as an other-worldly journey in spirituality. Another person, standing at a different spot, could produce a snapshot of elderly men in garb from several prior centuries, mumbling strange incantations—with nary a woman in sight—and have it emerge as an outdated relic of a yesteryear religion. Still another could take a photograph and have it not at all relate to the Western Wall of the Jews, but rather focus on the mosques of the Temple Mount.

The camera story and the narrative theory are critical for Israel education. There are diverse narratives about the Zionist movement, the establishment of Israel, and contemporary Israel. The most dramatic conflicting narrative versions are clearly between Israel and her neighbors, but within the Jewish world too there are conflicting narratives. Recall the Western Wall vignettes? The pictures just described were taken by people who see the Wall in dramatically different ways.

Israel today lends itself to diverse vantage points, perspectives, and tellings of the story. Indeed, the diverse pictures of Israel are in some ways the essence of life in Israel. The richness of Israel is that everyone is a narrator and everyone is a photographer. We have three tasks concerning lenses and narratives in Israel education.

Our first task is to help our youth learn prominent narratives that Jewish history and life have promulgated and accepted—rooted in both objective realities and research by historians. Our second task is (over time) to teach that one wonderful aspect of Jewish life has been its openness to diverse narrations and narrators; that Jewish life values a tradition of commentary, debate, and discourse which, when effected properly, is regarded as in the name of Heaven (לשם שמיים), i.e. a praiseworthy activity. Our third task is to help our youth become narrators and photographers on their own—to give them the tools to see alternative pictures and hear diverse narratives and hopefully, through their own pictures and stories, to understand a Jewish narrative that speaks to them.



Teaching Prominent Israel Narratives

There are several prominent Israel narratives which our youth should have the opportunity to hear and learn from in their formative years. Understanding these narratives during their early years will enable our youth to deal with conflicting narratives as they grow older. If they do not begin with these diverse narratives as part of their youthful legacy, it will be difficult for them to intelligently deal with complex narratives as young adults. The teaching of these narratives should reflect the best of Jewish scholarship and research. It should be based as much as possible on primary Jewish sources, and it should be pedagogically accessible and interesting.

Birthplace and Covenant

One of the prominent understandings of Israel is that it is the birthplace and sign of the Covenant between G-d and the the Jewish people. According to this narrative, the Jews as a people originated in the ancient Land of Israel;

its early history is almost exclusively related to Israel: and the evolution of its core heroes and values is in Eretz Yisrael. The sagas of the Patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, the vision of the Prophets and their religious-ethical creeds, the monarchies, and the Temple culture are all Eretz Yisrael-based. This entire narrative is wrapped in a grand narrative often denoted as the Covenental relationship (see "Eretz, Medina, Am Yisrael: Navigating Multiple Landsapes"). This narrative is best studied with original Biblical texts such as Genesis 17:8, Genesis 35:12, Exodus 20:12, Amos 9:14-15, Psalm 137: 5-6, and others.

Memory and Hope

This narrative reflects the transformation of a land- and cult-centered Israelite religion into rabbinic Judaism. It is the remarkable saga of Jewish teachers and leaders over the ages and across diverse lands who transformed a cultic-nationalbased people into the Jewish religion. In this narrative, Jews became part of a religious community existing, in varying degrees of accommodation, in diverse host countries while preserving core values, behaviors, and texts of former days. Central to this story is the ongoing remembrance and longing to return to Zion. While out of Israel, the Jewish people used ritual (breaking a glass at weddings, using the words "next year in Jerusalem" at the end of the Passover Seder), prayer, poetry (such as works by Yehuda Halevi), and law (diverse rabbinic and Talmudic statements) to keep Eretz Yisrael and the value of Shivat Zion (returning to Zion) as lynchpins of Jewish existence. Key documents that explicate this vision are Talmudic and rabbinic literature, the prayer book, and literary

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and philosophic writings (e.g. Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 110b, and Baba Batra 60b and 158b, Vayikra Rabba 34:7, Midrash Tehillim 105:1, Rashi on Genesis 1:1, the Shema, the Amidah, and Birkat HaMazon in the siddur). Many of these sources are collected in the Tuvia Book For the Sake of Zion: Pride and Strength through Knowledge: An Educator's Guide.²

Returning To Zion (Shivat Zion)

This narrative reflects a shift from references to Jewish as the religion to 1) the Jewish people's confrontation with modern societies and to 2) the emergence of a modern movement advocating for the physical return of the Jewish people to their homeland. The pre-Zionists (Hess, Kalischer) and the Zionists (Herzl, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, A.D. Gordon, and Rav Kook) weaved a narrative that proposed that Jews could only find haven, creativity, sustainability, and dignity by physically returning to their ancestral homeland. The phrase was always to return and the methods were political, economic, and practical. This movement regarded the Jewish people not as a group of outsiders invading foreign territory, but as an indigenous people returning to their original home. The pinnacle of this narrative is the establishment of a Jewish State, recognized by the world community in May, 1948 and a vibrant statement of this narrative is the Israeli Declaration of Independence (Megillat Ha'atzmaut). This document is a rich resource that encompasses values, history, sociology, and contemporary Realpolitik. The original writings of Zionist thinkers such as Hess, Pinsker, Herzl, Achad Ha'am, Bialik, A.D. Gordon, Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, and Jabotinsky are also useful texts for exploration of this narrative.³

The State of Israel

The fourth narrative is the story of a modern Jewish state and contemporary society for millions of Jews from all over the world (as well as several minority populations), living in a neighborhood of ongoing conflict. This narrative unfolds in art, music, industry, pop culture, government, politics, education, and all those elements which comprise modern societies. It is about many achievements and many challenges. Can the state be Jewish, but also general? Can it be both modern and traditional? Can it be Jewish, but also inclusive of non-Jewish citizens? Can it be Ashkenazi and Sepharadi? Is it a Jewish state or a state of Jews? Can it just be? This narrative is a love story, an adventure story, a drama, a comedy, and at moments a tragedy. It is a story new to the Jewish experience and as such is characterized by all the excitement and complexity of new ventures and experiences.

Tools for understanding:

- Sive our youth "the tools to see alternative pictures and hear diverse narratives and...to understand a Jewish narrative that speaks to them."
- Begin the educational process "in the early years through high school so that by young adulthood, our youth are well-equipped photographers on their own."

The best text for this narrative is clearly the visit to Israel. The more than halfmillion youth between the ages of 13 and 26 who have visited Israel since statehood and have experienced the narrative and photographed it with their own eyes bear testimony to the richness of this text. Unfortunately, this number constitutes a minority of world Jewry. In lieu of the visit—or in preparation for it—the task of Israel education is to create dynamic, engaging resources which make contemporary Israel come alive. In this context, it is useful to coopt Howard Gardner's notion of multiple intelligences and to suggest that a diversity of cameras should be used to capture the State of Israel. Some youth will be ignited by music and others by literature; some by architecture and others by food; some by heroes and others by events; some by politics and others by people. Beyond the trip—which is unquestionably the pedagogic technique par excellence a host of diverse resources now exist or can be created.

The Peoplehood of Israel (Klal Yisrael)

This narrative views the Jews as a world-wide collective living among the nations of the world with a special center called the State of Israel. This narrative is eloquently described in the writings of Achad Ha'am and Mordechai Kaplan which regard the existence of a Jewish state as a central force in the artistic, cultural, intellectual, and interpersonal blossoming of the Jewish people. This narrative focuses on the state as an instrument and catalyst of spiritual, artistic, cultural, and intellectual Jewish creativity and longevity. At the same

time it raises issues of the relationship of Jews outside of Israel to the indigenous population. Are Jews not living in Israel in Exile, 'Diaspora,' Galut, Gola, or are they equal citizens of the State of the Jewish People? What is the connection of Jews worldwide to Israeli life, politics, culture, and policy-making? Can there be global partnership without mutual responsibility? The texts of this narrative are being written everyday and even as we write and read this anthology. They are in novels, poems, academic writings, political activism, lobbies, and national and international Jewish organizational life in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, New York, Ottawa, London, Buenos Aires, and Lima.

