The Management
of Pedagogic Change
in Contemporary
Orthodox Jewish Schooling

By

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**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

At the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NOVEMBER 2006

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated how a pedagogic change process is managed by the divergent Haredi and Modern Orthodox streams of Orthodox Jewish schooling. Its literature study looked at the classical forms of historic Jewish pedagogy and how they have adapted to internal and external dynamics. It also examined how contemporary Orthodox schooling, specifically, is an amalgam of a variety of responses, reactions and adaptations to the radically changed landscape of modernity. The influence of the modern student profile was examined along with the affects of the inclusion of secular studies into the modern Jewish syllabus. The appropriateness of new interactive methods and technologies and the specialized teacher training they require were also explored. A qualitative study of the expert opinions of six contemporary experts was conducted and thematically analyzed along with an analysis of material from two file-sharing websites. Recommendations for educational practice and further research were proposed

KEY WORDS

Bible as Literature

Curriculum

Educational technology

Empirical Investigation

Haskalah

Jewish Education

Jewish Pedagogy

Pedagogy

Qualitative Research

Teacher Training

I declare that THE MANAGEMENT OF PEDGOGIC CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY ORTHODOX JEWISH SCHOOLING is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references

Mr. W S Kraines

30 November 2006

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1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is the life-blood of continuity for any culture or national identity. It is critical, then, for those concerned about that continuity, to grasp the essence of the educational system that is charged with ensuring it. Orthodox Jewish Education can only be understood in the context of its classic religious underpinnings and its encounter over a long history with changing societal circumstances. Contemporary Orthodox schooling, specifically, is an amalgam of a variety of responses, reactions and adaptations to the radically changed landscape of modernity. The study seeks to analyse the historical roots, modern challenges and future vistas of a pedagogical system as old as the Bible itself.

1.1.1 Religious Roots: Biblical and Rabbinic

The study of Torah (cf. 1.9) is a central religious obligation in traditional Orthodox Judaism (cf. 1.9). The Bible itself commands 'You shall teach them [words of Torah] thoroughly to your children' (Deut. 6:7). This passage is interpreted by the Talmud (cf. 1.9) as a commandment to both study and teach Torah (Maimonides 1991a: 1,1).

A culture of study has always been a primary feature of Jewish life. The eminent historian James Hastings writes that the pedagogical principles of Israel are without parallel in ancient literature. Every home was a school, and every parent a teacher (cited in Jacobs & Grossman 1906). Josephus points with pride to the fact that Jewish children were from earliest childhood instructed and trained in the Law and the traditions of their fathers (Whiston 1737: Book II:26).

The challenge of defining the distinct character of Torah pedagogy, then, is as old as the Bible itself. But, while the depth theory of Torah pedagogy can be approached through rabbinic and modern exegesis of selected Biblical texts, the study of the

practical implementation of that theory must begin from the institution of universal public education as a documented feature of Jewish life in the 1st Century C.E. (Talmud: Baba Bathra 13a). These early educators recorded their methodologies for posterity in the Talmud.

The educational principles recorded in these sources are considered authoritative and relevant by Orthodox Judaism. Orthodox Judaism, as opposed to Reform (cf. 1.9) or Conservative (cf. 1.9) Judaism, adheres to the Torah and Talmud as interpreted in an authoritative rabbinic law code and applies their principles and regulations to modern living (Merriam-Webster 2005). Consequently, the primary sources for any investigation into the principles of Orthodox Jewish education are the Talmud and its classical codes (cf. 1.9). Even today, these sources, as interpreted by contemporary authorities, will be the final arbiters of propriety and practice for Orthodox Jews.

These sources are augmented by a fascinating literature of rabbinic responsa, learned rulings and clarifications, penned in many lands and over many centuries. With the responsa, the study of Torah pedagogy moves from its narrow methodological focus to the examination of the application of its principles in a variety of social and historical contexts. Also valuable are the educational guidelines registered in the communal notebooks of Diaspora cities over the centuries. These sources are important in that they can reveal which methods rabbinic authority have considered sacrosanct and immutable and which were considered adaptable.

1.1.2 Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity

An understanding of the maelstrom of modern Jewish history provides the crucial background for appreciating the issues facing contemporary Torah educators, who seek to import effective methodologies from a secular context without compromising the religious and educational values of the very tradition they are trying to preserve and transmit.

Even a cursory look at the history of Jewish education since the emancipation of European Jewry will reveal the volatility of this seemingly technical pedagogical

enquiry. For the hostile reform of traditional education was the central platform of the Jewish modernist Haskalah movement (Rosenthal and Wiernik 1906a). Haskalah, also called Jewish Enlightenment, was a late 18th and 19th-century intellectual movement among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe that attempted to acquaint Jews with the European and Hebrew languages and with secular education and culture (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2005b). As Professor Parush of Ben Gurion University explains:

> In the fierce cultural war that took place during the Haskalah, marked by wrenching processes of secularisation, modernization and Europeanization, the main battle for the soul of Jewish society was waged on the fronts of language, literacy and education. The Maskilim [followers of Haskalah] returned to the biblical text and struggled to legitimise the acquisition of Biblical Hebrew. Their decision to introduce Hebrew … into the Jewish cultural discourse at this particular historical moment was a subversive act that released an immense amount of secularising energy (2004: 174).

The usefulness of the Haskalah movement as a means to 'russify' the Jewish populace was not lost on the Tsarist government in control of most of Eastern European Jewry. Sergei Uvarov, Minister of Public Instruction (1833-49) under Emperor Nicholas I (reigned 1825-1855), worked out all his plans for Jewish education under the influence of Jewish Maskilim. The abandonment of the Talmud and the study of Hebrew were the basis of Uvarov's schemes (Rosenthal and Wiernik 1906). In a letter to the Tsar, Minister Uvarov asserts that "There is no better means or more appropriate device for eliminating the Talmud from Israel, than by introducing study of the Holy Scriptures and the Hebrew language, its grammar and literature, into the general curriculum" (Parush, 2004: 200).

Even today, issues around educational reform are part of the struggle between the religious and secular communities in the modern State of Israel. In 2001, the Israeli Supreme Court stirred up political controversy by ruling that the Education Ministry must impose a core curriculum of secular subjects on Orthodox elementary schools, which would account for 75% of the school day (Rosenblum 2004).

It is no wonder then, that the proposal to import even the most innocuous technique from a foreign context automatically arouses suspicion among religious leaders.

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Orthodox Judaism's foremost rabbinic authority at the turn of the 20th Century, cautioned against opening the door to new educational methodologies that might erode allegiance to traditional faith and observance (1990a: 51-53). The very terms "methods" (Kagan 1990a: 51) and "pedagogy" (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:10, in Bronstein 2001), used by the modernists to describe their innovations, were seen by Rabbi Kagan and his contemporaries as pejoratives.

1.1.2.1 Haredi Orthodoxy Reacts and Responds

The views of Rabbi Kagan are authoritative to the followers of what has become known as Haredi Orthodoxy. The Haredi sub-group of Orthodoxy incorporates the Lithuanian (cf. 1.9) and Sephardic (cf. 1.9) Yeshiva movements, and the Hassidic movement (cf. 1.9). These groups share in common a fervent devotion to traditional Torah study, a strict adherence to Halacha (cf. 1.9) and a policy of social and intellectual isolation from the open society (Finkelman 2002:61). The intellectual isolation is only partial, especially in Haredi communities in the United States and other Western countries (Finkelman 2002:61), where Haredi children follow a dual curriculum of religious and general studies.

Haredi philosophy rejects the notion that Torah knowledge must be enriched with the enlightened ideas of modernity to maintain relevance (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:19-21, in Bronstein 2001). However, Haredi philosophy does assert that secular studies contain truths that are capable of yielding technological advances beneficial to humanity. They deem it important to study such knowledge only as necessary in order to benefit from or contribute to the increase of such beneficial technology, or in order to earn a dignified living for the support of a family (Berman 2001a: par. 9).

The 19th and early 20th Century Haredi rabbinate met the modernist challenge with a tripartite strategy of reaction, response and adaptation. In reaction, rabbinic bans were legislated against schools that introduced reforms in the educational system (Katzburg 1966:300). But reaction alone was ineffective, as the new challenges also accentuated the need to articulate responses for the contemporary Torah educator. Seminal guidelines for authentic Orthodox education were published by great rabbinic

authorities, led by Rabbi Kagan, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski of Vilna and Rabbi Yosef Rosen of Dvinsk (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:14-24, in Bronstein 2001).

In Germany, where Orthodoxy was faced with the need to attract an already secularised constituency, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch chose the strategy of adaptation by developing a dual curriculum model for Haredi Orthodox schooling in Frankfurt (Hirsch 1867:99). Though Rabbi Hirsch clearly justified the inclusion of general studies in the school curriculum as an expression of the highest Judaic ideals (Hirsch 1867:90), this inclusion was based on the belief that the progressive ideas of modernity were manifestations of humanity's finally "catching up" with the timeless truths of Sinai revelation (Hirsch 1867:98). Consequently, in the classroom students were to be shown how their general studies were expressions of a lofty educational programme found in the Bible itself (Wolf 1954:23-24). Even this highly circumscribed justification has been interpreted by major contemporary authorities as tactical move to attract assimilated Jews back to an Orthodoxy, which was then perceived as uncultured and outmoded (Schwab 1994).

Rabbi A. Wolf, a pioneer of women's education and teacher training in post-war Israel, asserts that the true ideal of the Hirschian school was never fully realized (1954:24). Nevertheless, Hirsch's principled justification of the inclusion of secular studies in contemporary Haredi schooling is a lasting contribution (Wolf 1954:22).

1.1.2.2 Modern Orthodoxy

The spectrum of Orthodox educational response broadened in the 20th Century with the advent of the 'Modern Orthodox' movement in its various manifestations in Israel and the Diaspora. The educational philosophy of Modern Orthodoxy itself is not uniform, but its adherents generally ascribe to the philosophy of *Torah U'Maddah* [Torah and Knowledge], defined here by Rabbi Saul Berman, a leading contemporary proponent:

> Torah U'Maddah - While the Torah is entirely true, human reason applied
> to the study of all of reality can also produce truth. We are required to

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engage with and study both Torah and other knowledge in order to properly achieve love and fear of God. We are permitted to study any aspect of human culture that enriches our intellectual, spiritual, or aesthetic identities. However, where the application of these studies might lead to behaviour that conflicts with Torah, we must submit to the authority of Torah. Engagement in this struggle is positive and results in a responsible learning, thinking, and spiritually vibrant community (2001b: par. 20).

As will be seen throughout the study, the divergent religious philosophies of the Haredi and Modern Orthodox streams of Orthodox Judaism have managed the process of pedagogic change in different ways. Each has established its own pedagogic centres, teacher training courses and educational material.

1.1.3 The Changed Educational Landscape

The overwhelming upheavals that have altered the social realities of contemporary Jewish life have had their impact on every stream of Orthodox schooling. The reality is that the great majority of even Haredi Orthodox children in the Diaspora are being educated in schools very different than those of their European forbearers.

1.1.3.1 Introduction of Secular Studies

The most radical educational change has been the inclusion of general secular studies in the syllabus of Jewish schools. This transformation began in Western Europe already in the 18th century. In 1778 the first modernist school, *Chinuch Nearim*, was established in Berlin (Eliav 1966: par. 8). In the first quarter of the 19th century, the various German States imposed a syllabus of compulsory secular education on all Jewish schools as a means to "Germanize" them in anticipation of their emancipation. The doors of German schools were also opened at that time to Jewish students and by the end of the century the vast majority of Jews were enrolled in them (Eliav 1966: par. 16).

With emancipation, unprecedented professional, business and academic opportunities opened to the educated Jew. Parents were understandably preoccupied with attaining

the best secular education for their children. The eminent historian Cecil Roth vividly describes the effect of these new opportunities on the Jewish community:

> Like a cork released under water, they forced their way to the surface after having been depressed for so long. Like water spilled on uneven ground, they followed the contours of the soil, took advantage of every opening, and flowed irresistibly into every gap (1940: 48).

Religious education was often relegated to a 'Sunday School' model, which emerged during this period (Eliav 1966: par. 16). To attract students, Orthodox day schools in Germany were compelled to incorporated secular studies in their curriculum, along the philosophic lines articulated by Rabbi Hirsch (cf. 1.1.2.1).

1.1.3.2 Mass Upheaval and Emigration

From the 1880's masses of Eastern European Jews immigrated to the United States, South Africa and other havens from persecution. The vast majority of these new immigrants enrolled their children in the Public School system to speed their process of acculturation and economic advancement.

With just a few notable exceptions, Jewish education was not a priority for these harried immigrants, and certainly not for their children. A study commissioned by the New York Jewish Community in 1909 found that only 23% of New York's 170,000 school-age Jewish children were receiving any form of Jewish education whatsoever. The teachers in the after-school Hebrew schools that did function were notoriously unqualified and underpaid. There was no standardization of curriculum or of texts. There was also no system of supervision (Sachar 1992:189-90).

The significant history of Jewish education in the United States can be said to begin with the proliferation of Jewish day schools post WWII (Waxman 2003:411-413). The first Jewish day school in South Africa was King David Linksfield, founded in Johannesburg in 1947 (King David Linksfield 2005 [online]).

1.1.3.3 New Curricular Considerations

Virtually all of these day schools were founded on the basis of a dual curriculum of religious and secular studies (Waxman 2003: 412). The requirement to pursue a dual curriculum dramatically reduced the time-allotment for Jewish Studies in the Orthodox school. The Shulchan Aruch (cf. 1.9) prescribes that children should be taught Torah, exclusively, throughout the day and even a little into the night (Karo 1977:Yoreh Deiah 245, 11). In contrast, even in the contemporary Haredi Orthodox day school, the average allocation for Jewish studies has been greatly reduced. This change alone has necessitated the rethinking of instructional methodology (Dessler 1954a:362).

In addition, strain has been placed on this truncated time allotment to accommodate the inclusion of new subject disciplines, in order to meet unprecedented needs in the Orthodox community. For example, to strengthen their religious identity, modern children have to be inspired with the meaning of the daily prayers and not only to be trained in their recital. This has necessitated the inclusion of prayer book study in the curriculum (Fishman 2004:10).

Zionism and identification with the State of Israel have become central features of Modern Orthodoxy (Bieler 1999: par. 29). Consequently, in Modern Orthodox schools, Hebrew language and culture have been given increased curricular focus (Bieler 1999: par. 30). Hebrew language instruction has increased for non-ideological reasons, as well (cf. 2.4.5.2).

As part of a world trend, the onus of moral education has been shifted from the home to the classroom (Bennet 2000:523-525). This holds true for the Jewish classroom as well (Wolf 1954: 40). Thus, the study of ethics and values has been incorporated into the primary school curriculum as discreet subjects or as school projects. These and other subject areas vie for precious classroom time.

1.1.3.4 Student Exposure to Secular Methodologies

Moreover, the contemporary student's exposure to the style and structure of secular learning can alter the ways in which he approaches his religious studies. This also has necessitated the rethinking of instructional methodology.

For example, while student assessment through written testing and grading is the rule in the general studies classroom, it was not a prominent feature of traditional Eastern European Jewish education (Kotler 1996a:168).

The Talmud, in fact, does not prescribe any specific method of testing.   Maimonides, in the 12th Century C.E., does mention a teacher's obligation to teach and reteach until the student understands, but does not indicate any specific method of assessment:

> The teacher shouldn't get angry or upset with the students even if they didn't understand what he said, but he should go back over the matter and reteach it, even many times, until they fully understand the depth of the law (1991a :4,1).

The Shulchan Aruch, in the 16th Century C.E., also omits any reference to a methodology of assessment (Karo 1977:Yoreh Deiah 246,10). Yet, in a dual curriculum system, if Torah subjects are not tested and marked, they can lose importance in the eyes of the student who has been conditioned to make the grade in their secular subjects. (Kotler 1996a:168). This is but one example of how student exposure to secular methodologies impacts on his approach to Jewish studies.

A specific challenge of the 21st Century is determining the criteria for the appropriate integration of new computer and distance learning technologies into the Jewish classroom. (cf. 4.9)

1.1.3.5 The Influence of Society

There are societal issues as well. The rigour of diligent review required for mastery of traditional learning runs against the grain of modern views of childhood (Bennet 2000:540-542). Even the most religious of parents may not be supportive of the

longer school hours necessary for achievement through traditional methods. Furthermore, the modern parent views extramural activities as a central element of their child's development (Bennet 2000: 547). These activities will compete with Torah study for the precious commodities of student time and interest.

Even religious children are enmeshed in the general cultural environment that encourages instant gratification. This has impact on the contemporary classroom, as exposure to electronic media changes the way students approach the learning process (DeGaetano 1996: par. 2). Consequently, children may weary more easily with study that is not liberally spiced with fun. Surely this new reality challenges traditional Torah education to explore and to innovate.

1.1.4 Torah Education: Methodologies and Religious Qualities

In order to understand the specific issues of pedagogic change in their context, we must first be aware of the classical methodologies of Torah education. We must also be aware of the spiritual qualities inherent in the study process as a religious act.

1.1.4.1 Oral Teaching

According to the Mishna (cf.1.9), Moses received an oral teaching from G-d at Sinai, which he taught to Joshua (Avot:1,1). This teaching was transferred orally, from teacher to student for a period of about 1500 years. The Halacha forbade the writing down of this oral tradition. Because of the fear of the loss of the oral tradition during times of Roman persecution, this restriction was relaxed somewhat (Talmud: Temura 14b).

The qualities of orality are manifold (cf. 2.2.1). One of the central challenges of contemporary education is the preservation of the flavour of teacher/student interaction in an increasingly textual and even media-based classroom (cf. 2.2.3).

1.1.4.2 Memorization and Teaching for Thinking

The memorization of Torah learning is a Biblical Commandment (Mishna Avot:3,10). Before the introduction of texts and the advent of the printing press, memorization was of indispensable importance. Even today it remains a valued achievement.

But, as more and more of the Oral Tradition has been committed to writing, the development of thinking skills in students has ascended in importance (Kanievsky 1986:15). Indeed, according to the great 19th Century rabbinic leader, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the development of analytic skills can be seen as the central objective of Torah education in contemporary times (Lipkin 1979: Letter 18).

1.1.4.3 Textbooks, Abridgement and Translations

In traditional Torah education, a young student of 5 or 6 years is introduced to the same sacred texts that he will encounter as an adult in the synagogue and study hall. Familiarity with adult texts is an educational goal in itself (Sherman and Zlotowitz 1991:xxv).

Yet these texts are often crowded with confusing vocalization and cantillation marks. Moreover, they are often made up of large blocks of print with minimal punctuation and no graphic aides. Though there would be legitimacy in producing a visually friendly text style for initiate readers, perhaps this step might undermine the identification of the students with holy texts in their traditional form.

Abridgement of classic texts or the selection of more accessible and relevant sections for anthologies makes a lot of sense for contemporary initiates. But these strategies were opposed by rabbinic authorities at the turn of the last century (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:17 in Bronstein 2001) and remain controversial today (cf. 2.8). The use of texts in translation in the classroom is also a matter of debate (cf. 2.8.1).

1.1.4.4 Hebrew Language Instruction

A central outcome of Torah education in the Diaspora is the mastery of the Hebrew language necessary for the study of primary Biblical and other Judaic texts. Yet, Hebrew language proficiency, historically, has never been an end in itself. Rather, its significance has been as a tool to derive meaning from sacred texts (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:8-9, in Bronstein 2001). It also has value for the proper pronunciation of the prayers, the public reading of the Torah in the synagogue and for the scholar's eloquent communication of Torah thoughts (Bachrach 1997:123).

In Eastern European educational tradition, it was deemed sufficient to provide children with a working knowledge of the Holy Tongue, gleaned indirectly from intensive exposure to Hebrew texts and the rote repetition of phrasal translations in the child's vernacular. By osmosis, the students would pick up translation skill and steadily achieve competency and even mastery of the process (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:7, in Bronstein 2001).

What this lengthy method lacks in efficiency and speed it makes up in emotional connection and ambience (Dessler 1954a: 362). Torah educators may be wary of replacing these evocative learning methods with the dry, but effective methods of formal language classes. On the other hand, the need for efficiency might dictate the introduction of Hebrew language instruction as a discrete curricular focus, if time allotment for Torah studies is limited (Dessler 1954a: 362). As will be explored, the study of the holy tongue, ironically, has become a major source of educational controversy because of its association with secularist trends in modern times (cf. 2.4).

1.1.4.5 Spiritual and Religious Qualities

Though the study of Torah can be examined as an academic discipline, clearly its central place as an act of transmission of Jewish faith introduces spiritual and religious qualities as well.

These qualities are manifold and are of overarching importance. In a famous passage, the Sages teach that the Torah is acquired through 48 qualities (Mishna Avot:6,6). It is beyond the scope of our study to describe each of these qualities in detail, but essential to the study to understand the general principles underlying them.

Many of them relate to the cultivation of a reverential approach to the holy teachings. This reverence is not meant to suppress the process of questioning. Rather, an assumption of Torah education is that the great depth of the words of the Torah and the Sages should be examined with the care they deserve.

Several of the 48 qualities relate to the dynamics of the relationship between student and teacher and student and peers. Still others relate to the dynamics of student as teacher. These dynamics are critical to the learning process.

Listening skills, questioning skills and thinking skills are featured prominently alongside qualities of intellectual integrity, such as the value of citing sources.

Love of learning and other emotional values are considered just as important as academic considerations. The preservation of these qualities and others are essential criteria for the management of pedagogic change and are explored in greater depth in the study (cf.2.9).

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The contemporary Orthodox Jewish educator finds himself in a quandary regarding the adoption of innovative techniques. If he adopts new methodologies uncritically he may be tampering with the ambience and unique outcomes of the Torah study he is trying to enhance. On the other hand, an equally uncritical conservatism may tempt him to reject unnecessarily the very innovations crucial to achieve those outcomes in the changed circumstances of modernity. His challenge then is to choose the right tools to facilitate learning in a changed school and societal setting, without compromising the authentic flavour of tradition.

Unfortunately, the teacher may not be equipped to meet that challenge. Though surely every Jewish studies teacher has himself received a Jewish education, this does not mean that he will be conscious of the philosophic underpinnings of a process he experienced as a child. Moreover, a growing number of educators have not been brought up through the system, as they have only commenced their Jewish education as adults. There is a clear need to educate our educators about the essential qualities of Jewish education and the criteria for pedagogical change.

The quick pace of societal change in recent times means that even the best educators may also not necessarily be aware of the affect of current social realities on the learner and the learning process. Attention span, work ethic, and parental support are just a few factors that have undergone radical change in recent decades (cf. 2.6). The exposure of learners to the methodologies of secular subjects may also affect the way they will approach their Jewish studies. Clearly, the complexity of these issues needs to be examined and brought to the attention of teachers.

To my knowledge, the criteria for the adoption or adaptation of new methodology into dual-curriculum Orthodox Jewish schools has yet to be clearly defined or articulated. Though, to be sure, authorities in Jewish education have written on these subjects, their insights are to be found in isolated comments scattered among their works, and thus have not received wide publication. Much of the rabbinic guidance to contemporary educational leaders has been delivered orally due to the ever-changing dynamics and volatility of the subject. There is a need to gather and articulate this guidance.

The various streams of Orthodox Judaism have managed the process in your own way by accentuating different precepts in classical Jewish teaching. There is a need, then, to clarify for the educator, which new methodologies are in consonance with the stream of Orthodoxy he is representing.

The research problem can then be summarized in the following questions:

a) What are the classical methodologies and religious qualities of Orthodox Jewish education and which of these can be classified as essential?

b) How do the changed social realities of contemporary society affect the learning process and call for new approaches appropriate to Orthodox schooling?

c) How is traditional Jewish learning affected by a student's exposure to the methodologies of his secular subjects in a dual-curriculum school?

d) How do the divergent educational philosophies of the various streams of Orthodoxy impact the choice of methodologies followed in their schools?

e) How are the criteria for the management of pedagogic change in contemporary Orthodox Jewish schooling determined?

f) What are the guidelines for the appropriate integration of new technologies into the learning process?

g) What place does Hebrew language instruction have in the contemporary syllabus?

h) What are the classic and contemporary Judaic attitudes towards teacher training?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this investigation are formulated as follows:

a) The investigation aims to define the classical methodologies and religious qualities of Orthodox Jewish education and to determine which of these can be classified as essential.

b) It intends to arrive at an appreciation of the current dynamics of Jewish society in historic context and how they impact on the learner and the learning process.

c) It examines how methodologies encountered by learners in their general studies classes influence the way they approach their Torah studies.

d) It seeks to investigate which new methodologies are being implemented in the classroom to meet the needs of contemporary learners. It also compares how the process of this implementation is managed in Haredi and in Modern Orthodox Schools.

e) The investigation aims to clarify the process and criteria by which new methodologies can be adjudged to be in consonance with the special qualities of Orthodox Jewish education.

f) Guidelines are adduced for the appropriate integration of new technologies into the Jewish classroom.

g) The history of the inclusion of Hebrew language instruction in the Jewish curriculum is studied for insight into its implementation today.

h) It aims to survey classical and contemporary attitudes towards teacher training and to explore the need for a more professionalism in the field.

1.4 POSITION OF RESEARCHER

I am an ordained Orthodox rabbi who has served as a teacher and principal in various Jewish schools in Israel, the United States, Mexico, and South Africa over the past 25 years. I have been involved in early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary Jewish education, both formal and informal. Most of my pedagogic training has been on-the-job or through conferences and professional consultation with seasoned educators.

Before commencing my rabbinic studies, I matriculated from a Government High School in Los Angeles and studied for a year as an undergraduate at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. My Jewish education and family affiliation were with the Conservative Movement (cf. 1.9), a non-Orthodox liberal stream of Judaism. Thus I

could not draw directly from the model of my own schooling to orient me as an Orthodox educator.

My broad secular background has enabled me to think creatively about adapting successful educational methodologies I encountered in my schooling for an Orthodox setting. My Orthodox training, conversely, alerted me to think critically about the appropriateness of those methodologies to the unique spirit of Orthodox schooling. As a teacher and principal, I have long felt the need for a deeper understanding of methodological issues from a religious standpoint.

Though I have endeavoured in my research to treat the subject of educational reform with a spirit of unbiased enquiry, my stated objective is not to question the axioms of traditional Orthodox educational philosophy, but rather to understand the internal practical dynamics of religious schooling and its encounter with contemporary societal and educational realities.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Gender Considerations

While the subject of pedagogical change in contemporary Orthodox schooling for girls falls within the parameters of our research, its complexity deserves an extensive independent treatment beyond the scope of our study. Thus, though much of the study is applicable to boys and girls equally, some of its data will only be relevant to the traditional Talmudical education of boys (cf. 2.1.2).

1.5.2 Non-Orthodox Jewish Education

The educational policies of the Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism will only be addressed tangentially, as a thorough discussion of the radically different premises of these philosophies is outside the scope and purpose of our study.

1.5.3 Israel and the Diaspora

Though I began my career in Israel, for the past 23 years I have been active in Jewish education in various Diaspora communities. Though many of the aspects of the study may be pertinent to contemporary education in Israel today, my professional experience does not equip me to define that pertinence with precision.   Moreover, there are many unique aspects to Israeli society and schooling requiring separate study and exposition. Therefore, I focused on contemporary Orthodox schooling in the Diaspora

1.5.4 The Central and Eastern European Educational Tradition

The vast majority of Diaspora schools are based on the educational traditions of Central and Eastern European Ashkenazi Jewry. Moreover, most of the Haskalah challenge to traditional Jewish education and Orthodox response and adaptation have taken place in the European theatre. Though reference was made to the Spanish educational tradition of Sephardic Jewry, the study focused on the change process in schooling based on the Central and Eastern European model.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Literature Study

A literature study was conducted examining the root philosophies of Jewish education from Biblical and Talmudic sources as they have been understood historically and, more importantly, how they have been understood and applied from the 19th Century. This gave the necessary background to appreciate the essential qualities of traditional Jewish education and its encounter with the rise of modern pedagogy in the general society. The many Hebrew references in the study have been translated by the researcher, except where otherwise noted.

1.6.2 The Interview of Key Informants

Key informants were interviewed in order to research the present state of expert opinion on the issues that emerged from the literature study. The interviews were recorded face-to-face, based on an informal interview guide (Appendix H). Their comments were then transcribed and submitted to them for their corrections and ratification. The validated comments were then analysed thematically and discussed in Chapter Four.

1.6.2.1 Torah Umesorah Organization

Some of the informants were leaders of the "Torah Umesorah" educational network of the United States and Canada. This organization was founded in 1948 as an institutional umbrella for Orthodox dual curriculum schools that face the challenges germane to our study. Over more than a half century, the rabbinic board of this body has wrestled with issues of pedagogic transition. Though Torah Umesorah is an umbrella for all streams of Orthodoxy, its own educational philosophy and leadership are Haredi.

1.6.2.2 The Lookstein Centre

I also interviewed leading educationalists in the Modern Orthodox stream of schooling. In this regard, I studied how pedagogical change is managed by the Lookstein Center in Israel. The Lookstein Center of the School of Education at Bar Ilan University is a service and research centre committed to enhancing the quality of Jewish education in the Diaspora. The centre seeks to develop and facilitate programmes and projects, which reflect and encourage ongoing growth and learning, and thereby enhance the knowledge and practice of Jewish educators and the efficacy of programs in Jewish schools and other Jewish educational settings (Lookstein.org 2005 [online]).

Like Torah Umesorah, the Lookstein Center is an umbrella organization serving all streams of Orthodox schooling. In written correspondence, Dr. Eli Kohn, Director of Curricular Development at Lookstein, maintained that "the majority of Lookstein Center staff come from a modern orthodox orientation but this is not the policy of the Center as such" (2006).

1.6.3 Analysis of Sample Lesson Plans and Educational Material

Both Torah Umesorah and the Lookstein Center operate file-sharing websites filled with sample lessons and educational materials submitted from teachers in the field. The researcher analysed a sample of these submissions to show how they reflect divergent approaches of these organizations towards the adoption of modern methodologies in the actual classroom.

1.7 BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The benefits of this study are manifold. As demonstrated in the study, Jewish education has always adopted and adapted new methodologies, congruent with its spirit, to adequately respond to the exigencies of contemporary educational conditions. However, the dynamics of that change process have not been comprehensively investigated and analysed. The contemporary educator may thus be poorly prepared to critically assess the propriety of adopting methodology from non-Jewish sources. As the process and criteria of appropriate innovation are clarified, Jewish educators will be better equipped to engage in innovation with greater confidence. Conversely, they will use these criteria to guard against the inclusion of inappropriate methodologies.

Moreover, it is hoped that the richness of the classic educational philosophies of the Bible and the Talmud and their application in contemporary schools will prove instructive for other educational cultures, with a shared dynamic, in search of a successful model for the management of their process.

1.8 BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

I have utilized the Harvard style of referencing. Several classical Hebrew works are traditionally referenced in Judaic scholarship by standard chapter divisions and not by pagination. This methodology is accepted practice in regards to Scriptural referencing (Burger 1992). I have utilized it for other classic Judaic texts such as the Talmud, the Mishna, Maimonides and Shulchan Aruch.

The investigation drew from many online journals that lacked conventional pagination. The UNISA Harvard referencing guidelines for such cases have been followed (University of the West of England 2006 [online]).

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Ashkenazi- Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.

Cheder – [káydər, kháydər] an elementary Jewish school in which children are taught to read the Torah and other books in Hebrew (Merriam Webster [online] 2006).

Chumash – the Five Books of Moses or a book thereof.

Classical codes – summaries and decisions regarding Talmudic law, published from the 11th – 16th Centuries by various authorities.

Conservative Judaism – A religious movement that seeks to conserve essential elements of traditional Judaism but allows for the modernization of religious practices in a less radical sense than that espoused by Reform Judaism (Encyclopædia Britannica 2005a [online]).

Halacha - In Judaism, the body of law regulating all aspects of life, including religious ritual, familial and status, civil relations, criminal law, and relations with non-Jews. Halacha is the term used to designate both a particular ordinance and the law in the abstract. The adjective halachic means "of a legal nature." The plural,

halachot, designates a collection of laws (The Columbia Encyclopedia 2001-2004 [online]).

Gadol; Gedolim; Gedolei Yisrael – lit. Great Ones. Senior Torah authorities.

Hassidism - Pietistic and mystical movement in Judaism that originated in 18th-century Poland. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2005d [online]).

Karaite Judaism - or Karaism is a Jewish denomination characterized by the sole reliance on the Bible, and the rejection of the Oral Law (the Mishnah and the Talmud) as legally binding (Wikipedia [online] 2006).

Lehrhaus - an innovative Jewish Free University in Weimar Germany, which produced many prominent Jewish intellectuals. The school's goal was to promote Jewish literacy and involvement (Wikipedia [online] 2006).

Lithuanian Yeshiva Movement – A yeshiva is a tertiary academic institution for higher Talmudic studies modelled on the academies of Babylonia that produced the Babylonian Talmud (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2005c [online]). The superior standards and methodologies of the pre-war Lithuanian Yeshivas were considered the 'ivy league' of Yeshivas and serve as models for post-Holocaust schools.

Mishna – Written compilation and redaction of Oral Law by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi (ca. 2nd Cent. C.E.).

Orthodox Judaism – Adherent to 13 Principles of Faith, including the belief in the immutability of Torah Law and the authority of the Talmud.

Reform Judaism - Judaism marked by a liberal approach in nonobservance of much legal tradition regarded as irrelevant to the present and in shortening and simplification of traditional ritual (Merriam-Webster [Online] 2005).

Rosh Yeshiva – Dean of a Yeshiva.

Sephardi – Jews descended from Spanish, Near Eastern and North African backgrounds.

Sephardic Yeshiva Movement – A Yeshiva movement modelled on the Yeshivas of Baghdad serving Jews of Near Eastern and North African backgrounds.

Shulchan Aruch - The most authoritative of the classical codes. Compiled by Rabbi Joseph Karo in the 16th century, it forms the basis of all further discussions of practical Jewish law.

Talmud – Authoritative compendium of Torah law, compiled and redacted in Israel and Babylonia in the 4th and 5th Centuries.

Torah – In a strict sense: the Five Books of Moses. For the purposes of this study the term is used in its wider sense: the teachings of Judaism as embodied in Scriptural and Rabbinic writings.

Yeshiva – Academy of adult Talmudic study.

1.10 CHAPTER DIVISIONS

The second chapter is a literature study exploring the qualities of Jewish education, its classical methodologies and the training of teachers in historical context. The effects of the transition from oral teaching to textual study are explored in depth. The study also examines the affect of the changed societal reality of modernity on the contemporary learner and the resultant curricular considerations and methodologies it has spawned.

In the third chapter, an exposition of the qualitative methodology chosen for the empirical investigation is provided. The chapter focuses on the design of the study, including the criteria for the selection of key informants, and the method of data collection and its analysis. The chapter also assesses the reliability and validity of the data and attendant ethical issues.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the empirical investigation.

The fifth chapter summarizes the research and its main findings. Recommendations are offered to educators and administrators and suggestions are made for areas of further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 VINTAGE WINE IN NEW VESSELS

The act of teaching Torah is a Biblical Commandment (Maimonides 1991a:1,1) and is therefore governed by immutable halachic principles. Nevertheless, the appropriate application of those principles requires constant re-examination and adjustment. Indeed, the practice of teaching Torah has undergone many controlled changes over its long history, in response to changes in educational conditions. The wine of Torah is of ancient vintage, yet it may be best appreciated when served in new vessels.

