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Gateways to Klal-Yisrael

Educational Discussion

Dr. Noga Cohavi

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Preface

The professional dialogue between the Israeli Ministry of Education and its colleagues in the Diaspora is immensely valuable. It contributes to conceptual, pedagogical, and didactic development within the context of identity. Furthermore, it supports the cultivation of competencies and literacies across varied fields.

The articles and research presented here reveal these advantages and highlight intellectual pursuit as a decisive factor. The diverse authors contributing to this booklet are united by their profound commitment to Am Yisrael and to the field of education. Together, they celebrate the essential role of the teacher in the Jewish world and look toward unique challenges.

Wishing you fruitful and insightful collaboration,

Dr. Dalit Atrakchi

The good mind wins favor and inspires others, as stated in the verse *Sechel tov yiten chen* (Mishlei 13:15).

In the spirit of this profound idea, a collection of thought-provoking essays is presented to you, educators in the Jewish world. These reflections that were authored by educators across Israel and the Diaspora demonstrate practical experience, Jewish wisdom and clear perspectives. The articles are organized into three chapters, highlighting the perception of Klal-Yisrael as a network of reciprocal relationships. Together, these three chapters open gateways to connections and opportunities for moral, social and intellectual growth. To this, I have added my research as a loving urgent call for revisiting Israel-Diaspora studies.

Bivracha,

Dr. Noga Cohavi

A Helping Hand for Critical Reading (regarding each article separately)

Details of the article:		
	impressions	reasoning
Overt Messages		
Covert Messages		
Surprising point		
A new thing that I learned		
Something that needs clarification		
I disagree		
And also...		



The Jewish People and the World

Field Notes: Teaching Jewish Philosophy in Bucharest

Michael Makarovsky

Everything, for us, is in our concept of the world.
To modify our concept of the world is to modify
the world.

Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, 160

People and the World: it is often argued, explicitly or implicitly, that the former excludes the latter, as if to belong to a People one must single out certain parts of the World and swear preferential allegiance to them. Yet the opposite is also true: by identifying ourselves with a certain People—even in the form of negation (“I’m not like them, I’m different”)—we find our place in the World. The identity of a People contains a certain idea of the World and a certain way of world-making: what is usually called a worldview or world-vision (Delia Ungureanu, “Philology’s Deep History,” 437). These seemingly abstract speculations are in fact the daily bread of humanities educators around the world. As we meditate on why we teach what we teach, what we would like our students to learn, and how best to get there, we develop a particular vision of the People vs. the World that reflects our personal preferences and institutional constraints.

These questions seem even more pressing for Jewish educators in the Diaspora. The project of modern Jewish education, originally conceived as a counterweight to the assimilation of the 18th and 19th centuries, now faces a “morning after” problem: on the one hand, in many European countries, the Jewish population has significantly decreased by the first quarter of the 21st century—in no small part due to the efforts of Jewish education, culminating in Aliyah.

On the other hand, recent events have clearly shown that the ideal of classical Zionism—the “normalization” of the Jewish people as a people among other peoples—necessitates a rediscovery of cosmopolitan, worldly currents in the Jewish Bookshelf. A re-contextualization of Jewish culture(s) as a complex system of

interactions with itself and with other cultures, which would equally emphasize its uniqueness and continuity.

By a peculiar irony of history, human communities evolve to the extent that they have something to say to others: that is, to the extent that they offer a reflection of what can be called by the now unfashionable word human nature. Only in mutual dialogue with others, with the “non-us,” do we come to know ourselves: “The particular, implied in the general and excluded from it for pedagogical purposes, explains both the general and the particular” (Baraita of Rabbi Yishmael, 7).

In October 2024, my wife and I were invited to the Romanian Parliament for an official commemoration of the victims of October 7. The invitation was extended by Mrs. Tova Ben Nun-Cherbis, the visionary founder and director of the Laude-Reut Educational Complex, an elite private school located in the heart of Bucharest’s Jewish Quarter, Cartierul Evreiesc.

After the ceremony, Tova, for whom I was to begin working in November, approached me with her typical lightning-like directness: “Can you teach Jewish philosophy?” she asked. And immediately, as if in a daze, I replied: “Yes, I can.” Needless to say, this “yes, I can” was not a factual statement, but rather a promise, a commitment, a covenant. (It was the first of many lessons Tova has taught me since: in the classroom, the teacher is the one who must learn the most.) At that time, I had no idea how or why one would teach Jewish philosophy to Romanian high schoolers, or what philosophy Tova had in mind: Judah ha-Levi? Maimonides? Moses Mendelssohn? Franz Rosenzweig?

Gradually, Tova’s insight began to dawn on me: in the Tanakh, she once told me, there is much wisdom. To prove her point, she even opened WhatsApp and showed how the gematria found in the weekly parasha foreshadowed some of the recent world news. This narrowed my task: now I knew the what, and all that was left was to choose the how—to choose the right approach to teaching the universal wisdom of the Tanakh to high school students. A piece of cake!

To do this, I had to look at the Tanakh from a somewhat detached, defamiliarized perspective. Six years spent in the department of Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University came in handy. Tova then introduced me to Dr. Noga Cohavi, the

editor of the current volume, who provided invaluable help and support throughout the process.

Regardless of our personal beliefs, I told myself, the Tanakh is a collection of literary works written and edited by different people, at different times, in different genres, and for different purposes. Many parts of the Tanakh were strongly influenced by the great cultures of the ancient Near East, and its influence on subsequent Western and world culture is inestimable. And yes, since the creators of the Tanakh were Jewish intellectuals, the Tanakh is Jewish philosophy.

These few broad strokes were enough to choose an approach: I decided to teach the Tanakh as a masterpiece of world literature, a product of ancient Hebrew creative genius. We will study the major stories of the Tanakh, from Genesis to Kings, touch on its poetry, theology, and cosmology, and explore how its complex imagery is refracted in world art, music, literature, and philosophy.

The Laude-Reut program in Jewish philosophy, approved by the Romanian Ministry of Education in May 2025, is the first educational program in Romania to apply a world literature methodology at the pre-university level.

“Our philological home is the Earth”, says Erich Auerbach, a prominent Jewish-German scholar, one of the many European émigrés who fled their homeland after 1933 and shaped the intellectual life of postwar America:

The most priceless and indispensable part of a [scholar’s] heritage is still his own nation’s culture and language. Only when he is first separated from this heritage, however, and then transcends it does it become truly effective (“Philology and Weltliteratur,” 17).

As I have argued in this essay, Auerbach’s words represent perhaps the most important challenge for Jewish educators in the 21st century.

Michael Makarovsky is a teacher of Jewish Philosophy at the Laude-Reut Educational Complex in Bucharest and a PhD candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jewish Education Overseas: A Bridge between Israel and the Diaspora

Veronika Dvorkin

I am seeking my brothers. Tell me, please, where they are pasturing (Bereshit 37:16).

A few years ago, I was a shlichah in a Jewish school in Vilnius, where a non-Jewish teacher also taught. One day, I heard her say to her students, "The Jewish people are so special. Thousands of years in exile, spread throughout the world, but they never lost their unique identity and connection to their land. Faith in one God, culture, language and customs that have passed down through generations and crossed continents." It is indeed an amazing thing, almost mysterious.