Alternative Narratives

The narratives sketched here are not the only Israeli narratives. As noted, there are several alternative non-Jewish narratives of Israel, e.g., Christian, Muslim, and Palestinian. Because of its unique location at the physical and theological crossroads of history, the Land of Israel has been shaping significant narratives for other religions and peoples and indeed for world history.4 The fact of these diverse narratives is an existential reality of the State of Israel and contemporary life. Our goal is not to resolve these complicated dilemmas, but neither are we free to desist from engaging with them in our educational work. Diverse non-Jewish Israel narratives must be taught and they should not be a priori discarded because they are the other.

The existence of these non-Jewish narratives should be referenced both for comparative purposes and also to introduce the idea of other narratives to our youth at an early age rather than waiting until they are rudely made aware of their existence in their college years. At the same time, the existence of diverse narratives should not lead to the conclusion that narratives are simply emotive expressions of personal religious or political loyalty, but rather that there are reasons, understandings, and explanations behind these diverse narratives. The coexistence of diverse narratives does not mean that all narratives are the same or equally coherent. The ability to critically judge diverse narratives with the skill sets defined as cognitive emotions is an important part of Israel education.

The idea of different perspectives is not foreign to children—even young children. They grow up in a multicultural, multi-religion, multi-national world. They know from an early age that there are different ways of being Jewish, and they know that there are different cultures, political parties, and sports teams. We do ourselves a disservice by not indicating that there are other perspectives to Israel: youth often feel cheated or deceived when they learn about them in their later years. Again, it is not our job to engage in a full-fledged comparative political science seminar in conflicting narratives. We have a narrative that we accept as reasonable, compelling, and legitimate; it is our role to present it in an open and engaging way. In teaching the core narratives, we have a unique opportunity to teach something important both about Judaism and about critical thinking. Judaism is a religion, culture, and civilization that has encompassed and

encouraged diverse views on many matters. It is a culture that, on the whole, has encouraged critical thinking and discussion. Critical thinking is not a skill reserved for math, science, and general studies. Our ancestors were among the creators of critical thinking.

It is important that Israel educators be comfortable in their own skin with the notion of multiple prominent Israeli narratives. Like all narratives, parts are very convincing and compelling, and others make us uncomfortable (the American narrative too encompasses both grand and problematic chapters). Belief in the grandeur of the Bible does not mitigate some difficult passages for us and for the rabbis throughout the ages. As our youth approach adolescence and young adulthood, we should be teaching them how to become photographers and narrators. We should be transmitting to them the critical, analytic, and reflective skills to read, discuss, debate, and consider alternative narratives so that, ultimately, they have the ability to create their own narrative.

> DIVERSE NARRATIVES

Further Reading

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Photo credit: Shmulik Belo

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THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

by Michael Soberman and Adam Stewart

Israel education has something about it which most other kinds of education can only dream. It has the *real thing*—the ability to give learners the opportunity to have an actual experience in Israel.

An Israel experience encompasses: tour buses with Wi-Fi, hotels, dogs and cats that understand Hebrew, walls and hills that tell ancient and contemporary stories, and real people living in a thriving modern Jewish nation.

It is almost inconceivable to imagine Israel education without a direct experience in Israel itself—a visit to the place in which a young person can see, feel, hear, taste, and touch the reality that is the State of Israel. Indeed, if there is one facet of Israel education that has proven itself, it is that the power of an effective Israel experience is unmatched and irreplaceable.

In many ways, what we now call the Israel Experience forms the foundation of Israel education. Until recent decades, Israel was often taught as a far-off land with which we should familiarize ourselves in order to complete our destiny as the Jewish people and religion. With the emergence of actual trips to Israel for young people, Israel emerged as an alive, vibrant, multi-dimensional place, which evoked great electricity within the young. The organized Jewish community began to understand the value of a quality educational Israel experience as a powerful force in Jewish identity development.

In recent decades, organized travel to Israel for children, teens, and young adults has developed into a major new arena for Jewish education.

More than half a million young Jews, many of them within the context of Birthright Israel, have had the privilege and pleasure their parents and grandparents never knew. Their visit to Israel has enriched, educated, and transformed them in ways that will affect the broader Jewish world in the coming generation.

In the past two decades, a consensus about the centrality of such an experience for personal identity and communal life has emerged, and a wide constituency within Jewish communities has advocated for the Israel Experience. Once again, Birthright Israel and other pathbreaking Israel educational programs have not only changed the landscape of those who have experienced Israel, but they also have changed conceptions of how we can educate and engage the young in an exciting experiential fashion.



It is this power and value of the experience in Israel that we address in this chapter centering on the following four questions:

- 1 Why is the Israel Experience so crucial to Israel education?
- 2 What constitutes the effective Israel Experience?
- **3** What does the research say about the impact of the Israel Experience?
- 4 What do we imagine the future of the Israel Experience to be?

As we re-imagine the Israel Experience, we will do so within the context of a greatly expanded field.

Why is an Israel Experience so Crucial to Israel Education?

In addition to the anecdotal experiences of practitioners who have seen first-hand the power of an Israel experience to transform the lives of participants, we offer three theoretical reasons that explain and describe why a genuine experience of Israel is so important.

Experience as Education

This approach reflects the thinking of such educators as John Dewey¹ and others concerning the value of experience and education. Dewey reminds us that the process of learning is about far more than the inculcation of knowledge and facts. He considers learning to take place through the interaction of the learner with experiences that take place in his or her environment. If an experience is educative, it will spur the learner to want to experience more, and if it is not, it will narrow the learning process.² When we consider the value of a trip to Israel through this lens, we see that the physical environment of Israel and the experiences that can be facilitated and enjoyed in Israel have enormous potential for education and growth. Effective educators maximize the potential of the environment by creating experiences that stimulate the learner's senses (focusing on the smells, tastes, touches, sounds, and varied sights that are available), creating direct interaction with the environment—through hiking and physical challenge, meeting people, touching the landscape, and more—to create powerful educative experiences.

Theories of Place

Over the past twenty years, social scientists, geographers, and

philosophers have considered the importance of place in the lives of individuals and communities. What gives places their power and roles in our lives? How do we experience different places and what do we learn from them? How does Jewish tradition and culture understand the power of *place*, whether it is Israel as a holy place or other places where Jews live? While answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this document, thinking about the power of place will enrich any discussion about Israel travel education.

Drawing from some of these theories, we learn that the physical surroundings of Israel function as a powerful educational tool, because the subject matter (Israeli history, geography, and culture) matches the setting in which the learning is happening. We can refer to this as *placed learning*: the learning that happens in a place and of that place, so that we learn about Masada at Masada. This idea, combined with the concept of experience, highlights the added power of Israel education in Israel.

Mediating Learner-Centeredness and Values Perspectives

The learner-centered approach to Israel education, discussed in "A Learner-Centered Approach," raises the question of learners' interests and educators' values. On one hand, we want to meet our learners wherever they are experientially; on the other hand, we do not enter the project of Israel education unbiased and without agenda. We want our learners to form a connection with Israel—the land and its people. We want them to experience the sense of community and peoplehood derived from the historic project of nation-building. Parker Palmer insists "good teaching comes from the

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identity and integrity of the teacher"³ and our integrity pushes us toward instilling the same love and passion for Israel that informs our Jewish life and being.

