

alone, when properly conceived, adequately financed, competently staffed and administered, can muster the authority and mastery of educational philosophy, methodology, psychology, administration, history, sociology. It alone can coordinate and focus specialists in statistics, survey-conducting, consultation, supervision, and genuine experimentation whose orchestration is needed to bring new life into the Jewish school. While the bureau cannot function as a college, a college can and should perform the functions of the bureau. Only the schools of Jewish education can restore unity and harmony to the theory and practice of Jewish education without which theory is "academic" and practice is nothing but routine performance.

3. Reconstructing the School's Life

Vast consequences for the curriculum, or for the school's planned life, flow from the recognition that the school is not a subordinate transmission agency for prescribed social or historical values but the chief authority for releasing and refining a people's creative powers of intelligence and compassion. Such a definition of education calls for a school design which differs sharply from the familiar subject matter model that is characteristic of educational essentialism—history, literature, language, art, science, religion etc.—and from the popular "activity" or "project" or "open classroom" pattern of a refurbished progressivism.

Such a design avoids the core weakness of intellectual conservatism and its concomitant imposition of conclusions preferred and imposed by this or that extra-educational authority.¹ It also avoids mere "excitement," entertainment, and disconnected dabbling

¹Theodore Brameld, *Patterns of Educational Philosophy*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, Parts 2-5.

in various fields styled "innovative learning experiences." Instead, it deliberately engages faculty and students in the organized and well-planned search for the most defensible answers to the central questions of their lives as Jews:

- (1) What kind of a person am I because of the fact that I am a Jew? How did I come to be what I am? Where, as the Jewish person I am, should I go from here?
- (2) What kind of a people do I belong to that is called the Jews? How did we as Jews come to be what we are? Where as the Jewish people do we want to go?
- (3) What kind of a world do we inhabit as Jews? How must we relate ourselves to it? What may we expect from it and what may it properly expect from us?²

The search, needless to say, is lifelong. Yet the school's chief responsibility is to steer its charges into the richest mines of knowledge about the roots, the quality, and the possibilities of man and Jew, of Israel and the nations. At the same time, it is the school's solemn obligation to teach what it can about the ways wherewith to achieve reasonable consensus about the issues involved in these questions that go to the heart of the Jewish people's being and becoming.

Only such a conception of school and such a daring and thoroughgoing reconstruction of the school's life may be expected to turn the tide in Jewish education. They alone are likely to bring about a rebirth of Jewish education which, after all, denotes nothing less than coming to know why and how to go into the Jewish future and how to conduct ourselves like intelligent and compassionate human beings.

²See my *Common Faith—Uncommon People* New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1970, pp. 161-163.

Shabbat Programs: Can We Tell the Difference?*

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"Far more than Israel has kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept Israel." With these words Achad Ha'Am signified the importance Shabbat has for the Jewish people. Others have suggested the Sabbath "might be considered the most vital integrating force in Judaism" (Sabbath Manual, p 3). Keeping these words in mind we turn to the Center field for a declaration about Shabbat."

AN OFFICIAL position was taken by the National Jewish Welfare Board in its adoption of the following resolutions at its annual meeting of May 10-12, 1947, in Pittsburgh:

- (1) On the Sabbath, Jewish festivals and Jewish Holy days, Jewish community centers shall conduct only such activities as are in consonance with the dignity and tradition of these days.
- (2) Where no special programs can be maintained the Jewish community center should be closed on the Sabbath, Jewish festivals and Jewish Holy days.

Since 1947, Centers have been faced with the rather paradoxical position that unless programs are "in consonance with the dignity and tradition of the Sabbath" they should close their doors on Shabbat and thus render no contribution to the continuing development of a key force in Jewish life. Although a number of Centers chose the latter (in many cases the choice of not opening had much more to do with local community influences than with an inability to find programming that was "in consonance" with Shabbat) there has been a growing group of Centers which have instituted "Shabbat" programs. Our intention is to come to some conclusions, however tentative, about whether these pro-

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grams are really "different from" activities offered during the rest of the week.

Shabbat Programming: Evaluatory Criteria

Our question about whether Shabbat programs are "different from" other programs follows from the philosophical belief that the Shabbat is a unique day having a very special place in Jewish life and from the JWB's resolution urging that activities be in consonance with the dignity and tradition of the day. In more general terms we are interested in determining whether activities held on Shabbat signify a change from other activities offered at the Center.

When looking at Shabbat programs we will ask whether the activity:

1. Makes the participant aware of the values of Shabbat. (These values generally denote a belief in or attitude toward Shabbat as a time of marked change in the pace of life from the rest of the week and a time to seek opportunities for enjoyment, learning and pleasure; also the day is marked off by the cessation of activities that involve strenuous work, manual labor, organized competition or the general conduct of business).

