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PARSHAT HUKAT

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD: A RESPONSE TO DAVID STEIN'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW TALMUD CURRICULUM

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> *"If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard." – Dorothy, The Wizard of Oz*

"All the rivers flow to the sea, and the sea is never filled…" (Kohelet 1:7) "All the Torah a person learns is only in his heart, and the heart is never filled." (Kohelet Rabbah 1)

Rabbi David Stein has presented a sparkling analysis of the problems facing Modern Orthodox education and the associated difficulties of the current high school system. Rabbi Stein strives to inculcate in his students the values of Modern Orthodoxy, but has found that a number of factors - school structure, compartmentalization, and the traditional methodology of teaching Torah - add to the challenge in achieving this goal.

Rabbi Stein is to be commended for the tremendous research and analysis that he has devoted to this topic, and for bringing the issue to the forefront in such a comprehensive and convincing manner. These concerns - highlighting the spiritual malaise in Modern Orthodox education - have been noted by community leaders for quite some time (Rabbi Stein's references start with Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm in 1969), and his suggestions are reiterations of the same theme: let us strengthen Modern Orthodox ideology by designing an appropriate curriculum and modeling for our youth the tenets of our beliefs, and they are bound to live up to our expectations.

Rabbi Stein's intentions are good, but in the three specific areas he spotlights as needing adjustment – inculcating Modern Orthodox ideology, class scheduling, and Talmud curriculum - his proposal misses the mark.

This is because it is incorrect to assume that student loyalties would be guaranteed if we provide the right source material and they adopt our ideology. Individual decisions are rarely guided by dogma or beliefs. Instead, to reach our students and have an impact, we must first be able to reach their hearts and influence their decision-making process. What bothers young people most is not ignorance of the answers to *hashkafah* questions, nor understanding the rules which govern their behavior, though these are certainly important. Rather, *their lives are defined by the need to choose between attractive alternatives, and the personal sacrifice this often entails*. As a young person furthers his connection to Hashem he becomes sensitive to these ongoing choices, but it is only to the extent that his Torah is acquired in his heart that he can truly be faithful to its perspective.

Our goal is to introduce our students to the *devar Hashem,* so that they have the desire and tools to forego inviting alternatives in order to live a Torah lifestyle. To do so, we must begin not by integrating Torah with other subjects, but by emphasizing the uniqueness of Torah. We must underscore how Torah differs qualitatively from subjects like physics, biology, history, and mathematics. Torah is not just a section of the curriculum, or a specialized course of study.

This is why Rabbi Stein's curricular recommendations miss the mark. He addresses a number of issues of serious concern to the Modern Orthodox adult, but these are only relevant to the mature individual who is fundamentally committed to Torah, yet challenged in his efforts to synthesize these values with those of a pluralistic, materialistic society. But too many of our current students don't yet know why they should accept and submit to the Torah's will at all. Rather than adjusting the curriculum, then, it is *kabbalat ha-Torah* that we first need to impart, and this is exactly what learning Torah, and specifically Talmud study, can help us to achieve.
For the same reasons, attempts to use Talmud study to promote a particular ideology, Modern Orthodox, Haredi, or anything else, will never bear fruit. By citing Torah sources to justify one's ideological approach, we reduce the Torah to a supporting role – not the crystal

clear, authoritative, and binding call of conscience that can insure fidelity to a higher set of ideals.

Torah cannot be taught with the same methodology used to impart other value systems. For not only are our rules and regulations different, but the very nature of Torah thought functions on a different plane, and for this reason, the method of transmitting Torah is distinctive and unique. Talmud is not, first and foremost, information to be mastered, but a process of understanding[1]. By engaging in Talmud study, our students are inducted into the inner world of the Oral Torah, and begin to accept from the inside its uncompromising logic and paramount importance.

In an earlier piece on this topic, Rabbi Stein put it this way: "Make no mistake: learning *Masekhet Berakhot* freshman year, *Kiddushin* sophomore year, followed by *Bava Kamma* and *Bava Metzia* in junior and senior year is not a curriculum; it's an advanced and sacred booklist." He proposes instead a different sort of curriculum, one that will expose students to the value systems of dichotomy and tension within rabbinic jurisprudence, and will strengthen their engagement with the broader society. His own curricular program presents varied topical selections with accompanying Talmudic texts, to be presented as a given basis for the values he hopes to impart.

But this misses the point. Of course, one must choose which *Masekhet* to study each year, but the precise choice of material is less important than the process of study itself. The Oral Law is not fixed, and the Talmud is one indivisible whole, not static, nor inert. In fact, this is precisely what defines *Torah she-Ba'al Peh*. The very idea of presenting our students with a limited body of material severs their connection to *Torat Hayyim*. Though the Talmud has been written, the Oral Law remains intact. The Talmud is a living organism into which our students are incorporated through the process of study. In short, a *yeshiva* education is not informative or instructional. It is about learning how to understand: how to recognize truth and falsehood, what is central and what is peripheral, and what is essential and what is tangential. It is not only the words on the page that must be transmitted, but even more – understanding what is not being said, and why. In this way, our students become part of the community of devotees of Hashem's living Torah.

If this is the case, there is only one legitimate question to ask when deciding which sections of Talmud are best for young students: What is it that would best attach them to this unbroken chain from Sinai, and mold their minds to operate along the same wavelength as the *Ribbono Shel Olam* (as it were)?

To show Talmud's relevance and vitality, we need to engage our students' minds and peel away the layers that conceal the heart of each *sugya*. This can be done best while studying *Nashim* and *Nezikin*[2], whose ready case law lends itself easily to sharp and riveting analysis that demands full and intense concentration, forcing the student to regularly shed assumptions and polish his thought process. A captivated mind quickly discovers a universe of subtle detail in worldly matters, and this is more effective - and ultimately more relevant - than the highly touted method of tracing a particular Halakhah from beginning to end, or finding justification for and/or responses to modern sensibilities.

True, novice students are not on this level, but this is precisely why the role of the Rebbe is critical for our youth. As grating as it may be to modern sensitivities, the Rebbe must be a voice of authority. Democratic principles are wonderful tools for a lively and engaging classroom experience, but they can never capture the true flavor of *Torah mi-Sinai*. The students must sense that their Rebbe is transmitting echoes of his own Rebbe, and in that transmission the sound of Sinai can still be discerned. The teacher of Torah must contain more than (s)he is imparting. In this way, students will detect something of the unlimited nature of Torah, and know that the teacher is holding back much more, teaching them now only as much as they can understand.

