

THE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL: A SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTION

Among those committed to vibrant Jewish survival, there has emerged by now a consensus that Jewish Day Schools offer the best hope for producing the kind of Jew who is genuinely dedicated to Torah and the Jewish people. As one reviews the dramatic epic of the heroic struggle against overwhelming odds, one is tempted to paraphrase Winston Churchill's statement that "Never before in the history of American Jewry have so many owed so much to so few Day Schools."

The miracle looms ever larger in the light of the staggering financial burdens shouldered by Day Schools because they have never received governmental aid nor the kind of support from Jewish Federation and welfare organizations commensurate with their needs and importance.

But in spite of or, perhaps, because of the growing popularity of Jewish Day Schools there has also come to the fore increasing self-criticism on the part of educators and community leaders. Alarmed by the relatively large number of graduates from Jewish Day Schools who, upon entering college, defect from the ranks of Judaism and reject the pattern of Jewish observance which they had previously practiced, some educators entertain doubts whether the Jewish Day School, however superior it might be to other forms of education, is really adequate to the challenge of developing genuinely committed Jews. Moreover, there are also some who wonder whether a Jewish Day School does not create a kind of ghetto which fails to prepare students to meet adequately the onslaught of competing ideologies to which they are exposed on the campus.

TRADITION has turned to a group of prominent educators and religious leaders to obtain their reaction to the educational philosophy, methods and procedures of day schools. Participants in this Symposium were asked to address themselves to the following questions:

1. In the light of modern experience does the Jewish Day School set realistic goals for itself?
2. What do you believe are the most serious shortcomings of the Day School?
3. Is the Jewish Day School too much insulated from the community and too over-protective of its students?
4. How do you evaluate the role of secular studies in a Jewish Day School? Are secular studies properly integrated with Jewish subjects? Should there be more or less synthesis between them?

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5. Can a Jewish Day School produce learned Jews while trying to integrate them into over-all society?
6. How can a Jewish Day School better prepare its students for the competing life-styles and ideologies of the campus?
7. How can a Jewish Day School improve the quality of the religious life of its students and deepen their commitment to Torah?
8. Does the Jewish Day School sufficiently stress the involvement of its students in Jewish communal activities and other forms of social action?
9. Does the Jewish Day School sufficiently tap Jewish community sources, Rabbis, Synagogues, Jewish Agencies to supplement and enhance its educational program?
10. How should a Jewish Day School improve its method, curriculum, and educational goals?

W.S.W.

Saul J. Berman

Rabbi Berman is Chairman of the Department of Jewish Studies at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University.

Analysis of the Jewish educational process must begin with an understanding of the student. The Solomonic proverb, urging us to "teach a child in his way," must be more than just a directive to know when the child is capable of learning how to read, and when he is capable of more intellectually demanding forms of study. The "way" of the child must include an understanding of the total society with which he interacts. The student of today is different from the student of the past because he relates to a markedly changed society which has produced new pressures, new responsibilities and new options.

While the traditional *yeshivot* may continue to attract predominantly students who are sufficiently sheltered from the outside world as to maintain their basic similarity to the students of the past generation, even they, and certainly the more open Day Schools, are attracting in increasing numbers, students whose life styles are being shaped by the new cultural patterns in American society. If the Day Schools continue to teach in the old, even previously successful, fashions, they will fail to accomplish their goals with their new students.

The indications of such failure

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are already foreshadowed on the college campuses. Rabbis having substantial contact with college students have already noted that a significant proportion of Day School and even Yeshiva High School graduates fall into one of two patterns; either they insularize themselves on the campus and fail to confront the campus community, or they enter fully into the social patterns of their peers and abandon altogether the degree of observance of Halakhah with which they arrived. Both alternatives indicate that they have not been adequately prepared to live as halakhik Jews, bringing their own unique perspectives to bear, while confronting and interacting with the general society within which they live. Despite their "integrated" education, they continue to see the worlds of Halakhah and of American life as mutually exclusive paths incapable of integration within the life-style of the individual.

Of course, many of their *Rebbeim*, and many people who occupy positions central to the Day School's educational process, will view this situation not with resignation but with joy, and will interpret it as great success. For them, the creation of an absolute dichotomy between Torah and the secular world is a desideratum. They may lose some of their students, perhaps even most of them to the secular world, but those they keep will belong heart and soul to the world of Torah.

