



## **Education for Life – the Best Investment for a Flowering Future**



### **Aims, Principles and Methodologies of an Integral Education**

A Philosophical Concept for a Reform of the Secular School System  
in Israel/Palestine

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(A discussion paper)

When asked about her view regarding current education in Israel, Prof. Rivka Carmi gave an open reply saying:

„On this matter I am less optimistic. In recent years we have raised more than one uneducated generation. The future of research is in danger. Academic Education today trains people rather than educating them. We have technically talented scientists, but *they have no spirit*. In order to achieve high level research, you have to ask high level questions. The education gives nothing in the way of creativity. If your horizons are not broad enough and you have been spoon fed information, this is a catastrophic combination. I feel that we will discover what we sowed when we reap it in a few years.

Until we decide that education is what's important, we won't be able to get anything done. Our generation is our future. We need to make a brave decision and to divert resources, and I am not sure if it has to come at the expense of something.” (Prof. Rivka Carmi, President, BGU)

**“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change  
the world.”**

**(Nelson Mandela)**

**“Give me ten great disciples and I will alter the face of our time  
and revolutionize the Jewish world!”**

**(Reb Ysrael Salanter)**

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## **1. Background: Concern with the Growing Disintegration of our Multicultural Israeli Society**

The initial force behind the development of the “Jerusalem Project for Education and Peace” was the concern with the scaring manifold of growing disturbances in our Israeli/Palestinian society. Nearly every day the media report a sixteen-year-old youngster killing another with a knife for no reason. Drugs, violence and sex rule their lives and news about killing and violent acts against our fellow men have become normalities of our day-to-day experience. While not long ago Israeli students have been amongst the leading ones in the world, nowadays interests and achievements in schools are found on a downward slope. Thus we face a general disorientation in our young generation, mirroring the lack of meaning of our adults.

Moral decline, lack of self-esteem and orientation, emotional disorders, the lack of experience in building and ruling a country, religious fanaticism, animosities between different fractions of society, drifting apart of different ethnic and social groups, century old hostility between neighboring nations bringing about permanent threat and insecurity, an increasing gap between religious and secular people – Jews and Arabs alike – being results of decades of war and terror as well as of unsolved Traumas from Holocaust, characterize our life in Israel. Neither parents nor children feel save and oriented. Two peoples without real access to their roots struggle with and against each other for survival and predominance in the midst of growing global economic, ideological and political pressure and international competition. As a long-term scattered people without national identity and a lack of independence in the midst of vast Muslim nations, not wanting to tolerate the existence of a Jewish “entity” (Israel as a Jewish State), we have to learn new ways of thinking and dealing with this insecure and hostile situation. Mere rationalizing these facts by explaining them does not help. The old ways of revenge and permanent wars have proved to be wrong and inadequate means to resolve this hopeless situation. More even, many agree that we have reached a crucial point for survival – either we will achieve a real change in our ways of thinking and attempts of problem resolution or Israel will cease to exist. We – that means every one of us – have to make such a profound change in looking at life and humanity. If we are not willing to face this challenge with a fundamental change in our personal as well as our political attitude towards solving some of the key problems in education, economy, our personal, national and international relations, as well as in spirituality and religion, we will not be able to survive.

To show just one example in figures, I want to present a short excerpt of a comprehensive study about aggression in Israeli schools done by Prof. Rami Benbenisti from the Hebrew University printed in Ma’ariv newspaper dated Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006:

Headmasters reports on violence of students against fellow students:

Verbal violence was reported in 96.4% of schools,

Physical violence was reported in 52.4% of schools;

Headmasters reports on violence of students and parents against teachers:

20.1% of school had parents threat the teachers,

15.5% had students threat the teachers;

Headmasters reports on violence of teachers against students:  
45% of headmasters reported verbal violence,  
13.4% reported physical violence;

Unfortunately, most violence between teachers and students in the Arab society, like Mount of Olives, is not reported because it is considered a legitimate way of disciplining.

The cause of aggression in young people can be seen in a deep lack of confidence, meaning and orientation, but also in misleading religious and political ideologies – which is no contradiction. People need a visible perspective, which is not in the clouds but at hand in our lives. And it is education – at home as well as in schools –, which should grant the building of such a foundation in our youth.

Along with the results of Prof. Benbenisti's study about violence in schools we also remember the shock we had, when the OECD published its "PISA-report" based on investigations amongst 300 000 children in 41 countries about their abilities in reading, maths and natural science whose results placed Israel in the lowest third, abruptly destroying the traditional image of the Jews as an outstanding intellectual people.

A recent controversial study done by Tel Aviv economist Dan Ben-David is confirming our statements as it is picturing the input-output relation of the system as being drastically bad. I quote from an article published in the Jerusalem Post on December 18<sup>th</sup> 2006: "While Israel's education budget is one of the highest in the Western world, the results achieved are among the lowest. Ben-David's figures tell the tale best. According to him, Israel spends today (after discounting for international differences in living standards) 23 percent more per pupil on primary school education than the average among member states of the OECD, an organization whose [measures roughly represent the standards] ... of the "developed world." In high school, the spending – even after the most recent budget cuts – is equal to the OECD average.

Israeli schoolchildren between the ages of seven and 14 even receive 13.5% more instruction hours than the average among OECD member states, higher than 22 out of 26 countries measured. There are the same numbers of teachers per pupil in the primary school, hovering at the OECD average of 16. 9, while high schools enjoy an even lower ratio, 13. 0 instead of the OECD average of 13. 3.

Yet, the results of the monetary investments are downright awful: Teachers' salaries are abysmally low. According to Ben-David, the average teacher's salary (crucially, corrected for the standard of living) is 36% lower than OECD countries for a starting elementary school teacher, and 42% lower with 15 years' experience!

Even more perplexing, despite the high teacher-to-student ratio and the abundant instruction hours Israeli classrooms populations are enormous, with 5, 1 pupils more in each elementary school class than the OECD average, rising to 7, 4 per classroom in high school.

Not surprisingly, then, the System doesn't produce the desired results in student achievement. While in 1963, Israel took first place in international standardized test rankings, it lost this position in the 1980s, and the drop has continued ever since. In the years 1995-1999 Israel ranked 39th out of 53 countries, putting it at the bottom of the developed world.

By 2002, according to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams conducted by the OECD (which did not include the haredim), Israel was 30th, 31st and 33rd out of 41 countries in reading comprehension, mathematics and science respectively, ranking below such countries as Thailand and Romania, from which it imports workers. Even the top 5% of achievers, the "cream of the crop", scored 35th in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests, well behind every other industrialized country.

Not only are the results dropping precipitously, according to Ben-David's figures, but the gaps in educational achievement are growing. These gaps, which will be reflected by a higher income disparity when today's students enter the workforce, are higher than in 49 out of 53 TIMSS countries examined. In the 2002 PISA exams, the gaps were even higher than all other participating countries. ...

Additional congruent figures were presented by MK Rabbi Michael Melchior, Head of the Educational Committee at the Knesset. Prefacing his comments with statements of dismay at Israel's ever-dropping test scores he said: "Among the things missing in the education system are 6,000 class-rooms, 1,500 kindergartens and NIS 2 billion for repairing immediate safety threats".

Now, of course these figures do not tell the whole story, and at least they cannot be interpreted as pure failure from the side of management or as a mal-investment of the Educational Ministry's finances. Only by reflecting and taking into account the structural complexity of Israel's education system, one can understand and interpret these numbers adequately. In fact the extremely high educational expenditures per pupil have to be seen as caused by the high structural costs generated by the complexity of the system. They simply indicate the system's structural redundancy compared with those of other countries: "It is the system's multi-channelled structure, where haredi, Arab, national religious and national secular school systems all compete for the same funds, which creates unavoidable higher expense", explained Yuli Tamir rightly.

The system's character as being multi-cultural, having to deal with poverty (30% of the kids are coming from poor backgrounds), with immigrants and questions of their integration, undergoing the threats of war, and having to overcome all kinds of social fragmentation and inequalities, is not explicitly expressed by the figures, yet requires quite more money to deal with. "There is a great need for reform" Yuli Tamir explained, "but first [- and the author interprets this as 'before starting a comprehensive change'] we have to stabilize the system, to create smaller classes and better teachers' pay and training."

Yuli Tamir and Ronit Tirosh, a former director-general of the Education Ministry, fully agree in the interpretation of Ben David's figures as being generated mainly by the specific organizational structure and the complexity of the education system, which is built on sectors, and therefore does not allow flexible allocation of means and resources. "If there are too many Arab teachers and too few Jewish [in another country] you would move them from one to the other, but you can't in our System", Ronit Tirosh explained. The same is true among Jews. "[Even if] there are too many teachers in the haredi sector, they won't go to the secular schools where there's a shortage. Nor would a secular teacher go [to the haredi schools]". ... there are enough teachers, but they can't go to the right places." In a country with a more homogenous social structure this doesn't happen.

The situation is similar in reference to classrooms. "Among East Jerusalem [Arabs]", for example, "don't have land to build [and probably also don't get building permits], so they rent some tiny room. Then you're paying for a teacher for each 15-pupil room, rather than one for 30 kids:"

Of course, while these reflections only explain the high expenditure of the educational system by its complexity, the still existing *mere structural impasses* certainly *do not explain* the extremely low achievements of its pupils. The factors, which are responsible for such awful results and may even endanger the spiritual and economic survival of our nation, are to be found in the lack of an adequate educational and pedagogic concept of the educational system, as well as the low moral and ethical awareness, disorientation and lack of life perspective in our society and youth, resulting in lack of motivation, interest and effort, without which neither personal development, nor intellectual or skill achievements are possible.

All these figures can be taken as indices for the above stated situation. Hoping for survival and even for a more life-worthy future, we have to take decisive steps to overcome thinking in patterns of tribes or nations, revenge and mutual punishment, and to learn new ways of cooperation and coexistence on the basis of mutual respect and acceptance. The enemy is not *the* Palestinian or *the* Jew, but a wrong attitude, no matter on which side. Our main enemy is inside of us. We have to overcome our mutual superiority complexes and to cooperate with those of good will and constructive attitudes and believes – independent of faith, gender, tribal or national belonging. We need to learn to support each other on a ground of mutual agreements with those who want to commit to peace and cooperation. Those who are not surrendering to reason, human respect and acknowledgement of human rights and dignity shall no more be fought and sought to be destroyed, but conquered by the persistence of higher ethical standards and inner strength.

To sum it up: The roots and origins of all these problems are of two kinds: internal and external to our human nature; while the internal factors are spiritual, psychological and mental, the external ones are economic, social, cultural and political. Despite the fact that the main common root of all human problems is a lack of spiritual awareness, skill and know-how of handling social, psychological and mental obstacles, striving to remove

them we nevertheless have to deal with all factors – internal and external alike – at the same time. We all agree that we have to bring about a comprehensive change in all areas and on all levels of our human existence, but we have not yet started to achieve any progress towards our goal of peaceful co-existence and collective well-being.

Even, if the “other” does not change, I can. And we have to learn to understand that our inner peace as well as our progress in life does not depend on anyone, but us. If we live a life according to God’s will and His righteousness, we will also enjoy His caring grace and protecting providence.

Until now many different attempts have been made, but they all have failed. We have wide-ranging agreements in the diagnosis, but not yet a workable therapy. The reason for this situation is a lack of holistic vision and acceptance of the fundamental cosmic-moral laws involved in our individual and collective lives, a lack an all-encompassing approach as well as of profound applicable tools and last not least the lack of unified efforts in a field of presently dispersed and scattered undertakings and trials.

In order to work out more profound, effective and organizational structured approaches for the attainment of peace and welfare, we have taken account to all of these issues right from the beginning.

In terms of politics and social development, these principles have to be applied in a professional and organized way. The statement is not enough. Nor can we rely on individual activities. We need to make it an organized and well-structured effort, being carried by associations of qualified professionals.

Getting back to our considerations about the Educational System in Israel (as well as in Palestine), we have to admit: Instead of having a positive impact on our societies, it is rather re-iterating its maladies and odds. This failior cannot be seen as to be caused in mere structural problems. If the System is structurally dysfunctional because of too many sectors and streams, it might be corrected by structural reforms, and such a reform is inevitably needed. But to grant an education, which at minimum fulfils the UNESCO standards, but more desirably a more humanistic and holistic vision to raise and educate our youth towards self-sustained independent personalities, which are able to evaluate good character and noble thinking, who are well-centered and creative, sharing a higher aspiration and understanding the purpose of life, who are open-minded, well tempered and enthusiastic to contribute to culture and society, we need to go much beyond.

We cannot carry on to just treat the symptoms, like violence, drug misuse and sex by implying informal treatments here and there, not will it be enough to wait until we may be able to provide better salary for teachers and better school environments for our kids, but we have to start with a comprehensive reform – immediately. Otherwise we will loose the opportunity. The present situation is at stake. It calls for both: A structural as well as a comprehensive, full conceptual reform, which is able to meet the needs and higher aspirations of our human nature and society as well as to adapt to the challenges of our modern digital and global world.

Truly we are facing a challenge of existential proportions. If drastic reform does not take place immediately, not only academia, science, research and economic survival are at stake (as repeatedly stated by reputed academics like Prof. Rivka Karmi (BGU) or Prof. Ben-David), but even more the upholding of our human dignity. “At stake are not only the future of the state, but the basic human rights of each of our children, regardless of religion, ethnicity and degree of devoutness, to an identical high quality educational toolbox in core subjects that will enable their survival in a modern, competitive economy.”

Altogether we have to understand the purpose and task of a education not as one of reproduction, but as the essential source and true root of all social change and development. It is not meant to reiterate the patterns of societies and cultures, but to initiate progress and innovation in all aspects and fields of life. If education fails to achieve its goals, society and culture will stagnate. Instead of staying a factor, which is rather picturing, reproducing and perpetuating the maladies and odds of our present-day society, it should once more become a dynamic force of restoration (Tikkun), innovation, renewal and elevation of culture and society (to the lofty ideals of divine life and God-Realization). Only then we will be able to create and maintain the perspective of a flowering future for our children.

## **2. Some Preliminary Remarks on Recent Philosophy of Holistic Education, its Background and History**

In 1972 UNESCO's commission report "Learning to Be" asserted that: "Education should contribute to every person's complete development – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality."

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, in his 21st Century Talks session on education for all stated: "I have personally committed myself to making it a priority, for education is a fundamental human right, set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Human Rights Covenants, which have force of international law. To pursue the aim of education for all is therefore an obligation for States." ("Education for All: the Unfulfilled Promise")

Throughout the 200-year history of public schooling in our Western World, a widely ranging group of pioneers in new educational thinking has based its critic on the grounds that education of our youth should not just mold them into future workers or citizens, but waken an awareness and aspiration for a much higher goal of life. Johann Pestalozzi, Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, Francis Parker, John Dewey, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, among others, "...all insisted that education should be understood as the art of cultivating the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing child.