To influence their students, the educator/Rebbe must be immersed in the intricacies of a difficult Talmudic problem before presenting it to others. If a complete evening was spent in the attempt to decipher a difficult Tosafot, or find an answer to Rabbi Akiva Eiger's question; if teachers stay awake while contemplating a philosophical dilemma, they will have no problem drawing their students near. If, on the other hand, they merely present a lesson plan, and demonstrate only that the Torah also has interesting answers to relevant questions, students will not be convinced of the Torah's unique status and authority. For this reason, in my view, today's greater access to Torah through database searches, while certainly making life more convenient, does not merit the hoopla or investment promoting digital progress in Jewish education. None of these innovations will solve the fundamental challenges described by Rabbi Stein.

Rabbi Stein notes insightfully that the disinterest in Talmud study among Modern Orthodox youth is an existential threat to our quest for integration. Before rejecting the classical forms of Gemara as inappropriate for today's youth, shouldn't we first determine if the traditional *yeshivot* are facing the same problems? Are Haredi youth equally disengaged?

This brings us to another key aspect of Talmud study: the mode of learning. Rabbi Stein's description of the problem is right on the mark, but for a different reason: many of our students spend years in the classroom, but have yet to study Torah on their own accord. This setting may be conducive for studying information, but is not ideal for *Talmud Torah*, which is best presented in the traditional *beit midrash* learning *seder*, a self-contained dimension of learning without end - no interruptions, no distractions, and no breaks, where students are bound neither by lesson plans, subject matter, or curriculum.

But Rabbi Stein's own suggestion for scheduling imagines every possible alternative other than one: that of the traditional *yeshivot*. In the traditional method, Talmud is not a subject but a way of life. In fact, a well-known practice in *yeshivot* of old was to study for days on end, with the most diligent students persisting until they dropped from exhaustion. Not that this was sound advice, but, just as life has no interruption, and man breathes without a break, Torah is best studied in the same manner.

In his haste to distinguish the Torah study of Modern Orthodoxy from the traditional *yeshivot*, Rabbi Stein does the community a disservice, for everything he is looking for is right there: project-based learning, and owning the material. A young man analyzes the Gemara and presents his insights to his *havruta*, who immediately adopts a different angle, pushing his friend to think the matter through more

[1] See *Ohr Israel*, letter 18.

[2] See *Ohr Israel*, letter 6.

fully. This debate helps clarify his thoughts, and the *haburah* that he prepares for peer review forces him to work hard to overcome a skeptical reception. He owns the material now, and he writes down a personal summary of every *sugya*, which the *yeshiva* may even publish. Creativity and engagement are on full display every morning in a local *yeshiva beit midrash*.

The direction of Rabbi Stein's integration is puzzling. Why should an emphasis on synthesis focus on adjusting the traditional methods of Talmud study, the fulcrum and foundation of Torah commitment, and not the STEM studies, sociology, or English literature? Attempts to transform Talmud class into acculturation is not synthesis, but instead does away with the primary component of what was meant to be synthesized within the student: *limmud ha-Torah* for its own sake. If Rabbi Stein's concern is that students are not identifying with this ideal, it means we have failed to communicate to them the primacy of *limmud ha-Torah*. To therefore discard authentic Gemara learning in favor of a curriculum highlighting Modern Orthodox tensions in engaging with society, or autonomy versus authority, and unity and diversity, is not addressing the problem; it's throwing in the towel.

Rabbi Stein challenges us: "We must ask ourselves, then: what does a Modern Orthodox curriculum actually look like, and how should it be taught? Should Modern Orthodox Torah learning aim to be essentially identical to what is being studied in the *yeshivot* of Bnei Brak – with the only difference being that we *also* value the science laboratories or literature classroom – or must we chart out new curricular approaches to communicate our values?" To this I would respond simply: Well, why not?

Assuming that many of the traditional *yeshivot* are successfully transmitting Torah in an authentic form – and despite their myriad problems, by all indications to a large degree they are – why should Modern Orthodox students be denied access to the same? Let Torah be studied on its own terms. Let the students connect with the Tree of Life and let it define their essence. Once incorporated, its eternal light will naturally guide their study of *madda*, *derekh eretz*, activities, and investigations, thus achieving a true integration of the highest order.

Personalizing Torah for Today's Student: Lessons from Israel

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Recent articles in this forum have addressed a so-called crisis in the Talmud curriculum in modern Orthodox day schools, harking back to a debate that came to the fore more than a decade ago. That discussion was rooted primarily in the *dati-leumi* community in Israel, but carried familiar echoes for educators on this side of the Atlantic. I'm not sure that we are at a point of crisis, so I would instead talk in terms of curricular needs. Thankful for David Stein's caveat that each community commonplace is different, I would like to share a sense of my own.

A mentor of mine, Michael Rosenak *z"l*, once identified two different typologies when speaking of the goals of Jewish education. The first, which he referred to as normative-ideational, is the one that is primarily concerned with the norms of tradition. It is rooted in the texts and culture of Judaism. The normative-ideational educator sees it as his task to get students to "know" Judaism better, for they will thereby be helped to become the kind of people demanded by tradition. "In concrete terms, the normative educator sees the solution to the problem of Jewish education in the successful molding of pupils by Jewish subject matter that is represented and adequately transmitted by good teachers." [3]

The other type of educator is referred to as the deliberative-inductive. The point of departure for educational deliberation in this school of thought is not what is demanded of people as they stand under a roof of imposed values, but how they will interact with other people, how they will understand themselves and solve the problems that obstruct proper "creative" functioning and well-being. The starting point here is the child: his problems and the sanctity of his soul. The goal is to help him find answers within tradition, even if those answers need not necessarily be ones which compel acceptance.

Any Orthodox Jewish educator worthy of the name will surely lean toward the normative. "Torah is our life and the length of our days," and forms the crux of our being, both personal and professional. At the same time, we must ask ourselves, what of the deliberative side of our undertaking? What is it that our students need and want at this particular point in time and place?

There is woefully little social science research to rely upon, so we are left with the unscientific option of actually asking our students. Depending on whom one talks to, one can surely hear from kids (and parents) who want to improve their skills working toward the year in Israel or life-long self-sufficiency; there are those who want knowledge, and those who want an appreciation for the underlying values of Jewish commandments and texts. But the answer I seem to have gotten the most these past number of years, is that students want connection. They want to feel close to the material, they want it to matter, they want it to be relevant to their lives and, most of all, they want a relationship with God. They simply don't always know how to get there. Alternatively, they long for the innocence of their youth, and struggle, in a developmentally appropriate fashion, to move on to the next stage of their commitments. But many can't seem to find a way to make that transition.

