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Major Trends in Jewish Education: Looking Towards Jewish Family Education

Rachel Rembrandt

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Insitute of Religion

1994

Referee, Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph

DEDICATION

TO MY HUSBAND, JEFF,
FOR ALL HIS SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE,
LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP,

AND TO MY FATHER,
WHOSE LOVE FOR THE RABBINATE
LED ME ON THIS HONORABLE PATH.

THESIS DIGEST

This thesis traces the development of Jewish education from Biblical and Talmudic times through the history of American Jewish education. It explores the problems inherent in the Sunday School and proposes Jewish family education as a key solution to these problems. Finally, it offers a model to begin training family educators.

The first chapter presents an introduction to the thesis. It discusses how the failure of the Sunday School leads to the need for a Jewish family education program.

The second chapter contains an overview and a description of the educational system of the Biblical and Talmudic eras through the use of such texts as the Bible, the two Talmuds and various Midrashic sources. The importance of education within the Jewish tradition is emphasized.

In the third chapter, the examination of Jewish education moves to that of America from the 1730s until today. Within this historical review, there is a presentation of the particular educational institutions which were developed by American Jews to fit into the American society.

From the general educational atmosphere, chapter four moves to information about the specific institution of the Sunday School. Along with an exploration of the history of its development, this chapter also describes the reasons behind its image as a failed institution.

In order to help improve this image, chapter five introduces the concept of Jewish family education. Among other topics, this chapter explains how family education can educate families to develop their own Jewish environments in their homes, reducing the educational load of the Sunday School.

The sixth chapter presents a model program to begin training Jewish family educators. Through this program, educators will have the resources to introduce a Jewish family education program in their own synagogue.

Finally, in the conclusion, I review the current situation in Jewish education and explain the reasons behind the need for a comprehensive family education program in synagogues across the country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who helped me during this exciting experience of writing this thesis. First, I thank Rabbi Sam Joseph whose enthusiasm for Jewish family education was contagious and whose encouragement and guidance helped me develop that enthusiasm into a reality. I would like also to thank Ruth Alpers for both her emotional and physical help during the short summer of this writing.

My mother, father and brother have helped me in countless ways so that I could never express my gratitude to them enough. Finally, I want to thank Jeff, Jason and Micah, my family, whose constant love reminded me throughout the process why I chose the topic of Jewish family education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From Biblical times through today, the Jews have recognized the importance of education. It is seen not only as a core value, but also a duty incumbent on the entire group. "He who rears his children in the Torah is among those who enjoy the fruit in this world while the capital remains for him in the World to Come."[1] (Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 127a) Because of this, the Jews have ensured that some type of educational system is always in place. From reliance on parents all the way to the modern Sunday School, educational institutions have been expected to educate and instruct Jewish children about their heritage.

Because of the emphasis Jews have placed on education, it is extremely upsetting when one of their major educational institutions fails. This is the case with the Sunday School. Often the children find the schools boring and irrelevant to the lives they lead. They complain when they are taken to the school, and tell their parents they have learned nothing at the end of the session. The parents are often disappointed in the results of the Sunday School education. They watch dismayed as their children show no indications of having learned enough in the school. And the educators agree. They graduate children who have only enough knowledge to perform during their Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremony in a satisfactory manner, but not enough to participate fully in holiday celebrations and other Jewish rituals. The children often are not motivated to continue their education beyond the required years. And later as adults, many of the children who attended Sunday Schools are not knowledgeable

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[1]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, Everyman's Talmud (New York: E.P. Dulton and Company, Inc., 1949), p. 173.

about their Judaism. It seems that the Jewish community is spending a lot of money, time and energy working in an educational system that does not work.

The question that the leaders of the Jewish community must ask is why the Sunday School is failing and what can be done to change the situation. Many have offered ideas about the failure of the Sunday School. Some have blamed the parents for their lack of interest and participation in the institution. Other have implicated the teachers for their inadequacies in Jewish knowledge and pedagogic methods. The curriculum has received criticism for the absence of such content as intensive Hebrew study and thorough exploration of classical texts. Even the amount of time allowed for instruction has been condemned for its brevity. All of these are valid problems which do exist within the Sunday School system. However, I feel these may just be symptoms of the larger and more complex problem which exists.

The research for this thesis reveals that the system was originally developed for a certain consumer in mind, and that consumer has changed radically in the past few decades. Originally, it was expected that the home would provide a significant amount of education for the Jewish child. The rituals which were performed within the home gave the children a great opportunity to understand their Jewish culture. For instance, the ritual of the Passover seder was introduced precisely to tell the story of the Exodus to children. The experiential re-creation and deliberate promoting of questioning allowed children to begin to develop a strong Jewish identity. The environment within the home was a major part of the education of the child.

Today this has changed. The family has become lax in their

participation in home ceremonies. The parents feel embarrassed because they do not have enough knowledge of their own to celebrate the holidays at home, or answer their children's questions about their Judaism. This situation is even more difficult with a family which contains an intermarried couple. A non-Jewish spouse has not experienced a Jewish home atmosphere as a child and therefore can not easily create one for their own children. As the Jews moved out of the Jewish neighborhoods, even the opportunities for children to learn from their environment became scarce. Today, there is little chance for Jewish children to pick up any informal education from their home or communities.

This has had a devastating effect on the Sunday Schools. The schools were developed with the idea that they would instruct the children in the facts of Jewish life and history. As only one aspect of their education, the time allotment and curriculum of the Sunday School would be helpful in rounding out the education the children were already receiving in their homes. In combination, the Sunday School and the home, the formal and informal educational experience, would be able to shape a strong Jewish identity, one which could stand up to the influences of the non-Jewish world.

When the homes became unable to continue in this partnership, the schools became overburdened. They were expected to continue to instruct the children and pass on to them the cognitive aspects of Judaism. This was their original purpose. However, now they also were expected to teach the children the affective, experiential aspects of Judaism, the former role of the family. This became too much for the system to produce. The teachers were not trained in how to develop the Jewish identity of the children. The curriculum was not developed to teach the sights and

sounds, experiences and emotions of living Jewish lives. The concept of two or three hours of classroom time was not instituted in order to be able to provide a complete and total educational experience for the Jewish child. The system of the Sunday School was not developed to provide for an audience which was incapable of offering any type of additional educational opportunities or at least reinforcement for the education given by the Sunday School. The Sunday Schools are failures because there is too much expected of them.

The key to improving the Sunday Schools lies with the family. The family must take back its part in the education of the children. The families of these children again must provide an informal Jewish environment which can reinforce what the schools are teaching and add the cultural aspects to the formal education of the Sunday Schools. Again, the children need a full education involving both the schools and the homes.

The families can not do this without help, however. Since the parents do not have the knowledge and experience to provide Jewish education for their children, the schools must work with the families in teaching them all they have lost. Jewish family education, a new trend in Jewish education, is an important way in which this can be accomplished. The program offers the families a variety of opportunities to learn about and experience all aspects of Judaism. The sessions provide the families with the information necessary to bring Judaism back into the home. More importantly, however, the program also empowers the parents to teach their children. By providing the parents with the basics of Jewish culture, the program allows them to feel more comfortable and competent in their own Jewish identity. Because of this, the parents will begin to encourage more Jewish activity within the home, and take back their part of the

responsibility of Jewish education.

This thesis begins with an overview of the role Jewish education played within the classic Jewish texts. The material will then jump to the United States and examine the Jewish educational institutions throughout the time in which Jews lived and studied in America. In a more detailed manner, we will move to the Sunday School and explore its history and analyze its failure. To examine one significant solution for this failure, we then will turn to the developing trend of Jewish family education and examine its theories and rationale. Finally, a model will be presented for those who wish to begin training Jewish family educators to run a family education program within their own synagogue.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL JEWISH VIEWS ON EDUCATION

The Role of Education in the Jewish Way of Life

In a myriad of places throughout the Jewish sources, the vital importance of education is stressed. Not only is it one of the many commandments found in the Bible and Talmud, but was considered by the Rabbis to be one of the most desirable achievements an individual could attain. The Talmud explains that study of the Torah is among the few things which must be done throughout one's life and for which one will receive rewards both in this world and in the World to Come:

> These are the things to which no limit is set: the corner of the field, the first fruits, the offering brought on the three pilgrimage festivals, the practice of benevolence and the study of Torah. These are the things of which the fruits are enjoyed in this world while the capital remains for the World to Come: the honoring of parents, benevolence, restoring peace between a man and his fellow and also the study of Torah which is equal to them all.(Talmud Yerushalmi Peah 1.1)[2]

This explanation demonstrated to all the importance of education and study, especially study of the Torah.

With this strong belief about education, the traditional sources contained many statements about the value of study and the place it

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[2]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, Everyman's Talmud, (New York: E.P.Dulton and Company, Inc., 1949), p. 135.

should hold within the lives of all Jews. Rabbi Yohanan, in Pesikta de Rav Kahana, expressed the priority of education to his student, Rabbi Chiyya son of Abba, as they were traveling on the road from Tiberias to Zippori. When they passed a field, a vineyard and an olive orchard, each time Rabbi Yohanan told his disciple that he had sold each one because he wanted to spend his time in study. Rabbi Chiyya began to cry, and told his teacher that he was distressed because he would have nothing in his old age since he had sold everything. Rabbi Yohanan explained that it meant nothing to sell something which only took God six days to give to humankind in order to acquire that which God gave in forty days and forty nights, namely the Torah.[3] Through this story, the Rabbis explained that the achievements to be gained through the study of Torah come before all worldly and material possessions. In fact, study "is described as of greater importance than the building of the Temple (Babylonian Talmud Megillah 16b)...the priesthood and the throne (Mishnah Aboth 6.5). A similar source reports that children's study may not be interrupted even for the sacred task of the building of the Temple (Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 119b)."[4] Even the most important event in post-Biblical Jewish experience, the rebuilding of the Temple, must take second place behind the study of adults and children. This extraordinary statement helps all understand how vital education is in the life of all Jews.

The goals of Jewish education were generally seen as two-fold. First, education helped in the building of one's character. By studying the

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[3]Bernard Mandelbaum, "Two Principles of Character Education in the Aggadah" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1976), p. 30.

[4] David M. Gordis, "Towards a Rabbinic Philosophy of Education" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I:Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1976), p. 55.

halakha, the rules of a moral life, and following the example of one's teacher, a student would develop the wisdom to be able to choose between good and evil. In Song of Songs Rabbah 1.28 there is a parable which illustrates the power of Torah in countering any evil inclination one might feel. The Torah "is compared to a cupful of oil. If a drop of water falls into a cup which is overflowing with oil, then a drop of oil is forced out. So it is with Torah. If some matter of Torah enters the heart some corresponding foolishness is forced out."[5] The education of people, especially of children, was important in that it would lead to a life of ethical decisions and actions.

The second goal of education went beyond the individual to the community. It was felt that the very survival of the Jewish society depended on education. In order for the community to remain viable, the knowledge of Judaism and the connection with the past had to be passed down to the next generations. One of the tasks of education is to pass on the Jewish heritage so that the Jewish people can maintain the strength to resist the various attacks placed on it by other influences, other nations and other religions.[6]

The main purpose of education in historical Judaism, however, was religious. Through the study of God's words and the history of the covenental relationship between the Jewish people and God, the learned man finds himself in the highest realm of piety. "To live in God's image, to know His will, to be enabled to do it, involves education."[7] The Mishnah, in a famous Rabbinic dictum, expresses the highly religious aspect of education: "the ignorant man cannot be righteous" (Mishnah Aboth, 2.5).

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[5]Ibid., p. 53.
[6]Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[7]Eugene B. Borowitz, "Judaic Roots of Modern Education" offprint from Heritage of American Education, Richard E. Gross, ed., (1962), p. 81.

Thus, education was not only a good way to learn what is right or wrong, how to overcome evil, how to behave or how to ensure the survival of the Jewish people. Education involved the highest rank of Jewish activity and thought, being in relationship with God. Education was Judaism.

Education in the Bible

There was not much discussion of formal education within the texts of the Bible. One of the first references to any kind of transmission of information among the Jews can be found in Genesis. In Chapter 18, verse 19, it was said of Abraham that God had chosen him to the end that he may command his children and his household after him that they keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.[8] In addition, the Bible in a few instances commands parents to teach their children. (Deut 6:7, Ex. 13:8, Proverbs 1:8) These statements referred mainly to the informal type of education which occurred in the home. The content of religious education in this manner centered around the recitation of personal and national history, as it is stated in Deuteronomy 32:7 "Remember the days of old, consider the years of age past; ask your father, he will inform you, your elders, they will tell you"[9] In addition, the parents taught the children all they needed to know in the arena of worldly-knowledge, such as the basics of herding and farming and the maintenance of the home.[10] According to the Bible, this home education was the primary means through which

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[8]Gotthard Deutsch, and Joseph Jacobs, "Education" in The Jewish Encyclopedia Volume 5, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1903), p. 42.
[9]William W. Brickman, "Education" in Encyclopedia Judaica Volume 6, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), p. 389.
[10]Ibid., p. 388.

information was transmitted.

There is an occasional reference to a more formal educational institution. The "earliest prescription for mass education in ancient Israel [was] 'Gather the people - men, women, children and the strangers in your communities - that they may hear and so learn to revere the Lord your God and observe faithfully every word of His Teaching.' (Deut. 31:12)"[11] In a later book of the Bible can be found the first indication of an organized body of teachers, the priests and Levites (II Chronicles. 35:3). These men were engaged as *mevinim*, expounders of the Torah.[12] This practice of mass education, of appointing recognized teachers and intensifying the study of Torah matured under the guidance of Ezra the Scribe at around 450 BCE.(Ezra 7:25)[13] With this action, the Biblical treatment of the institution of education was transformed from a vague injunction to parents regarding the telling of stories to their children into a more formal institution of the public recitation of the laws of the Jewish people.

The Institution of Formal Study

The Jews became increasingly aware of the importance of a more formal institution of study for children. Unfortunately, because of the increasing need for the Jews to spend more time working for food and goods, parents had less time to spend with their children and thus were increasingly less able to pass on to their children all of the knowledge which was developing. As a result, the Scribes or Sophrim, those men who were entrusted with the leadership of the Jewish community and the

[11]Ibid., p. 385.
[12]Deutsch and Jacobs, p. 43.
[13]Borowitz, p. 68.

guidance of the spiritual life of the people, at around 300 B.C.E., began a program of higher education for adults in the synagogues by delivering free lectures.[14] These men were considered the educators of their time, taking over that role from the priests. However, the children were still considered best taught by their fathers.

The Jewish elementary school did not develop until the earlier half of the century Before the Common Era. Under the initiative of Simeon ben Shatah, the leader of the Pharisees, older children were introduced to the teaching of the Pharisees. "The method of study was not unlike that of the Greek rhetorical school - for instance, the practice of arguing on both sides of a case"[15] was common in these schools. By the last decades before the destruction of the Second Temple, Joshua ben Gamala recognized the need for such schooling to expand, including children of such a young age as six or seven. Through his decree for every province to appoint their own teachers for children of varying ages (Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 21a), Joshua ben Gamala "made the first nation-wide attempt to establish a universal school-system for boys throughout the country."[16]

By the Third Century of the Common Era, this attempt began to develop at a greater pace. Babylonia, at this time, contained a very favorable economic situation resulting in more time available for even the poorest to spend in daily study. The more prosperous the community became, the less of an economic burden it seemed to release the children from their occupational duties in order to attend school on a more

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[14]Deutsch and Jacobs, p. 43.

[15]Nathan Morris, The Jewish School: An Introduction to the History of Jewish Education, (New York: Jewish Education Committee Press, 1964), p. 12.

[16]Moshe Aberbach, "The Change from a Standing to a Sitting Posture by Students after theDeath of Rabban Gamaliel" in Exploring the Talmud Volme I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1976), p. 280.

substantial level.[17] The Babylonian Talmud relates that at the same time, Rabbi Chiyya did much to help this revival of interest in elementary education. He states that he worked hard at ensuring the continuation of the study of the Torah, especially by traveling from place to place teaching different children each of the Five Books of Moses and the Six Orders of the Mishnah so that they in turn could teach other children. (Baba Metziyah 85b)[18] In this way, even the towns and villages too small for their own school could benefit from the education of their children.

The Importance of the School House

The Jews considered the House of Study of utmost importance in the lives of the individuals and in the continuation of the community. As such, many laws developed in order to explain and protect its sanctity and the sanctity of those who teach in it. Asher ben Yehiel, one of the leading medieval rabbis whose decisions often became law, declared that:

> if someone established a foundation for such religious purposes as a synagogue or cemetery, the community might at any time alter the terms of the foundation and use its funds for educational purposes, even against the will of the donor. But, if on the other hand, the foundation had been established for the sake of Jewish education, it must never be diverted to any other more strictly religious uses.[19]

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[17]Louis Ginzberg, Students, Scholars and Saints, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1926), p.11.
[18]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p.174-175.
[19]Judah Pilch and Meir Ben-Horin, ed., Judaism and the Jewish School: Selected Essays on the Direction and Purpose of Jewish Education, (New York: Block Publishing Co., 1966), p. 5.

Even the place considered most sacred, the synagogue, was not considered as vital as the arena of Jewish education. Maimonides, in his Mishnah Torah Chapter 2:1, reminded the Jews of this principle in his statement that if a city does not provide for the education of its children, it is first placed under a ban and eventually excommunicated.[20] These decrees made explicit the importance of the education of children to the Jewish people.

In addition to laws such as those of Asher ben Yehiel and Maimonides, there were a variety of midrashim which communicated this conviction. One such story is conveyed in the Palestinian Talmud, Hagigah 1.76. This passage tells of a group of three Rabbis who went out on a mission to inspect the educational facilities throughout Palestine. They arrived at a city which had no teachers and requested from the townspeople that they bring them to the protectors of the town. After taking them to the guards posted at the town gates, the Rabbis told them that these were not the protectors of the town. To the question of who, then, were the protectors of the town, the Rabbis responded that the teachers were.[21] Stories such as this one drove home to all of the Jews the important place the school houses hold in the continuity of the Jewish society.

The Physical Placement of the School, Teachers and Students

Although there were school-houses, there were times in which the interaction between student and teacher took place outdoors. This was

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[20]Moses Maimonides, "Laws Concerning the Study of the Toráh" in Mishneh Torah: The Book of Knowledge, (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1981), p.58a-58b.
[21]Gordis, p. 54.

especially true during the warm and dry season. There are numerous references throughout both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds to teaching occurring not within a specific building. At times this occurred in a field, as when the Palestinian Talmud referred to the academy of Jochanan ben Zakkai as being "seated in rows like [trees in] a vineyard."[22] (Berachot IV, 7) At other times, open air scholarly discussions occurred even in the market places in towns, such as in the case of Rabbi Chiyya in the Babylonian Talmud Mo'ed Qatan 16a.[23] However, the classroom was not permanently placed in the outdoors. There is evidence in the traditional sources that the school could be found in a synagogue, the private home of the teacher, or a building constructed specifically for Jewish education. A Baraita in Baba Metzia 59b refers to studies conducted by Rabbi Eliezer occurring in a field which sat close by a school-house with strongly built walls.[24] The physical layout of the place of study changed for Jews during the Talmudic times, especially depending upon the season and its weather.

The seating arrangement also went through a metamorphosis. In Megillah 21a there is a clear statement of the manner in which students were expected to attend to their teacher. "Our Rabbis taught: 'From the days of Moses up to Rabban Gamaliel, the Torah was studied only standing. When Rabban Gamaliel died, illness came down upon the world, and they studied sitting."[25] This development probably occurred over time

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[22]Samuel Krauss, "Outdoor Teaching in Talmudic Times" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1976), p. 333.
[23]Ibid., p. 335.
[24]Adolph Buchler, "Learning and Teaching in the Open Air in Palestine" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing Inc., 1976.), p. 340-341.
[25]Aberbach, "The Change...", p.277.

as the amount of information necessary to impart increased. As the Mishnah and Talmud were added to the curriculum, it would have become more difficult physically for the students to continue to stand around their teacher, or even walk with him on his journeys. Additionally, with the growth of the individual schools, it would have been increasingly difficult to be able to hear and respond to the scholar while standing. Thus, by the end of the First Century CE, the practice of sitting during study was established.

Due to the poorly equipped condition of the school-houses, a lack of furniture led to the custom of sitting not on chairs or benches, but on the floor. There were occasions in which students would bring mats to sit on (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 25a)[26] or would use their own coats to cover the cold stone floor of the classroom. (Derekh Eretz Zuta, chapter I, beginning)[27] As a student moved up in age and ability, however, they were able to take advantage of the few spaces available on benches in the classroom. In the instances in which there were numerous benches, those who moved up in understanding would also move up closer to the teacher.[28] These seating arrangements thus depended upon a number of factors, including the economics of the society, the number of disciples within a school, and the capabilities of the individual student.

The teacher also had specific guidelines he needed to follow in terms of his seating placement. Maimonides, in his Mishnah Torah, expressed the understanding that the teacher must sit in the center of the class with his students surrounding him so that all can see him and hear

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[26]Moshe Aberbach, "Educational Institutions and Problems During the Talmudic Age", in Exploring the Talmud Volume 1: Education, (New York: Ktav Publishing Inc., 1976), p.352.
[27]Ibid., p. 352.
[28]Ibid., p. 354.

his words. Also, no preferential treatment is to be given to the teacher in that if the students must sit on the floor, so too must the teacher. He reflects back to a time in which this was not the case, when the teacher would sit while the students stood, but explains that even before the destruction of the Second Temple, as we have seen, the students took to sitting while being taught.[29] (Chapter 4:2) Thus, while the specifics of the position the students took while in the course of study changed, those of the teacher did not. The teacher was usually seated in the more comfortable position afforded to one of his rank of honor.

The Details of the Schooling Experience

The age of the child being educated was a serious consideration of the Rabbis. They felt it was important that the instruction of children be appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Although the Mishnah maintained that study should begin at age five (Pirke Avot 5:21), the Rabbis decreed that formal education would not commence until the child was at least six years old. They expressed this change in Baba Batra 21a: "Under the age of six we do not receive a child as a pupil; from six upwards accept him and stuff him (with Torah) like an ox."[30] The remainder of the statement in Pirke Avot was, however, followed as a general rule. It went on to say that one started with the study of Torah, spent five years on that and moved on to the study of Mishnah for another five years and finally spent the rest of the time studying the Talmud.[31] One was not ever to

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[29]Maimonides, p. 60b
[30]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p.175
[31]Judah Goldin, trans., The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 247

complete their course of study, as Maimonides remarked on the verse in Deuteronomy (4:9) which states "lest they (the precepts) depart from thy heart all the days of thy life."[32]

Since there was a large range of age and ability levels, the school was organized in such a way as to maximize the learning of the children. As indicated by the Mishnaic statement, each house of study was divided into three major departments. Within each department, the students were split according to scholastic ability into classes of no more than twenty-five students. If there were fifty students, the community hired a second teacher and if there were forty students, the teacher engaged the help of a senior student.(Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 21a)[33] This system indicates the recognition on the part of the Rabbis of the necessity for a high level of excellence in the classroom and the influence class size has on this level of excellence.