If this dichotomization is unacceptable as either the formulated goal or as the unintended consequence of Day School education,

then positive steps must be taken to prevent it from occurring. Firstly, we must reevaluate the basis of selection of textual sources used in the schools. No one can deny the importance of communicating basic skills in the study of Hebrew and Aramaic texts. Without a working knowledge of the languages of Biblical and Rabbinic text, Jewish education becomes a dead end road. But we may question whether the study of consecutive pages in any text is geared to accomplish anything more than literary skills. Exposure of our students to carefully selected texts which are value-infused, which deal systematically with basic legal, philosophical and moral concepts can be a more valuable approach to the study of Tanach and particularly to the study of Talmud and Halakhah.

The first fifteen pages of Tractate *Berakhot*, are in their subject matter and in their structure, no more intrinsically relevant to our students than are the first fifteen pages of *Baba Metzia*. It is fallacious to assume that the substitution of one tractate by another will automatically increase student motivation and participation. On the other hand, a carefully structured sequence of texts, Biblical, Talmudic, and post-Talmudic, may not only expose our students to basic areas of Jewish values relevant to their lives, but may also engage them in a life-long pursuit of Jewish perspectives while maximizing their abilities to handle the Jewish sources from which those perspectives are to be culled. The mere awareness that Judaism deals with problems such as cheating, social

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responsibility, war, freedom of speech, business ethics and so on, could only help them in the process of seeing their societal existence as part and parcel of their lives as Jews.

Secondly, we must not be frightened away from a more direct integrative approach in our teaching of Jewish and general studies. There are Jewish perspectives to the teaching of world and American history; there are Jewish values related to the study of government and social sciences; there are areas of Jewish law and custom which could take on infinitely greater significance if taught within the context of mathematics and the natural sciences. The development of an integrated curriculum on that level would more effectively project Judaism as a total life pattern rather than as an appendage to Americanism.

Thirdly, premium must be placed on finding and keeping teachers who express not only in words but in their life style the goal of a halakhic life within the structure of American society. Just as not every Israeli is *ipso facto* a teacher of Hebrew, similarly not every religious Jew is capable of serving as a model for the fullness of religious life. If the *Rebbe* is himself totally removed from society and lives in a closed world, he can be, at most, a partial example for the student who will have to make his way — fully as a committed Jew through the labyrinths of American society.

In this regard, our schools could make much further and effective use of people outside of the edu-

cational structure who can serve as appropriate models. By co-opting members of the general Orthodox community who have preserved their Jewish integrity while fully engaged with the general society, the school can project model images more closely related to the reality our students will face. Such contact, if properly used, could also serve to minimize the occasional antagonism between school and synagogue community which develops all too often to the detriment of both.

Fourthly, greater effort must be expended to establish administrative integrity in the schools. As students learn from their teachers, they learn also from the administration of the institution. The fairness with which students are handled, the public image projected through fund-raising activities, the manner of calendar design, the persons honored by the school, the way in which parental concerns are treated, all these and more, project to the student what it really means to be an Orthodox Jew and to live a Halakhic life.

A school administration which shows itself to be unfeeling, which favors the children of wealthy parents, which is unscrupulous in its dealings with its community, may defeat everything it is struggling so hard in the classroom to communicate.

Fifthly, we must look toward a greater integration of the classroom setting with the informal process of the Orthodox youth movements. Organizations such as N.C.S.Y., Bnai Akiva, Yeshiva University Torah Leadership Seminars, Pirchei

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Agudath Israel, and others have a potential for providing the youth community within which the formal learning of the school can take root and flourish. Maintaining a religious peer group is at least as vital as providing religious knowledge in the process of assuring the continuing allegiance of our students to the religious community. The greater the integration between formal and informal educational influences, the better our chance of preventing Jewish knowledge from being fragmented from the total life style of the student. In this regard, the pioneering efforts of Torah Umesorah at developing a distinct curriculum for the teaching of Jewish moral values, could effectively be supplemented by the development of actual projects in which

those teachings could be put to use in the community as well as in the school. Such demonstration of the immediacy of transition from talking about morality to actually living morally would be more than just an educational device, it would serve as a much needed model to the Jewish community as a whole.