Every year, on Seder night, we retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and remember being one people who went out together to celebrate in G-d's name.

Although not all were allowed to enter the Promised Land, the very constant repetition of the story indicates that on every continent where the Haggadah is read, our hope rises to gather together "next year in Jerusalem built". It is a longing to return and be the twelve sons of Yaakov.

So how do you maintain the connection? It's not always easy. Some challenges put the connection to the test. One of them is the growing differences between Jews living in Israel and those living in other countries. Cultural, political, religious and social differences sometimes create gaps and different understandings about the essence of Jewish identity.

When Yosef searches for his brothers, he knows that they envy him because of his father's special treatment of him and his dreams. However, he himself only wants their closeness, their peace and well-being. Yosef seeks love and brotherhood; Yosef seeks his family. He seeks unity with his brothers, his family and his people. And what are we looking for? Do we also want to feel love and support from our brothers in the Diaspora? Is it just us? And what are they looking for?

For the past seventeen years, I have been involved in Jewish education in the Diaspora, and to this day, I am amazed by the desire of the Israelites to maintain

their connection with Israel and Judaism, no matter what their economic or political situation is, whether they are better off or worse off in the countries in which they live. They feel an inseparable part of the community of Israel, of the tribes of Israel, of the sons of Yaakov. I have often been asked: Why is it important for us – the State of Israel, the Ministry of Education – to invest in Jewish education in the Diaspora? In my opinion, Jewish schools around the world are a stronghold of the close connection between Israel and the Diaspora. The children who learn Hebrew, Jewish heritage and prayers are cultural agents and even our emissaries in the communities, families and non-Jewish societies in which they live.

When I meet graduates of Jewish schools who are currently building their own communities and passing on the knowledge they have acquired to their children or members of the community, my heart fills with joy. Through Jewish education, we continue to nurture the Jewish spirit and strengthen not only the community in the Diaspora, but also Israel. We need their support.

Although the State of Israel is a focal point and source of inspiration for Jews around the world, at the same time, the communities in the Diaspora are a kind of “protective arch” and a check on its sovereignty. They constitute a political, economic and spiritual force, strengthening Israel’s international standing. The interaction is two-way: while Israel sends its emissaries, its knowledge and technology, the communities in the Diaspora send Israel life forces, donations and assistance.

Jewish nationhood is not just a theory, but the essence of our existence. It is a complex network of interactions between different Jewish communities, which maintain a continuous and bilateral connection with the State of Israel. This connection nourishes and strengthens Jewish identity worldwide, ensuring the future of the Jewish people.

The bond between world Jewry and the State of Israel is a reciprocal and dynamic one. It is nourished by shared history, values, and heritage, and is strengthened daily by acts of brotherhood and mutual responsibility. Our role as educators is to continue to establish this bond. We must educate future generations to recognize the diverse faces of the Jewish people, to cultivate tolerance and acceptance of others, and to encourage honest conversation.

Jewish education in the Diaspora is not limited to learning Hebrew, history and the Torah; it is also a living bridge between different worlds. Through curricula, visits to Israel, and dialogue with educators from Israel, the connection can be rebuilt. Education is the best tool for creating an open dialogue, recognizing the diversity and complexity of Jews in Israel and abroad, while emphasizing what is common and unifying. Educators hold the key to the future of the Jewish people. It is essential to ensure that Israel remains a focal point of identification for Diaspora Jews, while also ensuring that Diaspora communities will be part of the Israeli story and contribute to shaping the identity of the State of Israel. Learning about communities in Israel, their cultural richness, diversity of opinions and social complexity, is an integral part of strengthening the connection.

Yosef wanted to find his brothers, even though he knew that they would not be happy to meet him. He knew that the will of his father Yaakov and the will of his Father in Heaven was to see the peace of his brothers and the peace of the flock. He felt that his brothers were himself and his flesh, spirit and soul – “I seek my brothers”. And even when he did not find them in Shechem and could have returned to his father, he continued to search for them without considering the danger. He did not rest until he found them in Dothan.

This is the greatness and virtue of Yosef, who stuck to the goal of finding his brothers as his father commanded him. Yosef seeks love and brotherhood; he seeks his family. The biblical story of Yaakov and his sons teaches us the meaning of kinship. Despite the tensions and rivalries between the brothers, when they encounter a difficult situation in Egypt, they understand that they must act together. Later, when they stand together before Yosef, they unite and become the twelve tribes of Israel – complex and different, but with a common destiny. This is an example of how even from challenges and disagreements, inner unity is created. Like Yosef's search for his brothers, we too are committed to continuing to seek connection with diaspora communities – even when it seems that distance, cultural gaps and tensions make the encounter difficult. This search does not stem solely from a historical or nostalgic need, but from a deep recognition that we are one people, sharing a common past and a common future. Jewish education is in this sense the central tool that turns the constant search into a living bridge: a bridge that allows gaps to be bridged, a

continuous dialogue to be built, and a space where Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews can meet with mutual recognition, respect and a sense of shared responsibility.

Jewish education in the Diaspora is a central pillar in preserving the continuity of Jewish identity and deepening the connection with the State of Israel. Beyond being an educational framework, Jewish education functions as a socio-cultural space that shapes a sense of collective belonging among the younger generation, connecting it to heritage, language, and shared values. Schools and educational frameworks in the Diaspora are not only centers for imparting knowledge, but also serve as living bridges connecting Jews overseas with Israeli society. They enable the creation of continuous dialogue, dealing with cultural and social gaps, and strengthening the mutual responsibility that is a central element of the Jewish community. In this context, Jewish education in the Diaspora can be seen as a strategic mechanism that ensures the continuity of the Jewish people and its resistance to processes of assimilation, alienation, and a disintegrating identity. Furthermore, Jewish education shapes the interaction between Israel and the Diaspora in a two-way manner: Israel inspires and shares resources, while the Diaspora communities strengthen Israel's position through political, economic, and spiritual support. In this way, education constitutes not only a means of preserving individual and communal Jewish identity but also a central tool in building an international network of connections that strengthens national cohesion and the shared future of the Jewish people.

Veronika Dvorkin is an educator and an instructor at Heftziba (Jewish Zionist Formal Education in Post-Soviet States).



The Jewish People and Eretz Yisrael

Why does Jewish Peoplehood require Aliya to Eretz Yisrael?

Roi Abecassis

One of the beautiful parables in the Gmara is a comparison of the Jewish people to a vine. The Gmara of Chulin states that just as a vine has different parts, such as leaves, branches and clusters, so too do the Jewish people consist of diverse components. To illustrate this diversity, the Gmara goes on to tell a story. Once there was a crisis in the Land of Israel, and a request was sent to the Jews living abroad in the following terms: "Let the clusters pray for the leaves". This means that people from abroad, who are likened to the clusters, are asked to pray for the Jews of the Land of Israel, who are likened to the leaves. In this way, the Gmara seeks to describe the special relationship that exists between Jews in the Diaspora and Eretz Yisrael. Interestingly, Diaspora Jews are likened to the clusters, which are the main part of the tree, while Jews in Eretz Yisrael are like the leaves, which are the secondary part of the tree. The Gmara continues: "You Jews abroad should know that without the leaves the clusters have no right to exist". Namely, although you are the clusters, it is no less important to recognize where the photosynthesis process comes from, from where you suck the energy to live. The analogy is therefore clear: the spiritual energy of the people living in Zion nourishes the entire Jewish people, and as a sign of gratitude for this, the people of Zion ask to receive a replenishment of energy when they are in trouble.