The students were engaged in study for many long hours. The children began early in the morning, at sunrise or before, and spent the entire day in school, returning home only in the evening.[34] The only book used in the elementary school in Talmudic times was the Hebrew Bible.[35] Additional equipment included a special scroll for the use of the children, a wax-tablet and stylus used in the teaching of the alphabet, and a pointer used by the teacher to aid in reading.(Babylonian Talmud Gittin 58a)[36] With the use of these few materials and the lengthy amount of time given to the teacher, the students were expected to learn all that they could

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[32]Maimonides, p. 58a
[33]Gordis, p. 59.
[34]Morris, p. 63.
[35]Ibid., p. 56.
[36]Ibid., pp. 53-54.

about the Jewish laws and customs.

The General Curriculum of the Talmudic Elementary Schools

The Rabbis conceived the curriculum of the elementary schools during Talmudic times as based upon the stages of intellectual and spiritual development of children. They made the presumption that children did not spend their first five years in a vacuum, but that education began with the religious experiences of the home.

> From the time a child utters his first word, "the father should teach him the text, 'Moses commanded us a law' (Deut. 33:4) and the first verse of the Shema (Deut. 6:4). Later on, according to the child's capacity, the father should teach him a few verses at a time, till he attains the age of six or seven years."[37]

With some basic understanding of a few verses of Torah, the child entered the formal schooling experience.

Before beginning the basics, reading and writing, the education of each child began with the study of the book of Leviticus. Thus, the earliest instruction commenced with a passage concerning the sacrifices as opposed to the more logical beginning of creation. This was explained in both Leviticus Rabbah and Genesis Rabbah as occurring because both children and the rites of the sacrificial system should reflect purity.[38] This decision points again to the belief of the Rabbis regarding the high value of

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[37]Maimonides, p. 57b.

[38]Hermann Gollancz, Pedagogics of the Talmud and that of Modern Times, (Oxford: University Press, 1924), p. 64.

children and their education.

From this first lesson, the curriculum moved on to the learning of the alphabet and basic blessings, such as the Shema and the Tefillah and the blessings surrounding the meal.[39] Great care was applied to the manner in which the alphabet was taught. To aid in the memorization and enjoyment of learning, words were associated with the letters. Careful consideration was given to the choice of these words so that not only would the child learn the letter, but a moral and religious lesson as well. For instance:

> the G[imel] and D[alet] were taught as " 'Be benevolent to the poor.' Why is the foot of G turned towards D? Because it is the way of the benevolent to run after the poor. Why is the foot of D turned towards G? To indicate that the poor person reaches out to his helper. Why is the face of D turned away from G? To teach that charity should be performed in secret so as not to shame the recipient."(Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 104a)[40]

The Rabbis took every opportunity to integrate within the basic curriculum some type of ethical instruction.

The rest of the curriculum consisted of Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud, all of which taught the child such general subjects as history, ceremonial customs, law and liturgy. The one major controversy involved the inclusion or exclusion of secular subjects, especially Greek thought and language. The Rabbis vehemently opposed the study of Greek: "Cursed be the man who has his son taught Greek philosophy." (Babylonian Talmud Baba

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[39]Judah Goldin, "Several Sidelights of a Torah Education in Tanaaite and Early Amoriaic Times" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), p. 8.
[40]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p. 177.

Kama 82b)[41] This attitude probably emerged from a fear of the influence of Hellenistic ways on an impressionable young boy. However, the mere presence of the injunction against this practice leads one to assume that fathers did send their sons to non-Jewish teachers for further study. On the other hand, much of the Talmud contains words from other languages which forced the Rabbis to engage in some level of instruction of languages and philosophies other than Hebrew and Aramaic. Other than this debate over the role of secular study in Jewish education, the curriculum within the elementary schools consisted of Jewish subjects which were common throughout the educational systems.

Pedagogic Methodology of the Teachers

The Rabbis not only applied their beliefs regarding human development toward the curriculum of the elementary schools, but they also did so to their pedagogic methods. They recognized that children learn differently during various stages within their lives. A younger child has very little understanding of moral issues and the techniques of teaching should reflect a more basic concept of the world. Thus, the Rabbis began the teaching of their pupils through the development of language and memory. Only after several years did the Rabbis engage the students in higher levels of discourse and dialogue.[42] The Rabbis had an impressive understanding of the role of psychological and intellectual development in the success of education.

The teachers felt that the best way in which younger children would

[41]Ibid., p. 178.
[42]Gordis, p.56.

learn was through memorization. Being incapable of the higher level of thought necessary for dialogue, the rote memorization of material would suffice. The teachers applied several methods in order for the children to memorize the important passages of the Bible. The principle method was repetition, both of the teacher and the student. Thus it was said in the Babylonian Talmud that "the teacher must keep on repeating the lesson until the pupil has learnt it," (Erubin 54b) and as for the student, "if he learns Torah and does not go over it again and again, he is like a man who sows without reaping." (Sanhedrin 99a)[43] In addition, the scholars utilized mnemonic devices, such as connecting an unknown passage with a common passage.[44] One section of the Talmud, Megillah 32, tells of the benefits of oral recitation either spoken or sung with intonation as an important aide to memorization.[45] Through the use of several methods, the Rabbis sought to develop in the student a mind ripe for the memorization of the Bible in order to form a foundation for the later years in which they would be questioning and discussing the material.

Early in the education of the child, the teachers used external means to disciple and maintain control in the classroom. Punishment was, however, restricted in its severity as it was felt that the best way to reach a child was through reward. Maimonides, in his Mishnah Torah, reminded teachers that the child attends school in order to achieve the greatest good. The best manner in which to help the child in this endeavor is to reward him through sweet gifts of nuts or honey. In this way, the child would enjoy the process of study, not because of the inherent value of learning, as he is too immature to understand this, but because of the

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[43]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p. 176-177.
[44]Gollancz, p. 58.
[45]Ibid., p. 59.

reward.[46] If, however, the teacher must punish, he was commanded to restrain himself in the severity of this punishment. "He must not strike them with whip or sticks, but only use a small strap."(Mishnah Torah Chapter 2:2)[47] The Rabbis applied their understanding of the development of human beings even to the arena of discipline.

The Characteristics of the Teachers

The Jews of the Talmudic times considered the teacher a man of great importance. He could take the Divine decree and overturn it, (Babylonian Talmud Baba Metzia 85a)[48], or control the weather, (Babylonian Talmud Taanit 24a)[49], a gift only held by God. In addition, the student learned by example. There are many stories of students who follow their teachers outside of the classroom in order to learn how to behave. The example a teacher set for his students influenced the development of each child in order for him to become a good Jew and a productive member of society. Because of this great power the teacher held, the characteristics of the teacher were of utmost importance.

The qualifications of the teacher were many. It was not enough for a man to know the subject-matter he taught. Hillel, in Pirke Avot (Chapter 2:5), expressed his desire to see the teacher as even tempered and patient with children.[50] He needed to be precise and truthful, as the lessons he

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[46]Morris, p.145.
[47]Maimonides, p.58b.
[48]Gollancz, p. 8.
[49]Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p. 140.
[50]Goldin, The Fathers..., p. 112.

taught were Divine. He must have a love for both the act of teaching and the subject he taught. Most importantly, the teacher must be God-fearing and pious. As an example to all, the teacher must maintain the highest degree of moral and religious standards for himself. "The greater part of the achievement [of the sages] doubtless resulted from the atmosphere generated by their personalities, an atmosphere of unbounded love for Torah and of supreme self-discipline in the observance of mitzvot."[51] These men were important in the maintenance of the Jewish people and thus were held up to high standards.

The Characteristics of the Pupil

There was a general expectation that the students behaved in specific ways. In Avot de Rabbi Nathan, Chapter 6, there was a discussion between Shammai and Hillel. Shammai expressed his high expectations that only those students which were talented and of distinguished ancestry could become students. Hillel, on the other hand, believed that every person ought to receive the opportunity to study, for regardless of the background of a person, each is an individual who may turn out similarly or differently from their predecessors.[52] Later rabbis felt that, although the ancestry of the student should not influence his acceptability for study, other characteristics were important. The behavior exhibited by the student was a major criterion in his ability to attend the house of study. Maimonides stated that "Torah should only be taught to a worthy pupil whose conduct is exemplary or whose disposition is simple." (Mishnah Torah Chapter 4:1)[53]

[51]Brickman, p. 402.
[52]Goldin, The Fathers ..., p. 26.
[53]Maimonides, p. 60a.

The student should show a desire to learn and his behavior must reflect that desire.

Beyond this expectation which was placed on every student, the Rabbis recognized the vast differences which exist between individuals. They knew that not every child could learn in the same manner and not every child would behave similarly. In Pirke Avot, verse 18, students are described as belonging to one of four types. A sponge, who absorbs everything, a sifter, who only collects the good from a teaching, a funnel, who takes everything in on one end and lets it all out on the other, and a strainer, who keeps the bad and loses the good.[54] The Rabbis expressed this sentiment explicitly so that every teacher could take it into consideration in his relations with his students and mold their pedagogic methods accordingly.

The Relationship Between the Teacher and His Student

The relationship between the teacher and those he taught was extremely important to the Jews. They recognized that only through good relations could a teacher hope to influence a student in the correct manner. They considered the relationship as two directional and spoke both of the respect the student should show to the teacher as well as the respect the teacher should show to the student. Only through the give-and-take of their relationship could all parties behave in the most religious and moral way.

The honor bestowed upon one's teacher is among the greatest given. The Mishnah explains that if one's father and one's teacher were both taken captive, the youth should first ransom the teacher and only

[54]Goldin, The Fathers ..., p. 165-166.

afterwards ransom the father since "His father brought him [only] into this world; his teacher on the other hand brings him to the life of the World to Come." (Baba Metzia 2:11)[55] In order to demonstrate this high degree of respect, the Rabbis described several behavior models for the students to follow. The student must not ask questions of the teacher as he enters the room, but must wait until he is settled and composed. The questions which the student does ask should pertain only to the subject matter being discussed, so as not to embarrass the teacher if he is not prepared. (Mishnah Torah Chapter 4:6)[56] The student should also display all of the manners befitting a scholar. As he sees his teacher approaching, he should stand up and should do so also as he is leaving until he is no longer visible. (Mishnah Torah Chapter 5:7)[57] Through the behavior which the student exhibits, he expresses his respect and admiration for the knowledge of his teacher.

On the other hand, the teacher also must show respect for his students. The rabbis knew that the better a child feels about himself, the more he will feel good about his academic achievements. In addition, the atmosphere of the classroom is important in order for the students to find the joy in study. Thus, Pirke Avot 4:15 tells the teachers: "Let the honor of thy disciples be as dear to thee as thine own."[58] A teacher should love his students as if they were his own children and treat them accordingly. Through the mutual respect of the teacher and the student, the process of learning would be greatly enhanced.

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[55]Goldin "Several Sidelights...", p. 5.
[56]Maimonides, p. 61a.
[57]Ibid., p. 62a.
[58]Ibid., p. 62b.

The Education of Girls

The Rabbis repeatedly expressed their concern and understanding regarding the education of children. However, as with much of the requirements of the laws and customs of Judaism, they assumed that Jews held this expectation for education only for boys. The role of girls in the institution of education was discussed, however briefly, by the Rabbis. The Rabbis assumed that the main responsibility for the education of girls fell onto the shoulders of the mother. This was especially true with regard to the practical training of household chores and child-raising. The education of girls was limited to this arena.[59]

With the exception of one view, the Talmudic opinions of the Rabbis regarding the education of girls lead one to conclude that there is "no doubt whatever that the average woman was deprived of every opportunity of formal education, either secular or religious."[60] Ben Azzai stated that it is a man's duty to teach his daughter Torah in order for her be able to know all of the restrictions expected of her so as to avoid any unknown punishment to be given to her.(Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah 3, 4) However, the majority of the opinions of the Rabbis express an entirely opposite view. Rabbi Eliezar, immediately preceding the statement of Ben Azzai, for example, declared, "If anyone teaches his daughter Torah it is as if he taught her lewdness"[61] This attitude comes mainly from the impression of the Rabbis that girls did not hold enough intellectual prowess to fully understand teachings of Torah and Talmud.

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[59]Borowitz, p. 90.
[60]Morris, p. 31.
[61]Z.E. Kurzweil, "Fundamental Principles of Jewish Education in the Light of Halachah" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1976), p. 43.

The Role of the Community in the Education of Children

The community felt very strongly regarding their role in the education of children. Once teachers necessarily took the responsibility of education away from the parents, the whole community recognized the importance of retaining some influence in the institution of education. Thus, one can find throughout the sources some explicit statements regarding the place of the community within the education of Jewish children.

This role fell mainly in the economic realm. So important was it for all children to receive education that others felt it vital to step in if the child was an orphan or his parents were too poor to pay the teacher. They considered it a commandment to pay for the education of a child who had no means, for Torah issues from the children of the poor. (Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 81a)[62] In addition, as often as possible, the members of the community offered the children their hospitality. Thus, the Jews took care of the children financially so as to offer to as many as possible the opportunity to study.

In addition, the Jews considered the economic situation of the teachers and scholars when referring to their own role. The Rabbis believed that study and instruction of Torah should be pursued without regard to material reward. Thus, they looked down upon the receiving of money for teaching. However, they also recognized that elementary teaching was a full-time occupation and did not offer as much opportunity for the teacher to find a means for survival. In order to rectify this dilemma, the Rabbis suggested a couple of options. The parents and community

[62] Reverend Dr. A. Cohen, p. 175.

were encouraged to provide the teachers with gifts periodically, in appreciation for their divine work. Generally, the community paid the teachers from a general tax fund.[63] The Rabbis considered this payment to be for taking care of the children during the time of their study, not for the actual teaching.[64] In this way, the community was able to take part in the education of their children through securing the financial needs of both the teachers and the children.

Summary

The textual sources, such as the Bible, Mishnah and Talmud, contain the laws and customs of the Jews during the earliest years of their formation. By examining them, one can discover their values, where their priorities lay. In this manner, I found that one of their highest priorities was the education of their children. Although there is little mention of formal education in the Bible, this does not show a disregard for education at that time, but simply points to the underlying assumption that the home was the center of education. Through study and home ceremonies such as the telling of the Exodus story at Passover, the parents taught the children all that was considered important.

As time and events caused dramatic changes in the lives of the Jews, the leaders recognized the need for more formal education for the children. Schools were set up, teachers were gathered, curricula were developed and principles of education were concretized. More and more statements regarding the customs and ideas of education were written in

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[63]Henry M. Leipzinger, "Education Among the Jews" in Exploring the Talmud Volume I: Education, Haim Z. Dimitrovsky, ed., (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), p. 97.
[64] Morris, p. 44.

the Jewish sources.

The Rabbis showed an impressive understanding of the physical, psychological and developmental stages of childhood and integrated those ideas into their opinions regarding education. Many of the pedagogic methodologies and expectations of both the teachers and the students reflected their extensive examination of the highest ideals for education. Because of the recognition of the Jews that only through knowledge can they survive as a people, the Rabbis placed education as one of the most important values that can be held, and they demonstrated this through their implementation of that value.

CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN AMERICA

An Introduction

Note: The Sunday School, the focus of this thesis and the predominant modern model of Jewish education, merits its own chapter within this thesis. That chapter follows this historic overview.

Before 1800, Jewish education in America was generally scattered and private. With the exception of one school, most Jewish parents took care of their educational responsibilities through the use of private tutors or on their own. The one exception was a school founded in 1731 as *Yeshivat Minhat Areb* by the Spanish-Portuguese community. At first this school taught Hebrew and Bible, but twenty-five years later it officially became a "Publick school" where both Hebrew and secular subjects were taught.[65] This first Day School was the rare case until the nineteenth century.

In the first half of the 1800s the Jewish educational scene was dominated by the German Jews. The American public school system was already in place in a number of large cities and German Jews quickly availed themselves of this opportunity. They relied on private tutors for their Jewish education.[66] As more and more of these Jews came to America, it became more feasible to establish more Day Schools. These schools were attached to the community synagogues. By the mid-1850s, however, most of them had closed.

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[65]I.B. Berkson, "Jewish Education - Achievements and Needs" in The American Jew, Oscar I. Janowsky, ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 64.
[66]Julius H. Greenstone, "Jewish Education in the United States" American Jewish Year Book Volume 16 (1915), p. 94

From 1840 until the wave of Eastern European immigrants in 1880, a major debate took place regarding the best available Jewish education. On the one side were people like Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal who expressed their claim that only through the intensive education that Day Schools could provide would Jewish children be able to receive an appropriate level of Jewish education.[67] They felt that it was necessary for children to receive a large number of hours of schooling in order to learn enough about their Judaism. Some also felt that it was important to retain as much of the "Old World" as possible. On the other side, people like Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise felt that Jewish children needed to attend public school and receive their Jewish education in supplementary schools.[68] The supporters of public education placed great emphasis on the value of Americanization and felt that this could be achieved only through the public school system. In addition, these German Jews were influenced greatly by their Protestant neighbors and wished to establish similar educational institutions for their own children.[69] Finally, since those who belonged to the Reform movement believed they did not need as much knowledge of Hebrew, some felt that Day Schools simply offered too much time for Jewish subjects.[70] The result of this debate was the reduction of the number of Day Schools and the development of such supplementary schools as the Sunday School and Weekday Hebrew School.

This debate continued around the turn of the century with most Jews sending their children to both public school and supplementary school. It was into this atmosphere that the masses of Eastern European Jews

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[67]Eduardo L. Rauch, "Jewish Education in the United States, 1840 - 1920" (unpublished thesis from Harvard University, 1978), p. 74 - 75.
[68]Ibid,, p. 68.
[69]Ibid., p. 58.
[70]Ibid., p. 57.

entered. The German Jews felt it was important to Americanize their Eastern European neighbors through the schools. Confused about their environment and too poor to set up their own schools, these Jews were forced to accept these impositions even though the education was often viewed by them as inadequate.[71] These schools included the Talmud Torah and the cheder, both of which had their roots in Eastern Europe but were adapted to the American way of life and education.

The 1920s brought a dramatic shift in Jewish education in America. As more Jews continued to arrive in America, and others began to move from one neighborhood to another, congregations grew. This phenomenon meant that more of the educational responsibility was placed on the congregations.[72] The Talmud Torahs could not compete in terms of the number of students or their financial status. "The large communal Talmud Torahs began to disappear and were replaced by the smaller and less intensive congregational schools."[73] At the same time, the Federations began to involve themselves in the financial situation of all of the educational institutions.[74] While the schools themselves were becoming more individual, the economic responsibilities of the education of the Jewish children were becoming more and more a community effort.

The acculturation of Jewish parents, the move towards the suburbs, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel directly affected Jewish education during the next twenty-five years. Most of the parents

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[71]Ibid., p. 227.
[72]Leo L. Honor, "The Impact of the American Environment of Jewish Elementary Education in the United States" The Jewish Quarterly Review Volume 45, Number 4 (April, 1955), p. 461.
[73]Alexander Dushkin "Forty Years of Jewish Education in America" Religious Education Volume 39, Number 5 (1944), p. 261.
[74]Abraham P. Gannes, ed., Selected Writings of Leo L. Honor (New York: The Reconstructionist Press, 1965), p. 81.

had changed from immigrants to natives and had adopted American customs and traditions. They felt that, with the exception of the knowledge necessary for the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, most Jewish education was irrelevant to the lives of their children. They wanted an educational experience which would be less time consuming.[75] Because of this, the Sunday Schools and Weekday Hebrew Schools became more popular and the Talmud Torahs became less popular. Interestingly, however, there was also a growth in the number of Day Schools at the same time. This was due to the effect of the Holocaust and the "influx of Eastern European Jews [who tended to be more traditional in their religious affiliation] after World War II."[76] During this time period, Jewish education was directly affected by the changes instituted by American Jews on their American experience and those pushed on the American Jews by the circumstances of the outside world.

During the 1950s and 1960s, there was an increase in the number of both congregational schools and Day Schools. The "baby boom" filled the congregations and also the congregational schools. "Full-time principleships and even full-time teaching positions became the norm in the large synagogue schools."[77] The Conservative movement founded Solomon Schechter Day Schools in 1957 and the Reform movement also established their own Day Schools. These movements began to recognize the value of the longer day in instilling Jewish values and knowledge.[78]

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[75]Uriah Zevi Engelman, "New Trends in Jewish Education in Buffalo", Jewish Education Volume 16, Number 1 (September, 1944), p. 40.
[76]Alvin I. Schiff, "The Day School" in What We Know About Jewish Education: A Handbook of Today's Research for Tomorrow's Jewish Education, Stuart L. Kelman, ed. (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1992), p. 150 - 151.
[77]Alvin I. Schiff, Contemporary Jewish Education: Issachar American Style, (Dallas, Texas: Rossel Books, 1988), p. 99.
[78]Ibid., p. 117.

The next few decades saw a slight decrease in enrollment in all types of Jewish institutions, including the schools. This occurred mainly because of a lower Jewish birth rate, and Jewish movement to the suburban areas.[79] Jewish educators recognized the risk that fewer children were receiving Jewish education. They took several steps to solve this problem. Among them was the "upgrading and intensification"[80] of the one and two day-a-week programs. They also increased the amount of informal educational opportunities available to Jewish children. This time period has been characterized by various developments mainly in the congregational schools.

The Cheder

One of the major Jewish educational institutions established by the mass of Eastern European immigrants during the late nineteenth century was the cheder. The cheder was a one-room school in which a teacher would instruct a group of boys in the Bible and Talmud, generally through the method of memorization. Unrelated to the synagogue, the cheder was generally maintained in the basement or upper floor of an old building within the environment of the tenement houses of the immigrants. After a long day at public school, the children, mostly boys, would meet in this room with their teacher. There the melammed taught the children simple Hebrew, a few basic prayers, and the rules and customs of the synagogue. The language of instruction was Yiddish. The teachers generally did not have good reputations and were not capable of higher teaching skills. Thus

[79]Hillel Hochberg, "Trends and Developments in Jewish Education" American Jewish Yearbook Volume 73 (1972), p. 198.
[80]Schiff, Contemporary..., p. 99.

the children learned mainly through rote memorization, on an individual basis.[81]

A variation of the one-room cheder developed around the turn of the century. Mainly a business undertaking, this more modern cheder included teachers who were more interested in a higher level of education. They attempted to utilize the most modern pedagogic methods and maintained good discipline among their students. The housing for these schools was also on a higher level. However, in order to conduct these schools, the tuition would range as high as $3 a month.[82] Because of this, and the lack of quality teachers, these schools were very few in number.