2.1.1 The Biblical Model

In order to understand these changes, we first must examine the original Biblical model of teaching as understood by its Eastern European practitioners. According to the Talmud, Moses received at Sinai a comprehensive interpretation of the Written Torah, directly from the Almighty (Maimonides 1991d). The Talmud refers to this revelation as the Oral Torah, in that it was transmitted orally from teacher to student through the generations (Mishna Avot: 1,1).

Every father is commanded to personally teach his child as soon as he is old enough to speak and to repeat, even without understanding, selected Biblical passages, which are fundamental to Jewish faith (Maimonides 1991a: 1,6). At this time the father also began to speak to his child in the Hebrew language as a means to facilitate reading at a later stage (Tosefta: Chagigah 1,3).

2.1.2 Educational Timetable

 The Hebrew alphabet was introduced at around the age of 3 (Midrash Tanchuma: Vayikra:19,23) and generally by the age of 5 the child achieved fluency in reading

(Mishna Avot:5,21). For the next five years the children were taught to read and memorize the 24 books of the Biblical canon. This memorization was necessary, because the vowels and cantillation marks found in the printed Hebrew Bible today are not found in actual Biblical scrolls, as they are part of the Oral Torah. This mastery was important because, as adults, they would have to refer to these texts and interpret their nuances (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993:1,1).

From the age of 10 until 15 the child was orally taught the six orders of the Mishna and memorized them without recourse to texts (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993:1,1). The Mishna was memorized without significant analysis, as premature analysis was seen to lead to immature conclusions and learning difficulty (Talmud: Avodah Zarah 19a).

At 15 the young man was introduced to the thinking skills, which would enable him to analyse and interpret the mass of data that he had absorbed in his childhood (Mishna Avot:5,21). This 'Teaching for Thinking" methodology is called Talmud (Maimonides 1991a: 1,13). The compilation of these interpretations is also called Talmud (cf. 1.9).

From a developmental perspective this timetable makes a lot of sense. The mind of the 5 year old is ideally suited for the reading, repetition and basic translation skills involved in elementary Scriptural study. For 5 years the child masters the Biblical canon. Fortuitously, the 10-year-old mind is then ideally suited to understand and memorize the factual information of the Mishna. By 15, the active mind of a young man and begins to relish the mental challenge of discussion and analysis (Ibn Machir 1975:189-191).

2.1.3 Societal and Legal Background

The tremendous physical, emotional, and financial commitment from parents, teachers and children that maintained this educational system was underpinned by a religious society that valued the "Crown of Torah Study" above the "Crown of Royalty" (Mishna Avot: 6,6). No other pursuit or interest was allowed to compete

for the child's attention or aspiration. School-going children were freed from participation in economic life and civic duties and could not be disturbed from their studies "even for the building of the Temple" (Talmud: Shabbat 119b).

Historic legislation from the 1st century C.E. ensured universal public education for boys funded from public taxes (Talmud: Baba Bathra 13a). Children studied from the morning and even into the evening throughout the six-day workweek and reviewed their learning for some time on the Sabbath (Maimonides 1991a: 2,2).

These values were promoted in powerful ways by supportive social norms. A wealthy man was awarded inferior synagogue honour if he was unlearned (Karo 1977:Orach Chaim:136,1) and his daughters were considered less eligible, despite their potential dowry (Talmud: Pesachim 49b).

2.1.4 Secular and Trade Education

Literacy and numeracy were almost universal in Jewish society (Roth, 1940: 45), even though secular studies were not formally incorporated in the school syllabus of Eastern European society (Shulman, 1986: 84). Secular subjects were studied on a need to know basis as a preparation for a trade or to facilitate the practical application of Torah law. As such, they were seen as the "Handmaidens of Torah" (Landau 1965: 293-295), much as they were perceived as the "Handmaidens of Philosophy" in a classical secular education.

The lure of financial success was not allowed to draw the children from attention to their studies in their formative years. Indeed, according to the prescription of the Sages the pursuit of livelihood generally only began in earnest from the age of 20, in a society where young men married at 18 or earlier (Mishna Avot 5,21). Even then, Torah scholarship continued as the main aspiration of young workingmen. Ideally, a man would ply his trade for 3 hours daily and devote a remaining 9 hours to furthering his studies (Maimonides, 1991a: 1,12).

In short, no other study was allowed to splinter the singular Torah focus of the school-going children.

2.1.5 Home Schooling and Public Education

This original form of education seems to have continued for approximately 1500 years, until the redaction of the Mishna in the 3rd Century C.E. No major recorded change is recorded except for the decree of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Gamla in the 1st Century C.E., which guaranteed universal public education for boys, by teachers paid from public funds (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a). Ironically, this enlightened legislation, which would have to wait close to two millennia for an echo in our modern world, was considered a giant step backwards from the Father/Son transmission, which it supplemented, and to a great degree supplanted. Class size was limited to 25 students unless an apprentice teacher was employed (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a).

Even after this change a father was still charged with the early education of his child including the teaching of the 'aleph-bet' (Isserles 1977:Yorah Deiah:245:6), the teaching of reading and familiarizing his child orally with Biblical verses (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993 1:1) and the Holy Tongue itself (Tosefta: Chagigah 3,1). At the age of 6 or 7, depending on the physical and mental readiness of the child, he was enrolled in school under the tutelage of a professional teacher (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a).

The term 'professional' is used here advisedly, as we have no record of any prescribed training or licensing procedures (cf. 2.7). Rather, prospective teachers were commonly apprenticed to experienced 'professionals' like other craftsmen (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a). Even established teachers would seek the counsel of the Sages on educational matters to perfect their craft (Talmud: Ketubot 50a). The term 'professional' is also too clinical to describe a persona charged with transmitting the soul of knowledge along with its body, in *imatio dei* (Hutner 1975:7-10).

New teachers or schools were allowed to open their doors in direct competition with established institutions. This seemingly ruthless spirit of free enterprise was sanctioned by law, based on the maxim 'The competition of sages increases wisdom' (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a). Thus, parents were free to move their children to a more effective teacher without ethical compunction (Karo 1977: Yorah Deiah 245,16) . Additionally, local rabbinic authority was charged with school supervision with full disciplinary powers including dismissal (Karo 1977 Yorah Deiah 245,18).

2.1.6 Conclusion

The act of teaching, in Judaism is a religious act, ordained by Biblical commandment. This system was originally a father/son transmission, until the need developed for universal public education in the 1st Century C.E., under the supervision of the Sages. The classical methodologies for the mastery of the Written and Oral Teachings, were governed by a strict timetable and clearly defined objectives. Supportive societal values and structures sheltered and nurtured this disciplined and intensive educational system, from antiquity until the modern age.

2.2 ORALITY AND TEXTUALITY

The most radical change to this system, with continued ramifications until our day, was the shift from orality to text in the 3rd Century C.E (Maimonides 1991d: 1). This shift has accounted for the eclipse of memorization as the major tool of primary education and the resultant accent on the development of analytic skills. It also challenged educators to preserve the crucial qualities of the original oral tradition in the text-based classroom.

2.2.1 The Qualities of Orality

The Halacha forbade the commitment to writing of oral teaching (Talmud: Temurah 14b) for a variety of reasons, which are pertinent to our enquiry. Though the general

moral and ethical code of the Bible was meant to be broadcast to all of humanity as a Divine universal vision, the fulfilment of the dictates of the Law was the particular covenantal mission of the Jewish people. The oral transmission ensured the inviolability of that covenant (Talmud: Gittin 60b, according to Tosafot commentary ad loc).

Moreover, since potent powers of interpretation were licensed to masters of the Law (Talmud: Baba Metziah 59b), orality allowed the Sages to limit access to an inner circle of worthy disciples (Maimonides 1991a: 4,1). Entrée to learning was democratic and universal; authority was earned and ordained (Talmud: Sanhedrin 5a).

But, perhaps more crucially, orality ensured a nuanced comprehension, born of the relationship and interaction of teacher and student. Where text provides information, orality shares the mind, indeed the gestalt, of the master (Talmud: Berachot 7b). Even practically speaking, many more facets will be communicated in speech without the great effort involved in writing.

2.2.2 The Need for Text

The redaction of the Oral Law to writing in the form of the 'Mishna' was a response to the general upheaval and the systematic assassination of Torah scholars in Israel by the Roman emperor Hadrian, after the failure of the Second Jewish revolt led by the famed Bar Kochva in 135 C.E. As Maimonides explains:

> Why did our holy teacher [Rabbi Yehudah the Prince] do so [to compose the Mishna] and did not leave the matter as it was? Because he saw that there were fewer and fewer students and the persecutions were intensifying and the Roman Empire was spreading and gaining power in the world. And [the people of] Israel were being dispersed to all directions (1991d: 2).

2.2.3 The Preservation of the Essence of Orality

This dispensation was reluctant and therefore only partial. The Mishna was written in a concise cadenced style, suitable for singsong memorization and still required a

living mentor to explain it and put it in context. Moreover, several devices of encryption were utilized in its composition to confuse the uninitiated. The Mishna, then can only be conceived as an aid to orality (Heller 1999:1).

The records of the oral interpretation of the Mishna in the great Academies was eventually redacted and published in the Gemara or Talmud. This unpunctuated compendium of these great debates also required master teachers to develop the prodigious thinking skills necessary to make sense of the subtlety of the arguments and codify the conclusions (Heller 1999:1). Indeed, the history of the Judaic publication until our times can be seen as a hesitant slide from oral teaching to text (Leibowitz 1991).

The hesitancy stems from the need to preserve the positive qualities of the original oral teaching process. The covenantal bond, the communication of subtle intent, the access control to authority and the richness of personal mentoring can somehow be lost in the translation to text. According to A. Selis, it is precisely the qualities of orality that transform learning into a religious experience, as it links the learner with the original experience of Sinai revelation:

> In this setting, the act of learning was imbued with discovery, frustration, conflict, joy and love. In short, the learning was alive. It replicated the most important interaction of all, between the Jewish people and God. Once that learning lost its voice, we became accustomed to teach Mishna from the text, not Torah from Sinai. As educational leaders in *Torah She b'al Peh [Oral Torah]*, we need not retreat into the text for lack of better options. Our pedagogy should be attuned to the struggle between oral transmission and textual knowledge that is inherent in *Torah She b'al Peh*. When we misuse or overuse the vehicle of text, the innocence of orality is violated and the experience of Mount Sinai grows distant. But when we embrace creative possibilities for instruction, we offer our students the potential of a powerful educational experience. (2004: par. 6)

Thus, even with the proliferation of texts and commentaries, after the invention of the printing press, a central outcome of Jewish education is to maintain the essential features of the Oral Law in a text-based classroom. In the 21st century, the challenge intensifies with the increased availability of computer and distance learning (Moeller 1996: 27-29).

2.2.4 The Eclipse of Memorization

The prominence of memorization as an educational focus was directly affected by this change. Originally, the Sages prescribed 5 years for the memorization of the Biblical canon, because the vowel and cantillation markings found in today's printed Hebrew Bibles were originally part of the oral teaching. The Bible was indeed a closed book unless these were taught and memorized word by word. As written and ultimately printed texts became available, other educational goals were given greater time allotment and focus (Kanievsky 1986: 15).

The urgency of memorization was affected as well. The Sages opined that the forgetting of the Oral Torah through neglect in review was a culpable offence worthy of divine punishment (Mishna Avot:3,10). Thus, memorization was a serious religious obligation as well as an educational outcome. After the Oral Torah was preserved safely in writing, the individual student was no longer held responsible for failing to inscribe it on the tablet of is heart (Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, cited in Meltzin 1947: 565). Memorization would always remain as a crowning achievement in learning, but would lose its centrality (Kanievsky 1986: 16).

This shift affected the primary curriculum in a variety of ways. As mentioned, 5 years were given to the memorization of all 24 books of the Bible with their orally transmitted vowels and cantillation. This goal was now superseded by other educational objectives. Over time, in many communities, only the Pentateuch was studied and special emphasis was placed on attaining mastery of those sections quoted extensively in adult Talmud study (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993:1,6).

As the Jewish population spread into a wide Diaspora, Hebrew was no longer the spoken language (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993:1,2). School time was then reallocated to translation into the vernacular and the artifice of reading fluency and comprehension in a second language (Rabbi Aharon of Barcelona 1996: Mitzvah 119). This need also competed with the goal of memorization.

2.2.5 Teaching for Thinking

Most importantly, the defining virtue of the scholar shifted from the possessor of encyclopaedic knowledge to the penetrating analyst (Kanievsky 1986: 15). "Teaching for Thinking' had always been a feature of Jewish education. Indeed, the word 'Talmud' or "Gemara", strictly speaking, does not refer to a book, but to an analytic process (Maimonides 1991a:1,13). Yet, this process was not introduced to students until the age of 15, after the systematic memorization of the Written and Oral Torah (Maimonides 1991a:1,13). This also made sense developmentally, as the immature mind of the younger child is better suited for simple memorization tasks so tedious for an adult. Moreover, the early harvest of childish analysis may yield a stunted fruit. This could hamper the later development of the student (Lowe 1980b: 272).

But, as the educational focus shifted to the development of analytic skills needed for the study of written texts, 'Teaching for Thinking' was introduced in a graded fashion from the age of 8 or 9 when a boy would be introduced to rudimentary Talmud study (Lowe 1980b: 272). From that moment, study of the Pentateuch and even the Mishna was de-emphasised and priority was given to the acquisition of textual and analytic skills (Fisher 1990: 3-5).

2.2.6 Conclusion

The gradual internal evolution of that system from orality to textuality has shifted pedagogic emphasis from content mastery and memorization to Talmudical analysis and the acquisition of thinking skills. This shift has also created the educational challenge of preserving the essential qualities of orality in the text-based classroom.

2.3 STUDY OF THE BIBLE

The historic core of all Jewish primary schooling is the study of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and Writings, which comprise the Jewish Bible [Heb.=Tanach]. But different educational approaches have developed in regards to curricular emphasis and time-allotment afforded their study. Purely educational deliberation on the subject has

been further complicated by Orthodoxy's conflict with Haskalah, Reform Judaism, and secular Zionistic claims to ownership of the soul of the Bible. Moreover, Modern Orthodoxy and Haredi Orthodoxy have responded differently to these modern challenges.

2.3.1 Emphasis on Talmud vs. Bible

In the educational tradition of Central and Eastern Europe, the shift to text also affected the proportional time-allotment for Bible and Talmud study. The Sages had prescribed a three-way division of hours between Scriptural study, Mishna and Talmudic analysis. But, already in 12th Century, the great Rabeinu Tam (Talmud: Kiddushin 30a) reported that prevailing educational custom gave Talmud study almost exclusive curricular focus. Rabeinu Tam's halachic justification of this change was ratified by later Ashkenazic (cf. 1.9) authorities in their codes (Isserles 1977: 146:4) and remains today the accepted practice in schools modelled on European tradition (Epstein 1903: 146, 14).

This early curricular focus on Talmud study, as opposed to the mastery of the Bible or even the Mishna, and the periodic efforts to reform it, deserves some attention as it is at the centre of much contemporary curricular debate.

At least from the time of the disruptive upheavals of the Crusades, the emphasis on Talmud study was a salient feature of Ashkenazi schools throughout the middle ages. Faced with the near destruction of their academies, and the Church's focused attacks on the Talmud, the Ba'alei Tosafot had to preserve their nearly obliterated Talmudic traditions (Beasley 1998: 10). This emphasis was noted critically by the Sephardic Don Isaac Abarbanel of 15th Century Spain, who writes that a 10-year-old should not abandon his Scriptural studies, even after he is initiated into Mishna learning "not like is done by the Ashkenazim" (2004: 371).

This de-emphasis has been the subject of Ashkenazic rabbinic controversy, as well. Though the 16th century authority Rabbi Joel Sirkis criticized the neglect of the other 19 books of the Bible, besides the Pentateuch, Rabbi Shabtai Cohen defended the

neglect as a "holy custom of Israel" as recorded by Rabeinu Tam (cited in Karo 1977: 245:5). Holocaust survivor, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, known as the Satmar Rav, reports that despite efforts of great scholars to bring the Eastern European curriculum in line with the Mishnaic prescription (cf. 2.1.2):

> The custom has already spread these hundreds of years in all the schools under the supervision of all the great rabbis not to learn in this order [the Mishna in Avot], rather they learn Talmud after just several periods of learning Chumash with Rashi. Even the Maharal [Rabbi Lowe] wrote that this was indeed done by the multitude, though he complained bitterly about it (1960: 425).

2.3.2 Reasons behind neglect of Bible study

The pre-eminent 19th Century authority, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter defends the focus on Talmud on the grounds that from the time of the redaction of the Talmud, the process of deriving Halacha directly from the Biblical text is no longer operative. Therefore, the need to master the Biblical canon has been diminished (Lipkin 1979: Letter 18). Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky, former head of Torah Umesorah's Rabbinic Advisory Board, has cited this rationale to justify his recollection that in pre-war Lithuania children were introduced to Talmud at a young age and abandoned the study of Bible even before they had even a superficial understanding of it (1989: 52).

The 12th Century commentator, Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel Ben Meir) opines that this tradition has its roots in the Talmudic dictum "Prevent your children from analysis (Talmud: Brachot 28b)" Though this statement has been interpreted in a variety of ways, Rashbam sees it as referring to analysis of the Biblical text. He explains that the Sages were concerned that the first exposure of young students to Scripture should be through the lens of the Oral Law. This explains the need to study the Oral Law before too much exposure to the Biblical text:

> (Since) the essential sections of Torah are the allusions and explanations that teach us the Aggadot [philosophic sections] and halachot, according to the (differing) methods of exegesis, therefore the earlier commentators. . . did not involve themselves in the in-depth study of the text's simple meaning, as they said, "Hold your children back from 'higayon'", and similarly, 'Study of Bible is an accomplishment, yet not an

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accomplishment; but the study of Oral Law, there is no greater accomplishment then this'. . . (Rashbam, commentary to Genesis 37,2, cited in Beasley 1998:7).

Some contemporary scholars attribute the shift away from Biblical study to the Karaite (cf. 1.9) schism in the 9th Century C.E. The fear of potential heresies affected major curricular changes in the yeshivas. With the Karaites trumpeting their 'unadulterated' Bible, unencumbered by rabbinic commentaries and traditions, the post-Talmudic Babylonian yeshivas reduced their emphasis on Bible study. Bible teachers were warned not to teach the text's simple meaning (Beasley 1998: 8).

Rabbi Chaim ben Betzalel (1515-1588), brother of Rabbi Lowe, blamed "the long and bitter exile" for the conscious decision to emphasize Talmudic studies. He asserted that through the study of the Talmud, at least the fear of G-d would be preserved. Others suggest that the Talmud assumed a commanding role because it deals with the daily laws more relevant to the Jew. Practical observance cannot be adduced directly from the Bible, independent of the Oral tradition. Rav Hai Gaon, post-Talmudic head of the Babylonian Yeshivas in the 10th Century, writes that ". . . correction of practical physical life is accomplished through Mishnah and Talmud study" (Beasley 1998: 5-8).

2.3.3 The Haskalah, Reform Judaism, and Bible Study

Ironically, Bible study became one of the main tools of the Haskalah to undermine traditional Jewish observance. In 1783, the proto-haskalist Moses Mendelssohn published his masterful German translation of the Old Testament with his own commentary, which was not based on traditional rabbinic sources. The commentary accentuated the ethical humanistic aspects of the Biblical vision in consonance with the *zeitgeist* (Brand 1997:72). Mendelssohn announced proudly that his intention was to break the hegemony of the Talmud in Jewish education and to "return the crown of Bible study to its rightful place" (Mendelssohn 1829: 251, cited in Brand 1997:72).

Much of the original ideology of the Reform movement was based on a re-reading of the Prophets as espousing an evolved religious spirit stripped of the archaic ritualism of the Pentateuch and later rabbinic encrustations (Hirsch 1901-1906b).

In reaction to these new challenges, the approach of the Rashbam (cf. 2.3.2) was reinforced by Rabbi Yechezkel Landau of 18th Century Prague:

> It appears to me, since the heretics also study Bible for their own purposes (i.e. – language), if your son studies Bible without supervision, he may have a teacher who is one of '*them*', and he will follow after their empty beliefs. This is true even more so in our time, when the German translation (by Moses Mendelssohn) is so prevalent. . . therefore, R. Eliezer warned us to stay away from Bible, and seat our children at the knees of scholars, who will teach them Mishna and Gemara as well. May Hashem help us! (Landau 1995: Brachot 28b, Translation from Beasley 1998: 18)

2.3.4 Hebrew Revival and the Bible

The early revivalists of Modern Hebrew Literature of the 19th Century adopted a tone and style consciously imitative of the Biblical motif – but with a secular nationalist twist (Brand 1997:73). Biblical figures feature in period literature, but not as pious role models, as they were portrayed by the Sages. Rather they were portrayed as brave military heroes, prototypes of a new self-image for oppressed Jewry.

The adoption of the Biblical style eschewed the Aramaic linguistic additions, which characterized the Rabbinic Hebrew of the Talmudic commentaries. This was a conscious change. For these Hebraists and the schools they created, glorified Bible study as an expression of a pure resurgent Hebraic national culture, shorn of the rabbinic overlay, which was perceived as an encumbrance of the homeless exile (Brand 1997: 73). From this angle, Bible was studied as a means to appreciate the Hebrew language, its grammar and culture and not for its religious content.

This approach was later the basis of the government curricular philosophy of the new State of Israel. Reflecting on the State Educational Law of 1953, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion opined:

We must of necessity give the youth only its choicest essence, namely the Bible. Though we created important works afterward, the Bible has remained the summit of Hebrew creation and has left its mark on the majority of the human race. The renewed confidence in the Jewish individual and the Jewish people, in their capacity to defend themselves drew influence from the restored influence of the Bible, because of the literature of the Haskalah…. The literature of the 19th Century Haskalah restored the Bible to all its glory for Jewish Youth (1972: 407).

2.3.5 Haredi response to emphasis on Bible

The rabbinic response to this new challenge was sharply critical. In the words of Rabbi Yaakov Lipshitz, Secretary to the great Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector of 19th Century Kovno, Lithuania:

And therefore with every reverence that the guardians of the Torah and the keepers of its commandments esteem the Bible, still they do not refrain from casting aspersions at those who cry endlessly: Bible! Bible! As if God forbid no Torah in Israel existed except for the literal portion of the Bible, when this position had already been taken by the Karaites (cf. 1.9), and moreover the Bible in their hands is just a means to expand the Hebrew tongue, and the Hebrew tongue was not so much an end in itself, but rather served the purpose and goal which they found in it for some other end. Which is the opposite not only of the sacredness of the Bible but also the sanctity of the Holy Tongue. . . . The intent of these lovers of Hebrew becomes more explicit in the letter of Minister Uvarov to Tsar Nicholas II . . . published in St. Petersburg in 1871 . . . which runs as follows: 'There is no better means or more appropriate device for eliminating the Talmud from Israel, than by introducing study of the Holy Scriptures and the Hebrew language, its grammar and literature into the general curriculum' (Lipshitz 1923-39, cited in Parush 2004: 199).

In reaction to this threat, the de-emphasis of Bible study, in some circles, became entrenched as ideology, to ward off the secularist influence. But the controversy also spawned a number of great works of Orthodox Biblical commentary, which focused on the demonstrating the legitimacy of classical rabbinic exegesis from grammatical and linguistic principles. The works of "Malbim", "Haketav Ve'Hakabala, Rabbi David Hoffman and Rabbi S.R. Hirsch are examples of this genre (Mirsky 1967:5).

Their work is pertinent to our study as they show how societal challenge creates new methodologies of study in Orthodox education.

2.3.6 Modern Orthodox response to Biblical emphasis

The Modern Orthodox response to the new emphasis on Bible Study, especially in Religious Zionist circles, is in sharp contrast to the Haredi reaction. The nationalist impetus to return to Bible study as an expression of a new distinctly Hebrew culture resonated with the tenets of religious Zionism. Thus, the study of Bible was embraced wholeheartedly as an act of religious renewal. Bible study was seen by Modern Orthodox educators as an important tool to deepen a religious connection with the Holy Land, its history, geography and archaeology (Mirsky 1967:1). Rabbi Y. Sharlo (cited in Beasley 1998: 21), a noted Religious Zionist thinker, asserts that the Bible also provides the precedents to deal with the contemporary political and communal challenges of the nascent State of Israel, which have emerged after two thousand years of homelessness.

Whereas the traditional Ashkenazi school syllabus will be generally limited to the study of the Pentateuch and the early prophets (Assaf 1928:XII), the Modern Orthodox school will pride itself on its extensive focus on Bible [Hebrew: Tanach]. This excerpt from the web-site of a Chicago school is indicative of this approach:

> The primary objectives in the Tanach program are to provide students with the linguistic, literary and critical thinking skills to make the study of Tanach a life-long occupation and to appreciate the centrality of Tanach in determining religious observance and ethical thinking. The Tanach program is a four-year sequence required of all Academy students. Each year, every student must take one course in Chumash and one course in Nach [Prophets and/or Writings] (Ida Crown Jewish Academy 2006 [online]).

2.3.7 The Haredi Approach to Sacred Text

A more fundamental issue about Bible study involves the appropriate approach to sacred text. Historically, Ashkenazi tradition has been to teach Scripture to children

through the lens of rabbinic commentary, based on the Midrashic interpretation of the Oral Law (cf. 2.3.2). The text was not given to free interpretation, rather the learning process involved plumbing the profundity of the commentaries and perhaps offering personal embellishments to traditional ideas. This approach was reinforced for modern times by directives from Rabbi Kagan and other leaders at the turn of the last century (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:6, in Bronstein 2001).

Contemporary Haredi educators underline the importance of this approach for a number of reasons. Foremost in their concerns is the danger of the trivialization of the Bible and the vilification of its revered figures by the unaided student mind. This was expressed most forcefully by in a seminal address in 1960 to Torah Umesorah educators by Rabbi A. Kotler, which has been widely distributed (Kotler 1996b:173-182). A generation after this directive, Rabbi Y. Cooperman, Dean of Jerusalem's Michlala Seminary has observed that those who have taught *Tanach* in the path described by Rabbi Kotler have been privileged to raise generations of observant God-fearing Jews, while those who have chosen the approach of allowing students free interpretation of the text have not been as successful (Cooperman 1978:5-6, cited in Olshin 1999: 9). This comment illustrates the priority given in Haredi education to traditional methodologies that aim to inspire the children to religious devotion.

2.3.8 The Modern Orthodox approach to Sacred Text

Modern Orthodox educators speak about the importance of giving students direct access to the text to hone his personal thinking skills. Olshin (1999: 11) cites Hayes and Holladay (1982, p. 108):

> Exegesis does not consist in consulting various commentaries on a given passage and from these commentaries constructing a single interpretation unifying the various observations and remarks of the commentaries. Approaching exegesis in this fashion only produces a mosaic of commentaries, and ultimately means the interpreter only directly engages the commentaries themselves, while the text is encountered only indirectly, if at all.

This citation in itself is significant of the greater openness of Modern Orthodox educators to adopt new methodologies from outside of the Jewish educational tradition (cf. 2.3.2). Olshin (1999:11) goes on to propose a programme where learners will have direct contact with the Biblical text. The traditional commentators will then not serve as 'middlemen'. In such a system, he asserts, the student cannot be lazy and rely on the commentator to explain the passage. He will thus be encouraged to develop his own understanding and greatly improve his powers of analysis.

2.3.8.1 Modern Orthodox Support from Sephardic Tradition

Direct access to the text will be more likely to produce interpretations of the actions of Biblical figures as emanating from common human dynamics and foibles. This is perceived by Modern Orthodox thinkers as edifying for the child and developmental of his moral sense. Aware that this less reverential approach is a departure from traditional Ashkenazic tradition, these educators seek precedent from commentators from the Sephardic tradition who engaged in extensive literary commentary of the Biblical text independent of the Midrashic gloss. One educator points put that neither Ibn Ezra nor Nachmanides, greatest of the Spanish exegetes, felt the need to apologize for their efforts in understanding the plain meaning of the text (Beasley 1998:7).

2.3.8.2 Attraction to System of "Maharal of Prague"

The openness of the Modern Orthodox to seek new methodologies, coupled with their accentuation of Biblical study has attracted many of them to a revival of the "Maharal System" based on the educational reform programme of Rabbi Lowe (cf. 2.3.1) of 16th Century Poland. This system prescribes the mastery of the Old Testament before beginning Talmud study. Ironically the modernist impulse unites them with some extreme traditionalists who have also revived the "Maharal system" as a return to doctrinal purity!

2.3.9 Haredi Adaptations

Though the Haredi response to the modern call to emphasize Biblical study has been essentially conservative, the need to accommodate the changed student profile has spawned many important adaptations.

2.3.9.1 Focus on Meaning

Before modern times, focus was given to simple translation of the text and the rapid mastery of the factual content of the Pentateuch. In an era imbued with religiosity, educators felt free to assume that the influence of society and the child's later immersion in Talmud study would insure his eventual piety. There was felt to be little need to slow down the learning process by dwelling on the underlying philosophical ideologies of the Bible. The transmission of faith was implicit in the educational process and not a conscious goal.

With the onslaught of modernity, the seamless transmission of faith and devotion could no longer be assumed. The great inspirational movements of Hassidism, Mussar as well as the approach of Rabbi S. R. Hirsch in the West sprung up in response to this new need. Though these movements and the societies which spawned them were very different, each was an attempt to give greater accent to the philosophical, ethical and mystical depth of Jewish observance (Elias 1994: 303).

This need was recognized by school educators as well. As Rabbi A. Wolf puts it "whereas faith was the starting block of previous generations, it has become the finish line of the new" (1954: 41). In his Haredi teaching manual, written in early 20th Century Lithuania, Rabbi E. Yosselovitz accentuates the need for teachers to make Bible study more enjoyable for children by dwelling on the deeper themes (1910: 10). In post–war America, Rabbi A. Kotler lectured to Torah Umesorah teachers about the need to use the Bible lesson as a tool to impress upon children the greatness of their Biblical ancestors and the grandiose spirituality of their deeds (Kotler 1996b: 174).

2.3.9.2 Thorough and Sequential Textual Study

To facilitate this new emphasis, practical changes were made in the Haredi syllabus. Classically, children studied in their classroom the Torah portion, which was to be read in the synagogue that week. The rationale for this syllabus was to establish a deep connection in the hearts of the children between the message of the Torah and the flow of their lives (Freidlander 1992: 121). But this system did not allow teachers to delve into the meaning of the text and forced them to learn superficially and abridge. This problem was noted by Rabbi Lowe as early as the 16th Century (1980b: 272) and has been abandoned in contemporary schools. The study of the weekly portion is presently allocated one or two periods a week in the standard contemporary syllabus and Bible studied in a systematic fashion from Genesis (Dessler 1968: 22).

2.3.9.3 Genesis vs. Leviticus

The initiation of Bible study from Genesis was also an accommodation to new circumstances. The Sages indeed prescribed Leviticus as the beginning text for young learners based on the principle "Let pure ones come and involve themselves with purity [the Temple offerings]" (Midrash Tanchuma 1975: Tzav 14). This was common practice in Ashkenazi schools and codified as Halacha (Karo 1977 Yoreh Deiah 245: Shach 8). Rabbi A. Wolf cites this prescription as an example of how the unique spiritual criteria of Torah pedagogy differ radically from the criteria of general practice (1954: 66). And yet, because of the changed student profile of the post-war Diaspora, Rabbi Z. Schostak, editor of Torah Umesorah's professional journal "Hamenahel [The Principal]" reports:

> Today, many Yeshiva elementary schools select Genesis as a primary text instead of Leviticus because the story content of the former is more appealing to the young mind than the dry, descriptive passages of the latter and also because a chronological order is desirable (1974: 51).

2.3.10 Conclusion

Traditional Ashkenazic education has de-emphasized Bible study for almost a millennium, at least. This de-emphasis has been attributed to the rise of the importance of Talmud study (cf. 2.3.1) and the need to introduce children to the Scripture through the lens of the Oral Law (2.3.2). The revival of Jewish and Hebraic nationalism has provided a new impetus for Bible study, welcomed by Modern Orthodoxy and suspected by the Haredi authorities. But even Haredi authorities have responded to a new need for a more inspirational method of Bible study, though they differ strongly with Modern Orthodox about how to achieve it.

2.4 HEBREW LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Another area that has seen much curricular change in modern times is that of Hebrew language instruction. As the basic texts of Jewish learning are written in Hebrew and its cognate, Aramaic, it would seem axiomatic that its instruction would feature prominently in the syllabus. Yet, ironically Hebrew study has yet to be disentangled from a web of political, religious and educational controversy

2.4.1 Eastern European De-emphasis

As noted (cf. 1.1.4.4), in traditional Eastern European Jewish education, Hebrew was generally not given specific curricular emphasis, except in order to facilitate the reading of the prayers and the study of sacred texts.

The lack of focus given to formal grammatical instruction in Eastern Europe was clearly rooted in a long educational 'osmosis' tradition (Assaf 1925: XII). Even so, the continued viability of this policy had been questioned by Eastern European rabbinic authorities centuries before its cause was taken up by hostile educational reformers (Klein 1990: Responsa 204). But the lack of curricular focus on grammar continued even over the impassioned protests of authorities of the stature of Rabbi

Lowe of Prague and Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz, known as the *Shelah* (Asaf 1925:18-26, cited in Parush, 2004:182).

2.4.2 Sephardic Emphasis

It is important to note also that the study of Hebrew grammar was an integral part of the curriculum of Spanish Jewry (Asaf 1925: XII). The great Spanish authority Maimonides, in his commentary to the Mishna, asserts that its study is in fact a commandment (1168: Avot 2,1). But despite these precedents, debate on the issue of the place of Hebrew language instruction in contemporary schooling has been greatly complicated by larger societal issues.

2.4.3 Secular Hebraist Revival

As mentioned, educational reform was the *cause celebre* of the late-blooming Jewish Enlightenment of 19th Century Eastern Europe (cf. 1.1.2). As part of this *kulturkamf*, the revival of the Hebrew language, stripped of its religious import, spawned a movement with its own educational agenda. Secular Hebraist *Tarbut* schools sprung up in Poland and Russia which emphasised Hebrew study as a substitute vehicle of Jewish cultural expression (Sachar 1958: 492).

Orthodox parents were also inspired by this revival and often lured into nominally religious schools that studied Biblical texts in order to understand Hebrew! This was an exact reversal of the traditional study of Hebrew as an aid to the study of the Bible and was vigorously opposed by rabbinic leaders (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:6-7, in Bronstein 2001).

2.4.4 The State of Israel and Religious Zionism

With the establishment of the secular Hebrew speaking State of Israel, language study has gained prominence as an expression of secular Diaspora identification with Israel, and has been incorporated as an expression of Religious Zionism in the Modern Orthodox curriculum as well. As Modern Orthodox scholar Rabbi Jack Bieler puts it:

Teaching Judaic studies classes in Hebrew–*Ivrit b'Ivrit*–is much more than a pedagogical device to advance a skill that will facilitate study of primary and secondary texts and enable students to understand the prayer book. Teaching in Hebrew is also a resounding ideological statement about the school community's relationship with Israel, and the degree of ease with which students can converse in Hebrew makes aliyah [immigration to Israel] that much more possible. (1999: par. 30)

2.4.5 Haredi Response

In contrast, the Haredi educator may be hesitant to emphasize Hebrew study precisely because it can be seen as de-emphasising its traditional purpose as "a skill that will facilitate study of primary and secondary texts and enable students to understand the prayer book" as Rabbi Bieler puts it (1999: par. 30). And yet even Haredi scholars are faced with new realities that have caused a rethinking of the place of Hebrew as a discrete curricular focus.

