

THE TASKS OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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I

The relationship between an historically continuous Judaism, as embodied in a living people, and the modern, open and largely secular Western society is a problematic one, both in theory and in practice.¹ Consequently, principled Jewish religious education, which is informed by a clear philosophic conception of "the ideal Jew" and of how young people are educationally moved towards *becoming* such Jews and which, moreover, possesses modes of translating such a conception into practice in the given historical situation, is elusive. For the issue of helping persons to *become* "ideal Jews" is dependent on more or less unambiguous notions of what it is to *be* such Jews.² Thus, the solutions to Jewish educational problems cannot be divorced from the dilemmas of contemporary Judaism.

¹ It may be said that the theoretical difficulties are largely related to the Enlightenment and its secular philosophical conceptions; the practical problems stem mainly from the Emancipation and the historical conditions it created. See David Sidorsky, "Judaism and the Revolution of Modernity," in *The Future of the Jewish Community in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973).

² See Seymour Fox, "Prolegomenon to a Philosophy of Jewish Education," in *Many Directions; a Single Aim* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, Hebrew University School of Education and Ministry of Education and Culture, 5729). I am assuming that Jewish education is ideally informed by principles of reality, knowledge and value, and concerned with transmitting them. However, if one were to define education according to what Lamm has called the "development model," this statement would not necessarily be true. See Zvi Lamm, *Conflicting Theories of Instruction* (Berkeley, Cal.: McCutchan, 1976).

Clearly, there is no one solution to the problem of Judaism that will be acceptable to all modern Jews. In the present situation, all that one can reasonably hope for is a diversity of coherent theological and ideological positions — thoughtful Jewish responses to modernity and systematic modern interpretations of Judaism's perennial meanings and claims. Such comprehensive responses necessarily have far-ranging implications for the structure of the Jewish community, for desired life-styles and for the organization of personal commitments, but their large scope does not make them less controversial. And it is unlikely that the theory and thus, responsible practice of Jewish education can be less diverse and controversial than the several available interpretations of Judaism.

Consequently, to the extent that they refuse to make social facts into religious affirmations, realities into ideals and (the necessity of) practical accommodation into normative theories, Jews will have to live with lively debate about central questions. This means that they will have to work towards a Jewish consensus that is workable but not identical with one particular ideal, a consensus that locates common questions but is permissive and open about solutions. As for Jewish education, diverse patterns and programs must be allowed to offer options for dealing with problems that will be viewed as *common* problems.³

Unfortunately, the ability to live serenely, or at least sanely, with complex and only partially soluable problems, bespeaks a significant existential commitment to the life-space in which these problems arise. Precisely this is what appears to be lacking in modern Jewish life; this lack is what is often termed the failure of contemporary Jewish education. Where there are existential involvements and cultural compulsions⁴, we find that serious problems heighten commitment, unleash previously hidden energies and harness intelligence and ingenuity. When this involvement is absent,

³ These problems, I believe, concern themselves with three areas of controversy: the *ideational* components of classic Judaism and their meanings and operative claims; the *cultural-historical* tradition, with its discrete means of expression, heroes and remembered events, and the *identity* components which distinguish between the Jewish group and others and suggest norms for maintaining group life and distinctiveness.

⁴ This term has been suggested by Marshall Sklare in his *Conservative Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1972), Chapter Nine.

the same serious problems evoke anxiety, despair, and ultimately, where the apparent options permit this psychological luxury, disengagement and indifference.⁵

And so, where there is a serious commitment to Judaism, there are many *serious* problems but few *critical* ones; where there is no such commitment, the opposite situation prevails. The problems are critical but not genuinely serious. Rather than appreciated for their power to mobilize the Jewish individual and community for effective action, they are viewed as threatening and corrosive. Hence, where commitment is lacking, all Jewish problems (with certain prominent exceptions⁶) are viewed with impatience; solutions must be found immediately or, it is implied, the public and even all serious people will have no choice but to save their serenity by ceasing to see them *as* problems.