The notion of Jewish peoplehood is increasingly endorsed as a unifying framework of a common identity that transcends national and geographical boundaries. It offers a vision of one people living in worldwide reciprocal relationships, based on shared values, culture, and tradition. While this idea deserves praise and support, it is crucial to emphasize that maintaining the centrality of the Land of Israel and the State of Israel as foundational values is necessary for a meaningful and cohesive Jewish peoplehood.

Jewish peoplehood provides a powerful response to modern challenges by nurturing a sense of belonging and fellowship that transcends local communities and national

borders. It emphasizes that Jews in New York, Buenos Aires, Paris and Tel Aviv share a historical heritage, mutual responsibility and destiny.

The growing popularity of this concept stems from a decline in religious observance, particularly among younger people. This has created a desire for alternative ways for a wider population to connect with the Jewish people. Therefore, it's crucial to examine and shape the core values of Jewish peoplehood to ensure its continued relevance and cohesion for future generations.

The Danger of Abstract Values

Every rose has a thorn. When Jewish peoplehood is built primarily on abstract values such as justice, Tikkun Olam or mutual responsibility, it exposes itself to fundamental problems. These values, important as they may be, are not unique to Judaism and are not sufficient to maintain coherence over time. Furthermore, the interpretation of these values varies from community to community, from country to country, and from generation to generation. The things one community sees as "Tikkun Olam", another may see as a disruption of the natural order. What one community defines as "social justice", another may see as inappropriate interference in local politics. Unfortunately, we are often exposed to bitter disputes concerning values that, instead of uniting, tend to divide and polarize. Thus, our reward becomes our loss. Moreover, many see the weakening of the religious context of the commonality of the Jewish people as a danger of losing Jewish identity over time.

The Land as an Anchor of Identity and a Cargo of Values

I follow the Gemara in Chulin: The Land of Israel and the State of Israel provide exactly what is missing for a people built on abstract values. It offers a concrete, tangible and unifying anchor. The connection to the land of Israel is not just emotional or historical - it constitutes the collective DNA of the Jewish people.

Despite all the complexities and political controversies it provokes, the State of Israel represents a unique realization of the Jewish dream. It serves not only as a place of refuge but also as a cultural and spiritual laboratory in which Jewish culture is renewed in a modern dimension. The renewed Hebrew language, the living Hebrew calendar, the cultural institutions and a vibrant religious center are common assets for the entire Jewish people.

I am fully aware that both the State of Israel and the dispute over the borders of the Land of Israel have the potential to arouse controversy. But we must remember that the connection to Zion and Jerusalem has been the focal point uniting all Jews. This has existed for thousands of years, even while facing halachic, philosophical or political controversies.

Expanding the concept of Jewish peoplehood with Eretz Yisrael is another advantage. Broadening the circles of Jews connected to their people requires a rich set of communication channels. When Jews do not endorse cultural or ethical channels, they still have Israel as a connecting channel.

The Land of Israel can support the weak links. When there is an ethical dispute or when Jewish circles grow apart, Israel has the power to bring them together; when the younger generation has no will to identify with abstract tradition, a connection to a living place can arouse interest in it and a sense of belonging.

True Jewish peoplehood requires recognition of the double burden that Israel carries for the Jewish people. On the one hand, Israel constitutes the spiritual center that nourishes the entire people, as the Gemara explained in Chulin the leaves of the Land of Israel provide the spiritual energy needed for the clusters in the Diaspora. The spiritual and religious center, the Hebrew language, the full-of-life Hebrew calendar and the modern Israeli culture are crucial. They constitute the spiritual assets that serve as common ground to the entire Jewish people.

On the other hand, Israel serves as a concrete territorial anchor providing stability to the peoplehood enterprise. In a world where abstract values are subject to dispute, the sentimental-territorial connection offers a permanent and tangible point of connection. As communities divide around different interpretations of values, the connection to Jerusalem and Zion remains a common baseline.

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Israel and World Jewry: Educational Synergy

Nike Silberstein

The relationship between Israel and Jewish communities worldwide represents a dynamic partnership in modern education, creating connections that strengthen both diaspora communities and Israeli society. This synergy becomes particularly evident in times of crisis, when shared identity transforms into concrete educational action. The Shaagat Ariele initiative, born in the aftermath of October 7th, exemplifies how technology and commitment can bridge any distance to ensure educational continuity.

The centrality of Israel to Jewish identity may seem familiar, but moments of crisis reveal the profound truth underlying these concepts. When October 7th struck, Jewish communities worldwide experienced collective trauma. Jews everywhere "wore metaphorical sackcloth", feeling their souls connect as we understood our shared destiny that transcends geography.

This connection has biblical precedent. When the Israelites returned to the Promised Land, two tribes requested permission to settle outside its borders. Their request was granted with the understanding that they would maintain responsibility to the land and to their people. This model reflects today's world: diaspora communities serve as bridges between Israel and the world, enriching both through their unique perspectives, and taking responsibility for each other.

The Shaagat Ariele initiative demonstrates how a crisis can catalyze educational innovation. Named after my father, Ariele Silberstein, Z"l, whose values of love and loyalty inspired the project, this program emerged within hours of October 7th, embodying the Israeli "beta version" mentality—choosing imperfect but immediate action over paralysis.

The initiative connected volunteers from Singapore to Canada, Australia to Argentina, Europe to the United States, creating virtual classrooms spanning continents. Art teachers, math professors, dance instructors, aerodynamics experts, English tutors, and yoga instructors offered their skills to Israeli children and families, ensuring education continued in the darkest hours. One volunteer teacher woke up early for eight months to teach at an Israeli public school before starting her paid workday, exemplifying the dedication that crisis can inspire.

Shaagat Ariei collaborated with established institutions, including AMIT schools and the Israeli Ministry of Education, to supply substitute teachers while many in Israel were called to reserve duty. Classroom partnerships between students abroad and in Israel were created in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Diaspora Department.

The success of initiatives like Shaagat Ariei highlights the advantages of a globally distributed Jewish community. Having Jewish populations worldwide helps engage with educational trends and resources, enabling success through understanding. Jews are naturally a people who love to travel and experience new cultures—the running joke that you meet a disproportionate number of Israelis on any international journey reflects this curiosity and openness.

This global presence creates an educational ecosystem where communities bring fresh perspectives on pedagogy, technology, and cultural integration, while anchoring ourselves in shared history and community. The Torah's instruction to "understand the stranger" takes on new meaning when Jewish communities worldwide serve as bridges between cultures, bringing that understanding back to enrich the collective Jewish experience.

Technology has enabled the sense of nationhood and responsibility of Klal Israel to reach unprecedented heights. The pain and fear shared through "soul understanding"—recognition that we are of the same origin and destiny—can only be denied by those who separate themselves from our national identity. When crisis

struck, the need for connection was immediate, and technology made that connection possible.