The cheder was a disaster in America. The Eastern European Jews brought this type of educational institution with them in an attempt to retain some of their old ways. However, for a variety of reasons, the children gained very little educationally. Often, the parents, because of their struggle for economic survival as well as the difficulties in adjusting to a new country, could not "devote much of their time to the question of the religious education of their children."[83] In addition, money was scarce. For these reasons, the children continued to receive the barest minimum in their Jewish education. The cheder all but disappeared by 1940 [84] and today the number of students who attend cheders is negligible.[85]

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[81]Marshall Sklare, ed., The Jewish Community in America, (New York: Behrman House, 1974), p. 223.

[82]Lloyd P. Gartner, ed., Jewish Education in the United States: A Documentary History, (New York: Columbia, 1969), p. 124.

[83]Alexander M. Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, (New York: The Bureau of Jewish Education), p. 67.

[84]Schiff, Contemporary..., p. 116.

[85]Simon Greenberg, "Jewish Educational Institutions" in The Jews: Their Religion and Culture, Louis Finkelstein, ed., (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 929.

The Talmud Torah

A more popular educational institution of the time was the Talmud Torah. Also modeled after the Eastern European manner of religious education, the Talmud Torah introduced a higher level of Jewish education to the immigrants. The first Talmud Torah was established in 1862 in New York City by Reverend Pesach Rosenthal. After seventeen years, it folded for lack of funds, but reopened two years later as the School of the *Machzike* Talmud Torah (Supporters of Talmud Torah).[86] From then on, this kind of supplementary school continued to draw traditional Jews.

Most of the Talmud Torahs were not attached to a synagogue. The major source of income was the parents. The schools charged between $8[87] and $25 per year. Along with tuition, there were sporadic fund-raisers within the neighborhoods and aid given by the Federations and Bureaus of Education.[88] From these moneys came the salaries of the teachers and the maintenance of the classrooms.

The Talmud Torah was an ideal educational experience for the new immigrants because it provided an opportunity for an intensive religious educational experience while still allowing the children to attend the American schools. Usually this school offered a curriculum which lasted approximately five years. The students would attend from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays.[89] In addition, the younger children were offered the opportunity to attend "day" classes from

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[86]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 69.
[87] Greenstone, p. 116.
[88]Sklare, The Jewish..., p. 236.
[89]Gartner, p. 119.

9 a.m. to 12 p.m[90]. In these classes, the students would learn the basics of Hebrew reading and the simple prayers.

The curriculum of the Talmud Torah was extensive. Based on the concept of *ivrit be-ivrit*,[91] Hebrew played an important role within the curriculum. Since many of the teachers "included Hebrew essayists and poets, some of high standing, as well as scholars and modernist Orthodox rabbis",[92] the studies included those areas with which they were familiar. Thus, Hebrew texts, including the Bible and prayer book as Hebrew literature and history were taught.[93] The students in the Talmud Torahs generally received a good religious education.

Unfortunately, the Talmud Torahs had their difficulties. For two main reasons, they were not able to maintain a high level of stability. The students rarely stayed in any one school for very long because of the constant moving from place to place as immigrants. These students were not able to achieve much progress educationally.[94] Moreover, the Talmud Torahs were known as schools for the poor, since they were established by the well-to-do German Jews for the poor immigrants. Because of this image, those Jews capable of improving the schools through financial assistance would not do so.[95] Thus, although the conditions within these schools were on a higher level than those of the cheder, the Talmud Torahs did not offer the best opportunity for Jewish education.

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[90] Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 71.
[91] W. I. Ackerman, "Some Uses of Justification on Jewish Education" AJS Review Voulne 2 (1977), p. 16.
[92] Gartner, p. 18.
[93] Ackerman, "Some Uses...", p. 16.
[94] Gartner, p. 120.
[95] Rauch, p. 383.

The Day School

A third type of American Jewish educational institution was the Day School. The Day School can be most readily compared to the schools of the Talmudic era. Students spent the entire day in one school, as opposed to attending a public school and a Jewish supplementary school. In general, the day school was not affiliated with any synagogue. The students paid tuition to attend, as in any private school in America. In addition, some Day Schools received financial aid from the community through the Federations. Most of these schools were Orthodox in nature, although there were some Day Schools affiliated with both the Conservative and Reform movements.

The curriculum within the Day Schools was extensive. Typically the day was divided into two sections, one being secular and the other Jewish. Since the children did not attend any public school, the schools needed to follow at least the minimum requirements of the state law. The mix, however, would vary from school to school so that some schools had a secular course of study which was among the best in the city while others concentrated on the religious aspects of the curriculum.[96] Because of the longer hours available for Jewish study, these schools offered a larger amount of religious education. The Days schools offered such courses as Bible, prayer book, Jewish history, Talmud, Hebrew language, holidays and ceremonies, and Jewish ethics, among others.[97] The education which the students received in these schools was more complete than in any of the other types of religious institutions.

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[96]Marshall Sklare, America's Jews, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1971), p. 168.
[97]Schiff, "The Day School", p. 154.

The teachers in the Day Schools were more likely to be professional teachers. This was because the pay was better since the job was full-time. Most of these teachers were men who spoke both Yiddish and Hebrew and had received some higher education, either in a college or a Jewish educational institution.[98] The Day Schools also often had "full-time educational administrators drawn from the graduates of rabbinical seminaries."[99] With the amount of educational and Jewish expertise within these schools, it was generally expected that the quality of Jewish education the children received was high.

The satisfaction with the educational experience received by the students was just one reason for the growth of Day Schools. Some parents were dissatisfied with the public schools in their neighborhoods, while others were dissatisfied with the Jewish supplementary educational experience. Most parents chose the Day School simply in order to give their children a good intensive Jewish education.[100] Despite these reasons, the Day School has not been a very popular way to offer most children a Jewish education.

The Congregational School

As opposed to the Cheder, Talmud Torah and Day School which were separate institutions funded and maintained mainly by the parents and Federations, there were some schools which were affiliated with

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[98]Alexander Dushkin and Uriah Z. Engelman, Jewish Education in the United States, (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1959), p. 116.
[99]W. I. Ackerman, "Jewish Education - For What?" American Jewish Yearbook, Volume 70, (1969), p. 9.
[100] Judah Pilch, ed., A History of Jewish Education in the United States, (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), p. 141.

specific synagogues. Although Sunday Schools seem to fit into this catagory, the congregational schools were those which met regularly during the week after public school, as opposed to only meeting on Sunday mornings. These schools were funded mostly through the membership dues and run by the synagogues. The pupils were drawn exclusively from the members of the congregation. Because of this, these schools had fewer problems with both their finances and their enrollment.

Congregational schools held their sessions three or more times a week after public school was over. They were generally attached to either Conservative or Orthodox congregations,[101] with a curriculum similar to that of the Talmud Torah. Most of these schools taught Hebrew, prayer book, history and Bible.[102] Because of the recognition of the lack of time, Hebrew was not emphasized as much as in the other major types of Jewish schools.[103]

The teachers within the congregational schools were mostly young men and women. They used their small salary to supplement them during their time as students. They were generally considered fairly knowledgeable about Judaism and were often interested in the job, especially because of the small number of work hours they had to put in in a week. The teachers usually were overseen by the rabbi of the congregation who was helped by a committee of congregational members.[104]

The congregational schools have been the most popular and lasting Jewish educational institution in America. This was because of the ease

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[101]Gartner, p. 121.
[102] Greenberg, p. 931.
[103]Gartner, p. 27.
[104]Gartner, p. 122.

with which people can associate with the school. However, there were drawbacks to this type of education. Most of the teachers spent very little time on class preparation since they were only very part-time in their employment. The school guided itself toward developing children who could fit into the congregation, and thus the education tended to be limited to preparation for Bar Mitzvah. Finally, the synagogue did not see the school as a major part of their Jewish responsibility and so would only spend a small portion of their budget on it.[105] Thus, although very popular, the congregational schools did not achieve a high level of Jewish education.

A Variety of Smaller Schools

The Weekday Hebrew School is the successor of the Talmud Torah. Meeting three or four times a week, this school is not as intensive as its predecessor. However, it has tried to maintain a curriculum similar to that of the Talmud Torah, with an emphasis on Hebrew , Bible and the prayer book [106] Another difference is that the Hebrew School, unlike the Talmud Torah, is usually associated with a synagogue.[107] The founders of the Weekday Hebrew School conceived of this school as a combination of the "Old World" and the "New World" in order to produce a true Jewish American educational institution.

Another less influential school is the Yiddish school. Started in 1910,

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[105]Honor, p. 486.
[106]Harold S. Himmelfarb, "The Non-Linear Impact of Schooling: Comparing Different Types and Amounts of Jewish Education" Sociology of Education Volume 42 (April, 1977) , p. 116.
[107]Sklare, America's Jews, p. 164.

this type of school actually consisted of a "three-pronged system ... - the national-radical schools of the *Idish-Natzionaler Arbeter Farband* (The Jewish National Workers Alliance); the Scholem Aleichem Schools of the *Poalei Zion;* and the *Arbeter Ring* (Workman's Circle) schools."[108] These schools were similar to the Talmud Torahs in that they were supplementary schools conducted in separate, community-backed institutions. However, the curriculum was different. The teachers in these schools stressed the Yiddish language with courses in Yiddish literature, Yiddish folk songs and Yiddish folk dances, as well as Jewish history and current events.[109] These schools never attracted many students. With its emphasis on a language and culture which was not only dying, but also un-American, most new immigrants stayed away from this type of Jewish school.

In the late nineteenth century, the German Jews organized "mission schools" in many cities across the country. These schools catered to the children of the poor. They had two purposes, the first being to teach ethics and refinement to poor children, and the second being to counteract the work of Christian missionaries.[110] In New York City, for example, the control over these schools was held in the beginning by a joint effort of the congregations within New York City, but later was taken over by the Hebrew Free School Association.[111] Eventually, these schools failed, mainly through lack of financial support.

For the wealthier Jews in the mid to late nineteenth century, a special type of Day School existed. The private boarding school offered an

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[108]Schiff, Contemporary..., p. 116.
[109]Berkson, p. 75.
[110]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 53.
[111]Nathan H. Winter, Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society, (New York: University Press, 1966), p. 7.

opportunity for these children to associate with others within their own religious socio-economic standing. Like the other Day Schools, the curriculum consisted of a combination of secular and religious courses, but eventually the emphasis moved to the English subjects.[112] These schools were more exclusive than the others and thus did not ever achieve long-lasting status.

Educational Organizations

In the early decades of the twentieth century, various communities across the country established Bureaus of Jewish Education. The first one was founded in New York in 1910 by Dr. Samson Benderly. "For the first time in the history of Jewish education in America a major Jewish community officially recognized its responsibility for Jewish education and thereby set a new pattern for other Jewish communities and organized American Jewry as a whole."[113] Dr. Benderly's goals were extensive. He established programs for the education and licensing of teachers,[114] organized a survey of the educational institutions of that time[115] and wrote the first modern textbooks for Jewish children.[116] These first Bureaus succeeded in pulling together the educational community for the benefit of the children.

The teachers also had associations. In the 1930s and 1940s, the large Jewish communities established teachers organizations for those

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[112]Rauch, p. 53 - 54.
[113]Pilch, A History..., p. 72.
[114]Rauch, p. 446.
[115]Israel S. Chipkin, Twenty-Five Years of Jewish Education in the United States (New York: Jewish Educational Association of New York City, 1937), p. 35.
[116]Sklare, The Jewish..., p. 238.

who taught in a variety of schools. Eventually, the religious movements also organized associations for school principles and supervisors.[117] These groups, such as the Conference on Alternatives in Education, and the National Association of Temple Educators, all provided the individual educator with the opportunity to interact with other educators and take advantage of collections of education materials.

The National Council for Jewish Education was established in 1925. This organization attended to the specific needs of educators such as "executives, supervisors, textbook writers, training school instructors."[118] Offering conferences for the discussion of theory and research, this organization was invaluable to upper-level educators.

In 1939, leading educators from around the country gathered together to establish a new organization.[119] The American Association for Jewish Education combined the efforts of several other groups in order to present all types of educators with a variety of opportunities. The members of this organization were both professional and lay people. Among its many goals, the AAJE wished to coordinate all of the educational institutions and organizations in America.[120] The American Association for Jewish Education attempted to reach all those involved in Jewish education as an over-all educational center.

The three major religious movements also established educational organizations. The Orthodox movement established a number of special committees on education within its larger national organizations[121] The

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[117]Pilch, A History..., p. 158.
[118]Chipkin, p. 85.
[119]Judah Pilch, The Development of the American Association for Jewish Education: 1939-1966 (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1966), p. 1 - 2.
[120]Ibid., p. 1.
[121]Greenstone, p. 108.

Conservative Rabbinical Assembly, the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and the Education Department of the United Synagogue co-operated in forming a special Commission on Education in order to aid in the development of curriculum and the publication of textbooks and educational materials.[122] One of the first acts of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873 was to set up a religious school committee to help those congregational schools affiliated with the Reform movement. Out of this committee grew the Hebrew Sabbath School Union which eventually developed into the Commission on Education directed by Dr. Emanuel Gamoran.[123] The aims of all of these committees were to unite the Jewish schools within each movement and give them as much help as possible in the areas of programming, curriculum development and professional improvement for the educators.

Conclusion

American Jewish education is a combination of traditional Jewish values, European educational institutions and American society. Most of the history shows Jews who retained the values expressed in the Bible and Talmud. As long as these people were able to survive in the new environment and feel comfortable, they set up institutions in order to fulfill the commandments to teach their children. They recognized the importance of instilling a Jewish identity even within a society in which they were allowed to live with other types of people. This they strove to do from early in their existence as a group in America.

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[122]Gannes, Selected..., p. 71.
[123]Honor, p. 462.

In order to achieve this goal, the American Jews adapted the specific institutions they knew from their homelands. Until public schools became a requirement in America, parents could send their children to cheders or private melammdim all day for their Jewish education. Once secular studies became mandatory, the Jews either changed these institutions so that they would fit the requirements, or sent their children to public school and Jewish supplementary school. This development caused a great debate among both parents and educators. Some felt the old institutions were best for the education of their children. Others felt it was important to learn about American society and its customs through the public schools. Most Jews wished to become true Americans, sending their children to Hebrew Schools and Sunday Schools, as opposed to the cheders and Day Schools.

In recent times, the debate has continued. Because of the conditions of the public schools, the number of Day Schools has increased. However, the strengthening of the congregations has also affected the educational system. Many Jews take advantage of the opportunities offered by the synagogues and send their children to the supplemental schools affiliated with them. Many outside forces, such as the birth rate and the suburbanization of the Jews, will continue to have strong influence on the choices Jewish parents make for the Jewish education of their children.

CHAPTER 4: A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Introduction

Even though the Sunday School system of Jewish education began in the 1830s, by the turn of the century, it had become a very popular option within the Jewish educational system. This type of schooling offered Jews the opportunity to receive their Jewish education in only one session a week, with time off for holidays and summer vacation. By sending their children to a Sunday School, Jews were able to imitate their Protestant neighbors, an important point to immigrants who were trying to fit into the general American society. In addition, the smaller amount of time spent in supplementary school seemed more appropriate for Reform Judaism with its desire for less Hebrew and texts. For these main reasons, the one-day-a-week school developed into a very important type of educational institution in America.

The History of the Sunday School

A problem developed in the 1830s within the realm of Jewish education. Many of the children of the poor were not receiving any! This was recognized by Reverend Isaac Leeser and Miss Rebecca Gratz in Philadelphia. In order to combat this problem, they organized the first Sunday School for "free instruction in Jewish history and related subjects."[124] This school was open to the community in an effort to offer at least a minimum form of education. Miss Gratz had no Jewish text books

[124]Honor, p. 465.

or set curriculum until Leeser published his Catechism and dedicated it to her.[125] She would open the day with a prayer which the children would repeat after her. She would then read a chapter from the Bible and conduct a session of questions and answers on such subjects as the Jewish holidays and religious practice.[126] This system of the communal Sunday School was adopted during the next several years by communities in South Carolina, Richmond and New York.[127]

A few months after the establishment of Rebecca Gratz's Sunday School, the first congregational Sunday School was established in Charleston, South Carolina with the help of Miss Gratz.[128] Most of the teachers in the congregational Sunday Schools were volunteers who were directed by the Rabbi of the synagogue. The curriculum consisted mainly of the study of religious beliefs and biblical history. The course, which usually lasted three years, culminated in the newly developed ceremony of Confirmation.[129] These schools could be found attached to synagogues in numerous cities like Richmond, Virginia and New York City.[130]

The Sunday School did not attract the more wealthy Jews until a couple of decades later. Once the German Jews became more acculturated, they began to notice their neighbors who were sending their children to religious schools on Sunday mornings. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was one of these Jews who felt that:

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[125]Gartner, p. 57.
[126]Pilch, A History..., p. 35.
[127]Winter, p. 5.
[128]Richard C. Hertz, The Education of the Jewish Child: A Study of 200 Reform Jewish Religious Schools, (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1953), p. 11.
[129]Sklare, The Jewish ..., p. 232 - 233.
[130]Winter, p. 5.

> Jewish religious education ... was the province of the congregational Sabbath School. The time and place of the school's meeting, obviously borrowed from the model of the Protestant Sunday School, were clearly designed to prevent accusations of Jewish separatism and to insure the possibility of Jewish involvement in the life of the larger community.131

So the Sunday School format attracted Reform Jews. Without the need for the children to learn Hebrew, as the Reform Jews had dropped the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, it was not necessary for their education to be greater than that offered by the Sunday School. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Sunday school remained the province of these more affluent Jews since the Eastern European Jews either were not wealthy enough to live in those neighborhoods which housed the schools or were not satisfied with the minimal amount of education they offered.[132]

Many congregations opened their own religious education institutions as one-day-schools. In addition, some all-day schools were converted into two-day-a-week schools with sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Eventually, these schools removed the Saturday sessions and became Sunday-only schools.[133] In 1882, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations stated that of the 91 schools affiliated with their organization, 81 held sessions only on Saturday and Sunday mornings. By the turn of the century, most of these had reduced the number of their sessions to one.[134] This type of religious education became very widely

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[131]Ackerman, "Some Uses ...", p. 12.
[132]Rauch, p. 364.
[133]Honor, p. 467.
[134]Pilch, A History ..., p. 69.

attended by the wealthier American Jews.

By this time, however, some already recognized the downfalls of this type of educational system. There were two main complaints. The first had to do with the teaching staff of the schools. In most of these schools, the teachers were volunteers who had recently graduated from the same school. Their obvious lack of advanced Jewish knowledge was seen as a hindrance to the development of educated Jewish children. The second complaint dealt with the decreasing importance shown to Hebrew in the curriculum.[135] Nevertheless, more and more Sunday Schools were opening their doors.

During the early 1900s, the organization of the Sunday School schedules across the country were very similar. Typically, the program would last four or five years for 34 weeks and two and a half hours a day.[136] The set-up was adapted from that of the public schools system. Each child was placed into a classroom depending upon their age or ability. There was one teacher for each class who was responsible for teaching the curriculum using textbooks and other materials appropriate for the class.[137] Most of the Sunday Schools held an Assembly in which the Rabbi would lead the whole school in the singing of some hymns, and the recitation of a Biblical passage, and would give a sermonette.[138] Then the teacher would conclude the day with the teaching of Jewish history, rituals and Bible stories.

The educators began to modify the Sunday School in the 1930s.

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[135]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, 52 - 53.
[136]Ibid., p. 343.
[137]Isa Aron, "The Malaise of Jewish Education", Tikkun Volume 4, Number 3 (May/June, 1989), p. 32.
[138]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 343.

More of the teachers, by this time, were paid for their efforts. This did not necessarily mean that the teachers, however, were more capable in their ability to teach Jewish material.[139] Although this type of educational institution remained mostly within the realm of the Reform congregations, there were more and more Conservative and Orthodox congregations who were introducing it to their parents. The leaders of these synagogues recognized that more of their congregants were not availing themselves of Jewish schools which were held several days a week because of their involvement in more extra-curricular activities.[140] They had no choice but to include the option of a one-day-a-week school. On the other hand, "more than 20% of the Jewish Sunday schools in the country ha[d] added one or two weekdays to their schedules" in order to increase the curriculum to include such subjects as Hebrew and Jewish currents events.[141] More Sunday Schools were offering high school departments.[142] The Sunday Schools across the country were beginning to show signs of maturation and development.

After World War II, there was a rapid growth in the number of children attending a Sunday School in their city. This came about because of the increasing numbers of Jews moving to the suburbs where they became more aware of the customs of their Christian friends and neighbors. There was also a larger number of people joining synagogues at this time. Subsequently, they sent their children to the school affiliated with the synagogue which often turned out to be a Sunday School.[143] The

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[139]Chipkin, p. 53.
[140]Judah Pilch, "Changing Patterns in Jewish Education", Jewish Social Studies Volume, 21, Number 2 (April, 1959), p. 99.
[141]Chipkin, p. 90.
[142]Ibid., p. 65 - 66.
[143]Ackerman, "Jewish Education...", p. 5.

children who attended these would stay in them for a longer period of time than those who attended other types of Jewish schools. The majority of the children in the Sunday Schools were of the pre-school and kindergarten ages. Most Day and Weekday Schools did not offer classes for children of these years. There was also, in many of the Sunday Schools, a requirement in which the children had to attend at least two years of school before the congregation allowed them the opportunity to participate in a Bar Mitzvah ceremony.[144] As an institution, the Sunday School system was becoming a large entity.

During the 1970s, the number of children attending a Sunday School began to decline. In the early part of the decade, Orthodox and Conservative synagogues were offering this type of schooling as an option for their parents. The children who took advantage of this opportunity were either those who were unable or unwilling to take a more intensive type of education, or those who were too young to appreciate a more extensive curriculum.[145] As the decade continued, researchers found that there was a decline in the enrollment figures in the one-day-a-week school. For example, in 1976, the total enrollment was estimated at about 400, 000 children, which was down 50, 000 from 1971.[146] Although the Sunday School was still the prominent type of educational system within the Reform movement, fewer of these schools could be found within the Conservative movement, and almost none could be found in the Orthodox movement.[147] Even within the Reform synagogues, the educational

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[144]Uriah Z. Engleman, Trends and Developments in Jewish Education - 1956-1957, (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1957), p. 6 - 8.
[145]Greenberg, p. 931.
[146]American Association for Jewish Education, Trends in Jewish School Enrollment in the United States, (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1976), p. iii.
[147]Ibid., p. iii.

options offered were increasing. Educators made Hebrew Schools an integral part of their system. This did not, however, affect the number of children who continued to attend the Sunday School since they were treated as completely separate institutions, especially with regard to the curriculum of each.[148] This did mean that the numbers of those children who only attended religious school once a week decreased.