Thus, as Jewish commitment diminishes, there is, paradoxically, ever more fervent expectation of some major breakthrough which will put all the fragments of modern Judaism and Jewish education together, and alter matters in a radical and highly satisfactory (i.e., no longer threatening) manner. Consequently, both religious thinkers concerned with Jewish education and educators in the field see themselves called upon to carry out an eleventh hour rescue operation, and neither can afford (at this critical hour) to be bothered with the insights, theoretical knowledge and activity of the other. Each group claims that the other is somehow responsible (due to naïveté, insensitivity or ignorance) for the dire situation in which there are no comprehensive solutions and in which the problems themselves are on the verge of evaporating. The theologians become more sublime, and the educators, more down to earth.⁷ Each is intent on saving what is essential and perhaps can still be saved: the theologians, Jewish truth,

⁵ In theoretical terms, we may say that *problems*, which are meaningful within a given frame of reference (e.g. body of theory) are seen as *counter-instances*, that is, evidences of the untenability of the frame of reference itself. On this distinction, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), Chap. VIII.

⁶ I.e., the problems related to the "identity component" which is seen as largely imposed from without (by anti-semites, for example), and where the luxury of "not relating" appears implausible. The claims made on behalf of commitment to the State of Israel is a prominent example.

⁷ For theological and practical examples of this tendency, see Abraham J. Heschel, "Jewish Education," in *The Insecurity of Freedom* (New York: Schocken, 1972) and Jay B. Stern, "Losing One's Faculties in Jewish Education," *Conservative Judaism*, Summer 1970.

and the practitioners, the Jews. Neither is concerned with a comprehensive philosophy of Jewish religious education which would inform the educators of their Jewish need for, and responsibility to, the theologians and, conversely, would teach the theologians that education is concerned with making truth accessible to specific human beings in concrete and never abstract or ideal situations.

II

What happens in the educational arena may be described as follows: Jewish religious philosophers (of all denominations), drawing on their own experiential insights and utilizing their well-developed powers of articulation, seek to solve the problem of Jewish education by abstracting comprehensive slogans from their own (usually very alienated) consciousness. These theoretical-theological slogans, addressed to "the community of the committed" albeit within earshot of the vaguely "concerned," create acute frustration among the practitioners of Jewish education, somehow inspire the concerned laity and thoroughly bewilder the wider community (which is far removed from the certainties and verities of the theologians) — and engender considerable guilt feelings in everyone. The educators feel guilty at their inability to translate the slogans into practice, the concerned laity at their failure to live by them or up to them, and the rank and file of Jews at their fundamental incomprehensions of what is being talked about.

Thus, philosophers and theologians demand more Torah or a deeper reverence or genuine rootedness, but their formulas are not of practical usefulness for education, though they are clearly meant to convey educational imperatives. They are useless for education because they are not defined or related to other bodies of valued knowledge and professed belief; they are not translated into educational theory; they ignore what sociologists and rabbis tell us about the processes and conditions in the Jewish home and community, and they are oblivious to the task of discovering criteria for selection from Jewish subject-matter, nor do they deal seriously with the problem of the teachers. They are far above such challenges as training and holding teachers even as they do not condescend to take seriously the talents and shortcomings, the aspirations and

needs, and the world-views and doubts of the actual teaching community.⁸

As for the educators, the men in the field, they learn quickly to become impatient with the "after dinner speech" quality of theoretical religious pronouncements, and they come to rely on the strengths and skills developed through experience and on the social scientific theories (in education, psychology, sociology and religion) that inductively deal with the *real* world in which they work. They know and accept, however grudgingly, the realities of Jewish life. They live with the fact (not the theologians' "imminent danger of" but the *fact*) of religious and cultural assimilation; they understand that the majority of the community is profoundly non-supportive of significant Jewish education; that the status and morale of most teachers is low; that traditional Jewish subject-matter is often irrelevant and/or inaccessible, that pupils are bored or hostile and that the "community of the committed" is existentially too aloof and educationally too naive to offer concrete guidelines for action. They therefore scorn Judaically anchored programmatic pronouncements and address themselves to descriptive analyses of a gloomy situation, analyses suggested by social scientific theories and designed to justify limited goals and minimal achievements.