The digital classroom became a space where Hebrew speakers worked alongside those who relied on music, art, and pure human connection to bridge distance, and occasionally, language gaps. Volunteers came together in "cyberland," creating something that was neither fully Israeli nor fully diaspora, but authentically both. Multi-generational mentorships emerged, reminding participants of the power that comes from generations working together across distances.

The relationship between Israel and world Jewry in education is fundamentally reciprocal. Israeli educators benefit from exposure to international perspectives, while Jewish schools abroad learn about the wide range of Jewish communities around the world, as well as the multifaceted Israeli experience, expertise in Hebrew instruction, Jewish studies, and educational innovation.

At this intersection of crisis and compassion, educational frameworks and international learning communities, such as Avnei Rosha and the World Zionist Organization's Education initiatives, became a safe haven and a reassuring forum for Jewish and Israeli educators to share experiences, ideas and support each other. Rather than waiting for crises to reveal these connections, educational institutions, like the Ministry of Education Diaspora Department, are building ongoing partnerships through teacher exchanges, joint curriculum development, and collaborative research projects. The goal is to create a permanent network of educational connection that enhances Jewish learning worldwide while strengthening bonds between Israel and diaspora communities. The educational synergy between Israel and Jewish communities worldwide embodies the magnificence of Klal Israel. When technology becomes a bridge, when volunteers span continents to support children, when crisis reveals connections that distance cannot weaken, we witness timeless bonds take shape in present reality.

The story of Shaagat Arie demonstrates that Jewish strength lies not only in Israel or any single diaspora community, but in the dynamic relationship between them. Through education, technology, and the simple act of reaching across distance, demonstrating our concern and responsibility for each other, we build stronger Jewish life, where shared identity and modern innovation create learning communities that transcend geographical boundaries.

Nike Silberstein is the director of Jewish Life and Learning at Marks JCH in NY and the founder and director of the global initiative Shaagat Arie, a virtual school for Israeli students.



The Jewish People and the Spiritual Heritage

Turn it, Turn it - The Intellectual Property of Klal Yisrael is Our Inheritance

Rabbi Scott Bolton

There is a special power, almost a spark of creation, in the moment when we first encounter a classic Jewish text. Or when we return for the hundredth time to a beloved source from our People's vast library. The Talmud teaches

וְתִלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּגֹד כּוֹלָם - And the study of Torah is equal to them all" (Peah 1:1)—placing intellectual engagement at the core of Jewish life. Our use of "Torah" is expansive; we see the texts of our people and the artifacts that reflect our wisdom and cultures as holy vessels that we may fill, that may fill us and that have memories to share.

The intellectual treasury of the Jewish People includes the gathered wisdom of millennia, now housed in the new National Library of Israel, vast digital storehouses, and the intimate shelves of Jewish homes and libraries across the world. In the original Hebrew, these sources connect us to the poetic heart and living soul of our tradition—our unique language for contemplation, discovery, and emotional resonance.

As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, "We do not simply learn in order to know; we learn in order to revere, in order to comprehend the grandeur, the power, and the meaning of the word." (God in Search of Man, p. 357) Through learning poetry, code, and Talmudic debate, our texts become mirrors for thought and calls to action, making us sharper thinkers and wiser educational guides .

The Rabbis and our ancestors left us not just teachings, but teaching methodologies: windows into how to delve into Torah, probe our intellectual treasures' many layers, and translate insights into classroom practice. In engaging with stories, laws, and commentaries, we uncover our shared Jewish humanity and grow into better educators, connecting our students with Klal Yisrael.

Franz Rosenzweig famously declared that his life was “brought to the text and the text to his life,” reminding us to be open to bringing our full selves into sacred learning, each time anew. “Turn it and turn it,” teaches Pirkei Avot (5:22), “for everything is in it...Reflect on it and grow old and gray with it, for you have no better portion than this.” Whether we are meeting a text for the first time or the hundredth, the intellectual property of the Jewish People is a wellspring—enlivening our minds, nourishing our souls, and connecting us, in every corner of the globe, to ourselves, our family and to Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi Scott Bolton, past head of school and currently the leader of Congregation Or-Zarua in New York City.

The Jewish People and the Spiritual Property: Jewish Literacy and Resilience

Sharon Moran

The word *amtachat* (bag or sack), familiar from the stories of Joseph, is more than a simple container. It holds the essentials of life—food, drink, memory, identity, and meaning—much like the spiritual resources that sustain the Jewish people.

One of the first questions I ask students at the beginning of our learning journey is what connects us to the Jewish people worldwide. The prevailing answers are: we are united by the same ancient chapters of history as we all left Egypt and stood at the foot of Mount Sinai; we have several things in common: the Book of Books, the weekly Torah portion, the Hebrew calendar, the Hebrew language, the State of Israel, and the instinctive sense of interest and caring. Another question I ask my young students is what each Jew carries in the bag. Often, the spontaneous image that emerges is of a figure walking in the desert carrying a backpack.

When students explore together the potential contents of the backpack, they understand the metaphor. They discover different versions of *piyyutim*, stories, poems, *midrashim* and prayers. They come across tears and sorrow, memory and hope. They understand that each generation adds another layer of melodies and colors.

In this educational experience, they get to know their significant personal role within an ancient story.

Jewish literacy begins with knowing our spiritual and cultural treasures. But it is more than memorizing texts—it is about engaging with these sources to understand ourselves and build resilience, using them as anchors and touchstones through changing times.

Each re-reading reveals a hidden treasure trove, inspiring wonder, an insight never seen before, and an idea illuminated in a different light, a word that enters the heart. In the words of Leah Goldberg:

Teach my lips a blessing and a song of praise.