Simultaneously we can witness a powerful movement of spiritual educators in the East, particularly in India, which envisioned education as the most powerful tool to bring about a change in Indian Society on the traditional grounds of Self- or God-Realization. We have names like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Paramahansa Yogananda each of whom founded schools, which remind us much of the educational principles of Platonic Greece.

While some advocates claim that views central to holistic education are not new but are, in fact, timeless and originate in the sense of wholeness in humanity's religious impetus, others claim inspiration from Rousseau, Emerson, Pestalozzi, Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel, and more recently Krishnamurti, Steiner, Montessori, Paul Tillich, Carl Gustav Jung, Maslow, Rogers, Paul Goodman, John Holt, Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire. Still others feel that the views central to holistic education are the result of a cultural paradigm shift that began in the 1960's. We also have a number of respected scientists such as David Bohm, David Peat, Karl Pribram, Ilya Prigogine, Theodore Roszak, Fritjof Capra, Charlene Spretnak, Ken Wilber who meet this view on the basis of modern Field and Systems Theory.

What is clear is that the values and the vision of humanity in the holistic education movement and which it promotes are getting increasingly popular.

I quote: "Parents, in increasing numbers, are seeking alternatives to mainstream education. Few could criticize the commitment to academic excellence that most schools

and teachers have and work hard to actualize. But more and more parents realize that just learning academics is not enough, and they see young people in their communities suffering from a lack of needed learning, and society suffering as well.

Parents worry about the negative social influence they see affecting their children. Parents see themselves having less impact on their children's behavior, relationships, and attitudes than the media and marketing which directly targets children. As a result children's senses of themselves and self-images are under pressure. This pressure is expressed in:

- Increased competitiveness in many aspects of a child's social life, such as sports, out-of-school activities, and of course, school.
- Obsessive concern for their "look", from their body shape to their clothes.
- Violence in many forms, from the physical to the psychological and emotional.

Parents are also worried about negative learning attitudes they see developing in their children. Parents saw their children as infants eager to learn, and this eagerness dissipated as these same children's schooling increased. Learning becomes a necessary chore, driven by rewards and punishments, and too often devoid of direct meaning in their children's lives.

Many parents also look at our current society in which social problems seem to be getting worse; in which those considered successful are too often greedy, corrupt, and brutal; in which families and communities seem increasingly dysfunctional; and they ask, "Why aren't we as humans learning what we need to know in order to live good and meaningful lives?"

It doesn't appear that we will learn such things from learning more mathematics, literature, or history. Parents see the need for their children to learn these other things as well as academics, and they look for schools that give time, attention, energy, and resources, to such learning. Parents generally do not come to holistic education from philosophical musings, but from a perceived need for their children that they feel is not currently met." ...

No doubt "Children need to develop academic capacities as these are required to live in the modern world. But much more than this is needed, and adults looking at what was required in order to meet the many challenges of their lives and the successes they have had can attest to this. The essential learning that we all need should begin in childhood.

Children need to begin to learn about themselves. The value of "knowing thyself" is so undisputed as to be a cliché, but conveying to children that they are worth knowing about seems fundamental to healthy self-respect and self-esteem.

Children also need to learn about relationships. Relationships are the greatest source of human happiness and misery, yet most children only have the relationships they see in their immediate surroundings (e.g., family, friends, etc.) and on the media (which are

usually caricatures and unreal) to learn from. Sociology and child development psychology repeatedly affirms that learning about relationships is acquired and not inherent, and yet the institutions created for children's learning have little to no time nor resources given to helping children learn how to have healthy, productive relationships.

Learning about relationships is sometimes seen as part of social development, which includes pro-social behavior and social “literacy” (i.e., learning to see social influence). As our societies become increasingly pluralist, complex, and fraught, social development becomes more difficult as well as more necessary.

Over the last decade research has demonstrated that emotional development, or what has become known as “emotional literacy”, is of fundamental importance. Learning emotional literacy has been shown to be crucial for intellectual development, social development, aesthetic development, and health.

Studies have shown that resilience is not an inherent quality, but one that is learned. Resilience is fundamental to overcoming difficulties, facing challenges, and long-term success in any field. Children must learn resilience.

Finally, children must learn that seeing beauty, having awe, experiencing transcendence, and appreciating those timeless “truths” which have inspired and sustained individuals and cultures are a natural part of life. The mundane and material (while important) have assumed too great a place in modern life, leaving a hunger for meaning that is often difficult to satisfy.” So far the quotation taken from “Holistic Education” (by Scott H. Forbes © 1994).

While these statements and demands are not entirely new, they have become of tremendously increasing importance within the last ten or twenty years, due to the rapid changes in our social and cultural environment, to the high state of development of communication technologies, easy access and quick exchange of all kinds of information in the process of globalization.

To cope with the urgent demands of our time we have to rethink our philosophy of education and to create a totally new approach. Nevertheless, since our human nature as well as the principles of holistic education are transcendental and therefore beyond time and change, such a philosophy cannot be but an adaptation thereof to the needs and circumstances of our time and culture.

For this sake and also because we believe that the thinking and writing of these great educators of the recent past are of genuine value, we shortly want to touch some of their innate ideas, which they have made the pillars of their holistic educational philosophy.

Really exemplary for these holistic approaches is the simple heart-felt humanism of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 - 1827). Born in Zurich, he took up Rousseau's ideas and explored how they might be developed and implemented. He is the author of what became known as the ‘Pestalozzi Method’, which came to fruition in his school at

Yverdon (established in 1805). Instead of dealing with words, he argued, children should learn through ‘activity’ and through experience with tangible ‘things’. They should be free to pursue their own interests and draw their own conclusions (Darling 1994, p 18). “I wish to wrest education from the outworn order of doddering old teaching hacks as well as from the new-fangled order of cheap, artificial teaching tricks, and entrust it to the eternal powers of nature herself, to the light which God has kindled and kept alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers, to the interests of parents who desire their children grow up in favour with God and with men.” (Pestalozzi quoted in Silber 1965: 134)

Pestalozzi (goes beyond Rousseau in that he) sets out some concrete ways forward - based on research. He tried to reconcile the tension, recognized by Rousseau, between the education of the individual (for freedom) and that of the citizen (for responsibility and use). He looks to ‘the achievement of freedom in autonomy for one and all’ (Soetard 1994, p 308).

His initial influence on the development of thinking about pedagogy owes much a book he published in 1801: *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* – and the fact that he had carried his proposals through into practice. He wanted to establish a ‘psychological method of instruction’ that was in line with the ‘laws of human nature’. As a result he placed a special emphasis on spontaneity and self-activity. Children should not be given ready-made answers but should arrive at answers themselves. To do this their own powers of seeing, judging and reasoning should be cultivated, their self-activity encouraged (Silber 1965, p 140). The aim is to educate the whole child - intellectual education is only part of a wider plan. He looked to balance, or keep in equilibrium, three elements - hands, heart and head.

William H. Kilpatrick has summarized six principles from Pestalozzi’s philosophy of Education:

1. Personality is sacred. This constitutes the ‘inner dignity of each individual’ for the young as truly as for the adult.
2. As ‘a little seed ... contains the design of the whole tree’, so in each child is the promise of his full potentiality. ‘The educator only takes care that no untoward influence shall disturb nature’s march of developments’.
3. Love of those we would educate is ‘the sole and everlasting foundation’ in which to work. ‘Without love, neither the physical not the intellectual powers will develop naturally’. So kindness-kindness (*Chesed*) ruled in Pestalozzi’s schools: he abolished flogging much to the amazement of outsiders.
4. To get rid of the ‘verbosity’ of meaningless words Pestalozzi developed his doctrine of *Anschauung* – direct concrete observation, often inadequately called ‘sense perception’ or ‘object lessons’. No word was to be used for any purpose until adequate *Anschauung* had preceded. The thing or distinction must be felt or observed in the concrete. Pestalozzi’s followers developed various sayings from this: from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to the abstract.

5. To perfect the perception got by the *Anschauung* the thing that must be named, an appropriate *action* must follow. 'A man learns by action... have done with [mere] words!' 'Life shapes us and the life that shapes us is not a matter of words but action'.
6. Out of this demand for action came an emphasis on repetition – not blind repetition, but repetition of action following the *Anschauung*.

(From: William H. Kilpatrick: Heinrich Pestalozzi – The Education of Man – Aphorisms, New York: Philosophical Library)

What now is his significance to informal educators today? First, there is his concern with social justice and his commitment to work with those who have suffered within society. He saw education as central to the improvement of social conditions.

Second, he used his sympathy for peasant life and his remembrance of his mother's care as paradigms – as ways of thinking about the form education should take. In a famous phrase he declared: "There can be no doubt that within the living room of every household are united the basic elements of all true human education in its whole range". This underlines the potential of everyday life for educators. That said though, Pestalozzi made a significant contribution to the establishment of the school as a central educational force (in contrast to Rousseau's emphasis on the tutor).

Third, there is Pestalozzi's concern with equilibrium between elements – head, hands and heart – and the dangers of attending to just one.

Fourth, Pestalozzi is a classic example of the 'reflective practitioner'. He is concerned with action, with experimentation and yet, at the same time, he is committed to observation and reflection, and to trying to make sense of experiences and situations.

Fifth, in his failed experiment at Neuhof he attempted to a form of schooling that has subsequently appealed to Gandhi and others concerned with combating colonialism and its legacy. He wanted the school to combine education with work. The school was to be a production unit so that children could finance their own learning – and in so doing they would be under no obligation to anyone. Furthermore, the school could be free from state interference.

Last, and not least, he strove to combat the tyranny of method and 'correctness'. It is ironical that his approach should become known as a method; and that observers attempted to systematize his thought. It was his commitment to people and their well-being that animated his life's work – and in Aristotle's terms he would put that which is 'right' or good before that which is 'correct'.

Another educator of world reputation is Jiddu Krishnamurti. What he describes in his books and lectures as 'another kind of learning' was what he felt should be the principal concern of education to be an activity that is fundamentally spiritual. This profound and life-transforming learning is certainly meant to be the focus of the schools he founded, and this is in perfect accord with what he stated in the days of their start as his central

intention in life, “I want to do a certain thing in the world and I am going to do it with unwavering concentration. I am concerning myself with only one essential thing; to set man free.”

For this Krishnamurti started schools, and for this reason only. He never did waver from his wish for people to have a constant movement of learning, which is non-mechanical, a life of freedom, love, and truth.

We read the words of the young seventeen Krishnamurti who writes, “If the unity of life and the oneness of its purpose could be clearly taught to the young in schools, how much brighter would be our hopes for the future!”

Forty-three years later he writes, “If one becomes aware that there can be peace and harmony for man only through right education, then one will naturally give one’s whole life and interest to it.” And that is exactly what he did.

Reflecting these simple statements they seem to be rather modern – but certainly accurate and indispensable. Now the more recent approaches towards holistic education were mainly inspired by humanistic and transpersonal psychology as well as Eastern Wisdom Traditions like Yoga, Zen-Buddhism, Sufism and Vedanta. Influential personalities were Paul Tillich, Carl Gustav Jung, Abraham Harold Maslow, Carl Ransom Rogers, Paul Goodman, John Holt, Ivan Illich and Roberto Assagiogli. Their thinking had mainly impact on the educational method, pedagogy.

Jewish Tradition has not elaborated an educational philosophy as a distinct discipline, but it has always been an intrinsic part of Jewish life and religious teaching, of Torah Schools, etc. In fact most holistic approaches in educational thinking of these days have evolved from humanistic psychology, which in itself is much based on the original Chassidic tradition of rabbinic counseling (Etza).

Finally at present we witness the development of a flooding multitude of particular psychological and educational methods or tools to be introduced and applied for specific educational purposes. Such tools are ‘Non-Violent-Communication’ created by Marshall B. Rosenberg, ‘Human Dynamics’ developed by Sandra Segal etc. etc. No matter how useful and appealing they might be, they are all far from being holistic.

In order to develop an integral system or philosophy of education, we have to start with a clarification of the implied view or image of our human being – our ‘Menschenbild’. Here the author clearly commits to a spiritual vision of the nature of man, particularly in accordance of the mystical lore of Jewish tradition – Kabbalah, which in fact corresponds 100% with that of Sufism or Indian Shankya. With these preliminary reflections we are well prepared to get into *media res*.

### **3. Education for Life – the Best Investment into a Happy and Flowering Future**

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”  
(Nelson Mandela)

“Give me ten great disciples and I will alter the face of our time and revolutionize the Jewish world!” (Reb Ysrael Salanter)

“I think education will be one of the first issues that will come up on the agenda when dialogue begins again on the political level. Both sides are aware today that it’s important to do something to change education. ... We feel that education should be a major issue in any upcoming peace agreement.” (Dan Bar On)

If there is anything in which Israelis and Palestinians can agree these days, it is the fact that our present way and system of education is a great failure. Despite of this fact, a parent truly loving his child, definitely wants to see him grow and blossom into fullness of life and spirit that is to become a valuable and happy person, able to lead a self-sustaining life granting him inner peace and fulfillment.

As youth is not only the seed of our lives, but also the future of our nation fostering profound education is the most effective and worthy investment into this future. A young generation that is guarded and guided with true love and understanding, wisdom and good example as to develop an inspiring vision and creative perspective for its life will certainly grow into a natural and mature attitude towards life and will easily take the yoke of responsibility on its shoulders for building up the country on a sound basis of economic, social, cultural and spiritual values, which altogether form the ground and backbone of our society.

Also our world today has reached a phase of accelerated scientific and technological progress that lead to social and environmental development and changes in professional lives of unknown speed, thus causing threatening uncertainties that surround even our most immediate future. Yet the present educational system does not cope with the today’s needs in the fields of modern technology and industry and the international labor market shaped by the process of globalization. It is too far away from the reality of professional life and work, lacking to prepare the student for his future task.

The most urgent surgery that our school system needs is to provide two things: first to grant a profound *improvement of the achievements in all subjects* and second a *definite change in the school climate* towards greater self-awareness, mutual respect, a sense of community, belonging and empathy. Such a change cannot be generated by merely adding several new modules (like Yoga or Autogenic Training, whose inclusion in fact would be not bad), but *an entirely new approach* in education – that is to say *a new spirit and educational philosophy*.

On the grounds of such a new philosophy we also will be able to simultaneously foster a different much more appreciative understanding and evaluation of education altogether as

well as to create an urgently needed new image of the teacher and his profession – which in any case has been seen as *vocation* rather than a mere opportunity to earn money.

In search for a new approach in education it has become an attitude to divide or specify education into different forms or disciplines. It has become accurate to speak about peace education, character building, value awareness, non-violence etc. We select one aspect of human life and attitude and build a whole system around it. But in fact education wanting to address man as a *whole undivided being*, aiming to bring about the *unfolding and rise of the inborn gifts* and nature of humanity and a *kindling of the indwelling spark of light* in his soul, it has to be an *integral* or *holistic* one.