Our goal in the Jewish Day School must be more than just communicating a given body of religious knowledge. We must strive to shape a Jewish personality not only capable of resisting violation by the general society, but also capable of creatively interacting with that society to the enrichment of his Jewish commitments. I believe that the suggestions made above can aid in moving in that positive direction.

David Eliach

Rabbi Eliach is Principal of Joel Braverman High School of the Yeshiva of Flatbush. His contribution to the Symposium is based upon a lecture delivered at a conference of the Rabbinical Council of America in Lakewood on November 30th, 1971.

The future of Jewish education in the United States looks very bleak. As is well known there has been a sharp decrease in the number of students attending Talmud

Torah. Only 4½ percent of Jewish students attend *yeshivot*.* We know that not all these graduates of yeshiva who attend college remain religious. I do not refer to *yeshivot*

*Rothman, Eugene, *Midstream*, June/July, 1971, "Whither the Hebrew Day Schools," p. 19.

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where the majority of the students come from non-religious homes but to *yeshivot* where the majority come from religious backgrounds. The latter do not retain their *Yiddishkeit* after attending college for a year or two.

It is true that some of our graduates are very active in establishing *kosher* kitchens on various campuses, and are involved in fighting the battle of Israel. They also have meetings, seminars, classes and conventions dealing with Jews and Judaism; but they are a minority even among *yeshiva* graduates. A good number of them are actually becoming alienated. Why? If we took a closer look at Jewish education, we would find that even the numbers and statistics which look encouraging are really not so at all.

We repeatedly hear that many more *yeshivot* have been established in recent years, but we do not learn about *yeshivot* which closed down or which are about to be closed, including *yeshivot* that had 700 or 900 students. At a time when the public school system is degenerating, and many parents are sending their children to *yeshivot*, we should have tripled the number of our students during the last five years. But we have not done so! We must ask why. Granted some *yeshivot* exist partly because of racial problems, political upheavals and a lack of security. But even so, we cannot attract more than 4½ percent of Jewish students to *yeshivot* and by the end of high school we find ourselves with only a two and one-half percent, or if we are to be optimistic, 3½ percent. These facts give rise to the

question: Don't we have in our Jewish tradition and in our Jewish philosophy enough content and material to motivate and stimulate our future generation to observance of *mitzvot* and to a Jewish identification in which our youth would be proud? Where have we failed?

I can see three major reasons for our failure. The first one is an apathy on the part of Jewish leaders toward *yeshiva* education. Even among the Orthodox leadership building a synagogue or a center was more important than erecting a *yeshiva*. A thousand Orthodox synagogues could collect enough money to support all the *yeshivot* which are struggling for survival and have to settle for second best in their education.

The second reason is our schizophrenic approach to Jewish education. We educate our students in two opposite directions — philosophically and psychologically. On one hand we guide our students in the belief that Torah is a way of life which encompasses every phase of life. On the other hand, we expose them in the humanities department to a secular way of life influenced by the sciences, history and world literature, with an entirely different approach to life. From our point of view, we teach our students the importance of authority in that we have to accept the rulings of the Sages and of the *Poskim* (codifiers). Whatever is written in the Torah cannot be questioned. No criticism may be directed against our tradition; but we also teach literature, history and science in which any authority may be challenged. Every part of

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science, literature and history is open to criticism.

We inform our students that any problem in life must be solved according to the Halakhah. This means a definite follow up of *Chazal* permitting no critical views. And at the same time we teach them that in political and social problems they may follow their own point of view—be it the Democratic or the Republican way—both of which philosophies have nothing to do with *Da'at Torah* (Torah outlook upon life). Thus we create a figure with a split personality within a compartmentalized mind, and in most cases working in two opposite directions. In essence, we repeat subconsciously the same historic mistake which was committed during the era of the Second Temple consciously by Jesus' famous saying "Give to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's"—a philosophy which marked the initial split with Judaism because Judaism tolerates only wholeness and a total commitment. Judaism is based on a One concept. God, Torah and Israel are One. This One concept is the source of all the Halakhot and philosophies; whatever we do and whatever we think has to stem from this central concept of One. It is true that we live in an open society where we are subject to all kinds of influences and in which we have to take a stand in order to survive, and our position has to be based on this One concept. But what we are really doing is using the psychology of "Be a

Jew at home and a man abroad" even though we cover our head with a *yarmulka*. If we are going to continue our schizophrenic approach, we may end up with a split personality which will result in a very sick Judaism whose existence will be precarious.

