THE CENTRIST TORAH
EDUCATOR FACES CRITICAL
IDEOLOGICAL AND COMMUNAL
CHALLENGES

ON THE STATE OF CENTRISM: BACKDROP
TO THE CHALLENGES

Orthodoxy in 1980

One of the most interesting and satisfying socio-religious phenomena on this continent during the last three decades has been the revival of Orthodoxy. In the 1950s, Marshall Sklare observed: "The history of their movement (Orthodox Judaism) in this country can be written in terms of a case study on institutional decay." In a dramatic reversal, some fifteen years later, in 1972, he noted:

Conservatism is incorrect in its diagnosis of Orthodoxy, and especially in its prognosis of Orthodoxy's future. Unaccountably, Orthodoxy has refused to assume the role of the invalid. Rather, it has transformed itself into a growing force in American Jewish life.

Two years later, in a volume of essays on the Jewish community, Sklare emphasized: "In less than three decades Orthodoxy has transformed its image of that of a dying movement to one whose strength and opinions must be reckoned within any realistic appraisal of the Jewish community." In that same volume, Charles Lieberman added: "There is a recognition and admiration for Orthodoxy as the only group which today contains within it a strength and will to live that may yet nourish all the Jewish world."
According to Professor Liebman, there are two general categories of Jews with the label Orthodox—the “uncommitted” Orthodox and the “committed” Orthodox. Each of these categories can be further subdivided into two groups. Within the classification of the uncommitted Orthodox there are the “residual” Orthodox and the “non-observant” Orthodox. The residual Orthodox include the remnants of the East European immigrants who remain nominally Orthodox, more out of cultural and social inertia than out of religious choice. They represent a dying generation.

The non-observant Orthodox are

Jews affiliated with Orthodox synagogues, but who have no commitment to the halakhah, or even to the rituals which the residual Orthodox practice. Until recently, they have probably represented the most affluent element of Orthodoxy.

In the second general category, the committed Orthodox are those Jews who strive to conduct their lives within the framework of halakhah. Within this category, the two groups are defined essentially according to their respective communal-societal postures. They are the “modern” Orthodox and the “sectarian” Orthodox.

Modern Orthodox (or “centrist” Orthodox) includes those individuals and institutions who tend to the “church” end of the church-sect continuum. “Church” and “sect” are terms generally used by sociologists to refer to that characteristic of religious groups that identifies their position with respect to the larger society and other religious bodies. Church groups are usually acculturated vis-à-vis the larger society. They try to meet the challenges of secularism, of the larger community, and of other religious groups within their own faith. In this regard, Liebman notes, the modern Orthodox “seek to demonstrate the viability of the halakhah in contemporary life. On the other (hand), they emphasize what they have in common with all other Jews rather than what separates them.” In addition, modern Orthodox Jews have a positive attitude concerning the State of Israel and the concept of Zionism.

Sectarian Orthodoxy can best be understood in terms of the behavior patterns of sects. A religious sect repudiates compromise, is indifferent or hostile to the secular world, and prefers isolation. Some individuals and groups in Orthodox sectarianism fall wholly into this classical mold. However, many Jewish sectarian in 1980, particularly the right-wing leadership, deviate very consciously from this narrow definition. While they concentrate on developing strategies to
maintain their separate traditional communities (and in this sense they are truly “separatists” and “sectarians”), they relate to the larger Jewish community and to the general society for the purpose of reinforcing their strategies. Indeed, they do so conscientiously, vigorously, even aggressively. Their ends are sectarian, yet their means bespeak of heightened sophistication in dealing with the larger Jewish and general societies.

The Agudath Israel is a good example of this bifurcated group behavior. Basically sectarian, Agudah is deeply involved in a variety of communal, social, educational and political activities in the United States, Israel and the world over, all for the sake of furthering its particularistic purposes.