2.4.5.1 The "Osmosis" Approach

As noted, the "osmosis" tradition of Eastern Europe was imbedded in a learning environment of long hours of immersion and extensive review (cf. 1.1.4.4). Where these factors are still present many schools have preferred to delay the study of Hebrew grammar until High School, and then to include it only as a minor subject. The Hebrew of modern Israel is consciously neglected because of its historical association as a tool of secularization (cf. 4.7.2). Moreover, many of the Hebrew workbook series available for school use are infused with the spirit of the secular Israeli society, alien to the philosophy of these schools.

2.4.5.2 Inclusion of Hebrew in Syllabus

Other schools have chosen to introduce Hebrew language instruction as a subject in the Judaic curriculum, from an educational and not a Zionistic motivation. They reason that the reduced time allotment for Jewish studies renders the "osmosis" method ineffective. They also reason that the battle lines of the *kulturkamf* with secularism have moved way beyond the old conflict (cf. 4.7.2), as Hebrew has

become the language of school instruction in most Haredi schools in Israel today (Sonnenfeld 1983: 326). Hebrew workbooks sensitive to the cultural background of religious youth, such as the "Leshoneinu" series have been developed for these schools (Knobloch 1977).

2.4.5.2.1 The Researcher's Experience

The personal experience of this researcher in following this approach is instructive. I assumed the position of Shaarei Torah Primary School, Johannesburg in 2001.   At that time the previous Hebrew language policy was ambiguous. The school did have a grammar curriculum in its syllabus, but it was implemented seriously only in the Girls' Department. In the Boys' department it fell out of the syllabus in the Senior Primary phase, as the boys initiated Talmud study. Problems with teacher competency were common and the curriculum was not properly graded.

I decided to allot 3 weekly units for Hebrew in all classes in order to improve the students' mastery of Biblical and other Hebrew religious texts. To insure a graded approach to the curriculum and to give guidance to the less confident teachers, I introduced a workbook series designed for Orthodox children in the Diaspora, which was sensitive and relevant to their religious culture. It also was fun for the children as it approached language study holistically and did not focus narrowly on grammar.

Student progress in the understanding of Biblical and other texts was immediately apparent. The graduating class of 2005, who were the first to follow this programme from its initiation achieved high levels of proficiency and fluency.

2.4.5.3 Hebrew Incorporation in Bible Study

Still other schools have chosen to integrate grammar instruction as part of the Chumash lesson. A popular graded workbook system, which introduces grammar systematically by teaching word attack skills, by Rabbi Y. Wenger has been adapted in many schools from the first grade (Torah School of Greater Washington 2006

[online]). The goal of this type of system is to get across the necessary language skills without forfeiting the flavour of traditional learning.

This approach finds precedent in the writings of veteran educator Rabbi Yisrael Isseral of 19th Century Lithuania. But Rabbi Y. Isseral acknowledged that his system required considerable prior grammatical training for teachers. This was an obstacle, as the teachers themselves were educated in a system which deemphasised grammar (1864:45-47).

Teachers' lacking the competency to teach Hebrew is a commonly encountered problem. The problem is more prevalent among men teachers, whose intensive Talmud background leaves little room for Hebrew in their own schooling (cf. 4.7.4). Women teachers are generally better trained. As Talmud study is absent from the typical traditional curriculum for girls, Hebrew grammar generally receives a more serious treatment in their syllabus. A diploma from the central Teachers Seminary of Beis Yaakov of Krakow, Poland in 1931 lists Grammar and Holy Language as qualifications (Dansky 1994: 133).

2.4.5.4 Incorporation in General Studies

In South African High Schools, Hebrew is at present a recognized matriculation subject and thus falls under the supervision of the general studies department. This strengthens the commitment of the students and justifies more rigorous testing, resulting in greater proficiency. As it takes place during General Studies time, it also frees the Judaic Studies department to focus on other vital subjects. Recent legislative moves to remove Hebrew from the list of approved matriculation subjects are being contested by the South African Board of Jewish Education (Kacev 2006).

2.4.6 Conclusion

The dynamics which were discussed in regards to the divergent approaches to Bible study (cf. 2.3.10) are similar to those which emerged regarding the place of Hebrew in the curriculum. A Secular nationalist educational reform movement displaced

traditional Torah learning with Hebraist scholarship. This impulse was adapted in a "kosher" form, in the spirit of the religious nationalism of Modern Orthodoxy. It was rejected firmly by Haredi Judaism.

However, the truncated time allotment for Jewish studies in the dual curriculum school has rendered the "osmosis" system obsolete, even for Haredi schools. This has led to the inclusion of Hebrew language instruction as a separate subject, incorporated in either the religious or general studies syllabus, or as an integrated part of the Bible study programme.

2.5 THE DUAL CURRICULUM

Many of he fundamental changes in Orthodox education result from the introduction of a dual curriculum of Judaic and General Studies. Among the direct affects are the truncation of the Judaic programme and the exposure to other teaching methodologies. But deeper and subtler issues, involving the clash of educational philosophies and the complexity of curricular integration, have developed as well.

The long history of the relationship between Torah study and secular intellectual pursuit is multifaceted. It is clearly beyond the scope of this study to investigate this controversy. Rather, the study attempts to assess the practical implications of the divergent views of Haredi and Modern Orthodox educators regarding the subject in their management of the change process.

2.5.1 Compulsory Secular Education

Historically, Haredi education in Eastern Europe was singly devoted to Torah education and had no place for the formal inclusion of secular studies in the school day (Asaf 1925: X). However, because of modern government legislation, compulsory general education in all Diaspora schools is the reality, even in the most religious institutions. This reality has been accommodated in various ways.

For some communities, the marriage of the holy and the profane has all the affection of a "shotgun wedding". A minimal secular curriculum is followed and no attempt is made to articulate a philosophy of integration between the two pursuits (Schostak 1974: 54). The diamond trade, shopkeeping and other types of businesses that require no university training are generally pursued by students from these communities in adult life (Pbs.org 1998 [online]).

2.5.2 The Primacy of Torah

Haredi authorities warn about the affects of the inclusion of secular studies in the classroom and caution that Torah learning must maintain its primacy. The responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the preeminent halachic decisor of post-war United States, delineate important guidelines for the Haredi educator. Rabbi Feinstein insisted that Torah studies should be taught in the morning hours and general studies confined to the afternoon, to accentuate the primacy of Judaic learning (Binenfeld 1999:6). Rabbi Feinstein also directed educators to choose carefully the material to be taught in the general studies classroom to ensure that the values taught in the morning were not compromised in the afternoon lessons (Binenfeld 1999:7).

Rabbi A. Wolf, dean of a major women's teacher seminary in post war Israel, noted that for the most part the guidance of the great rabbinic authorities was restricted to such cautionary pronouncements. Rabbi Wolf reports the guidance he received from the great Lithuanian Rosh Yeshiva and Holocaust martyr Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, major disciple of Rabbi Y. M. Kagan. Rabbi Wasserman explained to him that the requirement to study specifically Torah "for it own sake" implied that the study of secular subjects was only legitimate as a means to a practical end and not as a path to enlightenment (Wolf 1954:29).

2.5.3 Lack of Guidelines for Positive Engagement

But these authorities chose not to issue guidelines for a constructive engagement with these studies, nor did they articulate a philosophic basis for their integration in the school day. This omission was a conscious one, as the authorities were concerned that

emphasis on the positive value of secular studies would pull students away from devotion to Torah and towards the pursuit of honour and livelihood in general society (Binenfeld 1999:7).

This omission may have been justified, but it left educators in a quandary as to how to deal with the realities of a dual curriculum.   Moreover, even the guidance which was available, generally addressed only larger philosophical issues and was not expanded upon as to its practical application in the classroom (Wolf 1954: 29).

2.5.4 The Neglected Frontier

This void is highlighted by the title of a recent series of articles in "The Jewish Observer": "General Studies in the Classroom: A Neglected Frontier".   In an introductory article, Mr. Richard Altabe, General Studies Principal of an American Haredi school, reports that in many instances a principal will simply abdicate any proactive role by handing over curriculum decisions to the state or local board of education. His subsequent role is reactive and thus conflictive, as he responds to parental objections to religiously offensive material by entering into a wrestling match with the General Studies department (2004: 6).

 A more proactive approach involves prior censorship of material. But in the words of Altabe "The problem with this approach is that while we may have defined what we do not want taught, it does not mean that we have established a coherent curriculum of material that we do want taught (Altabe 2004: 6).

2.5.5 Rabbi Kaletnik's Research and Recommendation

In response to this dilemma, Rabbi E. Keletnik, both a general studies principal and Judaic studies teacher, undertook a 2-year independent research project under the auspices of Torah Umesorah and with the mentorship of Rabbi D. Leibenstein, veteran supervisor of Chicago's Associated Talmud Torahs, Board of Education. The main thrust of the study's recommendations dealt with the importance of providing a positive attitudinal orientation for students and Jewish studies teachers towards

secular studies. This attitudinal orientation must be in consonance with Torah based principles. For this reason alone the inclusion of the Jewish studies teachers in the process in critical.

The inclusion of the Jewish studies teachers is important for another reason. As their job includes inspiring the students to diligence in Torah studies, they may be prone to attempt to achieve that goal by ridiculing secular studies, along with the materialism of the secular world. But this undermining of the authority of the general studies department generally breeds an undisciplined atmosphere, which undermines all authority. Rabbi M. Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of the Telz Yeshiva of Cleveland, is quoted as having instructed his High School students to apply themselves to their compulsory general studies, lest a negative attitude spill over to other areas of their character (Gruzd 2006).

2.5.5.1 The Positive Orientation to General Studies

The positive orientation is practical. Keletnik and Leibenstein recommend that the students simply be told that a basic knowledge of general studies will be useful to them in the future, even as rabbis and Torah scholars. English, it is explained, is a prerequisite for contemporary rabbis, who need to communicate effectively with an English speaking public. The students are reminded that mathematics is necessary for the many technical subjects of the Talmud.

The study of Science is easily integrated into a Torah worldview. Maimonides asserts that an intellectual appreciation of the wonders of the natural world is indeed a fundamental way of fulfilling the commandment to love the Almighty (1991c: 2,2). The approach to Science in religious schools from this perspective was outlined in the 19th Century by Rabbi S. R. Hirsch:

> Anyone who is familiar with even the general trends of Talmudic literature knows that Talmudic discussion is related to the important areas of mathematics, astronomy, botany, zoology, anatomy, medicine, law and ethics (cited in Schostak 1976:54).

History, according to the classical Spanish commentator Nachmanides, can be seen as a means to develop a deep gratitude to the Almighty for his Divine guidance and supervision throughout the ages (Nachmanides 1976: 356-357). The great leader of pre-war Jewry, Rabbi C. O. Grodzenski wrote that since monumental works of 'revisionist' Jewish history were published by the Haskalah scholars in order to undermine traditional Judaism, the study of History from a Torah perspective to counteract these influences has become an imperative (Grodzenski 1907, cited in Rabinowitz 1986: 28-30).

2.5.5.2 Emphasis on Subjects Relevant to Student's Future

To implement his programme in his own school, Rabbi Keletnik hired a professional educational consultant to redesign the general studies syllabus to give emphasis to the subjects most relevant to the future professions of the students.   Mathematics was given more time as a preparation for general business and accounting career and also for its benefit in the development of thinking skills. The English syllabus emphasized the communication skills of reading and writing over the exploration of literature, as the content and context of Western literature is often in conflict with the religious values of the students.

Because of the scheduling constraints of a dual curriculum, less time was devoted to Social Studies and the sciences. The school promoted Science fairs, spelling bees and oral presentations to increase student motivation (Keletnik 2004:11).   Similar curricular adjustments were arrived at independently and have been the rule at Shaarei Torah Primary School of Johannesburg, where this researcher serves as Principal (Sloot 2006).

2.5.6 The Integrated Curriculum

Notably absent from Rabbi Kaletnik's proposals is any mention of an integrated Judaic / General Studies curriculum. In practical terms, an integrated approach would imply the teaching of General Studies subjects from a religious perspective; for example: emphasizing the Divine wisdom manifest in the Natural Sciences. It also

would entail the coordinated study of related subject matter in the two classrooms. An example of this would be the study of Ancient Egypt as a History and Geography unit before Passover, when the children are learning about the Exodus in Jewish Studies (Schostak 1976: 54).

2.5.6.1 The Hirschian Formula

The modern champion of this ambitious approach was Rabbi S. R. Hirsch of Frankfort. In 1837, Hirsch prescribed:

> The study of both, History and Nature, should start with the Bible and follow it closely, being penetrated with the spirit of the Bible, and everywhere keeping mind and heart in touch with G-d and humanity (1994: 411).

But a little over a century later Rabbi A. Wolf observed that Hirsch's idealistic vision was never fully realized, even in the school that he founded on these principles. This was due to intervention from the Prussian government, but also to obstacles stemming from the need to provide teachers with an elaborate orientation inconsistent with their prior training (Wolf 1954: 24).

Rabbi M. Eiseman, a dean of Ner Israel Rabbinical College of Baltimore, has recently noted that Hirsch's model was designed as a response to the high intellectual culture of 19th Century Germany and that the present student profile demands a less cerebral approach (Eiseman M. 2004: 14).

2.5.6.2 The Modern Orthodox Formula

Modern Orthodox proponents of an integrated curriculum value its intellectual component as a way of teaching religious children how to successfully navigate the turbulent waters of modernity. In the view of these thinkers, schools in which "the general and the Jewish are at best put side by side mechanically and not combined organically" are failing to prepare their students for the "real world". For "the air they [the students] will breathe will be the air of the American variant of Western culture. The vice of the day school is that it ignores Western culture" (Himmelfarb 1969: 214)

Researcher M. Genuth defines the integrated curriculum as "the 'Holy Grail' of curriculum research on Jewish Education (2001:1). According to Genuth, the integrated curriculum seeks to provide contemporary students with a "modern scientific and academic knowledge, while at the same time, fostering within them a unified and coherent set of cognitive skills and beliefs about their lives as Jews in a modern world" (2001:1).

Haredi educators, such as Rabbi Kaletnik tend to see the integrated curriculum mainly as the incorporation of Judaic values in the secular programme. But the cross-pollenization, according to Modern Orthodox proponents of integration, is much more than simply the reconciliation of apparent conflicts between Torah and Science. It is seen as a process where:

> The philosophical foundations of both science and Torah are analyzed for their similarities and differences, and a scheme for defining a 'higher common denominator' in the form of the Symbolic language of the two fields is developed. This 'common denominator' is then shown to be the basis for creating a curriculum in which the 'foundational and metaphysical tenets' of modern science can serve as explanatory instruments for the most difficult and abstract Torah concepts, especially concerned with the doctrinal beliefs of Judaism (Genuth 2001:2).

This resonates with Rabbi S. Berman's definition of *Torah U'madah* "We are required to engage with and study both Torah and other knowledge in order to properly achieve love and fear of God" (cf. 1.1.2.2).

2.5.6.3 The Dangers of Curricular Integration

The approach outlined by Genuth is in sharp contrast to the guidance of Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (cf. 2.5.2), as it implies that the study of secular disciplines is of intrinsic worth and not merely a concession to practical necessity. It also opens the door to idealizing the study of the "higher common denominator" of secular knowledge as being synonymous with Torah study. This divergence of approach is indeed a continental divide between Haredi and Modern Orthodox curricular thinking. Haredi authorities fear that Torah study will lose its primacy, as greater hours spent in

the General Studies classroom can be justified religiously, from this integrated curriculum perspective, as part of a holistic encounter with divine revelation in its other manifestation (Schostak 1976: 54).

Curricular integration has other dangers as well. Superimposing methodologies of secular literary analysis onto the Biblical narratives can produce grotesque results. As Rabbi M. Eiseman observes:

> I wince at the thought of children, even 12th graders, being asked to analyse the experiences of David and Saul, an exercise which inevitably cuts down these larger-than-Life personalities to bite-sized chunks of pop psychology (2004: 16).

Dr. Beverly Gribetz, Principal of Jerusalem's Evaleyna de Rothschild School, opines that instead of aping the General Studies methodologies, Judaic Studies teachers should rather take advantage of the unique qualities of Torah education:

> Then, we try to teach Talmud in the way that the other subjects that seem exciting are taught. That's the problem in the American yeshivas and American yeshiva high-schools, where there is *limudei qodesh* [Torah Studies] and *limudei hol* [General Studies], and very often, unfortunately, the *limudei hol* is considered more important, more exciting, more jazzy. The teachers are better educated. The teachers are snappier. So we try to take our *limudei qodesh* teachers and give them a smattering of what the history teacher can do. Let's bring various sources on a page; let's cut and paste. Let's bring a lecturer. Let's have a movie, because that is what we are able to do in *limudei hol* (Finkelman 1999: 24).

2.5.7 Practical Benefits of General Studies

But though divided on philosophical lines, there is some agreement as to the side benefits of student exposure to General Studies and its methodologies. Besides the honing of thinking skills in mathematics and communication skills in English, the student may benefit from the greater emphasis on structure and presentation in General studies.

Though the impoverished Eastern European Cheder (cf. 1.9) system produced great scholars against all odds, it lacked in the basic facilities of ordered education (Rosenthal & Wiernik 1906). Poverty also filtered out of the classroom all but the

most self-sufficient students, who required little external structure to succeed. The student body of today's schools includes many more students who require a more structured approach (cf. 4.8.2). As High School Principal, Rabbi A. Adler has noted, in Eastern Europe:

> No more than 5% of the population above bar mitzvah age [13] was likely to study *Gemara* regularly on an intensive level. Most people went to work, and many were actually married at that age. The advantage that we all have at the turn of the [21st] century, the luxury, is compulsory education. Everybody goes to school till age 16 or 18, and even beyond that. During the years of the Lithuanian *yeshivas*, - of the Volozhin yeshiva of 200 years ago, until the middle of the 20th century - there was a natural selective process in which the cream of the crop went on to higher yeshiva education. Today, everybody is into higher yeshiva education (Finkelman 1999:11).

Thus the European tradition provided little guidance on study skills and academic structure. In this regard there has been much borrowing from General Studies methodologies to the Judaic classroom (Kotler 1996a: 168).

2.5.8 Conclusion

Compulsory secular education has become a fact of Diaspora schooling. Though some elements of Haredi Judaism eschew any type of positive engagement with it, the majority of contemporary Haredi authorities, while insisting on the primacy of Torah study, are seeking ways to portray it as an integrated element of a Judaic worldview. Modern Orthodox adherents of the *Torah U'maddah* philosophy celebrate the new synthesis as the realization of their holistic ideal. Though the philosophic stances of these streams are clear, little practical guidance is available in this very new and neglected frontier.

2.6 THE CHANGED STUDENT PROFILE

The essence of our enquiry revolves around the application of Jewish educational principles in new educational contexts. A major factor in that application will be the changes to the student profile of contemporary primary learners in Jewish schools.

2.6.1 Rabbi Shapiro's Conversation with Parents and Teachers

As discussed the classical methodologies of Jewish education flourished because of a supportive societal and attitudinal context. Orthodox educators, from the 19th century onwards, have recognized that this context has been in flux and that new strategies had to be employed to reach the modern student.

One approach was outlined in pre-war Poland by the Holocaust martyr, Rabbi Klonymus Shapiro in his "Chovat Hatalmidim [Duty of Students]" (1998: 12-29) which has gained widespread popularity as a modern classic. Rabbi Klonymus was a "Hassidic Rebbe", that is a leader of a Hassidic community, known for its closed society and strict adherence to traditional religious norms. Rabbi Klonymus' call for a changed approach to the youth of his period is then an indication of how universal the changed student profile had become by his time.

The title of Rabbi Shapiro's essay, 'A Conversation with Parents and Teachers', is significant in itself. The need to enlist the support of parents in the educational process and the non-authoritarian conversational approach can be seen as part of a trend currently included in the policy of most educational systems throughout the world (Lemmer 2004:260).

2.6.1.1 Engaging and Inspiring the Independent Spirit

Basing himself on the verse "Educate a child according to his way" (Proverbs 22,6), Rabbi Shapiro asserts that a purely intellectual approach to teaching is not sufficient in modern times. The 'whole' child must be engaged and inspired in order to produce adults who are self-starters, religiously. This new emphasis is necessary because of the early appearance of an independent, even rebellious spirit in the modern child. This factor renders an authoritarian approach useless and even counterproductive.

Indeed, he continues, this decline in authority signals the death of conventional discipline as an exclusive strategy for parents and teachers. Whereas the child of an earlier generation may have interpreted the teacher's strap as a deserved measure, the contemporary child will be more likely to interpret any form of reproof as part of wrestling match with authority. In such an environment the teacher must create a relationship with the student allowing appropriate expression of his independent spirit and engaging that spirit in the learning process. In Rabbi Shapiro's words "that he, the child himself, is the main educator." This same approach was outlined in the mid-19th century by the Haredi educator Rabbi Yisrael Isseral of Ponovisz, Lithuania (Isseral 1864:50).

2.6.1.2 Appealing to the Child's Appreciation of Meaning

This early independence of mind occurs alas, in the immature and impressionable mind of children. This creates, explains Rabbi Shapiro, the need to deepen the child's appreciation of the meaning of what he is learning, praying and observing at a younger age. This, of course, must be incorporated in the primary school curriculum along with technical and factual study.

The post-war educator Rabbi A. Wolf concurs that this new profile necessitates an earlier emphasis on moral and philosophic training. Whereas traditionally it may have been sufficient to inculcate the young child with an uninformed piety and obedience that was enriched only in young adulthood, the modern child needs that enrichment first to inspire him to self-control and observance (Wolf 1954: 40-45).

2.6.2 Grandchildren of "The Me Generation"

These prescient observations are all the more relevant in the 21st century, when teachers must struggle with the "independence" of grandchildren of the "Me" generation. Thus, lessons which engage the active involvement of students are the rule in Orthodox day schools of every denomination, as much as they are in the general classroom. In a recent Johannesburg lecture to teachers, Rabbi G. Bottleman, principal of the Hadar Tzion primary school in the ultra-orthodox Mea Shearim

community of Jerusalem, underscored the need to avoid disciplinary issues by forming a caring rapport with students (Bottleman 2005). Rabbi Bottleman's observation indicates that these changes in student profile have affected even the most insular of religious communities.

2.6.3 New Subject Areas

The need to inspire young children has spawned new subject areas in the Jewish classroom, such as 'The Explanation of Prayer'. Torah Umesorah's annual national convention of 2003 was focused on the development of new methodologies for the teaching of the art and meaning of prayer – a subject afforded little attention in previous generations. A task force headed by Rabbi Y. Fishman, Director of Torah Umesorah, was established to give curricular guidance for the subject (Fishman 2004:10).

2.6.4 Fun and Engaging Methodologies

Even traditional subject areas have been adapted to the new focus. Activities for classroom discussion about the deeper meaning of Biblical stories have been incorporated into contemporary workbooks (Bernstein 1991). The popular teacher file-sharing websites are replete with ideas for games, dramatic skits and craft projects (Appendix F), uncommon in "the Little Red Schoolhouse" and the Eastern European "Cheder". To be sure, effective educators of the old systems have always motivated their pupils with extrinsic rewards, but the literature does not record the inclusion of so many motivational activities, which may slow down purely academic progress.

2.6.5 Moral Education

Societal changes have brought a shift in responsibility for the teaching of moral and ethical values from the home to the school worldwide. Educationalists Hedges and Martinello (1977 cited in Sykes 1995:44) note:

Historically, the school has taught the 3 R's and it has left much of the process of socialization and the development of values…to the home, church and community. In the future we may see…the school becoming primarily a center for socialization.

This societal change has spawned the various "Middot Tovot [character development]" programmes in Jewish day schools. Though moral education is as old as the Bible, the literature study did not find that it was a formal curricular focus for children in previous times.

2.6.5.1 Moral Education and Modern Psychology

Where these programmes are straightforward adaptations of classical works of Jewish ethics, they present no special challenge for Jewish educators. Often, however, teachers may draw form their own psychological assumptions rooted in prevalent secular theories. In a published letter from 1949, Rabbi E.E. Dessler deals with the need to filter these theories from a Torah perspective:

From this we see how much we need to be aware of the modern innovations of researchers in matters of psychology and education. We need to analyse with precision to determine if they are not in contradiction with the words of the Sages and classical authorities or with accepted Jewish practice, which is also of Torah status (1954c: 360).

2.6.6 Conclusion

The changed student profile of modernity necessitates a more child-centered approach to education, even in the most insular of religious communities. The student must be motivated extrinsically by fun and interactive methodologies. He must also be motivated intrinsically by appealing to his sense of meaning at an early age. This has created the need for new subject areas in the curriculum and an impetus for more teacher training in methodologies effective with the contemporary student.

As society shifts the burden of moral education away from the family, Jewish schools are also called upon to give new curricular focus to ethics and psychology, filtered through a Torah perspective.

2.7 TEACHER TRAINING

Though the Halacha sets out professional standards of conduct for teachers and even speaks about the dismissal of ineffectual or derelict ones, it is curiously silent about their training and licensing (Karo 1977:Yoreh Deiah: 145).   It seems that an apprenticeship system, common in other trades and crafts was applied to the art of teaching as well. The position of teacher's helper prescribed by the Talmud (Baba Batra: 21a) for over-large classes can be seen as an example of such an apprenticeship in action (Bleich 2004:33). But, this apprenticeship is not codified as an obligatory prerequisite for becoming a full teacher. Teachers were allowed to open up shop to succeed or to fail according to their own merits and natural teaching abilities (Karo 1977:Yoreh Deiah: 145).

Supervision and standardization were the responsibilities of the local rabbi and periodic visitations from regional rabbinic authorities (Midrash Rabba: Petichta to Eicha:1). But more importantly, teachers were selfishly motivated to maintain standards and increase proficiency in order to keep their jobs. For though the Halacha placed restrictions on the opening of new shops or new artisans in the proximity of established ones, the tenure of educators was not similarly protected. This omission was consciously promulgated by the Sages, based on their maxim "Competition among scholars increases wisdom" (Talmud: Baba Bathra 21a). This ruthless marketplace was deemed good for learning standards and it understandably kept teachers on their toes from fear that they might lose their students to more popular teachers.

2.7.1 Lack of Regulation

This total exposure to free market forces had its downside as well. Rabbi Lowe of 16th Century Prague deplored the common tendency for teachers to play to the "my son the genius" sentiments of doting parents, by training children to spout superficially brilliant analytic comments and other forms of mental gymnastics. Of

course, this brilliance was achieved at the cost of the gross neglect of basic skills and information. Rabbi Lowe laments mournfully that by his time this had become common instructional malpractice even for young children (Lowe 1980a: 43-47). By the mid-19th century, a veteran educator recorded that these flashy methodologies, by bypassing the interest and skill level of the students, left the children demotivated and unprepared for independent study (Isseral 1864: 49).

2.7.2 The Effects of Poverty

The anguished cry of Rabbi Lowe and his contemporaries gives the impression that the grip of rabbinic supervision on the educational process was weakening rapidly. The causes of this weakening were manifold. As the debilitating Tsarist policies in the Pale of Settlement intensified throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, worsening social and economic factors worked to the detriment of education. Though every town still operated schools for the children of the poor, communal funds were strained beyond their limits to provide a decent salary for teachers (Shapiro 1896:41). Though idealistic young men continued to answer the holy calling of teaching – Rabbi Yisrael "Baal Shem Tov", founder of the Hassidic movement, was a primary teacher in the early 18th century (Ginzberg 1903:383) – the field was soon flooded with the otherwise unemployed and even the unemployable. These unfortunates were often of minimal piety as well (Landau, 1995: Brachot 28b).

Ironically, this can be directly attributed to the fact that a teacher, unlike a rabbi or even a ritual slaughterer, required no particular training or licensing. A well known anecdote of the period tells of a rabbi who disguised himself as an unknown indigent and applied for a position of ritual slaughterer in a small town. The elders of the town told him that since he could not produce papers qualifying him for the position, they could only offer him a teaching post!

2.7.3 Private Tutors

The relatively fortunate private tutors of the period fared little better. As mentioned, their lack of job security tempted them to please the parents by producing quick

impressive results at the expense of true education. This unfortunately only served to heighten competition and thus undermine their financial security even more. Though a legal system of contracts developed to protect their status, rabbinic literature is full of the contentious contractual disputes between these hapless tutors and their dissatisfied employers (Karo 1977: Choshen Mishpat: 334-335). The memoirs of teachers from the period bitterly recount the financial insecurity, poor working conditions and strife of their collective lot (Yehuda of Pressburg, 1790: 12).

2.7.4 Low Status of Teacher in Society

Deservedly or undeservedly, the "melamed [teacher]" gained a reputation for lack of skill, harsh reactionary discipline and dullness (Lipshitz 1920: 8). This passage from the Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906 is characteristic:

> Searching questions are seldom asked concerning the melammed's pedagogical fitness; and it frequently happens, moreover, that parents, for charity's sake, send their children for instruction to persons who are unfit for any other vocation, but who possess more or less knowledge of the Talmud. As the profession of a melammed is not an enviable one, it is mostly practised by people who can not find any other employment. In Russia and Poland, therefore, the word "melammed" is, in slang, synonymous with "good-for-nothing" or "dolt."(Jacobs & Lauterbach 1906).

This image was sharpened by the acid pens of the secular Yiddishist writers of the period. Keeping in mind that these modernists were consciously parodying the transmitters of "old time religion" as irrelevant bumblers (Seidman 2006: 56), the massive readership of their satires suggests that their portrayal resonated with the experiences of a wide segment of the populace. Foremost in these accounts are reports of the overuse of the strap and the ruler by frustrated teachers who lacked the skills to engage cooperation more constructively. The writers of the Jewish Encyclopedia accentuated this issue:

> Various punishments were meted out to disobedient or inattentive children, and chastisement often meant cruel flogging; it is no wonder, therefore, that the Cheder [school] was to a very large extent a cause of physical deterioration, and that many remember with horror the school-days spent there. J. L. Gordon's semi-humorous description of his teacher Reb Todros, and of the armory of instruments of torture with which he

enforced discipline and attention ("Collected Works," I. 112-113, Odessa, 1889), may be somewhat exaggerated, but in all essentials is, to a very large extent, true (Rosenthal and Wiernik 1906b).

2.7.5 Rabbinic Support for Teacher Training

In response to this deterioration, the rabbinic leadership of Eastern Europe, led by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski of Vilnius and Rabbi Shimon Shkop of Grodno convened a special conference on the issue in 1930. The conference culminated in a public proclamation, signed by these authorities, calling for the establishment of teacher training institutes for the Haredi schools. (Kagan 1990b:52)   This proclamation was preceded by many years of discussion on the matter. In his training manual of the period, Rabbi E. Yosselovitz recalls that in the mid-19th Century his parents' generation were already musing why teachers were not licensed like rabbis, scribes and ritual slaughterers (1910:11).

2.7.6 Rabbinic Reservations about Teacher Training

The delay in the call for this seemingly obvious institution was rooted in ambiguities around the subject, which are still present in contemporary times. For the unintended effect of the training and accreditation of teachers was the creation of an attractive alternative to traditional Talmudic scholarship and rabbinic ordination. A teacher's diploma was currency in the general society and could be upgraded to a more advanced academic degree. Thus, the best and the brightest of young scholars could easily be lured away from Torah study into secular pursuit through the "holy" portal of teacher training (Dessler 1954b).

2.7.6.1 The "Aish Dos" Seminary Conflict

This conflict was even more sharply felt in the post-holocaust generation. In the United States, the very same rabbinic leadership responsible for the foundation of

"teacher hungry" Torah day schools across the continent was also charged with the resurrection, against all odds, of the tertiary Yeshiva movement destroyed by the Nazis. As an example, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, founding Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva of Lakewood, New Jersey, worked tirelessly for the spread of Orthodox schooling as a rabbinic advisor of Torah Umesorah. Yet, he could not support the diversion of talented young scholars from full time Torah learning to enrol in Torah Umesorah's Aish Dos seminary in Monsey NY, which ultimately closed its doors. In the end, local Aish Dos part-time programmes were attached to Telz Yeshiva of Cleveland, Ner Israel Yeshiva of Baltimore and Mesivta Chaim Berlin of Brooklyn, NY (Rosenblum 2001:236).

2.7.6.2 The Gateshead Men's Seminary Conflict

The anguish of this conflict was articulated by Rabbi E. E. Dessler, founder of the Gateshead Yeshiva of the United Kingdom, and, ironically, the founder of the Gateshead Teachers Seminary for women. In 1951, Rabbi Dessler (1994b:355) responded to the proposal to found a teacher's seminary for men in the proximity of the Gateshead Yeshiva:

> I certainly know that there is in this matter a sanctification of G-d's name and the saving of souls. However, one question I must ask. How can we guarantee that the existence of such an institution will not weaken the enthusiasm of Yeshiva students learning there? That is, a yeshiva student who without the option of a University education with rabbinic approval, would not otherwise even imagine preparing for university and planning for a B.A... But now, with this new option, his holy yeshiva studies will be weakened from the outset, to the effect that he may well indeed become in need of a kosher university alternative to save him from worse options…. and we, the doctors of the soul will have become the cause of its sickness.

Rabbi Dessler, in consultation with Rabbi A. Y. Karelitz and Rabbi Y. Kahaneman of Bnei Brak, Israel, was forced, because of these concerns, to rule against the well-intentioned effort to found an adjunct seminary in Gateshead (Dessler 1994b: 359). He also expressed that his allowance of a degree programme for women was not without misgivings (Dessler 1994b: 359).

2.7.6.3 Exposure to Modern Psychology

In another communication of 1949, Rabbi Dessler underscores a different concern about professional teacher training. The less formal apprenticeship model was understandably more focused on practical teaching and not on educational theory per se. But formal training culminating in a secularly recognized diploma involved exposure to modern psychology and other disciplines, whose depth theory often clashed with Orthodox religious belief (Dessler 1994c: 361). Concerning permissive attitudes towards the relationship between children and their parents and teachers Rabbi Dessler (1994c 362) warns:

> From this we see how much we must beware of all the innovations of the academics concerning psychology and education. We must test and analyze [their theories] well to see if they contradict the words of our sages and classic authorities or Jewish custom, which is like Torah.

2.7.7 The Approach of Rabbi A.Y. Kook

A more liberal approach can be found in the writings of Israel's first Chief Rabbi, A. Y. Kook, which is followed by Modern Orthodox educators in Israel and the Diaspora. Rabbi Kook embraced wholeheartedly the direction of Yeshiva students into Teachers training institutions with secular degrees. But, even so he also warned his students to be on their guard against the influences of secular pedagogy (Lipshitz 1965:11).

2.7.8 The Need for Accreditation

Despite these misgivings, the need for training and accreditation remained a real one. The impassioned pleas of rabbinic leaders addressed to Jewish parents of the period to beware of the lure of the modernist schools and their slick "methods" is evidence that the traditional schools were haemorrhaging badly to these new institutions (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:13, in Bronstein 2001). Indeed, records indicate that with time the vast majority of school age Jewish children in Lithuania were being educated in State Recognized Religious Zionist *Yavneh* schools or Secular Hebraist "Tarbut' schools (Levine 1978: par.1).

2.7.8.1 Accreditation in the United States

In post-war United States and England, the need for accreditation was an urgent one, as the rabbis there were not pleading with parents to stay in Jewish schools, but rather to transfer from the well managed government schools with ample facilities and funding. This was in the golden age of public schooling. Professional qualifications for Jewish studies teachers was then an essential selling point, especially for the day schools that were being rapidly established in cities outside of the New York area with smaller Orthodox populations (Rosenblum 1999:2).