The final problem we face is our weakness in launching an educational revolution. We—who are living in the midst of a crisis and I would dare say in the middle of a spiritual holocaust — do not do enough to stop it. The most recent statistics about mixed marriages show a substantial increase. However, more serious than that is the fact that a much smaller percentage of American Jews now disapprove of mixed marriages compared with only six years ago.**

We are experiencing a repetition of the Haskalah movement where many of our Jews left Judaism to join Communism, other revolutionary movements and atheism. As at that time, when we were faced with many new challenges, our religious leaders were shocked by the phenomenon but very few knew how to cope with the new situation. Very few realized that if a change in attitude did not take place, we would lose a generation. Most of the leaders did not look for immediate Halakhic and philosophic answers beside a *Cherem* (ban) or an *Issur* (interdict). Many tried to compromise but they did not succeed and we lost our Jews to alien philosophies. The challenges we are facing today are of a similar nature

**Sklar, Marshal, *Commentary*, March, 1970, "Intermarriage and Jewish Survival," p. 51.

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and again we find ourselves unable to answer them or to explain in the context of our society from a Torah point of view. We are exposed to a new outside world with many new problems.

Our problems are more severe than at any other periods in the last era. We live today in a world of dynamic change where a six-year period may seem like a generation. In the last few years many changes have taken place in this country that are in complete opposition to all our concepts as an ethnic group and as religious Jews. These changes are a direct result of the new revolution which has been going on in our country for the last decade. The influences of secular society are very great upon all of us, especially on the younger generation which is very impressionable. Therefore, Jewish and religious education are confronted with greater difficulties and obstacles than at any other time. The truth is that we are trying to educate our children toward a philosophy which is not accepted today. There was a time that we, as Jews, had many things in common with the outside society. For instance, our code of morals and ethics had *some* similarity to that of the outside world. Today, however, an unwed teenager comes to school with her baby, and society is proud of its progress. The coed dormitories in the colleges are also a source of pride. As a result, we with our traditions are irrelevant in the eyes of the students. These are the realities of our times and an answer must be found. We cannot ignore them, but who of the *Gedolim* is

willing to give an answer that does not involve total surrender of university/education or segregation. We are confronted with the problem of a lack of recognition of the realities of the times and how to deal with them.

We live in a world where religion is collapsing. The Church is losing her power and is being crushed by the forces of liberalism and communism. This phenomenon of secularism was a result of the achievements in science, technology and economy. We live in a world where wholesale murder is heroism. It is no wonder that the 20th century has been the scene of two world wars, a holocaust, mass murder in Russia and Mylai. We live in a world where new morals offer a new way of life. How have we challenged these threats? What did the Orthodox community do about finding solutions? One possible answer is isolating ourselves and adopting a ghetto mentality; enclosing ourselves and shutting out the entire world from our children, and continuing the traditional way as it is known in some of our communities. I don't know if this type of ghetto will have a future in the United States and I am not sure that some of the new concepts will not penetrate even into these groups. So far, the isolationists have been successful. To the majority of Jews, however, this philosophy is not valid. How, then, did we challenge all the problems of our time? The answer is, we did not! Here and there you find a few educators who have tried to find solutions but these solutions did not catch the imagination of the Jew-

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ish community. There is not one good textbook in Jewish philosophy which attempts to treat these problems and explain them to American youth. There has been no new approach to teaching the Torah or the Talmud in order to make them relevant and more meaningful to our students. There has been no new approach to the entire curriculum. Some educators made abortive attempts to prepare a new curriculum and have failed because they lacked the background of the historical, the philosophical and Halakhic adaptations. *Yeshivot* are still competing among themselves as to which is teaching more *gemera*. Our main problem stems from the fact that our leadership is not ready for the new revolution and is not prepared to lead one. The only time Judaism was saved in times of crisis was when its leaders were ready to make a revolution, and when I say a revolution—I don't refer to a revolution in our central ideas, but a revolution in concepts of methods, emphasis and adaptation to new situations.