As a whole, Orthodoxy continues the move to the right that began shortly after World War II. And, as modern Orthodoxy is pulled to the right, it seems that sectarian Orthodoxy moves in that direction even more quickly. This is one of the reasons why Orthodoxy has not been able to initiate cooperative efforts or develop a united front to attain common religious objectives, even though the overwhelming majority of committed Orthodox Jews share a common commitment to perpetuating Judaism.

Given the current moods in both camps, achieving rapprochement between the Orthodox moderns (or centrists) and the Orthodox sectarians seems highly improbable within the foreseeable future. Moreover, the organizational heterogeneity and institutional rivalry on both sides of the Orthodox spectrum, and the triumphalism of the “right” — the competition for economic, political, social and religious power — impede the integration of the “right” and “left” and exacerbate the ideological differences that separate them.

In light of these realities, several questions beg to be answered: Can one roof be established for all centrist organizations, for all centrist educational groups, for all centrist educators? How hybrid or eclectic can, or should, the centrist position be? It is clear that centrist Orthodoxy is broad-based and encompasses a rather wide variety of opinions and positions. One need only view the faculty and student body of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (in a sense, a microcosm of the committed modern Orthodox world) to note the ideological variation in modern Orthodoxy — ranging from sectarian attitudes to liberal Orthodox views.

The Demography of Centrism

Exact figures about the number of Orthodox Jews in America are not easily available. In 1974, the National Population Study
found that 11 percent of the approximately 1,900,000 Jewish households (209,000 Jewish households) described themselves as Orthodox.8 Gershon Kranzler recently estimated that Orthodox Jews represent 15 percent of the total Jewish population.9 Thus out of 6 million Jews in the United States and Canada there are approximately 900,000 Orthodox Jews.

According to Chaim Waxman and Egon Mayer, there is good reason to suspect that the number of Orthodox Jews will decline in the coming decades.10 They claim, however, that “the proportion of young Orthodox Jews to the total of Orthodox Jews is likely to increase.”11 This means that while there will be a decline in the overall Orthodox population, it will be reversed gradually or rapidly during the next decade or two depending on the Orthodox birth rate.

Indeed, this demographic prognostication augurs well for the future of Orthodoxy. How much this trend will relate to the centrist community—given the lower birth rate amongst its member families—remains to be seen. But one thing is clear: the Orthodox school enrollment figures do bear directly on centrist Orthodoxy’s future population potential.

Like its counterpart in Israel, American Orthodoxy claims a greater proportion of the school enrollment than the adult population. According to the American Association for Jewish Education, about one quarter of the total American Jewish school enrollment (81,000 pupils out of a total pupil population of 342,000) is currently enrolled in schools under Orthodox auspices.12

Clearly, Orthodox education is a big city day school phenomenon. Eighty percent of the total Orthodox enrollment is in yeshivot and day schools; 20 percent is in supplementary schools. And while almost all of the yeshivah-day school enrollment is in the ten large Jewish communities, 75 percent of the total Orthodox day school population is in New York alone. Also, most of the supplementary school enrollment is in the large ten cities.

All the Orthodox supplementary schools are centrist institutions. About two-thirds of the Orthodox day school enrollment is in centrist sponsored schools. Outside of New York over 80 percent of the Orthodox day school population is under centrist auspices. In New York, about half of the yeshivah enrollment is in centrist schools. These data have important implications for centrist Orthodoxy—particularly since significant proportions of the centrist enrollment come from “uncommitted” homes.

A vital statistic to which the centrist community must pay heed is the changing ideological identification of Jewish day schools during the last two decades. In 1964, in the United States and Canada, 93
percent of the day school enrollment was in Orthodox schools, 4 percent was in Conservative institutions, and 3 percent in communal and independent schools. Fifteen years later, in 1979, according to AAJE, only 66 percent of the day school enrollment was in Orthodox schools, while the pupil population in communal and independent schools grew to more than 20 percent of the total day school enrollment, and the enrollment in Conservative day schools rose to more than 10 percent of the total school population. These data require careful analysis.