However, by cutting themselves loose (for all intents and purposes) from theoretical guidelines drawn from systematic interpretations of the Jewish tradition, they are left with Jewishly superficial or corrupted conceptions of Jewish education, and they develop Jewishly detached notions, either optimistic or pessimistic, as to "what can (still) be done, things being the way they are." The optimists, well-versed in educational psychology, learning theories and didactic skills, devise curricular gimmicks, calculated to inject at least an element of relevance or interest into programs of realistic standards, built, of course, upon "sober" expectations. They shape and reshape the meagre clay at their disposal,

⁸ In other words, they do not relate to all "the topics" of Jewish education (the learners, the teachers, the subject-matter and the environment) seriously and organically. The theological thinkers tend to be biased towards the exclusive importance of subject-matter, i.e., *Torah*, as they variously define it. As for the practitioners, their bias is to relate mainly to the learners and the environment. Both groups tend to ignore the teachers.

usually no more than six hours per week at a pre-conceptual age and sometimes less, indifferent parents, tired and antagonistic pupils, digruntled or apathetic teachers, into diverse, always disintegrating forms. As for the pessimists, they work and suffer without illusions and without recourse to sophisticated theories: they teach the tradition in quiet desparation and mounting cynicism, living only for the occasional great soul in their classroom who can be rescued for real Jewish education and enticed into the community of the elite. These great souls will, of course, be removed from the classroom in question as soon as possible.

Thus, we have the following situation. The theologians, far from the milieu of the classroom and the community, can only preach; the practitioners, wearied by preachers and angry at their nebulous guilt, can only set their sights close to the ground, theorizing about their experience through the prism of education or such general fields as sociology or religion and applied psychology.⁹ And because of their frustration with theologians, they seldom ask which of these borrowed theories are compatible with the Jewish religious tradition, however interpreted.

In the meantime, Jewish education, despite the abundance of frills, stays very much the same. But the community changes, and those who despair of threatening problems leave it. Sensitive Jews who seek a life of meaning, one which is anchored in a world-view and negotiated through a cultural language of living — unless they happen upon a charismatic rabbi or teacher — seek it elsewhere. For many of those who earnestly seek realms of significance, Jewish education amounts to broken Hebrew phrases, signifying nothing; to biblical concepts which are learned only to be discarded in the adolescent and university encounter with sophistication; to moral teachings, ultimately to be viewed as parochial formulations of universal principles, and to odd customs and ceremonies, useful upon certain institutional occasions and ativistically endearing but meaningless in the

⁹ On this, see Stephen C. Lerner, "Ramah and its Critics," *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. XXV, No. 4. But compare Raphael Arzt, "Questions for Jewish Education," *Petachim* (Hebrew), Iyar 5732.

It is noteworthy that an important article on religious education, which was printed by *Conservative Judaism*, does not mention God and defines "tradition" in a manner which is clearly unacceptable to many of the theologians of Conservative Judaism. See Joseph J. Schwab, "The Religiously Oriented School in the United States: a memorandum on policy," *Conservative Judaism*, Spring 1964.

routine of rational living. Except for a small minority (mostly of the "observant" Orthodox, but not only), who are educationally initiated into what Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik has called "the covenant community,"¹⁰ Hebrew is Israeli (i.e., remote) or dead, Bible is not Torah, teachings are not binding norms, and customs and ceremonies are not commandments.

Because Jewish knowledge is not really serious, no genuine tension is created between what is known Jewishly and everything else known. Consequently, what the child is asked to believe in Jewish education is not believable, what he is taught is not really learned at that center of the soul where intellect, affect, will and action meet, and what he does as a Jew is not "where the action is." Jewish education appears, therefore, to deal with what one can learn far better elsewhere, for Jewish education is only moral or cultural or religious education,¹¹ and both teacher and pupil know that their morality is Western, their culture is American, English or Israeli,¹² and that they are not religious in any responsible or comprehensive sense. And to the extent that religion is important, it signifies religious sensitivity, wonder and openness.¹³ Existential philosophies, taught by disciplined, yet attractively bemused truth-seekers at universities, serve the purpose admirably. And these manage to deal with religious categories of existence without having to resort to bothersome dialects, disturbing Scriptures and implausible rituals.