When your time is renewed by day and night,

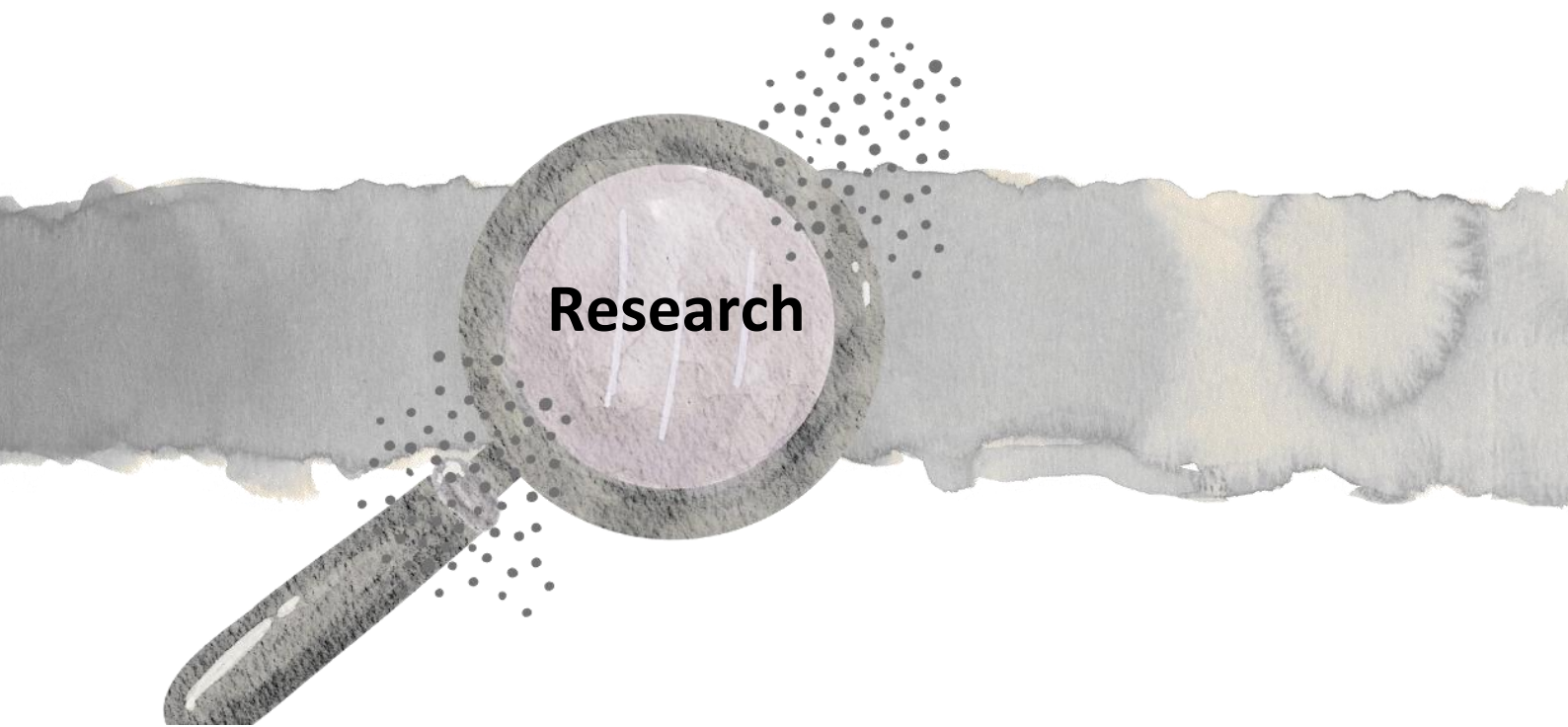
Don't let my day be like my yesterdays,

Don't let my days become a habit.

When I am with my students, I realize that the greatest gift I can give them is exposure to the Jewish bookcase and the treasures it holds. That is where the magic happens. The sense of belonging, identification and responsibility grows after understanding the texts, poems, legends, verses and proverbs. This is where students learn that they are part of a great story, a link in a long and glorious chain. This is where they observe the broad historical context of the Jewish people and see the importance of the Jewish state of Israel. They comprehend that the justification does not lie in a dark chapter or in any of the UN resolutions. Rather, their eyes are open to the current Jewish chapter following thousands of years: "Know where you came from and where you are heading" (Mishnah Avot). In a world of changing realities, our resilience as a people rests on the treasures of the spirit. They are the lighthouse and the compass, and they are the ones who give us an anchor against the changes and turbulence of time. Genuine resilience is not measured only by military power and technological capabilities. It is measured by our ability to feel that we belong, even from thousands of kilometers away and even without knowing each other, to find connections and understand how much we have in common. Our magnificent heritage is personal and collective; it crosses continents and borders. Each Jewish community adds its uniqueness. The "Nitzanim Class" that I lead is a Jewish class shared by young students from Israel and around the world. The children get to know each other, ask questions, sing and play. Through sharing, they experience the words of Zelda: "My well-being is tied to your well-being". When we celebrated Hanukkah online, we felt that the candles lit by Gaia from Berlin, Rani and Ma'ayan from Colombia and Noya from Israel spread great light far and wide. When we sing "Adon Olam" together, the melody is slightly different, but the intention of the heart is completely the same. The personal stories revealed in "Kitat Nitzanim" deepened our ancient-new joined story. Knowing that we have brothers and sisters in the world who lean on our common anchors, who sing the same songs, even if in a different style, adds a layer rich in sounds to our resilience. "A People and Its Intellectual Property" is not just a title or an idea, but a living and breathing reality. Every Jew, teacher or student, every community in Israel and the Diaspora, has been enriching the shared basket for thousands of years: a line from a song, an

interpretation of a verse, a family story, a personal experience, memory, and spirit. When we carry this together, it is never a burden. It gives us resilience, stability, and hope. It connects the threads into a solid fabric.

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An Act of Embroidery: Revisiting Israel-Diaspora Studies

Noga Cohavi

The conceptual background

The phrase *Maase Rokeh* (an act of embroidery), which describes the construction of the Tabernacle, is a beautiful metaphor for the people of Israel. Like the biblical tent, the Jewish people have partitions that shift with every wind and a double-sided fabric. On the inside, a tangle of knots and threads twists together, but on the outside, they form a single, cohesive image. This parable aligns with distinction and duality, the main cornerstones of Jewish reality. Opening the article this way, we draw on sources of Jewish learning to differentiate our approach from the universal formulas often applied to such a unique existence. In this respect, presenting Judaism as a mere civilization under Western terminology opposes its very essence and superficializes the discussion. The sociologist Samuel Noah Eisenstadt justified this linguistic shorthand as a desire to explore the uniqueness of Jewish existence through "a comparison between other long-lived civilizations" (Eisenstadt, 1992, p.5). Eisenstadt, Shalom Salomon Wald, and other researchers acknowledge this flaw yet refrain from offering alternatives. Eisenstadt does so for methodological reasons, while Wald notes that this is useful in shaping Israel's foreign policy (Wald, 2005). "Judaism as a Civilization" approach should not serve as a primary definition. Instead, expanding "Judaism as a Civilization" to "Judaism as a reality" will better align the cultural aspects of Judaism with the notion of *havdala*, the Jewish principle of distinction. This principle always involves friction, fractures and occasionally, reconciliation and wholeness. The constant, multi-directional border crossings among Jewish "yards" (*Hatzerot*) and the non-Jewish world decisively affect the functioning and well-being of the Jewish people. Furthermore, the *havdala* principle reveals that the preservation of Jewish identity—in Israel and abroad—is determined by the Jewish people's affinity to their spiritual assets, heritage and the ethics derived from them. Incorporating analogical thinking and induction-deduction reasoning fosters higher-order thinking (Keith J. Holyoake, 2025). This approach

aligns particularly well with Jewish learning, which, thanks to its many connections, offers an excellent opportunity for analogical thinking. These ideas have gained renewed validity during the period of intense internal Israeli tensions that preceded the catastrophe of October 7, 2023, and the war that followed. It must be emphasized, however, that the call for an updated discussion in Jewish studies is not a reaction to this latest trauma, but the result of extensive professional educational experience.

A Disclosure

This article reflects my years of work within the Israel-Diaspora educational landscape. It should not be regarded as a model for conventional academic writing, as it intentionally does not meet the research expectations on Jewish peoplehood and klal Yisrael. Several key preliminary understandings guided my writing: 1. Recurring patterns in Jewish history are as relevant as ever. 2. A small Jewish community often offers great lessons. 3. The level of Jewish literacy affects the quality of Jewish educators' work. 4. The Jewish Peoplehood School (Cohavi, 2020), highly influential in the Israel-Diaspora arena, has political colors. 5. Most educators interested in the Jewish world accept Jewish ethics as common ground. Yet, they often overlook Jewish learning and settle for naive anecdotal acts of solidarity. To support these preliminary statements, I collected data from sources such as syllabi, articles and professional guidebooks. Additional authentic data were extracted from educational conversations. These conversations, which took place over several years, were originally intended to clarify pedagogical considerations about the studies of the Jewish people and to examine the pedagogical perception of the concept of Jewish peoplehood. However, with the accumulation of materials, the time was right to lay the foundations for a discussion that does not dismantle the triangle of education, academia, and society.