2. Assists participants in developing increased awareness of and appreciation for the value(s) of Shabbat.

3. Stimulates participants to develop their own Shabbat activities in keeping with their personal lifestyles (at home and at the Center).

4 Marks off the day at the Center as being different from the rest of the week.

5. Provides participants with enjoyment and pleasure in keeping with the dignity of the day.¹

Turning now to actual Shabbat programs offered by Centers, and utilizing the criteria listed above as a guide for our discussion, we will come to some conclusions about whether the programs are, in fact, "different from" normal every day activities. Of course the activities discussed are only a sampling from Centers around the country. Our intention is not to compile and evaluate a comprehensive listing of all so called Shabbat programs; rather, the activities selected are intended to be fairly representative of the major thrusts in Center Shabbat programming.

Besides those Centers that are closed or those that offer programs "as usual" one is immediately struck by the variety of activities offered by Centers under the rubric of Shabbat programming. Everything from actual Shabbat celebrations to recreational gym and swim are included. Some activities such as club groups, gym activities, gameroom activities, or drama projects held on Saturday, are, in and of themselves, referred to as Shabbat programs. While in other Centers these same activities are listed as being part of a broader program of Saturday activities bound together in some systematic fashion to represent a Center's Shabbat program. A list of such activi-

ties would encompass almost every type of program available.

Where do we draw the line? After all, if the activity provides participants with a pleasant experience or with a sense of contentment (this could even be a yoga group!) it certainly meets one of our criteria—that of providing the participants with enjoyment and pleasure. It does not, however, seem to differ enough from other daily activities to be included as a Shabbat activity. Thus, for our purposes, the activity must meet more than just the criteria of providing participants with a pleasurable experience. Some may also argue that activities must be in keeping with the dignity of the day and a yoga group, for example, is just not in keeping with the dignity of Shabbat.

However, what about an adult education series on Saturday with such topics as "Mass Media in Israel," or "Jewish Philosophers"? This activity would appear to meet the criteria of offering participants a pleasurable experience while also providing a learning experience, and study is certainly one value in keeping with the tradition of Shabbat. The problem here is the fact that an adult education series about "Jewish Philosophies" or, for that matter, an informal discussion group dealing with a topic like "contemporary Jewish problems" could just as easily be held on a Sunday afternoon or a weekday evening. They certainly are not different from many other activities offered during the rest of the week.

In fact, after reviewing a number of Center programs it becomes obvious that Shabbat programs are, in many cases, no different from weekday activities. The following list is fairly representative of Shabbat programs offered at Centers: Jewish film series, Israeli dancing, Jewish heroes program, friendship groups, Youth Projects such

as Soviet Jewry or Israel independence day, discussion groups, Hebrew club and Israeli stamp club. An inventory of Shabbat activities would indicate a large number of Jewish and Israel-oriented programs along with a similar number of the normal leisure time and recreational activities available at a Center.

Suitability Is Not Enough

The outstanding characteristic of these offerings is their general suitability to Shabbat; in other words, they may not be "different from" other daily Center activities but at least they are suitable for holding on Shabbat. The assumption being that if the program is in consonance with the dignity and tradition of the day, it is a Shabbat program. Suitability becomes the primary criteria determining whether the activity is or is not offered.

The difficulty in determining whether a program is "suitable" for having on Shabbat is more or less so, depending on past Center practice and community sensibilities. Many Centers carry out programming as usual on Saturday with seemingly little or no concern about the program's being in consonance with Shabbat, while others are opened for only short periods of time on Shabbat and make great efforts to interpret and explain the programming as being in consonance with the Shabbat. Still other Centers must deal with strong community reaction and pressure for the cessation of this or that activity. Suitability has become the "rule of thumb" whereby any program held on Shabbat becomes a Shabbat program because it happens to be offered on a Saturday and because it does not affront the sensibilities of the community.

It is this writer's opinion that suitability should not be the primary criteria for making judgments about the

scope and nature of a Center's Shabbat program. Rather, a Shabbat program should offer the following: 1) it should make the participants aware of Shabbat values and practices, 2) it should increase this awareness on the part of participants to include a greater appreciation of such values, and 3) it should stimulate participants to integrate these values into their own lifestyles. Essentially, a Shabbat program must meet one or more of the first three criteria mentioned previously in order for it to be considered "different from" other activities at the Center.