So how do we reconcile these two tensions? In many ways, the Israel Experience itself is the remedy. By allowing our learners to truly and authentically experience a land and its people, we allow them to form their own personal connections, negotiate their own dilemmas, and search for their own truths. The project of Israel—of Zionist nation-building—is one of the great projects of contemporary Jewish life; one of the most foundational



educational experiences we can give our learners is the opportunity to be a part of it.

Yet how we negotiate the space between where they are experientially and where we would like them to be remains an ongoing challenge for the educator. In some ways, negotiating this tension is the essential work of Israel education, and through the essential parts of an Israel experience below, we will attempt to provide some questions, tools, and strategies for success.

What is an Effective Israel Experience?

The act of getting young people to Israel is not a success unto itself. While Jewish communities should be proud of the enormous success in making an Israel experience the norm, we should be more proud of the standards that we have set for an effective Israel experience.

In many ways, the Educational Platform of Birthright Israel⁴ is the culmination of decades of thinking and practice in the Israel Experience. Shaped by Barry Chazan and Zohar Raviv, and influenced by a wide array of educators, trip organizers, and tour educators, the Platform contains a set of "Core Educational Principles" from which we shall borrow in order to highlight the essentials of an effective Israel experience. While we do not suggest that Birthright Israel is the only model for an Israel experience and we do recognize it focuses on a specific age group, the groundwork that Birthright Israel has done in the area of creating an educational platform for Israel experiences is both instructive and useful.

Following each principle, we suggest a set of questions designed to further explore the concept in relation to a specific Israel experience.

1 Learner-Centered Education

The Israel Experience regards people as subject matter along with sites, narratives, and ideas (see "A Learner-Centered Approach"). The needs and interests of young people should be the starting point of educational work, and it aims to engage teenagers and young adults in a meaningful dialogue with Jewish and Israel content. It is committed to a teaching and learning approach rooted in the active engagement and involvement of the learner.

Questions to ask:

- How will this experience intersect with the interests of the intended audience?
- In what ways will this experience contribute to their needs in forming a Jewish identity or living a Jewish life?
- >> What is required, in terms of staff skills, to facilitate this experience?

2 An Experiential Approach

The Israel Experience sees Israel as a diverse landscape encompassing a rich array of interactions, narratives, and places that can be effectively presented in the course of an experience. These experiences are personal, collective, spiritual, secular, political, social, cultural, recreational, and deeply rooted in engagement and interaction with peers.

Questions to ask:

- Whow will this experience use the landscape of Israel to reveal its purpose? What are the specific ways in which this purpose can only be achieved in Israel?
- Whow is this experience curricularized (see "Curriculizing Israel: Principles and Themes") so that learners get an intentionally focused, yet purposely diverse understanding of Israel?
- In what ways will this experience engage the concepts of the Land, the People, and the State of Israel (see "Eretz, Medina, Am Yisrael: Navigating Multiple Landscapes" and "Diverse Narratives")?
- Is our staff trained in best practices of experiential education? How are we leveraging the resources in our community to contribute to their expertise?

3 A Culture of Values

An Israel experience should enable participants to learn about diverse concepts regarding the Jewish people and Judaism. Like any Israel education curriculum, values underlie the purpose of the project and shape the experience in the most fundamental ways.

Questions to ask:

- What are the values which underlie the experience that we want to create?
- > How are these values uniquely presented in Israel?

THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE In what ways does the interaction with these values build upon the experience the learners have had? How does it prepare them for future engagement with these values?

4 A Culture of Ideas

An Israel experience should enable participants to deliberate on ideas and beliefs in a safe and non-judgmental context that fosters open discussion and critical examination of concepts and viewpoints. Our goal is to help participants to experience, think, discuss, and feel during their journey, making their own connections between their experiences in Israel and their daily lives, in the present and in the future.

Questions to ask:

- >> What are the key ideas in which we want participants to engage in the course of this experience?
- » Are we comfortable with open deliberation, and if so, how are we ensuring a dialogue which is safe, non-judgmental, and critical?
- >> Where are these conversations taking place and between whom?
- > How is the staff of this experience trained in best practices of discussion facilitation?

5 An Integrative Approach

An Israel experience should take an integrative approach, which allows participants to seek and establish connections between the different experiences of their Israel trip. It calls upon the curriculum designer

to create a comprehensive set of themes, core questions, and values whose various associations present a meaningful narrative of Jewish identity, Jewish peoplehood, and contemporary Israel. The purpose of the integrative approach is to guarantee an educational coherence that underlies the diverse experiences of the program.

Questions to Ask:

- What are the themes that will guide the presentation of subjects in this experience? (See "Curricularizing Israel: Principles and Themes")
- In what ways are the days and sites woven together in a narrative that is rich but coherent?
- When have we decided what's in and what's out based on our approach to the subject matter rather than our preconceived notion of what the Israel Experience requires?
- How is our staff prepared to understand and utilize these themes to effectively present a narrative?

6 A Social Interactive Experience

In the Israel Experience, the group experience, itself, is important to identity development, and promotes community as an essential building block for the Jewish future. As such, the integration of Israeli peers is regarded as a valuable component in individual identity development and in social networking for overseas Jews and their Israeli counterparts.

Questions to Ask:

- >> What are the common elements among these learners upon which to build an interactive experience?
- >> How does the program—the timing, the flow—facilitate social interaction amongst the group?
- In what way will learners interact in a meaningful and authentic way with people in or from Israel and in what specific ways does this interaction contribute to the goals of the program? How is our staff trained to facilitate crosscultural dialogue?
- 7 An Emotionally Engaging, Intellectually Challenging, and Enjoyable Culture

The Israel Experience models
Jewish learning and experience in
enjoyable and gratifying ways that
are as emotionally engaging as they
are intellectually challenging. A
fun atmosphere is not seen as the
antithesis of education, but rather,
if utilized properly, an essential step
toward its facilitation.

Questions to Ask:

- In what ways are pleasure and fun built into the programmed experience? Are these elements part of, or separate from, the values-based agenda of the program?
- Does the flow of the program contribute to an enjoyable atmosphere? Is there enough downtime and opportunities to reflect?

Is the staff of the program funloving and enjoyable to be around?

8 Outcomes Oriented and Self-Reflective

As part of engaging in an Israel experience, a community or organization must be committed to measuring outcomes and to using those measures to provide feedback, reflective upgrading, and ongoing change and improvement to the Israel Experience program.

Questions to Ask:

- >> Who are the stakeholders (including participants) in this experience and what are their interests in the outcomes?
- Which outcomes do we plan to measure and how do we propose to capture them?
- Whow will learning be presented?
 By whom and to whom?
- What is the mechanism by which learning will inform future Israel experiences?

What Do We Know About the Israel Experience?

In preparation for creating an Israel experience, we recommend an examination of some of the considerable research that has been done about the Israel Experience. This research, both qualitative and quantitative, describes the educational processes and impacts of a trip to Israel. A bibliography and references are included at the end of this article.

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Here are the key facts we believe to be fundamental to the Israel Experience as it is now practiced and as it should be evaluated in the future:

Impact. There is a long-term correlation between participating in an Israel trip and strengthened dimensions of Jewish identity. The trip impacts on the lives of participants, although the nature of that impact is debatable and difficult to determine. Still, it is clear from the data that the more people who get to Israel, the more they will connect to their Jewish identity and to Israel.

Community Context. More Jews still have not gone to Israel than those who have, and changing this fact alone will have enormous impact on the Jewish community. It has taken a mammoth effort to begin to change the paradigm; as a result, more than 500,000 people have been on Birthright Israel, and the field has been expanded and strengthened.

Purpose and Planning. A good Israel experience does not happen by virtue of a trip taking place. Not all Israel experiences are the same, and there is a diversity of qualitative educational components that matter.