Man today – and this includes Arabs, Jews, Christians etc. everywhere in the world alike – has lost his sense of wholeness and belonging. Everybody is seeking for happiness and well-being – not a transient shallow one, that fades away the moment the objects of desire or pleasure are gone, but a sustainable unconditional happiness, which is rooted in the deep of our soul and which nobody can take away. Such inner happiness in fact is based on four things, which are *self-awareness, self-trust, integrity and emotional independence*, summing up to what we call true *authenticity or completeness*.

There is a traditional saying, which is provoking us educators to think. The proverb goes: “Education is what stays, when one has forgotten everything he has learned.” This clearly shows that education wanting to enrich and unfold our inner life and personality has the address man as a whole. By emphasizing education as this or that, we willingly or unwillingly restrain education to a certain aspect or direction, which cannot and actually does not meet the real need. Seeing man as a *whole undivided being*, education is to be understood as an *overall endeavor to improve our condition as human being* on all levels of our existence and to enhance spiritual, psychological development and growth in understanding, knowledge and wisdom.

That is to say we cannot address man as *either* individual *or* social, physical, psychological, mental *or* spiritual being, caring of this or that side or aspect of his nature, like purpose and meaning of life, emotions, values, ethics, character, attitude, well-being, skills, knowledge, creativity, respect, responsibility, citizenship, democracy or peace, but for him as a *balanced whole*, such that only an *integral education* which focuses on and aims towards his *wholeness and integrity* can be considered as meeting the needs of our time. Such *integral* education is neither superimposing nor manipulative, but waking and fostering the inborn seed of perfection and bringing us in tune with God and creation. In this way the teacher’s or educator’s vocation is to *mold the personality and character* of his disciple and to help him to unfold the ability of clear discrimination on grounds of a wake conscious, harmony with his creator and independent self-sustained creative thinking in whatever aspect and walk of life.

The way toward this goal is to get and stay and live and act in tune with God and universe. And being in tune means to be whole, and it is integrity or righteousness which covers all aspects of our humanity in its wholeness and aspiration for this highest attainment.

Another issue is the question of acquirement. Speaking about education, we all know, that we do not mean mere book learning nor just imbibing secular knowledge into the head of a student, but rather a holistic preparation of him for life in its entirety. Such preparation is based on kindling the light of his spirit as well as a keen interest in the quest for purpose and meaning, awakening of our God-given gifts, fostering an awareness of values, developing a compassionate heart, a sharp goal-oriented intellect, a strong and decided will, the right discipline and last not least a wake and active sense for responsibility and justice.

To quote Sri Ravi Shankar: “Just information is not education. It is cultivating behavior and attitude. It is our ability to perceive things better. Perception, Observation and Expression - these three aspects of education have to be improved.”

“Basic human values need to be encouraged in the classroom. A child is born with these values and a teacher needs to uncover them. What are these human values? Compassion, co-operation, friendliness, smiles, laughter, lightness, wanting to help, a sense of belonging and caring for each other – all these qualities are there within the child. They only need to be brought out.”

Besides factual knowledge, there is not anything to be acquired neither from outside, nor to be superimposed on the child or student by ways of pushing or pressure. He or she is carrying all real treasures within. All skills, gifts, virtues, abilities and higher values are innate to our human nature. In their entirety they build the inner, inborn potential of man, the divine seed sown upon the fertile soil of his soul within. Consequently we need not force or superimpose any good onto the child’s personality, but rather intend to awaken and nourish the good in him to come forth and flourish. Therefore the work of a teacher can be compared with that of a gardener. As the newly sown seed, so the soul of the child or student needs good care and attention. We want to inspire, to awaken interest and enthusiasm, and to foster the emerging of the inborn values and virtues by our substantial empathy and lively example. Equally we need to have the courage – if demanded by facts – to cut wild shoots.

The international convention protecting the rights of children, which also was signed by Israel should be a basic value. The UN Charta terminates these rights of children as the right for development of its personality and a preparation for life. It states: “The education must be directed at developing the child’s personality and talents and preparing him for a responsible life as an adult who respects human rights”.

Rudolf Steiner, founder of anthroposophy and Waldorf-School-System declared: “The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility – these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.” The unique quality of human beings is our capacity for conscious thought. Waldorf schooling strives to support the development of well-rounded human beings who are able to feel deeply and broadly, to think penetratingly and clearly, and then to act rightly out of conscious and free choice.

The best overall statement on what is unique about Steiner education is to be found in the stated goals of the schooling: “Our highest endeavor must be to develop individuals who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives.” (Rudolf Steiner)

“In the right view of things the true purpose of education is not only to bring out of the child the best and the noblest that he is capable of, but also to endow him with an understanding of the true aim and significance of human life so as to provide him with a lasting source of inspiration when he enters and faces the world at the end of his academic training. ...

The attainment of maturity includes these five aspects: an awareness of the purpose of life, good character, the ability to use ones inborn faculties and skills, attainment of (practical) knowledge and a well-working conscience. On this ground there will also naturally grow an inner aspiration of self-realization and a feeling for the sanctity and brotherhood of life. Only the coincidence of good character and know-how in one person can grant success, right orientation and happiness in his life. And it is education alone that can provide for such condition and it is none other than us – parents and teachers – who can sow the seed of such life and upliftment into the souls of our children.

The famous educator St. Hillaire said: “All parts of human life, all his physical, vital, dynamic, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, psychic activities will also discover the road to their own accomplishment, and become instruments for a richer, fuller and happier life, and finally for a divine living.

Education will embrace all knowledge in its scope, but will make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but personal development and self-realization. It will pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them.

He who sees God in all, will serve freely God in all with the service of love. He will, that is to say, seek not only his own freedom, but the freedom of all, not only his own perfection, but the perfection of all. He will not feel his individuality perfect except in the largest universality, nor his own life to be full life except as it is one with the universal life. He will not live either for himself or for the State and society, for the individual or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for the Divine in the universe.” (Education and the Aim of Life)

And in the U.S.A., Dewey wrote: „The child is the starting-point, the center, and the end. His development, his growth, is the ideal. It alone furnishes the standard. To the growth of the child all studies are subservient; they are instruments valued as they serve the needs of growth. Personality, character, is more than subject-matter. Not knowledge or information, but self-realization, is the goal. To possess all the world of knowledge and lose one’s own self is as awful a fate in education as in religion.

Moreover, subject-matter never can be got into the child from without. Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind. It involves organic assimilation starting from within. Literally, we must take our stand with the child and our departure from him. It is he and not the subject-matter which determines both quality and quantity of learning.” (John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 9)

In India, the foundation of Shantiniketan by Rabindranath Tagore, was an historic act: “The object of education is to give man the unity of truth. Formerly when life was simple all the different elements of man were in complete harmony. But when there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, the school education put entire emphasis on the intellect and the physical side of man. We, devote our sole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis we are accentuating a break between the intellectual, physical and the spiritual life.

I believe in a spiritual world not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth. With the breath we draw we must always feel this truth that we are living in God. Born in this great world, full of the mystery of the infinite, we cannot accept our existence as a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere. We cannot look upon our lives as dreams of a dreamer who has no awakening in all time. We have a personality to which matter and force are unmeaning unless related to something infinitely personal, whose nature we have discovered, in some measure, in human love, in the greatness of the good, in the martyrdom of heroic souls, in the ineffable beauty of nature, which can never be a mere physical fact nor anything but an expression of personality. ...

In ancient India the school was there where was the life itself. There the students were brought up, not in the academic atmosphere of scholarship and learning, or in the maimed life of monastic seclusion, but in the atmosphere of living aspiration. They took the cattle to pasture, collected firewood, gathered fruit, cultivated kindness to all creatures, and grew in spirit with their own teachers’ spiritual growth. This was possible because the primary object of these places was not teaching but giving shelter to those who lived their life in God. ...

This ideal of education through sharing a life of high aspiration with one’s master took possession of my mind. ... Only let us have access of the life that goes beyond death and rises above all circumstances, let us find our God, let us live for that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love. Such emancipation of soul we have witnessed in our country among men devoid of book-learning and living in absolute poverty. In India we have the inheritance of this treasure of spiritual wisdom. Let the object of our education be to open it before us and to give us the power to make the true use of it in our life, and offer it to the rest of the world when the time comes, as our contribution to its eternal welfare.” (Rabindranath Tagore, *Personality*, Chapter “My School“)

Since then and with an accelerated tempo, a considerable amount of theoretical and experimental research work on education has been carried out, mostly in Western countries. Following this pioneering work, an entirely new conception of education has gradually emerged. In this relation we may reconsider how R. Cousinet defined the new outlook:

“New education ... is really a new attitude towards the child – an attitude of understanding and love, and above all an attitude of respect. ... A conviction that the child has within himself everything that allows a true education, and particularly a ceaseless activity, incessantly revived, in which he is totally engrossed, the activity of a growing being who is continuously developing and to whom for that very reason, our help may be useful, but our direction might be not necessary. ...

The only true education will be that, which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation. That is the principle on which we must build the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its destiny and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being. ...

Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere, which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself, which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.”

„To learn is to face transformation. To learn the truth is to enter into relationships requiring us to respond as well as initiate, to give as well as take. If we became vulnerable to the communal claims of truth, conversion would be required. Our knowledge of the atom would call us to the patient work of peacemaking, not mindless acts of war; our knowledge of human nature would call us to the difficult task of cooperation, beyond our easy instinct to compete; our knowledge of nature would call us into careful nurturing, not careless exploitation, of the earth. But we find it safer to seek facts that keep us in power rather than truths that require us to submit. Objectivist education is a strategy for avoiding our own conversion. If we can keep reality “out there,” we can avoid, for a while, the truth that lays the claim of community on our individual and collective lives.“ (Parker J. Palmer in: To know as we are known)

Referring to our identity as a Jewish nation, education will need to walk in the spirit and footsteps of our fore-fathers. As Josef was carrying on the inheritance of his father Jaakov (even in the land of Egypt), so we all should abide in the heritage (covenant) of Israel and bear witness of the spirit of Avraham, Isaak and Jaakov. In the same way, Ishmael should be integrated as natural part of our family. As heirs of our fathers to this precious land, we should always remember the promise and oath of JHWH, our Lord: “When you return to the land that I have promised to your fathers, then keep my word and commandment. ... Do not forget that I have given it to you not because of your

virtues or merits, but because of my promise to your fathers and because I had mercy for you, for you are a stubborn people!” (Deuteronomy 9. 1 - 6) This word is a challenge for all of us. If we want to survive as a nation and prosper, we should pay respect and obedience to Him, who is the source and Lord of the entire creation as well as the root and origin of our soul. He who dwells in righteousness shall lack nothing, and it will be the meek, who shall inherit the land.

In order to cope with the fact of our present reality and as a response to our needs, several different private attempts and organizations worldwide as well as in Israel and Palestine have been established dedicated to develop and foster such a working model of education. Some of them are sheltered under the umbrella of Jerusalem Academy, one being “Education for Life”.

“**Education for Life**” is an international nonprofit foundation. Its international office is in The Netherlands, and it has offices in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority.

Education for Life’s founder is Mr. Daniel Kropf, an Italian businessman, who, for years, has been promoting processes and tools for personal awareness, development and growth, for violence prevention and for the betterment of interpersonal communication. Presently it is co-chaired by Mr. Daniel Kropf and Dr. Eliyahu Benedikt.

Education for Life Israel’s vision is more people caring more for themselves, each other and coming generations.

Education for Life Israel’s purpose is to inspire authentic and caring dialogue within and between people in the Israeli and Palestinian societies.

Education for Life Israel’s CEO is Mrs. Noga Meiri-Rabinovich, who has worked internationally in educational and commercial organizations, has a Masters degree in Psychology and Psychodrama therapy as well as a degree in Education. Noga has been training trainers and process leaders for the educational and business sectors, and has collaborated in developing [Lots®](#), a business reflection and planning tool which she now applies in the work of Education For Life.

Education for Life Israel’s Chief Operating Officer is Mr. Ofer Al-Yagor. Mr. Al-Yagor has had extensive experience in Israel’s educational system, performing various roles ranging from teacher to project manager and principal. He currently develops programs and applications for Education for Life, and serves as chief supervisor for our trainers.

Education for Life Israel’s basic Methodologies are [Nonviolent CommunicationSM](#), [Human Dynamics®](#), [Lots®](#), [Open Space](#), [Appreciative Inquiry](#) and [Somatic Experiencing](#).

Education for Life’s programs are [recommended by the Ministry of Education](#) as intervention programs for the improvement of school climate and for violence prevention.

Education for Life has the distribution rights for different [Methodologies](#) and tools from around the world, which are changed to accommodate to the specific needs of Israeli society. We also develop unique tools and applications for the needs of each organization and school we work with. (See: [www.efl.co.il](http://www.efl.co.il), [www.education-for-life.org](http://www.education-for-life.org))

Another attempt to bring about improvement in education is “**Living Values**”. “**Living Values**” is an official international association, started in 2001 and headed by Esther Khavous, a member of the “Brahma Kumari Group in Tel Aviv”. It fosters awareness of human values in schools and society in general in accord to the UN organization of the same name and is also recommended by the Israeli Ministry of Education.

The call for values is currently echoing throughout every land, as educators, parents and even children are increasingly concerned about and affected by violence, growing social problems, and the lack of social cohesion. Educators are, once again, asked to address problems, which have arisen within their societies.

**Living Values Education Program (LVEP)** is a comprehensive values education program. It offers a wide variety of experiential values activities and practical methodologies to teachers and facilitators, parents and caregivers to enable children and young adults to explore and develop 12 universal values. They are:

[Unity](#) | [Simplicity](#) | [Responsibility](#) | [Happiness](#) | [Humility](#) | [Honesty](#)  
[Respect](#) | [Peace](#) | [Love](#) | [Tolerance](#) | [Cooperation](#) | [Freedom](#).

In addition to programs for classrooms and parent groups, LVEP offers special materials for street children, children affected by war, and children affected by earthquakes.

Implemented in 74 countries, educators report positive changes in teacher-student relationships and in student-student relationships both inside and outside the classroom. Educators note an increase in respect, caring, cooperation, motivation, and the ability to solve peer conflicts on the part of the students. Aggressive behaviors decline as positive social skills and respect increase. LVEP helps educators create safe, caring values-based atmospheres for quality learning. (See: Diane Tillman: Theoretical Background and Support for Living Values: An Educational Program; [www.livingvalues.net](http://www.livingvalues.net))

So far the most approaches towards a reform of the educational system are mainly adaptations or remedies to cure some of the unpleasant symptoms of our social reality.

In order to bring about a sound holistic approach in education covering all aspects and needs of achievement, personal development, character building and inner growth, we have to go much beyond these efforts and to develop a totally new and comprehensive – that is to say *integral* – approach in education, aiming for a *new core curricula* as well as a renewal of *our system of teachers training*. Only by such an all-encompassing reform of our entire Israeli Schooling System including both the development of integral core curricula as well as an alternative, awareness- and value-based teachers training programs, on the grounds of a holistic vision and philosophy of life, we will be able to

meet the educational needs of our today global society, enhancing a much deeper meaning and life perspective in our youth.