2.7.8.2 Accreditation in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, essential government funding for parochial schools became contingent on Jewish studies teachers attaining qualified teachers status. As a recent example, since 1997, the Jewish Teachers Training Partnership has successfully trained more than one hundred and fifty teachers through to qualified teacher status. As most of these have been Jewish Studies teachers the effect has been to raise the status and standard of Jewish Studies teaching in mainstream orthodox day schools (Agency for Jewish Education 2006 [online]).

2.7.9 Contemporary Models of Training

The different streams of Orthodoxy have responded to the need for training in characteristic ways. Schools serving the Haredi community will consider a traditional yeshiva educated teacher's depth of scholarship and passion for Torah learning and life as primary criteria, even if he does not possess other qualifications. To compensate for this lack of formal training, an intensive two year course "Chinuch [Education] Training Course" is operated by the Ner Le'Elef Foundation, which

includes courses in Educational Psychology and Methodology. Students receive a monthly stipend during the course and are expected to work for at least 2 years in Diaspora schools (Ner Le'Elef 2006 [online]).

The Modern Orthodox Yeshiva University of New York (Yeshiva University 2006 [online]) and Bar Ilan University of Israel (Bar Ilan University 2006 [online]) offer full academic and Post-graduate degrees in Education, based on the model of modern education colleges, world-wide.

2.7.9.1 In-Service Training and Conferences

Torah Umesorah operates yearly summer courses in the United States and Israel and other workshops for the training of yeshiva graduates. In addition Torah Umesorah's yearly teacher's conference has become an important opportunity for in-service training and professional development. In the words of an experienced principal:

> Over the past five years, I have been watching the rebbeim [teachers] of our yeshiva experience the thrill of professional growth at the annual Torah Umesorah Conventions. A Torah Umesorah Convention is so much more than merely the sum of its parts. The incredible range of topics in the more than 40 practical and educational workshops. Several rooms brimming with classroom materials culled from the files of outstanding mechanchim and mechanchos [men and women educators] from around the world. The Friday Morning Networking Breakfast, where mechanchim get to share ideas with their colleagues (Horowitz 2004: par. 5).

An important component of these conventions is a Question and Answer session with the Presidium of Torah Sages. Issues of correct methodology are discussed alongside other perplexing issues from the field. In addition, the convention features expert lecturers from the field of general education, psychology and management.

2.7.9.2 Women's Teaching Seminaries

Teacher training for women educators carries with it few of the attendant issues for men that we have discussed. In fact, since the advent of the Beis Yaakov Seminaries in Poland (1924), teacher training has been an almost exclusive focus in tertiary Jewish education for women. A Beis Yaakov curriculum from the Krakow seminary of 1933 lists History of Education, Principles of Pedagogy, Hygiene and Psychology as required subjects (Dansky 1994:336).

2.7.10 Conclusion

There seems to have been no Talmudic model for the training of teachers, except perhaps for an optional apprenticeship system. Though basic teaching standards were supervised by the Sages, individual teachers were left to succeed or to fail according to their own talent and application.

This *laizes faire* system was undermined by the falling socio-economic conditions of Eastern Europe. Though, from the 16th Century rabbinic authorities were already calling for formal teacher training, this was only instituted in the early 20th Century. The need for government accreditation and parental confidence has accelerated that process in the post-war years.

Concerns about placing Teacher Seminaries for men on a par with Yeshivas and about student exposure to the depth theory of Modern Psychology, have led to the development of supplemental training courses under Haredi auspices, as opposed to full-time institutions. Modern Orthodoxy has developed formal University education colleges in Israel and America.

2.8 TRANSLATION, ABRIDGEMENT AND TEXTBOOKS

One of the changes most vigorously opposed by the leading rabbinic authorities of the late 19th Century was the publication of abridged and simplified Biblical story books

as textbooks for children (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:17-18, in Bronstein 2001). These educators opined that the essence of Torah education is to challenge the student to apply himself with great vigour to fathom the great depths of divine teaching. In a fundamental address to Orthodox educators at the Torah Umesorah convention of 1960 (Kotler 1996b: 173), the pre-eminent Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Aharon Kotler cites Maimonides (1991b: 8,8):

> It is fitting for a person to contemplate the laws of the Torah and fathom their implications according to his ability...His thoughts about it should not be like his thoughts on secular matters.

Abridgement, simplification and other forms of pre-digestion remove the sinew and substance of the material and signal to the child that parts of the text may be less relevant or even inappropriate for study (*Darkah Shel Torah* 1902:7-8, in Bronstein 2001). Pre-digestion also dulls the analytic skills, which the child will need for later learning (cf. 1.1.4.2).

2.8.1 Dynamics of Translation

It is true that the translation of sacred Hebrew texts into the student's vernacular has always an essential feature of Diaspora education (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993:1, note 2). But, translation was always seen as a temporary aid to the study of the original under the guidance of a teacher (Leibowitz 1991). The objections to the widespread use of translated texts in the classroom are similar to the objections to abridgement and simplification we have discussed. Most significantly, the use of translated texts encourages the student to learn superficially (Yeshaya of Trani 1996: 3a). Moreover, insistence on the standard of learning sacred texts in the original ensures that parents will be motivated to seek an intensive Jewish education for their children (Hirsch 1994:544-546).

2.8.2 The Use of Graded Readers

For this reason, even initiate readers are introduced immediately to sacred texts used by adults. A grade one child, in an Orthodox day school General Studies classroom, would typically be initiated into English reading, his home language, through a set of graded readers, like "Kathy and Mark'. But, in his Torah studies, the same child will be introduced to Chumash, using the same text which will be his life-long companion, the Hebrew Book of Genesis - with all the sophistication of its grammar, syntax and content. The child is typically presented with his first Chumash with great pomp and circumstance at a special school assembly. Gradually he learns to grapple with its complexities. He is brought up to the Torah; the Torah is not cut down to his size (Kotler 1996b:173).

2.8.3 Workbooks and Supplementary Aids

But the fact remains that this initiation may prove daunting for contemporary students, who have less classroom time to master it. Haredi schools in the Diaspora compensate for this difficulty by the effective use of workbooks to help break down the text. This is supplemented by vocabulary flash cards and other games. Thus the text remains the same but many aids are implemented to master it 9Appendix F).

2.8.4 Modern Orthodox Practice

Modern Orthodox schools are more likely to redesign sacred texts to make them more accessible to modern students. This may be for practical rather than ideological reasons. The average student in a Modern Orthodox school may be from a marginally religious home and may require more motivational textbooks to engage in religious studies (Jewish Studies Curriculum Partnership 2005:1-2).

2.8.5 A Symposium on Reforms in Traditional Talmud Curriculum

A Jerusalem symposium in 1999 on reforms in the traditional Talmud curriculum, hosted by 'ATID: Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions', highlighted many of the perspectives on this issue. The symposium was called in response to the published reform recommendations of Daniel Levy, academic director of Jerusalem's Israel

Studies Institute. Levy attributes the failure of many modern students to master or enjoy their school Talmud studies to the difficulty of the text:

> The problems of *Gemara* education at the elementary and high school level - remembering again that we are talking about the entire range of religious education, not just elite schools - are fundamentally insoluble. They are a function of the essential nature of *Talmud Bavli* [The Babylonian Talmud] in itself: an incredibly complex, inspired, brilliant collection of the work of generations of masterful scholars, grappling with and reshaping all of halachic and aggadic [non-legal or homiletic] tradition. A veritable sea of knowledge, one in which many young students find themselves drowning. *Talmud Bavli* is a magisterial compendium of traditions, a reference work for scholars, a record of debates in the academy; it was not written to be an educational textbook for children and adolescents (Finkelman 1999: 4).

2.8.5.1 Levy's Proposals

Levy's first proposal is to allow modern students to initiate their studies with a more accessible text:

> By the way, I have great difficulty in accepting what I hear from a lot of different schools, in which students are encouraged to learn *Gemara* from texts such as the Vilna Shas [traditional text], rather than in editions, which are vocalized and punctuated like the Steinsaltz edition. I can not see any reason whatsoever that students in the elementary grades should have to learn *Gemara* without the help of those basic aids (Finkelman 1999: 5).

Levy also points out a fundamental stylistic challenge in Talmud study, different than what the student encounters in other subjects. The debate form of Talmud fails to lay out information in the linear logical structure that contemporary students are familiar with. Moreover, the "case study" methodology of Talmud is fundamentally inductive and not deductive (Finkelman 1999: 5-7).

Levy also is concerned that the curriculum should be more relevant to the student's world. To this end, he proposes a topical syllabus, rather than the traditional page-by-page study.   He also proposes that there should be a greater emphasis on the integration of Halacha [law] and the spiritual values and philosophies, which lie

behind the Halacha. He also suggests delaying the introduction of Talmud until later grades (Finkelman 1999: 8 -10).

2.8.5.2   Concerns about the Joy of Discovery

Rabbi S. Berger, of Bar Ilan University's Lookstein Centre for Jewish Education, expresses concern that Levy's proposal can be characterized as cutting and pasting and then handing students a finished product on a silver platter. This approach might eliminate the joy of discovery, which comes through unravelling the complex dialectics of a Talmudic argument (Finkelman 1999: 17).

Addressing Levy's suggestion that Talmud study in its original form lacks the linear logical structure necessary for contemporary students, Dr. B. Gribetz opines:

> …my call would be to take advantage of the thing that in Talmud is so different from what we know as Western literature today. That it does go around in circles.   That there is often a question of what this *sugya* [subject] is doing next to that *sugya.* How did the connections work? Just the discussion of the connection, of how one thing leads to another, could be, if done right, something very fascinating and very enriching (Finkelman 1999: 24).

2.8.5.3 Concerns about Authenticity

Berger also argues that today's students are searching for an authentic learning experience that links them with their roots and with a worldwide fraternity of Yeshiva students. The best and brightest students must be given the 'real thing': Talmud as it has been taught traditionally. If not, Berger fears, they will realize that they are not learning the same way as advanced yeshiva students, and would feel dissatisfied. (Finkelman 1999: 16).

The use of traditional editions of sacred texts can be seen as a way to imbue learning with that sense of authenticity. Rabbi Y. Kahn, Lecturer in Talmud at Yeshiva Har Etzion, counters Levy's suggestion to introduce accessible texts:

> One of the main things that I think the Artscroll edition [traditional text] taught us, as opposed to Steinsaltz edition [accessible text] -which came

out twenty years earlier, - is that if you retain *tzuras hadaf [traditional page format]*, people are interested in learning. If you don't' retain *tsuras hadaf*, you miss that sense of tradition (Finkelman 199: 22).

Ironically, Berger notes, though Levy's proposals are intended to 'modernize' traditional learning to bring them in line with current methodologies:

> Contemporary educational theory is moving away from set, overall, universal curriculum. It is moving away from the idea of creating workbooks for kids to study from. Its also moving away from what was very popular in the 70s, cultural literacy, or what I think is lowest-common-denominator literacy. The movement today is to create substantive teacher training, to make the teacher who walks into the classroom knowledgeable and excited about what they are doing. This recognizes individual learning styles, the idea that not ever kid learns the same way. Kids learn differently. We have to focus on the different ways kids learn and understand, in order to make them appreciate what they are doing. Current educational theory is also moving away from generalities. Instead, it says, "Let's get down to details of a given topic, rather than have a smattering of different topics." Curricula based workbooks basically stifle kids and stifle teachers (Finkelman 1999:18).

2.8.5.4 Concerns about Student Demotivation

Rabbi Y. Kahn argues forcefully that Levy's proposal to choose topical subjects for their philosophic value leads to the unintended affect of student demotivation. Integration of Talmud with philosophy may water-down the autonomous methodology of Talmud study. Also, the subjects explored by the Talmud are often technical and certainly not directly philosophical. Students who think that they will find direct spiritual meaning in each subject will only be disappointed. By using Talmud study simply as a means to an end, when that end becomes some kind of comprehensive philosophical approach, then the details become unimportant. This can lead students to ridicule of subjects, which seem dry of philosophic import (Finkelman 1999:20-22).

2.8.6 Conclusion

The vigorous opposition of pre-war rabbinic leaders to format changes and the abridgement of sacred texts are reflected in the attitudes of contemporary Haredi

educators. These educators meet the daunting challenges of textual study for Diaspora children with the use of supplementary workbooks and other aids. Though some Modern Orthodox scholars claim that the changed profile of today's students justifies the development of texts that are more accessible, topical, and relevant, others are more inclined to identify with Haredi hesitation.

2.9 THE SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF TORAH STUDY

A repeated theme in rabbinic writing about Torah study is that it cannot be conceived as an intellectual exercise (Kagan 1994: Section 47,1). The spiritual values of love and reverence and a myriad of other elements receive a wider treatment in the literature than technique and methodology.

Many of the qualities of traditional education are emotional and affective. Indeed, in the daily morning prayers of Jewish liturgy, a special petition is recited asking G-d to "sweeten the words of Torah in our mouths and the mouths of our offspring" (Siddur 2006:16). This indicates that 'love of learning' and associate values are an essential part of the commandment of Torah study, and not merely motivational tools.

2.9.1 Chanting and Rhythmic Swaying

According to Mosaic tradition the words of the Bible are to be sung according to a system of cantillation. Before this system was committed to writing, it was memorized by school children (Shneur Zalman of Liadi 1993: 1,1). The Sages castigated one who read or studied in a tuneless joyless manner (Talmud: Megillah 32a). The singing of learning was practiced as an aid to memorization (Talmud: Tosafot Commentary to Megillah 32a).

This tradition was challenged by the 19th Century Reform movement as distractive, but defended vigorously by rabbinic leaders, led by Rabbi Moshe Sofer (Felder 1956: 205). Similarly, the singsong method of teaching the letters and phonetics of the

Hebrew alphabet came under assault in modern times. Rabbi Dessler sums up the conflict in a letter to a head of a teacher training college:

> Behold it is revealed to us that the main object of Jewish learning is not to acquire information, but world-view and religious inspiration, which requires a unique methodology. We must also be aware that it is this methodology, which has been abandoned by this generation. This methodology was followed by our fathers and forefathers, because they taught to the heart. Swaying while learning and melody and the like, may certainly slow down learning, for they pertain to the emotions and not to the mind.
>
> In contrast, today there is much use of writing…and the teacher also writes on the board, which certainly aids the focus of the intellect, so that the children will grasp the material quicker – but without emotion. Conversely, swaying and music stimulate the emotions and add sweetness and love (1954a: 363).

Reluctantly, Rabbi Dessler acknowledged that this emotive methodology may not be suited for the afternoon Hebrew Schools and even some dual curriculum day schools, where time constraints dictated the use of drier, but more efficient methodologies (Dessler 1954a: 362).

2.9.2 Reading Aloud vs. Silent Reading

The importance of reading aloud and its drawbacks has long been debated. Quintilian writes: "Further, not all reading requires to be first read aloud or interpreted by a master. If it did, how would the boy ever become acquainted with all the authors required of him?" (1920:45). Silent reading has become more popular as the modern student has become responsible to go through large quantities of printed material, in search of ideas, without paying attention to the process of reading itself. This is true when silent reading is seen as a method of receiving thought from others, exclusively (Morris 1937: 138).

But, Jewish learning traditionally emphasized reading aloud as a means of integrating the knowledge into the whole being through a multi-sensory approach. The famous woman scholar, Bruriah, of the Mishnaic period, once rebuked a student who was learning quietly. "If the Torah is integrated with your 248 limbs it will be retained; if

not it will not be retained" (Talmud: Eiruvin 54b, cited in Morris 1937:139). Maimonides codifies this dictum "He who learns aloud retains what he has learnt, but he who learns quietly, forgets quickly" (1991a:3,12). This point is corroborated by the famed classicist Prof. Rouse:

> Only by reading aloud, and in no other manner whatever, can the student receive the author's meaning, as he wished it to be received, in his order, with his emphasis, in the mood he wished to call up (cited in Morris 1937: 140).

2.9.3 Reverence

Reverence for learning as a special encounter with the divine word is another key emphasis. The Sages equated the learning process as a miniature recreation of the Sinai revelation (Selis 2004: par.6). A blessing is recited before commencing to learn, which according to many classical authorities is Biblically ordained. The Sages emphasized the importance of reciting this blessing with great emotion, in order to drive home to the learner that he is involved in something much more than an intellectual activity (Kagan 1994: Section 47,1).

Axiomatic to the learning process is a reverence for the words of earlier scholars. This is based on a belief that the closer a generation is to the Sinai revelation, the more authoritative its teachings. Thus, a contemporary student would approach the writings of prior scholars with hierarchical reverence, increasing with the antiquity of the source (Talmud Shabbat: 112b).

The educational relevance of this approach goes deeper than its religious significance. A student in this system seeks first and foremost to understand the words of classical texts, rather than imprint his own insight upon them. His creativity lies in appreciating the novel insight of the text, and only ventures to offer his own insight if it is well founded on precedent (Talmud Eiruvin:53a). Perhaps this can be loosely compared to the study of the 'Old Masters' by initiate painters before the modern age.

2.9.4 "Torah for its Own Sake"

As the study of Torah is itself a commandment, the student is called upon to master even the less immediately relevant and practical aspects of a given topic. This concept is called "Torah for its own sake" The blessing recited before Torah study includes a prayer that "we and our descendents and the descendents of Your nation Israel should all know Your name and <u>learn Your Torah for its own sake</u>" (Siddur 2006:16).

A practical ramification of this value is that the curriculum will include areas of study, which have had no practical application for the two millennia of the present Diaspora. Understandably, many educators believe that contemporary students, who do not have an appreciation of "Torah for its own sake", may need a more stimulating topical curriculum. As researcher Daniel Levy puts it:

> It is true that there are maybe one hundred times as many discussions in the *Gemara* about *qarqa'ot meshu'abadim* [real estate subject to a lien] than there are about the mitzvah of lending money to another Jew. But, contemporary educators have the responsibility to make a decision of how much time they are going to allocate differentially to those two things. My sincere belief is that if learning time is limited, we should deal more with fundamental issues, which have general moral and social implications, and only then deal with topics peripheral to spiritual living (Finkelman 1999:10).

But, too much selectivity and topical approach may endanger the value of Torah for its own sake. As Educator Yair Kahn counters:

> Talmud often deals with material that is detailed and technical. The subject matter is often unrelated to religious issues or moral values. We find lengthy discussions detailing the formal requirements of various legal categories….. Even regarding acts of worship, many *sugyot [topics]* focus on intricate technicalities. If approached by someone thirsting for religious inspiration, I would probably recommend the classic *Sifrei Emunah [Philosophic Books]* over *Bava Kama[Tractate Torts]*. If asked by a student what one should learn in order to improve his ethical sensitivities, I would suggest *Sifrei Mussar [ethical Books]* before *Massekhet Kiddushin {Tractate Marriages}*. Those who promote learning Talmud *only* in order to achieve limited aims that do not fully reflect the richness and diversity found in *Gemara*, are prone to proceed in one of two directions. Either they inadvertently frustrate their pupils, who are taught to expect certain results from their study, but are often disappointed. The alternative, is to distort *Torah she-b'al Peh [Oral Law]* by

misinterpreting, being selective, or both, in order to attain their stated objectives (1999: 3).

While Kahn agrees that the task of inspiring contemporary students in "Torah for its Own Sake" is a difficult one and requires new strategies, his own proposals focus on reengineering the typical classroom along the model of the traditional Bait Midrash [House of Study], rather than redesigning Jewish learning to fit into the classroom (Kahn 1999:6-10).

2.9.5 Conclusion

Though Torah study, like any other study, can be looked at as essentially an intellectual and academic pursuit, its spiritual and religious nature call for a special approach. This approach is reverential, idealistic and seeks to ignite a deep emotional devotion to the sacred act of Torah learning.

2.10 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE STUDY

This chapter has given a broad overview of the historic and contemporary dynamics of pedagogic change in Orthodox Jewish schooling. It has shown how modern societal realities have created the impetus for new methodologies and new curricular considerations. Finally, it has demonstrated how this change process has been managed differently by educationalists of the Haredi and Modern Orthodox streams of Judaism.

Thus, this chapter has provided a useful background to the empirical investigation discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature study carried out in chapter two provided a comprehensive overview of the classical methodologies of Jewish education and its change process in historical context. It also described the conflicts involved in the sudden thrust of Jewish education into the modern world and the contemporary dynamics of its post-holocaust reestablishment. The divergent approaches of the Haredi and Modern Orthodox streams in the management of that process were also outlined.

As these complex dynamics are in continuous flux, the need was highlighted for empiric research into the opinions and perspectives of expert informants, who are presently involved in the management of the change process. An analysis of practical lesson plans and educational materials from Haredi and Modern Orthodox file-sharing websites was also undertaken to demonstrate how these theoretical approaches are manifested in the actual contemporary classroom.

Chapter Three presents a detailed description of the design employed for that study.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The study was conducted through the methodologies of qualitative research due to manifold considerations. The qualitative approach to the interview of key informants was conducive to open-ended questioning and probing follow-up discussion. This allowed for greater depth and richness of information. The data thus obtained was ultimately a more accurate reflection of the participants' inner perspectives and opinions (McMillan 2004: 167).

As the goal in qualitative research is to understand the participants from their own point of view (McMillan 2004: 259), it was best suited for our study of the nuances of the personal and doctrinal perspectives of the interviewees.

Qualitative researchers want to know how and why behaviour occurs. They look for the process through which behaviour occurs, not just the outcomes or products (Mc Millan 2004: 258). This orientation was best suited for our study of the "how's and why's" of the management of the process of pedagogic change.

Qualitative researchers do not formulae hypotheses and gather data to prove or disprove them. Rather the data is gathered first and then synthesized inductively to generate generalizations (McMillan 2004: 259). This inductive approach was best suited for the investigation of a little researched topic of great complexity. The qualitative methodology also allowed for an emergent research design (McMillan 2004: 259) appropriate to our study for the same reason.

3.2.1 Selection of Informants

The selection of informants was undertaken through the methodology of purposive sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:378) state that purposive sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples. It is a process that requires that information be obtained about variations among the sub-units, before the sample is chosen. Then, the researcher looks for information-rich key participants to study. The literature study in chapter two outlined the variant philosophical approaches, which were represented in the sampling of participants.

3.2.2 Maximum Variation Sampling

The participants were purposively selected from the broad spectrum of Orthodox educational philosophies. This can be seen as falling within the methodology of maximum variation sampling. Patton (1990:170) writes that maximum variation sampling involves purposively picking a wide range of variation on dimensions of interest. This documents unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions. It also identifies important common patterns that cut across variations.

3.2.3 Typical but not Representative Informants

Each of the participants was selected purposively as typical of a particular stream of educational thought, along the Haredi/Modern Orthodox spectrum. This does not imply that their personal opinions are necessarily wholly representative of their philosophic stream as many of the issues discussed are subject to nuanced interpretation. According to Patton (2002:40 cited in Johnson & Christensen 2004: 362), informants are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population.

3.2.4 Number of Informants

Characteristic of the qualitative method, a small sample of 6 participants was selected for in-depth semi-structured interview. In the purposive sampling of key informants participants are selected because the investigator can learn the most from them. They may have information that others do not have, they may represent the full range or most extreme examples of the phenomenon, they may be the most articulate spokespersons, or they may have a unique perspective (Goering & Streiner 1996: 494). The credibility of key-informant interviews depends less on sample size than on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher (Patton, 1990, cited in Hoepfl 1997).

3.2.5 Criteria for Selection

Each of the participants holds a leadership position in a prominent educational body of international significance and enjoys a broad reputation as an insightful scholar and effective educator.

Though the participants represented different views and philosophies, they shared several common criteria. Most fundamentally, all of the participants were Orthodox

Jews who acknowledged the authority of the educational prescriptions of the Talmud and classical codes. This criterion was fundamental because the scope of the study was limited to how divergent streams of Orthodoxy managed the process of pedagogic change (cf. 1.5 2).

The Jewish participants also possessed a rich background in the Talmudic and classical codes dealing with the subject and were conversant with the issues of their application in contemporary schooling. The participants were also selected for their extensive experience in practical teaching and, most importantly, for their extensive involvement in teacher training in either a professional or consultative capacity. One non-Jewish educator was selected for his perspectives on the general dynamics of contemporary education.

Table 3.1 Table of Informants

Name	Qualification	Professional experience	Position	Expertise	Publications
Rabbi Gamliel Bottleman	Rabbinic Ordination	4 decades in traditional Eastern European Cheder style teaching (3 decades as a Principal)	Principal of Hadar Tzion Cheder, Mea Shearim, Jerusalem	Hebrew remedial reading	
Rabbi Aharon Feldman	Rabbinical Ordination	American High School Principal in 1950's; Renowned Author and Scholar; Rosh Yeshiva of various Yeshivas over 3 decades	Rosh Yeshiva Ner Israel Rabbinical college, Baltimore; Presidium Agudath Israel of America, Rabbinic Board, Torah Umesorah	Torah Authority	Yad Lepeah (Heb.); The Juggler and the King (Feldheim); The River, the Kettle and the Bird (Feldheim) Contributor to Jewish Observer, Tradition, and Jewish Action Magazines
Rabbi Craig Kacev	Rabbinical Ordination; BCompt Account. UNISA; Post	Head of Jewish Studies, King David High School; Community Rabbi,	CEO of South African Board of Jewish Education;	Curriculum Development	

	Graduate degree in Education, Hebrew University	West Street Synagogue			
Rabbi Dr, Eli Kohn	Rabbinical Ordination; PhD. Bible University of the Free State, South Africa	Judaic Studies Head, Herzylia College, Cape Town, Teacher for over 2 decades	Director of Curriculum Development, Lookstein Center; Senior Consultant, Jewish Studies Curriculum Partnership, UK	Curriculum Development	"The Role of Partnerships in the Process of Curriculum Development"; "Models of Assessment for Jewish Studies" etc.
Rabbi Hillel Mandel	Rabbinic Ordination Chofetz Chaim Rabbinical Seminary of America B Ac. Accounting SUNY; M Ed. Elementary Education cum Laude, Adelphi University; PhD. candidate Yeshiva University Azriel Graduate School of Education.	Principal, Yeshiva Ketana of Manhattan; Principal Yeshiva Shaarei Simcha of Clifton New Jersey;	Principal	Professional Teacher Training and Educational Consultant	"Curriculum and Methodology for the Yeshiva Day School", (Torah Umesorah 2003)
Mr. Kenneth Tait	B.Com Wits; B.Th UNISA; M.ED. UNISA; T.T.H.D.	Pretoria College of Ed.; Vice Rector Johannesburg College of Ed.	Headmaster, Jeppe High School for Boys		The modular system: a possible solution to the education debate; The supervision of teaching experience at the Pretoria College of Education.

3.2.6 Notes to Table 3.1

As mentioned (cf. 3.2.1), the participants were chosen using a strategy of maximum variance sampling.

Rabbi Bottleman is a contemporary educator of a school in the insular Mea Shearim community of Jerusalem, directly modelled on the Eastern European *Cheder* schools. Rabbi Bottleman's interview was conducted in Hebrew and transcribed by the researcher.

Rabbi Feldman is a current Haredi Torah Authority and a leader of the Rabbinic Advisory Board of Torah Umesorah.

Rabbi Mandel is a professional teacher trainer, educational consultant and curricular authority, who has consulted broadly with Haredi Torah authorities about pedagogic issues.

Rabbi Dr. Kohn is the Director of Curricular Development for the Modern Orthodox led Lookstein Center. As a consultant, he has a comprehensive knowledge of current educational practice in a wide variety of schools, especially in the area of internet-based distance learning.

Rabbi Kacev, as CEO of the South African Board of Jewish education, is responsible for curriculum development for a largely non-religious student body at the Orthodox led King David School system. Over the last several years he has developed curricular materials that attempt to make Judaic studies relevant to religiously alienated youth.

Mr. Tait is an expert on trends in non-Jewish general education, whose perspective cast light on the social and pedagogical dynamics facing all contemporary teachers and principals, of whatever culture. His views were incorporated to provide contrast and confirmation to the comments of the Jewish educators, about trends in their system.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was accomplished through interviews of key informants, supplemental e-interviews and the analysis of written material. These three methods were chosen in

order to increase the comprehensiveness of the study and to facilitate triangulation for greater validity in the analysis of its data.

3.3.1 Interviews

The major methodology used was the interview of key informants. As noted, the literature study highlighted the need for a greater understanding of the actualities of the methodological change process, best gleaned from the experts who are currently engaged in it.

3.3.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with the help of an interview guide (Appendix H). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate data gathering technique because the research strategy required information concerning interviewee's personal beliefs, considered opinions and insights. These are difficult to obtain through structured interviews where rigid questioning prevents opportunities to pursue an interesting angle or call for elaboration (Connell 2001: par. 26)).

The semi-structured interview technique builds into questioning sufficient flexibility to capture insights that may otherwise be lost to the imposition of the 'next' structured question (Connell 2001: par. 26). Semi-structured interviews promote an atmosphere in which the participants, while answering specific questions, feel free to augment the conversation with what they consider valid, if uncovered information (Winget 2005: 5)

The more informal semi-structured were also effective in building trust and rapport with the participants. All of the participants are public figures who have bitter experience of their misquoted words arousing unintended controversy. Since they were being consulted as experts, without the discretion of anonymity, the researcher felt they would be more candid if they would be approached in a less formal manner.

Access to these very busy professionals was also an issue. The researcher judged that they would be more open to finding time for an informal consultative conversation, to which they are accustomed, but would be hard pressed to find time for a formal session.

Another consideration for choosing a semi-structured interview technique was that the research strategy required the flexibility to explore areas of particular expertise with one participant, not shared by the other. For example, one participant (Rabbi Kohn) is an expert in designing curricula for distant learning over the Internet, an area quite foreign to the others.

3.3.1.2 Personal Interviews vs. Focus Groups

Personal interviews were chosen over focus groups as the geographical distances and other logistical considerations made groups impractical. Also I felt the participants would be inhibited in their responses in the presence of representatives of other streams of Judaism, so as not to arouse controversy in a potentially explosive topic. Johnson and Christensen (2004:185) assert that a focus group is usually homogeneous as this promotes discussion. Homogeneous groups are less likely than heterogeneous groups to result in the formation of cliques and coalitions.

3.3.1.3 The Interview Procedure

Topics and issues to be covered were specified in advance in outline form. The interviewer decided the sequence and wording of the questions in the course of the interview. The outline increased the comprehensiveness of the data and made its collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Care was taken that important and salient topics were not omitted. Care was also taken that interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions should not reduce the comparability of responses (Patton 1987: 116-117, cited Johnson and Christensen 2004: 181). While the 'semi-' ness of semi-structured interview allowed a level of freedom in questions and responses, the "structured" part provided a means to ensure consistency across interviews (Winget 2005:5).

All of the interviews were conducted face-to face by the researcher. McMillan (2004: 167) maintains that with personal interviews a proper rapport with the subject can be established that enhances motivation and elicits more information. More accurate responses are obtained as the interviewer clarifies the subject's questions and follows up leads. The interviewer can also observe non-verbal responses and behaviours

As the transcripts reflect, the researcher maintained the role of a neutral medium throughout the interview. McMillan (2004:168) opines that the interviewer should not have an effect on the results, except to make it possible for the subject to reveal information that would not otherwise have been known.

3.3.1.4 The Recording of the Interview

The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder, which functioned throughout the session. Because it has been noted by researchers that tape recorders may be perceived as intrusive and may inhibit an honest account (Dowell 1995: 252), the researcher first obtained permission (Appendix I) from the interviewees to record their comments and assured them that they would have an opportunity to edit their views through later email correspondence. Transcriptions of the interviews were produced for later analysis and as a means of triangulation.

The advantages of recording are manifold. Recording can assist interpretation as it allows the interviewer to concentrate on the conversation and record the non-verbal gestures. Editing and transcribing the recordings also assist in becoming familiar with the data, and aid in coding it. Furthermore, recording guards against interviewers substituting their own words for the words of the participants (Sanghera 2002).

3.3.2 E-interviewing

The face-to-face interviews were supplemented by follow-up email correspondence. Bampton and Cowton (2002:3) describe the advantages of e-interviewing even as a primary methodology, which are relevant for its use as a supplemental tool. They

suggest that in permitting a delay between communications, an e-interview enables interviewees to reflect and then supply a considered reply. A carefully considered, well articulated, reflective reply is not necessarily less valid than a spontaneous one, especially when it serves to supplement rather than replace the face-to-face dynamic. Moreover, they assert, an ethical case can be made in some situations for allowing research subjects the opportunity to protect themselves from making injudicious comments.

3.3.3 Analysis of Written Material

Whereas the interview of key informants gave insight into the educational philosophies of contemporary experts, it was not focused on the actual implementation of these philosophies in the classroom. In order to obtain more empirical evidence about current practice, an analysis of sample written educational materials and published lesson plans was carried out.

These materials were selected from e-chinuch.org and lookstein.org, the file-sharing websites of Torah Umesorah and the Lookstein Center, respectively. Samples were chosen from these two websites, in particular, as they are reflective of the spectrum of educational approaches described in the literature study (cf. 1.6.2.1-2).

These lesson plans and materials were analysed as to their approaches to the methodological issues explored in the literature study. Specifically, attention was given to how these plans and materials displayed openness to the inclusion of current educational methods in the Jewish studies classroom. Different approaches to the study of sacred text and other subjects were also identified and related to student profile of the schools in which they were implemented.

3.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.4.1 Constant Comparative Analysis

Analysis of data began during the initial interview and continued during the conducting of subsequent interviews in accordance with the qualitative method of 'constant comparative analysis'. This strategy involves taking one piece of data (one interview, one statement, one theme) and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different in order to develop conceptualisations of the possible relations between various pieces of data. In many qualitative studies, whose purpose it is to generate knowledge about common patterns and themes within human experience, this process continues with the comparison of each new interview or account until all have been compared with each other (Thorne 2000:68-70).

3.4.2 Transcription and Thematic Coding

When all the interviews were completed they were transcribed. The transcriptions were read, reread and reflected upon. As patterns and themes were seen to emerge they were marked by means of colour-coded highlighters, for easy reference and identification. Finally, each participant's response was copied and filed in a "Microsoft Word" document according to the themes. These thematic files allowed the researcher to compare all the participants' responses until the dominant themes were identified (Lemmer 1989:155-156, cited in Panaretos 2002:139)

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted by means of colour-coded highlighters to mark the written material and lesson plans according to the themes outlined in the literature study. The material was then sorted and filed according to its thematic content.

3.4.4 Negative Case Sampling

Attention was paid to negative case sampling during the analysis process. Johnson and Christensen (2004:222) maintain that as the researcher develops a tentative

generalization based on the data, it is important to search for instances where the generalization do not hold, in order to help define its boundaries and qualifications.

3.4.5 Integration and Presentation of Findings

The findings of the interview data, the e-interview supplementation and the document analysis were then compared and synthesised in preparation for their integrated presentation.

The findings were presented as rich data, illustrated by appropriate direct quotations from the transcriptions and excerpts from the written material.

3.5 ISSUES

3.5.1 Defining Reliability in Qualitative Research

The nature of knowledge within the quantitative paradigm is different from the knowledge in qualitative paradigm. Consequently, each paradigm requires paradigm-specific criteria for addressing "rigor" (the term most often used in the rationalistic paradigm) or "trustworthiness", a parallel term for qualitative "rigor" (Morse 2002:5).

Although the term 'Reliability' is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, the idea is often used in all kinds of research (Golafshani 2003: 601). Patton (2002, cited in Golafshani 2003:601) states that validity and reliability are two factors, which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. This corresponds to the question that "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba,1985: 290, cited in Golafshani 2003:601).