We have students who thankfully are great at learning *Gemara*, but they don't see the point. There are students who know an impressive amount of *Tanakh* and commentaries, but they often have trouble trying to figure out how it is different from studying for any other subject, how it is supposed to impact their commitment to Torah, or how it should inform their daily lives and connect them to God. Too often, we used to assume that if we taught Torah, students would understand what the purpose was. That doesn't always seem to be the case, and there is much to be gained, I think, from making this more explicit, especially if we wish to be both normative *and* deliberative.

The question is, how?

First, a caveat or two. I know that there are lots of teachers out there who already do this (and some who claim they do), but most do so by dint of their compelling personalities, something which will not help

[3] Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns: Jewish Religious Education in Secular Society* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1987), 20.

train other teachers in this. There are also teachers who see this as their main calling, but as someone who is committed to the normative goal played out through rigorous textual analysis, I cannot abide turning the classroom into a *kiruv* seminar, hyperbolic as that may sound.[4] Nor do I aspire to inspire every day; except for the most committed of us, our own learning (and teaching) are not necessarily a daily exercise in inspiration. Instead, I seek to find ways to enable students to find personal connection and personal meaning from *within* the texts that we learn together.

Personal connection in this context does not mean just learning a piece of *Navi* and asking the question of what it means for us in America today. It surely may involve that, but I am less interested in solving society's problems in that way than I am in exploring how what we are learning impacts our students' inner lives. What does this mean to you? How can it change the way that you relate to the people in your life, today? How does this material make you feel? Whose opinion in this *mahloket* speaks to you the most? How can it impact your relationship with God? What, in fact, is your relationship with God? These kinds of questions are not meant to be theoretical. They are meant to be answered and discussed, sometimes in self-reflection, sometimes in papers, and most often in class, in discussion with other people, especially with fellow students *and* the teacher, all of whom are working on their own connection at the same time.

Having these kinds of discussions calls for a different kind of pedagogy, one which few if any of us were trained for in graduate school, and usually not in yeshiva or seminary either. Those institutions were just promulgating the same kind of elitist education of the past. Instead, I began looking for and experimenting with a framework for this kind of education, one that would permit us to keep doing what we are doing well but begin to practice an additional kind of teaching that would speak to the students who had these unanswered needs.

Along the way, I have been grateful to find some kindred spirits, most recently and particularly at the Fuchs Mizrachi School in Cleveland. Thanks to the vision of its Head of School, Rabbi Avery Joel, and the leadership of Rabbi Yehuda Chanales, Director of Educational Advancement, the school's Jewish Studies teachers have collectively embarked on a journey toward culture change. Using a grant from the Mayberg Foundation, the school began a process of working first on the teachers themselves. To make a long story short, they invited Rav Dov Zinger and Rav Ori Lifshitz from Israel to work with the faculty, and help them start thinking about their own postures in the classroom, and how to start crafting their curricula in a slightly different way. Then, this past June, seven teachers traveled to Israel for a week to continue that work with those same people and their related institutions, all under the auspices of Herzog Teachers College.

The focus of that work was threefold – each aspect of which is critical for moving forward, I think, to address this need. First, it meant working on oneself as a teacher and considering what shifts might be necessary in order to create a space where the teacher is not a sage on the stage, nor just a guide on the side, but a fellow learner. In order for students to speak candidly and deeply, there must be a sense that the teacher is willing to do the same. One needs to be prepared, for example, to self-disclose (think Rav Soloveitchik[5]), to become more comfortable with using a language of meaning-making (think Hay and Nye)[6], and to know when to be silent and when to prod students to speak more deeply, if they so choose.

Teachers and students must become much more active listeners than we sometimes are and to create a non-judgmental environment of respect and trust. We need to bring with us a deep sense of caring (think Nel Noddings)[7], which in turn means getting to know our students as well as we can as individuals, not just the details of their

[4] Ziva Hassenfeld and Jon Levisohn have recently written about the differences between process-based educators and outcomes-based educators and that the professional development for the former will often not work for the latter. I am speaking here, then, about the possibility of a professional development program that speaks to the outcomes-based educator as well. "The Challenge of Professional Development in Jewish Studies: Why the Conventional Wisdom May Not Be Enough," *Journal of Jewish Education* 85:1 (2019): 53-75, available at https://doi.org/10.1080/15244113.2018.1558386.

[5] "In the past, this great experience of the tradition was not handed down from generation to generation through the medium of words. It was absorbed through osmosis; somehow, through silence. We used to observe. Today in America, however, and in the Western world, this is completely lost...Therefore, it is up to the Yeshiva and the teacher to open up the emotional world of Judaism to the student…"

"…I do not believe that we can afford to be as reluctant, modest, and shy today as we were in the past about describing our relationship with the Almighty. If I want to transmit my experiences, I have to transmit myself, my own heart. How can I merge my soul and personality with the students? It is very difficult. Yet it is exactly what is lacking on the American scene." *The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, Vol. 2, ed. R. Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff (Hoboken: Ktav, 1999), 168-169.

[6] For example, "Some children who are familiar with religious language...can use it as a means of detaching themselves from the reality of their own experience. They will discourse in a dispassionate way about religious abstractions or 'facts about religion' that they have learned in class. The traditional mode of a pupil in a classroom is one of demonstrating to an adult that you have learned information correctly. It is almost as if shifting into that mode offers a necessary refuge from exposing the vulnerable world of personal relatedness to an outsider. We have seen that the children are already aware that there is a social taboo on speaking about spirituality." David Hay and Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of the Child* (London: Fount, 2006), 132.