As mentioned above, such an approach presumes the awakening of an awareness of the sanctity of life and the understanding of our life's fundamental meaning and purpose in the first place. Such a new awareness will finally bring about a real change of mind and attitude towards life in all its aspects. To reach this goal we need to teach by example! This implies the need to realize within ourselves what we want to teach others. If we do not live what we teach, there will be no credibility in what we teach or say. Our words only carry power of conviction on grounds of our living example.

It was none less than Einstein who stated: "All education is based on example – and if not by a shining one, also the negative does its work." Obviously he had not the best experience with education himself, but relying on his intuition and inner discrimination he was able to compensate the lack by his own understanding. But that is not what we can expect by an average youth or student. It is us – parents and teachers as well – who mold the child's character and understanding. And in education we have to do this with inner authority and compassion, with strictness and empathy (Gevurah & Hesed), using both in a balanced way.

Further we need to have a clear image of the nature of man and the purpose of our own life, a clear goal, enthusiasm, love for people and youth respectively and a vision of what we want to attain and plant. The soul is a field waiting to receive good seed and nourishment in order to bringing forth a rich harvest of flowers of gifts and skills as well as fruits of virtue and good character (Midot). Character is the highest attainment and the basis of contentment, success and happiness and the seed of our future destiny. As one sows, so he shall reap. If we sow love, joy and appreciation, we also will reap love, joy and appreciation. And if we are able to keep a pure heart, we will even see God and rejoice in His Glory.

Further we have to restore the image of man to its original dignity as an image of God, which is based on equality of freedom of choice that He has bestowed onto us. By our free choice we can become "like" G-d, or – in the other extreme – we may become devils.

In order to have a profound foundation ourselves we need to investigate and discover ourselves – the divine as well as the dark sides deep down in our souls, the true self and the ego – and to learn to sharply discriminate the one from the other. Only then we can become masters of our thoughts and feelings and not stay the victims of their unconscious uncontrolled play.

For building a new educational system, we need not begin from zero, but have pioneers who have already paved the way. And in this manner we can draw a lot from the models and experiences of all those, who have been dealing with education in profound terms before us, as there are the models of great humanists as Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, Alexander von Humboldt, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner,

Rabindranath Tagore, Carl Rogers, Paramahansa Yogananda, the Salanter Rebbe and many others.

In fact, to bring about an effective change in our present unhappy ways of thinking and living, our whole society needs to get involved in education. And as we can immediately realize, it is at least the parents that need to be integrated in the process of change and attainment, thus supporting and interrelating with the teacher's efforts and empathy towards the child.

Therefore as said above – in long run – we need to develop an entirely new Curriculum for all stages of schooling and education in this country. Within its scope some important adaptations have to be considered.

We learn so much about physics, chemistry, biology and many other interesting subjects which we hardly need in life, but we do not learn anything about ourselves, about the nature of our soul, the operation of our mind, the use of thought and will-power etc.

So some portion should be rendered to enhance a minimum knowledge and understanding of our human nature; by doing so we could do pioneer work in the world;

Some adapted issues should deal with questions as:

- 1 What is the meaning and purpose of life;
- 2 What is the structure of inner man;
- 3 What is the dynamics of the soul: sensation, thought, feeling, desire, will-power;
- 4 The higher (divine) and the lower (animal) nature of man, and the permanent inner struggle between them;
- 5 The third faculty: the responsible "I" and its power of discrimination, inner choice and decision;
- 6 How to overcome weaknesses (anger, greed, jealousy, ...) by virtue;
- 7 To introduce and explain a set of perennial human values;
- 8 To foster character building (Midot) and wakeful awareness etc.

Also we should consider the results and consequences of brain research.

If we want to promote some really profound and all-embracing idea of education that deals with our human nature in its entirety and totality, we should bear witness of our holistic vision in a more accurate way. It was already more than a century ago that educators were starting to care more particular of the spiritual and psychological side and needs of our human nature and especially with the progress in brain research there was the discovery of the two complementary operating hemispheres of our brain which further-on brought some intriguing conclusions concerning the apprehension of our mental abilities and education.

Since we had the mentioned models of great educators as Rabbi Nachman, Alexander Humboldt, J. H. Pestalozzi, John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner,

Rabindranath Tagore, the Salanter and Carl Rogers all of whom fostering an integral and more right-hemispheric model of education, concerned with the development of the holistic, intuitive, transcendental, spiritual and artistic side of man as well, instead of reducing us to just linear and verbal operating “computers”, we should also adapt to this other side of our human existence. That means that we definitely should include these aspects in our building a real humanistic approach for the educational perspective of our future by coping also with the intuitive, transcendental side of man. As we are of a double origin - one being physical, one transcendental - we not only need to satisfy our physical and economic living conditions as well as developing our rational, verbal and intellectual (that means our left-hemispheric) abilities, but also to reach out for the realms of our divine destiny by developing our God-given conscience, our power of discrimination, the faculties of holistic understanding, imagery, music, artistic creativity and even a sense for the mysterious and mystic in our lives.

#### **4. What is Integral Education?**

Integral education is by definition an education which meets and addresses man in the wholeness and unity of his human nature as body, mind and soul, equally participating in spirit and matter, and as an individual and social being alike.

It covers the religious or spiritual aspect, which is the quest for the purpose and meaning of life before eternity (or the face of G-d), the psychological aspect, which embraces the quest for our human nature in its aspects as body-soul-mind-spirit, higher and lower self, as well as our core as a responsible, discriminating and decision-making individuality, thus molding his character (Midot) and determining his future destiny, the ethical which deals with the quest for the awareness of the eternal values as well as conduct of life, and last not least the social, which deals with the structure and dynamics of our human relations, group dynamics, patterns of communication and interaction, modes of encounter, skills of conflict regulation, setting of boundaries and allowing closeness and intimacy etc.

In any situation we – as parents or teachers – need to be able to choose the right measure. We need both – Chesed and Gevurah – each one in the right time and the right place. To act on this ground one needs to be a rather balanced and mature personality. His own personality is the strongest tool of the teacher. Only if he is inwardly weak or emotional, he will feel the need of applying harshness or violence to create attentiveness and quite in his classroom. If he finds himself in this place, he has to correct himself.

**What exactly does character education or character building mean?** By definition character education is the teaching of core values. It is a planned, comprehensive, and systematic approach to awaken or imbue a sense of moral righteousness or integrity, a working conscience and the awareness of the priceless blessing of adhering to the lofty ideas and universal human values which build the foundation of the world.

That means character education teaches values by various means, like story telling, discussing actual situations of ethical relevance, religious and humanitarian motivation, examples from our own experiences with ourselves and with others and all this on the ground of our own example.

Different times and cultures, alternative approaches and reflections have led to the fact that different schools and traditions emphasize on different sets of values as to be the most essential ones. In fact if we really go deep into the matter, they all prove to be fully equivalent. As all values are interrelated – as one cannot be faithful if being untrue or judgmental etc. – any profoundly based set can be replaced by another. They all converge in an all-embracing perfection in the likeness of God.

**To give some examples I want to start with “The UNESCO Task Force”.** It has put forward the idea that education is a process continuing throughout life, being based upon four pillars:

Learning to know,

Learning to do,  
Learning to live together,  
Learning to be;

Further I want to mention the “Brahma Kumari” approach of “Living Values”, which builds its foundation on a set of twelve values (see above, p 20), or the “*Character Counts*” program which defines six teachable ‘pillars of character’, namely: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Or we have the Universal Education Foundation, which selects four values being:  
Respect                      Integrity                      Caring                      Learning by experiences.

In any way character education involves children in reflecting upon behavior and attitude as well as human relations on the grounds of basic human values including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect.

In our Jewish tradition we can rely on Leviticus and its comprehensive interpretation by our great sage Hillel who extracted the whole teaching of the TaNaKh to the essential of: “Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself.” And: “What you do not like others do to you, don’t it to them.” (Adding: “ – the rest is commentary. Now go and study.”)

In his book, *The Educated Child*, William J. Bennett writes, “Good character education means cultivating virtues through formation of good habits.” According to Bennett, children need to learn through actions that honesty and compassion are “good”, and that deceit and cruelty are “bad”. He believes that adults in schools and parents should strive to be models of good character.

Therefore character-building is both: to foster and to constrain, to encourage and to set limits, but in any case by compassing love (empathy) and our own shining example. It is an interlude of “Chesed” and “Gevurah” – of loving-kindness and consequence.

In Jewish tradition we have the Musar movement which is emphasizing on “The thirteen Midot of Reb Yisrael Salanter”:

1. Emet – Truth: Never speak a word unless your heart can testify to its truth!
2. Z’rizut – Alacrity: Never waste a single moment; do what has to be done!
3. Harizot – Determination: Do what you have determined to do, and do it energetically!
4. K – Respect: Be caring to treat all men with respect – even those with whom you have little in common!
5. Tranquillity: Inner Calm: do not be overwhelmed (with emotions); always act with deliberation.
6. Gentleness: “The wise speak in gentle manner”, always try to speak softly.
7. Cleanliness - Attain purity and cleanliness of body and dress.
8. Patience – Calmly confront whatever circumstance you meet. Absorb each blow that Life brings.
9. Orderliness – Carry out your responsibilities in all aspects in an orderly fashion.

10. Humility – Recognize your own shortcomings, and disregard those of your fellowmen.
11. Righteousness – in the common sense of justice; and also as the Sages interpret the term – give up what is yours even when not required to do so.
12. Thrift - Do not spend even a penny unnecessarily.
13. Silence – Deliberate on the ramifications of your words before uttering them.

Whatever system of values we choose, character-building does not end with intellectually introducing the child to a mere awareness of them, but to invoke and awaken a desire in him to live and abide by them. In this way there will be built an inner fortress of ethical awareness and a sense of integrity and dignity, which will be understood and realized as the true and final root of all lasting self-content and happiness. All true self-esteem and self-respect, not just being an outer or superficial attitude or self-adjustment, can only spring forth from such an inner basis of a firm ethical conscience.

Thus the goal of character education is not merely to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens, but beyond that self-content mature human beings, abiding in an awareness of the unity and sanctity of all life and living beings. Of course such an awareness is equally if not even primarily focused upon ones relating with the Almighty as the root of our soul and source of all life and happiness.

The ability for problem solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution are some other important parts of developing moral character. Through role-playing and discussions, students can experience and feel that and in which way their decisions affect other people and things.

*(The Language of Learning: A Guide to Education Terms, by J. L. McBrien & R. S. Brandt, pp. 17-18, 1997, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)*

Another issue to be considered in a reform towards holistic education is that there is no balance in our knowledge and understanding of the outer and the inner world. We have made fantastic progress in discovering the secrets of nature, have penetrated deep into the universe above, but for many of us the space of our own soul within is still an unknown mystery – whose existence is even doubted by many. While natural sciences and technology have provided an ability to handle or rather manipulate a wide range of phenomena of the outer physical world, its elements and forces, we have tremendous shortcomings in human sciences and our abilities to handle even our own thought patterns and emotions. Still less we know about the deep interrelation between individual attitude, fate and cosmic moral law. Time has come to realize that the universe within is as vast and deep as the starry skies above, and that not only the course of the stars is following quite distinct laws, but also the course of our lives. Starting to dive within will show that there are no limits in time and space set to our soul and its abilities. Yet there are wise rules and orders, which abused will cause suffering and malfunctioning. In order to cope with this gap of scientific knowledge, many scientists and educators have therefore rightly demanded a shift in priorities and paradigms in research and education

from a rather materialistic or physical dominated approach towards a more human and psychological centered and oriented one.

Time has come for this shift to also be reflected and represented in our school system and its curricula. While we make a lot of studies in physics, chemistry and biology which are certainly most beneficial and interesting subjects, we hardly learn anything about psychology, ethics, the dynamics of emotions, attitudes, patterns and laws of relating and interaction. If not provided by informal education there would be a total void in this area of human awareness. Therefore we strongly recommend the inclusion and establishment of subjects of human science and psychology.

Education should awaken and develop self-awareness in relation to God, self and the other, a sense of discrimination between eternal and temporary, reality and illusion, good and evil, an ability to handle our emotions, to overcome weaknesses, to build a foundation of inner centeredness, harmony, spiritual growth, health, happiness, dignity, divinity and wholeness. In that sense holistic education is aiming towards well-being on the basis of the realization of one's physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual potential.

All these aspects – as being essentials of our human nature – are equally and comprehensively addressed in the student as long as the teacher is inspired by a lofty vision of man (Menschenbild) as an integral whole created and living in the image of God. Abiding in this vision and even an experience of Self-Realization, he does not need to scatter his attention and awareness in this or that direction or on this and that aspect, but in whatever he says or does, he will be immersed in universal consciousness and connect to the seed of all-embracing perfection in the soul of his student. This in fact would be the highest form of integral or holistic education. This is the ideal which we are striving for.

Such considerations have also to focus on and deal with the presently increasing specialization, particularization and fragmentation in all areas of society, especially in research and education on cost of a much more general and universal perspective and outlook on life in its more universal scope and connotation with its transcendental meaning. There is a big lack in developing, keeping and maintaining a vivid and contentious *Weltanschauung*, which would grant a solid ground for evaluating the different aspects and issues of life in relation to its true purpose and transcendental meaning.

Instead of leaving a void being compensated by mere spoon-fed information and fragmental particularized knowledge, education should lead and inspire the young adolescent to develop and impart a rather holistic and well-grounded world view and “*Weltanschauung*”.

Only a person which is able of developing a comprehensive, yet dynamic “*Weltanschauung*” by and for himself, which on one side allows to place, interpret and evaluate the experiences of one's life consistently within its framework, while on the

other adapts according to new insights, can be called mature and well-oriented. The best of education is based on transcendental reasoning, guiding the child or youth towards independent intellectual and moral discrimination, unbiased judgment and clear self-sustained thinking. As was repeatedly stated by great educators of all times, education should not teach a disciple what to think, but *how* to think! And these are the things that are badly missing today – the ability for independent thinking, a firm rootedness in the transcendent, wake common sense, eye measure, clear and self-sustained judgment and courageous decision-making. All these are qualities of a mature personality and a steadfast and unwavering character.

If the educational system of a society or nation is not able to cultivate and maintain these values, our culture and civilization is seriously at stake (and endangered to vanish from the globe.) In this respect Martin Luther King's statement reverberates like a prophecy: "A nation or civilization that continues to produce soft-minded men purchases its own spiritual death on the instalment plan."

Speaking in terms of pedagogy we can summarize: In order to mold people with character and independent "Weltanschauung", one does not need tools, but to awaken awareness and moral feeling. Tools may help as long as we need crutches to stand or walk on our own legs, but the legs of maturation are inner centeredness and self-awareness itself.

This is why I said above: "The strongest tool of the teacher is his own attitude, radiation and charisma. Therefore these are the essentials to provide for a powerful teachers training.