Low socio-economic status has been an earmark of fundamentalist religious groups. The lowest SES (Socio-economic Status) has been associated generally with the sectarian elements of these groups. Indeed, Orthodox Jews have been the poorest segment of the Jewish population. And not unlike the economic status of Christian sects, Jewish sectarianists were usually at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale.

These generalizations no longer apply in 1980. Notwithstanding some poor Jews (and excluding the poor elderly Jewish population), the Orthodox Jewish community is now solidly middle class. And, despite some pockets of poverty amongst Hasidim (particularly in light of their large families), sectarian Jews, as a whole, have also become middle class. To be sure, their living patterns do not always reflect the real level of their economic status. Yet, the sectarian Orthodox can proudly point to the significant financial support their institutions receive from their own adherents. This recent development—a condition not fully comprehended by fellow co-religionists—has serious implications for centrist Orthodoxy, particularly in light of the financial difficulties of centrist educational institutions and their relationship to governmental and Jewish communal sources of funding.

CATEGORICAL CHALLENGES TO THE CENTRIST TORAH EDUCATOR

Organizing for Effective Action and Communication

Positive Self-Image. The primary challenges to centrist Orthodoxy can be classified under the heading "Organizing for Effective Action and Communication." The first task in this effort concerns self-image and self-respect. A positive self-concept is a *sine qua non* for *effective* and *assertive* action on behalf of Jewish education. However, in times when the Orthodox Jewish community is moving to the right, it is not easy to maintain a strong self-respecting centrist
position. There are even centrists who are ambivalent about the authenticity of centrism. Indeed, the uncertainty of many centrist educators has had a detrimental, unsettling effect on centrist education.

The delicate balance that modern Orthodoxy must keep between the imperatives of Jewish tradition and the demands of the larger Jewish and general societies make it an easy target for attack by sectarians. This balance is not, as some sociologists see it, unstable. To be sure, centrism has built-in problems. But, the history of the American Jewish community demonstrates that Orthodox centrism is viable, achievable and necessary for Jewish survival. This spirit of self-worth and the feeling of being absolutely necessary to the continuity of Jewish life must be reinforced amongst centrist Torah educators. As Norman Lamm has noted, “we must stress that our הבדתא is נַפְשַׁׁשּׁׁ and not רְחַב־שׁם.”

Coalition of Leadership. One of the outstanding features of the structure of American Orthodoxy is its high proliferation and weak coordination. As a comprehensive movement, Orthodoxy is manifestly uncoordinative. For the creative continuity of centrist Orthodoxy, however, a coalition of centrist leadership and programming is an absolute necessity.

For centrism to flourish all lay and professional forces in formal and informal centrist education must join in cooperative efforts. Centrist Orthodoxy should develop an umbrella arrangement in which all centrist groups can participate, including the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, National Council of Young Israel, Community Services Division of Yeshiva University, the National Commission for Torah Education, Rabbinical Council of America, Religious Zionists of America, the American Sephardi synagogue groups, and the various youth services and programs under centrist Orthodox sponsorship, such as the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, Young Israel Youth, and Yeshiva University Youth Bureau. On the professional level, Centrist Orthodoxy should expand the base of membership of the Educator’s Council of America to include all centrist Torah educators and join ranks with the Rabbinical Council of America and the National Association of Traditional Jewish Communal Workers.

Learning to work together for self-improvement and for developing cooperative approaches to governmental agencies and the organized federated Jewish community is absolutely essential for the well-being of centrist Orthodoxy and for individual centrist institutions.

Relating to Governmental Agencies. Sectarian Orthodox groups, particularly in New York where they are all headquartered,
have learned how to utilize the funding sources of the government and the Jewish community. In New York, Orthodox sectarians have exerted significant pressure on the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies over the past several years to obtain more services and support for the right wing Orthodox community. Similar pressures have been exerted on governmental agencies to obtain public funds and services for the Orthodox poor and for the various non-religious aspects of sectarian institutions, including yeshivot.