Program. Trips must be adapted to ages and developmental needs. In addition, the *mifgash* is often cited as the most meaningful and impactful part of any Israel experience and that it is often the most neglected component of the program. The experiential nature of the program and group dynamics are key factors for the success of an Israel experience and, therefore, affinity group programs tend to yield more positive and lasting impact.

Staff/Educators. The educational staff is instrumental in the overall effectiveness

of the experience. The individuals we choose and how we train them are key elements of the program. Recently, we have seen a proliferation of programs aimed at properly training trip staff for their roles as *madrichim* on the Israel Experience, and this may be one of the most important ways in which we can continue to grow and strengthen the Israel Experience.

Conclusion. There is still a great deal that we do not know about the Israel Experience, particularly about the interaction of all the characteristics, the role that educators play, and the significance of pre- and post-trip learning. We look to the research community to consider these questions.

A Vision for the Future

The Israel Experience field has grown and developed through various stages. It had modest beginnings, in which just a few thousand of the most engaged teenagers visited Israel, usually at the age of sixteen or seventeen, on six-week summer trips organized by youth movements and camps. The field then expanded to include dayschools, supplementary schools, and congregations which offered a wider variety of ages and lengths of stay. But the majority were still untouched by an Israel experience, and those with big imaginations had always dreamed of a time when every young Jew would be able to visit Israel. Those dreamers revolutionized the field with the creation of Birthright Israel. The Masa Israel Journey initiative and Onward Israel seek to expand on this success by enabling a longer term Israel experience (for two months, five months, or a full

year). This development of the field has shown that in the arena of Israel travel, there is always room to dream and grow.

Contemporary stakeholders and thought leaders challenged our major assumptions about an Israel experience program. Could we do a meaningful program in a shorter period of time? What if we removed price as one of the major obstacles to participation? This type of revolutionary vision transformed the Israel Experience into a major force in education. We wish to add our own imaginings to this dreaming, as we consider what is still to be achieved in this field, and what the impact might be on individuals and whole communities if the Israel Experience moves to a new phase:

New Contexts. Currently, Israel experiences take place in a relatively small number of communal contexts. If one doesn't belong to a particular school, youth movement, or congregation, or is not between 18-26, there are very few opportunities to visit Israel in an organized framework. Imagine new contexts for traveling to Israel, in the framework of JCCs, early childhood centers, Jewish workplaces, or with all congregations and community organizations. Consider the possibility of virtual communities that currently exist through various social media, becoming realized in actuality for the purposes of a trip to Israel.

New Populations. The overwhelming majority of Israel Experience participants are between the ages of 16 and 26. There are enormous possibilities for expanding the age demographic to include participants of other ages and life stages. A few ideas include: massive expansion of the Israel Experience as a multi-generational family experience,

perhaps connected to bar/bat mitzvah; school trips, pre-teen experiences, young professionals, newly married couples, intermarried couples, and various family constellations and trips for retirees.

New Programmatic Elements. Although Israel is an incredibly multifaceted and complex country, Israel experiences tend to have a fairly standard program and set of programmatic elements. We suggest that it is time to think much more broadly about the possibilities of what can be done during a trip to Israel. There are so many ways to connect Israel experiences to professional and other niche interests for lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and those interested in sports, Hebrew language, Jewish text, politics, music, literature, food, and much more.

Conclusion

There has been more research on the impact of an Israel experience on adult Jewish identity than any other form of Jewish education—and the results are significant. It may still be argued that the field, especially in the pre-collegiate years, is in a nascent stage. Programmatic options need to be expanded; financial resources are unstable; and in some circles, the case still needs to be made.

A wise investment strategy is to invest in what is known to succeed. If the success we desire is a stronger Jewish community that is connected to Israel and the Jewish people, then any strategy aimed at increasing the numbers of people participating in quality programs needs to be embraced

THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE today. And all practitioners of Jewish education, in whatever framework, will see the benefits when they deliberately include an Israel experience as a key element in their work. We have a dream that every Jewish educational setting—be it camp, day school, supplemental school, or youth group—will one day have an Israel experience as part of its curriculum.

"If you will it, it is no dream." Theodor Herzl's words have been the mantra or call to action for the Jewish people for over 100 years. We have gotten where we are today by following our dreams and making those dreams, however ambitious, a reality. We believe that anything is possible if enough people believe that everything is at stake. Given the unquestionable power of the Israel Experience at strengthening Jewish identity and connection to the Land and people of Israel, the dream that every Jewish person participates in an Israel experience is not an unattainable dream.

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For all of the research on Birthright Israel, and more, see the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, www.cmjs.org.

For a good collection, and links to research on Israel and Israel experience education, see www.jewishfederations.org.

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RELATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

by Anne Lanski, Adam Stewart, and Yehudit Werchow

"When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, G-d is the electricity that surges between them."

—Martin Buber

The Israel of Anne, Adam, and Yehudit includes places, experiences, and memories; but most of all—relationships. These personal connections shape our lives. Our Israel is very much related to the people we care about who often live 6,000 miles away.

A Conversation with Friends

Anne Lanski

I loved our shlichim. They came to summer camp and to our community. Hearing Hebrew spoken (including to me), tasting Israeli salad and schnitzel, learning about Israeli current and historical events, hearing all kinds of Israeli music—all comprised my first "Israeli" immersion experience. These relationships transcend time and distance. Decades later, we remain like family.

Yehudit Werchow

As an Israeli, one of the most exciting experiences of traveling outside of Israel is being welcomed and hosted by friends and family, or, by people who at the moment we met were complete strangers and by the end of our time together become part of my life and family and vice versa. I am always deeply moved by the generosity of people; their willingness to open their homes and hearts, immediately expands my heart and helps me become more present and more curious about them and about myself. noth means "letting in"—and it's unsurprisingly the most appropriate way of describing the reciprocal impact of such unique encounters. In order to let someone in, the host needs to create space; this action reshapes the "traditional" roles between the host and the guest so that now, both get to enrich the space with their presence and their inner worlds, creating together a shared "home." This kind of hospitality is essential for creating meaningful and lasting relationships between us, and ultimately strengthens our shared home and our people.

Adam Stewart

When I was sixteen years old, I traveled around Israel for six weeks with Israeli peers. My experience in Israel—the things I saw, the places I visited, and the ideas that I encountered—are forever shaped by these people and they continue to impact the way in which I experience Israel.

My friends from high school, from college, and from my professional life all form a real and authentic collective of my past and inform how I digest the news of the day. When something happens in Israel—good, bad, ugly, or beautiful—I always contextualize it against the feelings and experience of the Israelis I know. A phone call, an email, or even an imagined conversation form the authentic foundation of my relationship with Israel.

From Mifgash to Relationship-Building

The term "mifgash" (encounter) initially referred to a program component of an Israel trip, whereby overseas participants met Israeli peers. This concept has emerged from a program element to a foundational requirement for a "good" Israel experience and serves as a guiding principle in Israel education, wherever it occurs. Israel education is about building meaningful and lasting relationships, which become the connections that sustain, nurture, and enrich us. Mifgash as a tool is timebound, a framework that is mostly artificial and perhaps best viewed as a trigger for a longer meaningful relationship. Relating to each other, North Americans and Israelis, educators, and students, in Israel and abroad, is a key goal of Israel education. Relationship-building processes begin and end with the participants and their inner world, and then move towards the collective.

Components of Relationship-Building

How can we enable meaningful relationship-building as part of our educational work?

- 1. Hospitality is an essential starting point for encounters between people.
- Mutuality of experience is assumed as each participant has something to gain and to learn from the partnership.