This trend has continued into the present. Surveys conducted in the mid-to-late 1980s showed that of the total enrollment of American Jewish children in religious schools, the enrollment of those attending one-day-a-week schools dropped from 42% to 25%.[149] This decrease can be accounted for by a number of reasons, some demographic and some inherent in the nature of the school. Many Jews, as is the case with many Americans, are simply having fewer children. This will have a direct effect on the enrollment of all types of religious educational institutions. In addition, the minimal amount of education available in this type of school has become increasingly more disturbing for parents who wish to give their children more knowledge about their cultural identity. With the shift in America away from the "melting pot" concept towards the idea of a "mosaic", Jewish parents want a more intensive educational experience. However, because of the continued involvement of their children in other activities, the Sunday School remains the most popular form of general Jewish education in America.

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[148]Sklare, America's Jews, p. 167.

[149]W. I. Ackerman, "Strangers to the Tradition: Idea and Constraint in American Jewish Education" in Jewish Education Worldwide: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, Harold S. Himmelfarb and Sergio DellaPergola, ed., (Lanham, N.J.: University Press of America, 1987), p. 85.

The Teachers of The Sunday School

In the early years of the Sunday School, the teachers, mostly women, were volunteers who had just graduated from the same school. Thus, the situation presented itself in which sisters were teaching their own slightly younger siblings. The young teachers were immature, unknowledgable and untrained in teaching methods.[150] As the schools became more numerous and sophisticated, the situation changed. Eventually, the schools paid their teachers. Being a very part-time venture meant that, although they were receiving a salary for their work, this salary was very small. Most of these teachers had no formal training in either general pedagogical methodology or specific Jewish information.[151] These women chose to teach either to supplement the salary of their husbands or as an addition to another full-time job of their own. Teaching in a Sunday School always has been considered a supplementary position by the teachers, the congregation and the parents, and this meant that they had low status within the Jewish community and synagogue.

The administrator or principal of the school, on the other hand, is often considered a full-time or half-time position. Some congregations take advantage of the skills of the rabbi as the administrator, while others hire a person who is more pedagogically knowledgeable. A 1988 survey showed that in general, the principals of the Sunday Schools had at least a bachelor's degree with ten percent having earned their doctorates. However, most had little or no formal Jewish educational background.[152]

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[150]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 280.

[151]Dushkin and Engelman, Jewish Education ..., p. 114.

[152]Alvin I. Schiff and Chaim Y. Botwinick, Jewish Supplementary Schooling: An Educational System in Need of Change (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater New York, 1988),

Their position within the synagogue hierarchy was placed below the rabbi and the cantor.[153] Although the Sunday School is considered one of the main activities of the congregation, both the teachers and the administrators are given little pay and are not expected to have received much in the way of formal training in Jewish education.

The Organizations for the Sunday School

There has been one major organization exclusively established for the betterment of the Sunday Schools across America. This agency went through a number of changes from its inception in 1883. The Hebrew Sabbath School Union began in order to unify all of the Sunday Schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of the Reform Movement. Its first act was to gather information about the schools. It also published a series of materials and lessons in an attempt to coordinate the curricula of these Sunday Schools.[154] In 1903 the Union was reorganized into the Department of Synagogue and School Extension. With the aid of a committee of rabbis known as the Commission on Jewish Education, this organization continued its efforts in coordination. It published a number of text books and helped smaller Jewish communities establish their own religious educational institutions.[155] For over a century, the Sunday Schools within the Reform movement have been united under this organization.

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p. 70.
[153]Ackerman, "Jewish Education ...", p. 10.
[154]Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 61.
[155]Gannes, Selected Writings ..., p. 62.

Expectations of the Sunday School

A number of studies have been conducted in order to determine what both the educators and the parents expect out of the Sunday Schools. In the beginning, the congregations felt that it was important that the education they offered to the children would be relevant to their lives as American Jews. They also were competing with each other for members, so they had to make their own school more appealing than any other. The directors of the schools set up the curriculum in order to fulfill these goals. They felt that their major aim was to "prepare the children for congregational life, for understanding the synagogue service, and for meeting the problems intelligently which American Jewish life brings."[156] They taught the courses in English and guided the students toward a successful Confirmation ceremony. Through this type of minimal educational experience, the congregations felt they would be able to attract the most Jews.

More recently, there has been a change in the desired goals for religious education. In a study conducted in the late 1970s, "100% of all educators ranked 'affirmation of Jewish identity' among the five most important goals that religious schools set for their students." Except for the fact that they also ranked learning about the celebration of Shabbat, festivals and life-cycle events within the top five, the other goals related to attitudes of the Jews.[157] This was just one study among several which demonstrated the shift in educational aims from acquiring knowledge to

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[156]Hertz, p. 34.

[157]S. A. Gertman, And You Shall Teach Them Diligently: A Study of the Current State of Religious Education in the Reform Movement, (New York: National Association of Temple Educators, 1979), p. 24.

acquiring the appropriate values for a productive Jewish life.

General Reactions to the Sunday School System

There is a general acceptance that the Sunday School type of Jewish school will continue to be a major institution in religious education. It consists of a number of characteristics which allow critics to appreciate the Sunday School. It is considered the most inexpensive type of religious schooling. Housed in the congregation, paying little or nothing to its teachers, and sometimes directed by the rabbi, there are few expenses involved in the running of a Sunday School. It does not seem foreign to the student. As they watch their Christian friends spend their Sundays in religious schools, the Jewish children feel that they can fit into their surroundings.[158] The Sunday School has demonstrated its ability to retain students for a longer period of time than other schools. "Most of the children stay for more than four years."[159] Because of the smaller number of hours per week the student is required to be in class, the average attendance runs higher in the Sunday School.[160] The convenience of the Sunday School is not the only reason many hold this type of religious school in high esteem, since it also offers inexpensive religious education in an atmosphere compatible with the Christian society.

One can find many people, educators, parents and children, who feel just the opposite, that the Sunday School is a failing educational institution. It is interesting to note that this reaction is not new. As early as the mid-

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[158]Greenstone, p. 113 - 114.
[159]Hertz, p. 34.
[160]Ron Wolfson, "Many Families, Many Models" Jewish Education News Volume 14, Number 1 (winter, 1993), p. 26.

and late 1800s, only a few years after the establishment of the very first school of this type, several Jewish leaders expressed this sentiment. For example, Rabbi Bernard Drachman, in 1890, stated: "[The American Sunday School] is notoriously inefficient or a mere farce, and its graduates, upon leaving it, find it easier to forget than it was to acquire the indifferent smattering of knowledge taught within its precincts." [161] Rabbi Drachman was just one who recognized from the start that Sunday Schools were deficient.

These expressions of negative feelings are not unfounded. There are obvious dangers within the system as it has been conceived. The goals of the schools range from teaching the child at least the minimum to perform successfully at either a Confirmation or Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, to the development of a positive attitude towards their Jewish identity. Many fear that, even if the Sunday School is able to achieve these goals, they are not sufficient to "stem the tide of assimilation or to reverse the process of erosion of Jewish identity within the younger generation." [162] Some even feel that this type of educational institution may result in a negative attitude in its students. Nissan Touroff expressed this sentiment in his article "Jewish Education for the Moment or for the Future." The superficiality of the education received in a Sunday School, he stated, must leave the children with the feeling that Judaism does not deserve an intensive education, and can exist and even grow without it. "In most instances (if not in all) it is bound to leave an unpleasant after-effect, a memory of time wasted to no purpose and of effort that ended in a void."

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[161] Quoted in Winter, p. 7.

[162] David Sidorsky, Jewish Education and Jewish Identity: Colloquium Papers: A Summary Report and Recommendations, (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1976), p. 6.

[163] These feelings are indicative of the often negative reaction which can be found regarding the Sunday School type of Jewish education.

Problems Inherent in the Sunday School

The first and most obvious problem within the Sunday School system is the amount of actual time the students spend in school. In Gertman's study in 1979, he looked at 195 Reform religious schools. He found that the vast majority of the schools met for one session a week for between thirty and thirty-two weeks per year. Most of these sessions met for two hours.[164] This meant that most of the students in his study ideally attended religious school for sixty to sixty-four hours a year. This does not even take into account the number of times a particular student may be absent due to illness or outside activities. If a child remains in school for seven years, until the completion of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, this adds up to about four hundred and twenty hours of Jewish education within the child's lifetime. Even if the child continues on until after Confirmation, this only adds another three years to the estimate. Thus, many children end up with only six hundred hours of religious schooling. Harold Himmelfarb, in his study through the Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research of the Synagogue Council of America, found that:

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[163]Nissan Touroff, "Jewish Education for the Moment or for the Future" Jewish Education Volume 16, Number 3 (May, 1945), p. 31.
[164]Gertman, p. iv - vii.

> Jewish schooling does not begin to have an impact in adult religious involvement until there have been at least 2,000 hours of schooling and the amount of impact is not statistically significant until 3,000 hours of schooling have been obtained.[165]

A comparison of these numbers indicate a severe problem within the majority of schools in the Reform movement.

The part-time aspect of the Sunday School has even more of an impact than the Himmelfarb study indicates. Not only are the students not participating enough in the direct learning process, but the teachers are also affected by the few hours in which they have to teach. Teachers have a very limited ability to develop long-term relationships with the students, the parents and even the director of the school.[166] Thus, the teachers are not able to be completely effective in the way in which they maintain discipline and command respect within the classrooms.

Although many have worked on various curricula across the years, there still exist many difficulties. Related to the problem of the lack of time within the system, it is difficult to teach children all there is to know about the richness of Judaism in the Sunday School environment in so few hours. Many subjects are treated in a cursory fashion, if at all. The teachers find that because of this the students must be retaught many of the things they had been taught the year before. In addition, the amount of Hebrew taught is generally only enough to perform in a successful Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. "A knowledge of Hebrew, sufficient to enable one to read the prayers intelligently and to understand the Bible in its original

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[165]Harold S. Himmelfarb, "Jewish Education for Naught - Educating the Culturally Deprived Child" Analysis Volume 51 (September, 1975), p. 7.
[166]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 67.

tongue, cannot be imparted in one session a week, thirty session a year."[167] The curriculum of the Sunday School, regardless of the changes which educators instituted, remains one of the major problems of the Sunday School.

The staff of the Sunday Schools present a further problem. As was discussed earlier, most of the teachers lack the appropriate Judaic background to effectively instruct the students. This sometimes holds true for the director as well. If the director happens to be the rabbi or cantor of the congregation, who obviously has a large amount of Jewish education, he or she often does not have enough pedagogic knowledge. This can affect the teaching staff as well as the students. "Most teachers feel that their principals are more comfortable and competent in their administrative roles than as educational supervisors."[168] The part-time aspect of the school can only attract teachers who are committed as Jews to the furthering of the Jewish education of childen, but are not, in the main, professional Jewish educators.

Another problem with the Sunday Schools lies with the parents. There is generally a low degree of involvement on the part of the parents, both with the school directly, and outside of the school. Gertman's study showed that "there is a general dissatisfaction among Reform educators with parental involvement in the program of the religious school."[169] Very few parents participate, even when invited, to class or school-wide events. In addition, many parents show little awareness of the educational activities of their children, despite the efforts some schools make in informing the parents of what occurs within the school. Some parents also

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[167]Greenstone, p. 114.
[168]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 72.
[169]Gertman, p. 22.

allow their children to miss a day of Sunday School every so often for various activities such as football games or birthday parties. Both the lack of parental involvement and the amount of permitted absences from class demonstrate to the children that these parents do not hold Jewish education in high esteem. If the parents feel this way, the children will also feel this way. This attitude presents another problem which stands in the way of the success of the Sunday School.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the expectations of the Sunday School have become more than the institution is capable of handling. The goal of Jewish education has expanded from teaching the children how to read the Bible and recite the liturgy to developing a a strong Jewish identity. The school was originally geared toward plain instruction. Thus, the teachers were only expected to be able to give to the children the information necessary to understand a certain subject. In the same light, the curriculum was developed to aid the teacher in this task. Today, because of the lack of parental knowledge about their own Judaism, the schools are also expected to induct the children into the culture of the Jewish society. This addition to the goals of the Sunday School has overburdened it. There is too much the Sunday School must do for the Jewish child and too few resources with which to do it.

Conclusion

From its inception, the Sunday School has been the choice of many parents for the Jewish education of their children. The Jews wished to fit into the surrounding environment. Other religious institutions, such as the Talmud Torah, Hebrew Weekday School and Day School, seemed foreign.

Either they did not offer the children the opportunity to attend public schools like other Americans, or they prevented the children from participating in extra-curricular activities with the other children. It also felt awkward to these parents, especially as they moved into more integrated neighborhoods, to watch the children around them leave every Sunday morning for religious instruction as their children remained at home. More American Jews joined synagogues which offered their congregants the cheapest and most convenient educational experiences. The Reform movement, which was growing, leaned towards the idea that intensive education was not necessary since the services were performed mainly in English and the traditional texts were not used very often. These general trends in the social and religious activities of many American Jews brought them towards the recognition of the value of the one-day-a-week religious institution.

As valuable as the Sunday School seemed, there were also many disadvantages. Many professionals began to wonder how children would be able to receive a high enough level of Jewish education in a couple of hours a week. Part-time education seemed to lead to a part-time mentality and part-time expectations on the part of the parents, the children and even the educators. The curriculum seemed to have been reduced to only the essentials. The teachers received such a small salary for their efforts that they often placed this job low on their list of priorities. The staff had little time to spend on developing strong relationships with the students or expanding their own small amount of Jewish knowledge. The parents demonstrated to their children, in a variety of ways, their lack of respect for the Jewish educational system. And while the school developed more problems, the Jewish society added yet another expectation for its

success. It seemed that in order for the Sunday School to become a success in achieving its goal of identity formation, all of the problems needed to be solved. With this overwhelming task, the Sunday School at the same time seemed very promising and a great disappointment.

CHAPTER 5: FAMILY EDUCATION: AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE UPON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Introduction

As was discussed in the previous chapter, educators and parents alike found the institution of the Sunday School unsuccessful. The children complained of boredom, the teachers complained they received no support from the parents and the parents complained their children had no true knowledge of Judaism. Many students dropped out of the Sunday School after their Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony without having gained more than a minimal amount of information about their religious identity. As adults, those who had attended Sunday Schools felt they knew very little about their Judaism, its holidays, beliefs or rituals. The Sunday School from its inception until today has been, for many, a failure in achieving even the simplest goal of producing educated Jews.

This condition has been very frustrating for those educators involved in the various Sunday Schools across the country. Most attempts to remedy this overall problem, as well as the problems which have contributed to the failure, have been on an individual basis, each school working on its own. Schools have tried a number of programs. Some schools have encouraged parents to become more involved in the school through membership on the school board, parent visitation days, correspondence between teachers and parents and a regular schedule of report cards, for example. There are requirements found in many schools with regard to the number of years a child must attend school in order to be allowed to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate. Some schools have

opened up pre-school programs on Sunday mornings in order to extend the time children attend a religious educational institution. The content of the curriculum in many schools has been expanded to include such cultural activities as Jewish music, art, newspaper and cooking. Some schools offer financial incentives to the teachers in order for them to receive more Jewish education through such programs as the national Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education conventions and local in-service sessions offered by the Bureau of Jewish Education. These are just a few of the programs many educators have introduced in order to improve their schools.

Unfortunately, these programs have thus far been unsuccessful. Most parents can not be members of a religious school board. The number of hours added because of requirements or an additional year or two is insignificant. Many teachers do not take advantage of opportunities for professional growth. These suggestions consist mainly of one or two time events within a single school which do little to make changes in the overall system.

Jewish Family Education: A Definition

In the past twenty years, a new concept has begun to take shape in an attempt to rectify the problems within the current Jewish educational system, especially as regards the Sunday School. Jewish educators remembered the value placed traditionally on the family as educator. In the past few decades, these educators noticed that the family had given up (either purposefully or because of a naiveté about thier own Judaism) their responsibility to educate their children in the way of Jewish life. In an

attempt to return the responsibility of education back to the parents, Jewish family education was developed.

Jewish family education is a concept that is founded on the idea that Jewish education is necessarily done within family units utilizing all generations available. This should be enacted in informal settings, using hands-on concrete, experiential methodologies encouraging parents and children to learn from and with each other. The overall goal is a strong Jewish identity based on firm Jewish content. Its main assumption is that Jewish education is not for children alone. Jewish family education offers programming in which all members of the family are involved. A wide range of information about various Jewish topics is taught, often in an experiential setting. In order for a program to fall under this category, it should "involve two or more generations of family members, have a clear Judaic content, call for an elaborated educational methodology and extend over enough time to make a potential difference in the life of the family."[170] As opposed to family life education, family education does not seek to especially address issues of the family, but rather to teach Judaism to the family.

There are many goals and objectives of Jewish family education.[171] Several of these goals are short-term. Much of the program is geared toward developing a cognitive understanding of Judaism which tends to be the means to the larger, long-term goal of Jewish identity. These I will call the short-term goals. One of these aims is to teach both children and their parents about Jewish history and ritual. The program attempts to teach enough about Jewish traditions and practice so that the families can begin

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[170]Joseph Reimer, "Family Education" in What We Know About Jewish Education: A Handbook of Today's Research for Tomorrow's Jewish Education. Stuart L. Kelman, ed. (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1992), p. 182.

[171]These will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

to perform these rituals in their own homes and feel good about doing so in the process.[172] And these programs bring the parents into the religious school so that they can understand more about what their children do during their Sunday mornings. These are all important short-term goals.

The long-term goals of Jewish family education are even more vital in reducing the problems associated with Sunday School education. Family educators wish either to introduce or reinforce a strong Jewish identity in both the children and the parents. This strong identity, it is hoped, will lead to a slowing down of the rate of both assimilation and intermarriage.[173] Family education will "re-establish the Jewish family as the ultimate conveyer of Jewish identity and the home as the primary setting for Jewish living."[174] In addition, through this program, the learning that does occur in the Sunday School can be further reinforced in the home, producing a well-educated child. Through the achievement of these goals, Jewish family education will be able to expand the power the Sunday School has in teaching children about Judaism.

More specifically, Jewish family education addresses a number of vital Jewish topics. Many programs have already been developed. These include the teaching of holidays so that families can participate in them more fully in both the synagogue and the home. There are also programs which educate families about the role Jews have played in world events, both in the past and the present. The experiences may be in conjunction with the school curriculum or completely independent from it. They also

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[172]Norman Linzer, "Translating Conceptions of Jewish Family Education into Practice" Jewish Education Volume 59, Number 3 (Winter, 1993), p. 7.

[173]Ibid., p. 7.

[174]Janice Alper, Jo Kay, Susanne Heiman, and Joan Davidson, "Family Education - A Challenge to the Educaitonal Environment", paper presented at a Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education on August 21, 1991 in New York, p. 6.

can be done in a parallel style in which the generations study the same material in separate places, times or ways, or in an interactive style in which the generations study together.[175] Some of the events can involve a recreational aspect as long as there remains a strong educational component. The program must contain more than just a few scattered events in order for it to be productive. And there must be definite Jewish content to the program.[176] A good Jewish family education program will combine all of these parts to make a whole which will help the school achieve all of its goals for the children.

Theories Concerning Jewish Family Education

Jewish family education was developed in order to combat many of the problems of the popular institution of the Sunday School. Compared to other programs, Jewish family education is capable of doing just that. In order to back up this claim, there are several theories regarding family education which explain each of the problems inherent in the institution of the Sunday School and how Jewish family education can solve them.

The Number of Hours of Schooling for a Strong Jewish Identity

A strong Jewish identity is important for a number of reasons. It is believed that those who understand who they are as Jews and the values and ethics which are involved in a Jewish identity are less likely to assimilate into the general culture. The acceptance among children of the

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[175]Janice P. Alper, ed., Learning Together: A Source Book on Jewish Family Education, (Denver, Colorado: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., 1987), p. 7.
[176]Reimer, "Family Education", p. 179 - 180.

> may later affect the behavior of Jewish adults in such matters as religious observance, the ties to the Jewish community, the choice of a marital partner from within or without the Jewish group, the religion of the offspring, and whether or not he later will be given a Jewish education.[177]

Not only will a strong Jewish identity affect a person during their adult life, but it also will touch them during their childhood. A child must understand who he or she is before they can absorb and utilize any information they receive from their religious education. Without an attachment to Judaism, any information teachers may present to a child will seem irrelevant. "Children go through the motions of attending religious school and becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but they see no meaning or purpose in these actions and drop out of supplementary school shortly thereafter."[178] Thus, a strong Jewish identity is necessary not only for the child as an individual, but also for the child as a student.

For these reasons, it is important that there be an attempt made at formulating a strong Jewish identity in Jewish children. As the major source of Jewish interaction and information, this responsibility has fallen to the school. Both parents and educators expect the school to develop "a deep sense of identification and participation in the shared experience of Jewish community life and in the historic culture which links [Jews] one with

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[177]Sergio DellaPergola and Uziel G. Schmelz, "Demography and Jewish Education in the Diaspora: Trends in Jewish School-Age Population and School Enrollment" in Jewish Education Worldwide: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, Harold S. Himmelfarb and Sergio DellaPergola, ed., (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), p. 44.
[178]Aron, "The Malaise ...", p. 33.

another and with the Jewish past."[179] This is a major responsibility taken on by the Sunday School .

The question remains whether the Sunday School is capable of fulfilling this goal. A number of studies have indicated that the answer to this question is "no". A survey done in New York in 1987 of supplementary schools showed that "schools do not include Jewish involvement and attitude formation as explicit aspects of the curriculum and do not succeed in implementing them."[180] Steven M. Cohen did another study examining the Jewish identification of students of several different types of religious schools. He examined such categories as Ritual Orientation, Subjective Commitment to Judaism, and In-group Dating. He found that those with more intensive schooling score high more often than those with only part-time instruction. He also discovered that "respondents with only Sunday School education and those with no formal religious education were found to be generally undifferentiable in religious background and current attitudes."[181] These are just two of the many studies[182] which demonstrate

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[179]A quote by Philip M. Klutznick in S. Dinnin, Written Symposiun on the Goals of Jewish Education, (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, n.d.), p. 22.