McMillan (2004: 278) writes that rather at looking for consistency of behaviour, qualitative researchers are interested in the accuracy of their observations. Hence, reliability is the extent to which what is recorded as data is what actually occurred in

the setting that was studied. This involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since, from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Trochim 2005: par. 3).

3.5.1.1 Trust and Rapport

Lemmer (1989:156, cited in Panaretos 2002:139) asserts that the validity of information is primarily determined by the participant's willingness to communicate his experiences to the researcher in an atmosphere of trust and comprehension. The informants in this research study were motivated to share their experiences. As the researcher/interviewer was a fellow educator, a collegial rapport was easily established. Also, the informants themselves sensed the benefit of exploring a little researched subject of great relevance to their field.

Because permission was elicited from the participants to reveal their identities in the study, they were cautious to express their opinions accurately and thoughtfully, in consonance with their status as experts in their field.

3.5.2 Validity

Though reliability and validity are closely allied issues, scholars have identified three types of validity in qualitative research: descriptive, interpretative and theoretical.

3.5.2.1 Descriptive Validity

Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the account as reported by the qualitative researcher (Johnson 1997: 284). The descriptive validity of the study was assured by the faithful transcription of all interviews and the reproduction herewith of all documents analysed.

3.5.2.2 Interpretive Validity

Interpretive validity is obtained to the degree that the participants' viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood and reported by the qualitative researcher (Johnson 1997: 284). This aspect of validity can be most easily compromised by researcher bias. The key strategy used to understand researcher bias is called reflexivity, which means that the researcher actively engages in critical self reflection about his potential biases and predispositions Johnson 1997: 284). As an Orthodox rabbi of the Haredi stream, the researcher had to open himself up to consider the perspectives of educators of the Modern Orthodox stream and try to prevent his bias from colouring their comments. Participant feedback, also called "member checking" was a crucial method in establishing this element of validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 314, cited in Creswell and Miller 2000: 127) describe member checking as the most crucial technique for establishing credibility in a study. It consists of taking back data and interpretations back to the participants so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Creswell and Miller 2000: 127). This was accomplished in the study through supplemental e-interviews as described in the design (cf. 3.3.2).

3.5.2.3 Theoretical Validity

Theoretical validity is obtained to the degree that a theory or theoretical explanation, developed from a research study fits the data and is, therefore, credible and defensible (Johnson 1997:284). A strategy for promoting theoretical validity is called "extended field work" (Johnson 1997:284). The researcher engaged in the study over a three year period, while at the same time, as Principal of Shaarei Torah Primary School he implemented many of the ideas in the classroom. This supplementary experience made the theoretical explanations more detailed and intricate.

3.5.2.4 Negative Case sampling

Another strategy that qualitative researchers use to reduce the effect of researcher bias is called negative case sampling. This means that they attempt carefully and

purposively to search for examples that disconfirm their expectations and explanations about what they are studying (Johnson 1997: 284). The researcher engaged in active negative case sampling, as described in the research design (cf. 3.4.4).

3.5.2.5 Triangulation

Triangulation is the term given when the researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen 2004: 424). The interview strategy of the study was corroborated through document analysis as described in the research design.

3.5.3 Ethical Issues

Though qualitative researchers often deal with ethical issues involving consent, anonymity, and the vulnerability of participants among others (Bournot-Trites & Belanger 2005:204-208), none of these thorny issues were pertinent to our study. Consent was obtained before the interviews from all the participants to disclose their identity and position.

3.6 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was designed according to the principles of qualitative research. The main methodology employed was that of the semi-structured interviews and follow-up e-interviews of 6 key informants, selected according to the strategy of maximum variance sampling. An analysis of written curricular material was also undertaken to ascertain how the divergent educational philosophies, which emerged from the literature study and the interviews, were manifest in the actual classroom. A qualitative analysis of data was then conducted, sensitive to the issues of ethics, reliability, and validity.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In our literature study we investigated contemporary Orthodox Jewish schooling as an amalgam of a variety of responses, reactions and adaptations of a classical educational system to the radically changed landscape of modernity. The divergent approaches of the Haredi and Modern Orthodox streams in the management of that process were also outlined.

Chapter 3 described the design for an empiric research into the opinions and perspectives of expert informants who are presently involved in the management of the change process. An analysis of practical lesson plans and educational materials from the Lookstein.org and the Torah Umesorah e-chinuch.org file sharing websites was also designed, to demonstrate how these theoretical approaches are actually manifested in the contemporary classroom.

Upon analysis there emerged from the interviews ten thematic codes which were highlighted and gathered in folders. These themes are explained in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The Thematic Codes

4.2 The Changed Student Profile	Comments on the affects of society on the persona and learning style of the modern child
4.3 Academic Rigour	An investigation into the changed attitudes towards academic study
4.4 New and Traditional Methodologies	Examines the merits and limitations of new and traditional methodologies from practical and ideological perspectives
4.5 Bible Study	Explores the controversial use of new methodologies in Bible study
4.6 Process of Consultation	Analyses how divergent Orthodox groups determine the appropriateness of new methodologies

4.7 Hebrew Language	Looks at the various curricular models in use in the contemporary classroom
4.8 Dual Curriculum	Researches the accommodation of secular studies and attempts at an integrated curriculum
4.9 Torah and Technology	Describes the challenges and successes of technology in the Judaic and general classroom
4.10 Teacher Training	Surveys contemporary attitudes and approaches

4.2 THE CHANGED STUDENT PROFILE

The single largest area of comment by the interviewees was in the subject of the changed student profile of modernity. Though the interviewees were selected purposefully using a strategy of maximum variation sampling (cf. 3.2.1), they were unanimous in ascribing a central importance to this change in profile. The change to the student profile emerged as a universal phenomenon, in the general society as well as the Modern Orthodox and even the Haredi worlds.

4.2.1 Affects of Affluence

Rabbi Bottleman, of Jerusalem's insular *Mea Shearim* community focused on the effects of material indulgence on the distractibility of his students. He opined that much of what we may describe as ADD or ADHD behaviour, so prevalent in today's classroom, is actually an outgrowth of the natural pleasure seeking character of the child exacerbated by the effects of affluence:

> Bottleman: Like I said before, there was an advantage before when the children were less egotistical, less indulged; it was natural for children to listen to their parents' voice. Now it is not so simple. The parents raise the children as if they, the parents, are the children and the children are the parents. They go shopping and the mother asks the child what do you want that I should buy for you. He just says what he wants and immediately she does his bidding.
>
> The Researcher: Are you speaking about Mea Shearim and Kiryat Sefer and Geulah [Haredi Neighbourhoods in Jerusalem]?
>
> Bottleman: I'm speaking about the whole Haredi world; that this bacterium, this craziness has infected also them. It came perhaps from their neighbours, some of them American by origin some of them not

American but who have money. They want that their children should be happy and they think this is the way to happiness. But children who are indulged and indulge themselves, it is simply very hard for them to focus on learning even if they are not ADHD, even if they are not ADD. Even if a child has a developed mind and a calm body - and he can absorb so much. But the child is at the end of the day an ego, that's how he was born, and he naturally seeks pleasure. He comes to school with a toy in his pocket. He begins to play with it and the teacher says put it away. But in a few minutes he takes something else out of his pocket to play. When he finishes what he has in his pockets, he takes from his friend what he has and again he is not focused on his learning. And as the child moves up a class and still stays playing, the gap widens.

4.2.3 Fortitude and Fragility

Rabbi Mandel introduced an historical perspective in describing the factors influencing the American Haredi student profile. He quoted the Bobover Rebbe, an influential Hassidic leader and Holocaust survivor, who had experienced pre-war Europe and post-war America:

> I find that the parents are different and therefore the children are different. I actually spoke to the Bobover Rebbe of blessed memory, Rabbi Naftali Halberstam. I asked him the same exact question. Are the children that different? Why are we coddling them? He said that when he grew up those families that remained observant had to sacrifice for that. Those who were not hearty and strong left Judaism because it was so difficult to be an orthodox Jew. So those that stayed were hearty people. But today – and he looked at me and said don't get me wrong there are tens of thousands of beautiful Bobover Chassidic Jews – it is not difficult to be a Chasid - which is good – but the fact that they didn't have to go through trials and tribulations means that the parents are softer, less hearty - and the children even softer. There is a different child, he felt, today. As you mentioned, in yesteryear you could tell the child do it cause I say so and he would do it. Today the child is weaker and more fragile.

4.2.4 Assimilation and Alienation

Rabbi Mandel also alluded to the need for the school to compete with the allure of the street and the media for the child's attention. This dynamic produces a pressure on teachers to be more entertaining. This he sees as crucial not only for classroom management, but for ensuring the religious allegiance of the student:

I think the first point to consider is that the society has become so inviting to the children. Whereas in yesteryear, the home or the school was a focus for the child, today the world is so suffused with the media and its allure that a disgruntled student can easily leave the confines of his religious culture and become part of the world outside of his little *shtetle* [village]. Therefore, we in the Torah world have to make the Torah studies that much more interesting exciting and attractive to keep the children within the fold.

In schools serving the less religious Jewish population the changes to the student profile are understandably even more dramatic. Rabbi Kacev, of the South African Board of Jewish education explained:

In our system the challenges of the student profile are enormous. In the sense that what children are exposed to makes them wise beyond their years, but still the same - even more immature… The wisdom doesn't meet with the maturity: in issues of relationships, finding meaning in life - even <u>caring</u> to look for meaning in life! In the South African environment, to appreciate the importance of being among fellow Jews or studying Judaism. Behavioural challenges ...discipline issues...

These changes affect the curriculum directly. Whereas the initiation to traditional Torah study is through exposure to classical texts, the modern educator, according to Kacev, needs to first deal with the apathy and alienation of secularized youth towards Jewish learning:

Researcher: So, what you are trying to do is to give children who don't understand the relevance of Judaism the appetizer to help them bridge to see the relevance of Jewish texts.

Kacev: Yes. Franz Rosenzweig [20th Century Jewish Philosopher] in setting up the "Lehrhaus (cf. 1.9)" in Germany said exactly that. He himself was coming from very far away from Judaism and he wrote that whereas classically you got into Judaism straight from text and then to issues. He felt that the methodology was the other way around that you first get into the issue and then show how the text informs the issue. Over the course of time people will become more connected to texts.

These attitudinal changes affect not only the students' approach to religious studies but also his approach to the relevance of knowledge and the past in general. Again, it

is the teacher who is called upon not only to entertain, but to stimulate student interest and the sense of relevance, almost ex nihilo. Kacev reports:

> Teachers have to be dynamic there is no doubt about that. They have to be so dynamic so the kids will se a value in what they are doing. Because otherwise the post-modern child will say: "who cares what they did in the past?". Why do I need to know theorems in Maths? So you have the motivating teacher who connects with the children on a personal level and they feel the meaning.

4.2.5 The Need for Motivation

As even this motivation is lacking for most students of Jewish studies, Rabbi Kacev maintains that the contemporary educator is sent back to the drawing board to develop methodologies that enhance intrinsic motivation by emphasizing relevance:

> Kacev: The other extrinsic motivation is that they want to get good marks to get into University
>
> Researcher: Which they don't have in Jewish studies?
>
> Kacev: They don't have at all! But what you do have and that is why we are moving that way is not the content but the process that they see there is some value added to life. That is why we are moving away from content to something which is foreign to classical Jewish teaching. That is - we are working on a methodology that says: "What are the themes in Judaism that if you crack their code you crack the code to gaining a meaning in a matrix that informs life. What does Kedusha [Holiness] mean and is it important that I need to know what that is?

It is interesting to contrast Rabbi Kacev's advocacy of moving towards relevance in the Judaic studies curriculum with the comments of Rabbi Y. Kahn explored in our literature study (cf. 2.8.5.4). Kahn argues forcefully that by using Talmud study simply as a means to an end, when that end becomes some kind of comprehensive philosophical approach, then the details become unimportant. This can lead students to ridicule of subjects, which seem dry of philosophic import. But one must keep in mind that Rabbi Kahn is addressing the application of these educational changes in the traditional curriculum and Rabbi Kacev is speaking about utilizing this approach for the religiously alienated youth of his school system (cf. 3.2.6).

4.2.6 The Policy of Inclusion

The student profile has changed in another profound way: inclusion. In Dr. Tait's case it has been affected by the inclusion of all South Africans after the downfall of apartheid. For the Jewish educator, the improved socio-economic situation of the descendents of Eastern European Jewry has created similar challenges of inclusion. As Rabbi Bottleman relates:

> Not every one [yeshiva student] was a genius. But in the earlier generations, he who was not in a mindset that he wanted to truly learn would not go to yeshiva. He would learn some trade. The majority was like this, the minority who were fitting for this [learning], and wanted it, did it. But also primary schools were rare. Any parent who was able would take a tutor to teach his children. The children who were on a level progressed and the ones who were not simply went to learn a trade. Now we don't leave anyone out of schooling. And now that we have even average students and even weak students I think it is an obligation to take this into account and to build the educational structure that it should be fitting not only for the strong students also for the weaker students.

This point was accentuated to me by Rabbi A. Feldman in an unrecorded informal interview. He maintained that the lack of structure manifest in the traditional Yeshiva education derives from its original formulation in the great Lithuanian yeshiva of Volozhin in the 19th Century. The excellent students who studied there did not require a superimposed structure; on the contrary, they felt that such structure would hamper their independent research. Our much more inclusive generation requires the teacher to provide more structured methodologies, he felt.

The wider spectrum of the inclusive classroom has posed new challenges for veteran teachers like Mr. Tait himself. He revealed, candidly:

> Tait: Just in class today one boy said to me that my classes are too boring – so I haven't made the change (laughing). And I'm doing a question and answer thing and I've got an example on the board. So I'm teaching well. He is not coping. I've got an intellectual approach and he is struggling with the abstractness of what I am trying to do.
>
> Researcher: Is the generation coming in less abstract and more experiential?

Tait: I don't know if you can say that. The brighter end of the students is very able to cope. But what we are experiencing is that our academic tail is quite long and those boys do need a different approach academically. So if you have a verbal type of delivery like I do, that is hard. It is not on my wavelength.

Rabbi Bottleman echoes this observation in the radically different school setting of Mea Shearim, Jerusalem. Without reference to the contemporary emphasis on "teaching for thinking", he prescribes for the inclusive classroom:

Also the weaker students can be uplifted through stimulating thinking. Just like a sports professional – how is he different than me? He is different from me because he does many training exercises. Just as the muscles develop through exercise also the mind develops through exercise.

For example, a teacher who takes 5 minutes every day to ask questions like "How is one thing like the other and how is it different. The Sages inserted the blessing of Havdalah [discernment] in the blessing of Knowledge because knowledge is based on discernment of differences. He asks "what is the opposite of light? Darkness. Simple question. What is the opposite of bitter? Sweet. If he asks 5 minutes of questions like this, he accustoms the child to think about things and their opposites. Then he develops the idea and asks how is this thing alike the other and how is not alike.

4.2.7 The Changed Parent Profile

The urgency of this more inclusive approach was underlined by Rabbi Mandel, in the name of a contemporary American authority, for religious reasons as well:

Mandel: Rabbi David Cohen once mentioned to me that in yesteryear, if the child was not so interested in learning - nevertheless the street was frum [religious] he wouldn't turn away from his religious culture because of the influence of his friends, and of the neighbourhood. He would learn to the best of his ability. Today, he said, if you don't reach out to the child he is out of your sphere of influence. He has very, many places to go. So it is even more important to keep the child interested.

The interviewees pointed to a natural correlation between the changed students and the parental attitudes which produce them. A breakdown in respect for parental authority was seen by Rabbi Mandel as a cause for a breakdown in the ability of

teachers to command respect. This also has generated the need for teachers to motivate extrinsically in order to achieve academic results:

> What I see in addition to that is that respect has deteriorated. And although we blame the society - at least the American society – it is also the parents who are not knowledgeable about how to command respect from the children. So I find that when we in a school encourage the children to stand up when a parent enters a room or to speak with respect to their parents – the parents themselves don't take well to that. They say you are putting a wedge between ourselves and our children. They say we are friends with our children. Don't make us aloof from them.

Rabbi Mandel noted the proactive efforts of the Torah Umesorah leadership in the area of parenting courses, especially for the newly observant "returnees" who bring with them the influence of their secular upbringing. Ironically, Rabbi Bottleman advocated the same type of training for the parents of his ultra-orthodox Mea Shearim neighbourhood . In our literature study (cf. 2.6.5), the growing role of schools as centres of socialization and moral education was noted. The call of these educators for a proactive effort on the part of schools in parent training would seem to confirm that trend.

Mr Tait espoused the importance of formalities such as school uniforms to counteract these societal influences:

> Researcher: Do you think formality is good?
>
> Tait: Hugely
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> Tait: It helps to create a disciplined environment and it gives them pride in themselves. I think if you look around you will find that those schools that emphasise the good manners thing - those boys have a confidence, a poise, an ease of relationships with adults. They know how to behave and they find it funny when people don't behave like that.

4.2.8 Moral Education

For Rabbi Kacev, the introduction of moral education into the Judaic curriculum has a distinctly 21st Century function. It serves the purpose of sharpening the dulled moral

sensitivity of the post-modern child and thus sensitizing him to the values of learning and of Judaism itself:

> Researcher: What you are trying to do is weave the fabric of life values, which Judaism is built on, because you cannot assume even them. And that is unprecedented.

> Kacev: Also, it is like something we spoke about when we met with the Chief Rabbi, children are looking through the lens of their liberal egalitarian value system and judging whether Judaism should be looked at or not. Somehow we have to get them to see the values of Judaism as an uplifted system something higher than what they have.

4.2.9 Conclusion

The respondents, from across the spectrum of Jewish and non-Jewish schools, agreed that the modern school child needed a different approach than his earlier counterpart. A breakdown in parental authority has made him less responsive to appeals to respectful obedience and thus, more in need of motivation.

Moreover, whereas the Eastern European system was designed for the brightest and most self-motivated student, the improved socio-economic conditions of modernity have brought the broad spectrum of ability and styles into the classroom. This has created the need for a more structured and child-centred learning environment.

4.3 ACADEMIC RIGOUR

4.3.1 Introduction

The interviewees all accentuated that the change in student profile has had a marked affect on the tone of academic rigour in the contemporary classroom. This has necessitated a reduction of academic expectations. It also has created the need for teachers to provide more stimulation and motivation for their students, both extrinsic and intrinsic.

4.3.2 Traditional Attitudes

As noted, (cf. 1.1.3.5; 2.1.2), classical Jewish pedagogy was designed for a student who applied himself with single-minded diligence to the difficult tasks of memorization and analysis of an enormous body of knowledge. The Sages prescribed that the ready and able student should be "stuffed like an ox" (Talmud Baba Bathra: 21a). This diligence was built on the solid foundation of parental and societal values. According to Mr. Tait, these same elements characterized, to a degree, the British school tradition, upon which the South African schools were originally based.

4.3.3 Focus and Endurance

The new student and the society that produces him are less focused on academic achievement (cf. 1.1.3.5). In fact, parental acquiescence to the pulls of media and popular culture has produced a pleasure-seeking, attention-fragmented child. Even in Mea Shearim Rabbi Bottleman notes:

> To find these ways [motivational methodologies] you've got to be a superman to make the lessons so interesting that they are more interesting than the other things.   But the technology of the games is so developed and all the times the children are bringing these electronic toys to school. The teacher is explaining something, doing interesting things on the board but the child is sitting with his fingers driving cars and the like and he is not thinking of his future. He is thinking of the immediate pleasure.

Academic rigour also requires from the child certain strength of character and endurance (cf. 4.2.3). Rabbi Mandel, quoting the Bobover Rebbe, maintained that "in yesteryear you could tell the child do it cause I say so and he would do it. Today the child is weaker and more fragile". The egalitarian attitudes of even religious parents were also cited by Rabbi Mandel as a cause of the erosion of school authority and the decline of academic rigor.

4.3.4 Modern Attitudes on Discipline and Childhood

Modern approaches to discipline, which eschew strong measures, have also lowered the bar of academic expectation. On the subject of homework for High School boys with supervised study periods in a dormitory, Mr. Tait observed:

> Researcher: Nine years ago, when you started at Jeppe did you find it was easier to load the kids up on homework? How much can you get away with now?
>
> Tait: We are getting less and less out of the boys on homework across the board. It is a real issue. If we would punish every boy every day we would be spending many many hours chasing up. Whereas when I was a boy if you didn't have your homework done the punishment was instant and swift. Part of it is teachers saying it is not worth it giving homework. Let me just teach this. Let's do it in class because then I have control of it and I don't have to spend 15 minutes of my next lesson chasing homework .

In a curious aside, Mr. Tait noted a gender difference in this area:

> Researcher: So does that indicate that rigorous academic work is harder to achieve?
>
> Tait: Yes, and I think it is harder for boys. My wife teaches down the road at Jeppe Girls and they definitely have a better work ethic than our boys have. And in many cases they come from the same families.

As noted (cf. 1.1.3.5), modern views of childhood, widely held by society, have confounded traditional academic discipline with academic 'pressure'. Rabbi Kacev observed:

> Teachers can't just come along and say tomorrow we're going to have this. There is so much effort that goes on to see that pressure is put on teachers that there is not so much pressure on the child.

4.3.5 Democracy and Egalitarianism

Societal trends and values, such as democracy, have also had their influence on student attitudes. Basing himself on the comments of pre-war educator Rabbi K.

Shapiro, cited in our literature study (cf. 2.6.1), Rabbi Kacev noted the exaggerated affects of these trends on the 21st Century student:

> You see in the introduction to *Chovat Hatalmidim* [Obligation of Students] (cf. 2.6.1) about the new theories of democracy... and children are born saying it is <u>my</u> right... it is <u>me</u>. There are so many of those theories pushed onto children that they turn around and say [I'm not going to do your homework for tomorrow].... The challenges are exactly that....democracy... because I have my rights in this classroom.

4.3.6 Erosion of Religious Values

According to Mr. Kevin Tait of Jeppe Boys High School, Johannesburg, a general erosion of the core values of education has followed *pari passu* with the erosion of religious values in society as a whole. This has also affected the intrinsic motivation towards academic excellence:

> Researcher: The values of religion - even if you abstract them from the religion - just as values - how is it possible to get them across or is it impossible?
>
> Tait: I think you are raising a key issue. In my weekly assembly address I appeal to values, but the context is not there. If you use a Biblical story for example – they don't know the story. That has made it difficult for me. I know not everyone sees it, but I see a causal link between religious beliefs and values... People tell me they can have values [without religion] but I don't know how they justify that value. What is right and what is wrong? For me that is a religious question.
>
> ...I find this generation of young people un-churched, un-mosqued – well maybe more go to mosque. But Sunday is not a religious day anymore.

In place of the intrinsic value of learning the educator must rely on the unreliable extrinsic spur of good marks for university entry. Tait commented that "the competitive environment in the top end helps because boys don't like being beaten or coming second.   But for many other boys they don't care. They are not aiming high; they are just aiming to pass".

4.3.7 Interactive Teaching

Mr. Tait also remarked that, in this respect, the interactive teaching methods of the Outcomes Based Education (Bennet 2000: 585-586) system have been a positive addition to the modern classroom. Rabbi Kacev concurred in principle, but added with a touch of irony: "I think that with things like group work what we are doing is giving the teacher a breather from having to act all the time ".

But, though Mr. Tait concurred that the need for more stimulating teaching is definitely caused in part by the decline in academic discipline, he cautioned that it is also true that the demands of delivering the current curriculum require much more of a teacher on their own. Because they both have happened in South Africa at the same time, he felt it would be quite hard to isolate the one and say it is the cause.

4.3.8 Abuse of Extrinsic Reward

Extrinsic motivational strategies, when misused as replacements for authority and academic self-discipline, were seen by Rabbi Bottleman as unsatisfactory and even subversive to the student's development:

> And teachers today cannot use strong disciplinary measures, so all the time it is with prizes and encouragements, prizes and incentives. And the child from his childhood does not get used to being focused on his studies and as the time goes on the gap widens.

4.3.9 Conclusion

The attitudinal underpinnings of classic Torah education and even of general education of just a generation ago have undergone a profound change. According to the interviewees, contemporary affluence and immersion in pop-culture have produced a student of weaker character, unsuited, in general, for academic rigour. The erosion of religious values, more liberal approaches to discipline and new attitudes towards child welfare and rights have bestowed upon the status quo the

patina of philosophic and psychological rectitude. The contemporary educator, qua 'edu-tainer' has been forced to fill the vacuum of academic rigour with the mixed blessing of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

4.4 NEW AND TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES

4.4.1 Introduction

We have gleaned from our study that the affects of the new student profile on traditional academic values have challenged educators to investigate new methodologies that motivate extrinsically and intrinsically. For the Torah teacher traditional methodologies have the ring of authenticity, whereas new methodologies may smack of reform. Nevertheless, the interviewees displayed varying degrees of openness to innovation, not necessarily along ideological lines.

4.4.2 Do Not Look at the Vessel

The interviewees all followed the exhortation of the Sages (Mishnah Avot: 4,27): "Do not look at the vessel, but at what is in it: there is a new vessel filled with old wine and an old vessel that does not even contain new wine". They were willing to consider that old methodologies were not necessarily sacrosanct and they were even willing to consider that new methodologies were sometimes the best conveyers of traditional content in the contemporary classroom.

Rabbi Mandel reported that the Rabbinic Advisory Board of Haredi led Torah Umesorah made the important distinction between the core values of Torah education and delivery methodologies for the American classroom:

> So, my understanding of the opinion of the Gedolim and of the tradition is … I make a dichotomy. The objectives of teacher and child - remain steadfast i.e. the objectives of Yiras Shamayim [reverence] of Geshmak [enjoyment of learning] Loving Torah, Loving to live a life of Torah – Skill development. Those objectives never change. The methodology however should change to be the best it could be. The methodology needs to be adapted to the child. Rav Eliashiv [senior contemporary halachic authority] said today's children are different. Rav Shach, of blessed

memory, [senior contemporary Rosh Yeshiva] said that today instead of criticism we need to encourage the children. So of course the strategies we use to invite the child into the world of Torah should likewise change. The Gedolim interpret "Chachma Bagoim Taamin [Believe that there is wisdom among the gentiles] to include secular teaching methodology --- not necessarily the psychology--- but the actual teaching.

It is important to note that these Haredi authorities, who advocate a general intellectual isolation from general society (cf. 1.1.2.1), are quoted here as encouraging the adoption of teaching methodologies from non-Jewish academic sources, albeit without their psychological depth theory. This same attitude was expressed quite forcefully by Mea Shearim educator, Rabbi Bottleman:

Researcher: Let me ask you - if some non-Jewish professor in America invented a learning method that deals with these problems can we take from that source, since we see that it is effective?

Bottleman: I'll ask you - if a professor in American invented something that would provide us cold and hot water in the kitchen, can we use it?... and an upholstered chair - you know once they did not have them - can we use them? Printed books? Just the opposite - G-d commanded Adam to dominate the world and conquer it. G-d expects that we should do anything in our power to develop the world.

4.4.3 Non-Jewish Resources and Research

The greater resources of research available in the general society and the prohibitive expense and other impracticalities of reproducing studies are cited by Rabbi Mandel as justifications for adopting from outside sources:

The secular world spends much money and time to make studies with thousands of children. The results of these studies are invaluable for enhancing our teaching experience For example a Japanize researcher tested the results of using colored chalk in the classroom and how it serves as motivator for the child. Others have studied the effects of using inter- active teaching as opposed to frontal teaching. They spend millions of dollars on these studies, why can't we benefit from them? Why can't we borrow?

The Haredi led Torah Umesorah itself has invited expert gentile educators of renown to be keynote speakers at their annual conventions, according to Rabbi Mandel. But, he emphasized, the subjects of the lectures related to the pragmatics of education and not to psychological theory, which may conflict with Torah philosophy. In addition, they were carefully screened to ensure their appropriateness. (cf. 2.7.6.3).

Since the traditions of Eastern European Torah education were practiced in an environment of crushing poverty, the rudimentary tools of classroom instruction were unknown to them and thus not part of the tradition. Mea Shearim's Rabbi Bottleman takes the position that these tools would have indeed been welcomed in the past. He also contends that teachers should take advantage of the new tools as they become available:

> Bottleman: The good quality is that you are able today to have more tools. Once all you had was a blackboard and chalk. If the teacher was an artist he could picture everything with the chalkboard, but that was all.
>
> Researcher: Did they even have a blackboard and chalk?
>
> Bottleman: 100 years ago they didn't have, but 50 years ago they had. But not every teacher used the blackboard well. Not all of them were talented and creative how to take advantage of the board.

4.4.4 Testing and Written Work

Though testing was not common in the Eastern European tradition (cf. 1.1.3.5), Rabbi Bottleman saw it's usefulness in the contemporary classroom. In fact, he asserted, along with Rabbi Feldman in a subsequent unrecorded interview (cf. 4.2.6), that the absence of tests in the Lithuanian pre-war Yeshiva was due to the highly motivated students who studied there:

> In the Yeshiva of the Chasam Sofer there were tests [Early 19th Cent. Hungary] and in other places there were tests. In the Lithuanian Yeshivas there were perhaps no tests exactly but they didn't need tests...not every one was a genius. But in the earlier generations, he who was not in a mindset that he wanted to truly learn would not go to Yeshiva.

When queried about the propriety of written work versus the more traditional method of oral review, Rabbi Feldman responded that methods of delivery were not matters of principle:

> Whatever the teacher thinks is successful may be done. I don't think this matter is a fundamental of religion. You want the pupil to know Chumash and whatever way he learns it, he learns it. I don't think emphasizing writing is a tragedy.

In our literature study we mentioned the opinion of Rabbi Dessler that having students write down work had an intellectual advantage, but lacked in emotional resonance of traditional chanting (cf.2.9.1). In a curious role reversal, traditional educator Rabbi Bottleman defended vigorously, from personal experience, the efficacy of written work

> Researcher: Let me give you another example - writing down a lot in notebooks. In a previous generation they did not write so much in notebooks.
>
> Bottleman: Because they didn't know how to teach properly.
>
> Researcher: Huh? But the original teaching was oral?
>
> Bottleman: But now it is written.
>
> Researcher: But in Europe they used to do oral reviews and didn't write much.
>
> Bottleman: There were clever teachers who wrote and when the students wrote it remained in their memories. I'll tell you a story. I was a young boy and someone had a page with the tune of the Bobover Hassidim *Yedid Nefesh* song in Yiddish. I knew the song but I didn't know the tune. I wanted to learn it, so I asked to borrow it to write the notes. He gave it to me for a day and I wrote some of it and he took it back. As much as I wrote I remember till today. One writing down is worth 100 oral reviews!

4.4.5 New Methods for New Generations

Rabbi Mandel went even further and questioned the very notion of traditional methodologies as being more appropriate in changed circumstances:

Now Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky [former heard of Torah Umesorah Rabbinic Board] noted that there are many chapters in the Shulchan Aruch [Code of Jewish Law] on every part of life There is much written in the Shulchan Aruch on Tefillin and on the other mitzvos but when it comes to the mitzvah of teaching Torah to our children it is very sparse. The Torah is quiet. Why so? Rav Kaminetsky said that it is because there is no one way to teach. There aren't laws governing teaching methodologies. It depends on the child. It depends on the society, on the place, and on the subject. He encouraged using methodologies that worked. If a chalkboard worked than use it. The fact that they didn't use boards in Europe is not relevant.

Rabbi Kohn made the point that what we may perceive as traditional may be of dubious historical precedent. Conversely, a new methodology like cognitive learning may have greater historic authenticity:

Kohn: What I haven't understood is what this tradition is in pedagogic terms. The fact that students sing-song in English, when did that begin? It is not in Shulchan Aruch. It is not in Rambam [Maimonides]. So when did it begin? I have tried to research this a bit. Now cognitive learning - children asking questions that has more of a tradition in Jewish sources. Asking! My daughter is encouraged to ask questions in grade 2. The tradition of chanting doesn't allow for questions in its extreme form.

Researcher: Can the traditional sing-song be looked at as a sensorial way of learning?

Kohn: Musical intelligence, ok… but the fact that one teacher stands in front of a whole classroom was never a Jewish idea. "Teach them to your son" one-on-one - father to son.

4.4.6 Advantages of Traditional Methods

Mr. Tait commented that many new and lofty educational goals were difficult to put into practice in the actual classroom. In reference to the goal of teaching for multiple intelligences (Gardner 1993), he remarked "That sounds great! But it is really hard. It is hard for the bright math student to be in a class with a weak one. It holds him up".

He also expressed a concern that creative methodologies are often poorly understood and implemented by all but the most skilful teachers. In answer to a query about group work, a feature of traditional Jewish learning that has become a popular style in general education, he noted:

> Cooperative learning is one of the building blocks of the South African OBE style. I have great reservations about how well it works. I think group learning requires a highly skilled facilitator and then can be extremely effective – so I'm not against it. The average teacher is not facilitating the group – he's got six groups and what are they doing? They are messing around. They talk about academically engaged time - if you apply that measure to group work it is extremely inefficient.

Even Rabbi Kohn of the Lookstein Centre, who expressed the firm belief that "our greatest challenge is in the area of teacher training - teaching teachers to be more engaging in the classroom with new methodologies", reserved the right to critically examine those methodologies to see whether they indeed have an advantage over the traditional:

> A modern discovery? We will look at it and examine it to see if it works. But we find that a lot of what the Sages have spoken about is part of sound education.

Though Rabbi Bottleman expressed a general positive approach towards the resources made available with modern affluence, he noted that the simpler methods of poverty could be a boon for 'the basics':

> When I was a child in my school I don't remember if they had a board. In secular studies the teacher would dictate. We didn't have books. But this was better because now that we have books, the child copies out the word, but if you ask him 10 minutes later he hasn't absorbed what he wrote out. But without books the teacher would ask the student how to spell and the student would spell it back to him. And the teacher could respond, "correct".

But, it is important to note that Rabbi Bottleman's criterion was not "tradition vs. the new", but rather "the effective vs. the ineffective". In discussing the conflict of 'whole language' (Goodman & Goodman 1981) over the traditional phonetic approach to the teaching of reading, he explained:

> The phonetic opinion is where the child learns the letters and then the vowels and then strings them together. Then there is the opposite approach where the child is taught to identify words and has to be very intelligent to figure out that the word reads a certain way because they are made up of sounds. The way of learning to read phonetically is much

more effective. Not because it is the tradition of our fathers but because it is more effective.

4.4.7 The New in Support of the Traditional

Rabbi Kacev sees a use for new methodologies as a kind of "appetizer" or "warm up" to traditional textual study. This acknowledges the importance of preserving traditional study values, while at the same time acknowledges the utility of modern methodology in reaching the contemporary student. He invested a lot of time and resources in the development of a 'moral dilemma' syllabus based on the moral development theories of Kohlberg (1984), designed to awaken children to the relevance of selected Jewish texts:

> Stage two of this process, after the children do the dilemma in an hour, in the next lesson they actually do a Jewish text. It will be Chumash, it will be Maimonides or Shulchan Aruch or something connected to what they learned. The whole methodology of this is that they learn the text…it brings out all those values in the Jewish context and the children are then asked how do you think the text can be used to solve the dilemma.

Though Rabbi Kacev deals mostly with children from less religious homes, he felt strongly that even religious child would benefit from this proactive engagement and the stimulation of these methodologies:

> Researcher: Can you see a cross-pollenazation effect? Do religious children nowadays need this kind of approach?
>
> Kacev: I definitely believe that. I think the methodology is correct for all schools. Those schools should be learning classically, but it doesn't mean that they shouldn't have that time for the students to engage and this is a positive way to do that. The only difference is that some of the dilemmas are written with the King David student in mind. These are issues that in Grade 7 and 8 he will be faced with. Call it sexuality and like that. In other schools the children will be dealing with the same issues but in different ways, not in a co-ed environment.