When the Rambam wrote the *Mishneh Torah* he created new methods to the approach of Halakhah for reasons he himself cites in his Introduction:

"ובזמן הזה תכפו הצרות יתרות
ודחקה השעה את הכל ואבדה חכמת
חכמינו ובינת נבוננו נסתתרה"

"Nowadays extraordinary troubles gripped us and conditions oppressed all so that the wisdom of our sages is lost and the understanding of our wise is concealed."

Suddenly the wave of a new era came. The old wisdom was lost and a new method had to be established.

The Talmud in its original form could not give all the answers and a new approach had to be found. The Rambam had written *The Guide of the Perplexed* at a time when philosophy endangered Judaism and again the Talmud and the *Gaonim* with their approach could not furnish the answers. The Rambam adopted the new method to explain Judaism—not to explain a new Judaism, but rather the old one which needed (as the Rambam himself wrote in his introduction) "a key permitting one to enter places the gates to which were locked."

The Chasidic movement was a revolutionary movement which saved thousands of Jews. It knew how to adopt a new situation into Judaism regardless of the bans pronounced by the greatest scholars of that time. Chasidism was the answer to many problems the old traditional way could not solve. It came at a time of upheaval when new approaches had to be found. To a lesser extent the *yeshivot* of Lithuania were involved in a revolution. There was a change from the pilpulistic method to that of a Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk (*Shaarey Yosher*) because this was an answer to the Haskalah movement. The approach had to be more rational and more logical because people who were influenced by the Haskalah movement would not tolerate the pilpulistic method.

Much more than a change in the methods of teaching of Talmud was the introduction of *Mussar* in *yeshivot*. This met with great opposition. At a time when the Haskalah movement pointed a finger at the

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religious Jew because he was not so concerned about the obligations governing man's relations to his fellowman—the *Mussar* movement came to emphasize these commandments. At that time these were revolutionary acts, as can be proven by the many bans and anathemas proclaimed by the *Gedolim* of the generation. All those new adaptations came in changing times when old methods and emphases could not be used anymore and new ones had to replace them in order to save Judaism and Jews. Those leaders had the vision and the bravery to act. They did not divide their philosophy between God and Caesar, but rather worked out a wholesome philosophy with a change in emphasis and a change in methods. We live in an era when there is an aversion of proper values, where almost everything has changed. A world of sexual licentiousness and murder and what did we do? We still teach the *Chumash* with Rashi with the same old methods. We still do not realize that our method of teaching *Gemara* is not going to produce a *Lomdan* and a pious individual as in Slobodka or Radin. Perhaps we need a new approach which will make it more relevant, and perhaps we need a different curriculum of studies in the Oral Torah. How many *yeshivot* have realized that *Machshovet Yisrael* (Jew thought) is one of the most important subjects we have to teach today?

How many principals have realized that there are certain interruptions of regular forms of Torah study that actually produce more Torah and more piety—like the sem-

inars where students leave regular classes for a few days in order to live and breathe *Yiddishkeit*. To what extent do we adapt our regular program so that our students may spend time in Israel in *yeshivot* and in other religious institutions as a part of our high school education? Many of our students come home and find there the very antithesis of what we are teaching them. How many congregations have stipulated that members must attend regular classes? How much in dues do members of the synagogue pay to a central fund for *yeshivot*—the pillar and the future of our existence?

It is clear, therefore, that we need a complete change in our thinking in order to save our future generation. Therefore, I would like to make a few suggestions. We are testing some of them in the Yeshiva of Flatbush but many of them can only be proved through a national effort.

1. To establish a national central committee for yeshiva education where *Gedolim* and great educators will work out together a new approach to our education which will be relevant and meaningful. They will set the aims and goals which will be followed up by new textbooks, new guidelines in teaching the various subjects, a new curriculum and ways of teaching our youth in Jewish causes.
2. A seminar for teachers where this new approach will be taught to them. That the teachers of the secular departments should be pious Torah scholars and they will have to teach from a Torah point of view.
3. That a way must be found to educate

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the parents, because a good number of students are coming from non-religious homes.