[180]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 116.

[181]Steven M. Cohen, "The Impact of Jewish Education on Religious Identification and Practice" Jewish Social Studies Volume 36, Number 3/4 (July - October, 1974), p. 319 - 321

[182] See for example, Geoffrey E. Bock. "Does Jewish Schooling Matter?" in Jewish Education and Jewish Identity: Colloquium Papers. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1977, Steven M. Cohen. American Assimilation or Jewish Revival? Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, Sylvia B. Fishman. Learning About Learning: Insights on Contemporary Jewish Education from Jewish Population Studies, Waltham, MA.: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1987, Harold S. Himmelfarb. "The Impact of Religious Schooling: The Effects of Jewish Education Upon Adult Religious Involvement," Unpublished Ph.D., Dissertation. The University of Chicago, 1974, Harold S. Himmelfarb. "Jewish Education for Naught - Educating the Culturally Deprived Child" Analysis Volume 51 (September, 1975), Harold S. Himmelfarb. "The Non-Linear Impact of Schooling: Comparing Different Types and Amounts of Jewish Education" Sociology of Education Volume 42 (April, 1977), Jewish Community Federation of Rochester. The Jewish Education Study of Rochester, New York 1976, Rochester: Jewish Community Federation of Rochester, 1976, David Schoem, "Explaining Jewish Student Failure and its Implications" Anthropology and Education Quarterly Volume 13, Number 4 (1982), Ron

the ineffectiveness of the Sunday School in developing strong Jewish identities within its students.

The reason for this result has been explored in an attempt to remedy the situation. Both Geoffrey Bock and Harold Himmelfarb have run statistical analyses on the number of hours necessary for a student to attend a school in order for it to be effective in developing a strong identity in the child. This they did because they and others found that "all other factors being equal, those people who have spent 'more hours' in Jewish classrooms are more religious, more involved in informal social networks with other Jews, feel more knowledgeable about Jewish culture and are stronger supporters of Israel." Just being in a Jewish setting for longer periods of time influences the Jewish identities of children.[183] Specifically, Bock and Himmelfarb wanted to know the exact number of hours a child needs to attend a religious school in order for it to affect their beliefs and actions as adults. Bock found a threshold of 1000 hours,[184] and Himmelfarb found one at 3000 hours.[185] Himmelfarb also discovered that the number of years one attends a religious educational institution has an additional effect on Jewish identity. "Supplementary forms of Jewish education do not affect adult religiosity unless they last for more than 12 years (an average of 15.6 in this sample.)"[186] Both studies showed a significant impact of the length of time a child spends in a religious school on the strength of the Jewish identity of that child.

In light of these studies, it is easy to understand the failure of the

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Wolfson. Shall You Teach Them Dilligently? Los Angeles: University of Judaism, 1983.
[183]Geoffrey E. Bock, "Does Schooling Matter?" in Jewish Education and Jewish Identity: Colloquium Papers, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1977), p. 4.
[184]Ibid., p. 6.
[185]Himmelfarb, "The Non-Linear Impact ...", p. 125.
[186]Ibid., p. 124.

Sunday School to have an appreciable effect on the development of Jewish identity. Even in a generous calculation, leaving out the highly probable situation of a child's absence from school a few times during the year, no Sunday School is able to reach even Bock's smaller threshold number of 1000 hours. In addition, it is extremely rare that a child attends at least 12 years of Sunday School. The Sunday School type of Jewish education simply does not offer enough hours of educational interaction for it to achieve its expected goal of developing strong Jewish identities within its students.

Jewish family education is one important way to remedy this failure. Through the additional educational hours that the program offers in retreats and evening sessions, a school may be able to reach the goal of 1000 teaching hours within the year. In addition, since the parents would eventually take the information and re-teach it at home, the children would be receiving even more time in an educational setting. This is especially true since the child, regardless of the type of educational setting, spends more time in the home with the family than anywhere else. The potential for additional time spent in a Jewish atmosphere learning about Judaism is tremendous when the time spent at home is added to the equation. Jewish family education, both in its class time in the school and in its continuing effect on the child in the home, can improve upon the Sunday School which does not offer enough educational hours to the child.

In addition, the influence of the school on a child's Jewish identity has been highly over-estimated. Research has shown that when one takes into account all aspects of a child's environment, the home has a much greater impact on a child than does the religious school. This is true throughout a child's life. In the early years, the child imitates and adopts

many of the values, practices and rituals of the family. From the intense relationship a child has with his or her parents, an identity is developed.[187] As the child grows into adolescence, the family remains the central role model for religious identity.[188] In fact, Bock found that, in terms of personal Jewish observances and Jewish self-esteem, the home background is 1.3 to 2.4 times more important than Jewish schooling.[189] The home contains the greatest arena for the development of a Jewish identity, not the school.

These findings prove to be further support for the importance of Jewish family education. The development of a strong Jewish identity is an important goal for both educators and parents. People placed this responsibility on the school. However, the home, not the school, should be the arena in which Jewish identity is developed. Regardless of the work a school may put into this goal, the fact remains that "individuals raised in less Jewish home environments are likely to be less personally identified."[190] The school must shift its goal so as to strengthen not the identity of the child, but the identity of the family. By educating the family, improving on its ability to perform the rituals and create the atmosphere that will develop strong Jewish identities in the children, the school will finally be able to succeed in its goal. A stronger Jewish family will lead to a stronger Jewish child. This can be accomplished through Jewish family education.

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[187]Jack D. Spiro, To Learn and To Teach: A Philosophy of Jewish Education (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.), p. 79.
[188]Charles S. Liebman, The Ambivalent American Jew - Politics, Religion and Family in American Life. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), p. 127.
[189]Bock, p. 5.
[190]Ibid., p. 15.

The Part-Time Relationship Between the Teacher and the Student

Every year a student enters a new classroom with a new teacher. These teachers are low-paid or volunteer. Many times they are not even members of the congregation. The teachers and students meet only for two to three hours on most Sunday mornings. The teacher is concerned with making sure each student receives the appropriate amount of information during the year. In addition, many students spend a significant amount of their time without their classroom teacher, in music class, art class, or religious services. By the end of the year, the teacher often feels fortunate to have known the names of the students and perhaps a little about their personal life. These conditions do not lend themselves to either high level relationships or mutual respect. This can be detrimental to the learning process. It may be difficult to learn even the simplest information from a person whom you do not know and with whom you do not feel comfortable. This part-time relationship which exists between the teacher and the student adds to the failure of the Sunday School in providing a good Jewish education.

As a solution to this problem, Jewish family education can be helpful. The program is designed so that the teachers, principal and Rabbi all participate with the families. This gives the teacher more time with the students. The informal setting also is helpful for a greater development of the relationship between the teacher and child. In a more comfortable atmosphere, engaged in more informal learning, they can get to know one another on a more personal level. Thus, once the teacher and students return to the formal classroom, their part-time relationship has been able to grow deeper. This will enable the teacher to be more productive in

accomplishing the educational goals of the Sunday School.

The Respect Shown to Teachers and Jewish Education in General

Too often teachers in the Sunday Schools find themselves listening to students complain about attending religious school. The students show little respect for the teachers or for the experience of learning about their Judaism. While students engage themselves in disruptive behavior stemming from this attitude, they are not able to learn. The teachers and principals recognize that the less a student respects the religious school, the more he or she will ignore the information being given to them. This lack of respect, a major problem within the Sunday Schools, adds to its failure.

Alvin Schiff and Chaim Botwinick were concerned about this problem. In their survey of the supplemental schools in the late 1980s, they examined the source of this disrespect. "The findings show that the attitude of parents toward the Jewish education of their children and their involvement in the school program are crucial to the learning behavior and attitude of their children."[191] The parents have a strong influence on how the child feels about their Jewish education and those who work to dispense it. Since many children see their parents simply drop them off at school and pick them up again, they receive the feeling that the parents do not respect the institution enough to become more involved. Thus, the children mimic the disrespect their own parents express.

Jewish family education can remedy this situation. Instead of sending their children to religious school, the parents are coming with them

[191]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 117.

into the school. They are participating in school programs, showing respect for both the educational system and the teachers. The parents send a strong message to their children which says that they feel Jewish education is vital for everyone. The children watch their parents learning at the same time and they "feel encouraged."[192] This joint educational experience can change how the children feel about their Jewish education and thus they will eventually begin to learn more from their teachers.

Parental Involvement

For many years, teachers and principals have been disturbed by the lack of involvement of parents in the Sunday School. Schiff and Botwinick found that the parents feel that "they have neither the time nor the desire to become involved in the school. For those parents who do express an ongoing commitment to the school, most of their involvement is related to Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation."[193] This is a very troubling phenomenon, one which can bring a school closer to failure.

For many reasons, educators feel that a high level of parental involvement in the religious school creates a better religious education for the children. Participation in all aspects of the school, from the religious school board to parent-teacher organizations demonstrates to the children the value adults place on religious education.[194] In addition, involvement in the school means that the parents, because they know what is being taught to their children, can reinforce that education in the home. Parental involvement in the schools can make a difference between those schools

[192]Hertz, p. 38.
[193]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 63.
[194]Gertman, p. 5.

which succeed and those which do not.

Family education offers an important way in which parents can become more involved in the Sunday School. The parents attend classes with their children and get to know the teachers and the school in a more intimate manner. By developing a stronger teacher-parent relationship, the teacher can feel more comfortable asking the parents to participate in PTA organizations or the religious school board. The parents also learn and understand more about the materials their children are learning in the classroom. This enables them to work with the children at home. In this way, the amount of time a child is learning is increased. Simply by involving the entire family in the educational process, the education of the child is improved.

The Judaic Education of the Religious School Teachers

The Sunday School is a part-time venture. Teachers only work for a few hours every week. Because of this, they do not receive much in the way of a salary. Thus, many of the principals must accept any person who is willing to teach for so little money. These people are generally those who, although committed to their Judaism and driven by the desire to pass on that commitment to Jewish children, do not have much Judaic background. Some remain only a chapter ahead of their students. This has drawn much criticism from those who expect a solid religious education from the Sunday School.

Family education can help solve this problem in two ways. First, since many of the programs are constructed so that the teachers as well as the principal and Rabbi participate, the teachers will be receiving additional

opportunities to learn about Judaism. This will inevitably help them in their classrooms. Through family education, the parents also will gain more knowledge about Judaism. Thus the parents will be able to act as a second Jewish teacher for their children. This reduces the responsibility of the teacher for the education of the child. By increasing the time teachers spend in study and the number of "teachers" with whom the children interact, family education helps to combat the problem of the lack of Judaic background of many of the teachers in the Sunday Schools.

Generational Influences

In the past, children learned not just from their parents, but from their grandparents as well. Living together in one home or one neighborhood, it was often the case that children would visit their grandmother while making a Jewish meal, or their grandfather while reciting the morning prayers. From these experiences, the children received a vast range of Jewish knowledge, values and feelings. Children learned to respect their own religion, to understand who they were and what made them Jewish. The generations learned from one another as they lived their Judaism.

This is not the case today. Many children live miles away from their grandparents. "Historical links to the Jewish past are not to be found in intimate family settings for many of [the children.]"[195] The children have lost their Jewish role models. They do not have the chance to absorb the culture and traditions of the Jewish family because of the loss of intergenerational interactions. For many, the Jewish family is an entity of

[195]Martha Aft, "Parent Involvement" in The Jewish Principals Handbook, Audrey Freidman Marcus and Raymond A. Zwerin, ed., (Denver: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., 1983), p. 79.

the past.

The conditions of the society can not be changed. The modern world insists that many people live far removed from their extended family. However, this does not mean that the lessons gained from the interactions among family members must be lost. Jewish family education brings different families together to learn from one another and experience Judaism as one large family. It teaches those who have lost the tastes and sounds of Judaism how to bring these sensorial experiences back into their own homes. Although many have lost the influence of their grandparents, they can begin again the tradition of passing down their Jewish identity to their children. Family education can be the conduit through which that tradition can renew itself.

The Condition of the Jewish Family

The majority of the Jewish families today who send their children to Sunday Schools are considered "culturally disadvantaged".[196] Most know very little about Jewish rituals or traditions. Many know no Hebrew at all. They attend religious events at the synagogue on a yearly basis. "While the idea of family may still be important to Jews, Jewish parents know much less about being Jewish, and their children see fewer and fewer Jewish symbols, values, and activities at home."[197] This is the result of a number of experiences through which the Jewish family has gone. As Jews came to recognize the value of blending into the American culture, they began to discard those aspects of their Jewish identity which seemed

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[196]Schiff, Contemporary ..., p. 162 - 163.

[197]Barry Chazan, The Language of Jewish Education (Hartford: Hartmore House, 1978), p. 15.

different from their neighbors. They worked hard at becoming Americans and thus lost much of the discipline of their Jewish life.[198] Jewish families also have become culturally deprived because of the conditions in which many of them find themselves. As more Jewish families contain one parent, the structure of the family becomes less stable and less capable of producing children with strong Jewish identities.[199] Many single parent families are headed by women and these families are often more economically disadvantaged than two parent families. For these families, these is less time and energy to participate in Jewish rituals. In addition, there are more parents who are either Jews-by-choice or non-Jews. These parents did not experience in their childhood the cycle of Jewish holidays, the family events or Jewish rituals. For non-Jews, their knowledge is minimal and thus they are not able to pass down a strong Jewish identity to their children.[200] For all of these reasons, many Jewish parents are not knowledgeable enough to aid in the Jewish education of their children.

In order for parents to create an atmosphere of exploration about Judaism and to answer the questions their children inevitably ask, they need to become more knowledgeable about their Judaism. This involves not only learning the facts about a specific ritual, but it also involves experiencing it first-hand. Jewish family education is a program geared not only for the advancement of the children, but also for the betterment of the parents. "For long-term impact, affecting the attitudes, actions, knowledge and home behaviors of parents is equally as important as influencing the

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[198]Rauch, p. 438 - 439.
[199]Bernard Reisman, "Jewish Family Education" Pedagogic Reporter Volume 28, Number 3 (Spring, 1977), p. 5.
[200]Reimer, "Family Education", p. 179.

children."[201] Family education draws parents in and teaches them those parts of their own Jewish lives which they have not understood or experienced.

Instruction Versus Enculturation

One of the major questions educators must ask of the Jewish educational system of today is whether its purpose is instruction or enculturation. Instruction is the systematic way of furnishing the learner with knowledge. "Enculturation is the process by which an individual is initiated into all aspects of a culture, including its language, values, beliefs, and behaviors."[202] Typically, the Sunday School has assumed the instructional mode of education. It has tried to follow the original goal of formal Jewish education, that of adding cognitive information to the already established knowledge given in the family and Jewish environment. Additionally, it has established this mode of instruction because it is simply the easier of the two. Dispersing information in a set manner takes less time, staff, money, physical space and resources than does any other type of pedagogy. Thus, the Sunday School and its curricula were developed with the instructional mode in mind.

This situation was based on the assumption that the home was providing the children with the knowledge of at least the basic aspects of the Jewish culture. However, for a variety of reasons, including the increased number of non-Jews within the home and the reduced level of

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[201]Leora W. Isaacs, "Asking the Right Questions, Finding the Right Targets" Jewish Education News Volume 14, Number 1 (Winter, 1993), p. 31.

[202]Isa Aron, "Instruction and Enculturation in Jewish Education", unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Jewish Education of the Conference on Alternative in Jewish Education Research Network, Los Angeles, June 1987.

Jewish knowledge on the part of the parents, the home has not been able to give the children a Jewish cultural experience. Thus, today, the Sunday School has been forced to enlarge its goals to include both instruction and enculturation, fulfillfing both its own educational responsibility and that of the parents.

This has caused a major problem within the Sunday School educational system. It was not developed in order to provide children with cultural knowledge and experiences. The Sunday School, because of lack of time, money and knowledgeable teachers, is often not able to sufficiently instruct Jewish children, much less also teach them about their culture. The teachers often do not have the knowledge or the time to teach the children both the historical facts about Hanukkah, for example, and the prayers, games, foods and songs connected to the holiday. In order to become successful, the Sunday School must return to its original goal of instruction while being assured that the home returns to its goal of enculturation.

Jewish family education can help guide the Sunday School and the parents back to their individual educational responsibilities. First, the school must set a new priority of enculturation through the family education program. By giving the families aesthetic encounters with Jewish culture, the families will gain the knowledge they need to bring the culture back into the home. Eventually, the school will be able to return to its goal of instruction with the knowledge that the families will reinforce that goal through their own efforts of enculturation.

Additional Benefits From Jewish Family Education

There is a trend in America toward a rediscovery of cultural identity. Instead of trying to become more like other Americans, many people are working on understanding those aspects of their background which make them unique. This is true also of American Jews. Michael Zeldin noticed this phenomenon and commented on it in 1989.

> Young parents are flocking to hands-on, how-to classes in celebrating the Jewish holidays. These young parents, third and fourth generation Americans, realizing that they have lost touch with their 'roots' are searching for concrete ways to regain a connection with their heritage.[203]

Family education classes offer parents an opportunity to explore those aspects which make them Jewish. These classes fill the void that many parents feel in their lives.

These parents are also looking for more opportunities to spend 'quality time' with their families. Many Jewish families contain two working parents. They struggle with finding the time to spend with their children, time which can be enjoyable and productive for all members of the family. Family education offers them this time. Through programs which bring the entire family together in order to learn in a fun setting, family education brings 'quality time' to families. Once the family has attended the session, the information they gained offers them further opportunities to be together

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[203]Shimon Frost, Alvin I. Schiff, adn Michael Z. Zeldin, "Jewish Education in the United States: Three Comments" in Jewish Education Worldwide: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, Harold S. Himmelfarb and Sergio DellaPergola, ed. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989) , p. 131.

as they begin to participate at home in the rituals and celebrations they learned. Jewish family education gives families the time they desire to be together and strengthen their relationships.

The Goals of Jewish Family Education

Jewish family education has several goals. One of these goals, put simply, is to help families live Jewish lives. Families need to recognize that the information the parents received during their childhood and that their children are gathering from their own experiences in Sunday School "must have an outlet where what is taught can be lived."[204] This includes celebrating Shabbat in the home, gathering their own collection of Jewish books and art, performing acts of *tzedakah*. Dr. Kerry Olitzky, director of the HUC-JIR School of Education in New York, explains it by saying this: "You will not become a literate Jew by being taught to memorize any amount of data. You become literate, you gain the vocabulary, by living the life of a Jew."[205]

The importance of this goal lies in its outcome. The Jewish home has been the safeguard against political and environmental pressure to assimilate or convert through thousands of years of difficulty. Today, with assimilation threatening the survival of the Jewish way of life, a strong Jewish home can provide the background necessary to at least slow down this process. By living a Jewish life, families provide each of its members with a sense of security, a feeling that they belong to a group of people

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[204]Schiff and Botwinick, p. 129.

[205]Janet Marder, "The Trouble with ... Jewish Education" Reform Judaism Volume 24, Number 4 (Summer, 1993), p. 21.

who take pride in themselves.[206] They are able to enhance their cultural and spiritual lives. By gaining the ability to live a Jewish life through a family education program, families succeed in becoming healthier and stronger.

This goal is not an easy one to accomplish. Jewish families have, over the years, either weakened or completely broken their ties to Jewish culture and heritage. Many of them must start from the beginning. As Bernard Reisman put it: "Jewish families today have to work at Judaizing their lives just as their parents and grandparents had to work at Americanizing their lives."[207] This is especially difficult because family education does not simply ask families to attend a program, but to change their daily behavior.[208] While most people are comfortable with learning facts, it is not easy to take those facts and live from them.

This difficulty leads to a second goal of Jewish family education, that of empowerment. Learning to live Jewishly takes a lot of courage. It involves such daily changes as the manner a family understands the calendar or how their home is set up. People tend to fight having to develop new habits and discard old ones. This is especially true with regard to Judaism. Often Jews do not live Jewish lives not because they have rebelled against it or are indifferent to it, but because they are ignorant of how to approach it. Many parents are embarrassed to show this inexperience to their children and thus find it simpler to ignore their Jewish heritage at home. This can become worse as some of these parents pass

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[206]A quote by Dr. Emanuel Gamoran in Dinin, p. 62.
[207]Reisman, "Jewish Family Education", p. 5.
[208]Joan Kaye, "Message from the Guest Editor" Jewish Education News Volume 14, Number 1 (Winter, 1993), p. 3.

on their fears and insecurities to their children, thus continuing the cycle.[209] The job of the family educator then becomes that of empowering the parents to become the primary Jewish teacher for their children. By offering them the information they need in a non-threatening environment, the educator aids the parents in feeling competent Jewishly. The program gives them further support in being able to transfer the skills they learn in the synagogue to their home. Through empowerment, the Jewish family education program moves the bulk of Jewish living back into the home where it can best help all members of the family lead Jewish lives.

The Effect of Jewish Family Education on The School and Synagogue

The religious school generally works without a strong connection to the home-lives of the students. Although many schools involve parents through a religious school board, there is little direct input from the board to the classroom. A strong family education can change this phenomenon. As parents become more knowledgeable about both their own Judaism and the experiences of their children in the Sunday School, they will become able, and more willing, to contribute to the school. The parents will be able to help the educators form a stronger link between the home and the school. They can contribute ideas on curriculum based on the activities the children experience at home. Parents will feel more comfortable attending school functions and helping in the classrooms. A greater amount of parental involvement in all aspects of the religious school is one outcome of Jewish family education.

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[209]Tamara L. Dollin, "Message from the Editorial Board" Jewish Education News Volume 14, Number 1 (Winter, 1993), p. 2.

The synagogue also will feel the effects of Jewish family education. As families become more comfortable with their Jewish identities at home, they also become more comfortable with their Jewish identities in the synagogue. "The more competent they feel, the more willing they are to experiment with new forms of observance and the more time they are willing to spend on Jewish learning."[210] As a result, more families will participate in synagogue events, such as attending Shabbat services, holiday celebrations and adult education classes. Some families will become knowledgeable enough to become both facilitators and developers of the variety of programs offered by the synagogue.[211] The congregation itself will gain from family education through the increase in the number of committed and interested Jews.

Family education also can build a stronger sense of community within the congregation. As many families move several times in their lives, they experience a difficult time finding close Jewish friends, even after joining a synagogue. The groups of families who participate in family education programs find others who have similar interests, backgrounds and family structures. This may lead to friendships between families, a desire to connect with others within the congregation, or even the development of *Chavurah* groups.[212] Building a feeling of community among the Jewish families that participate in family education adds to their sense of belonging and helps them feel good about their Jewish identity and their congregational life.