This view would seem to find support from the opinion of Rabbi Shapiro, explored in the literature study (cf. 2.6.1).

4.4.8 Focus on Meaning

In the literature study we also noted the modern need for more focus on philosophic meaning in the modern syllabus of even young children (cf. 2.3.9.1). This was corroborated in the comments of the interviewees about the changed student profile (cf. 4.2.4). This new accent featured strongly in the comments of the respondents about curricular changes.

Rabbi Bottleman noted that even children from the most Haredi homes could no longer be expected to accept the simple tenets of faith upon authority. They therefore needed to have their questions dealt with seriously, at a young age, to avoid rebellion at some later stage. This approach is in consonance with the guidance of Hassidic leader and holocaust martyr Rabbi K. Shapiro in our literature study (cf. 2.6.1):

> A child could ask: when the land was created? Because it seems to have been around before the waters were removed. And he could ask when the water was created. I had a child ask me that. But if we stifle that question, in another 20 years the question will surface again and the child will think – what a low class airhead teacher! I asked a question with a good point and he did not know how to answer it!

Though Rabbi Bottleman felt that this new need was applicable in Haredi neighbourhoods, Rabbi Feldman suggested that there still were insulated enclaves in Israel where the challenges of modernity had not penetrated:

> In Israel, in the Cheder system, they teach the simple meaning of the Chumash… I think that in Israel there may be no issue. A child that is in a religious neighbourhood - a religious society - where there are no Hashkafa [philosophic] issues - should just learn a lot of Chumash. He will be a bigger Talmid Chacham when he grows up.

4.4.9 Primacy of Talmud

Rabbi Feldman judged that outside of these enclaves in Israel it was indeed necessary to teach matters of faith and character development directly, but only as a minor focus. His approach is in consonance with traditional Lithuanian Haredi educational

philosophy, which emphasizes Talmud study over Biblical study (cf. 2.3.1). He felt that though there was now a need to teach more philosophy and character directly, the ultimate goals of the traditional curriculum were all the more pertinent in our times:

> Researcher: The Learning of Mikra – Tanach - historically wasn't part of traditional religious education.
>
> Feldman: Some say because the Haskalah used Tanach for heretical reasons. They sometimes present difficulties. They show [heretically] that King David wasn't religious. A child can come away with the wrong impression of the Melachim [Kings]. That is why people say they didn't learn it. I am not sure this is true.
>
> I think the major reason is that they emphasized Gemara and there was no time for Tanach. The Sages say, "Keep your children from Higayon" which means Tanach, which is why I think they stopped emphasizing Mikra. My father of blessed memory said that at 10 years old they finished [Talmudic tractate] Bava Kama in his school. That is because they learned Gemara [Talmud] the whole day. Nothing but Gemara. They wanted to produce halachic authorities. They wanted to produce Gedolim. And Gemara is the source of everything. They figured they would pick up Tanach somewhere along the line. They didn't want to waste time with children; they wanted the children to know the whole Talmud.
>
> Researcher: That is still our proper approach?
>
> Feldman: I think that is the ideal that children should know Shas [Talmud] and Poskim [Halacha]. That is the ideal - that is the survival of the Jewish people: to learn Shas and Poskim. If you produce Talmidei Chachamim - people who know everything - you have ensured the survival of the Jewish people. You have produced people who know Halacha and people who will be leaders Accordingly you will have Daas Torah [Torah authority] and that is vital for our times.

Though Rabbi Feldman was a major student of the late Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (former member of Torah Umesorah Rabbinic Board), who was known for the introduction of greater emphasis on the study of the Midrashic and philosophic parts of Torah in the post-war Yeshiva curriculum, he felt that this emphasis was a response to the unique dynamics of those times:

> Feldman: Rav Hutner made many great leaders in America but he didn't create as many Gedolei Torah [great Torah scholars] as did Rav Aharon Kotler. That was the difference- Rav Aharon emphasized Talmudic learning. Rav Hutner was fighting the influence of academia on American youth...

Researcher: The Haskalah?

Feldman: Yes. The university was very popular and he felt he had to give some kind of equivalent in Torah. That's what he did and he did it very successfully.

4.4.10 Pitfalls of "Hashkofo" Focus

Rabbi Feldman also accentuated the pitfalls of the focus on esoteric 'hashkofo [philosophy]', as opposed to the traditional focus on the more rational and accessible Talmudic texts:

> The successful way has been to get them into Talmudic learning and not to be involved too much in matters of hashkofo. Apparently we are not sure that you are going to give over the right principles in Hashkofo. There are so many opinions. Which one are you going to choose? And not everyone understands the deep books that deal with the subjects. In esoteric matters people usually come away with wrong conclusions.

4.4.11 Conclusion

Even the most conservative of the respondents displayed a surprising openness to methodological innovation from non-Jewish sources. They attributed the prior absence of many of these methodologies to a lack of resources and funds for educational research. The approach of the respondents can be characterised as pragmatic. Some even asserted that the Sages themselves provided few rigid practical guidelines for classroom delivery, because effective education practice, by definition, needed to adapt to the realities of the age.

On the other hand, new was not necessarily better, in their eyes. The new idealistic methodologies tended to be difficult in implementation by all but the best teachers. In Jewish education, in particular, sometimes the new methodologies were most effectively used as "appetizers' to traditional study.

There was a realization that new methodologies, which focused more on meaning and relevance, were necessary even for the religious child. But, there were Haredi concerns that this focus should not lead to philosophical confusion or to the abandonment of the traditional focus on Talmud study.

4.5 BIBLE STUDY

4.5.1 Introduction

Although the respondents from across the ideological spectrum of Orthodoxy displayed unanimously a great degree of openness to pedagogical change, they split dramatically when it came to utilizing modern literary approaches in the study of the Bible. In our literature study (2.3.7-9) we traced the historic roots of this educational controversy and discovered in our interviews that the debate still rages today.

4.5.2 Bible as Literature

Rabbi Kohn of the Modern Orthodox led Lookstein Centre spoke positively about new "literary approaches to Tanach - looking at Bible as literature: guiding words, repetitions, narrative structures etc". In a follow-up e-interview, Rabbi Kohn asserted that these approaches were in consonance with the Tradition:

> Repetitions, guiding words etc. are literary techniques dealt with by the greatest of the commentators. Rashi, for example, is clearly aware of these repetitions and relates to them in his commentaries. The Midrash itself frequently points to key words and their repetition in its exegesis.

He added that any discussion about the foibles of the Forefathers was firmly based on traditional commentary and done in a respectful manner. Nonetheless, he admitted that this approach was perceived as inappropriate by some contemporary 'traditionalists':

> I don't see anything that we do in conflict with the traditionalists except in the area of explaining the Avot [Forefathers]. Not so much a pedagogical

issue, but more moral and philosophical, we have a clash with the traditionalists. How do you present Esau and Yaakov? We would encourage an approach, which explores the texts and opens the possibility of Yaakov being wrong. Educators in traditional schools would not buy that approach for philosophic reasons.

Even in pedagogical approaches for teaching the Avot, when we would encourage an honest discussion about Yaakov's actions etc., we follow rabbinic commentaries (like Nachmanides and Rabbi Hirsch) that offer criticism. We do so with due respect and would not offer criticism if no great commentaries would have done so earlier.

4.5.3 The Haredi Approach

Rabbi Feldman, of Torah Umesorah upheld the traditional approach as the most conducive to inspiring children to religious faith:

Feldman: I think the best way is to learn Chumash with Rashi. There you get the words of the Sages. There you get a lot of Emunah [faith]. This way they have the tradition of the Oral Law.

Researcher: The Modern Orthodox write that the child should have his own independent relationship with the text itself, with the Tanach. Then you learn the commentaries afterwards. First you say what is the pshat [the plain meaning].

Feldman: I don't think that is right. I think you have to put the Oral law into the verse. Later they can learn the simple meaning - that comes later - but the Oral tradition has to be mixed into the Written Torah. That should be the simple meaning.

4.5.4 Haredi Concerns about Changes to Bible Study

Rabbi Feldman suggested that the Modern Orthodox approach to Bible study was not motivated by purely pedagogical principles. He asserted that, whereas the traditional approach to textual study gave the ultimate power of interpretation into the hands of rabbinic authority, the professed aim of modern exegesis is to grant more autonomy to the reader, thereby increasing relevance. This autonomy, besides opening the door to trivialization, can be detrimental to authority. As Zvi Grumet, Associate Director of the Lookstein Center, admits: "as texts become available to the masses, they help to

bridge the gap between the learned and the unlearned, increase the potential for challenges to traditional authority, and open society up to new ideas" (2004).

4.5.5 Texts vs. Abridgement

The use of abridged source sheets, which facilitate reader autonomy, in place of traditional texts is also a source of educational controversy (cf. 2.8). Rabbi Kohn of the Lookstein Centre reported that his organization was not concerned with this issue in their curricular deliberations, as their major objective was to develop methodologies, which were effective educationally. In contrast, Rabbi Feldman of Torah Umesorah commented sharply on the importance of the traditional textual experience:

> The pupil has got to have a Chumash in front of him. The "Kedusha" [holiness] of the Torah resides in the Chumash he has before him - not in sheets. Even the Gemara shouldn't be taught by sheets. The pupil should have a real full-size Gemara in front of him He should know that the Chumash is a Sefer, that there is a Rashi and a Targum Unkelos [classical commentaries] on the page. The images of these will remain in his consciousness as a result of holding a Chumash in his hands. It is like… When he studies Physics or Composition in the afternoon, so he will take another sheet of paper from same note pad he used in the morning for his Torah studies. He is not receiving the correct message. He has to know there is something Kodesh [holy] about Torah and a Sefer [book] is a Holy thing. He has to wrap it and make sure it is kept neat. He shouldn't write in it. It is not a secular thing. If he has to write, he should write on a photocopy of the Chumash, but not on the Chumash itself.

4.5.6 Conclusion

Though Haredi educators are open to the use of new methodologies, even from secular and Non-Jewish sources, they draw the line when it comes to traditional Bible study. They are concerned that changes to the traditional way of studying Bible will impact negatively on the transference of religious values.   In contrast, Rabbi Kohn, of the Lookstein Center, believed that literary methods increased the relevance of the text in the minds of the students and thereby, made Bible study a more meaningful experience.

4.6 PROCESS OF CONSULATATION

4.6.1 Introduction

As indicated by its title, the study focused on the issue of the management of pedagogical change. A critical element of the study, then, is an exploration into the process of establishing criteria of appropriate innovation and conservatism for Jewish education. In the interviews a clear division emerged between the Haredi and Modern Orthodox approach to the importance of consultation with rabbinic authorities on matters of methodology.

4.6.2 The Lookstein Center Approach

The Lookstein Center's Rabbi Kohn felt strongly that the methodological issues facing contemporary educators were best handled by educational experts. This was not motivated by concerns that rabbinic authorities would be too closed minded to innovation, as even the renowned Torah scholar Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik, who held a doctorate in Philosophy and was an icon of enlightened open-mindedness to the Modern Orthodox, would not be consulted by Rabbi Kohn as a final decisor:

> Researcher: Torah Umesorah has a consultative process with their board of rabbinic sages. Do you have something like that?
>
> Kohn: No, we consult with educators who are experts in their field.
>
> Researcher: Let's say you had someone like Rabbi Soloveichik around, who had an open approach to drawing from modern sources and was rooted in Torah as well, would you consult with him?
>
> Kohn: Interesting question. Yes, but we would retain the final decision to go with our educational judgment.

4.6.3 The South African Board of Jewish Education Approach

Rabbi Kacev's perspective was that the unique student profile of non-religious youth in the King David system could best be understood by educational experts who had experience with the secular mind-set. Though he is an Orthodox rabbi who consults with his own Rosh Yeshiva on personal issues, his professional mentoring is through other channels. He added that even that mentoring process was more academic than consultative:

> I have a personal mentor at the Melton Centre at Hebrew University. I just call Israel. A lot of the mentorship is through articles. I ask: could you send me the latest articles on a particular subject.

4.6.4 The Torah Umesorah Approach

These approaches contrasted sharply with the approach of Rabbi Mandel of Torah Umesorah.   During his interview he substantiated virtually every one of his educational opinions with statements from Torah authorities with whom he had personally consulted or heard their views (cf. 4.4.2). He reported:

> Basically, every new milestone in Jewish education is cautiously authorized by Gedolei Yisrael. Torah Umesorah has a board, a group of Gedolim and they allow or not allow. As an example: co-educational classes -- we allow it in elementary, we don't allow it in high school.

According to Rabbi Mandel, the Torah Umesorah consultative approach does not end with the discussion of broader policy issues. The rabbinic board is brought into the nitty-gritty of educational issues to enable them to make informed decisions about them:

> A lot of secular educational material has been discussed with Gedolei Yisroel. I know one of the most famous videos of Rick Lavoie, F. A. T. City, Frustration Anxiety Tension [about children with learning disabilities] has been shown to a prominent Gadol for his approval. Some

secular books have been approved by Gedolim, e.g. authors Dale Carnegie and John Holt. Educators like Rabbi Orlowek have shown secular educational material to Gedolim for their approval.

Rabbi Mandel related an illustrative vignette of the personal, even emotional involvement of American Torah authorities in the mechanics of classroom instruction:

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Rubinfeld [Principal in Toronto] as a fifth grade teacher in Chaim Berlin [Brooklyn, NY] had all his sheets for teaching Mishna, Chumash and Gemara written in Lashon Kodesh [Hebrew]. He said that the Rosh Yeshiva was so happy with him and so enamoured that he kissed him because he did it in Lashon Kodesh.

Rabbi Mandel also pointed out that educational issues were treated seriously and fundamentally in the formal written responsa of 20th Century American authorities, Rabbi Y. Henkin and Rabbi M. Feinstein.

These authorities evaluated these new methodologies on their practical merit and according to their consonance with the goals of the Eastern European tradition. They did not dismiss them because they were not grounded in historical precedent. Rabbi Mandel explained that the poverty of Eastern Europe and the general low standard of its teachers meant that their techniques could not serve as paradigms for the contemporary classroom:

We have a vision that the Cheder [Eastern European school of yesteryear] was a paradigm that we should try to emulate and follow. Many Torah authorities don't agree with that. The objectives of that Cheder are what we should emulate and aspire to reach, but some of the techniques are looked askance at by many contemporary authorities, and they don't feel we should be trying to restore them. In fact often they [the techniques] did harm to the children, as I have heard myself from prominent Torah authorities .

4.6.5 Conclusion

It emerged from the interviews that the process of educational consultation is perceived differently by Modern Orthodox and Haredi educators. The Modern Orthodox respondents felt that decision making for methodological issues was

essentially an educational call, and thus best left for professionals of the particular field. The Haredi led Torah Umesorah organization was reported to refer even the details of pedagogic issues to a formal Rabbinic Board.

4.7 HEBREW LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

4.7.1 Introduction

As noted in the literature study (cf. 2.4), the role of Hebrew language instruction in the Torah curriculum has been controversial since the 19th century. Some of the elements of the controversy emerged in the interviews, but the intensity of the debate seems to have abated. The need for Hebrew proficiency for textual study has pushed aside the more political side of the issue in almost all educational systems

4.7.2 Contemporary Rabbinic Guidance

Rabbi Mandel was very vocal in his support for children having a thorough knowledge of Lashon Hakodesh even in the Haredi school. He based his opinion on the guidance of Torah Umesora's rabbinical board and on common practice:

> That fear [of Haskalah] has abated. I don't think that there is a school today even among the more traditional schools that in principle doesn't teach Lashon Kodesh [The Holy Tongue]. I'm not speaking about Chassidic Yeshivos. I'm not that familiar with their curriculum. But the traditional Yeshiva does encourage- some more, some less - Lashon Kodesh, Dikduk [grammar], etc.

Rabbi Mandel cited guidance from early 20th Century American authority, Rabbi Henkin, which prescribed a significant amount of daily focus on grammar. But Rabbi Henkin clearly differentiated between teaching grammar for the sake of understanding Torah and learning Hebrew for the sake of appreciating Hebrew secular culture. It is indicative of this Haredi sensitivity that Rabbi Mandel preferred to use the term "Lashon Hakodesh [Holy Tongue]", instead of the secularly tainted "Ivrit [Hebrew]":

Rav Henkin [Early 20th Century American Authority] has a Teshuva [responsa] wherein he says that upon examining the various school curricula, the proper course would be for yeshivos to set aside a daily period for the teaching of Lashon Kodesh. He further says that the time allotted shouldn't be wasted with mere discussion of secular facts in Hebrew, but should rather be used for reviewing of Torah concepts. For example: (in Hebrew) how old was Abraham when he left Padan Aram or when Isaac was born. In the same teshuva, he also advises that the actual language of instruction of the Kodesh material should be in the "sofoh Hameduberes" i.e. the language spoken by the student

Rabbi Mandel described the attitude of contemporary Torah authorities in America as unusually enthusiastic, considering the Zionistic conflict and the hesitations of the previous generations of religious leaders. He quoted Rabbi Ruderman, former Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisrael in Baltimore and leader of Torah Umesorah's Rabbinic Board, as saying "the greatest gift you can give a student is that by the time he graduates elementary school he should have a strong knowledge of Lashon Kodesh". In the same vein, he was encouraged by Rav Pam, the Noveminsker Rebbe and his own Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Henoch Leibowitz to teach students Lashon Hakodesh.

4.7.3 Modern Orthodox Approaches

This approach was contrasted by Rabbi Mandel with his perception of the approach in some Modern Orthodox schools:

The dichotomy is that the more traditional schools teach Lashon Hakodesh as a preparation to learn the rest of the Torah. Unfortunately, there are some modern schools that do the reverse. They feel that the Hebrew language is the goal - their vision being that the children should be fluent in Hebrew language and literature - and often they use the Torah as the vehicle - the take off point for Lashon Kodesh.

Rabbi Kohn of Lookstein acknowledged the Zionistic rationale of the Modern Orthodox school, but insisted that the true benefit of Hebrew instruction was in the easier mastery of Judaic texts in the original:

For some schools Ivrit Be Ivrit [Judaic subjects taught in Hebrew] is an important goal for two reasons. One ideological, because they are religious Zionist and they believe that Hebrew is important and the other reason is that it is a tool for learning Chumash texts. If you know Hebrew then you are able to study texts independently. We are very supportive of that approach – not so much for ideological reasons – though I am quite happy with the ideology.

Rabbi Kacev describes a positive trend in his schools to separate the cultural Zionistic elements from the study of Judaic texts. This he attributes to a shift in consciousness towards religion in the South African Jewish community and in the mind-set of the teachers:

The only area left is that Chumash still remains in the Hebrew curriculum and you have people who don't necessarily believe in what they are teaching, who are teaching it. They are still trying to get out of it what they can for Spoken Hebrew; yet the Biblical Hebrew is so different from Modern Hebrew.

But our system is going to see within the next years or two even that vestige moving out - so that Hebrew becomes fully Spoken Hebrew and we are moving towards creating curricula around Chumash in Jewish studies. The Hebrew teachers will teach a certain text for its vocab and then it will be studied in Jewish studies for its values…Especially in the Primary school no longer do we have so many teachers who look at Hebrew only as a source of cultural identity. The nature of the teacher has changed and many of them look at Hebrew as an aid to Judaism. More and more.

4.7.4 Ivrit B'Ivrit [Judaic Studies in Hebrew]

Rabbi Kohn went so far as to advocate a total Ivrit b'Ivrit Judaic curriculum, with all subjects taught in Hebrew with untranslatred texts. He reported that those schools that have introduced Hebrew immersion comprehensively into their schools have seen amazing results in the mastery of textual learning, even when the children come from non-religious homes:

I was just in a school in Montréal Canada where 95% of the student s are not religious - like a King David in South Africa. It is an Ivrit b'Ivrit school - they are learning Jewish History, Chumash, all in Hebrew besides the Hebrew language - 3 hours a day. They were comparing linguistic

differences in the Ten Commandments between Exodus and Devarim in a Hebrew Tanach in 7th grade. I think that is a good standard. The kids did not have a background at all. And most of the kids were on task.

But Rabbi Kohn acknowledged that the lack of emphasis on Hebrew language in the traditional Haredi curriculum, especially in the education of boys, made this immersion impractical to implement in many schools:

> Researcher: Do you find there is still a knee jerk reaction in the more Haredi schools to minimize Hebrew instruction?
>
> Kohn: Yes, they are not supportive of it - mainly because the teachers can't do it. There is a school in Highland Park NJ that we work with. The school has an Ivrit B'Ivrit policy. The women teachers can do it, but the Rabbis come from Lakewood and other yeshivas and they can't. The Principal says I'd love to do Ivrit B'Ivrit; that is our policy. I can't! Find me the teachers! In the lower grades it is not a problem, but in the 5th or 6th grade the Rebbes want to get into real discussions in depth and the Hebrew becomes a hindrance, as English is the language they communicate best in.

4.7.5 Haredi Adaptations

Haredi schools have also developed strategies to introduce Hebrew language skills as part of the Chumash curriculum, to accentuate the inseparable bond between the Holy Writ and the Holy Tongue. (cf. 2.4.5.3). According to Rabbi Mandel this approach is followed by the flagship schools of the American system:

> Rabbi Yaakov Bender of Yeshiva Darchei Torah decided many years ago that he is only bringing in teachers to his yeshiva who would teach Chumash with the appropriate understanding of Lashon Hatora, and dikduk. He seems to be the trendsetter among Yeshivos. He is the Harvard of the Yeshivos at this point.

4.7.6 Conclusion

The interviews confirmed that the ideological battle about Hebrew language instruction in the syllabus is largely a thing of the past, as even Haredi experts

advocated its inclusion. The Haredi focus remains on the teaching of grammar, as opposed to literature, as an aid to master Hebrew sacred texts. This "grammar" focus was born of both an ideological disdain of secularist Modern Hebrew literature and the practical limitation of their curricular emphasis on Talmud. Though some Modern Orthodox schools were reported to continue to approach sacred Hebrew texts as a means to master Hebrew, this emerged as a disappearing phenomenon. An ambitious 'Hebrew immersion' programme was purported to achieve impressive results, but required a highly proficient staff. Yeshiva educated male teachers were either unequipped or unwilling, from an educational perspective, to implement the "immersion" methodology.

4.8 DUAL CURRICULUM

4.8.1 Introduction

The most radical change to traditional Jewish education has been the introduction of secular studies as a major feature of the school day (cf. 2.5). As a new phenomenon, attitudes towards accommodation, prioritization and full integration of secular studies are still in a state of flux.

4.8.2 Accommodation and Prioritization

According to Rabbi Mandel, this accommodation has become a *fait accompli* in Diaspora schools. Haredi schools, guided by the Rabbinic Advisory Board of Torah Umesorah, incorporate secular studies as a minor feature, limited to the afternoon (cf. 2.5.2), in order not to supplant the primacy of Torah studies:

> At this point virtually all the yeshivos in America have secular studies as part of their curriculum - barring perhaps the Hassidic Yeshivos. The hours are less - maybe 4 days a week maybe 2 ½ 3 hours a day but English is part of the curriculum. The feeling is that it should be in the afternoon. Rav Pam specifically said this at a Torah Umesorah convention --- Torah studies in the morning; Secular studies in the afternoon.

But, as Rabbi Mandel emphasizes, contemporary authorities insist that children treat their secular studies with respect. They feel that a lack of seriousness in attitude will have a negative affect on the child's character and on his application to his Torah studies (cf. 2.5.5). There is also a realization that the realities of American life and livelihood dictate a strategy of partial accommodation. Once that accommodation is made, a philosophy must be developed (2.5.5.1) on how to deal with it:

> The general consensus is that if you are going to do it, then do it right. The child would need to know how to read and write to be a good Jew in American society and secular knowledge would help him to be able to earn a livelihood too. It should be done with excellence. Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky [former head of the Torah Umesorah Rabbinic Board] felt that anything in life that you don't do with a vision to excel is unhealthy. Whatever you do in life, do it the best way you can. If English was going to be a stepchild and people would be satisfied with lower grades and just do it sloppily and shoddily - he felt it would not be good for the character development of the person.

4.8.3 Integration

The "integrated curriculum" model (cf. 2.5.6) was very much at the top of Rabbi Mandel's priorities in the new Haredi school that he was founding in Passaic, New Jersey. In order to facilitate this model properly he reported that he had gone to great expense and effort to develop curricular material and train teachers:

> In the afternoon, studies, nothing is taught independent or outside of Hashem and His Torah. Nothing - not math, not science, not history. It is all an outgrowth of Hashem's beautiful world. When children learn in the morning about the Six days of Creation, then in the afternoon the teacher teaches about the forces of nature etc. All of the studies; biology, astronomy etc., all stem from the Torah and G-d's world. We don't even call it "secular studies" but rather refer to afternoon studies as *"chochmas haolom" [Wisdom of the world]*. The children are taught that everything outside of actual Torah learning is *Chochmas haolom*. it is an extension of Hashem's world

But Rabbi Mandel also confirmed what we noted in our literature study (2.5.6.1), that this ambitious and noble goal is difficult to implement without highly specialized teachers:

It does, however, require someone with the duality of Torah knowledge and secular knowledge. Unfortunately one of the drawbacks of the American Yeshiva system is the lack of religious English teachers.

Rabbi Bottleman, without consciously naming this method as the "integrated curriculum", describes a process of drawing from the child a way of experiencing and interpreting the natural world as part of Torah learning (cf. 2.2.5):

> For example, a teacher takes 5 minutes every day to ask questions like "How is one thing like the other and how is it different. The Sages inserted the bracha of Havdalah [discernment] in the "blessing of knowledge" because knowledge is based on discernment of differences. He asks "what is the opposite of light? Darkness. Simple question. What is the opposite of bitter? Sweet. If he asks 5 minutes questions like this he accustoms the child to think about things and their opposites. Than he develops the idea and asks how is this thing alike the other and how is not alike.

4.8.4 Caution and Hesitation

Rabbi Feldman cautioned against the blurring of lines between the child's experience of Torah studies and his experience of secular studies (cf. 2.5.6.3). He was concerned that Torah studies should not be approached as simply another academic subject:

> When he studies Physics or Composition in the afternoon, so he will take another sheet of paper from same note pad he used in the morning for his Torah studies. He is not receiving the correct message. He has to know there is something Kodesh [holy] about Torah and a Sefer [book] is a Holy thing.

> You see this is the main problem People see chinuch as transmission of information, because the purpose of secular studies is nothing more than this. The purpose of a Torah education is transmitting values, transmitting Emunah [faith], the experience of the Kedusha (holiness) of Torah, of the unbroken tradition of Torah - these are what you are trying to transmit. Pupils have to sense that studying Chumash is different. Consequently, the same methods of teaching should not be used, so as to establish a sense of difference in the Torah studies.

4.8.5 Conclusion

The historically controversial inclusion of secular studies in Orthodox education has been accepted and accommodated into contemporary schooling. Presently, educators are developing ways to integrate the two parts of the school day into one holistic religious philosophy, without compromising the primacy of Torah study.

4.9 TORAH AND TECHNOLOGY

4.9.1 Introduction

An exciting, yet controversial, feature of 21st Century education is the role of technology in the classroom. The interface of the ancient educational traditions of Jewish pedagogy with the new vistas of distance learning, chat rooms and videoconferencing was discussed with several of the interviewees who have hands-on experience with the challenges of recreating a 'virtual orality'.

4.9.2 Virtual Orality

The Lookstein Center, based at Bar Ilan University in distant Israel, is a leader in developing methodologies for the delivery of Judaic studies, using modern technology. Rabbi Eli Kohn, Director of Curricular Development, is unapologetic about the advantages of the virtual classroom, when the process is thought through and implemented carefully.

The obvious initial concerns about the "beamed-in" teacher are similar to the critiques of television instruction, which has been around for decades. The teacher is an impersonal icon who cannot engage meaningfully with the distant classroom, and cannot gauge his delivery to the individual dynamics of the class and certainly not to the dynamics of individuals in the class. The students are passive note-takers who

cannot interact with the person on the screen. The whole experience lacks the 'real-time' feel of the actual classroom (Moeller 1996: 27-29).

Rabbi Kohn admits that a lot of pedagogical work must precede the Internet driven virtual classroom to deal with these issues. But, perhaps counterintuitively, if these concerns are dealt with, the resultant classroom experience, in his opinion, marks a return to the qualities of Jewish orality and not a departure from them:

> We look at that differently. We say that it would bring us back to that [orality]. In the sense that in the past distances meant that you were unable to have that face to face. You had to write - you had to communicate in other ways. The technology to a certain extent brings that back. We have regular lectures mostly to England and the connection is made between the student and the teacher.

4.9.3 "From Zion Shall Go Forth Torah'

Kohn sees a particular Jewish advantage, supported by Biblical prophecy, of classes beamed out of Israel to the Diaspora – because of the distance and not in spite of it:

> There is actually something very powerful about the teacher sitting in Israel and the student in England. What that means to the students who are sitting there. It gives a very powerful message about "From out of Zion shall go forth Torah (Isaiah 2:3)"

4.9.4 The Personal Touch

Kohn repeated several times that the key to the success of the method is adequate preparation to overcome the obvious disadvantages of distance. He stressed that "the personal touch needs to be worked on because you cannot feel the teacher. Not in the physical sense but feel his presence, feel his warmth - that certainly loses in the process". The teacher, therefore, must lay the groundwork for the possibility of an online interactivity and gauging of delivery, lacking in the "TV teacher" model (Moeller 1996: 27-29):

They have been given work to do in advance of the lecture itself. Even better is when the students hand in work to the lecturer in advance. They are given an assignment that is connected to the work that they are doing. That way he can, in the beginning, have some sense of the level of the students and even more he can learn their names. So he can say at the beginning of the lecture "Thank you for all the pieces of work that I received. I particularly enjoyed that which Susan said. Where is Susan can I just see her over there?" Then she puts up her hand and he says, "what did you mean when you said that Judaism has ..." and Susan sort of wakes up.

4.9.5 Couch Potatoes

The issue of student passivity is not an easy one to overcome. Not everyone, according to Kohn, will have the ability to enliven a class over the barrier of cyberspace, especially as it is a new dynamic for both student and teacher:

> Researcher: The other aspect might be like a point that Neil Postman makes in "Amusing Ourselves to Death" (1985). That visual media comes in unchewed, undigested. It is like television viewing. You have the passive student....

> Kohn: Absolutely. If the goal here is to receive a lecture from Israel, I can just send a videotape and they can see him. That is not the point of the exercise. The point is the engagement - the interaction… The lecturer must be quite skilful to be able to create a relationship. It is a new process for him as well. The best at doing this are the ones who have done it for a while and have felt it out.

4.9.6 A Unique Model for Jewish Education

Interestingly, though the technology is obviously borrowed from the outside world, Lookstein's actual educational design is an original innovation to meet the contemporary needs of Jewish education:

> Researcher: Is this modelled on distance learning in, lets say, America with the home schooling movement or is it something proactive on your part?

> Kohn: Good question this is something we have learned from our own experience and not something that we have so much learned from others. We have three pilot programmes in North America. One in Phoenix, one in Birmingham, Alabama and one in Vancouver, Canada.

4.9.7 Imaginative Applications of Distance Learning

Rabbi Kacev outlined these contemporary needs in his discussion of the uses of distance learning. The most immediate need is where staffing is inadequate in a particular city and children are in need of instruction. Rabbi Kacev told of an instance where a teacher was "beamed" from Johannesburg to Cape Town to fill in a month's gap. This usage of distance learning was also mentioned by Rabbi Kohn.

But Rabbi Kacev spoke about the imaginative use of the technology to enable specialist teachers of international renown to interact with local classrooms. He envisioned:

> We are thinking that if we are learning about the Holocaust for example there is no reason that we can't hear from one of the top thinkers in this area. For example just because we are so far away there is no reason why we cannot hear from Former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Lau on the Holocaust. They should be able to be prepared and then engage with this person for an hour…We don't have to wait for the UK's Chief Rabbi Jonathon Sacks to arrive here to organize an hour with our Martric students to speak about Jewish continuity.

Exposure to stellar personalities is only the tip of the iceberg of possibilities. Rabbi Kacev also saw the advantage of top classroom experts engaging the alienated students of the King David system, in ways that conventional teachers cannot emulate effectively:

> But with distance learning you can say that maybe sitting in Lookstein or in the US is a phenomenal teacher. Let's bring him into this class, because he will teach it better than anyone will be able to teach it and engage with that class.

Rabbi Kacev felt that these dreams were still a long way from becoming realties, for financial and logistical reasons. At present, the Internet was only being used by classroom teachers in the King David system for supplemental homework assignments. But, in the area of teacher in-service training the use of videoconferencing was already being implemented by him, as an inexpensive alternative to flying teachers to Israel or the United States.

4.9.8 The PowerPoint of Prayer

On a cautionary note, Rabbi Kacev saw the lack of Jewish flavour in substituting a "technology" event for the personal and communal experience of prayer, even as a way of stimulating the most spiritually alienated students:

> Kacev: The only time I felt that way [the lack of Jewish flavour] is when we had a situation at Herzylia School in Cape Town, where they don't have prayer every day. Once a week they have it. It became a war with the children, so they said we should do a PowerPoint presentation on prayer with the children on those days… They turned it into a subject. Things like that say to me "Wait! Is this going to be lasting?"

> Researcher: Instead of the power of prayer you have the PowerPoint of prayer!

> Kacev: And they are not going to go to Synagogue - when they do go - and seeing a PowerPoint presentation. You feel that you have missed the point. Maybe prayer in King David also misses the point sometimes – but rather find a way to say let's learn the texts better. When you get to these fancy methodologies you sometimes feel this is to far away. We've missed it. That is a gut feel - not that I can quote anything.

4.9.9 Chat Room Philosophers

Mr. Tait expressed some cynicism about the role of the computer in the classroom, but acknowledged that if handled correctly in the right subjects, it could offer exciting enhancements to the learning process:

> I am not opposed to it [computer assisted instruction], but I don't think it delivers what people think. On the other hand, we believe as a school that we have to do more in terms of the technological delivery of education. Last year for instance we had two classes of really top students and we shifted the curriculum. We started to do philosophy by chat room and it was really effective and lots of fun. The teacher posted the questions and said "boys go!" It was not just one student; it was multidimensional!

> Now subjects like history can really be brought to life through technology. Let's say you are doing Nazism and the 2nd world war and you download images of the holocaust. That is a really effective tool. It really brings it alive.

4.9.10 Conclusion

Virtual relationships can never take the place of actual relationships in Jewish education because of its deep roots in orality (cf. 2.2.1). However, the respondents felt that the skilful use of technological resources, with careful pedagogic preparation can achieve a "virtual orality" with many exciting educational applications.

4.10 TEACHER TRAINING

4.10.1 Introduction

As explored in the literature study, the poverty and oppression of 19th Century Eastern European Jewry led to a decline in teaching standards (cf. 2.7.2). This in turn led an attraction to secularly trained teachers, who were generally influenced by the values of the Haskalah. The initial reaction of the Haredi authorities to the notion of teacher training seminaries was one of justified hesitancy and suspicion. However, there emerged from our interviews a unanimous recognition of the need for professional training and networking.