¹⁰ For Soloveitchik's understanding of this concept, see Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith," *Tradition*, Summer 1965.

¹¹ But see Barry Chazan's recent discussion of this problem, "Is Jewish Education Religious or Ethnic Education?" *Philosophy of Education Society 1975* (Edwardsville, Ill.: P.E.S., 1975).

¹² Obviously, the distinction between religion and culture exists in Israel as well, at least within the general state school system which is considered neutral with regard to religious matters, but which teaches subject-matters (e.g., the Bible) that, within the Jewish tradition, are certainly intrinsically related to religious issues and decisions. For a careful study of the status of the Bible as national literature in education and the religious issues that arise, see J. Schoneveld, *The Bible in Israeli Education* (Van Gorcum, Assen/Amsterdam, 1976).

¹³ A distinction has been drawn between *explicit religious education*, which is frankly committed to the doctrines and practices of a given religion, and *implicit religious education*, which is concerned with a religious orientation to life and the world. In the latter, diverse religions constitute embodiments of such an orientation. Explicit religious education is possible only where a specific religious tradition is believable to the teachers and the community; implicit religious education does not generally require assent to specific doctrines ("believing that . . ."). Those who are educated in the latter way may wonder, especially in the "open society," why they should be loyal to one specific (e.g., the Jewish) embodiment. For these

III

It is our contention that we cannot expect significant change or development in Jewish education until the interpreters of Judaism will learn to *see* the educators and until the latter are enabled to *hear* the Jewish thinkers and theologians. This need to open a two-way street has been pointed out in recent years by Jewish educational scholars such as Fox, Ackerman and Hazzan, from various perspectives and with various emphases,¹⁴ and by religious thinkers as diverse as Borowitz (Reform) and Berkovits (Orthodox).¹⁵ These writers have enabled us to see that the task of teaching the theologians to *look at* Jewish educational realities and at the theories that organize them on the one hand, and of teaching the educators to *hear* the spokesmen of consistent and coherent conceptions of Judaism on the other hand, falls within the domain of the philosophy and philosophers of Jewish religious education. Below, we should like to spell out the tasks facing such philosophy of Jewish religious education.

In general terms, the philosopher of Jewish religious education must serve us in the following areas:

(1) He must show us why problems cannot be solved before they have been located, why we cannot evaluate success before we have decided upon criteria of success or failure in given situations, upon given theoretical assumptions, and why not every problem can be solved to the complete satisfaction of Jewish thinkers *and* educational philosophers *and* rabbis *and* teachers. He must show us how partial success differs from total failure *and when*; how the onus of accomodation can be redeemed by conscientious and principled handling of (theoretical and practical) variables. Fox, moving from an edu-

terms and their significance, see Schools Council (Working Paper 36), *Religious Education in Secondary Schools* (London: Evans and Methuen, 1971), Chapter Two.

¹⁴ See Seymour Fox, "Towards a General Theory of Jewish Education," in *The Future of the Jewish Community in America, Op. Cit*; Walter Ackerman, "An Analysis of Selected Courses of Study of Conservative Congregational Schools," *Jewish Education*, March 1970, Summer 1970; Barry Chazan, "The Nature of Contemporary Philosophy of Jewish Education," *Philosophy of Education Society*, 1972 (Edwardsville, Ill.: P.E.S., 1972).

¹⁵ See Eugene B. Borowitz, "Problems Facing Jewish Educational Philosophy in the Sixties," *American Jewish Yearbook 60* (American Jewish Committee, New York, and The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1961); Eliezer Berkovits, "Orthodox Judaism in an Age of Revolutionary Transformations," *Tradition*, Summer 1965 and his "A Contemporary Rabbinical School for Orthodox Jewry," *Tradition*, Fall 1971.

cational-vantage-point, and Hartman, moving from a philosophical one,¹⁶ have recently illuminated this area.