[7] "The phenomenological analysis of caring reveals the part each participant plays. The one-caring (or carer) is first of all attentive. This attention, which I called "engrossment"..., is receptive; it receives what the cared-for is feeling and trying to express. It is not merely diagnostic, measuring the cared-for against some preestablished ideal. Rather, it opens the carer to motivational displacement. When I care, my motive energy begins to flow toward the needs and wants of the cared-for. This does not mean that I will always approve of what the other wants, nor does it mean that I will never try to lead him or her to a better set of values, but I must take into account the feelings and desires that are actually there and respond as positively as my values and capacities allow." Noddings, N. (2005). 'Caring in education', the encyclopedia of informal education. [http://infed.org/mobi/caring-in-education/. Retrieved: June 30, 2019].

external lives but also their inner lives. Above all, it means having the teacher come prepared to accompany students on a journey as a fellow traveler. This is accomplished in no small part by making the text, rather than the personality of the teacher, the focus of the discussion, since it is the roadmap that animates and captures the essence of the discussion. Anyone who has read Parker Palmer's *Courage to Teach*, or has done work with Aryeh ben David's Ayeka, will have a sense of what all of this might mean. The difference is that in Israel there is a methodology and developed framework for its implementation that is also used in training Masters candidates and for teachers' professional development. Some of its proponents rely heavily on Hasidic texts and concepts to frame their approach, but one need not adopt those or even be proficient in that world in order to adopt the approach.

A second component is looking at Joseph Schwab's commonplace of the subject matter. Here lies the need to find experts, in this case *talmidei hakhamim*, who look at *Gemara* not only for its content but also for its accompanying underlying values. One thinks in this context of the work of Rav Shagar or Chaim Saiman's recent book on *Halakhah*.[8] The goal, but as only a first step, is to learn how to identify and translate the contemporary values (or their opposite) which may animate a particular *sugya* and may speak to the student's twenty-first century life. The teaching of aspects of *Kiddushin,* for example, needs to include an underlying appreciation of the marriage relationship in *Halakhah* and how the underlying values at play there can positively inform marriage today in ways that will be familiar to students. Discussions in *Berakhot* can be mined not only for their halakhic importance but also for their ongoing underlying spiritual concerns as well. This is not necessarily the focus of every day of teaching, but it is a thread which can tie it all together and, when possible, act like a prism through which to understand the discussion. Of course not every *sugya* may lend itself to this kind of analysis, but that is why one needs subject matter experts to help with the selection process and to inform when and how such analysis might be utilized.

A third related component is the pedagogic one, namely, how does one teach in such a way that we strive toward the goal of not only getting our students to learn the material but to internalize it as well. In my own school, we have coined the term "personalizing Torah" to convey the sense that we want something more than to "just" study the Torah – we want students to connect to it as well, and we want it to be something of *their own making* rather than ours. How might this change the essential question and subsequent planning of the lesson? How might it change which material, which *sugyot* or commentaries I teach? How might it impact the kinds of questions I ask? There is a difference, for example, between asking questions that ask for fact or analysis, and questions that are based on emotion ("How did you feel when you read this?") or relate to identity or personal connection ("Which opinion speaks to you the most?"). How might it impact the kind of assignments or assessments I give: spitback, reflective or personal, or just learning for its own sake? Anyone familiar with the work of *Lev la-da'at*, based in part on dialogic teaching as well as Krathwohl's and Bloom's taxonomies, will appreciate what this means.

[8] See, for example, רב שג"ר, בתורתו יהגה – לימוד גמרא כבקשת אלוקים, הוצאת מכון כתבי הרב שג"ר, תשס"ט and Chaim Saiman, *Halakhah*: *The Rabbinic Idea of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

None of this is without its challenges. There is no doubt that working with Israeli institutions requires cultural (and literal) translation—their system of education and students are different than ours. But they also have experience and a huge infrastructure that I have always believed we ignore to our detriment. Effecting culture change in a school is no small matter either, but one of the most wonderful parts of accompanying Fuchs Mizrachi on this journey was to watch how a group of teachers who already respected one another transformed into a team. They were suddenly speaking the same language, working toward the same goals, constantly thinking aloud collaboratively, and, thanks in part to the training, with incredible honesty and the intimacy born of trust and common purpose. As I have noted, before we start talking about working with the children, we need to first work on ourselves.

None of this is to suggest that every lesson needs to be taught this way, or that we need to completely upset the applecart. But in the attempt to be deliberate about our students and their education, it seems to me that we need to pay more attention than we sometimes do in our daily lessons to their souls, to their innate desire for meaning and connection through Torah. In this I am reminded of the warning of Rav Soloveitchik *ztz"l*:

> There are two aspects to the religious gesture in Judaism: strict objective discipline and exalted subjective romance. Both are indispensable… Feelings not manifesting themselves in deeds are volatile and transient; deeds not linked with their inner experience are soulless and ritualistic. [9]

We have spent a lot of time and effort in Jewish education teaching about Judaism as a discipline. Many of our students now crave assistance with their inner experience as well.

Compartmentalization and Synthesis in Modern Orthodox Jewish Education

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"The great problem of modern American Orthodoxy," wrote Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm in the May-June 1969 edition of *Jewish Life* magazine, "is that it has failed to interpret itself to itself."[10] Rabbi Lamm's critique of the young movement was scathing - he pointed to "a remarkable intellectual timidity" as the root cause of its struggle to find its ideological voice. Yet he also suggested a powerful antidote, arguing that Modern Orthodoxy must articulate a worldview "that is halakhically legitimate, philosophically persuasive, religiously inspiring, and personally convincing" in order to survive.

[9] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Family Redeemed: Essays on Family Relationships*, eds. David Shatz and Joel B. Wolowelsky (Hoboken: Ktav, 2002), 40.

[10] Cited in Zev Eleff, *Modern Orthodox Judaism: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2016), 189.

In many ways, however, Rabbi Lamm's challenge was never sufficiently addressed. By 1982, David Singer would lament that "Modern Orthodoxy did not fail - it never happened."[11] Indeed, as Charles Liebman first described it in 1976,[12] American Jews were increasingly exhibiting a phenomenon described as "compartmentalization," an orientation defined by "a marked decrease in the centrality of traditional religious values and way of life."[13] In a word, instead of a sweeping, integrated, and inspired religious experience, sociologists were quickly finding that Modern Orthodoxy, in practice, was defined by deep segregation between the modern world and Jewish tradition. Judaism was reserved for Shabbat and the *shul*, while the boardroom or courthouse were the places that the *kippah* came off. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, himself one of the most powerful champions of an integrated religious worldview, lamented the contemporary state of Orthodoxy in a public lecture first published in 2003, quoting the haunting words of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats: "the center cannot hold."[14]