The success of the right in obtaining funds and services from Jewish secular and governmental sources is attributable to a combination of factors, especially the religious and personal attitudes of the pre-World War II and post-World War II immigrants and the replacement of the melting pot theory with the theory of cultural pluralism. Unquestionably, the most significant American development of the 1960s has been what Michael Novack called “the rise of the un-meltable ethnic”—the growing self-awareness and assertiveness of the minorities. They have learned that they need not sacrifice cultural integrity to be good Americans. To be different became respectable during the 1960s. The centrist Orthodox educational establishment and individual centrist Torah educators—with rare exception—have not been touched by this mood and opportunity.

Not unrelated to the new self-respectability of sectarian Orthodoxy vis-à-vis governmental agencies is the founding of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Teachers in the New York City public schools and the Commission of Law and Public Affairs. The program emphases of these organizations clearly reflect the strong Jewish assertiveness associated with the Jewish right. These developments are not outside the purview of centrist consideration and organizational relationships.

Relating to Federations. During the past several years, federations across the country have demonstrated increased awareness of the need for Jewish education and its support. This awareness has led, among other things, to a new sense of comprehensive communal leadership amongst the federations. Indeed, they are fast becoming the central addresses for the organized Jewish community—locally and nationally. How does centrist Jewish education, as a totality, relate to this emerging phenomenon?

This development has not yet been clearly defined as a challenge by centrist Orthodoxy. And that, in itself, is a problem. The definition of this challenge must be forthcoming. Furthermore, it must lead to a careful charting of the kind of relationships that should adhere between centrist Orthodox education leadership and the larger Jewish community. One thing is clear, centrist Orthodoxy
needs knowledgeable, articulate and contributing lay leaders to become part of the federation family. Developing a posture of communal responsibility amongst centrist laity is basic to this relationship.

Orthodox Jewish educators, not unlike other Jewish educators, must learn the principles and practices of community organization. Educators must understand the dynamics of communal planning as employed in federations throughout the country. Community organization skills have been finely developed and used by Jewish communal workers and social workers. It is true that some federation personnel often overkill the matter of process. However, as Carmi Schwartz has observed, the weakness of Jewish educators in this area is just the opposite. Learning to appreciate the proper social planning processes and utilize them effectively in school administration as well as in dealing with the organized Jewish community looms large as a significant challenge to centrist Torah educators.

One of the all-important goals of better social planning—one in which laity must be heavily involved—is to bring the skyrocketing cost of day school education within easy reach of the average middle class Jewish family. To achieve this objective centrist leadership must develop more effective and efficient methods of fund raising and fiscal administration in addition to forming more productive partnerships with federations throughout the continent. Where possible, these relationships should be within the framework of the respective central agencies for Jewish education.

**Providing Educational Leadership**

**Halakhic Leadership.** To begin with, centrist Jewish education must give attention to a variety of problems that require halakhic solution or input. For example, whether co-education is appropriate is a question that comes up frequently. The seriousness of this problem, which almost caused a midwest centrist school to close recently, points to the lack of centrist halakhic leadership. Deciding when to begin teaching Humash and Gemara or whether girls should be taught Talmud often require halakhic responses which the centrist community is not yet prepared to make. In developing a centrist halakhic approach to Jewish education, how do centrist Torah educators relate to Yeshiva University, to Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, to the Rabbinical Council of America and its Committee on Halakhah?

Here is one area where a coalition of rabbinic, educator and lay leadership is vital. The first task of this coalition would be to seek out
and establish the halakhic leadership of the Rav in developing guidelines for the future and in responding to several immediate problems that must not be either swept under the rug or left for others to resolve. In addition it is important for the coalition to determine what is and what is not strictly a halakhic problem.