(2) He must show us what currently accessible theologies of Judaism consider to be ideal for Jewish life¹⁷ and what the educational implications of these ideal structures are. Thus, he must discover what various schools of Judaic thought mean by the key value terms of Judaism (e.g., Torah, God, the People of Israel, the Messiah, the Land of Israel),¹⁸ how they may be related to normative (ideal) conceptions of education, and how both normative Judaism and normative educational philosophy may be translated into curriculum rather than preached at, and corrupted by, educators and educational theorists.¹⁹

(3) He must help us to develop theoretical strategies for dealing with the fact of pluralism. This does *not* mean that he must devise an *ideology* of pluralism. First, because ideology-making is not his task, and second, such an ideology will be recognized by him as only another instance of attempting to provide a theoretical justification for a once-and-for-all solution to a problem which is misconceived as one problem and as completely solvable.²⁰ And each strategy must be seriously rooted in a conception of Judaism and Jewish education which makes claims and offers realms of meaning.

¹⁶ See Seymour Fox, "Towards a General Theory," *Op. Cit.* and David Hartman, "Halakha as a Ground for Creating a Shared Spiritual Language," *Tradition*, Summer 1976.

¹⁷ Because of the character of the Jewish tradition, Jewish theologies will always inevitably deal with broad cultural and historical questions and sometimes, will appear as "programs for Jewish living" rather than "theologies." The writings of Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist movement, are a noteworthy example. For the problems related to Jewish uses of the term "theology," see Samuel Sandmel, "Reflections of the Problem of Theology for Jews," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (April 1965), pp. 101-112.

¹⁸ It is suggested that these are the primary *ideational* terms of Judaism in relation to which Jewish theologies and ideologies diverge in "principled" fashion, i.e., as a result of diverse interpretations of these terms and varying understandings of their relationship.

¹⁹ Fox has pointed out a very important type of corruption: the employment of methods that seem educational but are not compatible with principled conceptions of Judaism. See his X "Prolegomenon," *Op. Cit.*

²⁰ For an ideology of pluralism is also based on certain principles about which there will be, in the nature of things, disagreement. The pluralistic ideology, in terms of *its* principles, will be no more tolerant than any position based on principles. Since, as we have suggested, agreement on all fundamental issues is not to be expected in the foreseeable future, an ideology of pluralism may be understood as an attempt to evade this uncomfortable fact, or, as one of the many principled positions which compete for the loyalty of Jews.

More specifically, his task is seven-fold:

(a) He must distinguish, for Jewish education, between what Schwab has called "problem areas" and "problems."²¹ That is, he must point out, with regard to the various topics of education (learners, teachers, subject matter and environment), the distinction between things that are obviously unsatisfactory and malfunctioning — like boredom, lack of discipline, or a brain drain in the teaching profession — and possible reasons, arrived at through educational deliberation, for what is obviously unsatisfactory.

(b) He must examine theoretical (theological and ideological) understandings of Judaism and Jewish education. In performing this task, he carefully analyses the writings of given Jewish thinkers in order to discover what they conceive Judaism to be ideally, how the ideal Jew lives it and by it. Moreover, his analysis is aimed at discovering what given ideal conceptions of Judaism have to contribute, *from within*, about the proper means (or at least, legitimate ones) of transmitting them to the coming generation.

Among the questions to which the philosopher of Jewish education will address himself in examining Jewish theologies, we may allude to the following: How does a given thinker understand the key terms of the Jewish tradition and how does he organize them into an organic conception of normative Judaism? What does he consider the guiding literary and other sources for his understanding of these key terms and for their normative inter-relationships? What, according to his theology, constitutes an ideal (Jewish) society and an ideal Jew? What aspects of the normative tradition deserve priority in teaching, and which are, in principle, not directly teachable?²² What is the theological conception being put forward with regard to the teacher's authority, with regard to the status of the pupil, of the subject-matter and the community?

²¹ See Joseph J. Schwab, *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum* (National Education Association Center for the Study of Instruction, 1970), p. 4.