I would suggest that classes by highly qualified teachers should be conducted in every synagogue on *Shabbat* morning between *Shacharit* and *Musaf* in order to familiarize the parents with the essence of Judaism. Sermons and Talmud classes alone are inadequate to fulfill the needs of adult Jewish education. It is sad to reflect that many hundreds of Orthodox teachers in the public schools do not feel obligated to teach in *yeshivot*. 4. A part of our education today must be involvement in Jewish causes. 5. There must be a youth movement in every yeshiva. 6. A part of our education must consist of seminars at least once a year with a follow-up in the yeshiva. Perhaps we have to look for other answers also with which we can influence our students — such as building dormitories where we would be able to create a way of life and more summer camps which will continue yeshiva education. 7. To encourage and support the Jewish religious colleges in order that they may become excellent institutions so that students will have a desire to attend. 8. To establish a central fund for *yeshivot* where every synagogue member must contribute a certain sum of money for yeshiva education. 9. To support

the Yavneh groups on the campuses so they will be able to continue Jewish education for our students. 10. To make it a part of our condition for graduation that every boy and girl must spend six months in Israel in one of the *yeshivot* for the boys and in one of the religious schools for the girls, or a *kibbutz* program.

We must establish a national organization where all of us will work together for a Jewish education if we intend to see any success.

Jewish education cannot survive in a vacuum. The modern Jew is part of society and Jewish education must therefore adapt itself to new problems and find a way which is basically and essentially a traditional path relevant to the new generation.

It is unfortunate that one of the greatest Jews and sages of modern Jewish history, Rav Abraham Yizhok Kook, former Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land, who did so much to find true relevance in Torah Judaism, should be virtually unknown to the majority of Jews today. A rediscovery of his work and spirit might well provide an approach to the solving of our serious problems.

Only a combined effort, however, by every major Jewish agency can ensure Jewish survival in the 21st century through Jewish education.

Joseph Kaminetsky

Dr. Kaminetsky is National Director of Torah Umesorah, National Society for Hebrew Day Schools.

The questions submitted by the Editor for this symposium fall broadly into two categories. Although not projected in sequential fashion, about half of them deal with the goals of the Day School, its curriculum and how to improve the quality of the religious life of its students. The others, in essence, attempt to examine the impact of the Day School on the community at large and evaluate its relationship to it. In the process, we are asked to indicate some of the most serious shortcomings of the Day School and forecast its success in helping its charges to meet the problems which they will face in the competing life-styles and ideologies of the Campus.

To answer these crucial questions adequately would require an in-depth analysis which would fill volumes. And there are many who have already attempted to answer these questions. The conference of Rabbis and educators convened by the Rabbinical Council of America at the end of November 1971 in Lakewood addressed itself to some of these problems. All we can hope to do in this article is to give some partial answers to these questions as directly as we can, by-passing well-known shibboleths, pious slogans, and even detailed statistical data—we hope. The over-all picture, after all, is well-known to the

readers of this journal.

At the outset, it must be stated that the Day School movement in this country grew out of a sense of urgency to rid American Jewry of the stigma of *am-ha-aratzut* which plagued it for so many decades. Day School enthusiasts had one over-riding goal: To teach children Torah, to give them some measure of knowledge of the basic texts of Judaism and, at the same time, inspire them to observance of the *mitzvot* and commitment to the Torah way of life. Knowledge of Torah comes first—action is predicated on cognition—abetted by emotional involvement. These primary purposes still motivate all of the close to 400 Jewish Day Schools in the United States which are conducted under Orthodox auspices.

Yet, as is well-known, schools do not operate in a vacuum; they are part and parcel of the environment in which they are born, mature and blossom. Accordingly, as the movement grew ancillary goals were added; and, as a result, we have today a multi-colored movement embracing the different point of emphasis which characterize American Orthodoxy itself.

Some of the more intensive schools gear their program to inspire their students to further Jewish study in higher *yeshivot* and

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even *Kollelim*, concentrating on Torah study *per se*. Others stress the religious-nationalistic aspects of Judaism, giving a central place in a core curriculum to *Eretz Yisrael*. Still others stress the attainment of synthesis between Judaism and Western culture. Despite these varying degrees of emphasis which are radiated by the wide spectrum which represents Orthodoxy in our age, it is most encouraging that the preponderant majority of our Day Schools share some basic goals. These are, most succinctly stated: Learning, commitment, observance, the attainment of *Emunah* (faith in God), the primacy of Torah as a guide to the development of a life-style, and *Ahavat Yisrael* — the people and the land (despite the internecine battles and political differences which divide us). These goals, I submit, represent an inspiring melange of realism and idealism. The purpose of the school is to *raise* the level of the culture — and this the Day School has done. No one will argue that the consistent dynamic growth of Orthodoxy in this country is due to our Day Schools which have proven to be a grand strategy for the production of *B'nei Torah* who have changed the Jewish or Torah character not only of the large Metropolitan areas but many of our out-of-town communities as well.