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[210]J. Kaye, "A Theoretical Model for Jewish Family Education" Jewish Education News Volume 13, Number 2 (Spring, 1992), p. 18.
[211]Ibid., p. 20.
[212]Shaya Ostrov, "Toward a Model for Training Effective Jewish Family Educators" a paper prepared for Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education on May 25, 1990, p. 7.

Types of Jewish Family Education Programs

There are many different types of Jewish family education programs. Some of them differ in the type of educational experience they offer the families. Some of these programs differ in the setting in which they take place. The amount of time required for the completion of a specific program also may be different depending on the specifics of the program. The specific family members who participate also may be different in specific sessions. The variability of family education is necessary because of the nature of the congregation, the schedules of the families involved and the structures of the families. The variety within the types of programs offers the opportunity for as many families as possible to participate in family education.

There are two different models of teaching that family educators can utilize. The first is the experiential model. Sometimes instructional, sometimes recreational, this type of learning experience involves the family in not only gaining information about a Jewish subject, but also sharing in the experience of it.[213] This can be done, for example, by having a *Shabbat* dinner before services during which the families learn about and then perform all of the ceremonies involved in the *Shabbat* experience. The second model is educational. This involves the more traditional pedagogic methods of a lecture or discussion.[214] Families can learn about Jewish history or explore the various traditional Jewish texts using this model of family education. Although these can be considered two separate models of education, many family education programs also combine them

[213]Harlene Winnick Appelman, "Jewish Family Life Education in the Synagogue" Journal of Jewish Communal Service Volume 62, Number 2 (Winter, 1985), p. 167.
[214]Ibid., p. 167.

in order to present a well rounded experience for the whole family.

Because of the various goals family educators strive to achieve, some programs offer sessions for the family together while others offer them as separate sessions. Joint learning programs are geared toward including the entire family in the same learning experience. Playing games, such as "Family Feud" in which the whole family participates while gaining knowledge is one example of this type of learning experience. In joint learning opportunities, both the parents and the children study the same material in the same place at the same time.[215] In the parallel learning experience, the parents and children study the same material at the same time, but in different places with different educators.[216] This manner of family education is often chosen because of the different levels of understanding and ability parents and children reflect. Regardless of whether the material is being taught to the family in one place or separately, all members receive the information and experience necessary to help them more fully understand their Judaism.

The venue of the educational experience need not necessarily be the synagogue or school. A variety of settings can be used most effectively in family education. The goal of transferring Judaism from the synagogue to the home can be achieved easily by conducting certain sessions of the program in the homes. Educators can visit the homes of the families either on an individual level or by gathering a group of families together, in order to help them understand more clearly how, for example, a *sukkah* can be built in the backyard. These "home visitors" would be able to bring Judaism

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[215]Ron Wolfson, Shall You Teach Them Dilligently? (Los Angeles: University of Judaism, 1983), p. 10.

[216]Sherry Bissell Blumberg, "Family Education" in The Jewish Principals Handbook, Audrey Friedman Marcus and Raymond A. Zwerin, ed. (Denver: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., 1983), p. 465.

into the homes of those who participate.[217] Educators also can develop programs which the families can do on their own. The family independent study programs[218] can involve fun activities such as exploring the zoo together to find animals mentioned in the Bible. These programs, whether informational or experiential, allow families to learn about their Judaism at their own pace either in their homes or in the community.

Family education programs can be held in one session or over an extended period of time. This can consist of a series of classes on one particular topic, such as the Jewish way of addressing social action. Families also can gather for weekend retreats or week-long camps. These "extended time programs" give the families the opportunity to spend a lengthy period of time studying a subject and then experiencing it together in an informal setting.[219] Depending on the type of information being taught, and schedules of the families involved, families can attend family education programs in a variety of time periods.

An Evaluation of Jewish Family Education

The theory of Jewish family education holds out much promise for its success. More people are looking for opportunities to spend with their family discovering more about their own identities. The schools are overburdened with the responsibility for educating the children about their Judaism without the aid of the home to reinforce that education. Family education offers both the children and the parents more time in which they can learn about Judaism. It extends the reach of the Sunday School into a

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[217]Wolfson, Shall You Teach ..., p. 11.
[218]Blumberg, p. 464.
[219]Ibid., p. 462.

wider arena of the lives of the children, while also empowering the parents to build a Jewish environment in the home. The trend of Jewish family education, which is just beginning, may be the help the institution of the Sunday School needs in order to succeed in its goal of educating Jewish children and building strong Jewish identities.

There have been educators who have reported both successes and failures in their family education programs. Some have experienced low attendance to these programs.[220] Others "have been overwhelmed by the high level of enthusiasm and participation from parents."[221] Some educators have seen no effect on the children in their attitude towards religious education.[222] The evidence from one survey, however, shows that both parents and children find family education "meaningful and enriching".[223] Finally, there are many family educators who feel that there has not been enough research done to be able to determine whether family education actually achieve the goals it espouses.[224] These mixed results are not surprising since the concept of Jewish family education is relatively new. However, with the great possibilities it offers both educators and families, Jewish family education could easily become the salvation of the Sunday School institution.

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[220]Wolfson, Shall You Teach ..., p. 1.
[221]Kaye, "A Theoretical Model ...", p. 17.
[222]Ackerman, "Strangers to the Tradition ...", p. 107.
[223]Sylvia B. Fishman, Learning About Learning: Insights on Contemporary Jewish Education From Jewish Population Studies, (Waltham, MA.: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1987), p. 43.
[224]Blumberg, p. 467.

Conclusion

Jewish family education was developed to combat the failure of the Sunday School to educate Jewish children. By directly involving entire families in the educational system, family education guides both the parents and the children toward a deeper understanding of the facts and feelings of Judaism. Utilizing such educational methods as experiential learning and informal settings, family education teaches the parents how to develop a Jewish homelife for themselves and their children. They are able to learn about the Jewish culture, a skill they often have lost, in order to join with the school in the education of their children.

Through enculturation, Jewish family education will aid tremenodusly in the struggle to improve the success rate of the Sunday School while also having a strong positive effect on the synagogue at large. The Sunday School will no longer have to spend its limited time and resources on teaching children how to behave as Jews. It will then be able to go back to the traditional goal of Jewish education which was to provide the children with the cognitive knowledge of Judaism, the skill of being able to read and write Hebrew, the lessons of the Bible and other classical Jewish texts, the facts of the history of the Jewish people. The responsibility for the education of the children again will be shared by both the school and the family.

Finally, the synagogue will feel the positive effects of a family education program. The parents and children will begin to feel more comfortable with their Judaism. Consequently, they will participate more and more in other aspects of the synagogue, in addition to the Sunday School. More families will want to attend religious services as their Hebrew

improves and they understand the significance of the liturgy. More parents will want to join committees and boards in order to have more of an influence on their synagogue as they learn more about how it works. And more families will want to participate in other congregational programs to further their development as strongly identified Jews. As family education helps both parents and children become more competent in their Judaism, their enthusiasm for all aspects of Jewish life will increase tremendously.

CHAPTER 6: A MODEL TO BEGIN THE TRAINING OF FAMILY EDUCATORS

The Need for a Family Education Program

Today the predominant type of Jewish educational institution is the Sunday School. As part of the synagogue, it is easy for congregants to become involved with the Sunday School in order to educate their children about their Judaism. Since it meets only once during the week for a couple of hours, parents appreciate the convenience this type of schooling offers. Parents are not required to put in very much additional effort in this type of school. The low level of commitment required by the Sunday School in terms of timing, parental involvement and proximity to the synagogue makes it very attractive to many parents today.

However, this educational institution also has faced many different types of criticism. With so few hours actually spent in the classroom, the children can not receive an adequate amount of information or experience within a Jewish setting. Many teachers do not have either the pedagogic or Judaic understanding to prepare the children for fully knowledgeable Jewish lives. The children complain of being bored and do not involve themselves in the program in order to gain what they can from it. Studies have shown that many children who graduate from the Sunday School institution have not developed the strong Jewish identity necessary to stand up to the trends of assimilation and intermarriage which threaten the existence of Judaism.

Among many attempts at solving this dilemma is a new trend in Jewish education called Jewish family education. In Jewish family

education, the students consist of the entire family as opposed to just the children. Using a variety of educational methodologies, settings and family configurations, family education combats the problems that developed from the use of the Sunday School. By including the parents and the home in the education of the child, more time is added to the educational opportunities of the children. In addition, as the children watch their parents involved and excited about Jewish education, they too will become more interested in developing that aspect of their identity. Jewish family education is the best way to improve upon the popular educational institution of the Sunday School.

The Changes Which Come About From Jewish Family Education

The best way to institute a Jewish family education program involves a completely new way of envisioning Jewish education. To add one or two sessions of education for the whole family to the already existing program is not sufficient to eliminate the problems which have made Jewish education today a failure. The students, teachers and parents would remain Jewishly unknowledgeable. Parents need many lessons in a non-threatening environment in order to feel comfortable to bring Judaism into their own homes. The families often must experience at least one full cycle of holiday celebrations in order to understand the various roles each member plays within those celebrations at home. Children grow less bored with their Jewish educational experience as they enter it more often with their parents than without them. In order to be truly effective, Jewish family education must become the most integral aspect of the religious school.

This change affects even the most basic of the aspects of Jewish

education. The way in which one envisions the physical lay-out of the school is one of these aspects. Because of the wide variety of types of programs involved in family education, the traditional classroom setting can not be the only venue for teaching available to the family educator. Classrooms are necessary for such programs as parallel teaching sessions in which the children study one subject while the parents study the same subject in a different room. However, there is also the need for large rooms in which whole families can study together in the traditional sense. Large rooms with space for physical activity also are necessary for programs which require families to role-play and actually experience the holidays or Jewish history. There should be a resource center in which teachers can put materials families can take home with them to learn from in a private setting. The congregational library will need to become a more integral part of the educational setting with books families can use as resources for more information about those aspects of Judaism which interest them the most. Because of the changing numbers of students learning in a variety of ways, the physical plant of the religious educational institution will look different than that of the traditional Sunday School.

The teachers will not only feel the effects of the change, but also will have to do some growing and changing of their own. Sunday School teachers are generally given their curriculum and their materials and then left alone by the principal. Most teachers are used to teaching children in a small group using textbooks with mainly the lecture style of instruction. Their goal is to impart information to the children so that they will be able to restate that information when necessary. Family education will change the image that teachers have of the educational situation. They will have to learn how to work with the family educator in a more intimate manner than

they usually do with a Sunday School principal. They also will have to feel comfortable with the rest of the family education team, the rabbi, cantor, social worker, to learn from them all how and what to teach. The teachers will have to feel confident enough in both their teaching ability and their Judaic knowledge to teach the adults as well as the children within the family. The place and time of the sessions may differ depending on the type of educational model being used. Thus, the teacher will have to learn how to teach in a variety of settings. In addition, the teacher will have to expand their ideas about pedagogic methodology since many of the sessions of family education necessarily consist of experiential and creative educational options. The teachers in the family education program will have to view their own job in a different light in order to help the program be a success.

The role of the rabbi also will change with the installation of a family education program. Typically, the rabbi plays a very small role in the Sunday School. For many, the only thing the rabbi actually does is to visit the classrooms to explain to the students about the various aspects of being a rabbi. While some rabbis attend religious school board meetings, the majority of them spend very little time helping with the development of the curriculum, or with the other aspects of the religious school. Instead, many parents turn to the rabbi to help them in their quest to understand the various aspects of life-cycle events and holidays. The rabbi spends a great deal of time leading these celebrations. A family education program depends on a more integrated role for the rabbi to play within the program itself. Working in a team with the family educator, teachers, cantor and social worker, the rabbi will need to add his or her Judaic expertise to the program. Development of the curriculum is just one area in which the rabbi

will need to be involved. During the beginning assessment phase, the rabbi will be vital in determining the needs of the congregation. Since the rabbi is typically the person who runs the congregational celebrations, the rabbi also will need to help in the running of some of the specific sessions involved in the program. However, the rabbi will find that the more the families become educated through the program, the less they will need the rabbi to lead them step-by-step through holiday and life-cycle celebrations. The family education program will change the role of the rabbi from one who runs the events to one who helps teach families to run their own events.

The parents also will be affected drastically by this change in the educational program. They will have to do more than simply drive the car-pool. The parents will have to make a commitment to spend more time with their children learning about their Judaism. They will be expected not only to attend the sessions, but also bring them home. Eventually, the parents will be the teachers of their own children. This will take a lot of courage and desire on the part of the parents. The parents will have to change their behavior patterns, in the religious school, the congregation and the home, because of the level of involvement necessary on their part to make a family education program successful.

Instituting Jewish family education in the synagogue involves many major changes within both the religious school and the congregation as a whole. The most extensive is that of changing the person who runs the religious school from a principal to a family educator. The principal has traditionally been the person who develops the curriculum for the school, hires and oversees the teachers, communicates with the parents, and maintains a connection between the school and the rest of the synagogue.

This is all done within the context of a child-centered educational system. The principal must understand the developmental needs of children during their various ages. During the hiring of teachers, the principal must evaluate each individual to determine whether they would be able to not only teach the curriculum, but also relate to the children in the appropriate manner. The principal must be willing to deal with the problems which come up with both the students and the parents and make sure all are satisfied. Often the principal maintains a relationship with the rabbi and cantor only on a minimal level, when their expertise is needed in a classroom, for example. The principal must actively participate in many administrative duties. In a Sunday School, the principal runs the school in a clearly child-centered atmosphere.

The family educator must approach education in a completely different way. All aspects of the position must be considered with a leaning toward the entire family, not just the child. This means that in order to run the school effectively, the family educator must become an expert in not just Judaism and the developmental stages of children, but also in the types of families that exist in the Jewish community today and the way in which families work. The family educator must know how to hire teachers who can teach not only in the traditional setting of the classroom, but also in a variety of other venues as well. The family educator also must look for teachers who are capable of teaching a myriad of age groups and developmental levels either separately or at the same time. This must include the ability to relate to both pedagogy and andragogy. The family educator must develop a curriculum which addresses the needs of the particular families within the synagogue. The family educator also needs to be able to feel comfortable heading the team of educators which includes

not only the teachers, but also the rabbi, cantor, and a social worker. The family educator must be willing to deal intimately with parents and their children. Finally, the family educator needs to be an expert in assessment of the congregational needs, creative and experiential programming, administrating the religious school, and evaluating the successes and failures within the program. The family educator holds a very different position within the religious school than does the principal of a Sunday School.

The Concepts and Skills Needed for a Family Educator

Before a family education program should be implemented, there are a number of things a family educator must do in order for the program to begin successfully. First, the educator must gather together the team. The family educator, rabbi, cantor and social worker need to work as one team to articulate the goals of the educational program, discover the particular make-up of the congregation, assess the needs of the families, develop the curriculum and prepare the staff and parents in regards to their roles within the program. The family educator will have to help each member of the team gain the knowledge they lack that is necessary to understand the goals of the program. For instance, the rabbi will have to learn more from the educator and social worker about the types of families which exist within the Jewish community and their particular sociological needs. The rabbi will, on the other hand, be able to offer his or her understanding about the make-up of the congregation and about those areas of Judaism about which people are most interested in learning. The team must be able to work together enthusiastically towards the common goal of developing

and implementing a Jewish family education program within the congregation.

Once the team is assembled, the family educator must work with them to establish and articulate the goals of the program. This is an important step so that the teachers and members of the team can follow a similar direction in the education of the families. In addition, the parents will need to know the goals of the program in order for them to feel comfortable engaging in the specific activities. These goals need to be developed in a way so that they fit into the overall philosophy of the synagogue and its philosophy regarding Jewish education. If, for example, the synagogue views the elderly as a vital part of the congregation, the family education program must include in its goals the place of the elderly in the religious experiences of families and their education. The goals should include those which are common among all types of Jewish education and those which are unique to family education. Finally, these goals must address the specific needs of the particular synagogue involved.

The next step a family educator must take is to determine those needs within their synagogue. Each synagogue is made up of a different population, depending on the community within which it resides, the policies and interests of the rabbi, even the number of years it has been in existence. Some have a large contingency of elderly congregants. Others contain a large number of intermarried couples and families. It is important that the family educator know to what type of population his or her congregation appeals. In addition, a needs assessment must be taken by the family educator. Through this, the family educator can determine at which level of knowledge each family lies. This might consist of a questionnaire sent to every member of the congregation in which the

families could describe themselves and give in detail those areas which they would be interested in studying. This information is vital if the family educator wishes to offer programs which would be beneficial and well attended. An assessment of the type of congregants and their needs will help the family educator know how to sensitize the teachers to the varieties of families and develop a curriculum which would be appropriate for the education of these families.

Once the assessment is done, the family educator should work with the team to determine the curriculum for the school. The curriculum will have to take into account the vast differences in developmental levels and learning styles found within one synagogue. Some people, regardless of age, will be able to grow and learn best using materials that they can work on without the direct intervention of a teacher, while others will need to be guided each step of the way. The curriculum also will need to address the different readiness levels of the families within the synagogues. Some families will know the basics of the holiday celebrations and thus would gain most by exploring the background, Jewish texts and other details about the holidays, for example. Other families will need to start from the beginning in order to experience the holidays. The curriculum must reflect the needs of all families so that they can all learn what they need in order to expand their understanding of their Judaism.

The next step is to address the specifics of the program. The family educator must put together a staff of teachers who will fit into the goals and style of this type of educational experience. The teachers first must understand and agree with the philosophy of the synagogue and its educational institution. They must be able to work with a variety of age groups, be flexible in their teaching methods and feel comfortable enough

with their Jewish knowledge to handle the questions of both children and adults. The family educator should take into consideration the personalities of the staff since they will be working closely with the rest of the team members. The choice of teachers is an important aspect of the program the family educator must address.

The family educator must examine the budget, schedule and physical environment available in order to fit them into the special considerations of the family education program. The priorities within the budget need to be determined. For example, depending on the specific curriculum and needs of the program, more money may be needed in obtaining craft supplies than in obtaining textbooks. The schedule of the school may be different than that of a Sunday School. If the majority of the sessions revolve around teaching about the Jewish holidays, the educator may need to schedule more sessions during the week or two before the holidays. The family educator also should consider whether it might be appropriate to hold some sessions during a weekend retreat. The schedule also can contain some evenings in which the resource center may be open for the convenience of those who can not spend the time during the weekends. Finally, as explained earlier, the different sessions may require different types and sizes of rooms in which people need to meet. For example, an experience in making costumes for Purim would require a large room with the space and tables for all of the materials necessary, while a class on examining the Book of Esther would need a more traditional type of classroom. The family educator must be flexible when considering the role of the budget, the schedule and the environment for a Jewish family education program.

Setting up a Family Resource Center would be another step the

family educator should take. As much of the education of the family will take place in the home, the families need a central area to which they can go to pick up materials and information for study at home. The teachers would keep in this area any materials pertinent to their sessions for those families who are not able to attend but wish the information. In addition, this area could house extra educational materials having to do with the various sessions being given during the year. A computer, arts and crafts materials, books and tapes also could be kept here for the use of the families. This Family Resource Center would be the central place for families, teachers and the members of the family education team to meet for any informal guidance and support.

Publicity is an important aspect of the family education program. In order for it to work, the families must become excited enough not only to attend, but also bring materials home. There must be enough appeal so that families consider the Jewish family education program when deciding what to do with the small amount of time they have to spend together. Thus, the family educator must publicize the program well. The family educator can do this by stressing the benefits this program offers families, such as a chance to spend quality time together in a Jewish atmosphere, or a chance for parents to help themselves as well as their children gain understanding about their cultural heritage. Programming which is splashy and exciting, such as holding a Yom Ha'atzmaut party with activities about Israel, can be a good draw for a beginning. At this kind of an opening, the entire family education program can be explained to the families. Once families are involved, it will be easier to attract them to more sessions. There should be constant contact between the religious school and the families, perhaps in the form of a fun and informative newsletter, so that

the families can continue to take advantage of the variety of educational opportunities. It also is important that some of the publicity be geared toward the children, especially those in the older grades, since often the excitement of the children about a project can be more influential on parents than any other publicity. Personal contact also can be helpful in making parents feel more comfortable seeking help in understanding their Judaism. A publicity blitz, using a wide range of types of promotional materials, is necessary to get a family education program off the ground and keep it going strong.

Once the program has begun, the family educator must make continual evaluations. This concept is a relatively new one. As such, there has been very little done in terms of evaluation. No one knows what kinds of programs work and what kind do not. This is especially true with regard to any particular synagogue. There must be constant monitoring of what types of learning experiences draw the most families, what kinds result in the largest number of families returning for more, what programs produce more activities in the home. This can be done through evaluation sheets given to the families at the end of the program, personal contact between the family educator and those families who attend the sessions, and surveys regarding home celebrations and Jewish activities. In addition, a needs assessment should be done periodically to determine any changes in the needs of the families and what more could be done to attract those families who have not become involved in the program. The evaluation process is vital so that the family educator can continue to produce better sessions appropriate for the families in the congregation.

Finally, the entire team always should be looking for any families who can be used for other congregational activities. As families become

more comfortable in their Judaism, they will be more willing to become involved in other aspects of the synagogue, such as becoming members of the congregational board, or running their own family education sessions. The further participation of more families within the greater structure of the synagogue is an exciting outcome of family education which the family educator should actively encourage.

A Model for the Family Educator

As I discussed earlier, the family educator is very different from the principal of a Sunday School. The family educator must view the educational experience as one which is family-centered as opposed to child-centered. This means that the family educator must learn to deal with the entire range of ages and developmental stages. In addition, the family education program is one which is geared mainly toward enculturation. The programming exists mainly on the experiential level as opposed to the information-giving which is the usual way in which Jewish education has been conceived. With the changes which result in the installation of a Jewish family education program, the family educator must have special skills which are different from those typically found in the principal of a Sunday School.

The model program which is given in this thesis is only the beginning. It is meant to introduce prospective family educators to some of the issues they will have to address when implementing a Jewish family education program. This model does not give such necessary aspects as the Judaic/Hebraic knowledge, a mentor to guide and help, field work experience or educational expertise that the family educator needs to

develop and run a successful program.

The following is a model program for the start of the training of Jewish family educators. It is written in a manner in which the trainer can divide the sessions as necessary. All of the information necessary is given so that one person can help the group understand the goals of family education and the skills needed to achieve those goals. I recommend that all members of the family education team attend these sessions so that they can begin to work together from the start in achieving the best family education program for their synagogue.

The sessions are divided into programs dealing with the individual aspects of running a successful family education program. Each session will take between a half an hour and an hour. They are each described for the trainer below, while the particular materials necessary for each session can be found in the appendixes. They can be run consecutively over an entire day, or can be divided into separate sessions run over a number of weeks.