²² For example, it does not require subtle philosophical analysis to determine that, according to the religious thought of the Israeli thinker, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, the teaching of Judaism is not legitimately concerned with the pupils' religious subjectivity or conducted via a discussion of values. He tells us clearly that while Judaism aims to bring men to a knowledge of God, such knowledge is not teachable. See, Y. Leibowitz, "Education for Commandments," in *Modern Jewish Educational Thought* (D. Weinstein and M. Yizhar, editors), (Chicago: The College of Jewish Studies, 1964) (Hebrew).

(c) He must examine normative philosophies of education, which deal with the comprehensive issues of the nature of reality, of knowledge and of value, and which relate axiomatic principles (ontological, epistemological and axiological) to one another for the explicit purpose of justifying curricular decisions.²³ In other words, the philosophies he examines deal not only with questions such as "What is a good man?" but expressly with questions such as "How does one educate men to become good?"

To the extent that the theologies he has studied deal systematically with the justification of Judaism, i.e., they have a well-developed and overtly philosophical aspect, he may expect to find an implicit normative philosophy of education in the theology itself.²⁴ In that case, he studies general normative philosophies of education only more readily to locate the philosophy of the given theology and to draw it out, i.e., to bring it to address itself more directly to specific educational questions. If, however, the theology he has examined is primarily concerned with the systematic *statement* of Jewish faith rather than with its *justification* (i.e., it is more of a dogmatic than a philosophical venture),²⁵ he may require extrinsic normative philosophies of education to provide a

²³ For a discussion of normative philosophy of education, which examines not only which attributes shall be transmitted through education but also deals with the question why certain attributes rather than others are to be considered worthy of transmission, see William K. Frankena, "A Model for Analyzing a Philosophy of Education," *Readings in the Philosophy of Education* (Jane R. Martin, editor) (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1970). See also Harold S. Broudy, "Philosophy and the Curriculum," *Philosophy and Education; Proceedings of the International Seminar 1966*, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967).

²⁴ Jewish theology is concerned both with the explication of Jewish faith, i.e., systematic reflection upon and systematic statement of Jewish teaching, and with the justification of Jewish faith, i.e., the demonstration of its plausibility. In my study, *Tasks of Contemporary Jewish Theology in the Construction of Religious Educational Theory in the Diaspora* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Hebrew University, 1975) (Hebrew), I attempt to show that theologies which emphasize the justification of Judaism make most extensive use of general philosophical categories, since they are designed to demonstrate the credibility of Judaism in universally comprehensible terms.

²⁵ The term "dogmatic" is not meant to imply that such theologies are irrational or implausible, but that they state the fundamentals of Jewish belief with only peripheral concern with terms of reference that are outside the tradition. "Dogmatic" theology may give reasons for the beliefs and actions it recommends, but it does not consider it necessary to examine the grounds of its presuppositions. On this latter point, see W. D. Hudson, "Is Religious Education Possible?" in *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education* (G. Langford and D. J. O'Connor, editors) (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 180.

theoretical bridge from religious explication to educational philosophy.²⁶

The questions addressed to normative philosophies of education will include: How is education defined, and how does it differ from such activities as indoctrination, conditioning or training? How can education be seen to have both cultural dimensions (concerned with the transmission of a culture and its creative continuation) and existential ones (concerned with the integration of personality)? To what extent are metaphysical considerations legitimate or essential in making principled educational decisions? How do diverse understandings of human existence affect the relationship between cognitive and affective aspects of education?

(d) Having examined diverse conceptual understandings of Judaism and education, he now connects given theologies or ideologies with those normative philosophies of education that are implicit in the theologies themselves (if they are explicitly philosophical) or congenial to them (if the theologies are explicatory or dogmatic). In other words, though he will always have discovered normative implications or ideas in his examination of Jewish theologies — “b” above — these ideas will not add up to a philosophy of education unless the theology in question is consciously and systematically philosophical. However even when it *is*, its educational principles are not likely to be fully exposed and made into clear and explicit theoretical guidelines until they have been held up to general educational thought. This is so because the philosophy of Jewish theology is concerned specifically with justifying the faith of Judaism rather than with justifying educational decisions.