These goals have thus proven to be realistic, in that we now have a richer, Torah-minded Jewish community than ever before. The idealism enters into the process when we weigh what has been accomplished in the scales of our visions and dreams — and come to the con-

clusion that there is still so much more that has to be done. The movement as a whole has been a most successful one, but here and there one notes some weak links which sometimes threaten the strength of the chain.

One of the major shortcomings of the Jewish Day School has been its inability to attract adequately trained and daring personnel to help it grow in depth. The reasons for this crisis are manifold and run the gamut from a desire for self-growth in *lomdut* to a lack of status and financial security. Our yeshiva students are just not daring enough to go out into "the sticks" where the comforts of a religious *sevivah* (environment) are so evidently lacking. Those who do go into the field, on the other hand, are so overwhelmed by the long hours of their teaching duties that they have no time for adequate preparation and, what is more important, for the writing of workbooks, teaching aids — and the like — which are so vital to the growth, in breadth and in depth, of the educational process. The Day School movement has been "derelict" in not providing for itself a cadre of trained educators who have the ability and capacity for the production of such material because of the strictures noted. The fact, too, that in many cases the principal or chief educational officer of the school must become involved in fundraising and public relations work stunts the improvement and development of the Day School curriculum and the methods of instruction.

That so much has been accomplished despite these handicaps is,

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of course, a tribute to the devoted educators and teachers who have shown the necessary courage and have given all of their energies and abilities to the task. I think we owe it to the men in the field to do all in our power to recruit the soldiers for these inspired and inspiring generals. We do, indeed, need our own *palmach* — *plugat mechanchim* — as someone picturesquely put it.

Yet, to be realistic, we do not see the sudden entrance of thousands of yeshiva students into the field of *Chinuch*, as much as we hope for it. There is, however, one effective way that many Day Schools have found to upgrade the teaching quality of their staffs — and that is through the setting up of regular *in-service* training programs in their schools, with the help of Torah Umesorah and other central educational agencies. The National Conference of Yeshiva Principals, an affiliate of Torah Umesorah, has added to this process through the convening of regular regional conferences of educators and through regular series of inter-school visitations where the latest methods are projected and successful ideas are exchanged. These processes must continue — and the lay leaders of our Day Schools must be ready to add to their budgets the regular setting up of these programs of *in-service* training, even to the extent of paying for experts to direct them.

It is high time, too, for our Day Schools to begin to apply the traditional methods employed in the *yeshivot* of Eastern Europe which proved so successful. We refer to the use of “master teachers,” as we

call them today, who gave the *master shiur* which was followed by *chazarah* (re-study) in *chaburot* (smaller groups). As a matter of fact, more emphasis on grouping according to rate of learning, and even individualized instruction, are needed in many Hebrew Departments. The teachers of secular studies who are constantly re-gearing their methods in these directions could be most helpful in these processes. We know of many instances where English teachers helped develop fine teachers out of neophytes straight out of the yeshiva through such guidance. Again, here, we need the funds and the creative minds to work out the teaching aids upon which these techniques are dependent for success. Further, the financial plight of so many of our Day Schools still represents a formidable handicap in achieving these ends. Some schools, however, have overcome this obstacle through the use of retired teachers and parents working as teachers’ aides.

Another method generally employed in all higher *yeshivot* cries for adaptation by our Day Schools. Many general educators who have visited our higher *yeshivot* are unduly impressed by the *chavrusa* idea (the “buddy system”). A child *learns* best, we have come to realize, when he is called upon to *teach* his younger or less adept friend.

All of these techniques are, in some form or measure, in evidence in many of our Day Schools. More regular sustained guidance in their application and adaptation by people who will be given the means and the opportunity to spread them