Weak Points

A. A matter of perspective

In 1933, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan was busy completing his book that would later become the basis of the Manifesto of the Jewish Peoplehood School: Judaism as a Civilization - Toward the Reconstruction of Jewish-American Life. Shortly before the publication of Kaplan's first edition in 1934, and following the rise of the Nazis to

power in Germany, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz published a modest essay. Although it was no more than an essay, it succinctly presented a broader perspective than Kaplan's. The author, Zalman Epstein, a Hebrew and Zionist writer born in Belarus and a member of the Enlightenment movement, had a good command of the nuances of the Hebrew language, pointed out the difference between Am Yisrael (the Jewish people) and Klal Yisrael [everyone in the Jewish nation] (Epstein, 1934). Etymologically, the Hebrew word "klal" is ambiguous. It means both "all" and "a rule". Thus, Klal Yisrael is an inclusive Jewish collective that acknowledges its limitations. Epstein was an active Zionist, but unlike classic Israeli Zionist leaders, he opposed the "negation of the Galut" [exiled Jewish dispersion]. For him, the people of Israel whether in their land or abroad, have "the same human cultural conscience, which is obligated to help the Jews build their national home on the land of their ancestors" yet is "also obligated to allow Klal Yisrael to exist in decent conditions of civil life in all their diasporas, wherever they are" (ibid.). Contrary to Kaplan, he was not inclined toward cosmopolitanism: "Starting from the end of the eighteenth century, we became accustomed to casting our hopes on global progress. We thought that under its shadow, we would find shelter even in the Diaspora, even if our life as a people would not be complete and correct in every way. And here suddenly such an important surprise, precisely in one of the most civilized countries in the world [Germany] as if the Middle Ages had returned with all their fears" (ibid.). Both ideas, Jewish Peoplehood and Klal Yisrael are conditioned by intra-Jewish ties and a common literary basis. Nevertheless, among those who advocate peoplehood as a "civilization," originally adapted to the language of the social sciences, one sanctifies universalism.

In comparison, the experience of Klal Yisrael is coordinated with the language of heritage and Jewish literacy. On the vitality of Jewish literacy for the realization of the Jewish people and the raising of the Hebrew flag, Rabbi Moshe Kalfon HaCohen wrote in the Collection of Laws and Customs in Djerba: "It is also appropriate to create time for the young learners to learn our sacred language. Because, besides being a benefit to Klal Yisrael in general and to the learner himself in particular, he will be united and connected with Jews everywhere, and in particular with the residents of our [ancestral] land, where our sacred language is considered

permanent even by the foreign regime" (Kalfon HaCohen, 1941). This quote does not mean Jewish literacy is based only on religion and Hebrew. However, the omission of their crucial role in Jewish identity results in a narrow perception, a view reflected in Yosef Gorny's article (Gorny, 2002, p. 1). Gorny, a distinguished historian, discussed the issue from two perspectives, the political and the historiographical. He chose to disregard the impact of the dramatic encounter between East and West and framed his arguments only in the modern era. That led to an inadequate observation of the Jewish people. He argued that the starting point for examining the use of the concept of *klal Yisrael* should be the French Revolution because then a process of change "of a dialectical nature" began in parallel with the rise of "the question of the definition of the collective Jewish entity" (ibid.). This argument is weak because Jewish national self-consciousness developed through conflicts long before the 18th century. The monotheistic revolution of the biblical era, the complex dynamics of the Israelite tribes, the negotiations of the Hasmonean state with Hellenistic culture, and the buffer Judaism between Christians and Muslims are some examples of the ancient imperative "two Gentiles in your womb" (Gen. 25:23). These contradictions are inseparable from both scholarly and intuitive Jewish existence. As such, they drive the ancient and renewed wheel in a recurring pattern of convergence and dispersion.

B. Lack of A coherent framework

The academic and educational frameworks for teaching Jewish peoplehood in Israel are currently unstable, often reflecting a progressive socio-political agenda. The programs, especially in state education, focus on two main ideas: Judaism as a culture and the centrality of Israel to world Jewry.

Experimentation with teaching methods has been a part of this process. The Ministry of Education's Departments of Jewish-Israeli Culture and Jewish Education in the Diaspora have produced teaching materials and worked with various organizations on local initiatives. For many years, these efforts often relied on informal "twinning programs" with the Jewish Agency, primarily through the goodwill of teachers, especially English teachers, and focused mainly on North American Jewry.

These "sister school" programs were largely considered enrichment activities rather than a core part of the curriculum. The activities were often limited to:

- Exchanging semi-creative products like posters, greetings, and recipes.
- Holding friendly, synchronized video calls, such as for Hanukkah candle lighting.

These programs rarely evolved to an in-depth part of the school curriculum.

A proper assessment of educational programs should analyze teaching and learning processes, including practical comprehension performance. However, evaluation of peoplehood programs is carried out by non-governmental organizations. The data they present is often of secondary importance, including emotional feedback, frequency of meetings, and vague descriptions of "new skills". They may use pedagogical byproducts to indicate success, but this is often for public relations or to maintain participant motivation, not for serious pedagogical analysis. Since 2017-2018, coinciding with Israel's 70th anniversary, there has been a noticeable increase in efforts to promote Jewish peoplehood education. Professional development for this has come from both within the educational system (supervisors and instructors) and from external groups like North American Jewish Federations, the Jewish Agency, and institutes for Progressive Judaism.

Despite these efforts, a scholarly discussion about how to teach Jewish peoplehood is largely absent in Israeli education. The field often relies on oversimplified ideas of "belonging" and "commitment." This lack of depth may stem from a few key factors:

- Intuitive National Consciousness: There's a certain comfort in the traditional, intuitive sense of national identity, which can discourage a more critical academic approach.
- Fear of Parental Backlash: Schools are often apprehensive about "religious indoctrination" and concerned that parents might object, even though Judaism is much more than a religion.
- High-Pressure Environment: Given the significant security, economic, and social challenges Israel faces, a deep dive into global Jewry might be seen as a luxury.

This neglect is a missed opportunity. The vast and diverse field of world Jewry studies could offer valuable perspectives and research tools to drive innovation in education.

Israeli Schools' Attitude to Jewish Peoplehood

A. The Beginning

The initial efforts to introduce the American-style concept of Jewish peoplehood in Israeli schools began in the 1980s and 1990s. This was influenced by two key ideas:

- Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's "Covenant of Fate and Destiny" (1955): This concept navigated the balance between the shared fate and the chosen destiny of the Jewish people.
- Simon Rawidowicz's "Babylon and Jerusalem" (1957): This emphasized the principle of mutual responsibility and reciprocity between Israel and the Diaspora.