4.10.2 Deficiencies in *Cheder* System

Rabbi Mandel was quite candid about the need to disabuse ourselves of a romantic mythology about the idyllic Eastern European Cheder. At the same time, he contended that it is important to distinguish between the sorry lack of professionalism and the positive traditional values embedded in that system which deserve preservation:

> Mandel: Firstly we have a vision that the *Cheder* [Eastern European school of yesteryear] was a paradigm that we should try to emulate and follow. Many Torah authorities don't agree with that. The <u>objectives</u> of that Cheder are what we should emulate and aspire to reach, but some of the <u>techniques</u> are looked askance at by many contemporary authorities. They are not of the opinion that we should be imitating their style of teaching.

Researcher: The truth is that the status of the teacher in prewar Europe - he was a *nebech* [ne'er-do-well] He wasn't well trained.

Mandel: Correct! So why would we emulate their educational techniques?

Rabbi Bottleman of Mea Shearim was surprisingly even more critical of the sad state of professionalism in the *Cheder* model:

Bottleman: You are asking me to evaluate the teaching traditions of Europe? How can you be so brazen to think that our period is better that the period when there were great Torah scholars? Yes I am brazen. Not because I like to criticize others, G-d forbid, but in terms of formal organization the schools were not organized. In the whole world, he who wished to establish a school would bring in a Principal to manage the school as one entity. He would know that one class would reach until one goal and the next class to the next goal. There was a clear curriculum about what was wanted from each child – a standard child.

These things were not present in our schools before the 2nd World War. And not only that, when I was a child, which was after the war, the good (or the not so good) teachers did not receive direction from above about what they were supposed to be doing. They simply ran their classes according to their abilities.

Researcher: From what stemmed this negligence?

Bottleman: It's not a matter of negligence. It simply didn't occur to anyone that this type of organization was in the realm of possibility or that it was even desirable.

Rabbi Bottleman attributed this situation, which he contended persists even today in his community, to the lowly status and socio-economic position of the teacher:

Who goes in today? Someone who is going to be an engineer does not go into teaching. Someone who is a Torah scholar involved in learning and has someone to help support him, even with a tight budget, does not go into teaching. It is a waste of time for him to teach others when he could learn himself. Who goes into it? People who lack a profession and need to make a living and ne'er-do-wells that the principal doesn't realize until he brings him to the classroom that he is a real dunce.

4.10.3 Alternatives to Formal Training

In the absence of formal training, Rabbi Bottleman claimed that teachers gradually improved through trial and error and through emulating more successful teachers, if they are fortunate to develop a mentoring relationship. But this process is slow, haphazard and unguided. In the meantime, the teacher's lack of class control can be painfully discouraging for the teacher and the student:

> Those teachers who are idealistic don't fool themselves. When they come upon a problem they ask for advice if they come to a man more wise than them, more experienced than them then they give them ways how to overcome the problem. Then they grow slowly, slowly, slowly until they reach a high level that they can control the class.

On the other hand, the informal method was not without its successes, according to Rabbi Bottleman. The sincere teacher who on his own puts in the proper effort will be blessed in his endeavours:

> Now if he prepares the shiur because he wants the class to be interested in the class, even if he doesn't find the ability in himself, G-d will find him a mentor who can help him make his classes interesting so that the class will be more concrete, easier to absorb, more interesting so that children will cooperate.

4.10.4 Rabbinic Support for Formal Training

Rabbi Mandel asserted that contemporary Torah authorities are unhesitant in their support of teacher training. He cited an interesting additional reason for their support: the growing need for teachers. Training courses equip and encourage more people, who are perhaps not 'naturals' to enter the profession:

> I know that today I have been in touch with Gedolei Yisrael. They seem to think that teacher training is important today. Rabbi Pam, of blessed memory, said that though there may be natural teachers, but everyone can learn and grow from the experience and mistakes of other teachers.

4.10.5 The Hassidic Criteria

The need for teacher training has even been recognized by the insular Hassidic community of New York. But, in this case, the programme specifically focuses on making teachers more effective in the delivery of traditional methodologies and rejects presenters who may draw their ideas from non-Jewish or modern sources:

> Mandel: A new phenomenon in the history of education, the Chasidic world now has a thorough teacher training programme. It formed about a year and a half ago and is taking root in Borough Park and in Monsey. At first, the Chassidic heads were very wary of it but it's effectiveness over the past year and a half has proven its success.

> Researcher: What are their criteria? Is it a more conservative set of criteria for what they allow?

> Mandel: The standards for one to be eligible to teach in this program have been established by Rav Rosenblum [Chassidic authority]. He allows only Torah-drawn sources to be used, without any trace of secular influence.

4.10.6 Increased Parental Demands for Professionalism

According to Rabbi Kacev of the SA Jewish Board of Education, teacher training has become a necessity, as a more discriminating generation of parents demands a higher level of professionalism from Jewish Studies teachers then before. He reported that parents are more likely to compare (cf.1.1.3.4) the level of professionalism in Jewish Studies to what they see in the general studies department:

> Researcher: Do you find that the status of the Jewish Studies teacher is lower that the general teacher.

> Kacev: That is true, but it is changing. It has improved with the better quality teacher and the introduction of materials that are equally professional as in other subjects. Someone says Wow!

> Researcher: And that was not there before?

> Kacev: It didn't have to be there because people sent their children to Jewish Day Schools and that was it. No matter what you produced they were still going to send their kids to the school. Now they want to see a certain level of excellence. We are still far away from meeting that, but

there is a change. That is what you spoke about earlier (cf. 1.1.3.4) there
certainly is an influence from other subjects and being in the environment.

4.10.7 Training as an Answer to Discipline Issues

Rabbi Kohn underlined the importance of teacher training in more engaging
methodologies to increase classroom discipline:

> Indeed our greatest challenge is in the area of teacher training, teaching
> teachers to be more engaging in the classroom with new methodologies.
> Discipline is often a result of poor teaching. When you have students
> more engaged, you have fewer discipline problems. When teachers are
> solid in these methodologies, you have good teaching. Unfortunately there
> are not many places in the Diaspora that give solid professional training.

4.10.8 Specific Training Challenges

According to Kohn, though training attempts are made to improve the general skills of
teachers, these rarely focus on improving actual teaching methodologies:

> It is generally in the area of general professional development – classroom
> management. But let's say: How do you teach a verse of Chumash?
> Teachers often teach how they learned; that is often not successful. Or
> they heard some ideas and they grope in the dark for help.

As society has become more mobile, teachers often find employment in schools
different than the ones in which they were taught. For example, a Haredi educator
raised in a religious neighbourhood in New York may find himself employed in a
school in Los Angeles, trying to communicate with children who are accustomed to
learning in different ways. This may require specialized orientation for even a
talented teacher, Kohn asserted. In addition, as modern influences intrude at a faster
pace into religious society, Kohn predicted that even Haredi educators will need to
adjust their methodologies to the challenges of a new generation:

> I would claim that even the Bnei Brak [religious neighbourhood in Israel]
> teacher could use a little of that [new methodologies] as well. The world
> is so much bigger now you can't totally close off the influences of the

outside world. The Internet... they might not have it now but in 15 years the need for kosher internet will be greater.

4.10.9 Haredi and Modern Orthodox Divergence

Though both the Haredi and Modern Orthodox respondents emphasized the need for teacher training, they differed in their intention. Whereas the Haredi approach was to use teacher training to improve traditional teaching by <u>adapting</u> techniques from other sources or through networking, the Modern Orthodox approach advocates the <u>adoption</u> of an entirely new teaching model from the academic world of general education.

To illustrate, Rabbi Bottleman of Mea Shearim spoke about the benefit in training in terms of better planning and curricular cohesiveness:

> Teachers don't have a clear plan of what to cover in a year and how to break up the year into smaller parts to reach the goal. How much time to give to each subject... to plan out what to teach and in what ways he can teach it.

In contrast Rabbi Kohn downplayed the importance of merely improving the technique and effectiveness of the teacher. He advocated the wholesale acceptance of the Outcome Based Education (Bennet 2000: 585-586) and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson 2000). He himself accentuated that this view diverged from the Haredi Torah Umesorah approach:

> The influence from the secular is not so much in terms of methodologies but – and this is where we might differ from Torah Umesorah is the focus on learning outcomes. It is something that teachers find very difficult. "I'm not interested in what you are teaching I am interest in what the students are learning" is what I tell them all the time in teacher training courses. I'm interested in differentiated instruction. Those parts of general education are much more important than a particular methodology that you are going to use.

4.10.10 Conclusion

The respondents of all ideological backgrounds agreed that formal teacher training is essential for contemporary Jewish educators. This need was in response to the external pressure of parental expectations and the internal dynamics of classroom management. They differed in their views of the purpose of that training and on whether that training should be merely tactical or more fundamental. They all felt that more should be done to develop this crucial area of concern

4.11 ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE MATERIALS
4.11.1 Introduction

In order to confirm empirically how the attitudes and policies, reflected in the views of the respondents, are manifested in the actual classroom, sample lesson plans and educational materials from the Lookstein.org and e-chinuch.org websites were analysed according to the themes that emerged from the literature study. The character of the websites themselves was also examined thematically.

4.11.2 The Role of the Webmaster

Both the Lesson Plan page at Lookstein.org and the search engine at e-chinuch.org are ostensibly file-sharing sites similar to other teacher file-sharing sites available on the Web. There is a major distinction, however, between the process of file-sharing, as manifested in the Lookstein website and that of e-chinuch.org: the role of the Webmaster. Though the Webmaster of e-chinuch.org indicates that all submissions will be reviewed before posted on the site, no pedagogical criteria for their acceptance are mentioned. In contrast, at Lookstein.org, materials are submitted to the Webmaster, who analyses them critically, not only for educational content but also for pedagogical correctness according to current principles. On the submission page of Lookstein the teacher is asked:

> Have you created or seen a Lesson Plan/WebQuest that deserves to be shared more widely? Let us know about it. We'll review it as soon as we possible and if we agree with your assessment, we'll add it to the Lesson Plan Page.

Another distinction noted is that the lesson plans sampled from Lookstein.org state that they were developed <u>for</u> the Lookstein Center. This indicates a policy, not present at e-chinuch, of accepting only those documents, which adhere to the pedagogic principles of the organization, enough to be branded as such.

4.11.3 Pedagogical Correctness

This critical focus on pedagogic correctness is further indicated by the small number of lesson plans posted. As of November 2006, the Webmaster had posted only 114 plans, some of them posted in multiple age groups. In contrast, the e-chinuch site, which makes no claim to the pedagogical correctness of its posted materials, contains hundreds of files. This would seem to resonate with the Haredi emphasis on content and 'adaptive' flexibility in regards to methodology (cf. 4.10.9).

4.11.4 Adoption of General Educational Models

In contrast, the Lookstein materials analysed reflected the Modern Orthodox approach (cf. 4.10.9) of adopting, in their entirety, current educational models from the world of general education. For example, all of the lesson plans sampled were designed according to Outcomes Based Education (Bennet 2000: 585-586) criteria, complete with evaluation rubrics and teacher self-evaluation questions (Appendix E).

Each Lookstein lesson plan is laid out according to modern pedagogic principles (Appendix E). The first line outlines the topic, suggested length and the grade level of the lesson. The lesson is then introduced and, in keeping with the OBE orientation, objectives are stated with regard to content and skills. The resources and equipment necessary for delivery are provided, as well as a detailed procedure, complete with vocabulary list, skit, worksheet and suggestions for oral testing (Appendix D).

One of them (Appendix B) was specifically designed according to the Multiple Intelligence guidelines of Dr. Gardner (1993). The lesson plan contains an imbedded hyperlink, which directs the teacher to an essay on the application of the Multiple

Intelligence approach in Jewish studies (Appendix C). The lesson plan instructs the teacher, presenting the Biblical story of Samuel's first prophecy:

> After studying the text, students are grouped and either write a skit (interpersonal) OR draw a cartoon (visual-spatial) based on the text. For homework, students write a diary (intrapersonal/linguistic), exploring Shmuel's feelings during the first prophecy.

4.11.5 Approaches to Textbooks

In our literature study we noted the divergent Haredi/Modern Orthodox approaches to textbooks (2.8.4). This divergence was confirmed in our interview with Rabbi Feldman of Torah Umesorah (4.5.5). Sensitivity to this concern is evident in the lesson plan's comment (Appendix D: textual reading) about the use of highlighters in the student's Chumash:

> Textual reading - Tell students you will read text, and they should highlight words or underline words used in the skit. Read with expression. Review highlighted/underlined words after reading. (Highlighting a *Chumash* is a system that works for some, while others disagree, claiming disrespect of the book. Use a light pencil underneath the word to keep them paying close attention if highlighting is not preferred).

4.11.6 Approaches to Bible Study

In our literature study we noted the Modern Orthodox philosophy of Biblical study that gives preference to the relevance of the Biblical narrative, even at the expense of reverence for the Biblical characters. We also noted the philosophy of giving students direct access to the sacred texts, unmediated by the classical commentaries (cf. 2.3.8.1). These philosophies are clearly manifested in the Lesson Plan's suggested skit (Appendix D), where the children are asked to role play the conflict of Abraham and Lot's shepherds:

> Trigger: Skit – children playing in sandbox.
> Jakie: You're taking up all the space in the sandbox!
> Eliot: Well I want to sit here, too!

Jakie: You can't have it all.
Eliot: Well neither can you! Look - all my sand toys need to be here.
Jakie: There's no more room. (look angry at each other)
Eliot: Why don't you move?
Jakie; Why don't you?
Eliot's mom (can be played by teacher) steps in: Boys, don't fight. You're cousins! There's plenty of room for both of you. Look at how big this sandbox is! Why don't you separate? One of you go to the right (pointing) and one of you to the left (point the other way). Jakie – you choose first - where would you like to go?
Jake (pausing, looks up and points): There!
Eliot (looks up and nods): OK, then I'll play over there. (Pointing in a different direction)

In this skit, the Biblical story is brought down to the level of children in grade 2-3. The skit makes the story relevant and meaningful to the lives of children, who doubtlessly experience conflict in their social lives. It is edifying as well, as it provides a strategy for conflict resolution. It places the children in direct contact with the text without the mediation of classic commentaries (cf. 2.3.8).

In contrast, in a traditional classroom, following the guidelines of Torah Umesorah's "Chumash with Rashi Curriculum" (Leibenstein 1991:25), these same young children would explore the complex themes emerging from the story, as mediated by the classic commentary, Rashi. Because the themes are distant from the child's immediate experience, the teacher would be challenged with bringing the child up to the story (cf. 2.3.7). In this treatment, the ethical persona of Abraham emerges as worthy of more reverence (cf. 2.3.9.1) than the child's selfish sandbox companion:

Genesis Chapter 13:7. And there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and between the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and the Canaanites and the Perizzites were then dwelling in the land.

Rashi: *And there was a quarrel* Since Lot's herdsmen were wicked, and they pastured their animals in fields belonging to others, Abram's herdsmen rebuked them for committing robbery, but they responded, "The land was given to Abram, who has no heir; so Lot will inherit him, and therefore this is not robbery." But Scripture states: "And the Canaanites and the Perizzites were then dwelling in the land," and Abram had not yet been awarded its possession [from Midrash: *Genesis Rabbah* 41:5] (Ben Isaiah and Sharfman 1949: 110).

4.11.7 Technology: The Use of the Internet

Another peculiarity of the e-chinuch site is that it is not hosted by the parent Torah Umesorah organization, for the simple reason that Torah Umesorah is not allowed by its rabbinic board to post on the Internet. The moral dangers of the Internet have led the Haredi rabbinate to proscribe its use for non-business purposes (Kahn 2000: par. 3). For this reason, e-chinuch posts no lesson plans, which involve students using the Internet. Rabbi Mandel reports:

> Even the e-chinuch --- to get permission to go on internet (which is what e-chinuch is) was a big discussion. Basically, every new milestone in Jewish education is cautiously authorized by Gedolei Yisrael

Lookstein.org, however, posts numerous "WebQuest" lesson plans which incorporate student activities on the Web. In the Tu Beshavat [Jewish Arbour Day] WebQuest sampled (Appendix A), students are directed to various supplemental Judaic and general websites about trees for further research.

4.11.8 Integrated Curriculum

The openness to the incorporation of general websites in a Jewish Studies' lesson indicates a quest for the 'integrated curriculum (cf. 4.8.3)'. Though this quest was noted by Rabbi Mandel of Torah Umesorah, its presence was conspicuously absent from the e-chinuch samples (Appendix G). In contrast, in the Lookstein Tu Beshvat sample (Appendix A), students are asked:

> One of the lessons that Tu Beshvat comes to teach us is awareness of our environment. If you were a tree what would you request that humans do for you? Give at least three answers

This limited sample would seem to indicate that the quest for curriculum integration is receiving more attention by Modern Orthodox educators.

4.11.9 Worksheets vs. Lesson Plans

It proved more difficult to analyze the postings of e-chinuch.org, because of its non-prescriptive character. In that the major sample of Bible Study from the Lookstein.org site dealt with the story of Abraham, samples of files from e-chinuch dealing with the same Biblical section were analyzed.

Most of the samples indeed were not lesson plans, but rather traditional worksheets dealing with the technical aspects of language and comprehension. The worksheets sampled (Appendix G) offered no pedagogical guidance with the notable exception of a workbook (Appendix F) submitted by R. Gross of Melbourne, Australia, which contained the following key:

Figure 4.1

Special Instructions: The worksheets (except Perek Tes) are arranged according to the 3 general levels in a mainstream class using the following symbols; ◇ = higher intelligence, ☐ = average ◯ = weaker students.

But even this attempt was not based on secular models like Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom 1956) or Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson 2000), but rather on the practicalities of teaching a classroom with different levels of ability. Even the 'triangle' questions were merely more difficult questions and not specifically 'higher order thinking skills'.

4.11.10 Knowledge vs. Meaning

In the e-chinuch samples (Appendix G), many content and language questions are asked, most of them factual in nature. This seems to indicate that the Torah Umesorah teacher is primarily concerned about the skills and traditional knowledge of the student in the primary grades. The major concern of the teachers was to make the

worksheets fun and graphically interesting, but not necessarily philosophically deep. This would seem to confirm Rabbi Feldman's comment (cf. 4.4.8) that students without religious conflicts should be given lots of information in order to attain higher levels of scholarship.

In contrast, the Lookstein.org samples showed a concern for making the information relevant and meaningful to the student and stimulating them to form their own relationship to Judaism. This could be due to differing student profiles of the intended audience of the lesson (cf. 4.2.7). In the Lookstein Tu Beshvat sample (Appendix A), the worksheet asked the students about the personal meaning of the information, according to their opinion:

> Why do you think it is important to have a holiday, even a *New Year*, for trees?

> 'A person is like a tree in a field' (*Devarim* 20:19). How is this true? What can trees come to teach us?

> Name at least four mitzvot [commandments] that Israelis have to follow that are connected to planting trees, or taking fruit from trees. Why do you think we have these mitzvot?

4.11.11 Conclusion

The divergent styles of the Lookstein.org and e-chinuch.org websites confirmed that the Modern Orthodox and Haredi educational philosophies were reflected in the actual classroom experience of their constituent schools.

The e-chinuch materials sampled were concerned primarily with mastery of skills and content and did not display a conscious effort to integrate modern educational models. The Lookstein materials were consciously filtered by the organization for adherence to current theoretical models. They were also more concerned with stimulating a sense of meaning and relevance in the child by eliciting his views and opinions. The divergence of approach to Bible study explored in the Literature Study and confirmed in the interviews, was clearly manifest, as well, in the sample of educational material.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was undertaken with a view to provide guidelines for educators and administrators in the management of their change process, as described in Chapter One. To that end, an extensive literature study is presented in Chapter Two, which provides historical and philosophic background into the subject. In Chapter Three, a qualitative methodology for an empirical investigation into the views of a broad sampling of expert educators about the state of the pedagogical change process in Jewish schooling today was designed. The insights and opinions of these experts were analysed thematically in Chapter Four, along with a sampling of written curricular materials and lesson plans, which demonstrated how these insights and opinions were manifest in the actual classroom.

Chapter Five presents the key findings of the literature study and the empirical investigation.   It also provides recommendations for educational practice and suggestions for areas of additional research in the future.   The limitations of the present research are also delineated.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The investigation explored the classical methodologies and religious qualities of Orthodox Jewish education and how the changed social realities of contemporary society affect their applicability in modern classroom. It also traced how the divergent educational philosophies of the various streams of Orthodoxy impacted on the way they managed their consultative process in critically implementing new methodologies in their schools, especially in the controversial area of Bible study. Specific attention was given to the place of technology and of Hebrew language instruction in the syllabus and to classic and contemporary Judaic attitudes towards teacher training (cf. 1.2).

5.2.1 Key Findings of the Literature Study

The literature study drew from the classical educational prescriptions of the Bible, as interpreted by the Sages of the Mishna and Talmud and codified by Maimonides, the Shulchan Aruch, and other classic codes. Much insight was gleaned from the responsa literature, as well as from the journals and memoirs of Jewish teachers over the centuries. Modern critical academic studies were also consulted widely.

5.2.1.1 Classical Methodologies

The literature revealed that the act of teaching, in Judaism is a religious act, ordained by Biblical commandment and governed by Halacha (cf. 2.1.1). This system was originally a father/son transmission, until the need developed for universal public education in the 1st Century C.E., under the supervision of the Sages (cf. 2.1.5).

The classical methodologies for the mastery of the Written and Oral Teachings, were governed by a strict timetable and clearly defined objectives (cf. 2.1.2). Supportive societal values and structures sheltered and nurtured this disciplined and intensive educational system, from antiquity until the modern age (cf. 2.1.3).

No other study was allowed to splinter the singular Torah focus of the school-going children. Secular subjects were pursued on a need to know basis, as a preparation for a trade or to facilitate the practical application of Torah law (cf. 2.1.4).

In the 1st Century C.E., universal public education for boys was instituted, but even after this change a father was still charged with the early education of his child (cf. 2.1.5).

The literature reveals no formal training or licensing procedure (cf. 2.7). Prospective teachers were commonly apprenticed to experienced 'professionals' like other craftsmen. Established teachers are portrayed as seeking the counsel of the Sages on educational matters to perfect their craft. New teachers or schools were allowed to open their doors in direct competition with established institutions and parents were

free to move their children to a more effective teacher without ethical compunction (cf. 2.1.5).

5.2.1.2 Orality and Textuality

A gradual internal evolution, from the 3rd Century C.E., of this system from one of oral transmission to textual study has shifted pedagogic emphasis from content mastery and memorization to Talmudical analysis and the acquisition of thinking skills. This shift has also created the educational challenge of preserving the essential qualities of orality in the text-based classroom.

The Halacha originally forbade the commitment to writing of oral teaching, in order to ensure the inviolability of the exclusive covenant between G-d and Israel and to allow the Sages to limit access to rabbinic authority, to an inner circle of worthy disciples. Orality also ensured a nuanced comprehension, born of the relationship and interaction of teacher and student (cf. 2.2.1).

As a response to Roman repression of Judaism, the Mishna was committed to writing in the 3rd Century. The written Mishna was an aid to orality. To that end, it was given a concise cadenced style, suitable for sing-song memorization and still required a living mentor to explain it and put it in context. This same concern for the preservation of orality characterized the redaction of the Talmud; indeed, the history of the Judaic publication until our times can be seen as a hesitant slide from oral teaching to text. In the 21st century, the challenge of maintaining the qualities of orality intensifies with the increased availability of computer and distance learning. The prominence and urgency of memorization as an educational focus was directly affected by this change (cf. 2.2.4).

Most importantly, the defining virtue of the scholar shifted from the possessor of encyclopaedic knowledge to the penetrating analyst. Educational focus then shifted to the development of analytic skills needed for the study of written texts and 'teaching for thinking' was introduced in a graded fashion (cf. 2.2.5).

5.2.1.3 Bible Study

The investigation documented the traditional Ashkenazic de-emphasis of Bible study, which remains today the accepted practice in schools modelled on European tradition (cf. 2.3.1).

This de-emphasis was attributed to the fact that from the time of the redaction of the Talmud, the process of deriving Halacha directly from the Biblical text is no longer operative. Therefore, the need to master the Biblical canon has been diminished. It was also purported that that the Sages were concerned that the first exposure of young students to Scripture should be through the lens of the Oral Law. (cf. 2.3.2).

The literature revealed how Bible study became one of the main tools of the Haskalah to undermine traditional Jewish observance. It also showed that much of the original ideology of the 19th Century German Reform movement was based on a re-reading of the Prophets as espousing an evolved religious spirit stripped of the archaic ritualism of the Pentateuch and later rabbinic encrustations (cf. 2.3.3).

Another challenge explored was from the early revivalists of Modern Hebrew Literature of the 19th Century, who glorified Bible study as an expression of a pure resurgent Hebraic national culture, shorn of the rabbinic overlay, which was seen as an encumbrance of the homeless exile. From this angle, Bible was studied as a means to appreciate the Hebrew language, its grammar and culture and not for its religious content (cf. 2.3.4). In reaction to this threat, the de-emphasis of Bible study, in some circles, became entrenched as ideology, to ward off the secularist influence (cf. 2.3.5).

The religious Zionist elements of Modern Orthodoxy embraced wholeheartedly the new Bible emphasis as an as an important tool to deepen a religious connection with the Holy Land, and to find precedents for dealing with the new political realities of statehood (cf. 2.3.6).

A more fundamental issue about Bible study emerged from the investigation, involving the appropriate approach to sacred text. Ashkenazi tradition had been to

teach Scripture to children through the lens of rabbinic commentary, because of concerns about the trivialization of the Bible and the vilification of its revered figures by the unaided student mind (cf. 2.3.7). But Modern Orthodox educators advocate a return to unmediated primary study of the text, citing precedent from commentators from the Sephardic tradition who engaged in extensive literary commentary of the Biblical text independent of the Midrashic gloss (cf. 2.3.8.1).

Haredi educators were shown to have recognized the need for contemporary children for a more inspirational approach to Bible study. Whereas, before modern times, focus was given to simple translation of the text and the rapid mastery of the factual content of the Pentateuch, with the onslaught of modernity, the seamless transmission of faith and devotion, without an appreciation of the depths of the Bible stories, could no longer be assumed (cf. 2.3.9.1).

5.2.1.4 Hebrew Language Instruction

The study showed that the lack of focus given to formal grammatical instruction in Eastern Europe was clearly rooted in a long educational 'osmosis' tradition (cf. 2.4.1). The modern revival of the Hebrew language, stripped of its religious import, spawned a movement with its own educational agenda (cf. 2.4.3). With the establishment of the secular Hebrew speaking State of Israel, language study gained prominence (cf. 2.4.4).

Haredi rabbinic response to this Hebrew emphasis was sharply critical. And yet even Haredi educators today are faced with new realities that have influenced them to introduce Hebrew language instruction as a subject in the Judaic curriculum, from an educational and not a Zionistic motivation (cf. 4.7.2).

5.2.1.5 Dual Curriculum

Historically, Haredi education in Eastern Europe was singly devoted to Torah education and had no place for the formal inclusion of secular studies in the school day. However, compulsory general education in all Diaspora schools is the reality,

even in the most religious institutions. In some schools, only a minimal secular curriculum is followed and no attempt is made to articulate a philosophy of integration between the two pursuits (cf. 2.5.1).

For the most part the guidance from the great rabbinic authorities on the inclusion of secular studies has been restricted to cautionary pronouncements aimed at preserving the primacy of Torah learning (cf. 2.5.2-3).

Contemporary American efforts at developing a strategy for the constructive integration of the dual curriculum were studied in depth. Simply stated, the findings of the American research project cited, recommend that the students be given the positive orientation that a basic knowledge of general studies will be useful to them in the future, even as rabbis and Torah scholars (cf. 2.5.5).

Modern experiments in "Curriculum Integration", i.e. the teaching of General Studies subjects from a religious perspective, were examined as well, as they are manifest in both Haredi and Modern Orthodox schools (cf. 2.5.6).

Finally, the benefits of student exposure to secular methodologies were explored. The impoverished Eastern European Cheder system lacked in the basic facilities of ordered education. Poverty also filtered out of the classroom all but the most self-sufficient students. In this regard there has been much borrowing from General Studies methodologies to the Judaic classroom (cf. 2.5.7).

5.2.1.6 The Changed Student Profile

As discussed the classical methodologies of Jewish education flourished because of a supportive societal and attitudinal context. Orthodox educators, from the 19th century onwards, have recognized that this context has been in flux and that new strategies had to be employed to reach the modern student.

It was asserted that a new, less authoritarian emphasis is necessary because of the early appearance of an independent, even rebellious spirit in the modern child (cf.

2.6.1.1). There also exists a need to deepen the child's appreciation of the meaning of what he is learning, praying and observing at a younger age (cf. 2.6.1.2).

An outgrowth of this phenomenon has been the need to develop whole new curricular subject areas and more fun and motivational delivery methods (cf. 2.6.3-4).

As society shifts the burden of moral education away from the family, Jewish schools are also called upon to give new curricular focus to ethics and psychology, filtered through a Torah perspective (cf. 2.6.5).

5.2.1.7 Teacher Training

The study failed to uncover the existence of a Talmudic model for the practical training of teachers, except perhaps for an optional apprenticeship system. Though basic teaching standards were supervised by the Sages, individual teachers were left to succeed or fail according to their own talent and application (cf. 2.7).

This *laizes faire* system was undermined by the falling socio-economic conditions of Eastern Europe (2.7,2-4). Though, from the 16th Century rabbinic authorities were already calling for formal teacher training, this was only instituted in the early 20th Century (cf. 2.7.5)

The need for government accreditation and parental confidence has accelerated that process in the post-war years (cf. 2.7.8)

Concerns about placing Teacher Seminaries for men on a par with Yeshivas and about student exposure to the depth theory of Modern Psychology (cf. 2.7.6.3), have led to the development of supplemental training courses under Haredi auspices, as opposed to full-time institutions. Modern Orthodoxy has developed formal University education colleges in Israel and America (cf. 2.7.9).

5.2.1.8 Translation, Abridgement and Textbooks

The vigorous opposition of pre-war rabbinic leaders to format changes and the abridgement of sacred texts, is reflected in the attitudes of contemporary Haredi

educators, explored in the study. They write that abridgement, simplification and other forms of pre-digestion remove the sinew and substance of the material and signal to the child that parts of the text may be less relevant or even inappropriate for study. Pre-digestion also dulls the analytic skills, which the child will need for later learning (cf. 2.8). The use of translated texts encourages the student to learn superficially (cf. 2.8.1)

These educators meet the daunting challenges of textual study for Diaspora children with the use of supplementary workbooks and other aids (cf. 2.8.3).

Some Modern Orthodox scholars claim that the changed profile of today's students justifies the development of texts that are more accessible, topical, and relevant (cf. 2.8.5).

Others are more inclined to identify with Haredi hesitation. They fear that simplified texts might eliminate the joy of discovery, which comes through unravelling the complexities of Bible or Talmud study (cf. 2.8.5.2) They also argue that today's students are searching for an authentic learning experience, symbolized by learning from original texts (cf. 2.8.5.3).

5.2.1.9 The Spiritual and Emotional Aspects of Torah Study

Many of the qualities of traditional education are emotional and affective. The spiritual values of love and reverence and a myriad of other elements receive a wider treatment in the literature than technique and methodology (cf. 2.9).

But, even Haredi authorities acknowledged that these emotive methodologies may not be suited for the afternoon Hebrew Schools and even some dual curriculum day schools, where time constraints dictated the use of drier, but more efficient methodologies (cf. 2.9.1).

The intellectual value and religious importance of reverence for Torah learning emerged as an inviolable value (cf. 2.9.3).

The study explored a Modern Orthodox/Haredi philosophic conflict about a curriculum strategy of selecting topically relevant subjects for study vs. the sequential study of 'Torah for its own sake' (cf. 2.9.4).

5.2.2 Key Findings of Empirical Investigation

As the complex dynamics explored in the literature study are in continuous flux, an empirical investigation was conducted, based on the thematic analysis of informal interviews with six expert informants. These informants are presently involved in the management of the change process of Jewish and general schooling. An analysis of practical lesson plans and educational materials from Haredi and Modern Orthodox file-sharing websites was also undertaken to demonstrate how these theoretical approaches are manifested in the actual contemporary classroom.

5.2.2.1 The Changed Student Profile

The change to the student profile emerged as a universal phenomenon, in the general society as well as the Modern Orthodox and even the Haredi worlds.

The experts asserted that affluence and indulgence had created a more fragile and attention splintered child (cf. 4.2.2-3) In schools serving the less religious Jewish population, immersion in pop-culture and alienation from traditional values had created a child in need of motivation to engage in even the rudiments of the search for knowledge and meaning (cf. 4.2.4-5).

Socio-economic improvements had brought about the inclusion in the classroom of children with different abilities and learning styles. This has required of the teacher to provide more structured methodologies (cf. 4.2.6).

A breakdown in parental authority has created a child less responsive to traditional discipline, and thus more in need of coaxing and motivation. This also has transferred to the school the job of sharpening the dulled moral sensitivity of the post-modern

child and thus sensitizing him to the values of learning and of Judaism itself (cf. 4.2.8).

5.2.2.2 Academic Rigour

Classical Jewish pedagogy was designed for a student who applied himself with single-minded diligence to the difficult tasks of memorization and analysis of an enormous body of knowledge. This diligence can no longer be assumed; as the new student and the society that produces him have become less focused on academic achievement (cf. 4.3.3).

Modern approaches to discipline, egalitarianism, and the erosion of traditional religious values have also lowered the bar of academic expectation (cf. 4.3.4-6).

The contemporary educator, qua "edu-tainer" has been forced to fill the vacuum of academic rigour with the mixed blessing of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (cf. 4.3.7-8).

5.2.2.3 New and Traditional Methodologies

Across the spectrum of Orthodox and general schooling, the interviewees displayed a general openness to innovation, not necessarily along ideological lines. The greater resources of research available in the general society and the prohibitive expense and other impracticalities of reproducing studies were cited as justifications for adopting from outside sources (cf. 4.4.3).

The very notion of traditional methodologies as being more appropriate in changed circumstances was questioned. The point was made that what we may perceive as traditional may be of dubious historical precedent. Conversely, the new methodologies, like cognitive learning, may have greater historic authenticity (cf. 4.4.5)

The absence of tests in the Lithuanian pre-war Yeshivas, for example, was attributed to the highly motivated students who studied there. Thus, the experts concurred that testing has a role to play in today's more inclusive classroom (cf. 4.4.4).

Conversely, many new and lofty educational goals were difficult to put into practice in the actual classroom. Creative methodologies are often poorly understood and implemented by all but the most skilful teachers. Even the most innovative of the experts reserved the right to critically examine new methodologies to see whether they indeed have an advantage over the traditional (cf. 4.4.6).

A use was seen for new methodologies, as a kind of "appetizer" or "warm up" to traditional textual study. This acknowledges the importance of preserving traditional study, while at the same time acknowledges the utility of modern methodology to reach the contemporary student (cf. 4.4.7).

There was a realization that new methodologies, which focused more on meaning and relevance, were necessary even for the religious child. But, there were Haredi concerns that this focus should not lead to philosophical confusion or to the abandonment of the traditional focus on Talmud study (cf. 4.4.8-10).

5.2.2.4 Bible Study

Although the respondents from across the ideological spectrum of Orthodoxy displayed unanimously a great degree of openness to pedagogical change, they split dramatically when it came to utilizing modern literary approaches in the study of the Bible.

Whereas the traditional approach to textual study gave the ultimate power of interpretation into the hands of rabbinic authority, the professed aim of modern exegesis is to increase the relevance of the texts to the contemporary student, by granting more autonomy to the reader. This autonomy was seen in a positive light by the Modern Orthodox experts, but Haredi authorities felt that it impacted negatively on the transference of religious values (cf. 4.5.2-4).