- 3. Responsibility for something larger than the encounter—that the sum of these meetings is greater than its parts. The net result of the project strengthens the vibrancy and sustenance of the Jewish people.
- 4. Relatability through an inclusive language and dialogue that makes relationships the subject of the project rather than the tool by which it is achieved.

RELATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Hospitality

Anne Lanski

I always remember the amazing welcome our American participants received upon arrival in Israel. They exited the terminal, suitcases in hand—nervous, exhausted, and excited all at the same time. The sliding doors opened and suddenly dozens of Israeli participants holding "b'ruchim ha'baim" signs and balloons, and singing Hebrew songs excitedly rushed into the group of "their" Americans with welcoming handshakes, smiles, and hugs. Giant circles were created and together they sang songs, linked arms, and jumped to the left shouting "achim, achim, simcha, simcha!" The energy and spirit permeated the arrival terminal and everyone in it. Spectators smiled and stared in amazement. Within minutes, they loaded the bus together and I could not tell for sure who was Israeli and who was American.

This group would spend every minute together until that moment at the end of the trip in the departure terminal where the hugs were strong and tears were flowing. As a result of their shared adventure, there was much discovery. Separating, they realized they felt more whole for having been together and at the same time, less complete for having to separate.

And in contrast, I looked over at the other American groups in the arrival terminal. Suitcases in hand, they were solely greeted by their Israeli tour guide and simply followed a sign with their group number held high in the air.

When we prioritize "relationship" over "encounter," we are able to invite each other—learners, participants and educators—into a shared space in which that relationship can develop.

Our posture then is not one of examination (i.e. how does one learn from the other), but rather one of mutuality (i.e. how do we experience together and learn from each other).

Mutuality

Adam Stewart

As an educator, I found my own authentic voice through *mifgash*. In my early years as a *madrich*, I scrambled to accumulate as much information as I could about Israel, Israelis, sites, history, and politics. That collection of information and the passion to learn serves me still to this day, but what defined me as an educator was the realization of the limitation of my own voice. It struck me one day in the Old City of Jerusalem, as I listened to one of my co-staff. He told

the story of growing up in the Old City as a secular Jew, at a time when many secular and religious Jews lived side-by-side in the Jewish Quarter. He talked about playing hide and seek in the alleys, and the time that *Kippi Ben Kippod*, the giant porcupine character from the children's show *Shalom Sesame*, came for a visit to film an episode. I realized that I could never tell this story.

It was not a disappointing discovery; rather, it relieved a burden. It wasn't important how much he (or I) knew about this place, but instead how we knew it. How we related this information to our participants became more of a function of how we related to the places and to the participants themselves rather than the primary knowledge presented. Moreover, the complement of both of our voices—American and Israeli—created a far better Israel experience than either of our voices could have alone.

We no longer assume that bicultural interaction is only a way in which we can learn more about a culture. It is also a way in which a new dimension of our selves can be explored. In this case, the

sum of the parts is truly greater than the whole. What emerges is not simply greater cultural awareness on both sides, but something new: a relationship that has a life and strength of its own.

Responsibility

Yehudit Werchow

At a peoplehood learning-workshop at *Beit Ha'tfusot* (The Museum of the Jewish People), participants were invited to select and articulate components of their identities. Once each of us selected our components, we were invited to identify pieces similar to our own by exploring those introduced by others. The beauty and power (עוצמה) of the experience emerged when I discovered the sameness and otherness amongst the components of the diverse identities present in the room.

While many of us wrote Israel as one of the core elements of our identities, there were so many Israels and so many roles and adjectives related to it. It was home, comforting, confusing, complex, simple, and more. Through personal and sincere conversations with other participants, some of the components I defined so carefully gained new dimensions and my experience of Israel was enriched and transformed. Engaging in reciprocal, authentic, and thoughtful relationships with each other expanded our personal and shared ideas and understandings of ourselves and of the world.

RELATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

We understand that the project of building relationships is not simply about the individual exploration that it involves, but rather the sense of responsibility that it inspires—a responsibility to Jewish peoplehood.

Relatability and The Role of Language

The language that we use to describe this work shapes our consciousness about how we understand it.

Through emphasizing "relating" over "encounter with the other," we emphasize our goal of making the relationship foundational.

Examples of a shift in language:

	Mifgash	Relationship Building
Summer Camp (Shlichim)	 Refer to Israeli staff throughout the summer as the "Mishlachat." Defined by role, rather than by mutual responsibility and the richness of our personalities. 	Yossi, Gali, and Noa are joining our camp family as partners in education.
Israel Experience (Mifgash)	 >> Prepare for "the encounter" by understanding differences to avoid cultural misunderstanding. >> Israelis understand their role is to explain and teach. • Emphasizing what separates us and the differences between us (mainly using stereotypes). 	 Emphasize commonality to enable an organic relationship of which differences are a part. Understand Israelis as group participants, not guests.
In Communities (Twinning)	 Israeli guests (peers and educators) bring Israel to our community. Emphasizing their role as transmitters of culture rather than relationship builders. 	Israeli friends and colleagues enable authentic and meaningful experiences in our community.

Relationship building with Israeli peers and colleagues can happen virtually or in-person, in Israel or abroad, at home or at summer camp, in school or anywhere where people communicate, learn, and experience together. In an age of interconnectedness, relationship provides a way for people to explore and connect to Israel in a way that is authentic to them.

together, transforming them into the shared experience of "us" rather than "me" and "you." Zelda's poem is about relating and relationships.

Relating is the process of establishing sympathetic connections between people and people, and people and things. It is the feeling of being linked to, and connected with, another. David Brooks describes this as transcendence.¹

These are moments we all know and feel. The moments when we truly connect with a friend, a colleague, a prayer, a place, or a spouse, and we feel complete being in sync with someone else and with our self. Relating is that process, and relationship is the sustained experience of being tied to another.

What exactly
is an authentic
relationship? How
we move forward is as

varied and diverse as the people who are coming together to form the field of Israel education.

As Zelda's poem suggests, the process begins with the words "my" and "your" and quickly proceeds to shared moments; holidays that we both love, to changing seasons, changing weather, and seasonal fruit which become the common thread that turns "my" into "ours."

"My Peace" by Zelda

My peace is tied with thread to yours.

And the holidays we love,
the wondrous seasons of the year
with their treasure of fragrance, the flowers
the fruit, the leaves and the winds,
with the mists and the rains,
the unforeseen snows,
and the dew,

Taking a Look Again: Redefining Mifgash

The first line of the poem by Zelda (pen name of Zelda Schneersohn Mishkovsky) suggests an exciting dynamic of initiating, expanding, and significantly deepening the nature of the meeting between people. The poem introduces the idea of "threads" that tie experiences

hung on the thread of yearning.

RELATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Endnote

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THE EDUCATOR: THE POWER OF TEACHING, THE POWER OF LEARNING

by Clare Goldwater and Lesley Litman

Think of a powerful learning moment in your life. Where were you? Who guided you through this moment? What made it a learning moment and, more importantly, what made it so powerful? Powerful learning can occur anywhere. However, turning a given moment into an important learning experience demands a set of skills that includes recognizing the potential in the moment and knowing how to capitalize upon it for maximum impact. That is the core work of passionate and knowledgeable Israel educators. This piece will explore the characteristics and actions that are necessary for these Israel educators to foster and nurture powerful learning moments as they relate to Israel learning and engagement.

In considering the potential impact of Israel in educational settings, we need only go back to our own experiences of Israel inspiration and to those educators who inspired us—whether on our first tiyul, meeting our first Israeli and hearing his or her stories, or encountering Israel at camp through music and play—in order to understand the power inherent in each of us to create deep connections to Israel and our Jewish selves.