Altogether we have to understand that the spiritual resources and cultural heritage of our civilization are its most valuable assets, who's investment in education is the first and foremost guarantee for its survival and sustainability. And the task of the educational system and its administration is the optimal allocation of these resources in the realization of its objectives. Translating this statement in terms of practical implementation, it calls for the engagement of the best and most noble representatives of society, cultural and spiritual life in its operation. They should take part in teachers training as well as in the school process.

Finally of course, we cannot deny the purpose to prepare the young people for their future life in society, family and profession, which implies the enhancement of wake awareness towards his rights and obligations as a citizen, a house-holder, a parent and a professional. It is only the later, which covers the common understanding of education as development and acquisition of relevant basic know-how and skills for information processing in general and a wider range of universal as well as more specific knowledge of subjects and skills being basic for his proposed future profession.

Further, education and pedagogy to be integral have to be based on an inquiry into the universal principles and goals of life and the nature of our human being and also assert the need for a relational unity between pedagogy and content. Such intentional

interrelationship between pedagogy and content in education is essential to its transformative effect and its intention to address the student as an integral being. (This need can also be confirmed by results of recent brain research).

Education, therefore, to be complete must have five principal aspects relating to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually these phases of education succeed each other in a chronological order following the growth of the individual. This however does not mean that one should replace another but that all must continue, completing each other, till the end of life.

Altogether, education should not be a joyless must or frustrating pressure, which the child seeks to avoid, but a joyous journey of ever-new discovery as well as an inspiring challenge to develop our spirit of invention and creative thinking, thus satisfying our eternal quest for truth, reality, self and purpose of life. It should be a lively experience of permanent discovery – of Self, world and G-d.

## 4. 1 The Physical Education

Perfection (of character) is the true aim of all culture. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument, which we have to use. An old adage says: "The body is the means of fulfillment of our destination."

A total perfection is the ultimate aim, which we set before us, for our ideal is Divine Life, which we wish to realize here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation. ... The body itself is able to reach a perfection in all that it is and does, which we can hardly conceive. It may even in the end be suffused with a light and beauty and bliss from the Beyond and the life divine assuming a body divine.

The results that a wholesome and methodical program of physical education may be expected to bring about are:

1. **A sound and healthy body:** This is a vast subject on which a good amount of knowledge has already been accumulated; The means to provide a strong and healthy body include the acquisition of good habits in food, sleep, hygiene, and the use of physical exercises to regulate the various body functions. Bodily defects and malformations can be reduced or even cured by appropriate methods of corrective gymnastics;

2. **Strength and fitness;**

3. **Development of physical skills;**

4. **Training of the senses:** A quick perception of the eye and ear and a quick response of all the parts of the body to any call made upon them, a wonderful co-ordination and mastery over the reflexes as for instance in gymnastics, sports and balancing;

5. **Self-mastery and discipline, courage and confidence:** To control one's impulses, reactions and weaknesses is a very important gain brought about by the practice of athletics and games. We must mention here that the regular use of physical exercises has a healthy influence on the control of sexual energy;

6. **Co-operation, impartiality and fair dealings with others.** This will develop a sense of altruism, belonging and community. To experience the enthusiasm of being part of a team is a good preparation for social appreciation and responsibility.

## **4.2 Vital (or Emotional) Education (and Character Building): The Development of Emotional Intelligence**

There is a proverb in our Jewish tradition saying: “Man is not how much he knows, but how deep he feels.” And philosophy of education adds: “Education is what is left, if we forget everything we have learned.” True man is body, mind and soul and his life comprises all aspects of his multidimensional being. Still his most precious treasures are his innermost feelings and intuitive insights, which add to his inner peace and maturity. And it is education, which has to provide for this goal.

Now, man is said to have a double origin: With his spirit he is rooted in the heavens, but with his vitality in this sensual world. It is the vital or emotional aspect of man, which is made up of sensations, emotions, desires, passions and instincts, energies of action, will of desire, emotional reactions like lust, fear, greed and anger, that build our lower nature (Hod, Netzach and Yesod of Nefesh), while it is our spiritual origin and nature (Neshamah) that contains and carries the seed of divinity. Thus life is experienced as a permanent struggle between our higher and our lower nature and their opposing inclinations. But being human means to be destined to realize our inborn divinity and to conquer our lower passions, which otherwise bind and subjugate us to the rule of matter.

The vital is a vast kingdom full of forces acting and reacting upon one another, the very nexus of man’s unconscious life and the motive power of his action – for good or for evil. The organization and training of this complex of forces is of the utmost importance for the *building up of character* (Midot).

Man to become master of himself – and really human –, needs to understand the dynamics of his soul, that is the interaction between his emotions, sense impressions, thought patterns, imagination, habits, memory and will power. Usually we are slaves of our passions and whims, not knowing nor being able to handle or even master them. In fact to become really human means to master our destiny; and this implies mastery over our vital forces, emotions and unconscious tendencies.

A contemporary Indian educator and teacher of spirituality shares this concern of mine with today youth in saying: “In our contemporary system of education, through subjects like science, mathematics, history, geography, etc., we learn primarily about the external world around us, leaving out to do with life’s most essential knowledge – the awareness of one’s own mind and emotions. All formal learning is supposed to prepare a child for life; it does anything, but that. Where does a child learn how to understand and handle his own emotions? How does he deal with anger, fear, guilt, sorrow, jealousy, competitiveness and insecurity, when nowhere, in our education system, or at home, have we taught him, and other young people, how to do this?” (Sri Ravi Shankar)

In order to become emotionally emancipated in such a way, we need to gain a much deeper understanding of the psychological laws, which rule the dynamics of our inner life. Such emancipation we call emotional intelligence.

The deepest knowledge and understanding of our inner life we find in the different spiritual wisdom traditions of the world, which are based on the direct inner experience of those great souls, who have attained cosmic consciousness and God-Realization. To name just some of these teachings I want to mention “Raja Yoga” (expounded in the Yoga Sutras of Maharishi Patanjali), “Vipassana”, and “Sufism” and last not least the Kabbalah, heart and core of our Jewish spiritual heritage. Especially the Cabbalistic tree of Life, composed of the ten S’firot and 22 paths and structured in the shape of a “Mandala” or Cosmo-gram, is a perfect representation and mirror of the blueprint of our macro- as well as our micro-cosmos. Its rich network pictures the structural pattern of interrelations, interactions and dynamics between the different aspects and faculties of our human mind and soul. Understanding its symbolism, we can read it as a reflection of our inner life, in particular of the miraculous play between sense impressions, imagination, emotions, thought patterns and memory.

It is not surprising to see how the recent findings of modern physiology and brain research strongly confirm the wisdom of old. In fact they teach us to see the functioning of our hormonal and nervous system as the physiological basis of the operation and expression of our inner intentions, sensations, thoughts, memories, feelings and the rest of our mental and spiritual activities.

Now, the greatest treasure we have is our life, yet hardly anyone is really satisfied with it or using it in an appropriate and satisfying way.

Everybody is longing for happiness and fulfilment – not a transient shallow one, that fades away if the objects of desire or pleasure are gone, but a sustainable unconditional happiness, which is rooted in the deep of our soul. Such happiness in fact is based on four things: They are self-awareness, self-trust, integrity and emotional independence, summing up to what we call true authenticity or completeness.

In other words, happiness and well-being rise from our being in harmony with God and creation. Usually we are out of tune. And like a radio not tuned creates only noise, so our mind and soul not being in tune with cosmic reality will equally produce only noise – that is to say mental disturbance, emotional tension and irritation in our sensitivity as well as in our human relations. To once more attain a state of calm and inner peace we need to get tuned to the melody of divine life, to God and universe. This is Holy Communion with all living beings. It is by full dissociation that we can rise to the peak of conscious in whose light we can see the edifice of this entire universe in one single glimpse.

Yet most people live on a rather unconscious level, not being aware of their motives, driving impulses and emotions that keep them acting and moving. And rather often we get caught up in thought-patterns and emotion, which we have not purposely initiated or invited, but which govern our hearts and minds and often lead us to actions and reactions which we ourselves do not appreciate and which even might spoil our lives and relations.

In such a state our mind is permanently changing its mood, emotion and functional condition, oscillating between agitation and deprivation, excitement and dissatisfaction,

all of whose cause and origin is not understood and in most cases projected onto the changes in the outer circumstances of this world. Under this condition our life will neither be a bubbling source of joy, meaning and inner growth for ourselves, nor will it be a blessing for others. In such a state we feel to be victims of our unintended emotions, whims and unconscious inner tendencies, which often spoil our inner and outer life.

Therefore in order to experience genuine unconditional peace and happiness, we need to understand our human nature and the dynamics of our feelings, thoughts and emotions. It is the wisdom of spiritual traditions and transpersonal psychology, which guides and helps us to become masters of our lives and destinies instead of staying their victims. Only by conquering our inner tendencies, emotions and attachments, we can attain lordship over our destiny. Laying the foundation to such an achievement is one issue which education should provide.

There is a well known statement of Stoa tradition, attributed to Epictet, saying: “Man does not suffer from the world, but from the unsolved contradiction between the world and his image of it.” Here with “image” Epictet is addressing the whole variety of unconscious concepts, fantasies, expectations, evaluations, emotional interpretations and the like, which are passing like movies or sound tracks before our inner eyes and ears and thus trapping our minds. To get rid of them is a task that should be aimed for by exercising clear awareness and perception.

As long as these inner movies and sound tracks are spoiling our perception and thinking, we are their victims as they are the root of all kinds of distortion in our dealing with the outer reality as well as with people on the bases of projections – that is perpetuated stereotypes, biased opinions etc. etc. That is why the scriptures say: “You shall not make a picture of what is above (in the world of spirit), nor of what is on earth (the concrete day-to day- reality), nor what is below (the deep of our unconscious).

To attain peace and happiness we need to get rid of all these inner images and to get and stay and live and act in tune with God and creation. This covers all aspects of our human nature aspiring for the highest, which is God- or Self-Realization. This is the way of liberating us from all problems and disturbances attributed to our outer and inner life.

What is true for the individual also holds for whole societies and nations. Being stuck with our illusionary expectations, attachments and claims we lost our centeredness and contact with our upper root. Being out of tune is the root of all world crises – as religious or political conflicts, moral decline, distortion of nature, climate changes etc. etc.

All these aspects are issues of integral or holistic education. The practice of it demands from the teacher that he has a comprehensive vision of the human nature as it is created in the image of God. Seeing the divine spark, which comprises all innate perfection and possibilities in the “other”, he will be able to address and meet the pupil in his wholeness and dignity thus covering all his needs and belongings as a human being and child of God.

That is why all great masters of East and West - knowing human nature at its very best - have taught us the necessity of self-discovery and meditation as an indispensable requirement for the attainment of the true goal of life.

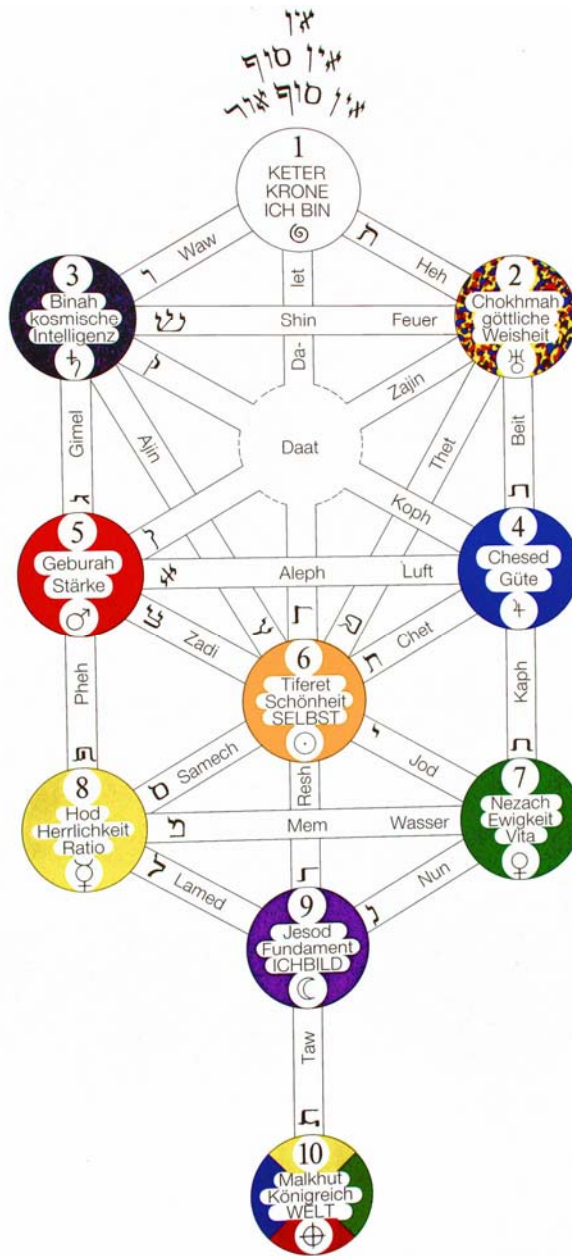
As for our inner progress and attainment of higher dimensions there are no other limits than those we create ourselves. We ourselves are the fabric of our emotions, the creator of our happiness and the smith of our own destiny. It is we who create our own hell or heaven inside.

As stated above, there is a tremendous potential within, deep down at the root of our soul; it is a potential of bubbling bliss and energy, of joy unending, creative inspiration, enthusiasm and love, a treasure house of shining jewels of dormant abilities and gifts lying unused at the bottom of our being which need to be awakened and brought into our awareness. But in order to do so, we need to remove and shake off the obstacles, which cover these inner riches and prevent us a natural access and sound use of them -, obstacles caused by ignorance, lack of self-awareness and knowledge, false identification and disorientation. The removal of all these hindrances and laying free the source within will not only transform and enrich our own personal life, but also our relationships, our outlook and perspective on life in its entirety.

To realize our indwelling potential, we need to study the nature of our minds, its roots and powers, the ways of its operation, but also its tricks to delude and misguide us if we loose our control over it. Tradition states that the mind is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation. Or in the words of Reb Nachman: “wherever man’s mind is, there is man’s entire being”. By understanding the mind’s laws and functioning, one attains control over its tremendous power which, if used intelligently and properly, will enable us to rid ourselves from all inner bonds and limitations and set free the full potential of spiritual, mental, psychological and emotional gifts and treasures. Thus transforming our scattered mind into a laser-like instrument allows us to penetrate and over-come all obstacles originating from wrong attitudes, habits and attachments.

Then we are no longer helpless victims of the powers of destiny, but lords and rulers of our lives. We are not failures, but born for victory. By conquering life we attain everlasting bliss and happiness. To get there we need to gain insight enabling us to look through the shallow surface of existence usually taken in this world as truth and final reality. But by knowing the inner light we go beyond. This is the path of joy, happiness and success.

It is the Philosophy and Psychology of Kabbalah, which teaches us to understand the dynamics of our soul as well as the operation of our mind, and how by connecting with G-d we can attain the peak and summit of a valuable life, inner joy and human dignity. As mentioned above its basic tool is the symbol of the “Tree of Life”, which is a diagram representing the invisible structure of divine principles that form our outer and inner universe.