Over time, historical and contemporary role models were added to the peoplehood pantheon. Popular rabbis like Abraham Joshua Heschel, Lord Jonathan Sacks and Angela Buchdahl were recruited to promote in Israel the English-speaking Judaism of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).

Infused by the involvement of intellectuals, civic organizations and philanthropic factors, the message got through: North America is world Jewry, and its beautiful face is Jewish Renewal's pluralistic denominational existence.

Peoplehood training for teachers was largely outsourced to non-ministry organizations and the teachers were reduced to "agents of change" in pseudo-communities. A typical formulation of this is at Oranim College: "All along, Oren's approach was to see educators and teachers as the main agents in the success of the school change. Therefore, the Division for the Jewish People, Oren, closely accompanied the work of the educational teams. The division established learning communities, conducted conference calls between teachers from partnering schools, and organized and guided visits in Israel and abroad for the leaders of the programs" (Mittelberg and Bell-Kligler, 2017, p. 400). The Jewish Agency played a key role in

managing partnerships within the state education system. In their programs, Israeli teachers were often cast in a supporting role. The Jewish Agency's continuous presence in schools helped pave the way for these changes. However, the attempt to build a learning community driven primarily by external motivation was ultimately unsuccessful. While the dogmatic approach of these organizations was necessary to start the process in the state system, the independence and free thinking of the teachers were not their primary goals.

B. Negotiation of Views

The Israeli education system, with its qualities and hardships, should be seen as a reflection of Israeli society. Like any large and complex public system, it involves internal and external sections. In this case, faculty and administrators from the inside, politicians and civil society representatives from the outside. The boundaries of state education in Israel are determined by its tangent and friction points. This fact and the behavioral characteristics of Israeli society explain a fascinating phenomenon: the educational policy in Israel, throughout its years, is based on conceptual eclecticism and execution that tends to improvisation. Despite such a challenging reality, these things are not necessarily a weakness. On the contrary, the Israeli education system is rich in initiatives and worldviews. Naturally, the events of the lively policy negotiations with the diverse performances generate unrest. Thus, the education system mirrors the eternal Jewish paradox: unpleasant tension maintains vigilance, encourages creative thinking, and breeds renewal. The dynamic between policy and implementation played a crucial role in the gradual integration of the concept of Jewish peoplehood into the curriculum of Israeli public schools throughout the 2000s. The American-oriented Jewish Agency still operates peoplehood programs within the state education system. But on a much smaller scale. With the decline of the externally managed School Twinning Program and the expansion of schools' autonomy, there was more space for teachers to take responsibility. In this transition to internal forces, even if partially, there is more room for updated thinking and improvement of the guiding principles. In particular, this can be seen in professional development from 2017 onwards, a momentum that

did not stop even during the COVID-19 pandemic, among other things, resulting from getting used to technology-based learning.

In recent years, more peoplehood training frameworks in Israel have tried to reconcile progressive and conservative attitudes based on a tripartite typology: the interactions of the Jewish people with the world, the land of Israel and the Jewish heritage. The Israel-Diaspora routine in state education has two main centers. The first is the Senior Division for Foreign Relations, a home to bodies that send dozens of teachers to Jewish day schools abroad: Heftziba (Jewish Zionist education in the former Soviet Union) and the Division for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. The second center is a school subject called Jewish-Israeli culture. Both centers develop teaching-learning methods and connections with colleagues overseas. In this context, the Foreign Relations Division develops the concept of global, growing, and cooperative learning groups, aspiring to replace the idea of twinning (sister schools).

Revealing Goals in Jewish Peoplehood Studies

Identifying the goals of Jewish peoplehood studies is intended for a better understanding of the field based on three components: professional literature, educators' views and Jewish peoplehood syllabi.

A. Publications relevant to the Ministry of Education: Instilling Jewish peoplehood in state education could benefit from two publications. 1. The report of the Shenhar Committee (1994) is an attempt to formulate a general policy regarding Jewish education in the state system. It was aimed first and foremost at the policymakers in the Ministry of Education and those responsible for implementation on their behalf. It referred to Jewish identity from a national-cultural perspective and emphasized pluralism. 2. The second publication, a collection of sources, is intended for supervisors, instructors, and teachers in the Ministry of Education, interested in Jewish life in the Diaspora. In addition, it presents a selection of evidence for the continuous influence of external organizations and promoters of public awareness on the work of the Ministry of Education. In both publications, the writers' list lacks representation from the Diaspora. The Shenhar Committee that convened at the request of the Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer, headed by Prof. Aliza

Shenhar, rector of the University of Haifa, united around the same concern: "The continuing decline in the status of Jewish studies at all levels of education, including in teacher training colleges and universities" (Shenhar Report, p. 8). Preparing the ground for a pluralistic and renewed Judaism included, for example, the recommendation to work with organizations that know how to engage the students in many ways to live "the various options of Jewish existence nowadays" (ibid., p. 23). This recommendation and similar ones coincided with the absorption of the idea of peoplehood in the following years while appropriating it to the politics of the denominations of American Judaism and its resources. Jewish studies in the state system have not reached the expected result since the publication of the report, which is consistent with a decline in the status of the humanities in Israeli academia. The committee's work testified to its understanding that in the process of shrinking Jewish knowledge, the fulcrums of pluralism and humanism in Israeli society are fading. In this, committee members were preceded by others, including the Jewish-Argentinean educator Jaime Barilko, who claimed that precisely from its origins, "Judaism is the project of humanism: how to be human" (Barilko, 1983). And even when he pursues the wider humanistic world, in the end, "the Jew will be left alone" (ibid., p. 150). This approach of the Shenhar Committee, Barilko, and other Jewish thinkers who seek pluralism aspires to establish Jewish uniqueness. At the same time, they rely on universal terminology that will never fully capture the nuances of Jewish particularity. The second publication concerning our matter, "The Jewish People Today: Belonging and Commitment" (Yona, 2003), was produced by the Israel-Diaspora Education Relations Division of the Ministry of Education and covers activities from the 1990s until its distribution. The rich booklet presents examples of educational ties between Israel and the Diaspora. However, it lacks a clear delineation and a methodical clarification. Since there are neither previous publications nor follow-ups of this type, it can be concluded that the subject's place among the outlines of the official educational policy is marginal. The booklet does not continue the Shenhar Report, yet it aligns with its key recommendations to the Ministry of Education. That is to say, a Zionist perspective, a focus on socio-ethical and cultural aspects, Jewish pluralism and collaboration with different institutions

and NGOs. Due to its limited distribution, the booklet failed to capitalize on the opportunity to initiate internal organizational learning in Israel-Diaspora matters.