The challenges facing Modern Orthodoxy can also be seen in recent demographic data. Indeed, despite the findings of the 2013-2014 Jewish Day School Census, which demonstrated that enrollment within Modern Orthodox day schools has remained roughly constant over the past 15 years,[15] the 2013 Pew study showed that Modern Orthodoxy is facing a dramatic demographic decline: while 43% of Orthodox Jews aged 50–64 consider themselves to be Modern Orthodox, only 9% of those aged 18–29 similarly identified with Modern Orthodoxy. The challenge facing Modern Orthodoxy, then, is not just an abstract sociological question - it is an educational one as well: our students are rejecting the values we seek to instill within them.[16] As Moshe Krakowski has recently pointed out, religious schools serve "simultaneously as educational institutions and as religious socializing agencies." In other words, we teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, *and* our schools are the vehicles for inculcating our communal values and ideological worldview.[17] As Krakowski notes,

> the ways in which students come to understand their own religious identities within these schools is central to the communal crisis modern Orthodoxy is facing...instead of pursuing a robust modern-Orthodox identity, many students have chosen to become either ultra-Orthodox or non-Orthodox.[18]

Make no mistake about it: if Modern Orthodox day school education does not sufficiently foster deeply integrated Modern Orthodox identities among its students - encoding, as Krakowski put it, "the norms and patterns of engagement in society" - then our schools will cease to be relevant, especially in a world of rising tuition costs.[19] This paper will examine how we instill and inspire Modern Orthodox identities within our students by analyzing three separate facets of the school system that serve to communicate our values: the structure of the school itself, the curriculum taught in the school, and the pedagogies employed by its teachers. Along the way, I seek to identify the factors within schools that reinforce the reality of compartmentalization, while also highlighting initiatives that may allow for a more integrated religious educational experience within Modern Orthodox day schools. To paraphrase Rabbi Lamm, I hope to both understand and suggest improvements to the way we "explain ourselves to ourselves."

Structural Challenges

Modern Orthodoxy is a worldview that encompasses intellectual, social, spiritual, cultural, and professional dimensions, and which recognizes that there exist multiple - and competing - values in our world, all while upholding the primacy of Torah learning and observance. All too often, however, it gets reduced (at worst) to an ideology of compromise, or (at best) a superficial pairing of general and Judaic studies. Educationally, then, we're charged with identifying the values in our world and in our tradition, articulating ways in which they can be balanced, highlighting the relationships between them, and helping our students apply them to our lived spiritual and human experiences. Yet the barriers to doing so are extensive, and begin within the communal and institutional structures of the Modern Orthodox day school system itself. As early as 1986, Jack Bieler argued that "The modern Orthodox school itself is undermining rather than supporting the religious outlook that it should be encouraging within its student body."[20] Samuel Heilman, in his landmark 2006 study of the American Jewish Orthodox community, describes several factors that have contributed to this reality.[21] First, he notes that with increasing professional specialization and training in fields of medicine, law, and business, Modern Orthodox parents find themselves without the religious training or free time to be actively engaged in the education of their children. As Heilman puts it, "The school had hoped not to replace the family and community, but in practice in the modern world it

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[11] David Singer cited in "A Symposium: The State of Orthodoxy," *Tradition* 20:1 (Spring 1982): 69.

[12] Charles S. Leibman, "Orthodox Judaism Today," *Midstream* 25:7 (Aug-Sept 1976): 25.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "Centrist Orthodoxy: A Spiritual Accounting," in *By His Light: Character and Values in the Service of God* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2017), 193-220.

[15] Marvin Schick, "A Census of Jewish Day School in the United States." Avi Chai Foundation, 2014.

[16] For a recent critique of Modern Orthodoxy issued by a self described "normal Modern Orthodox kid, who goes to a normal Modern Orthodox high school," see the recent Times of Israel article published by Eitan Gross at http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/modern-orthodoxy-from-a-teenagers-perspective/. Gross points to the "glaring hypocrisy" and "internal contradictions" of the movement, arguing that "Modern Orthodoxy tries to create a balance that, at the moment, cannot work."

[17] Moshe Krakowski, "Developing and Transmitting Religious Identity: Curriculum and Pedagogy in Modern Orthodox Jewish Schools," *Contemporary Jewry* (2017): 1-24.

[18] Ibid., 2.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Jack Bieler, "Integration of Judaic and General Studies in the Modern Orthodox Day School," *Jewish Education* 54:4 (1986): 18.

[21] Samuel Heilman, *Sliding to the right: The Contest for the Future of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

did."[22] This growing divide between the roles of parents and teachers - indeed, between school and home - means that students' lived communal and familial experiences develop separately from their educational encounters; they often learn one thing at school and then see something very different at home. To make matters worse, the very teachers that students engage with at school are often at odds with the core values that Modern Orthodoxy espouses. This reality creates significant additional barriers to communicating a Modern Orthodox worldview within our schools, as Heilman further notes that

> the teachers in their schools and many rabbis did not share their values and remained unprepared to endorse the modern orthodox life trajectory even tacitly… the teachers often did not share the same neighborhoods and certainly not the same community as the families of the students they taught.[23]

Indeed, identifying, recruiting, and hiring Modern Orthodox faculty role models (especially for *limmudei kodesh* classes) is a such a daunting task that Heilman estimates that by 2003 up to two-thirds of Judaic studies teachers in schools were *Haredi*. At the very outset, then, the school system itself often suffers from a failure to align its educational prerogatives and professional staff with the families and communities that it serves. While it may be that some parents may *prefer* the Haredization of school faculty as a correction for perceived deficiencies of Modern Orthodoxy, it goes without saying that such a perspective would point to a complete breakdown of our educational mission and ideological platform. Faced with this disconnect between faculty, parents, and school, then, it is no wonder that students struggle to identify with the religious values and philosophical worldview that we seek to inspire within them.

Furthermore, Bieler has also noted that the seemingly rote questions of scheduling classroom hours within schools can communicate an institution's stance towards integration.[24] Indeed, scholars of educational culture have described the bell schedule as one of the most powerful cultural features of a school, determining where students should be and what they should be doing at all times.[25] It should be unsurprising, then, that in many of our schools where Judaic studies are exclusively taught in the morning, with general studies classes meeting in the afternoon, students can easily begin to compartmentalize the disparate classrooms that they occupy without identifying relationships or connections between them. These types of organizational structures are so powerful, in fact, that several meta-analyses of educational research have found that a school's culture, values, and systems are often the most powerful determinants of student outcomes.[26] In essence, researchers have shown that actions speak at least as loud as words, and so while a school's mission statement may preach the values of Modern Orthodoxy, if everything from role models to class schedule - as well as field trips, assemblies, outside speakers, school policies, and even the posters in the hallways - doesn't also reflect our ideological values, then we implicitly send a powerful message about where our priorities really lie.