As micro- and macro-cosmos are reciprocally interrelated with each other, it simultaneously pictures the outer cosmos and our inner world. And in this respect it is used not only as an image and mirror of the subtle architecture of our human nature, but also as a road-map on our path towards G-d and Self-Realization. By understanding its symbolism, it teaches us to deal and handle our inner life in a rather goal oriented way, instead of leaving us the stay passive leafs in the storms of this world.

The key to a strong, straightforward and harmonious character is to awaken in the child the will to overcome his weaknesses and eliminate his defeats. The aspiration towards perfection exists in every human being, but too often the conditions in which the child lives, at home and elsewhere, the moral and mental environment are so antagonistic to the

tiny little flame of aspiration that it (easily) dwindles and dies out. This aspiration has to be gently kindled and helped to translate itself into will.

Only what man admires and accepts, becomes part of himself; the rest is a mask. He conforms to the discipline of society as he conformed to the moral routine of home and school, but considers himself at liberty to guide his real life, inner and private, according to his own likings and passions.

The best method of inspiration and guidance is by personal example, daily conversing, by providing nutritious mental, psychological and spiritual food, and last not least through a good selection of books read day by day. These books should contain, for the younger student, the lofty examples of the past given, not as moral lessons, but as things of supreme human interest, and, for the elder student, the great thoughts of great souls, the passages of literature, which set fire to the highest emotions and prompt the highest ideals and aspirations, the records of history and biography which exemplify the living of those great thoughts, noble emotions and aspiring ideals. This is a kind of good company, which can seldom fail to have effect so long as sententious sermonizing and double moral is avoided, and becomes of the highest effect if the personal life of the teacher is itself molded by the great things he places before his pupils. It cannot, however, have full force unless the young life is given an opportunity, within its limited sphere, of embodying in action the moral impulses, which rise within.

To this general education of our senses and their action there will be added as early as possible, the cultivation of discrimination and the aesthetic sense, the capacity to choose and take up what is beautiful and harmonious, simple, healthy and pure. For, there is a psychological health as much as a physical health; there is a beauty and harmony of the sensations, as much as a beauty of the body and its movements. As the child grows in capacity and understanding, he should be taught, in the course of his education, to add aesthetic taste and refinement to power and precision. He must be shown, made to appreciate, taught to love beautiful, lofty, healthy and noble things whether in nature or in human creation. It must be a true aesthetic culture and it will save him from degrading influence.

The Divine is Purity as well as Beauty and it is by the cultivation of both – the ethical and the aesthetic – that the needs of our heart and soul will be really fulfilled. In this way the sublime being of man will rise towards its divine destination.

### 4.3 The Mental Education

Mental education is predominantly addressing our human mind. Mind (Ruach) is the intermediary between higher and lower soul, or in other terminology between spirit and astral (or emotional) body – Neshamah and Nefesh. The mind itself has two opposing poles. They are reason (or higher intellect) and “ratio”. While reason is upward directed and related to the transcendental principles of the invisible cosmos of pure ideas or divine intentions, “ratio” as the lower one is purely based on elemental sensual perception and experience. We can say the substance of our “ratio” as well as that of its contents is entirely composed of sense data and sense impressions.

Mental education is first and foremost meant to foster a sense of clear discrimination and impartial judgment and an emancipated use of our mental faculties – reason, “ratio”, perception, cognition, creative thinking, decision and memory.

The greatest mistake is to make an accumulation of factual knowledge, i. e. erudition, the crowning end of education. This error distorts the whole process of education itself. Instead of learning how to acquire knowledge, the student is asked to store in his memory the knowledge gained by others, so as to keep it ready at hand – at least for the time of the examination.

The real gain that one can expect from a well organized and thorough mental education has an individual aspect and a social or collective one.

The individual aspect is culture. Culture is not erudition, it does not depend on the amount of knowledge, but on the way knowledge has been assimilated, integrated, transformed into a synthetic *Weltanschauung*, which can serve as a base to a still higher vision and understanding. In fact, it has aptly been said that “culture is what remains when all (we have learned) has been forgotten.” (Edouard Herriot) Culture is not acquired by forcefully memorizing, but by keeping a wide interest and a mind open to all sources of knowledge (books, magazines, lectures, exhibitions, human contacts, etc.): whatever is retained and assimilated will be welcome: it may be deep or shallow according to one’s capacity.

The collective aspect of education is utilitarian and functional. It is connected with the professional life of the individual and his relations with his fellow-beings. Hence schools need to develop professional skills, like clear perception of problems, the abilities for grounded yet quick decisions, implementation of know-how according to international scientific standards, as well as invoking a spirit of invention and innovation in the young people.

Yet the acquisition of know-how and mental skills is not enough. We also need people with self-esteem, psychological independence, leader-qualities plus social competence. We know through a lot of unpleasant experiences how much intern friction and incalculable costs are caused within companies and organizations by a lack of leadership and team qualifications.

Thus mental educations should provide:

1. **the capacity to gather old knowledge**, i.e., how to use the various means of documentation (text-books, reference books, technical magazines, etc.) to find out what is already known on a subject; how to grade and organize that knowledge so that it can be made available to oneself for ready reference and to others;

2. **the capability to discover new knowledge**, i.e., to engage successfully in research work; how to face a problem, to analyze and get at the core of it; how to use imagination in the search for analogies and structural similarities; how to formulate and test hypotheses etc.;

3. **the capacity to use and apply knowledge (old and new) to specific cases** and to deal with concrete situations; how to reach optimal decisions; how to get on with fellow-workers and engage in team work, understand others and make oneself understood.

#### 4. 4 The Psychic and the Spiritual Education

Till now we have dealt with the basics of education, which should be granted to all children born upon earth; it is concerned with purely human faculties. But, at least in our awareness and aspiration, one should not stop there:

“Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness beyond the frame of his normal life through which he can participate in a higher and vaster life. Indeed, in all exceptional beings it is always this consciousness that governs their life, and organizes both the circumstances of their life and their individual reaction to these circumstances. What the human mind does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the center of our being radiating through the thick cover of our external personality. ...

With psychic education we come to the problem of the true motive of life, the reason of our existence upon earth, the very discovery to which life must lead and the result of that discovery, the consecration of the individual to his eternal principle. This discovery very generally is associated with a mystic feeling, a religious life, because it is religions particularly that have been occupied with this aspect of life. But it need not be necessarily so: the mystic notion of God may be replaced by the more philosophical notion of truth and still the discovery will remain essentially the same.” (Mother Alfassa of Auroville)

The mind of the child has to be consulted in its own growth. Therefore the work proposed to a child must be suited to his mental age and outlook, and he must be allowed to do it according to his own capacity and speed. A child who is given a work corresponding to his needs as a growing being, accepts it readily and does it with attention and joy.

From this it follows, that the child must be given individual attention and be allowed to proceed independently. It is the child and not the teacher that sets the pace. (Saint-Hilaire)

Finally we have to understand that the summit and ultimate goal of education would be to guide and inspire the student towards finding or at least approaching the calling or vocation to which end God has created and sent him to this plane. It is by truthfulness and self-abidance that one approaches his vocation. And the Scriptures state: “In finding our vocation, we find our utmost fulfillment in life and the final purpose of our existence.” It is one of the tasks of the teachers to help the child and student to get closer and closer to himself thus approaching the core of his existence in the discovery of his inner calling. This demands the caring attention of the teacher being given to the student, his interests and his development. This aspect of course is more relevant for students who are about or have passed puberty.

More generally speaking there are some aims in education which usually are overseen:

1. So it should be one of the teacher’s aims **to train the ear** of his students – and their tongue if the talking is on both sides. This is to say we need to develop a culture of

listening and communication, which is untainted by emotional and mental stereotypes and projections, but based on clear discriminative perception and judgment. As long as we are reacting emotionally to outer circumstances, it proves that we are victims of unconscious tendencies and projections based on emotional and mental conditioning. Education to be true is the opposite of conditioning. It is and always has to aim for self-aware and independent judgment, thought and reasoning, avoiding any form of psychological manipulation and emotional pressurizing, which are the main causes of such conditioning. Awakening awareness is an indispensable part of teaching and education, which has to go pertain in all subjects in our schools. The ability to listen and to communicate in a non-judgmental way is the only foundation to develop a sense of social justice, sound patterns of social interaction, socialization, and for overcoming all the biased stereotyped cultural prejudices, fears and suspicions, which are usually perpetuated in our social environment and thus spoiling the terms of our social, inter-cultural and inter-religious relations.

This also should help the student to find the adequate form and language to express himself, verbalize or communicate in non-verbal ways his authentic thoughts and feelings. Such attention might even reveal hidden talents and ambitions of the student.

2. The aim is further **to supply specific needed information (according to higher aspiration)**. This aim is perfectly justified by our intention to help the pupil to discover his real vocation. Usually such need arises in one or a few students at a time and the delivery must be made to those students alone, since for the others it may seem useless and boring or even embarrassing. Therefore, at least at school level, the resort to discourses and lectures of this type will arise rarely.

3. The teacher's relation and communication with his students should always be intended **to give him empathy and guidance**. Steiner defined 'three golden rules' for teachers: "to receive the child in gratitude from the world they come from; to educate the child with love; and to lead the child into the true freedom which belongs to man."

And Mother Alfassa added: „Teachers who do not possess a perfect calm, and unfailing endurance, an unshakable quietness, who are full of self-conceit will reach nowhere. ... One must have the right attitude in order to be able to exact from one's pupils that same attitude. You cannot ask of a person what you do not do yourself. It is a rule.”

That is to say the teacher shall be the living example of where he wants his student to arrive. Being honest and faithful to himself the teacher will find himself growing in understanding and wisdom every day. The teaching-learning process is a two-sided challenge: It makes teacher and student walk and grow together.

The best of educators in history have been the great sages and Zadikim of all traditions, They not only have explored the depth of their soul and the peaks of spirit, thus having attained an unfailing understanding of the impact of human nature, but also the experience of downfalls and success in their struggle to overcome their lower nature (ego) and get established in the Divine. Hence by their victory they have become true, yet humble and patient examples of their teaching.

The art of motivating and of kindling keen interest and enthusiasm is a result of the teacher's ability to marvel by having kept his inner eye open to the hidden miracles and secrets of life.

There is a Jewish proverb saying: "Attending to the needs of *Talmidei Chachamim* is greater than study." (Berachot 7h) Meaning: Seeing something with one's own eyes has a much deeper impact on the soul than hearing or reading *about* it. One who observes the day-to-day conduct of a *Talmid Chacham* sees the teachings of Midot and ethics (Musar) carried out by his mentor in practice.

On this background the Salanter Rebbe said: "Give me ten great disciples and I will alter the face of our time and revolutionize the Jewish world!"

#### **4. 5 Summing up:**

As said before, human life is aiming for happiness and inner peace. If these are attained all else can be easily achieved. Yet real happiness cannot be found by our indulging into world and its pleasures, but through a life that has contentions meaning and brings spiritual satisfaction by fulfillment of our inner calling and a vocation to something that is greater than us. To find this calling – or at least to bring him closer to it – is one of the tasks of the teacher in giving attention to the child and watching his development.

If we do not want to fail the calling and mission of our lives we have to understand that the first precondition for unwavering happiness is an untainted and unspoiled conscience resulting from fair conduct of life and attempted righteousness in our attitude. Purity of heart and clarity of mind resulting in a sound sense of responsibility and upright attitude are treasures of life of utmost price and value. They should be the real goal of our striving and therefore of all our endeavors in education. Abiding in truth and an uncompromising attitude are the only real guarantee for success and happiness, peace and comfort in our lives. As we all know these things grow only on a safe ground of the experiences of trust and profound love and appreciation. On these grounds only the teacher will succeed in his task to awaken interest and enthusiasm in the student and in molding his personality and character to become a happy person and emancipated citizen.

Again I want to point to the indispensable import of the teacher and his own attitude. It is his happiness, his integrity and authenticity in the process of education, which is molding the students lives towards becoming equally happy, integer and authentic. Only a happy teacher can make happy students. Understanding this issue the question of education is finally referring to the issue of teacher's trainings. How to train the teacher to become happy and reliable human beings, with sound self-esteem and natural authority easily being accepted and followed in their example by our youth – this is the key question.

Altogether, thinking of setting up new colleges for teacher's training, we also need to think of ways to make the teacher's profession more attractive, self-sustained and enjoyable.

## **5. Perspective: General Consideration about a Reform of the Israeli/Palestinian Secular School System**

As stated in our introduction, the first and foremost need in an education reform is to provide a renewal in spirit and philosophy of education, which simultaneously grants a profound rise of educational achievements as well as a real change in school climate. Still the integral or holistic approach in education is going even beyond, as it focuses on the pupil as an integral human being to be in tune with God and universe. It aims to kindle the spark of light in his soul, to awaken and unfold his inborn gifts and potential and to mold a mature independent and responsible personality and character. To get there we will need first to educate teachers who learn to see their profession as a vocation and who develop those qualities and virtues themselves, which they are meant to bring about in their students.

This makes evident that a school reform can only succeed, if we are able to generate a teachers training program, which provides for a preparation of the aspirant enabling him to pick up that task and secondly to develop newly adapted curricula and educational plans serving as a matrix and carrying ground of such a new educational system. The development of such new curricula need to be fully life-oriented and be based on a relational unity between pedagogy and content, which only can contribute to an essential understanding of life and thus have a really molding and transformative effect in character-building.

Finally all success is depending on the qualification as well as the educational competence of the teacher. He should be a guide, friend and example for the student, imbuing him with true values and molding his character by the soft power of this living example and his sparkling inspiration.

In ancient cultures and civilization (like Greece, Egypt, China or India) the cast of the teachers has held the highest rank and position in society, while in Israel teaching and education was kept as part of the task and office of the Levites and the Rabbis (including the Sanhedrin). The low appreciation and respect towards teachers and teaching in our time signifies the low value that is given to humanity, wisdom and education today altogether and is another index of its moral decline. This has to change! Hence we need to advocate a new understanding of the import of education and teaching and thus restore the teacher's image to its true social value and thereby to once more make his work and status more attractive and appreciative.

The first step to take in working out a reform will be to design a general schooling-plan. This implies a mindful choice and structuring of subjects on core contents to be taught in different branches and grades of our school system. Building a set and structure of (possibly interrelated) core contents, we may develop them into sets of modules covering the whole of the chosen subjects. To use imagery, I like to compare a schooling plan or Curriculum with a puzzle, whose elements – the modules – if put together in an appropriate way, picture the reality of a desirable life.