SESSION 1: THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish education has changed and developed from Biblical times through the twentieth century. Because of the changing responsibilities of the parents, Jewish education has moved from being within the realm of the home to being within a separate school. The situation of the Jews also has changed over the years. During the Biblical and Talmudic times, Jews lived mainly within close communities. They tried to educate their children through the use of the classic Jewish texts. When the Jews moved to America, in an attempt to become more like those around them, they began to teach their children using the vernacular of English in programs

which took only a few hours a week. Because of all of these changes, the goals of education also changed and developed.

It is important that the Jewish family educator understand both the general goals of Jewish education as it exists today and the specific goals of Jewish family education. The trainer will divide the participants into two groups. The trainer will pass out a list of goals for education found in the Bible and other traditional Jewish sources to the first group (Appendix A). To the second group, the trainer will pass out another list compiled from a variety of sources throughout American Jewish history (Appendix B). Each group will examine and discuss their list and give a short presentation to the other group. The presentation should not only include a summary of the goals of education from their particular time period, but also a list of those goals they think are relevant for Jewish education today. The trainer will then give both groups a copy of the list of goals for Jewish family education (Appendix C). From this list, the two groups each will prepare their own statement of the goals of Jewish family education. Finally, the two groups will present their statement to the rest of the group. Any differences between the statements should be discussed.

SESSION 2: JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION

Since Jewish family education is different from the typical Jewish educational institution, it is important that family educators gain an overall understanding of this new trend. Jewish family education is more than just instruction about Judaism involving families. There are many goals and characteristics of Jewish family education which should be part of the knowledge of a family educator.

This session offers the family educator an introduction to the concept

of Jewish family education. The participants should begin by reading the article written by Joseph Reimer, " What We Know About ... Jewish Family Education" found in What We Know About Jewish Education, edited by Dr. Stuart L. Kelman. (See Appendix D) After everyone has had an opportunity to read the article, the trainer will lead a discussion among the participants. (The trainer can use the suggested discussion questions found in Appendix E, or use his or her own.) It is important that the basics of Jewish family education are covered in the discussion. To conclude, the trainer should encourage the participants to continue learning about this new field in Jewish education guided by the bibliography found in the back of the article.

SESSION 3: UNDERSTANDING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF FAMILIES

The family educator will be working closely with the entire family during each specific program. As such, the educator needs to recognize the various types of families which exist and be able to deal effectively with all of them. The Jewish family has not escaped the conditions which have changed the face of the family in today's society. Only through understanding the realities of the situation of the modern Jewish family can the family educator develop programs which will fill the needs of the families and lead them successfully.

This would be a good time to introduce the idea of having a social worker as part of the family education team. If possible, the trainer should invite a social worker into the session to talk about the varieties of family groups found in the Jewish community today. If this is not possible, the group should brainstorm a list of all of the types of Jewish families of which they can think. This list should include, for example: the nuclear family of

the original two parents and a number of children evenly spaced apart, a widow and her children, a blended family of two parents with children from their first marriage and children of their own, a family with children ten years apart, a gay family, a single mother who was never married, an intermarried couple with no children, two parents with children who are living out of the house. It should be pointed out that the permutations of types of families may be endless. The group will then participate in a series of role-plays. (See Appendix F) After each role-play, the group will discuss the effect the type of family had on the situation, and the role the family educator can play in helping these families overcome their difficulties.

SESSION 4: BUDGET

Determining the budget is an important aspect of the job of the family educator. Most educators are comfortable with dividing up the money they have in their budget. However, the priorities of a family educator are different from those of a principal of a Sunday School. There will be fewer teachers and thus the family educator will have to spend less on salaries. Especially in the beginning, the major job of the family educator will be to draw families into the program; publicity will play a large role within the budget of a family educator. The level of creativity must be great in order to offer a variety of informational and experiential programs. Because of this, money will have to be spent on crafts supplies and a variety of educational aids, such as Jewish magazines and books. Other settings may be necessary for specific programs, so money may be set aside for renting retreat facilities.

In this session, the family educators will be asked to develop a list of areas in which they will need to spend their money, set their priorities and

spend a set amount of money. These catagories should include such areas as: arts and crafts supplies, basic supplies (pencils, paper, ect.), guest speakers, publicity, retreat rentals, staff salaries, staff training, text books, Jewish magazines. Once they have been given the sheet (See Appendix G) and done this, the trainer should lead a discussion comparing the lists of the participants and inviting them to share their reasons behind their choices. The trainer should also encourage participants' ideas as to other needs within the family education program.

SESSION 5: STAFF

The staff for a family education program will have to have some characteristics which are different from those teachers affiliated with a Sunday School. They will have to be able to work with both children and adults often in the same setting. They will have to understand about the developmental levels, both behavioral and pedagogic, of a wide range of ages since often families will contain several children of different grades and abilities. The teachers need to be flexible in their ability to work in a variety of settings and with a variety of types of pedagogic methods. They should be creative and willing to try new ideas. The Judaic knowledge of these teachers will need to be at a high enough level as to deal with the different questions which may come from both the children and the parents; if not, the teachers must be willing to spend extra time and effort to improve their understanding of Judaism.

This session will involve three sections. The participants will be divided into two groups. First, each group will make a list of all of the characteristics they feel are necessary in a good teacher within a Jewish family education program. Then, each group will choose two participants to

be involved in one role-play. In the first role-play performed by the first group, the family educator will interview the prospective teacher. The questions should reflect his or her list of teacher characteristics. The prospective teacher will answer the questions so as to present the picture of the perfect family education staff member. For example, the family educator may ask the prospective teacher to describe how they might set-up their classroom. The perfect staff member might then offer ideas on setting up the chairs (which would be a variety of sizes) in a circle in one area with another area containing tables at which individual families could work. He or she might go on to explain how the decorations would reflect both the curriculum of the session and the variety of ages of the students. The second role-play would be similar except that the prospective teacher will respond in the interview in a manner which would befit one who would not be right as a teacher in a family education program. To the same question, the prospective staff member might describe a classroom in which the chairs are set up in rows with the smaller chairs up front and the larger chairs in the back. (This would separate the families, defeating the purpose of having the families share in the educational experience.) Each group will be allowed time to prepare their role-play before presenting it to the rest of the participants. The final section of this session will be a discussion of the role-plays and the lists the participants developed. The trainer should make a comprehensive list of the characteristics of the perfect staff member so that all of the participants can share their ideas and comments. The list might include such characteristics as a flexible time schedule so that the teacher would be available to attend some of the evening and weekend sessions, enough Judaic knowledge to be able to answer questions from both children and adults, creativity to help develop

and comments. The list might include such characteristics as a flexible time schedule so that the teacher would be available to attend some of the evening and weekend sessions, enough Judaic knowledge to be able to answer questions from both children and adults, creativity to help develop interesting programs, a strong Jewish identity and home life in order to be a role model for the families, and the ability to relate to adults as well as children. By the end of this session, the participants should have a good idea of the aspects of a teacher they would look for when creating their staff for a family education program.

SESSION 6: PUBLICITY

Change can be a very difficult thing to implement. A family education program contains several aspects of change within it. First, parents need to change their assumptions regarding religious education. This type of program consists of a different kind of parental involvement than is typically found in educational programs. Thus, parents must be enticed into actively participating in the program. In addition, the success of the program involves a change in the behavior of the families in their homes as well as in the synagogue. Because of this, the program should be promoted on a continual basis to remind the parents of the value of bringing Jewish education into the home.

In addition to constant updates and reminders about the various aspects of the family education program, family educators must be very creative in how they publicize both the program itself and the different educational opportunities available. In this session, the participants will explore various ideas about how to best and most creatively publicize the family education program. In the first step, all of the participants will

brainstorm concepts about the program which will be a draw to families. For example, some ideas may be: quality family time, improve your Jewish I.Q., or find out more about what Judaism can offer you. These ideas should be written down by the trainer on one side of a blackboard. Then, the group will choose a specific program idea, such as a tzedakah fair, and brainstorm publicity ideas for that program. Once all of the ideas are down, the trainer will divide the participants into two groups. The first group will construct one flyer, one poster, and a bulletin article which, using the ideas on the board, will promote the overall family education program. The second group will do the same with the specific program idea conceived of by the entire group. (Examples of publicity from Jewish Family Retreats: A Handbook by Vicky Kelman can be found in Appendix H.) After these publicity pieces have been developed, each group will share them with the others and discuss how they work at promoting the ideas necessary to draw families into the program.

SESSION 7: PREPARING THE CONGREGATION AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL BOARDS

The family education program will affect not only those directly involved, but also the whole congregation. From assessing the needs of the congregation through the programs themselves to the final outcome of more participation of the families in all aspects of the synagogue, many changes will take place because of the program. The family educator not only will have to convince the various lay boards of the importance of this type of program, he or she also will have to prepare them for the different changes which will result. This may be one of the most daunting tasks the family educator will have to undertake.

It will be important that the family educator feel comfortable addressing the congregational boards and preparing them, remembering at all times that these people are also prospective family education participants. In this session, the trainer will lead a discussion about this aspect of the job of family educator. In order to help guide the discussion, the trainer will pass out a list of questions each participant should think about in relation to this issue (Appendix I). It would be helpful to give the participants about five minutes to look at the questions and write themselves some notes for the discussion. After all of the questions have been touched upon, the trainer should open up the discussion to any additional questions or concerns the participants may have concerning the relationship between the family educator and the congregational boards.

SESSION 8: THE SUMMARY - A JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM

It is important that the Jewish family educator understand the variety of options available for family education programming. Jewish education can be presented to the families using a number of different models. Some programs can be done in groups within the synagogue, while others can be done by sending the programs to families to be done at home. One type of model involves the families going into the community to do some exploring or a community activity. Another model involves a series of activities which the family does together and checks off in order to achieve a larger educational goal. All of these methods of programming involve the families in learning about their Judaism in a variety of ways.

In this final session, the participants should incorporate all that they have learned about Jewish family education. The trainer will divide them

into three groups. He or she will then present them with a program idea (Appendix J) which they then will have to change into a family education program utilizing one of the specific methods of family education. One group will transform this program into one in which families will be given a series of short learning exercises which they will have to perform at home, checking them off as they do. For example, the families may be asked to begin by taking a tour of their home, counting every Jewish symbol (a mezuzah, books about Judaism, Shabbat candlesticks) they can find. The second group will use the method of a large group activity which the family educator will run in the synagogue. This could be, for example, in the form of a fair at which different booths allow the families to do such activities as creating Jewish art in the form of a family crest which symbolizes the various Jewish memories the family possesses, while listening to a sample tape of different Jewish music selections. The third group will develop a program in which the family educator gives the family a unit of material for home study. This goup may decide to prepare informational sheets describing such symbols as a *tzedakah* box and a *havdalah* set, explaining their history and how they are used in the home, including any prayers which may be associated with the symbol. After each group has developed their program, they will present them to the rest of the participants, explaining how the program fits into the family education mold. The trainer should then pass out the bibliography of books in which educators can find various Jewish family education programs (Appendix K).

Appendix A: THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION - BIBLICAL AND TALMUDIC

"Gather the people - men, women, children and the strangers in your communities - that they may hear [the covenant which was to be read every seven years] and so learn to revere the Lord your God and to observe faithfully every word of God's teaching." Deuteronomy 31:12.

"This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein." Joshua 1:8.

"Rabbi Ishmael, his son, said: 'He that learns in order to teach is granted the means to learn and to teach; but he who learns in order to perform is granted the means to learn and to teach, to observe and to perform.'" Pirke Avot 4:5.

"Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah says: 'Where there is no Torah, there is no right conduct; where there is no right conduct, there is no Torah. Where there is no wisdom, there is no fear [of God]; where there is no fear [of God], there is no wisdom.'" Pirke Avot 4:14.

The Midrash states that the Torah can be compared to a cupful of oil. If a drop of water falls into a cup full of oil, then a drop of oil is forced out. So too it is with the Torah. If some matter of Torah enters the heart, some corresponding foolishness is forced out. Song of Songs Rabbah 1.28.

Josephus said: "The Law commands us to bring up those children in learning, and to exercise them in the laws, and to make them acquainted with the acts of their predecessors, in order for their imitation of them, and that they be nourished up in the laws from their infancy, and might neither transgress them, nor yet have any pretense for their ignorance of them." Apion ii, 26.

Appendix B: THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION - THROUGHOUT AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

The common aims of Jewish education: "(1) To prepare the Jewish child to live in his Jewish environment. (2) To prepare the Jewish child for the implications of his non-Jewish environment. (3) To enrich the character and personality of the growing Jewish child. (4) To perpetuate Jewish life and culture." Alexander M. Dushkin and Leo Honor. "Aims and Activities of Jewish Educational Organizations in America" in Jewish Education Volume 5, Number 3, (1933), pp. 137 - 139.

"Jewish education in America is essentially a process in social adjustment and cultural self-preservation. This process bears both an American and a Jewish aspect. In its American aspect it seeks the harmonious integration of the Jew, whether as an individual or as a group, into the social pattern and cultural life of America. In its Jewish aspect, it aims at cultural self-preservation of the group and at enrichment of personality in the individual. Specifically, this process becomes a problem in group survival, character development, and effective citizenship in a democracy." Israel S. Chipkin. Twenty-five Years of Jewish Education in the United States. New York: Jewish Educational Association of New York City, 1937, p. 27.

National Study on Jewish Education 1953 - 1954. "The agreement on specific goals in Jewish education, the attainment of which is a consequence of schooling, points to an emphasis on those aspects of education that would mould the personality. The image of the Jewishly schooled young Jew is that of an intelligent Jew who understands present-

day realities, and is able to live as a Jew (religiously, culturally, and socially) in the present-day world." Judah Pilch. Analysis of the Study of the Assessment of Priorities on Specific Goals in Jewish Education. New York: National Curriculum Research Institute, 1960, pp. 33 - 34.

"The school's function is to transmit the heritage of the historic Jewish community and to prepare the individual Jew for meaningful and intelligent participation in the present-day Jewish community." Judah Pilch. "Changing Patterns in Jewish Education", Jewish Social Studies Volume 21, Number 2 (April, 1959), p. 117.

The aims of Jewish education: "(a) fostering the sense of belonging and identification; (b) imparting knowledge, specific and general; (c) engendering beliefs and values, attitudes and appreciations; and (d) inculcating practices and participation, ritual and communal." Alexander Dushkin and Uriah Z. Engelman. Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the United States. New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1959, p. 223.

"The presumptive purpose of a Jewish educational system is to provide people with sufficient competence to exercise informed Jewish judgments - that is, judgments regarding the ways in which they will choose to express themselves as Jews." Leonard S. Fein. "Suggestions Towards the Reform of Jewish Education in America", Midstream Volume 18, Number 2 (February, 1972), p. 46.

"Indeed, one might accurately describe the school's essential goals as

enculturation and socialization. While we Jews have always believed that the study of Torah was an invaluable intellectual exercise, we also understood that such regular review would help us keep spiritually in touch with the tradition, allow us to replay the past in the present, and serve to communicate as well as perpetuate the inherited conceptions that define Jewish culture." Samuel Heilman. Inside the Jewish School. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1984, p. 35.

"The teaching of spiritual values and religious observances is the most crucial element of the Jewish school program in terms of its Jewish survival index." Alvin I. Schiff. Contemporary Jewish Education: Issachar American Style. Dallas, Texas: Rossel Books, 1988, p. 145.

Appendix C: THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION - JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION

"The mission of the program was to reinforce Jewish identity, to increase knowledge of the ritual and practice of Judaism in the family, and to lend support to the family in its centrality as the transmitter of Jewish heritage and values." Harlene Winnick Appelman. "Jewish Family Life Education in the Synagogue" Journal of Jewish Communal Service Volume 62, Number 2 (Winter 1985), p. 166.

"The goal of the program is to strengthen families' commitment to Judaism, and in particular, to have an impact on the lives of young, marginally affiliated Jewish families by providing educational programming and other forms of connections." Edie Brown. "Filling the Void: An Ongoing Jewish Family Life Education", The JCC Circle Volume 48, Number 3 (October, 1991), p. 11.

The Commission on Jewish Continuity of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation: "The focus of Jewish parent and family education is to reinforce the family's role as the primary transmitter of Jewish values and practices." Judith L Lichtig. "How to Program a Family Retreat" in Meeting the Needs of Contemporary Jewish Families: A Synagogue Program Guide. Judith F. Diamond and Sanford Seltzer, ed. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, n.d., p. 150.

"The ultimate goal of Jewish education today is the affirmation of Jewish identity. Simply stated, we wish to assure that as many as possible of our

next generation will remain proud and active Jews. We would also like to produce as many Jewishly knowledgeable Jews as we can." Samuel Heilman. Inside the Jewish School. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1984, p. 1.

"Another important goal of Jewish family education is transference...In Jewish family education, the question of transference revolves around: "What do the learners take from the educational experience that empowers them to do the behavior/ritual/skill at home?" Ron Wolfson. "Many Families, Many Models", Jewish Education News Volume 14, Number 1 (Winter, 1993), p. 34.

"The goal of family education is to empower families to be more Jewish (in any of many possible ways) and to feel more competent to take charge of their own Jewish life as a family." Vicky Kelman. Jewish Family Retreats: A Handbook. New York and Los Angeles, California: The Melton Center and the Whizin Institute, 1992, p. 12.

"Enculturation, however, must be the priority of the supplementary school, for the simple reason that it is a prerequisite for valuing and retaining the contents of instruction." Isa Aron, "The Malaise of Jewish Education", Tikkun Volume 4, Number 3 (May/June, 1989), p. 33.

What We Know About... Jewish Family Education

Joseph Reimer

Jewish Family Education (JFE) has arisen in recent years as a response to the alienation of the school from the home. Dr. Joseph Reimer, Assistant Professor in the Hornstein Program of Jewish Communal Service at Brandeis University, explores what has become one of the newest buzzwords in the American Jewish Community. What led to the emergence and popularity of this concept? What is unique about it? What does JFE seek to achieve? How can success be measured? These are the questions Dr. Reimer seeks to answer.

IT IS COMMON TO HEAR JEWISH EDUCATORS BEMOAN THE LACK OF PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR THE AGENDA OF the Jewish school. Acknowledging that parents usually take seriously their commitment to bring their children to the school, educators wonder why they do not also commit themselves to what is taught *in* the school.

The alienation of school from home does not serve the educational needs of the children well. A teacher can make a wonderful case for the beauty of Shabbat observance, but if Friday night at home remains unmarked by Shabbat ritual, the child has no real way of connecting with the teacher's words.

Jewish family education (henceforth, JFE) has arisen in recent years as a response to the alienation of the school from the home. Realizing that it is simply ineffective to teach children in isolation from the realities of home life, educators have begun to reach out to the whole family—but especially the parents—to invite them to join in learning together with the children about the joys of Jewish living. Instead of dropping off the children at school, parents have been invited to themselves drop in and learn alongside their children.

JFE, then, takes the family—rather than the individual child—as the client of Jewish education. Most often programs in family education are sponsored by a synagogue for the school or preschool children and their parents. But family includes more than just two married parents and young children. JFE has arisen at a time of increased awareness that Jewish families come in many different forms (Cohen, 1989; Fishman, 1990a). These include single-parent, blended and interfaith families as well as families with grown children, families without children and singles living

alone or in joint households. A challenge to Jewish family educators is to welcome "nontraditional" as well as "traditional" families and work with all these populations on the basic agenda: learning to live a richer Jewish life.

JFE is also not limited to the synagogue context. Keller (1990), reviewing a JESNA publication on JFE programs, notes that while synagogues account for the sponsorship of more than one third of the listed programs, bureaus, national organizations, JCCs and Jewish Family Services account together for the sponsorship of almost half the listed programs. The programs are located in settings as diverse as nursery schools, summer camps, museums, universities and even trips to Israel.

JFE came into its own during the 1980s as a popular response to the needs of a changing American Jewish community. To understand this phenomenon in greater depth, we need to answer the following four questions:

1. Where did JFE come from?
2. What is new or unique about its programs?
3. What does it aim to achieve?
4. How do we know when its programs succeed?

The Origins

The 1970s was the decade during which the family surfaced as a focus of great debate in American society. The turmoil of the 60s, the rise of the women's movement, the increase in divorce, the change in the abortion law all contributed to a sense that we as a society no longer share a single vision of the place of family in our society (Berger and Berger, 1983). Some observers thought the family might disappear as the unit of organization; others who disagreed still predicted the family of the future would look very different than the family of the past (Bane, 1978; Keniston, 1977).

The American Jewish community also awoke to a family crisis in its midst. Young Jews were delaying marriage and having fewer children. In seeking marriage partners, they were more attracted to non-Jews, increasing greatly the number of intermarriages. Divorce was rising in incidence almost as fast as in the general American population. The vaunted "Jewish family" seemed to be coming apart at the seams (Cohen, 1983).

There were many different responses within the Jewish community to the perceived crisis in family life—from increasing counseling and outreach services to putting day care on the agenda and setting up Jewish dating services (American Jewish Committee, 1979). But the Jewish educational community did not get involved until the crisis in family life was joined to a crisis in the synagogue supplementary school.

The 1970s saw a dramatic decrease in the number of students attending supplementary schools, offset only partially by a substantial increase in attendance at day schools (Dubb and DellaPergola, 1986). Furthermore, two academic studies were published in the mid 1970s that called into question the effectiveness of supplementary education (Bock, 1977; Himmelfarb, 1977). It seemed that at the moment when the capacity of the average Jewish family to pass Judaism on was being called

into question, the school could also no longer be relied upon to fill in the gap. Surely both pillars of Jewish continuity could not be allowed to crumble at once.

This anxiety led in part to an increase in federation and communal investment in the field of Jewish education (Fox, 1989). Among some Jewish educators working in synagogue education there arose a feeling that the best hope for improving the supplementary school lay in involving the family in that education. In their view the supplementary school was sinking primarily from a lack of emotional investment on the part of parents who sent their children (Schoem, 1982). If families could be drawn into their children's education and develop Jewish interests of their own, the whole system would receive a vital motivational boost (Schiff, 1986).

The turn towards family education has coincided with two demographic trends which have proved significant: baby-boomers becoming parents in large numbers and interfaith couples joining synagogues and becoming part of the school's parent body.