Strategies to address these structural issues within our schools are both obvious and frighteningly difficult to implement. On the one hand, it should go without saying that hiring teachers who are ideologically aligned with the mission and values of a school would make an enormous impact on the school's ability to communicate its values. Yet actually doing so is not so simple. In a recent personal conversation, the Dean of the Azrieli Graduate School for Jewish Education at Yeshiva University reported that out of a yearly class of thirty-five Master's degree students at the school, many candidates are already employed as teachers.[27] The efforts of this program to bring new educators into the field while also providing growth opportunities for current teachers are undoubtedly essential to our schools. At the same time, however, there is simply no way that we are meeting the demand for qualified Jewish educators in our schools - even with an optimistic estimate of total graduates entering the field from other institutions as well. The reasons for this are obviously complicated, but economics are one starting point: unless we pay more for our teachers, we're less likely to attract top talent to Jewish education.

Two promising initiatives - adult education programs and scheduling changes aimed at reducing compartmentalization - may be somewhat easier to achieve but also require extensive effort, planning, and investment. At Shalhevet High School in Los Angeles, for example, the Shalhevet Institute was established as a center for learning, conversation, and scholarship for the entire community, and it has helped transform the school into a driver of ideas and education for parents and adults, thereby bridging the gap between school and community. The Shalhevet Institute's programs - courses for parents built around content that the school's students are studying, *Shabbatonim* designed to allow community members to engage in immersive learning, and scholars in residence who communicate the school's mission and generate dialogue within the community - are all designed to connect parents to the ideas and values that the school seeks to instill within its students. Recently, SAR High School established Machon Siach, a project that seeks to foster "collaboration among the school, community, alumni, and parents while engaging in research around crucial issues affecting Jewish education."[28] Taken together, these initiatives point to a growing recognition that in order to effectively communicate its values, the school must leverage its resources to engage both students as well as adults throughout the community.

Scheduling changes to the school day offer another opportunity to achieve integration within our educational institutions. While there may be many logistical or personnel factors that shape a school's scheduling decisions, growing adoption of block scheduling

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[22] Ibid., at 103. On this point, see as well Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy," Tradition 28 (Summer 1994): 64-130.

[23] Heilman, 110.

[24] Bieler (1986), 15-26.

[25] See, for example, Owens and Valesky, *Organizational Behavior in Education*, 11th Edition (2015).

[26] C.R. Cook, K.R. Williams, N.G. Guerra, T.E. Kim, & S. Sadek, "Predictors of Bullying and Victimization in Childhood and Adolescence: A Meta-Analytic Investigation," *School Psychology Quarterly* 25(2) (2010): 65–83. A. Thapa, J. Cohen, S. Guffey, & A. Higgins-D' Alessandro, "A Review of School Climate Research," *Review of Educational Research* 83(3) (2013): 357-385.

[27] Dr. Rona Novick, personal communication, October 8, 2018. Shared here with permission.

[28] www.machonsiach.org.

systems at Modern Orthodox day schools offers important opportunities for reducing compartmentalization. Under these systems, which allow for classes to meet for longer periods on a rotating basis (i.e., each class does not meet every day), students alternate between their science, Talmud, literature, *Tanakh*, or math courses, helping to facilitate maximal cross-pollination and connection between seemingly disparate fields.

The Written Curriculum

It also matters what students actually learn in their classrooms. We must ask ourselves, then: what does a Modern Orthodox curriculum actually look like, and how should it be taught? Should Modern Orthodox Torah learning aim to be essentially identical to what is being studied in the *yeshivot* of Bnei Brak - with the only difference being that we *also* value the science laboratories or literature classroom - or must we chart out new curricular approaches to communicate our values?

Several authors have made important contributions to the question of what a Modern Orthodox curriculum should look like. Among them, Alex Pomson has argued that the problem of compartmentalization can be traced back to the challenges (and failures) of developing "integrated" curricula.[29] Building off of the work of Robin Fogarty, [30] Pomson proposes that curriculum integration - by which he means weaving together multiple disciplines (or "multiple experiences within a single discipline") in order to construct knowledge - can allow students to "make connections within and across" a particular discipline.[31] For example, Pomson suggests that a study of the laws of *mishloah manot* can be combined with a project to deliver food packages to a local nursing home - requiring students to calculate and plan a budget and consult with elderly caregivers, while demonstrating mastery of the rules and regulations behind *mishloah manot*. Similarly, Pomson proposes that the study of *Megillat Ruth* in a *Tanakh* class can allow for integration with several other disciplines by engaging the Drama department in a musical production of the story, the English department in script writing, the History department in studying the role of minorities within society, and the Literature department in reading similar stories about outsiders or converts. For Pomson, then, integration of disciplines around shared ideas or themes can allow for a Modern Orthodox school to escape the trap of compartmentalization by creating meaningful connections across Judaic and general studies.

In a similar vein, Moshe Krakowski proposed using problem- (or project-) based learning (PBL) in Modern Orthodox schools in order to "build connections between abstract Jewish text based legal codes and everyday Jewish practices,"[32] and a related effort has been spearheaded by Tikvah Wiener at the newly founded Idea School in North Jersey. There's obvious value in these approaches: by empowering students to connect ideas and values across disciplines while harnessing the creativity and engagement of these project-based pedagogies, we can reduce compartmentalization by ensuring that Judaic studies are not relegated to the sidelines of students' educational experiences.[33] Along the way, a powerful model for Modern Orthodoxy can be constructed echoing Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's assertion that "the final word" on the synthesis between Torah and general knowledge "is with integration and harmony."[34]

However, beyond the value of integrating disciplines within the PBL model, two important questions must be raised as we chart out a Modern Orthodox curriculum. First, we must consider the question of the *limmudei kodesh* curriculum itself: what should the study of Judaic texts look like? What skills or dispositions should be developed? What topics should be included in the curriculum? Should a school focus on Jewish holidays? Everyday rituals and regulations? Talmudic case law? Before embarking on the path of synthesis and integration with other disciplines, then, we must first consider what Modern Orthodox students should actually be learning in their Judaic studies courses in the first place. And here Michael Rosenak has identified an additional question for our consideration.[35] As opposed to Rav Lichtenstein's thesis of integration and synthesis,

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[29] Alex Pomson, "Knowledge that Doesn't Just Sit There: Considering a Reconception of the Curriculum Integration of Jewish and General Studies," *Religious Education* 96:4 (2001): 528-545. For a review of Pomson's and other approaches towards integrated curricula, see Jon Levisohn, "From Integration of Curricula to the Pedagogy of Integrity," *Journal of Jewish Education* 74(3) (2008): 264-294.