Some Examples of Shabbat Programs

If we take these criteria and analyze Center programs, we see, first of all, a trend developing on the part of a few Centers to integrate Saturday activities into a comprehensive "Shabbat program package." In this model the Center articulates the purpose or purposes of Shabbat and clearly defines the relationship of activities to the stated purpose(s) through a variety of mechanisms such as bulletin boards, the in-house newspaper, articles in Jewish newspapers, and in the flyers and mailouts sent to members about the Shabbat activities, registration, etc. This model can be further illustrated by the following example:

At one Center the description of the Shabbat program was outlined in its program brochure and also in a separate flyer beginning with a statement of the goals of the Center's Shabbat activities. The message conveyed to members was that the Center was, on Shabbat, "open for a purpose" and this purpose was "a) to create a mood of reverence and joy for our Sabbath day, b) to imbue our members with the richness and depth of our Jewish tradition, c) to gain through Oneg Shabbat the fellowship and joy of our Day of

¹The criteria were developed from the program manual: Philip Goodman, Ed., *Sabbath: Program Material for Jewish Community Center and Camps*, The National Jewish Welfare Board, New York, 1974.

rest and d) to refresh both in body and mind through recreation and study our commitment to Judaism." Below this statement of purpose were a series of activities listed under the following headings: A Time to Gather, A Time for Simchas, A Time to Learn, Physical Recreation, Oneg Shabbat and A Time to Rejoice. The day was completed with a brief Havdalah celebration.

This type of program is "different" in two respects. First, it clearly and specifically articulates to the membership the purpose(s) for which the various activities are intended. In this way it makes the participant aware of the connection between the distinctive Shabbat value and the activity offered. Second, it utilizes "every other day" types of activities and rearranges them into a Shabbat configuration. The model described above, for example, offered gameroom activities under the category of Physical Education and an adult ed. series that had topics such as "Civil vs Religious Law in Israel" and "Travel to Israel" under the A Time To Learn category. These "every other day" types of activities were thus utilized to reinforce the participants' awareness that during Shabbat one should spend time learning and/or relaxing. Activities that had only been "suitable" for Shabbat became part and parcel of something that can aptly be called a Shabbat program. The comprehensive Shabbat package is one model offering a variety of activities on Shabbat different from activities during the rest of the week.

A second trend that is developing into an identifiable pattern is the *Shabbaton-Shabbat Shalom-Shabbat Workshop* type of program. This model attempts (to quote one such program sponsored by the Minneapolis Center) "to strengthen Jewish family life by providing ways for families to enjoy Sabbath observance at home together."

The outstanding characteristic of this model is the attention given to providing participants with the necessary resource information, skills and motivation to develop (or enhance) their own home Shabbat practices. Center staff members act as resource persons to these groups which are made up of families, mothers, or even non-specific groupings of interested persons.

An interesting question comes to mind when looking at this model. Does a Shabbat program as defined by the criteria listed above have to be held on the Sabbath? I think not. If the program assists participants in becoming aware, appreciative and/or able to integrate Shabbat values into their own lifestyles, then this specific program does not necessarily have to occur on Shabbat. For example, at the Pittsburgh Center, Shabbat workshops are held in the afternoons at the Center and in the evenings at members' homes. The workshops are designed to "supply families with ideas, materials and other resources to help them celebrate Shabbat at home." Although not held on Shabbat, these activities are certainly "different from" daily activities.

Are there any other types of programs we can identify as Shabbat programs? A final trend becoming observable is the development of mark-off types of activities carried out by many Centers on Shabbat. These mark-off activities may or may not be a part of a comprehensive Shabbat program package but they do constitute a departure from the daily routine of a Center and are intended to heighten the memberships' awareness of the uniqueness of Shabbat.

Mark-off activities include such things as: a) restricting members from smoking, b) not allowing team competition, c) not taking money, d) restricting the use of kitchens, e) no writing, f)

decorating lobbies in a Shabbat manner, g) displaying a sign saying Shabbat Shalom. These activities, especially the restrictive ones, do not seem to be carried out in order to placate community sensibilities but rather are efforts on the part of Centers to make their members aware of the fact that Saturday is a different day from other days at the Center. As such, these practices become a "Shabbat program" in that they raise members' awareness about the uniqueness of the day.²

²In a survey of sixteen Centers regarding their Shabbat practices, twelve Centers reported some type of mark-off activity. The most prevalent ones were restrictions on members' smoking, not taking money, not using the kitchen facilities and utilizing lobby decorations to set a Shabbat tone. One Center reported that it required its members to wear "appropriate dress" when coming to the Center on Shabbat!

To sum up, Shabbat programming at Jewish community centers for the most part has not been significantly different from program activities available during the rest of the week. The fact that an activity is deemed suitable for Shabbat does not necessarily make it a "Shabbat" activity. This paper has identified program models that really are "different from" daily activities in that they indicate a significant reorientation to Shabbat. These three models are certainly not the only way(s) a Center can provide Shabbat programs, but they represent the outstanding models developed so far. The challenge before us is to continue further, always keeping in mind that the development and reinforcement of Shabbat values remains the principle goal.