In both, curricula development and design of teachers training programs, fundamental holistic psychological and pedagogical principles have to be taken into consideration. For the final Curriculum development, meaning the setting up of the variety of modules for the specific subjects and stages in accord with the study plan, we are about to build a mixed professional team composed of education practitioners, academics and curriculum writers, whose task is to work out a new model based on the principles presented in this proposal, which finally may be introduced and implied in the actual educational system throughout the country. In doing so, we will keep in touch and exchange with the advocates of present reform of education in different countries and particularly in India as a pioneering force as for human values and the apprehension of the sanctity of life. There is a lot of highly developed material which easily could be adapted to the needs and conditions of our Israeli/Palestinian system. Building on the grounds of our specific heritage we could even become an example for the entire Western world.

## **5. 1 Some Impacts of Developmental Psychology on Pedagogy and Syllabi**

To implant spirit into the child, one has to start right from the beginning of education that is to say from pre-school age. Right from birth the child is by nature driven to investigate the world and his own limits and abilities. In his book "Education begins before Birth", Mikhael Aivanhov has suggested focusing on the child's development even before birth. Nevertheless, in his first attempts of exploring the world he is mainly using his senses of touch, smell, taste etc. The senses are his first sources for the generation of primary terms and concepts of life and reality. It is the use of the senses by which he discovers the qualities of the elements of the world and their consistency. By his crawling movements he gets his first feeling for space surrounding him and hunger and thirst teach him his original sense for duration and time. And we all know that he is inventive by nature and one does well to reply to his inherent curiosity and quest to understand.

Not yet fully aware of the specifics of this outer world, he is still connected with the super-sensual and thus experiencing lively threads to the subtle reality beyond, from whence he has descended. Thus he still has a vivid sense for the supernatural and sublime, which nourish and sustain his soul in his attempt to adopt to the laws and needs of physical. It was Joseph Chilton Pierce, who in his book "Magical Child" has given specific attention to the magical aspect of the child's experience of the world, while the "Three Lights of Little Veronika" by Manfred Kyber show, how the undisturbed sensitive child may be fostered in the development of his sensitivity, creativity and spirituality by our supportive handling and guiding of him in his connectedness with the etheric, astral and spiritual realms.

It is not a rare case if parents enjoy their child's natural interest in their meditations or Yogic exercises as if they were rather a matter of remembrance. Especially as long as the child is specifically attached to the mother, he tries to participate in her life and actions, while later on he is increasingly attracted to his father and the wider circle of his out-door activities. In any way it is the parent's attitudes, interests and attachments, which inspire the child's imitation and imagination and which therefore, play an important role in the child's development.

It was especially Jean Piaget, Tagore, Maria Montessori and Steiner, who set up foundations of new developmental psychology of the child and the growing adolescent. They have described their observations in terms of stages of different mental activity-patterns, which constitute the child's adaptation to the world as well as the unfoldment of his faculties of cognition and memory. The basic mental conceptual powers they have discriminated as imagination, intelligence, reasoning and intuition and have thus based their pedagogical concepts on these considerations. It was further Rudolf Steiner, who has utilized his discoveries in his educational approach by giving right attention to the different phases of the child's development, passing from imitation to imagination and creative investigation unto intelligent reasoning and intuitive conceptualization. In all these stages the emotional is known to play an important role specifically in the development of trust and self-confidence, as a sound base for its mental and intellectual faculties.

There are basically three stages of child development, which proceed in cycles of seven years and should be considered as quite relevant in pedagogy and education. They are distinguished by the predominance of specific aspects (or “Gunas”) of psychological needs and elements in the child’s attitudes and behavior and can be roughly ranged as from birth to 7, from 8 to 14 and 15 to 21. While the first stage is characterized by a predominance of security and protection in relation to the basic needs (as well as physical and psychological satisfaction), thus signifying a state of introversion, emotionally dominated awareness and a close bond to the mother, the second one is bringing a shift from the inward towards a more extroverted orientation, a growing interest in the external world and predominated by will. In his allowing of growing horizons he is exercising the execution of his will and testing its limitations. This is an age where the child needs to have clear boundaries and to learn to respect set limits. And while in his first period the child is meant to develop growing emotional independence, inner stability, and trust, which are to be seen as the ingredients for the development of a firm foundation of self-confidence, in his second phase he is adopting ways and attitudes to meet and relate with his environment, the outer physical world and surrounding people. Thus he is establishing his patterns of socialization and relating with the world.

The third stage, which usually starts with puberty, is the phase when the young adolescent in experiencing the awakening of sexuality and its demands is starting to anticipate himself as adult, as male or female, seeking for purpose and meaning of life as well as for his future place and role in world and society. This is the age where new interests awake and where he is getting particularly receptive for questions of philosophy and psychology. At the same time he discovers new aspects of himself, new interests, talents and skills, which he tries to investigate and to enjoy. This is a time where the example of adults will have a rather strong impact on the development of his personality, his character as well as his outlook on life.

These years are decisive for him in respect of building a positive or negative view and expectation of life in reply of his experience with adults around him. Also of course these are the years, where he is preparing for his future life as professional, house-holder, family father and member of society.

Our Educational and Schooling System is structured in accordance to these three stages of physical, psychological, mental and spiritual development and in respect to age groups and developmental periods. In fact the entire building and structure of our educational systems is based on them. And it adapts to these stages of development in regard to emotional growth, awakening interests and perceptions and to the needs and functioning of his cognitive faculties.

Altogether we have to understand that the child’s spirit is awakened by adapting to both, its innate soul potentials and creative powers as well as to adequate ways we meet, stimulate, inspire and support his sensual, emotional, mental and spiritual needs. All this requires attention and empathy for the child and the stages of his development. (See: Maria Montessori: The Absorbent Mind)

It must be quite clear to us that it be the early experiences of the child, which are preconditioning him for later school education. Has he developed relative emotional independence, trust and natural self-esteem then he will also have a wake explorative spirit paired with keen interest in discovering life, the world and himself. These are the best preconditions for a school-beginner, which are but rarely found in our society today.

The consequence is that it has become the teacher's task and load, to bridge the gap and to possibly achieve what the parents missed. Of course this need can never be fully compensated by the teacher, yet he has still a tremendous chance to bring forth in the child what nature has provided, when sharing real empathy and interest in his ways of being and self-expression. In any way it is the authentic personality and lively interest of the teacher in the child's personality and character, which is working miracles. Even a retarded child sometimes can be awakened to a rather sound inner balance and harmony.

In whatever measure we work, curricula and pedagogy have to adapt to the stage of the child's inner growth and capacity. We want to inspire and to challenge, but never put pressure or expectations on his sensitive psyche. We have to set limits when he gets caught into lower emotional behavior and selfish attitudes, yet simultaneously to waken and inspire his higher aspirations.

As for the subjects and contents to teach, we start with what is close to the child's life experience and move forward according to the growth of the radius of his perception and ability of abstraction. Curricula we develop around core contents simultaneously caring for association and relatedness between them.

In India, an updating and revision of syllabi for the different school subjects has become an important part of a research organization dedicated to education reform and modernization of school curricula. A great deal of discussion on epistemological and pedagogical issues relevant for reform strategies has taken place in the context of the review of the National Curriculum Framework. Different aspects and problems of school education have been deliberately re-examined in terms of the nature of knowledge and its transaction in schools. A wide-ranging participation of institutions and public across the country has taken place through regional seminars, meetings, websites and the media.

The focus of this exercise is on curricular burden faced by children at all stages in our system, which was also the theme of a committee appointed previously. Its report was published under the title '[Learning Without Burden](#)'. It took the view that the sense of burden felt by both children and teachers has to do with the systemic tendency — *reflected both in syllabus and textbook preparation as well as in teaching and examination* — *to treat information as knowledge*. The recommendations of this committee and those discussed in other reports require a fresh look in the light of the current review of the National Curriculum Framework. Recommendations are now required for specific steps to improve and revise the syllabi of different subjects at all levels so that the burden on children is reduced and teaching becomes more interactive and joyful.

In 2002, NCERT had established Quick Review Committees to examine the textbooks of all subjects, and earlier this year internal committees were appointed to review syllabi of subjects. The findings of these groups are available. The draft reports of the National Forum Groups have also come in. It is important for syllabi revision groups to benefit from the insights now available from all these sources. In the context of curricular burden, there are these major considerations to be taken into account:

1. Appropriateness of topics and themes for the relevant stages of children's development from a psychological point of view.
2. Pervasive resonance of the values enshrined in the Constitution of Human Rights in the organization of knowledge in all subjects.
3. Continuity from one level to the next.
4. Inter-disciplinary and thematic linkages between topics listed for different school subjects, which fall under discrete disciplinary areas.
5. Linkages between school knowledge in different subjects and children's everyday experiences and knowledge derived from them.
6. Infusion of environment related knowledge and concern in all subjects and at all levels, treating 'environment' as a holistic expression, covering nature, all forms of life, human values and socio-economic and cultural meanings of environment.
7. Sensitivity to gender parity, peace, health and the needs of children with disabilities.
8. Integration of work-related attitudes and values in every subject and at all levels.
9. Need to nurture aesthetic sensibility and values by integrating the arts and Jewish etc. heritage of crafts in every aspect of the curriculum.
10. Linkage between school and college syllabi, avoiding overlapping.
11. Using the potential of educational technology, which includes the new information technology in all subjects.
12. Encouraging flexibility, epistemic activism and creativity in all areas of knowledge and its construction by children.

With this rather elaborated concept we have a model, which could be well adopted in Israel and Palestine in the process of planning the reform.

## 5. 2 Considering the Socio-economic Relevance of Education

Education is *the* basic national infrastructure for strong socio-economic foundations, a necessary condition for national security and the source and heart for cultural and social renewal and development. It is a primary factor in providing equal opportunities for full realization of individual abilities as well as for the society as a whole. The better the education and the lower the educational gaps the greater the benefit to individual and society.

Education is the fountain head (and rejuvenation well) of cultural, social and economic sustainability and renewal; it is the fabric of spiritual attainment and creative thinking, the source of psychological growth, scientific, technological and economic progress, social and ecological care and civil responsibility. It is the dynamo of cultural life and the backbone of society and its economy.

The present poor performance originates from a wide array of factors that include teacher quality, inadequate curricula, large fragmentation and a lack of effective management.

The problems plaguing Israel's education system are not rooted solely in the quality of the teachers, nor do they stem just from inferior educational programs or from inefficient and wasteful management, but they are mainly generated by a lack of flexibility throughout the system caused by the inherent complexity and fragmentation of Israel's society, which has in fact amplified and accelerated the decline.

Since these problems are profound and their socio-economic implications so severe it is no longer sufficient to deal only with the symptoms. Hence the need for a comprehensive structural reform of the entire education system along with the change of content and method of curricula and teaching.

Israel needs to substantially overhaul and reform the primary and secondary education that its children receive. Yet this reform cannot stop there but should rather include higher and university education as well.

### **1. Introducing an identical – high quality and mandatory – core curriculum in the entire education systems.**

Despite the great diversity in Israel's population, there is the indispensable need of *a common set of core values*, as well as *a common set of skills and knowledge* required for functioning as citizens in a democratic society and as productive workers in an open, competitive and modern economy. Besides unification in core subjects we need a significant improvement in the level of performance and achievement.

For this aim the system needs to provide truly free and complete education from the age of three to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Further it should be able to close socio-economic gaps and to provide equal opportunities to each pupil independent of ethnic belonging, social background, religion and gender along with setting uniform criteria for all pupils

The level of education in core subjects should be equal in all sectors of the education system and in all localities and neighborhoods. (The wider the disparities in basic education, the greater the inequality in opportunities for those entering the job market, thus contributing to further increases in gross income inequality.)

“Thus, there is a need for a state-of the-art, uniform, core curriculum that will provide an identical basic “toolbox” to every pupil throughout the national school system:

The basic “toolbox” must be considerably improved. This includes a significant upgrading of the educational levels in core subjects such as Civics, History, Hebrew, English, Mathematics, Science, Geography and Literature and to newly introduce subjects dealing with “goal of life”, “human science” and “ethics”.

1. The core curriculum must be uniform in content and in quality if the future economic playing field is to be level. While Israeli society is characterized by numerous lifestyles, each of which demands an education that reflects its distinct social and religious perspective, there is only one economic market in which all the country’s citizens must compete and thrive without becoming a burden to society. Therefore, a country that wants an egalitarian – and not just a successful – society must ensure that the improved core education be provided at equal levels in all its education systems, in all its towns and neighborhoods, in all parts of the country.
2. In order to receive a license, each school in Israeli must adopt and implement the core curriculum. Any and all public money provided to a school must be conditional upon full acceptance and implementation of the core curriculum.
3. The State of Israel must provide free education to every child, regardless of their needs or ability. An Israeli is an Israeli is an Israeli, without any relationship to his or her ethnic or religious background. Each must be provided with the most basic civil right, the right to build their personal futures, and to partake in the building of our collective future. *The education of our children – each and every one of them – must become a national priority second to none.*

Only at the national level is it possible to provide a comprehensive solution to the educational needs of the country’s population. Only a national mechanism with the mandatory systemic perspective can reduce regional, ethnic and religious gaps. *This is the role of the state – and not of local authorities or philanthropic/voluntary organizations.*

1. Supplementary funding will be provided to individual schools on the basis of the socio-economic composition of their respective populations and also as an incentive for rewarding school achievement.
2. Better achievements require better classroom environments. This includes installation of air-conditioning and heating in all classrooms and a stipulation that average class sizes be similar in all the education systems – with no more than 25 students in any given class.
3. A longer school day will be introduced – with qualified teachers only – including a hot lunch for every pupil, served in a proper dining room.

*Providing more attention to each pupil, augmenting the curriculum, developing special skills and motivating excellence are preconditions to better educational achievements.”*  
(Ben David)

## **2. Bolstering the teacher’s status, authority and professionalism**

It is an immediate need to substantially increase the teachers’ salaries alongside a significant improvement in the social image as well as the training of the teaching workforce.

To this end new curricula for teachers trainings need to be set up providing a new philosophy, evaluation and awareness of the real goal and import of education altogether as proposed in this paper. In this context the teaching profession needs to be advocated as a vocation of a much higher esteem and social appreciation. Prof. Ben David suggested further that the professional training of a teacher in Israel should require at least an undergraduate degree (BA or BSc rather than the currently acceptable BEd), in addition to a teaching certificate, provided the training would not be accomplished by a newly established teacher training colleges.

Ben-David further recommends that:

- a) the number of work hours per day and work weeks per year for full-time teachers be similar to the norm in other sectors of the economy. This will enable the employment of fewer teachers and raise the salary of those already employed.
- b) there needs to be more flexibility in the employment of teachers and in the determination of their salaries to enable a system that provides appropriate financial incentives for achievement.
- c) Each teacher must have his own workspace in the school.

## **3. Structural Changes in the Education System**

We should reconsider former recommendations recently offered by different international and national commissions. As for structural reforms in Israel’s education system it was the independent ELA commission (2003) and the proceeding government-appointed Dovrat commission (2005) who equally focused on ways of reducing complexity of departments, branches and offices of the educational system and its administration by establishing a professional and non-partisan National Education Authority, which will have the authority to determine the credo and the core curriculum of the education system in its entirety. This Authority was designed as to comprise a maximum of 20-25 professionals and a small administrative staff and to grant rather unified core curricula in Israel, while the Ministry of Education would be charged with setting policy for the education system in keeping with the credo and core curriculum set by the National

Education Authority providing for a performance granting the achievement of high quality skills in all critical core subjects.