Here he comes upon *normative philosophies of religious Jewish education*. In so doing, he answers questions such as: How does a given Jewish thinker who interprets Judaism for our time, understand or portray the ideally educated Jew? How does he, no matter how implicitly, define *learning* and *knowing*, and what would he consider mis-educative? How does he understand the transmission of culture (i.e., what is

²⁶ Since such theologies do not explain themselves in philosophical terms, they may lack the philosophic apparatus needed in the construction of educational theory. The problem of supplying such theologies with such an apparatus is dealt with in my *Tasks of Contemporary Jewish Theology, Op. Cit.*, Section IV.

for him the language of Jewish education²⁷) and what are, for him, the parameters of creative self-expression within Jewish culture? How does he conceive of the Jewishly integrated personality and what are the respective roles of cognitive and affective learning in shaping it?

(e) The philosopher of Jewish education now moves to the practical plane. Here his concern is not with normative or ideal conceptions of Judaism, but with the empirical facts of Jewish self-understanding and Jewish life.²⁸ With the assistance of sociologists, rabbis and educators, he discovers the distance between "elite religion" and "folk religion,"²⁹ between what is theoretically and universally Jewish truth (as conceived by thinkers and scholars) and what is considered binding or acceptable in given communities under given circumstances. He learns which factors, historical, social and educational, militate against scholarly notions of normative Judaism and how teachers and community leaders attempt to bring Judaism to various publics.

Among the problems with which he deals on this plane, we may note the following: How strongly does the average, say, American Jew perceive and feel bound by his Jewish identity, and how does he combine it with, or distinguish it from, other identities that have a hold upon him? Which fundamental terms of the Jewish tradition are problematic or resisted in a given time or for a given public? How are principled controversies managed within the community and how are affinities expressed? What does the community of Jews consider to be still normative or intrinsic to its Jewish-

²⁷ For a discussion of the "language" of education, i.e., those cultural assumptions and procedures of a culture which permit for its transmission (in contradistinction to the "literature" of education which initiates learners into the creative use of a culture), see R. S. Peters, "Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education," in Israel Scheffler (editor), *Philosophy and Education* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966, Second Edition), especially pp. 252-53.

²⁸ We are not referring here to the practical life of Judaism as programmatically outlined by the sage or theologian in the sense of, for example, "the practical halacha," but to the particular realities and circumstances in which these conceptions are to be carried out and in which there are various departures from norms as well as efforts to reach towards them. We may surmise that a theology which views Judaism as truth for all Jews will have theoretical categories that legitimate diverse responses to norms in different circumstances, will make theoretical allowances for the less than ideal and evaluate different "deviances" in terms of implicit toleration or explicit disapproval.

²⁹ For an analysis of these terms, see Charles L. Leibman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," *American Jewish Yearbook* 1971.

ness? What new Jewish imperatives does it perceive in its historical or social situation?³⁰

(f) Then he examines the educational situation which obtains "out in the world" and which is always less than normative. He discovers, on the basis of psychological and sociological theory, educational studies, and the testimony of men and women who have on-going experience, that some individuals are more educatable towards given goals and ideals than others. He learns that many teachers who are doubtful of several fundamental principles of the normative philosophy of Jewish education adhered to in a given educational system are being utilized in the absence of more ideal ones; he examines, with the aid of theories of learning, motivation, etc., how education is done in practice when less than what is considered the ideal allotment of time is at the disposal of the teacher.³¹ And he sees how subject-matter is chosen on the basis of practical considerations, for example, availability, teachers' knowledge, pupils' interest, etc., in addition to theoretical ones.

Among the practical issues he faces in this phase of his work, we may also mention the following: How is education carried on where teachers do not clearly share Jewish educational principles? What criteria are employed in granting priorities to diverse educational tasks? How are pupils, who have already been educated towards a value system which may be incongruous with what the school believes about Judaism, initiated into Jewish conceptions and patterns?

(g) Finally, he makes connections on the practical level between the realities of Judaism in given situations and the realities of Jewish education in such situations. And this he does with constant reference to Jewish theological and educational (normative) thought.