We start with a few definitions that will guide our thinking on this topic, from the general to Israel specific:

1 Who is an Educator?

The moment we are in a position to affect another human being's perspectives, we enter into the role of educator. Educators can be youth group leaders, camp counselors, classroom teachers, Israel trip leaders, and rabbis, among others.

Whatever word we use to describe ourselves, as educators (in the broadest sense) we are charged with facilitating the ongoing growth and transformation of our learners. As educators, we bring a deep sense of caring for others to our work, an intention to broaden the horizons of our learners, and a desire to enrich their lives in some tangible and meaningful way.

2 What is Considered Educational Activity?

Our approach to what is considered an educational activity is expansive and inclusive. Essentially, anywhere learners and educators gather to engage in the work of learning and teaching is considered an educational activity. And, educational activity occurs in a broad array of settings the classroom, a living room, a patch of grass, a beach, and more. At the same time, certain venues bring an added dimension of significance to a learning moment; in particular, those venues that might be considered authentic are where the learning is lived out in real time and real space. For more on this point, see "Creating Immersive and Integrative Israel Education" and "The Israel Experience."

? Who is an Israel Educator?

What makes an educator specifically an Israel educator? Do we include a camp counselor who (in the course of a summer) leads some Israel-focused activities? What about a rabbi who regularly answers questions about Israel? Or a Jewish studies teacher who includes study of the Land of Israel in the study of Bible? To all these examples and more, we say

yes—you are an Israel educator if Israel forms a meaningful part of the educational work in which you are involved. Whether or not Israel is in your job description or your title, if you are concerned with connecting your learners to the Land and State of Israel, then this chapter is talking to you. And we believe that you are involved in enormously inspiring and challenging work.

We might refer to the Israel educator as a moreh derekh—which in Hebrew literally refers to someone who "points to" or "leads the way." This phrase was coined by early Zionist educators to refer to tour guides who inspired generations of young Israelis to love the land of Israel by walking its length and breadth. For us, especially outside Israel, an Israel educator is a moreh derekh who can take his or her learners on a figurative (and sometimes literal) journey through the depth and breadth of Israel studies and inspire them to feel at home in the Israeli landscape.

4 Being an Israel Educator

In summation, being an Israel educator is an exciting prospect that demands the best from us. The Israel educator, in addition to having a purpose for Israel education, knowing the subject matter deeply, and using the most effective pedagogical techniques, must also (as Parker Palmer argues on behalf of all educators in The Courage to Teach¹) be able to teach from within, be able to teach from their own selfhood. The truth is that these demands are true for all educators, no matter what or where they are teaching. But they find unique expression and contain unique challenges for

Israel educators. In the next section we will look at what being an Israel educator requires of us, and the challenges that go with it. At the end of this chapter we will make some suggestions for how you may strengthen yourself as a passionate and knowledgeable Israel educator.

The Israel in Me

The first demand for Israel educators is to address the most important factor in Israel education: Israel as it lives inside of me, the Israel educator.

Parker Palmer describes what he calls "two of the most difficult truths about teaching:"

The first is that what we teach will never 'take' unless it connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives, with our students' inward teachers. ... The second truth is even more daunting: We can speak to the teacher within our students only when we are on speaking terms with the teacher within ourselves.²

So, we must access our own emotions and beliefs about Israel and use them consciously.

At the same time, we recognize that Israel raises deep emotions in teachers, parents, and learners alike. These emotions are not always positive. For example, in a teacher education class on the topic of teaching Israel, the lecturer asked aspiring teachers about their own relationship with Israel. While several learners gleefully described their love of Israel and the exciting and engaging visits they had made there,

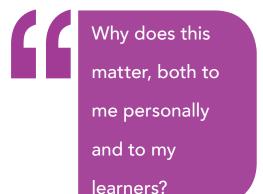
THE EDUCATOR one usually vocal and articulate learner was particularly quiet. With some prodding, she described her ongoing sense of conflict around her personal relationship with Israel as well as her ensuing difficulty in projecting an enthusiasm about and love for Israel to her learners. In short, she described feeling like a fraud.

Hence, Israel, even for the most committed Jew, is a complex and sometimes conflictual topic. While it is unreasonable to expect that we have all worked out all the questions and concerns we harbor about Israel, it is certainly reasonable to demand of ourselves that we reflect on our own personal Israel biography, on our own relationships and engagement with, and questions about Israel. As we evolve and mature, our relationship with Israel must mature and develop so that it remains part of us, authentically connected to our own personal journeys.

Thus, authenticity in Israel education can only be achieved when the deliverer of that education is authentically connected with his or her own feelings and passions about Israel. This authenticity will then naturally lead one to grapple with the why of Israel education: Why does this matter to me? Why should it matter to my learners? And that brings us to our purpose. It does not necessarily take a complicated professional development program to help teachers to connect to their inner selves, according to Palmer. Sometimes it only takes time, solitude, journaling, and/or the opportunity to talk with colleagues.

Purpose

Before we even approach a group of learners, we have to know our end goal, our purpose, the real reason that we are interested in doing what we are doing. And often the questions related to purpose are relegated to second priority, behind the questions of how and what, which tend to be more immediate and pressing.



But it is critical for educators to clearly and deliberately ask themselves and their institutions the question.

There are many possible answers:

- Do I want my learners to develop an ongoing and deep relationship with Israelis? If so, why?
- » Do we want learners to integrate Israel into their Jewish identity and practice?
- Maybe we want our learners to consider aliyah as a real life choice.

All of these are valid goals, and some even overlap. By choosing one, it is then possible to sculpt the learning in such a way as to build toward the ends we have in mind. For example, if the focus is on relationships, we might focus on meeting and learning about the diversity

of Israelis, and create partnerships with Israeli schools, or use media to introduce learners to the lives of their Israeli peers. Or if Israel in Jewish identity is the core goal, one might highlight the Jewish rhythms of life in Israel and focus on Israel in Jewish texts. If interested in aliyah, we might build a curriculum that connects learners to daily life in Israel and focuses on stories of immigration and olim. The actual purpose is up to you—the key is that whatever purpose you choose is aligned with your choice of content, methodologies, and the interests of your learners.

The Subject Matter

Israel is a subject unlike many others; its demands are multiple and challenging. Firstly, the content areas that comprise Israel education are numerous and multifaceted. Israel includes teaching Bible, but it's not just about Bible. There is the Hebrew language, which is central, but does not in itself exhaust the topic. Then there is history, cultural studies, and social studies. As a result, Israel is more than the longitude and latitude on a map or main products of England or Venezuela. It takes us into many disciplines and fields.

Then, once we have made ourselves familiar with all these fields, we realize that the subject matter itself is continually evolving and changing. There is new research, new facts, additional approaches and plenty of new news! It is hard to keep up and be abreast of the latest developments.

Additionally, as Barry Chazan suggests in his chapter titled "Diverse Narratives," the subject matter is further complicated

by the multiple narratives that exist around Israel. What may seem like a simple fact may not be simple at all. Facts are everywhere and, at the same time, are elusive. A textbook, a newspaper article, or even a video clip from the daily news may look and feel factual or true, but on examination, may raise questions more than portray actual events.

The implications for those engaged in Israel education are myriad and serious:

- We must carefully check and recheck our sources (and ourselves), not only for accuracy, but also in order to understand the underlying narrative of the writer or teller.
- >> We must have clarity on the narrative(s) we bring to the learners (including our own) and how they shape our understanding of the subject matter. Given the wide range of potential narratives, choosing one or two may seem daunting. One way to address this is to start with purpose (as we have referenced above). Additionally, it is important to carefully examine the stance of the educational setting. Such an examination might involve looking at the literature of the institution (school, camp, synagogue, etc.) for mention of Israel, or speaking with the director of the program, a supervisor or fellow educators. The bottom line: intentionality and care in determining what is meant by knowledge and into which narrative that knowledge is embedded are key.
- Most importantly, we must always be striving to expand our own knowledge and understanding. This

THE EDUCATOR stance recognizes that we do not know everything, nor do we need to. Indeed, the ability to say *I do not know* is an important quality for every educator, especially when it is combined with the attitude that, even if I don't know this now, I am always moving towards a greater level of understanding, and modeling that approach for learners.