The Modern Orthodox experts were open to the effective use of abridgements and adaptations of classical texts, whereas the Haredi authorities reacted strongly against these methods (cf. 4.5.5).

5.2.2.5 Process of Consultation

It emerged from the interviews that the process of educational consultation is perceived differently by Modern Orthodox and Haredi educators. The Modern Orthodox respondents felt that decision making for methodological issues was essentially an educational call, and thus best left for professionals of the particular field. The Haredi Torah Umesorah organization refers even the details of pedagogic issues to a formal Rabbinic Board (cf. 4.6.1-5).

5.2.2.6 Hebrew Language Instruction

The interviews confirmed that the ideological battle about Hebrew language instruction in the syllabus is largely a thing of the past, as even Haredi experts advocate its inclusion.

The Haredi focus remains on the teaching of grammar, as opposed to literature, as an aid to master Hebrew sacred texts. This 'grammar' focus was born of both an ideological disdain of secularist Modern Hebrew literature and the practical limitation of their curricular emphasis on Talmud (cf. 4.7.2).

Though some Modern Orthodox schools were reported to continue to approach sacred Hebrew texts as a means to master Hebrew, this emerged as a disappearing phenomenon (cf. 4.7.3).

An ambitious "Hebrew immersion" programme was purported to achieve impressive results, but required a highly proficient staff. Yeshiva educated male teachers were either unequipped or unwilling, from an educational perspective, to implement the "immersion" methodology (cf. 4.7.4).

5.2.2.7 Dual Curriculum

The historically controversial inclusion of secular studies in Orthodox education has been accepted and accommodated into contemporary schooling (cf. 4.8.2). Presently, educators are developing ways to integrate the two parts of the school day into one holistic religious philosophy, without compromising the primacy of Torah study (cf. 4.8.3-4).

5.2.2.8 Torah and Technology

The respondents felt that the skilful use of technological resources, with careful pedagogic preparation to overcome the obvious disadvantages of distance, can achieve a "virtual orality" with many exciting educational applications. In fact, the resultant classroom experience could mark a return to the qualities of Jewish orality and not a departure from them. (cf. 4.9.2).

An imaginative use of the technology of Internet conferencing was to enable specialist teachers of international renown to interact with local classrooms. Videoconferencing was already being implemented in the area of teacher in-service training (cf. 4.9.7)

5.2.2.9 Teacher Training

There emerged from our interviews a unanimous recognition of the need for professional training and networking. The need for teacher training has even been recognized by the insular Hassidic community of New York. But, in this case, the programme specifically focuses on making teachers more effective in the delivery of traditional methodologies, as opposed to equipping them with new ones (cf. 4.10.5)

Teacher training has also become a necessity as a more discriminating generation of parents demand a higher level of professionalism from Jewish Studies teachers then before, as they are more likely to compare the level of professionalism in Jewish Studies to what they see in the general studies department (cf. 4.10.6)

It was also noted that teachers must be skilled in more engaging methodologies to increase classroom discipline (cf. 4.10.7).

Though both the Haredi and Modern Orthodox respondents emphasized the need for teacher training, they differed in their intention. Whereas the Haredi approach was to use teacher training to improve traditional teaching by <u>adapting</u> techniques from other sources or through networking, the Modern Orthodox approach advocates the <u>adoption</u> of an entirely new teaching model from the academic world of general education (cf.4.10.9).

5.2.2.10 Analysis of Sample Materials

In order to confirm empirically how the attitudes and policies, reflected in the views of the respondents, are manifested in the actual classroom, sample lesson plans and educational materials from the Lookstein.org and e-chinuch.org websites were analysed according to the themes that emerged from the literature study.   The character of the websites themselves was also examined thematically.

The e-chinuch materials were concerned primarily with mastery of skills and content and did not display a conscious effort to integrate modern educational models. The Lookstein materials were consciously filtered by the organization for adherence to current theoretical models (cf. 4.11.2-4). They were also more concerned with stimulating a sense of meaning and relevance in the child by eliciting his views and opinions (cf. 4.11.10).

The divergence of approach to Bible study explored in the Literature Study (cf. 2.3.8) and confirmed in the interviews (cf. 4.5.2), was clearly manifest, as well, in the sample of educational material (cf. 4.11.6).

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

5.3.1 Introduction

As explained in the problem formulation (cf. 1.2), the contemporary Orthodox Jewish educator finds himself in a quandary regarding the adoption of innovative techniques. If he adopts new methodologies uncritically he may be tampering with the ambience and unique outcomes of the Torah study he is trying to enhance. On the other hand, an equally uncritical conservatism may tempt him to reject unnecessarily the very innovations crucial to achieve those outcomes in the changed circumstances of modernity.

The researcher believes that the present study has produced enough grounded evidence for the recommendation of three areas of future educational practise:

1.) Intensive teacher training for Judaic studies educators in more motivational and interactive methodologies.

2.) A greater curricular focus on Hebrew language instruction.

3.) A more vigorous implementation of technology in the Torah classroom.

5.3.1.1 Motivational and Interactive Methodologies

As explored in the literature study (cf. 2.6) and confirmed in the empirical investigation (cf. 4.2-3), the changed student profile of modernity calls for a more motivational and interactive approach to teaching. Teachers who are not trained in these techniques and seek to rely on authoritarian discipline will certainly meet with a large measure of student resistance and disobedience (cf. 4.10.7).

Additionally, in an increasingly inclusive classroom, students of a wide spectrum of abilities and learning styles need to be motivated in individualized ways (cf. 4.2.6). This necessitates that every teacher should possess a well stocked 'toolbox' of methodologies for all circumstances.

Present deficiencies in the training of Judaic studies teachers (cf. 2.7.2-4), especially males (cf. 2.7.9), dictate that this upgrading of skills should be a crucial part of the in-service workshops and conferences of Jewish schools (cf. 2.7.9.1). Due to the high priority of this retooling, it is recommended that the principal or Jewish studies head of department should take a personal interest in its implementation.

5.3.2 Hebrew Language Instruction

For historical reasons traced in the literature study (cf. 2.4.1-5), Hebrew language still receives little curricular focus. But, though even contemporary Haredi authorities have expressed enthusiastic support for a greater focus (cf. 4.7.2), this has yet to be manifested sufficiently in many schools (cf. 4.7.4-5).

Both the expert opinion consulted in the empirical investigation (cf. 4.7.4) and the personal experience of the researcher recorded in the literature study (cf. 2.4.5.2.1) point to the profound benefits of greater Hebrew proficiency for the mastery of sacred texts.

It is recommended that even more traditional schools follow the guidelines of Rabbi Henkin (cf. 4.7.2) for the inclusion of regular language instruction in the school day.

5.3.3 Technology in the Torah Classroom

It emerged from the investigation that the skilful use of technological resources, with careful pedagogic preparation can achieve a 'virtual orality' with many exciting educational applications (cf. 4.9.10).

If the use of technology is accompanied by techniques which increase the 'personal touch' of the teacher/student relationship of historic Jewish pedagogy, the resultant classroom experience could mark a return to the qualities of Jewish orality and not a departure from them. (cf. 4.9.2).

Specifically, the insights of the experts recorded in the study lead to the grounded recommendation that Internet–based teleconferencing be used to grant students exposure to inspirational figures in the contemporary Jewish world and create classroom interaction with master teachers in their fields (cf. 4.9.7).

It is also recommended that Internet-based teleconferencing be utilized to facilitate teacher in-service training with the most qualified international professionals.

The increased use of the networked chat-room forum for student interaction is also recommended (cf. 4.9.9).

As these methodologies are new and foreign to most teachers, it is recommended that specialized training be offered to selected teachers in each school. It is also recommended that schools liaise with the Lookstein Center in Israel or with other resources that have broad experience in the field.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.4.1 Introduction

As demonstrated in the study, Jewish education has always adopted and adapted new methodologies, congruent with its spirit, to adequately respond to the exigencies of contemporary educational conditions. However, though a rich literature about the practise of Jewish education is extant, the dynamics of its change process have not been comprehensively investigated and analysed. The findings of the present limited investigation into those dynamics suggest further research in three areas:

1.) A comprehensive compilation and analysis of the writings, speeches and memoirs of rabbinic authorities and educators on correct and effective Jewish pedagogy.

2.) A study of the change dynamics in Jewish education for women.

3.) An investigation into the development of professional standards and licensing for Judaic studies teachers.

5.4.2 Writings on Jewish Pedagogy

The present study discovered that seminal rabbinic insights are to be found in isolated comments scattered among their works, which have not received wide publication. Much of the rabbinic guidance to contemporary educational leaders has been delivered orally due to the ever-changing dynamics and volatility of the subject. There is a need to gather and articulate this guidance.

The speeches of contemporary rabbinic authorities and their 'Question and Answer' sessions at Torah Umesorah annual conferences of half a century are recorded on cassette tapes, many of which have yet to be transcribed and analysed.

A rich literature of the memoirs and journals of Torah educators was uncovered in the course of the study, which casts light on the teaching conditions and other concerns of Jewish educators over the centuries. These insights have yet to be compiled and analysed comprehensively.

The present limited study has shown how relevant these various writings are to contemporary educational issues.   Clearly, this under-researched treasure trove deserves a thorough compilation and thematic examination.

5.4.3 Changes in Jewish Education for Women

As mention in the discussion about the scope of the present study, the extensive changes in Jewish education for women deserve a separate investigation (cf. 1.5 1).

The origins and the development of the Bais Yaakov movement from the 1920's and the controversies surrounding it are extremely relevant today (cf. 2.7.9.2). Moreover, the Haredi/Modern Orthodox divergence traced in our present study is even more pronounced over issues of the appropriate content of Jewish study for women and girls.

A study into the pedagogic change dynamics of women's and girls education in the 20th Century would be of great benefit and consequence.

5.4.4 Professionalism

As explored in the literature study, the poverty and oppression of 19th Century Eastern European Jewry led to a decline in teaching standards (cf. 2.7.2). There emerged from our interviews a unanimous recognition of the need for professional training and networking.

Though models for professionalism are in place in the medical and other occupations – including education, very few structures have been developed for Jewish education. The extensive in-service training recommended in this chapter (cf. 5.3.1.1) is, perhaps wishfully, predicated on the existence of such programmes in Jewish schools.

An investigation into the development of professional standards and licensing for Judaic studies teachers would be of great significance for the uplifting of the status of these educators in their own eyes and in the eyes of society (cf. 4.10.6).

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As a phenomenological research based on qualitative methodology, this study of the management of pedagogic change in contemporary Orthodox Jewish schooling demonstrated both the strengths and the limitations intrinsic to such an investigation.

The small sample size of typical but not representative informants and materials, characteristic of the qualitative method is the most obvious limitation of the study (cf. 3.2.3-4).

Also, no attempt was made to generalize or quantify the findings; data was presented in descriptive terms only (cf. 3.2.3).

While the literature study provided an important framework for the interviews and the analysis of curricular material, no attempt was made to prove or disprove theory, but rather to understand the participants' opinions from their vantage point (cf. 3.2).

In a limited sense then, the study can serve to expand our knowledge of the change process in Jewish Orthodox schooling and to offer suggestions for beneficial practice and further research.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Orthodox Jewish Education can only be understood in the context of its classic religious underpinnings and its encounter over a long history with changing societal circumstances. Contemporary Orthodox schooling, specifically, is an amalgam of a variety of responses, reactions and adaptations to the radically different landscape of modernity.

A changed student profile and new societal attitudes towards academic rigour have created fresh tests for Jewish and, indeed, all educators. The inclusion of secular studies into the modern Jewish syllabus and the consequent student exposure to the secular methodologies have presented Jewish educators with the perplexing challenge of curricular integration.

Additionally, religious controversy has complicated deliberations on the seemingly technical issues of the place of Hebrew language in the syllabus, the adoption of new methods and technologies from non-Jewish sources and the proper approach to the study of the Bible.

Despite these challenges, the study discovered a general openness, across the ideological spectrum of Orthodoxy, to the importance of continual adaptive change. This supple attitude would seem to offer encouraging testimony on the regenerative powers of an ancient educational tradition. It is the hope that lessons gleaned from the study of this change process will be useful for other educational traditions, faced with a similar dynamic.

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Appendix A: Lookstein.org Multiple Intelligence Lesson Plan

Chana's Anguish and Triumph -1
by **Semadar Goldstein** *for The Lookstein Center*

Topic	Suggested length	Grades
Samuel I 1-2:11	1 40 Minute Session	5-8 Grade

Introduction

This unit is an MI (Multiple Intelligences) on *Samuel I* 1-2:11. The unit utilizes the following intelligences: Linguistic, Interpersonal, and Bodily-Kinesthetic. The author of this unit has written an essay on using MI in the Judaic Studies classroom (see http://www.lookstein.org/resources/jewishmultipleintelligence.pdf).

Lesson Objectives

Content: The student will be able to…
1. Describe Elkana and his family (1:1-2).
2. Outline the family's yearly trip to Shilo, including Elkana's and Penina's behavior toward Chana (1:3-8).
3. Relate the encounter between Eli and Chana (1:9-18).
4. Describe the birth and naming of Shmuel (1:19-20).
5. Describe the fulfillment of Chana's promise (1:21-28).
6. Describe Chana's feelings throughout the story.

Skills: Student will be able to…
1. Study the text in *chavruta* with the help of a word list.

Values: Student will appreciate…
1. That teasing can cause pain and harm towards other people.

Procedure

1. Match students together for *chavruta* study and tell them to learn the first chapter using the word list (see appendix) if necessary. They should use the worksheet questions (see appendix) as a guide for study. Follow *chavruta* guidelines below to make sure that class time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.
2. Discuss main ideas as a class, asking questions for basic understanding. You may want to review the worksheet questions.
3. Note *tefillat Chana* in chapter 2 as Chana's triumphant return to Shiloh with Shmuel.

Guidelines for *Chavruta* study:

1. Match similar leveled students together, and medium student with a weaker one.
2. The teacher should spend as much time as possible assisting weaker groups.
3. ALWAYS provide a wordlist and basic question and answer sheets.
4. Designate learning time, then discussion time, then more learning time to guide your students to use their time well. Don't let more than 10-12 minutes go by without having a quick comprehension discussion.
5. ALWAYS discuss main ideas together as a class after designated time is up.
6. Choose a few key verses and vocabulary words to back up your points.
7. Periodically alternate *chavrutot* within the class (over the course of the year).
8. Support *chavruta* study by periodically polling students with questionnaires on their *chavrutot*, assessing each's personal opinion of her perceived progress, respect and affection for his/her *chavruta*.
9. Circulate during *chavruta* study to assist all groups and assess efficiency of groups working together.
10. Avoid *chavrutot* larger than 2 people whenever possible (students preferring to learn alone, usually stronger students, should be allowed to do so).

Appendix B: Jewish Multiple Intelligence Document (excerpt) From Lookstein.org

A JEWISH MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

By

Semadar Goldstein

PROJECT MENTOR:

Esther Lapian

ATID FELLOWS

1999-2000

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Semadar Goldstein is an elementary and junior high school teacher of Tanach and EFL (English as a foreign language) in Dugma Boys' School and Evelina de Rothschild in Jerusalem. Prior to her *aliyah*, she taught Tanach in the US at the Yeshiva of Flatbush Middle Division and in Hillel Torah Day School in Chicago. She holds a BA from Stern College and an MA in Jewish Education from Azrieli Graduate School of Yeshiva University.

Project Description

This project explores the concepts and advantages of incorporating a Multiple Intelligence curriculum in a Jewish junior high school. The author presents the successful implementation of Multiple Intelligence curricula in the US, which incorporates relevant subject matter and character development, in a variety of learning styles. The author then suggests methods of implementation for a Jewish curriculum.

Abstract

People learn in different ways. One person is linguistically strong while another excels in interpersonal or visual-spatial skills. Howard Gardner analyzes the different learning styles people have and labels them *Multiple Intelligences* (MI). The Multiple Intelligences are linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily–kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural. Gardner encourages teachers to relate information in many different styles in order to access all students in the classroom.

Last year for the ATID project, the author adapted these creative teaching methods to the Bible classroom. In continued research, the author discovered that Multiple Intelligence Schools have developed Howard Gardner's theories into an entire school curriculum, not just individual lesson plans. Gardner's goals are to create a relevant learning environment for children. This means that students can gain skills and develop character in ways that will positively influence them. Gardner outlines the following elements for a MI based

school curriculum. All of the elements are adapted to a Judaic Studies curriculum in the project and briefly explained below. They are:

The author adapted the book of Exodus to a Jewish Studies MI curriculum. Following the thematic learning system, the book is divided into three sections or themes; Ancient Egypt, Wanderings in the Desert and the Building of the Tabernacle. The project focuses on Section I, Ancient Egypt. A sample weekly schedule is included in the project. An interdisciplinary Judaic studies curriculum would cover the following topics in relation to Ancient Egypt: Bible, Navi, Mishna, Talmud, Jewish Law, Jewish history and Hebrew language. In addition to learning the first few chapters of Exodus chronologically, students focus on themes that overlap all subjects, including those belonging to "general studies" (math, science, geography, social studies, drama, art and music). Students are not only studying text but also creating a miniature Ancient Egypt in their classrooms. All themes are taught using MI intelligences, with students breaking up into groups and creating projects on material they have learned. Upon completion, students present their findings to the class.

STUDENT PROJECTS, OCCUPATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Three separate student projects are conducted each year, in collaboration with the themes studied in an interdisciplinary curriculum. In order to connect the project to a MI curriculum, the author combined occupation and projects. The student chooses an occupation of interest mentioned or referred to in the Bible. Then, he must explore it using other Biblical references and commentaries, include world knowledge, explain the occupation's relevance to Ancient Egyptian times, and compare it to its modern day equivalent, if one exists.

Appendix C: Lookstein.org Lesson Plan

Lihitraot Lot! Avraham and Lot Separate -1

by **Semadar Goldstein** *for The Lookstein Center*

Topic	**Suggested length**	**Grades**
Bereshit 13: 5-11	40 minutes	Grade 2-3

Introduction

In this lesson plan on *Bereshit* 13:5-11, students study the text in preparation for acting out the texts' events in the next lesson.

Lesson Objectives

Content: The student will be able to:
1. Describe how the shepherds of Avram and Lot were fighting.
2. Describe how each shepherd felt his cattle did not have enough land on which to graze.
3. Relate how Avram expressed concern about family fights and offered a compromise.
4. Explain that Lot decided to choose a direction to travel, and Avram chose the opposite way.
5. Describe how Lot chose Jordan, towards Sodom. Avram made his way toward Canaan. They separated.

Skills: The student will be able to:
1. Identify a list of common Biblical vocabulary. (See list)

Resources and Equipment needed

Vocabulary binder/workbook, blackboard, highlighter, pens/pencil

Vocabulary list

1. לשבת
2. ריב
3. הפרד
4. אהלים
5. שמאל
6. אימנה

Procedure

1.Teacher Preparation (before class): Find students to act in skit; review script with them (see script below). A word on skits: Introduce three well reading students to script a few minutes before class starts. Tell them you would like them to perform for the class if they can read well and behave. Most children love to perform, so this should not be a problem. Once other students see a skit, many might ask to participate. A chart can be kept in the classroom of 'skit performances' to rotate turns. As skits are incorporated into the class, students can be rewarded with extra performances based on their behavior during other people's performances.

Blackboard setup: In large letters, on top middle of blackboard "Lihitraot Lot!" and copy the following words onto the right side of the board. In the space remaining, draw the scene as described in the *Humash*. On the left , draw a sheep, cow, tent and a shepherd. On the right, draw a sheep, cow, tent and a shepherd. The shepherds should be facing each other with angry expressions on their faces. Label one group רועי לוט and the other, רועי אברם.

2. Trigger: Skit – children playing in sandbox.
Jakie: You're taking up all the space in the sandbox!
Eliot: Well I want to sit here, too!
Jakie: You can't have it all.
Eliot: Well neither can you! Look - all my sand toys need to be here.
Jakie: There's no more room. (look angry at each other)
Eliot: Why don't you move?

Jakie; Why don't you?
Eliot's mom (can be played by teacher) steps in: Boys, don't fight. You're cousins! There's plenty of room for both of you. Look at how big this sandbox is! Why don't you separate? One of you go to the right (pointing) and one of you to the left (point the other way). Jakie – you choose first - where would you like to go?
Jake (pausing, looks up and points): There!
Eliot (looks up and nods): OK, then I'll play over there. (Pointing in a different direction)

3. Check student comprehension by asking the students what the children were fighting about (*not enough room in the sandbox*) and how did they resolve the issue (*separating and playing on opposite sides*).

4. Students should copy the vocabulary list into their notebooks. While students are finishing (circulate the room to make sure majority are done), say: You are going to see the skit again. This time, 5 words will be said in Hebrew. When you hear them, think of its meaning in English. When the skit is done, I will ask you each word's definition and we will write it down.

5. Skit with Hebrew vocabulary
Jakie: You're taking up all the space in the sandbox!
Eliot: Well I want שם‎here, too!
Jakie: You can't have it all.
Eliot: Well neither can you! Look - all my sand toys need to be here.
Jakie: There's no more room. (angry looks abound)
Eliot: Why don't you move?
Jakie: Why don't you?
Eliot's mom (can be played by teacher) steps in: Boys, אל תריבו‎! You're cousins! There's plenty of room for both of you. Look at how big this sandbox is! Why don't you תפרדו‎? One of you go to ימין‎ (pointing) and one of you to שמאל‎ (point the other way). Jakie – you choose first - where would you like to go?
Jake (looks up and points): There!
Eliot (looks up and nods): OK, then I'll take over there (Pointing in a different direction).

5. Check student comprehension by asking the students what they thought words meant and how they got that impression. Students should write down the meanings of the words. Discuss how the word אחים‎ could mean a relative.

6. Textual reading - Tell students you will read text, and they should highlight words or underline words used in the skit. Read with expression. Review highlighted/underlined words after reading. (Highlighting a *Humash* is a system that works for some, while others disagree claiming disrespect of the book. Use a light pencil underneath the word to keep them paying close attention if highlighting is not preferred).

7. Read the text again, acting out phrases or using board pictures of sheep and shepherd, and angry faces.

8. Check for comprehension through questioning. Ask:
Which groups of people were fighting? (*shepherds of Lot vs. shepherds of Avram*)
In what verse does the Torah say the shepherds are fighting? (verse 7)
Who wanted to separate – Avram or Lot? (*Avram*)
What words does the Torah use to say this. Look in verse 8. {אל נא תהי מריבה ביני ובינך‎}
What reason does Avram give for not fighting? (We are 'brothers' = relatives, כי אנשים אחים‎)
In which verse is this stated? (*verse 8*)

9. Clarify other difficult words or concept students don't understand. *(Note: tell students to skip end of verse 10 after the word מצרים‎ until the end. Go right to verse 11.)*

10. Student Reading/Acting in Front of Class. Choose 2 students whom you feel understand the text well and have them act out the verses as they, or you, read. In verse seven they can ad-lib a bit, by including what they think Avram and Lot said to each other during the fight ('there's no more room here for your sheep!' or 'your cow is eating my cow's grass!', etc.)

Appendices

Appendix 1
http://www.lookstein.org/lessonplans/lot_wsheet1.pdf

Appendix D: Lookstein.org Lesson Plan with OBE Assessment Rubric

CHANA"S TRIUMPH 2 *by Semadar Goldstein for the Lookstein Center*

Lesson Objectives

Content: The student will be able to...

1. Outline the story of Chapter 1 (review from lesson 1).
2. Describe Chana's prayer of thanks to God (2:1-10).
3. Express the deep sadness and subsequent joy of Chana.
4. Identify the main themes of Chana's prayer.

Skills: Student will be able to...

1. Read Biblical text with understanding.
2. Link Biblical texts to (personal) human feeling and emotion.

Values: Student will appreciate...

1. The importance of showing gratitude.
2. The importance of prayer in Jewish life.

Procedure

1. Review Samuel I 1-2:11 briefly.

2. Ask the class what they would expect to hear in a prayer of thanksgiving from Chana. Then read the prayer and explain.

3. Questions for discussion:
- What are the feelings that are being expressed in the prayer?
- Does this match the expectations of the class (see #2)?
- When thanking God, is prayer enough or is action needed (i.e. giving charity)?
- What do Chana's actions say about her? What type of person is she?

4. Ask students to share prayer experiences when they have been in a similar frame of mind (i.e. extremely grateful). What would they say?

5. Ask students to identify themes of the prayer, including:
- Praise and thanks
- Love of God
- Power of God
- Submission of self

6. Homework: Students rewrite Chana's prayer in modern day language. The prayer should outline the story in Chapter 1 and include themes from Chana's prayer.

Assessment

Use this rubric to grade the homework assignment.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Knowledge of content	Includes clear detail of five to six points as in knowledge goals of lessons 1-2	Includes clear detail of three to four points as in knowledge goals of lessons 1-2	Includes sketchy detail of only two to three points as in above knowledge goals of lessons 1-2	Includes imprecise detail of only one to two points as in above knowledge goals of lessons 1-2
Literal comprehension and quality of writing	It describes, focusing on the subject matter and how to convey it in sufficient detail to the reader. The writing is legible, organized and uses correct punctuation and spelling.	It describes the subject matter but does not convey it in sufficient detail to the reader. The writing is legible, organized and uses correct punctuation and spelling.	It does not clearly describe the subject matter nor does it convey it in sufficient detail to the reader. The writing is legible, organized and uses correct punctuation and spelling.	It does not clearly describe the subject matter nor does it convey it in sufficient detail to the reader. The writing is not legible or organized and does not use correct punctuation.
Depth of Understanding and Interpretation	It demonstrates a deeper understanding of Chana's emotions, including all of the value goals from lessons 1-2.	It demonstrates a deeper understanding of Chana's emotions, including some of the value goals from lessons 1-2.	It demonstrates a deeper understanding of Chana's emotions, including one value goal from lessons 1-2.	It does not demonstrate a deeper understanding of the text.

Appendix E: E-chinuch.org document with Differentiated Instruction

בס"ד

<u>TORAH UMESORAH CREATIVE LEARNING PAVILION</u>
<u>FORM FOR SUBMISSIONS</u>

Title: Chumash worksheets

Topic: Parshas Noach, Lech Lecha

Description: Arranged in booklet form, with translation of the Pesukim, grammatical rules based on the words of these Pesukim, matching up of words to translations, questions on the content etc.

Recommended Grade levels: I used this for a Year 3 girls' class – aged between 7 and 8 years.

Additional Information: The translation sheets are taken from the sheets made by Rabbi N. Eisemann – Torah Academy of Philadelphia. I made certain changes where I thought a different translation would be more appropriate.

Special Instructions: The worksheets (except Perek Tes) are arranged according to the 3 general levels in a mainstream class using the following symbols; ◇ = higher intelligence,
□ = average   ○ = weaker students.

Submitted by:
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Appendix F: E-chinuch.org Worksheet Samples

בִּינְגּוֹ - Bingo

1

פרשת חיי שרה		פרק כד. א-כא		
זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ	הַמּשֵׁל	שִׂים-נָא יָדְךָ	תַּחַת יְרֵכִי	אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תַקַּח
לֹא-תֹאבֶה הָאִשָּׁה	הֵהָשֵׁב אָשִׁיב	אֲשֶׁר-יָצָאת	הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ	פֶּן-תָּשִׁיב
אֲשֶׁר לְקָחַנִי	וְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע-לִי	ח נ ס	וְנִקִּיתָ	וַיָּשֶׂם הָעֶבֶד
וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ	מִגְּמַלֵּי אֲדֹנָיו	וַיִּבְרֵךְ הַגְּמַלִּים	מִחוּץ לָעִיר	לְעֵת עֶרֶב
צֵאת הַשּׁאֵבֹת	הַקְרֵה-נָא	אָנֹכִי נִצָּב	וּבְנוֹת אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר	יֹצְאֹת

Frequent חוּמָשׁ words

1. alot

2. nation

3. גּוֹי

4. רַב

5. נשׂא

6. דִּבֶּר

7. מוּת

8. die

9. name

10. big

11. גדול

12. שֵׁם

13. carry

14. ׳spoke

4
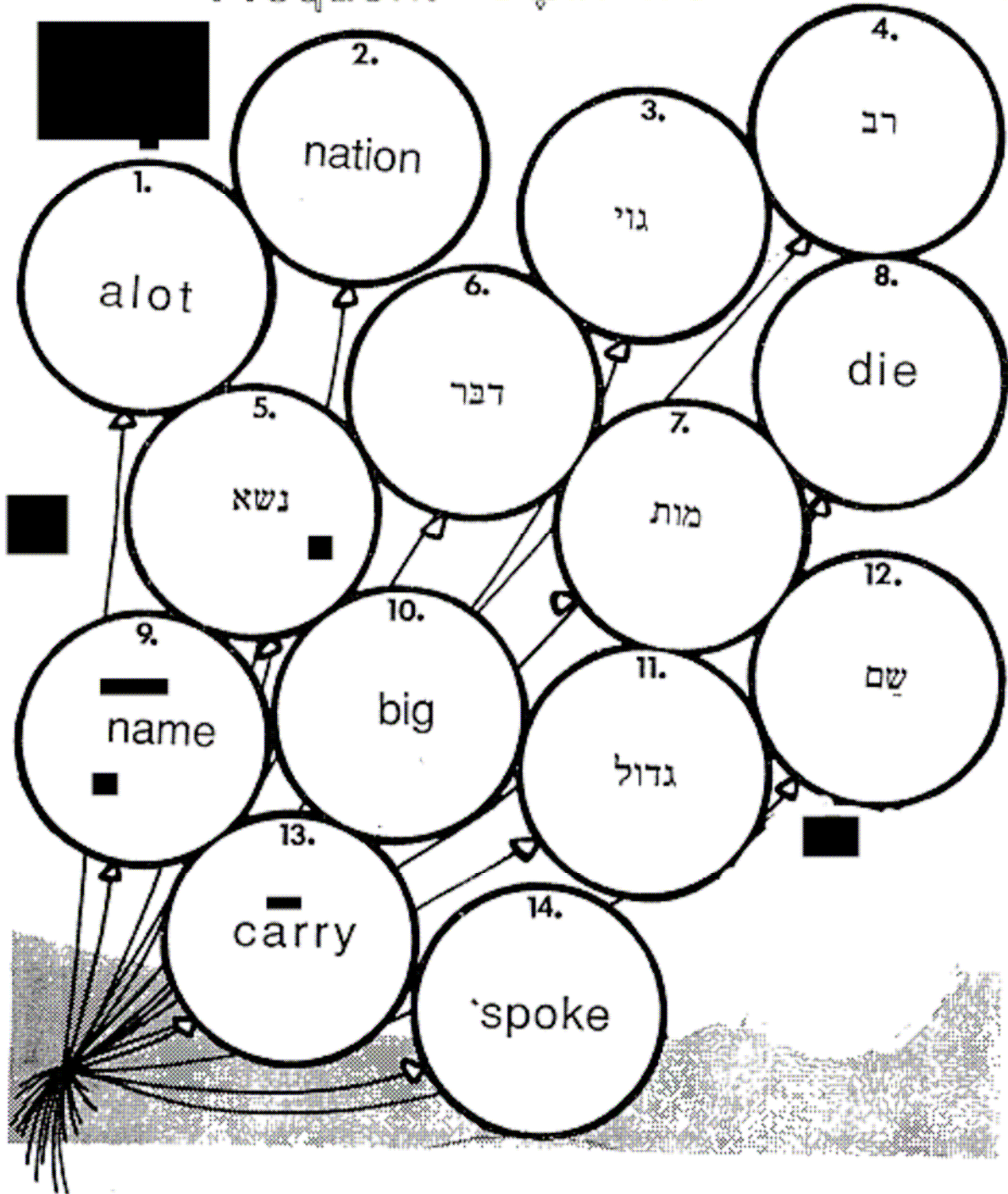
עניָן א- הַלִיכַת אַבְרָם לְאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן　פרק יב (א-ט)

פֶּרֶק יב פְּסוּקִים א-ט

Number in the order that they happened.

○　אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן　came to　אַבְרָם

○　אַבְרָם travelled to the south.

○　מִזְבֵּחַ built a　אַבְרָם

○　ה״ told אַבְרָם to leave　חָרָן.

○　ה״ promised אַבְרָם that he will bless him.

○　ה״ promised that his children will get　אֶרֶץ
יִשְׂרָאֵ-ל

Appendix G: Lookstein.org Tu Be'shvat WebQuest

טייו בשבט

Tu B'shvat is almost here! Here's some good fun to prepare for the New Year for trees. Hunt for the answers to the questions below with the websites given... and Happy New Year!

http://www.akhlah.com/holidays/tubshvat/tu_bshvat.php
http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/tubshvat/tubstory.htm
http://www.his.com/%7Echabad/tu/
http://www.treesaregood.com/funfacts/funfacts.aspx
http://www.joi.org/celebrate/tubshevat/index.shtml

1) Why do you think it is important to have a holiday, even a *New Year*, for trees?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2) On what date do we celebrate the holiday of Tu B'shvat, and why does it seem most appropriate to celebrate it at this time of the year? (hint: Tu B'shvat centers around Israel)

_____

_____

_____

_____

3) If you were a farmer living in the time of the *Beit Hamikdash* (the Temple), and Tu B'shvat came, what would you do with the fruit that blossomed after this date? To whom would you give it? How much would you give?

_____

_____

4) What kind of fruit is customary to eat on Tu B'shvat, and what extra blessing do we add?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5) 'A person is like a tree in a field' (*Devarim* 20:19). How is this true? What can trees come to teach us?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6) Name at least four mitzvot that Israelis have to follow that are connected to planting trees, or taking fruit from trees. Why do you think we have these mitzvot?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7) There are four New Years throughout the Jewish calendar. What does each one commemorate, and what do you think each one comes to teach us?

_____

_____

_____

8) One of the lessons that Tu B'shvat comes to teach us is awareness of our environment. If you were a tree what would you request that humans do for you? Give at least three answers.

_____

_____

_____

Appendix H: Interview Guide

1) What are the classical methodologies and religious qualities of Orthodox Jewish education and which of these can be classified as essential?

2) How do the changed social realities of contemporary society affect the learning process and call for new approaches appropriate to Orthodox schooling?

3) How is traditional Jewish learning affected by a student's exposure to the methodologies of his secular subjects in a dual-curriculum school?

4) How do the divergent educational philosophies of the various streams of Orthodoxy impact the choice of methodologies followed in their schools, especially in their approach to Bible study?

5) How are the criteria for the management of pedagogic change in contemporary Orthodox Jewish schooling determined?

6) What are the guidelines for the appropriate integration of new technologies into the learning process?

7) What place does Hebrew language instruction have in the contemporary syllabus?

8) What are the classic and contemporary Judaic attitudes towards teacher training?

Appendix I: Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent

Thank you for giving of your time to be interviewed.

The information and opinions you provide will be published in a dissertation submitted to the University of South Africa Graduate School of Education and placed in their library catalogue. It may also be submitted to electronic databases accessible to scholars internationally. Thus, your words may be cited in the future by other scholarly studies.

Please be assured that I will send you a transcript of your recorded statements for your perusal ad give you an opportunity to correct, add or subtract to your statements. I will also send you an electronic copy of my dissertation for you to check to see if your words were quoted correctly and in proper context. I will not publish anything in your name, which you would prefer, for any reason to remain out of print.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines

Consent:

Name _____ Date_____

Signature_____

Position _____

Qualifications

_____

_____

Publications_____

_____

_____

Membership in Professional

Organizations_____

_____

_____