[30] Fogarty, Robin, "Ten Ways to Integrate Curriculum," *Educational Leadership* 49:2: 61-65.

[31] Pomson, 534.

[32] Krakowski, 10.

[33] The educational world is somewhat split about the efficacy of problem based, or "constructivist" approaches to learning. See, for example A. Kirschner, J. Sweller, and R. Clark, "Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry Based Learning, *Educational Psychologist* 41(2) (2006): 75-86, in a journal volume devoted entirely to debating this question. Yet as Tikvah Wiener recently put it to me in a personal conversation, there is obviously no single educational approach that works best here, and that the best pedagogies balances between student inquiry and direct instruction.

[34] Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "A Consideration of Synthesis from a Torah Point of View," in *Leaves of Faith* Vol. 1, (Brooklyn, NY: Ktav, 2003), 89-103. Shortly after Rav Lichtenstein *zt"l* passed away, someone commented to me that "Rav Lichtenstein didn't really value integration - he spent his life in the *Beit Midrash*!" My own experience learning from Rav Lichtenstein, however, was marked by an overwhelming sense of his educational synthesis and integration of disparate values, sources, and ideas in his *Talmud Torah* in much the same way that Krakowski is arguing for. His writing on the topic is marked by both a serious openness to curricular innovation away from traditional *gemara* learning [as expressed in his 2007 essay published by ATID - see Aharon Lichtenstein and Yehudah Brandes, *Talmud Study in Yeshiva High Schools* (Jerusalem: Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions, 2007)], along with an emphasis on the need to find an appropriate balance between *kodesh* and secular studies in the "Consideration of Synthesis" article quoted here. At the same time, however, there is no question that Rav Lichtenstein saw intensive, focused, and independent Torah learning as an ideal pursuit. See, for a forceful example, Aharon Lichtenstein, "Why Learn Gemara?" in *Leaves of Faith* Vol. 1 1-18.

[35] Michael Rosenak, "Towards a Curriculum for the Modern Orthodox School," in Jonathan Sacks (ed), *Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity* (Hoboken, NJ : Ktav Pub. House in association with Jews' College, London, 1991.

Rosenak has suggested that the hallmark of a Modern Orthodox curriculum should instead be defined by "dichotomies and tensions" - echoing the complex and multivariate nature of the world around us.[36]

What would such a curriculum look like? Truth be told, dynamic tension is almost definitional to Jewish law and tradition. As Rav Lichtenstein has written elsewhere, to open and learn a page of Talmud is

> to gain access to a world in ferment. It is to enter a pulsating bet midrash, studded with live protagonists; to be caught up, initially as witness and subsequently as participant, in a drama of contrapuntal challenge and response, of dialectic thrust and parry; to be stimulated by the tension of creative impulse.[37]

Yet our students don't generally experience the majesty of this encounter with Torah learning. Instead, all too often, students feel disengaged from their *limmudei kodesh* classes in our schools, reinforcing the reality of compartmentalization by relegating Talmud study to the sidelines of their interests and focus - an ancient and arcane discipline that simply does not relate to the world around us. Simply put, if students don't value or are not motivated to engage in Torah study, then there is nothing to "integrate" with their secular subjects and cultural experiences to begin with. And while conclusive data on the subject is limited, the data we do have certainly isn't positive. A 1991 study in Israel found that *gemara* was the least favorite class among Israeli students, while a 2009 dissertation by Aaron Ross found that motivation to study Talmud depended largely upon students' general academic motivation as well as their relationships with their teachers.[38] Taken together, these studies suggest that *gemara* learning is often of little intrinsic interest to our students, a reality which - if true - is an existential threat to integration. Reversing this trend and reigniting student interest in *limmudei kodesh* is therefore essential to any efforts toward reducing compartmentalization within the Modern Orthodox community and building recognition within our students of the ways in which Jewish learning can inform our engagement with the world.

In order to tackle the need for a curriculum that effectively communicates the values that we're trying to instill within our students, Noam Weissman and I created LaHaV, a *limmudei kodesh* curriculum project that provides content and training for schools and educators across the world. At its core, the goal of LaHaV is to reframe Torah learning for students in our schools along the lines envisioned by Rosenak, and so the curriculum itself is designed to focus on the dynamic tensions within our tradition. How, for example, does *halakhah* balance between the will of the majority and the needs of the minority? The Mishnah in *Eduyot* 1:5 - which establishes the legal norm of recording minority opinions along with those of the majority, along with the famous narrative of *Berakhot* 27b - where Rabban Gamliel is removed from his leadership of the *Sanhedrin* after humiliating Rabbi Yehoshua over a halakhic dispute - highlight this tension and articulate potential solutions that should be included in a Modern Orthodox curriculum. What about fostering both unity and diversity within our communities? Here again, our tradition grapples with this fundamental question, as in the *gemarot* in *Eiruvin* 13b, *Hagiga* 3b, and *Rosh Hashanah* 25a. Should *halahkah* be guided by looking to previous generations (an approach championed by R. Yosef Karo in his introduction to *Beit Yosef*), or should it be decided based on communal norms of the current generation (as advocated for by R. Moshe Isserles in *Darkhei Moshe*)? Our Sages recognized similar creative dialectic between the role of the people and the Rabbis within *halakhah* (*Pesahim* 50b, *Avodah Zarah* 36a), as well as the ways in which individual needs may override halakhic norms, such as the role of *kavod ha-beriyot* (human dignity - *Berakhot* 19b), *makom tzarah* (sickness or pain - *Ketubot* 60b), and *makom mitzvah* (performance of a *mitzvah* - *Pesahim* 66b) in allowing for leniency within *halakhah*.