Effective Pedagogical Techniques

Just as the subject areas for Israel education are many, so are the pedagogies that educators are called on to use. Effective Israel educators use pedagogies that are learner-centered and focused on the genuine needs of the learners. They also make use of cutting-edge technologies, multimedia, arts and culture, and immersive trips to Israel. For more on these topics, see the chapters in the *The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition* that relate to pedagogy.

Ideas for Enriching and Enhancing Your Practice as an Israel Educator

So, what must we do as responsible educators to maximize our own capacity to craft effective learning experiences in the realm of Israel education?³

First, (as we have already said) we must start with our own connection to Israel (in whichever way and through whichever pathway is most powerful for us).

- Don't be scared to engage honestly with your own Israel biography.
- » Bring together colleagues and friends to discuss your own relationships with Israel and how they find expression in your work.
- We The iCenter resources like the Israel Resource Cards to provide structured discussion and prompts that can help you in these conversations.
- Start an Israel journal where you can write and reflect on your growing knowledge of and relationship to Israel.
- » If you supervise educators, create a safe space for the educators to discuss their own Israel biographies.
- Participate in an iCenter professional development opportunity.

Second, we must keep abreast of current and emerging subject matter resources in the field. We must continually update ourselves and seek out resources and



people that can provide us with the newest and best of Israel engagement resources, information, and materials.

- Develop your own go-to list of resources. Websites such as theicenter.org, israel21c.com, toldotyisrael.org, and makomisrael.org (among others), provide rich, varied, and authentic perspectives into Israel for all ages. They bring people, ideas, and places together in unique ways that draw learners into a vibrant, exciting and cutting-edge Israel.
- Make a reading list of books, articles, movies, and other resources that you want to read and explore. Ask colleagues for suggestions. Develop a strategy to read some of these each year. You might find a book club is helpful as a structure for learning with colleagues.
- Find a master Israel educator or expert in the field who can provide ongoing support in your learning and be a first port of call if you have urgent questions.

Third, as an educator of any domain, we must have a deep knowledge of a learner's cultural context, developmental stage, interests, prior knowledge, and experience with Israel. These elements then inform our decisions regarding the purpose of the learning—why it would be important to learners. It is incumbent upon us to be keenly aware of who our learners are and of the natural connection points between them and Israel and to infuse those connection points with relevant and meaningful knowledge and insights. We must also pay close attention to those pedagogic approaches which will be most effective in engaging the particular learners we educate.

- Read the other chapters from The Aleph Bet of Israel Education 2nd Edition that deal with learnercentered education and effective pedagogies.
- Talk to your learners! Find out what they care about, their motivations, and what Israel really means to them (if anything).
- Craft your own purpose for Israel education. You might want to convene your colleagues to discuss the alignment between your own personal goals for Israel education and your institution's goals.

Finally, we must strive to present our learners (at their appropriate level) with a balance between the two master stories of Israel. On the one hand is the story we might understand as the envisioned Israel. This is the story that sees Israel as the fulfillment of the ancient promise made by G-d to the Jewish people, in which contemporary Israel is the nexus of sacred meaning and history, propelled by a belief in the ultimate redemption. And, at the same time, coexisting with this story, is the approach we might call the enacted or actualized Israel. This is the story of the Jewish return to Israel seen through the perspective of modern nationalism, and the ongoing story of Israel as the daily effort to build a sustainable, modern democracy in a difficult neighborhood. The balance between these two stories is a core component of thoughtful Israel education and educators must be able to find their own personal balance for themselves, analyze contemporary Israeli reality through the lens of these two stories, and find the appropriate balance for their learners.

THE EDUCATOR As Israel educators we have been given an extraordinary gift. There is no more exciting time for teachers and learners alike to be engaging with Israel. Yes, there are complex issues. Yes, we may be engaged with our own challenges about Israel's contemporary policies and behavior, but we still live in a time of wonder and miracles. Israel, the country and the people, is visceral proof that:

- >> Dreams can come true.
- >> Human beings can change the world.
- > Jewish life has responded with hope to its darkest chapter.
- We are part of a living, modern Jewish society, culture, and people shaped by diversity, creativity, complexity, and passion.

B'hatzlachah!

Endnotes

- Palmer, Parker J. The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. Print.
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POSTLUDE

by Lee S. Shulman

It is both a delight and a privilege to write the afterword to this thoughtful and scholarly, as well as practical and realistic, collection of chapters on Israel education. It is an equally exciting and delightful privilege to be writing as a closing bookend to the "Prelude" written by my esteemed colleague Parker Palmer. Parker and I have known each other for many years. In a very friendly and mutually supportive manner, we represent complementary perspectives on education, in particular higher education. It is never a surprise when Parker Palmer writes about teaching in the language of love and passion, while I am likely to be describing the same phenomena with accounts of thought and judgment. If there is a core to the Jewish tradition, it certainly has the multiplicity of interpretations at its heart.

Parker Palmer has always been the most inspiring and eloquent of the scholarly champions of a humanistic and emotionally rich approach to the challenges of teaching. His perspective has lovely relevance and resonance to the world of Israel education. I have always taken a more cognitive approach with an emphasis that is much more embedded in the social sciences and the challenges of professional practice.

I think it is fair to assert (and I believe that Parker would agree) that each of these perspectives is both valid and incomplete. Taken together, they are much richer, yet even the sum of our parts will necessarily be insufficient for a truly comprehensive understanding of education. And if education in general is a challenge, Israel education is among the most daunting of those challenges.

Permit me to begin with a surprising claim. In this chapter, I examine Israel education as an exemplar of *professional education*, a field in which I have worked for nearly fifty years. This claim should elicit some shock, alarm and understandable skepticism among my readers. But be patient with me for just a moment.

I treat professional education as education for professing. I consider liberal education to be professional in this same sense. Paradoxically, religious education is professional as well (I do not confound Israel education with religious education, although in some contexts the two are closely connected). That is, they are professional in the sense that a goal of both liberal education and religious education (properly understood) is to prepare students to develop the kinds of understandings, skills, and values that are necessary for them to function

fully, flexibly, and meaningfully as citizens, leaders, parents, teachers, and trusted friends. To profess is to combine knowledge with commitment, to combine practical skill with moral values, and to link understanding with action.

Learning to profess is a process of habit formation and identity development. There are three kinds of habit integral to professional learning—habits of mind, habits of practice, and habits of the heart. The lawyer, for example, must learn to think like a lawyer, must develop a large set of lawyerly skills and practices from drafting contracts to mediating disputes, and needs to develop an ethical and moral compass that can guide her efforts as she walks the line between serving as the zealous advocate for a client and also serving as an officer of the court, protecting the integrity of the justice system. All professions entail the need to negotiate the interactions and the tensions among these three habits.

The student of Israel education is asked to develop extensive cognitive understanding of Israel—its history, geography, religious and cultural significance, literature, poetry, music, and a host of other varieties of intellectual and aesthetic learning. She may also be expected to develop Israel-connected skills such as fluency with the Hebrew language, talent and experience for engaging in debates and disputations about Israel, competence in making one's way within Israel, or participating in Israeli dancing. Perhaps most important, and calling for the most integration, we ask the learner to develop habits of the heart. These are values, commitments, feelings, and a sense of belonging. The integrative function is captured in the process of identity formation, the development of a sense of self and of group membership where Israel plays a central role.