B. Views of Educators in Israel and the Diaspora

This chapter aims to present educators' perspectives on the goals of teaching Jewish peoplehood. These findings do not form a statistical or sociological study. Rather, it is a collection of authentic perceptions and approaches to serve as a didactic reference. The information, gathered over a long period—from July 2017 to July 2025—through numerous conversations with educators from Israel and the Diaspora, will be summarized. Most conversations were face-to-face and involved Israelis and Jews from across the globe, including the United States, Europe, Latin America, and two Muslim countries. There were three main groups of respondents: Israeli educators, Jewish educators in the Diaspora, and academics. Unlike Jewish teachers in the Diaspora, who showed less interest in "twinning" relationships, many Israeli teachers expressed a desire to collaborate with overseas colleagues and highlighted the difficulty of finding partners. Interestingly, religious and secular teachers in Israel shared a similar approach, focusing more on emotional and national aspects rather than an in-depth study of Jewish spiritual assets. They spoke of "shlichut" (mission) intuitively, without fully understanding the complexity of the Israel-Diaspora relationship. Recently, the term "Klal-Yisrael" has been used as a synonym for peoplehood. The core focus for all teachers centered on values and emotions—mutual guarantee, commitment, and a sense of belonging. Compared to North American teachers, those in Latin America and Europe emphasized the importance of the connection to the State of Israel more and tended to avoid criticism of Israel's policies. Conversations with non-religious North American teachers reflected a universalist and political outlook. They suggested leadership training and creating shared text libraries to address controversial issues and promote social justice ("Tikkun Olam"). Since 2000, the influence of critical theory and the DEI slogan (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) was evident in these discussions. The main recommendation was to adapt education about Israel to a liberal narrative. After October 7, 2023, this approach weakened, shifting instead toward fostering emotional and security connections. Jewish teachers in Muslim countries generally avoided open Zionist discussions. Religious teachers among them emphasized values

of brotherhood, mutual responsibility, and charity. They also discussed the importance of Jewish literacy as a foundation for intra-Jewish relations. Conversely, secular teachers sought educational ties with Israel through projects across various subjects, infused with Jewish moral themes. Responses from academics, naturally, included both practical and theoretical training needs. Most of them leaned toward a socio-pluralistic approach, with a central focus on American Jewish movements. Across all groups—except for religious teachers in Islamic countries—Jewish literacy was not presented as a prerequisite for Jewish peoplehood.

C. Messages of the Syllabus

Many Israeli Jewish peoplehood programs integrate philanthropy, particularly within educational contexts. Examples of such programs at the academic level are at the Hebrew University, the University of Haifa and Oranim College. All three institutions reflect the social sciences and humanities. These programs often implicitly or explicitly encourage pro-activism. For example, the Hebrew University's 2022 course, "Jewishness in First Person: Ways for the Jewish Monologue in the 21st Century", provides "tools and methods for the experiential application of community building." Teacher training curricula reveal a tension between approaches focused on "inspiration from the wisdom of Israel" (CET's 2020 "Jewish Community in a Changing Reality" course) or the more analytical examination of "basic concepts in the history of the Jewish people and Zionism and their relationship with the Diaspora" (Pisgah Golan Katzrin's 2022 "Peoplehood Aiming Abroad" course). The overall goal, however, appears to be shaping attitudes and behaviors through approaches such as "recognizing the Jewish denominations" and "developing a collective Jewish consciousness" (Pisgah Lod's 2023 "Jewish Peoplehood – Meeting between Israel and the Diaspora" course). The peoplehood syllabi do not formulate a goal of cognitive improvement!

Jewish Peoplehood: Teachers' Professional Development (examples)

Training Institution	Publication Year	Course Title	Sample Goals
The Oranim College	2014	Bonding Program: Jewish Renewal and Questions of Identity, Peoplehood and Diaspora Relations	To impart knowledge and pedagogical tools that will lead educational and networking programs on: Jewish identity and peoplehood, Jewish denominations, Jewish education in the USA, Jewish renewal, and the Mifgash (getting together).
CET	2020	Jewish Peoplehood in Changing Reality	To be inspired by the wisdom of Israel; to form a dialogue with diverse voices in the Jewish world.
Pisgah Motzkin	2021	Did You Pack by Yourself?	To explore the content world of Jewish peoplehood in the context of Jewish-Israeli culture.
Pisgah Golan Katzrin	2022	Peoplehood Aiming Abroad	To deepen Jewish identity. To strengthen the sense of belonging to the people of Israel, the State of Israel and Israeli-Jewish culture in Israel and around the world.
Pisgah Tel Aviv Jaffa	2023	Jewish Peoplehood: Meetings, Challenges, Pedagogy	To experience a diversity-based conversation. To experience peoplehood with texts, films, music and interactive learning units.
Shittim	2024	Jewish Peoplehood in Israeli Classrooms: Seeing Ourselves in Them	To use the insights from the meeting [with the Diaspora] to improve Israeli society.

Summary

Studying the interrelationships in the history of the Jewish people can provide valuable insights into current challenges. It is fertile ground for cultivating critical thinking and understanding a complex picture of mutual influences, conflicting interests, and collaborations. Furthermore, the multitude of contexts in Jewish reality and higher-order Jewish thinking tools can support the development of personal intelligence and metacognition. The desire to advance this understanding educationally yielded this article, which considers several perspectives of Jewish peoplehood and its purpose. Teachers asked about Jewish peoplehood and its goals, generally accepted the word peoplehood as a neutral description of positive Jewish

connections and openly suggested different directions. Academics and outsourced content providers were not interested in potential alternatives.

There are two approaches to Jewish peoplehood professional programs in the state education system. Conceptually, one is vibrant and curious, the other is fossilized. When Ministry of Education personnel are directly responsible for training on this subject, the chances increase for a view that includes more than North American Jewry, utopian social justice, and excessive attention to Jewish denominations. When academics and outsourced groups, mostly under American influence, engage in “pedagogy of Jewish peoplehood,” they echo the idea of “Tikkun Olam” with a neo-Marxist orientation. Moreover, the openness of teachers on this subject is reflected, among other things, in their experience of various interactions. In doing so, and despite partial knowledge of the global Jewish reality, they reveal solid pedagogical considerations and offer (mainly theoretically) Jewish learning alongside intercultural encounters.

Ideological or utilitarian considerations often overshadow genuine critical thinking and research in Jewish peoplehood programs. When scholarly thinkers and educators acknowledge this tension, they can better navigate the complexities of Jewish uniqueness versus overly global visions—a path, as Jewish history illustrates, that can lead from utopia to dystopia. Jewish world studies can serve as a rich moral and intellectual cultivation framework. However, attempts to “fix society,” “educate for peoplehood,” “shape identity,” or appoint “agents of change” must be abandoned and replaced with scholarly study free from indoctrination.

This article argues that optimal, moral and intellectual exploration of the Jewish reality requires significant collaboration between the educational field and academia.

The goal is not uniformity but adherence to overarching principles. The key to understanding Jewish existence and identifying its inherent opportunities is to acknowledge its singularity and interconnectedness. This requires a methodology based on the following principles: 1. engaging with the Jewish bookcase and heritage. Including Jewish didactics like memorization and ritual, negotiation-based learning (Shakla ve Taria) and Jewish logic (high-order thinking skills, Midot Hadrash). This is the basis for building a **higher metacognition level**. 2. Producing lessons of

contemporary value based on recurring patterns in the history of the Jewish people. Such as dispersion and convergence, expressions of life in surrogate societies and cultures of East or West and sovereignty experiments. 3. Articulating the contradictions that sustain the Jewish reality, which serve as levers for growth and creativity. 4. Taking a broad perspective of the Jewish world that spans different fields. 5. Planning assessment procedures that examine, through performance of understanding, primarily knowledge and competencies.

The ideas above, which converge on the dual meaning of the word klal, lay the foundation for a moral discussion on the broad perception of klal Yisrael.

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