**Curriculum Leadership.** Centrist Torah educators face serious challenges regarding the curricula of the day school and supplementary school. Notwithstanding the new afternoon school curriculum recently prepared by the National Commission for Torah Education (NACOTE) and the efforts of individual day schools to develop new programs, the centrist Orthodox educational establishment has not creatively addressed the questions of curriculum development, curricular objectives, program emphases and instructional approaches. These include the place of Hebrew language and Israel in the curriculum, readiness programs for Humash and Talmud, integration of Jewish and General Studies, vertical and horizontal articulation of Jewish studies, and a host of extracurricular opportunities and methodological considerations. The key curricular questions for centrist Orthodoxy are: What does centrist Orthodox education stand for? What are centrist Orthodox education's key objectives? What are its priority concerns? Centrist educators must either agree on common curricula goals, or agree to disagree, and not aspire to common curricula at all.

Adopting the latter posture would be unfortunate. Centrist Orthodox educational leadership, through direct involvement with centrist schools and educators, must develop common curricular guidelines and program discipline. That a cooperative curricular approach can be successfully accomplished is demonstrated admirably by the Greater New York Uniform Yeshiva High School Entrance Examination. More than 1300 eighth graders from 80 yeshivah elementary schools participated in each of the last seven years. Administered and guided by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, in cooperation with NACOTE, this testing program was organized by the Yeshiva High School Principals' Council with the continuous active involvement of its twenty member schools and principals in the metropolitan New York area. This kind of cooperative curricular activity must be expanded.

**Meeting the Needs of the Uncommitted.** Almost all of the children in Orthodox afternoon schools and a significant percentage (in some schools up to 80 percent) of the enrollment in day schools under Orthodox auspices come from uncommitted Jewish homes—ranging from marginal Jewish families to homes totally devoid of Jewish life. How does centrist Orthodox education cater to the needs
of these children? By and large, they are treated as part of a total student mass. There is no question that educators have to respond differently to the various kinds of children in centrist schools. This is a curriculum challenge of the highest order.

Meeting the needs of children from uncommitted homes calls for developing intensive outreach strategies to the families of these children. These marginally committed and unaffiliated adults are a significant human resource for modern Orthodoxy.

The uncommitted pupil population in the day school poses yet another challenge to the centrist community. The effect of the uncommitted upon the Jewish ambience of the school is disconcerting to many centrist parents. So much so, that they prefer to send their children to right wing yeshivot.

Here centrist leaders must tackle the problem of the critical ratio of religious and non-religious children. Is there a tipping point beyond which a centrist school should not enroll children from uncommitted homes? If centrist schools maintain open-door policies with respect to the uncommitted, special outreach strategies to both children and parents become an absolute necessity.

Related to the problems of the native American uncommitted Jewish children are a variety of special pupil populations including the Russian immigrants, other foreign students, Israelis, (there may be as many as 40,000 Israeli children of school age in North America) and children with special needs. Effective means of dealing with these populations and their parents must be found.

Breaking Through the Personnel Crisis

Teacher Models. Curriculum implementation highlights the need for emulative educators models. Research has shown that the non-Orthodox parents of children in Jewish day schools are more concerned about the teacher's personality and his or her personal influence on children than they are with the curriculum. This should be a matter of high priority to the centrist educator and lay leader alike. Given the difficulties of attracting talented personnel, centrists must be concerned especially with the socializing effects of the daily contacts between teachers and children.

The need for proper teacher models was eloquently articulated a decade ago, by a group of 15-17 year-old high school students in the Leadership Training Program at Camp Morasha in a perceptive report entitled Jewish Education: The Students' Viewpoint. The following observations are excerpted from the report:
Teachers stress marks. . . . They do not seem to regard the importance of learning.

Teachers find questions not only time-consuming, but also personally annoying. They . . . resent questions about the basics of Judaism and even refuse to answer students.

This basically is the most dangerous problem facing our Jewish education system: teachers who “turn their students off.”

As students that are receptive to learning, we ask to be inspired. We want our teachers to take an interest in our religious development. We want our questions to be valued, and we want our teachers to want to answer us.