Yet the ways in which *Hazal* balanced competing values within a complex world aren't always apparent to the casual student of Talmud - the discipline isn't organized around these issues, and so we've spent years researching and selecting Talmudic *sugyot* to weave together into a fully structured and spiralled curriculum. In these cases and many more, we've attempted to identify areas of dynamic tension within our tradition, and to use these tensions to engage our students in deep and sophisticated learning that communicates the complex system of conflicting priorities that *Hazal* attempted to balance. Today, we're working with schools across the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Israel - and while our curriculum is certainly not the right fit for every school out there, I've argued previously at the Lehrhaus that any responsible approach to Jewish learning for our students must focus on deliberately and consciously engaging students with the competing values that can be found behind any Talmudic *sugya.*

Dialogue

Articulating a compelling Modern Orthodox worldview, however, isn't just a question of who is doing the teaching or how the curriculum is defined. Modern Orthodox education is also about *how* we teach - and what we're willing to talk about with our students. If Modern Orthodoxy is an orientation that recognizes that the world is filled with competing values that coexist with the primacy of Torah learning and observance, then these values must always be in conversation with one another. In the final analysis, then, we must ask ourselves how to facilitate these conversations. Do we talk with our students about the moral, religious, spiritual, and political conflicts that we encounter in our lives and our communities - or do we simply reduce these conflicts to easy choices shaded in hues of

[36] Ibid., at 65. It should be noted here that "integration and harmony" and "dichotomies and tensions" are two very different visions of what Modern Orthodoxy is really about. While Rav Lichtenstein certainly argued for and modeled the integrative approach (within limits), others, especially Rav Soloveitchik, wrote extensively about dialectic and tension within religious experience. See, for example, Rav Soloveitchik's famous introduction to *The Lonely Man of Faith*: "it would be presumptuous of me to attempt to convert the passional, antinomic faith-experience into a eudaemonic, harmonious one" (p. 2), as well as the tensions layed out in his 1964 essay, *Confrontation*. Between the worldview of "harmony and integration" and the vision of dynamic tension lays a deep chasm at the heart of what it means to be Modern Orthodox - an ideological divergence that may explain why we've failed to articulate what the movement actually stands for.

[37] Aharon Lichtenstein, "Why Learn Gemara?" in *Leaves of Faith* Vol. 1, 1-18.

[38] S. Weiser and M. Bar Lev, "Teaching Talmud in the Yeshiva High School: Difficulties and Dangers" (Hebrew), *Nir ha-Midrashiah* 8 (1991): 233-56. For Ross' dissertation, see http://lookstein.org/articles/motivational_issues.pdf.

black and white? On this issue, Devra Lehmann has highlighted the ways in which the classroom discourse within Jewish schools can create cultural barriers to integration as well. Lehmann analyzed the basic norms of speech and interaction that govern the discourse of general studies and Judaics classrooms - and here she found a stark difference between the two. She describes that in the classrooms she observed,

> English teachers wanted to develop independent readers who could make sense of the text on their own, who could find ways to support their own views even when they encountered the critical tradition, and who could feel free to express their views in assertive or even strident ways...*humash* teachers, on the other hand, wanted above all to develop Jews who were committed to their tradition. This commitment entailed not only knowledge of the tradition, but also a sense of one's own smallness in relation to its wisdom and authority.[39]

As one student put it in an interview, "in secular classes you get to think, but in Jewish studies classes you just spit back whatever they tell you." [40] Lehmann's work therefore suggests that compartmentalization is not just a function of curricular content or communal integration within our schools. Rather, Lehmann argues that on a much deeper level, the very nature of our classroom discourse influences the ways in which students relate to the course material - and that there exist serious differences here between Judaic and general studies classrooms. To the extent that students get to think, explore, or question in secular classes but not with *limudei kodesh,* then, we risk our students developing very different orientations towards these disciplines, sabotaging integration and cross-pollination between the two.

In a very real sense, Lehmann's work forces us to ask ourselves how we view the students that we're charged to inspire: do we see them as passive receptacles for a static tradition, or as essential links in a dynamic conversation that has spanned generations and which must be continued in order for us to address the challenges facing our community and our world? *How* we talk in the classroom, then, may be just as important as *what* we're teaching. Are we developing a culture of inquiry and critical thinking? Do we encourage creativity and originality within our *limmudei kodesh* classrooms? Are we willing to speak about the issues of our day - gender, truth, economics, otherness, and more? Does the ideology of *Torah im Derekh Eretz* (a philosophical forebearer of Modern Orthodoxy) permeate our sense of mission to develop moral thinkers as well as *talmidei hakhamim*? Ultimately, Lehmann's analysis forces us to consider the pedagogies, norms, and discursive cultures that are encountered by students within our classrooms. If - to paraphrase Rav Soloveitchik - we seek to create students "who long to create, to bring into being something new, something original,"[41] then we must treat our students as such by fostering personal creativity and connection within our classrooms.

The issue of *how* to teach in a Modern Orthodox school is certainly the most expansive of the issues tackled in this essay, and obviously may take any number of forms. Yet it should go without saying that the modality of a classroom focused on project based learning or *havruta* study communicates a far different message about the nature of authority and the value of creativity than one in which a rabbi stands in front of the classroom and reads from a *gemara*. Similarly, the way we discipline our students and respond to their challenges (and mistakes) must also be part of our thinking about how we help them recognize and embrace the responsibilities and conflicts that they must navigate in their encounter with the world. Democratic educational approaches - often the mark of "progressive" schools - which focus on student empowerment, autonomy, and responsibility within the classroom, are another potential avenue for creating and modeling an authentically Modern Orthodox discourse within our schools. In truth, this type of dialogue is the legacy that *Hazal* imparted to us in pages of Talmud filled with running disputes, attempted resolutions, and continuous inquiry. And if we are to successfully inspire our students to embrace this heritage, then, Talmudic discourse shouldn't only be encountered in the classroom - it needs to be modeled in our hallways as well. *Mahloket* and dialogue are not just the hallmarks of our tradition; they must be the watchwords of our movement, along with a wariness of simplistic answers, and a recognition that we may not always find resolutions to our many questions.

At the end of the day, then, I'd argue that Modern Orthodoxy isn't about compromise - it's about embracing dynamic tension and attempting meaningful harmonization. And, if we are to survive, we must build educational institutions that can inspire our students to engage in that process. To do so, we must think carefully about whether the structures in our school are designed to communicate these tensions, how our curricula provide students with the tools to navigate conflict, and whether we are sufficiently empowering them to find their own voices within these essential conversations. While no two schools will take the same path to build these systems, as a community and a movement, we need to do a better job of explaining ourselves to a generation of students who are wondering what role Torah learning should have in their lives and in the world around us.

[39] Devra Lehmann, "Calling Integration into Question: A Discourse Analysis of English and Humash Classes at a Modern Orthodox Yeshiva High School" *Journal of Jewish Education* 74 (3) (2008): 295–316.

[40] Ibid., 316.

[41] Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1983), 100.