Thus, he takes part in deliberations that deal with such questions as: How does one make educational transitions between conceptions that are acceptable to the educational and larger community and those that are no less fundamental to a given

³⁰ Among the new imperatives perceived, we may mention the actual commitment of Jews to the well-being of the State of Israel. Only gradually is this perception finding its way into contemporary theologies of Judaism.

³¹ An "ideal" solution, in the case of the non-supportive community, would be to declare that "Judaism cannot be taught in six hours" and to refuse to engage in it until more "normative" conditions prevail. The fact that very few serious educators would suggest doing this indicates how perspectives may be distorted by not taking all the factors, including the practical, into consideration.

interpretation of Judaism, and that must also be expressed in the curriculum in some form and at some phase? How shall one decide who is qualified for Jewish teaching, and how are such teachers to be trained? How shall committed teachers interact with non-supportive communities? Which new educational ideals demand concrete expression in the community and how may they be connected with historically continuous bodies of principle?

Here, the philosopher of Jewish education assists in planning educational strategies, in distinguishing between unprincipled surrender to "the facts" and wise respect for particular circumstances. In other words, we see the philosopher of Jewish education suggesting philosophically anchored *strategies of Jewish education*.

It should, however, be noted that his competence is not synonymous either with that of the theologian or the sociologist, or teacher. That is, his expertise is neither in constructing ideal conceptions of Judaism or in researching real situations. His competence is in understanding that real situations are different from ideal ones, in knowing how they differ and in examining the implications of these differences for Jewish education, which is duty-bound to relate seriously to both Jewish ideals and educational realities. Thus, he may play a pivotal role in negotiating plausible and principled movement from theory (of Judaism and education) to practice (i.e., the reality theoretically dealt with by social scientists and educational scholars). He is not, *qua* philosopher of Jewish education, an expert on a given community, teacher or school. In other words, he is not an expert on practical situations *in particular*. Thus, while he can suggest strategies related to the question, "What happens in such situations and what kinds of actions appear plausible in such situations?" he is not competent to dictate policy. The latter is related to the question, "What are we going to do in *this* situation?"³² And *that* question must be answered by the educational leadership of the community in consultation with the philosopher. He can participate, and ultimately evaluate decisions, but he cannot unilaterally make them.

The philosopher of religious Jewish education may be

³² On this limitation to the authority of the educational philosopher, see William K. Frankena, *Three Historical Philosophies of Education* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1957), p. 8.

seen, therefore, to work on four levels: Jewish thought, educational thought, Jewish practice as mediated by social scientific theory and the testimony of men in the field, and Jewish educational practice as mediated by educational theory and the testimony of practitioners. Therefore, he must be competent to deal with both Jewish thought and with educational philosophy, and he must carefully study the real lives and educational ventures of Jews, utilizing the theories that explain both, but never limiting his understanding to the fund of empirically arrived at explanations.

His vocation is to initiate and, at times, regulate, discourse between thinkers and doers. His concern is that Jewish education will be based on Jewish principle and that principle will be translated into Jewish education. We may say that he helps Jewish communities and individuals to build bridges between the giving of the Torah and the performance of the commandment, between revelation and teaching.

This is a profoundly serious enterprise, and one that makes clearly definable professional demands on the practitioner of Jewish philosophy of education. But, given existential commitment and faith, it can be carried out without undue anxiety or the addictive and debilitating dependence on crisis.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Dorothy Fahs Beck—Sophia Lyon Fahs, Liberal Religious Educator

Catherine Fletcher—Search For Meaning: A Foundation for Ethical and Religious Education

Norma H. Thompson—Current Issues in Religious Education

Padraic O'Hare—Neo-Orthodox Influence and Empirical Corrective

David Ramey—Evangelization: Its Challenge to an American Catholic Catechesis

Robert A. Barr—How Not to Raise Our Children

Robert D. Goodwin—Morality: How Can We Teach It If We Cannot Define It?

Sister Ruth Ann Haunz, osu—Models of God and Suggested Relationships to Fowler's Stages of Faith Development

Bruno V. Manno—The Church and Older People

Hugh G. Nevin, Jr.—Values Clarification: Perspectives in John Dewey

Marc Lee Raphael—Denominational Jewish Confirmations and Jewish Identity