We come to school with open minds, hearts, and ears. We long to be responded to. . . . The duty of the teacher is to help us in our attempts. It is a crime if our teachers do not fulfill their roles. . . . We deserve a better break from our Jewish education.16

Centrist leaders must adequately respond to such student complaints even if they may be exaggerated according to their own perception of reality.

Effective Administrators. An equally important personnel problem is the inability of the majority of principals to provide quality educational leadership, especially in the areas of curriculum development, instructional supervision and pupil guidance.

As far as the principal is concerned, the students claimed that the root of this problem lies in the administration’s shameful neglect of Jewish religious guidance for the students on both the personal and group level. The more important of the two is the need on the part of individual students to have someone to turn to for help in religious problems. . . . What is desperately needed is a qualified person who can dedicate himself to help and inspire troubled students.17

The students asked for intellectually stimulating programs in Jewish thought and Jewish living on various grade levels. The Jewish philosophy courses, in their respective junior and senior high schools, they said, were “detrimental and alienating rather than conducive to the betterment of the student.”18 This criticism poses a major challenge to Jewish school administrators.

Reaching Out for Quality Centrist Educators. For self-perpetuation, modern Orthodoxy needs modern Orthodox educational personnel. The centrist community is simply not training enough centrist-Orthodox educators. It relies upon Israel for elementary school teachers. For Talmud instructors, it engages musmakhim from the sectarian metivtot.

Many centrist principals also have “rightist” training or “rightist” leanings. Moreover, the centrist community has not succeeded in
producing Torah scholars and rosh yeshivah who espouse the modern Orthodox way of life.

Centrist Orthodoxy cannot continue, let alone flourish, with this kind of personnel situation. True, the fault does not lie with the rabbinic seminaries and teacher training institutions. Talented young modern Orthodox Jews simply do not opt for Jewish educational careers.

The number of centrist Orthodox supervisory and administrative positions are limited. At most, there are about 500 such jobs in America. Moreover, the salaries of most of these posts are competitive, if not attractive. Yet, one must look far and wide to find qualified centrist professionals to fill the relatively small number of administrative openings each year.

The socio-economic status of teachers is another matter. Nothing short of a dramatic upgrading of salaries, conditions of employment and social status must take place. Centrist leadership, despite all the present financial difficulties of centrist schools must find the ways and means to accomplish this feat posthaste.

To make the necessary breakthrough in the education personnel situation Centrist Orthodoxy desperately needs the united effort of Yeshiva University, The Hebrew Theological College, Bar Ilan University, the Torah Education Department of the World Zionist Organization and national and local, school-based lay leadership. Anything less than spectacular improvement in the training, recruitment and retaining of qualified centrist educators will see a gradual, if not rapid, erosion of the Orthodox centrist position in education.

To begin with, the centrist community has a unique opportunity to help remedy the problem of quality administrators via Yeshiva University's Ferkauf Graduate School programs, particularly, the newly instituted Block program in school administration. To be adequate to the challenge, however, Yeshiva University requires centrist support and guidance in recruiting talented students and inspiring faculty.

A necessary ingredient of the personnel breakthrough is an imaginatively developed movement to draft young, bright, committed Orthodox Jews into the Jewish education profession. This can be done, particularly in light of the decline of available centrist Orthodox rabbinic pulpits.

There is a positive correlation — in every vocation — between the quality of personnel and their earning power and social status. In Jewish education, both challenges must be tackled simultaneously. The recruitment of new quality people and the socio-economic
upgrading of the centrist education profession must take place in tandem. The potential success of one dynamic is dependent upon the success of the other. For both, a climate of progress, and success, must be created.

The personnel challenge seems like an impossible mission. If it is not met, however, centrist creative continuity might no longer be possible in America.