To profess also entails living and working in contexts that are replete with unavoidable uncertainty and unpredictability, thus requiring the profess-or to exercise judgment, reasoning, faith, and hope in the face of ambiguities. Indeed, the successful students of professional education must frequently inhabit multiple identities, plural senses of self, to accommodate the varied circumstances under which their professional judgment and action are tested. I find this conception of learning deeply Jewish as well as profoundly relevant to Israel education.

When we speak about education for professing, we are not describing processes of learning and identity formation that lead to unquestioned faith or belief in one set of principles, institutions, or leaders. What I have found in my studies of education across many professions is that learning to profess involves the development of a concordance of opposites. That is, someone who has developed an understanding of profession is someone who can combine the deepest commitment with the necessary levels of questioning, skepticism, and doubt needed to keep those commitments sharp and useful as events unfold and as unforeseen circumstances arise.

To learn medicine is both to develop deep understanding of the research findings, technical skills, and medical ethics that one learns during training whilst being in a position to question and challenge them as the need to adapt, refine, and even replace them emerges. It was no accident that the sociologist Rose Coser named her book on the psychiatric residency *Training*

66 Learning to profess is a process of habit formation and identity development. There are three kinds of habit integral to professional learning—habits of mind, habits of practice, and habits of the heart.

in Ambiguity.¹ Moreover, even as the physician or nurse undertakes the most complex intellectual and technical analyses, she must enter into a trusting, caring, and even loving relationship with the patient under her care. Analysis and empathy must work together for the sake of the patient.

In that regard, I remember a conversation I had with a young man who had just graduated from a Mennonite Christian college that is, in denominational terms, in the same extended family of Christian

POSTLUDE



denominations as the Quaker tradition akin to those which Parker Palmer identifies himself in the first sentence of his prologue. The young man that I met informed me that he had majored in theology in college and had been accepted to the Yale Divinity School as a graduate student. When my facial expression communicated a certain modicum of surprise at the juxtaposition of an undergraduate Christian college that I correctly assumed was committed to traditional liturgical and devotional practices and Yale Divinity School, which I saw as a liberal home to critical studies of holy texts, I saw a smile cross his face. He smiled and said to me:

You seem surprised by my choice. I guess you don't understand that the kind of education I have received has taught me that there is more

than one way to read the Holy Scriptures. In my youth, I could only read them one way; I read them devotionally. I have now learned that I can read the Scriptures, both analytically or critically as well as devotionally, without losing the capacity to do either.

In my language, this young man was learning to profess in a very deep sense. He was also developing a sense of epistemic empathy—the ability to hold on to one's values while appreciatively comprehending the views of others whose values and perceptions are not aligned with one's own. Indeed, at this same small Christian college, much of the first-year freshman curriculum was designed, as described by both the students and the faculty, to test their faith. Only by engaging that faith within a crucible of skepticism, doubt, and critical questioning could that commitment be appropriately examined.

And that is the fundamental paradox of learning to profess and the inherent challenge of Israel education. It is both learning to understand deeply, to practice in often routine and predictable ways and to absorb and exemplify a religious, national, familial, or cultural identity quite deeply without losing the capacity to be analytic and even critical. That juxtaposition is far easier to write about than to accomplish in practice. And yet, I would contend, what we learned from the chapters included in this anthology as well as from the continuing experiences with Israel education and other forms of professional learning, is this: development of the capacity for informed, mindful, and responsible uncertainty leads to intelligent and responsible action and not to paralysis. That is the essential character of Israel education.

When so many kinds of learning and developing wind about one another in a kind of pedagogical triple helix, the processes of teaching are not simple. The wise and varied chapters in this anthology exemplify that pedagogical diversity. While the chapters are all directed at the teaching of Israel education, they appropriately traverse the landscape of teaching and learning in which most fields of study must engage.

Conceptualizing Israel education as a form of education for professing also has the advantage of removing the question of whether we are talking about an education that is primarily cognitive and intellectual or emotional and spiritual, a form of deep learning or of identity formation. Learning to profess integrates and connects all of these. More accurately, learning to profess



...development of the capacity for informed, mindful, and responsible uncertainty leads to intelligent and responsible action and not to paralysis.

is an experience in which emotions, thoughts, identity, and technical skills are developed concurrently and seamlessly. They can be unpacked for analytic purposes, but in practice they are facets of a common experience of identity formation.

Learning does not occur in a vacuum. Israel education makes substantial demands on teachers and their pedagogical skill. Because the goals of Israel education are so multi-dimensional, teachers must be competent to teach for the understanding of subtle and challenging ideas. They must also be engaging role models and masters of narrative if the emotional and personal aspects of Israel education are to be addressed successfully. The pedagogies of Israel education cannot be didactic and frontal. The teachers must be skilled at group discussion, engaging reluctant learners, and guiding students into exciting debates and discussions. Increasingly, they will need to be adept at the uses of technology for longdistance communication, simulations and games, and the development of learning and experiential portfolios. The preparation and continued professional development of the teachers in this field must be a critical priority.

Equally important, excellent teaching requires constant redesign and reformulation of formal and informal experiences based on more than personal taste or pedagogical intuitions. The field of Israel education needs to continue to develop bodies of evidence regarding what kinds of experience have what kinds of influence on which kinds of learners and in what sorts of contexts. The chapters in this anthology draw upon many kinds of evidence. But Israel education is not a field where a

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single study, a powerful experiment, or a well-crafted evaluation will answer questions of educational quality once and for all. Those of us in the field of Israel education and indeed in the world of Jewish education more broadly are continuously called upon to make practical judgments. These judgments will be better grounded if we continue to gather evidence of learning and its challenges in an ongoing manner.

What is needed is not research that will provide clear answers to the how-to, when, and where questions of Israel education. Those kinds of answers do not emerge from the kinds of research, however applied and practical, that I advocate. What does evidence-based practice mean? The word evidence derives from the Latin root (shoresh in the language of Israel education) vid that refers to acts of seeing. Thus visual, vision, and similar words share etymological patrimony with evidence. Caesar intoned "Veni, Vidi, Vici"—I came, I saw, I conquered—and the vid of evidence is the same allusion to seeing. The more evidence that has been collected, organized, and displayed, the better the guidance for those who teach and learn in this field.

We need to create a field informed by good research; we need to plant landscapes of evidence about the world of Israel education. They will entail large-scale evaluations like those deployed to study the impact of Birthright Israel. They will call for well-designed experiments that examine the teaching and learning of Hebrew language under different conditions. They will include many careful case studies of classrooms, field experiences, Shabbatons, and study trips. They will invite studies by teachers themselves who record and analyze variations in

their own practices. When we can draw upon richer landscapes of evidence, we can do a better job of crafting more powerful educational experiences.

There is something inherently Jewish about the title of this anthology. Even though it presents a comprehensive, rich, and extensive overview of the field of Israel education, the editors resist the temptation to call it the alpha to omega or aleph-tav guide to Israel education. In all fields of Jewish studies, we treat our current state of understanding as preliminary, evolving, and subject to revision. Every text demands an interpretation. Every source cries out for a midrash. So it must be with Israel education. This anthology, however comprehensive, is only the aleph bet of the field. It is a great beginning. Of this we can be certain. There will be gimel and daled and many additional letters yet to come.

Endnote

1. Coser, Rose Laub. Training in Ambiguity: Learning Through Doing in a Mental Hospital. New York: Free Press, 1979. Print.



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Shulman's work examines the study of teaching and teacher education; pedagogical content knowledge; the assessment of teachers; medical education; the psychology of instruction in science, mathematics, and medicine; the logic of educational research; and the quality of teaching in higher education. Shulman's most recent work has been the conceptualizing and description of signature pedagogies in the preparation of professionals.

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