As many who in the 1970s delayed marriage and childbirth began having children in the 1980s there arose a new generation of parents and children to join synagogues and seek Jewish education (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1989). These parents often have gone through childbirth classes, read the literature on raising children and are very ready to be involved in their children's education. They also, on the whole, have weak Jewish educations that need refreshing if they are to keep up with their children's Jewish learning. Among this generation is an increasing number of parents who are Jews-by-choice or non-Jews who are raising the children as Jews (Fishman, et.al, 1990b; Tobin, 1991). They, in their childhood, did not experience the cycle of Jewish holidays, rituals and family events, and need to learn how to live as Jews if they are to be active in their children's Jewish upbringing. Together these parents' diverse Jewish needs have created a fertile ground for JFE.

Jewish Family Education Defined

What is most clearly new about JFE is that it is "Jewish education for the family." But as that phrase has many different meanings for practitioners, it may be helpful to suggest a set of criteria by which JFE can be defined. These criteria are of my own devising, but are based on the writings of professionals active in the field of JFE.

1. *JFE is explicitly Jewish or Judaic in its content and is to be distinguished from programs for Jews about family life (Wall, 1985).* A synagogue or JCC may sponsor a program on understanding teenagers which is for Jewish families, but would not be considered JFE unless it involved some learning about a traditional and/or modern Jewish understanding of family life.
2. *JFE is for the family as distinct from being for adults and for children (Kelman, 1989).* While JFE programs generally include segments directed to teaching parents apart from

children and children apart from parents (or other adult family members), these segments are part of a larger thrust to address the family as a unit.

As an example, on a family Shabbaton there may be specific moments designated for adult study and children's play. But these activities take place in the context of a larger framework which structures celebrating Shabbat together as a family. That is distinct from a Shabbaton for adults in which children are invited, but not directly involved in the main educational program, or a Shabbaton for children in which some parents come along, but are not directly involved in experiencing the educational program.

3. *JFE is educational and not simply recreational.* There are many family events sponsored by Jewish organizations which are fun and involving, but more recreational than educational. These may include a Chanukah party, Purim carnival, or dinner at a Jewish deli. These are potentially wonderful Jewish experiences, but only become educational when tied in with a larger framework of meaning. When the Purim story is brought to life through the carnival, or dinner at the deli is an opportunity to learn about kashrut or Jewish eating styles, the family event becomes part of a curriculum for JFE
4. *JFE extends over a period of time and is not simply a one-time event.* While a well-planned single event may be a wonderful way to introduce parents to the concept of JFE, the type of learning envisioned requires that families return over time to repeatedly have the experience of being together in Jewishly rich, interactive environment (Appelman, 1985; Bernard, 1991).

The Goals of JFE

If we define programs in JFE as providing families over time with educational experiences with solid Jewish content, then what are goals of the programs? What do their planners hope to achieve in creating these Jewish experiences for families?

In reviewing the literature on JFE, I have found four goals which seem common to the various programs described.

1. *Involving parents in Jewish learning.*

   If the alienation of the home from the school is the basic problem that JFE is designed to address, its first goal is involving parents and other family members in the pursuit of Jewish learning. This has taken three forms: parents and children learning together, parents learning the same content as the children but in a parallel, adult-oriented way, and parents pursuing their own plan of learning alongside, but separate from, their children's learning (Lichtig, 1988; Wolfson, 1983).

   This overall goal may be seen as having two subgoals: 1) involving parents in caring about and reinforcing the children's learning, and 2) parents becoming more Jewishly knowledgeable in their own right.

2. *Providing quality family time in a Jewish setting.*

   Given how busy everyone is in today's families, it has become important for programs in JFE to provide families with quality time together (Alper, 1987; Bernard, 1991). This goal is especially evident in family camps or retreats, but is also important for attracting families to any program on the weekends. This is not only a pragmatic consideration for marketing purposes, but also a philosophic commitment to help support families in their efforts to cohere together as a unit (Reimer and Kerdeman, 1988). Being involved together in Jewish activity helps the family to focus on itself and allows opportunities for family members to enjoy one another's company on a regular basis.

3. *Building community among families.*

   In the highly mobile corporate world in which many Jews work today, there is a great deal of moving of families from one location to another. Families may join synagogues and JCCs to get to know other Jews, but the facts are that there often is a high degree of social isolation. It is not uncommon for parents to have children in the same class and not to know each other by name (Appelman, 1985).

   While building community among families may not be an intrinsic goal of JFE, it has become a common outcome that ends up reinforcing the other goals of these programs. When families get to know one another and decide to spend time together—especially when that involves a Shabbat or holiday celebration, the learning in the program becomes more real for all the members of the family. It becomes a part of their communal lives (Kaye, 1989).

4. *Bringing Jewish living into the home.*

   What might be seen as the ultimate goal of JFE, and the one hardest to accomplish, is the family's deciding to enhance the quality of Jewish living in their home (Wolfson, 1983). This may involve building a library of Jewish books, records and/or videos, buying Jewish art or subscribing to a Jewish newspaper or magazine. It may also involve introducing or enhancing Shabbat and/or holiday observance. Whatever the initial level of Jewish practice by a family, this goal would represent a deepening of their commitment by some degree.

Difficulties in Accounting for Success

Success or effectiveness in educational practice is often measured by the degree to which the goals or objectives are realized by the program's end. In JFE that would mean assessing the degree to which the goals described above were realized over time by the families participating in these types of programs.

Many difficulties face us in trying to make this type of assessment. To enumerate a few:

1. *There are many programs that are loosely called Jewish family education (Keller, 1990).* By our criteria, some deserve the title more than others. In testing for success, we ought to

2. *Providing quality family time in a Jewish setting.*

   Given how busy everyone is in today's families, it has become important for programs in JFE to provide families with quality time together (Alper, 1987; Bernard, 1991). This goal is especially evident in family camps or retreats, but is also important for attracting families to any program on the weekends. This is not only a pragmatic consideration for marketing purposes, but also a philosophic commitment to help support families in their efforts to cohere together as a unit (Reimer and Kerdeman, 1988). Being involved together in Jewish activity helps the family to focus on itself and allows opportunities for family members to enjoy one another's company on a regular basis.

3. *Building community among families.*

   In the highly mobile corporate world in which many Jews work today, there is a great deal of moving of families from one location to another. Families may join synagogues and JCCs to get to know other Jews, but the facts are that there often is a high degree of social isolation. It is not uncommon for parents to have children in the same class and not to know each other by name (Appelman, 1985).

   While building community among families may not be an intrinsic goal of JFE, it has become a common outcome that ends up reinforcing the other goals of these programs. When families get to know one another and decide to spend time together—especially when that involves a Shabbat or holiday celebration, the learning in the program becomes more real for all the members of the family. It becomes a part of their communal lives (Kaye, 1989).

4. *Bringing Jewish living into the home.*

   What might be seen as the ultimate goal of JFE, and the one hardest to accomplish, is the family's deciding to enhance the quality of Jewish living in their home (Wolfson, 1983). This may involve building a library of Jewish books, records and/or videos, buying Jewish art or subscribing to a Jewish newspaper or magazine. It may also involve introducing or enhancing Shabbat and/or holiday observance. Whatever the initial level of Jewish practice by a family, this goal would represent a deepening of their commitment by some degree.

Difficulties in Accounting for Success

Success or effectiveness in educational practice is often measured by the degree to which the goals or objectives are realized by the program's end. In JFE that would mean assessing the degree to which the goals described above were realized over time by the families participating in these types of programs.

Many difficulties face us in trying to make this type of assessment. To enumerate a few:

1. *There are many programs that are loosely called Jewish family education (Keller, 1990).* By our criteria, some deserve the title more than others. In testing for success, we ought to

begin by looking at programs that involve two or more generations of family members, have a clear Judaic content, call for an elaborated educational methodology and extend over enough time to make a potential difference in the life of the family.

2. *The educator-programmers should have a clear sense of the goals they are working towards.* Often JFE programs are single events that do not lead towards specified goals. It is unlikely that goals can be reached without forethought and direction. Jewish family educators, for example, may wish to involve parents in the synagogue, increase their knowledge of Jewish practice and motivate them to higher levels of home observance. But until the educators specify how the programs they are planning can reasonably be expected to lead to the achievement of these broad goals, they are engaging more in wish-fulfillment than in educational goal setting.
3. *Even when clear goals are embraced, their attainment can be assessed only when the broad goals are articulated in terms of more specific objectives.* What do we mean by increased parental involvement? What concrete actions would we need to be seeing to know that increased involvement was taking place? How can we assess whether these actions are increasing as a result of families participating in these programs?
4. *Someone has to be designated as an evaluator and have the role of carefully observing and monitoring what anticipated (or unanticipated) outcomes are indeed happening.* Ideally the evaluator ought not to be one of the educator-programmers but an outsider so as to establish some distance and objectivity in making these assessments.

Rarely in Jewish education do we set up the conditions to be able to adequately assess whether given programs are successfully reaching their goals. More commonly we get the assessment of the persons responsible for the program who have much at stake in showing how their program is working. In JFE even these kinds of evaluations are rare (Rose, 1988). Thus, from an objective viewpoint we to date know very little about the success of programs in JFE

Future Directions

Given the difficulties involved in assessing programs in JFE and the lack of objective evaluations in this field, we cannot make any definitive statements about its future. We do not know if JFE represents a set of adequate responses to the changing needs of American Jewish families or if it is a first response that will decline as fast as it arose.

But from the many subjective reports on these programs that make up the bulk of the literature on JFE we can draw some tentative conclusions about what future directions this field might take.

1. *JFE is a populist movement with programs springing up in many locations.* As a populist movement it has grown more by inspiration than by direction: educators, rabbis and social workers hear about programs from one another and adapt the basic concepts to their settings. That means JFE has many different meanings and shapes. Yet, as the movement develops a leadership, it will be helpful for those leaders to provide clearer guidelines and

definitions for others to consider.

2. *JFE lacks a curricular base (Keller, 1990).* At present educators are inventing programs as they go along and learning from one another how these programs are run. The educational richness of program offerings and the pursuit of specifiable educational goals could be greatly enhanced if some quality curricular materials were developed, produced, and distributed.
3. *JFE programs are primarily attracting parents and school age children.* We have very few reports as to who these parents are. For the programs to best service this clientele, educators will need to be aware of the makeup of these families in terms of demographic diversity. If some programs are attracting a high percentage of interfaith couples or are failing to attract single parents, the educators may want to plan the educational agenda in ways that address these tendencies.
4. *JFE programs have yet to be designed to appeal to the Jewish family at different stages of the life cycle.* It will be interesting to discover if newly-married or "empty nest" couples would benefit from this type of programming. So too the adult child and the elderly parent may be audiences JFE learns to address.
5. *Introducing evaluation research could be very helpful in providing this new field with valid feedback as to what is working and why.* The field is still in an early stage of trial and error, but until the current experiments are monitored, it will be very hard for educators to learn from mistakes and build confidently on successes.

Appendix E: JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION

1. Give a definition of Jewish family education.

2. What characteristics of the Jewish society and the Jewish educational institutions have precipitated the emergence of Jewish family education?

3. What are the major aspects of a Jewish family education program?

4. What makes Jewish family education different from the typical Sunday School program? How is a family educator different from a principal?

5. What can be gained by the synagogue and the Jewish community through the various goals of Jewish family education?

6. What difficulties might an educator encounter after implementing a Jewish family education program?

Appendix F: UNDERSTANDING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF FAMILIES

Role-Play #1

It is Friday night at about 6:00. The father has just rushed home from work and sees his two sons who have just gotten home from their Little League baseball practice. The father has been divorced from the boys' mother for two months and is still unsure of how to run the household. He recognizes the importance of maintaining consistency in the home, and knows that Shabbat has always been an important part of the family's routine. Three participants will be necessary to play the three members of this family. They will begin by greeting each other as they come home and go through their Shabbat celebration.

Role-Play #2

An older couple is sitting at the table discussing their calendar. They have been retired for several years, but like to keep busy within the Jewish community. They see that Chanukah is quickly approaching. Every year they have spent the holiday with their daughter and her family. This year, however, they are not able to visit since she and her husband are taking the kids on a cruise. The couple still want to celebrate the holiday, however. The two participants, as the couple, should discuss how they can celebrate Chanukah under these circumstances.

Role-Play #3

The parents of a blended family have called a family meeting. This family contains the mother who has brought into this second marriage a fifteen year old son, the father, and the three year old girl whom the two of them conceived. They heard the Rabbi announce from the *bimah* on Yom Kippur that day that Sukkot was approaching. They decided that for the first time, they would like to build their own *sukkah* and celebrate in their home during the holiday. They have called the family meeting to discuss what roles each of them would take in this new experience.

Appendix G: BUDGET

The budget of any program can be difficult to determine. In a Sunday School, much of the budget is spent on the salaries of the teachers and the textbooks for the classrooms. In comparison, very little is spent on the physical space or on arts and crafts supplies. A family education program is set up very differently than a Sunday School program. Because of this, the priorities regarding the division of the money available may be different. Within your congregation, the total budget is $100,000. You have a very generous board who is very excited about your new family education program. They have decided to give you $25,000 for your program. You expect to have 50 - 75 people participating. The board will be watching very carefully how you spend this money to determine whether they made the right decision. You must give them a list of how you will spend this money. Please create this list, and divide your budget so that you show where your priorities lie in terms of the various aspects of the program. Be prepared to defend your decisions.

Appendix H: PUBLICITY

Appendix I: PREPARING THE CONGREGATION AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL BOARDS

1. What specifics about the program do you need to give the boards in your initial presentation?

2. How can you best explain the benefits for the congregation which would result from the family education program?

3. What kind of help would you elicit from the boards themselves?

4. What questions might you expect from the board members? How would you answer them?

5. How might you demonstrate the various aspects of the family education program?

6. What kind of follow-up would you offer them?

Appendix J: THE SUMMARY - A JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM

After assessing the needs of the families within your congregation, you have discovered many areas within which the families are lacking in their Jewish knowledge. One of these areas includes knowledge about what the symbols of a Jewish home are, where they came from and their importance to the Jewish people. In the past, you have helped your teachers introduce the idea of Jewish symbols whereever it was applicable. For example, during Hanukkah, the art teacher every year has each grade make a menorah or a dreidel. You still know, however, that many of the homes in your synagogue are not using even the few symbols you send home with the children. Your job is to incorporate into your family education program the teaching of Jewish home symbols using the specific method explained to your group by your trainer.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

"And you shall teach your children diligently." (Deuteronomy 6:4)These words not only are found in the Bible, but also in the liturgical expression traditionally recited numerous times a day, the Shema. It is a statement which has guided Jews for centuries and still holds an important place in the intellectual and emotional aspects of the lives of Jews today.

Why have these few words been so vital? From Biblical times, the Jews have recognized the positive results which can develop from a strong educational system. Through the teaching of such things as the Jewish texts and history, children are able to learn more than just the facts. The rest of the Biblical passage explains that through education, Jews learn to love and respect God. By reading of the relationship the Jews have with God, they begin to understand the value of that relationship; they begin to develop a faith that can help them in times of happiness and disappointment. By reading of the laws and codes the Jews have lived by, the children can develop their own morality. The stories in the texts lead the reader to an understanding of the ethics of the Jews. And the Jewish education of children also can help them develop and expand their Jewish identities. They learn about their ancestors, their homelands, their history. The children gain a sense of pride in who they are as Jews through their Jewish education. Jews have recognized since the beginning that Jewish education means more than just the memorization of facts; it means the growth of a Jewish person.

Because of this understanding, the Jews, as a people, have made sure that the education of their children holds a high place in their priorities. At first, it was assumed that the parents would be the major source of

educational instruction for the children. The families stayed together and while the mother would teach the daughter all she would need to know about maintaining a Jewish home, the father would instruct the son in the rituals of worship in the Temple. The parents realized that the responsibility for the continuation of the Jewish way of life lay solely on them. And they took on this task diligently.

As the life experiences of the Jews in the first centuries of the Common Era changed, however, so did the ability of parents to continue with their job. The Jews were becoming more immersed in the growing non-Jewish culture which surrounded them. The Greeks introduced them to the idea of a system of more formal schooling for children. Meanwhile, the parents, as they took more jobs in the city, were able to spend less time working beside their children. This precluded the type of education they had been used to giving. And finally, as the Jewish community became more prosperous in those countries to which they had been exiled, they stopped needing the added economic boost of their children in the fields or stores. The Jews began to develop schools and hire teachers to take over the educational responsibilities of the parents.

The schools became an important aspect of the lives of the Jews. The boys would begin attending at age six and would continue through their teens. The teachers would conduct the classes surrounded by their students. They would begin by teaching the Aleph Bet and continue the curriculum by teaching the books of the Bible, the Mishnah and the Talmud. Although the children could read, there were very few books available to them and so they learned mainly through rote memorization. The teachers were held in high esteem as it was expected that they would set not only an intellectual example for the children, but also an ethical one

as well. When we think of the educational experiences of Jewish children during the Talmudic times, we often picture many students sitting outside in a field eagerly listening to the Midrashic stories of the teachers. Although there were permanent school-house structures, this picture is accurate, especially in the spring and summer months. The students and teachers shared a strong bond in their desire to learn and to teach.

During this time, however, it was still considered to be the parents' responsibility to ensure that the children developed a personal Jewish identity. The sons joined their fathers, not their teachers, in the worship experience. The daughters were not even included in these formal educational experiences. They continued to learn from their mothers about the Jewish home and about the Jewish laws they had to follow. The parents showed the children the lives of the Jews while the teachers showed them the laws of the Jews.

All of this changed when the Jews, hundreds of years later, began to live in the United States. The Jews had moved, in the early part of the nineteenth century, from Western Europe where they had been relatively secure in the outside society. They brought with them this desire to melt into the environment. In America, they wanted to be like other people. This need led to a strong push for Americanization. These Jews wanted to work like Americans, live like Americans and educate their children like Americans. While watching their Protestant neighbors send their children to religious schools on Sunday morning, these new American Jews realized that this was one way they could become more American. Thus, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Jews developed an original Jewish educational institution, the Jewish Sunday School.

This type of religious school fit into the American society very nicely.

The Jewish children could attend public schools during the week and still have time to participate in such extra-curricular activities like music classes and sports teams. Even when the Eastern European Jews brought over their own educational systems, the American Jews tried to persuade them to attend their Sunday Schools. The cheders and Hebrew Weekday Schools attracted some of the Eastern European Jews who wanted to maintain a high level of religious education, but the Sunday School system continued to grow.

This type of religious school was popular for a number of reasons. First of all, it seemed to be the American style to gain religious training on Sunday morning. This became more noticeable to the Jews as they moved further out of the cities into the suburbs with more non-Jewish neighbors. The Sunday School also fit into the schedules of both the children and the parents who became more involved in outside activities during the week. The Sunday School system was more attuned to the lessening need for intensive religious study as American Jews developed prayer books and rituals which were shorter and used less Hebrew. The Sunday School offered parents an opportunity to give to their children just enough religious education for them to learn about their Judaism, but not too much to interfere with their desire to be more American.

This push for Americanization did more than just help in the development of a new type of Jewish educational system. The Jews began to move away from those neighborhoods which contained a majority of Jews. In the suburbs, they surrounded themselves with non-Jews. This meant that the children lost the informal education they used to receive from simply living in a Jewish neighborhood. The children could no longer walk down the street on Friday afternoon and hear the Jewish vendors

hawking their chickens for Shabbat dinner, or smell the fresh-baked *challahs* cooling off, or see the fathers hurrying to *shul*. The families also moved away from the influence of the grandparents who would spend the time teaching the children about the old country and the lives of the Jews. By moving to the suburbs, the parents removed much of the informal Jewish education their children received.

The Jews also made a more conscious attempt at removing their Jewish living environments. The more they wanted to be like other Americans, the less they acted like Jews. One could not possibly survive in the American society dressing differently than everyone else. In order to succeed in the business world, the Jews had to work on Saturdays. Keeping kosher also kept you out of American restaurants and the dining rooms of your Christian neighbors. Because of these problems, America Jews became more American in how they lived their lives by becoming less Jewish in their daily activities.

The lessening of the availability of informal Jewish education through a Jewish environment had a devastating effect on the education of Jewish children. The parents became less and less knowledgeable about Judaism. They also lost the generational influences through which Jews learned the customs and traditions of Jewish life. They could no longer make gefilte fish, much less teach it to their own children. Fewer families spent the time even celebrating Shabbat at home, not only because they had places to be on Friday night, but also because the parents did not know the words in the prayers. Because of the ignorance of the parents, they had no choice but to relinquish their responsibility for Jewish education. The parents could no longer teach their children diligently.

This placed the schools in a very difficult position. They were

expected, in two or three hours a week, not only to teach the children the facts about Judaism, as was their original goal, but also to teach them how to live Jewish lives. The schools had to take over the job of the parents who were now unable to teach their children. The parents wanted the schools to teach the children both the story of Hanukkah and how to celebrate it.

This condition has not improved, but gotten worse today. The schools are overburdened. They must not only attain the goal of instruction, but also that of enculturation. The Jewish parents expect their children to leave their Sunday School having not only the information about Judaism, but also the sights, smells, and feelings of a Jewish life. The schools must guide the children in achieving a strong Jewish identity. Today, a successful Sunday School is defined by how well it can teach the children all it takes to be a "good" Jewish adult.

This is an impossible task. As has been shown by the negative reactions of parents, children and educators, the Sunday Schools are failing in their task. This is not surprising. The religious education of Jewish children was meant to come from both the school and the home. The school was developed to enhance what the children were already learning at home, not to replace it. The Sunday Schools are overburdened and can not achieve, especially in the short time allowed them, all that is expected.

The only answer to this dilemma is to return the responsibility for teaching the children back to the family. The parents must again be willing and able to show their children how to live Jewish lives. The celebrations and customs must be moved away from the school and synagogue back into the homes where they were intended to be. And the children need to watch and listen to their parents as they help them develop their Jewish

identity.

This shift back to the home will not be an easy one. Many parents feel incompetent when it comes to performing Jewish rituals or answering their children's questions about Judaism. They are embarrassed that they can not provide Jewishly for their children, and thus shy away from any attempt to do so. This is where the new educational trend of family education is able to help. By teaching the entire family about their Judaism, the parents can feel more comfortable filling in their own gaps in their Jewish knowledge. Jewish family education teaches families how to experience Judaism together. They learn what it takes to celebrate Havdalah or to perform acts of *tzedakah* as a family. Whether the educational experience takes place in the synagogue with a large group of families or during a private home study session, Jewish family education is a way in which the parents along with the children can learn how to be Jewish. The parents can then use their influence to help their children develop a strong Jewish identity.

By becoming involved in Jewish family education, both the family and the religious school gain in numerous ways. The family is able to spend quality time together learning about who they are as Jews. They can begin to use their relationship with each other to take back the task of learning about the Jewish culture. The schools can then go back to their original goal of instruction. By again dividing the responsibility of educating the children, neither the family nor the Sunday School can be called failures again.

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