**Taking a Stand on Ideological Issues**

**Professional Allegiance.** The individual centrist Torah educator faces a serious challenge vis-à-vis his professional ideological allegiance. Where does the loyalty of the centrist Torah educator lie? Does centrism have enough attraction to centrist educators for exclusivity in organizational relationships? In how many different educational organizations should a centrist educator hold membership? Does a centrist educator compromise himself by participating in sectarian Orthodox organizational activities or by belonging to non-Orthodox professional groups?

Obviously, there is a finite amount of time and energy that centrist Torah educators have. How much of that time should be translated into allegiance and action on behalf of centrist Orthodox educators? Moreover, how can this kind of activity be maximized?

**Organizational Relationships.** Related to this ad personam professional ethical issue is a challenge requiring an organizational response. How should centrist Torah education relate to the sectarian Orthodox establishment as represented by Agudath Israel and Torah Umesorah? Can, or should working relationships be established to achieve common goals? What kind of relationships should they be? Also, what should be the relationship between the centrist education establishment and non-Orthodox professional groups? These questions all require definitive responses.

**Whither Supplementary Schooling?** The centrist Orthodox community must make a decision about its collective role in supplementary schooling. It is obvious that the after-public-school form of Jewish education is less than satisfactory, less than effective in all its denominational settings. There are some 16,000 children in supplementary schools under Orthodox sponsorship throughout the country. A decision must be made by the Orthodox community whether it should continue supporting this type of education. Is it better off expending all its energies on day schools exclusively if the supplementary Jewish education does not improve?
The Future of the Centrist Day School. Concerning all day education, how should the centrist Orthodox educator react to the development and growth of Conservative day schools, some of which were initiated or planned as centrist Orthodox schools or are in neighborhoods in which they often compete with centrist Orthodox schools for enrollment? What should the centrist Orthodox day school in a small or middle-sized community do about the non-Orthodox lay and rabbinic leaders who want to take an active role in the direction of the school? How does the advent of the “independent schools” in many communities relate to centrist Orthodoxy? Why did some day schools change their identifying label from Orthodox to Independent or Communal or Conservative? Does the change to Independent or Communal signal a change in ideological orientation? These questions, which, among other things, obviously relate to sources of funding, constitute a major challenge to centrist Orthodoxy.

Besides being important for Jewish survival and for the continuity of Orthodoxy, the day school has given Orthodoxy an image of power and growth in the Jewish community. This image is not unrelated to the increased support the Orthodox day school has received from the organized Jewish community. On the other hand, in some Orthodox locales, this image has caused schools to drop their exclusive Orthodox affiliation to be eligible for communal funds.

Israel and Centrist Education. It is axiomatic that Israel is crucial to the centrist Orthodox community. Modern Orthodoxy can be proud of its role in the growth of the modern Jewish state. It is not clear, however, how Israel is integrated into the education programs in centrist yeshivot.

What role should Israel play in Orthodox schools? How should faculty, administration and student body relate to Israel and to Israeli agencies? And should there be a relationship with the World Zionist Organization, the Departments of Education and Culture and Torah Education, and the American Zionist Youth Foundation, and other organization or schools located in Israel? How can the programs of these departments most effectively serve the centrist Orthodox community? What kind of American centrist Orthodox input is required to maximize the value of these departments for the American Jewish community and for centrist Orthodoxy?

All these questions require serious consideration and response. The welfare of modern American Orthodoxy and its Israeli counterparts depend, in good measure, upon the resolution of these questions.
EPILOGUE

The relevant demographic data presented earlier provided a framework for presenting the critical challenges facing the centrist Torah community. Succinctly stated these challenges are:

1. the need to organize for effective action and communication;
2. the need to provide educational leadership;
3. the need to make a breakthrough in the personnel crisis; and
4. the need to take a stand on ideological issues.

In all, the four categories embrace fifteen discrete challenges, almost all of which do not require additional funding—only a sense of urgency and a good sense of judgment.

NOTES

6. Liebman, p. 34.
14. In a note sent to this writer in August, 1980.
17. Jewish Education: The Students' Viewpoint, pp. 11-12.