The objective of such a reform is to set uniform criteria for all pupils by introducing an identical – and mandatory – high quality core curriculum, which is binding for the entire education system (all its sectors and in all the county). Also the level of education in core subjects must be improved and equal in all education systems and in all localities and neighborhoods. Only then we can reduce structural redundancy and extra expenditures and simultaneously create conditions that will facilitate a significant improvement in educational achievements and a substantial narrowing of the education gaps.

### 5. 3 Shaping the Plan for the Actual Reform:

#### I) Preparing the Reform: Steps of Conceptualization:

A) Preliminary Research (based on the previously presented Educational Theory and Philosophy):

1. Functional and Structural Analysis of the Present (Governmental) School System: Tracing and identifying the conceptual and structural core problems, lack, gaps, dysfunctions and failures of the system;
2. Choosing and Deciding the Set of educational Goals to be achieved by a Reformed School System; from them we derive the Objectives to be dealt with and to be met or fulfilled by the Reform:
  - a) Objective relating to content and subjects,
  - b) Objectives of pedagogy and methodology,
  - c) Structural objectives;
3. Development and Choice of Criteria;
4. Survey: Comparative Study of existing alternative School Models (in Israel/Palestine and abroad (international)):  
Montessori, Steiner, Reut, Hand-in-Hand, Neve Shalom, ...  
Mahavir, Tagore, ...
6. Evaluation and implied Prescriptions;

B) Development of the Model (on the grounds of our Philosophy and Vision):  
Curriculum Development for Schools as well as for Teachers Trainings;

- 1) Developing a Substantial Core Curriculum;
  - a) Principle: The Core Curriculum is to be conceptualized as the unifying and integrative factor in our Diverted Schooling System as well as the comprehensive communality to prevent and reverse the growing disintegration and fragmentation of our multiple Culture, Society and Economy;
  - b) The Core Curriculum has to be binding for all Schools and compulsory for all pupils,
  - c) Set a Range of Core Values, Core Subjects (Contents) and Core Skills;
- 2) Framework and Variety of Minor and Subsidiary Subjects: tolerated versus fostered; in accordance to partitions, sectors and branches:
  - a) Sectors:  
Jewish – Arab, plus International, Bedouin and Druze,  
Religious – Secular,  
Lingual,
  - b) Branches:  
Universal – Particular,  
Humanistic, Scientific, Professional,  
...
- 3) Specifics of Teachers Profession and Trainings:

- a) Upgrading the marginal subsidiary conditions: Bolstering the Status of Teachers: through substantial increase in teachers' salaries alongside significant improvements in quality of the teaching workforce;
- b) Redefining the Teachers Profession as Vocation;
- c) Reshaping and Advocating a new Image of the Teacher and his Profession;
- d) The New Teachers Training Program:
  - d1) Self-Inquiry: What is my greatest strength? What is my greatest weakness?  
What are my greatest talents? What are my aspirations and interests?  
What is my vision of and goal for my life?
  - d2) Introduction into Basics of Cabbalistic, Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology;
  - d3) Pedagogy: Principles and Directions; Basics of Developmental Psychology;
  - d4) Methodologies and Tools: NVC, Living Values, Human Dynamics;
  - d5) Subjects: General Knowledge, Particular Subjects;

4) The Structural Reform:

- a) Reshaping, reorganizing and unifying the complexly partitioned and fragmented system (in accordance to Paragraph 2));
- b) Reshaping the Administration:  
Considering the establishment of a professional and non-partisan National Education Authority etc. as recommended by ELA and Dovrat commission;
- c) Advocacy and Public Education (providing Brochures and involving the Media);

II) Implementing the Reform:

C) Steps of Implementation:

1) Strategies of Change and Transformation:

- a) Providing for the financial (budgetary) Needs;
- b) Recreating the School Environment and its Infrastructure (Facilities and Equipments)
- c) Introducing new Textbooks, Media and Technologies;
- d) How to manage the shift? General Considerations (Preparing the Public, ...);
- e) Restructuring the School System
- f) Shaping, Advocating and Advertising a new Image and Profile of the Teacher and his Profession (Vocation);
- g) Establishing new and Reshaping the old Teachers Trainings Colleges;
- h) The actual Shift of Educational Patterns in the Schools:  
Peer-Groups, Parent-Teacher Assemblies;

## 2) Interactive Reevaluation and Corrective Steering:

- a) Performance Measurement (application of the Robert Barrett Model);
- b) A Feedback Steering Model;

A survey should not only cover projects in Israel and Palestine, but also include international ones (e. g. Mahavir School, Tagore School, etc.). It should analyze and identify the lacks and unfulfilled needs of the present system and select models which might fulfill them. It should provide an analysis of

- the dysfunction of the school system (tracing and identifying the structural obstacles for smooth and effective functioning in its organizational set-up),
- the uneased structural complexity,
- the impacts of social fragmentation in its many respects (ethnic, religious, social (status), multi-cultural, lingual),
- the motivation of teachers,
- the attitude of parents (not backing educational efforts),
- the variegated aspects of the lack of overall, holistic vision
  - of purpose and unity of life
  - loss of inner ground,
- the social and institutional programs and costs of the integration of immigrants,
- the social impact: low moral state,
- the present and the wanted standards,
- specifics to deal with,
- and specifying the needs of a structural reform;

As mentioned above the present Israeli Educational System pictures its multi-cultural, deeply fragmented society with all its ethnic, religious and cultural antagonisms, disturbances and problems. In order to consolidate its effectivity and achievement it has to change from being a mirror to becoming an initial force of cultural and social renewal, development and unification. Instead of copying and perpetuating the problems of our society it has to strive for its resolution.

Several models – like hand-in-hand Schools, Neve Shalom, Mar Elias School and others – have proved it to be possible to break the pattern of stereotyped prejudices and expectations and to achieve real progress and transformation towards a more balanced and integral society.

The needed unifying forces will not be found in traditional concepts, but only in universal principles and human values, which are beyond perpetuated collective images and personal sympathy patterns.

### 5.3 Values Revisited

A life without values is condemned to stagnate and decline. Values and spiritual ideals are the source of happiness and the heart of humanity. And their common root is cosmic moral law, which is an expression of divine wisdom and transcendental intelligence (Chokmah and Binah). Cosmic law is the skeleton of life and universe. It represents the structure of eternity within the flow of time.

In this way we have to understand that psychological health, mental clarity, spiritual growth, happiness and well-being are completely depending on our abidance with cosmic moral law.

In other words, all problems in human life – individual as well as collective – originate from not being in tune (with God and universe). We feel cut off from the root of divine life as well as from cosmic intelligence, which build the foundation of the world. Hence the need to tune our instrument to the key note of life, *expresis verbis* to tune our mind to the frequency of cosmic consciousness and our psyche to the rule of cosmic moral law.

Being in tune with God means to be established in divine qualities and to strive for righteousness and integrity in all we think, speak and do. Only in maintaining purity of heart and clarity of mind man is able to reflect God's light and glory, which are his eternal inheritance.

Integrity, righteousness and being in tune with cosmic moral law are synonymous; they all indicate a person being naturally established in the fullness of virtue including truthfulness, honesty, faithfulness, commitment, justice, modesty, humility, compassion, independence, respect, esteem, etc. Being in tune with God and universe covers all these qualities and virtues, and the possession of them in their entirety is what we call integrity or righteousness.

What is true for the individual also holds for whole societies and nations. Being stuck with our illusionary expectations, attachments and claims we lost our centeredness and contact with our upper root. Being out of tune is the root of all world crises – religious as well as political, moral as well as physical. Such lack of centeredness results in inner and outer conflict, moral decline, war, distortion of nature, climate changes etc. etc.

All these aspects are issues of integral or holistic education. Its performance demands from the teacher to have a holistic vision of the human nature as being created in the image of God. Seeing the divine spark, which comprises all innate perfection and possibilities in the “other”, he will be able to address and meet the child or student in his wholeness and dignity thus covering all his needs and belongings as a human being and child of God. Such an attitude and achievement is true abidance with “Torah” and “Mitzvot”, just expressed in more modern spiritual words.

Usually secular people are associated as being nihilists or spiritually ignorant. In fact there is a good portion of secular people who are seriously seeking for truth and meaning

and therefore committed to ethical conduct and social attentiveness. What definitely separates them from the religious mainstream is their rejection of external religious observance and symbolism. Usually they are rejecting an outward oriented religious attitude, against a more introverted spiritual life and awareness. Of course there are many who throw away the child with the bath. And it is the growing influence of this kind together with blind religious fanatics, which causes the endangering decline of our present society and culture.

In fact it is this anarchic reality, which gave birth to the growing concern with present social development and education, in order to stop and reverse the downward trend and to bring about a spiritual and ethical awakening to the import of value, transcendental awareness, cosmic moral law and true meaning.

These should be the basic unifying principles and foundations of a reform of our secular (and possibly also religious) school system.

Finally a reform should also provide a supportive, child centered educational environment granting the well-being and healthy development of our children.

## 5. 5 Structure, Branches and Stages of Schooling, Syllabi and Curricula

The classical stages in education are:

Pre-School,

Primary,

Secondary,

High School,

University;

As long as these stages coincide with the natural stages and patterns of child development they should be kept and moulded in accordance to the national tradition unless they contradict specific particulars of socio-economic needs and demands (only relevant in higher education).

Pre-nursery / Nursery / Kindergarten

In the pre-nursery at Tagore International School we follow a non-formal approach to learning - an enjoyable, interactive ongoing process.

Children are encouraged to explore the environment around and interact with their group.

Activities are designed to develop fine motor skills, intellectual skills and encourage their sensorial development. These students have their own assembly and a variety of activities, which are enjoyable and creative. Their general social conduct and manners, communication skills in language, artistic and music skills are taken care of.

Further a modern school reforms need not deny or put away with traditional concepts and dichotomy of “General” versus “Particular” or “Specific” Knowledge, but should give it a new shape and meaning. While “General Knowledge” paired with personal experience and reasoning is to be seen as the ground on which the student is building his value system, his “*Weltanschauung*”, his “view of human nature” and his socialization, the specific particular subjects contribute and impart the needed skills and know-how for his future practical and professional life.

The different specific subjects and particular disciplines imbue him with information, methodologies, specific knowledge of different scientific disciplines, results and methods of research and information processing and the like, whereas “General Knowledge” is transferred by study of and discourse on World Literature, Philosophy, General Principles of Scientific Discoveries, the Arts, Ethics and Religion.

And while specific subjects may be taught in the light of their place in the entelechy of creation as well as child comprehension, the General Knowledge provides the universal matrix, ground and framework in which the specifics are imbedded and having their contextual stand.

Despite the significant difference in General (Universal) and Disciplinary (Specific) Education, the development of Syllabi and Modules do not need to keep this dichotomy; in fact it is not possible to do so, but it is part of the teacher's understanding and flexibility to provide for its different connotation.

Keeping the understanding of the three periods of the child's development (1-7, 8-14, 15-21), we will see that the starting point for professional preparation is puberty, the time when "will" and gender start to dominate the psyche's life, attempting to conquer the world. Therefore real professional specification should not start earlier than at age 14, meaning that even professional schools, which usually start at age 10, shall keep a general and wide outlook towards life, before getting into fully specialized professional training. This would be the ideal, but if it is possible to keep up with it, is depending on different socio-economic factors as national technological development, employment, labour market, income structure and economic stability.

The syllabi of all schools and educational systems can be represented in the image of a tree, growing from one root and unfolding into a variety of branches. And the differentiation is growing with the advancement of the school stages and from level to level.

Depending on the type of school, specific subjects like second or third language or specific crafts will start at different age and grade. Relating to the social reality of Israel as a multi-cultural, bi-lingual and poly-religious fragmented nation, ethnic, lingual, emigrational and religious pluralism is causing a much more differentiated school structure and therefore more demanding than other school systems in the world. Nevertheless and especially in response to the growing disintegration and fragmentation, we need to care for more unifying principles and core contents, counteracting to the social trends. Such principles can be found in general humanistic and inter-cultural approaches, which not necessarily hinder the development of a more explicit involvement and interest for specific religions, as it also does not for later professional specification.

These are issues, which have to be worked out with the specific religious communities.

In high schools and professional schools the subjects of the core curriculum will be compulsory, while there might be a range of subjects offered as additional choice or as informal study or training.

The teacher's aims should be going beyond the prescribed syllabus in preparing students as future leaders of the society. The syllabus should provide to devise a curriculum that maximizes progress in multiple dimensions such as intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical, cultural and artistic. It should set a new trend for excellence in learning by

emphasizing on self- and social awareness, on values systems, emotional intelligence, vocabulary development, language structure, reading, comprehension, creative writing and providing the students with the opportunity to review and reinforce concepts and investigative skills. The teacher's training and school's program should ensure a quality of teaching that promotes self-learning because it is self-learning that is granting self-esteem, autonomy, independent thinking and self-sustainability. Activity-based learning should be emphasized for which the students may attend special workshops or be sent for educational outings based on their syllabus.

Coupled with a strong foundation of social and moral values, the new curriculum and pedagogic approach of teaching will ensure an amalgamation of respect for our rich inter-cultural heritage, for identity as well as difference, for more humanity, a universal vision of life, a global outlook and modern educational methodology. Finally the alignment of the curriculum, to suit the needs of the students, should be given high importance.

Altogether the syllabi and modules of the Israeli School System should be developed parallel and jointly with Palestinian Institutions.

## 5. 6 Some Minimum Required Changes in Contents of Curricula and Modules

For basic education: See: Value Education, 4 Vols., Bombay, India

Intermediate/high school:

Old:	New:
Hebrew/Arabic	... it is specifically within the framework of learning and exercising of languages that a culture of listening and non-judgmental communication can be created, ...
English	...
Math	...
Geography	new approach (interconnected with history etc.)
History	new approach, compulsory: including the rise and the fall of the Third Reich and the Shoah, as well as the Jewish-Palestinian Conflict from different angles of view and narratives.
Physics Chemistry Biology	Natural Sciences 1/2  Human Science (Psychology, Dynamics of the Soul, Ethics, Human Relations)
Cybernetics	Group Dynamics,
Arts	...
Music	...
Sports	...
Religion/ Philosophy	an entirely new approach: universal plus comparative religious understanding; purpose and conduct of life in general, the eternal quest of man and the answers to it in the different religious traditions, leading to the study of the principles of the three

Abrahamic religions, which should become compulsory (see Switzerland, CET);

Citizenship, human and civil rights

Value Education, Education for Peace and Democracy, Development of Social Awareness and a Sense of Social Justice, of Sound Social Relations, of a Basic Understanding of Politics and Responsible Citizenship (Staatsbürgerschaftskunde);

Specific Preparatory Professional Training Programs;

In any way the focus of our attention in educational philosophy should be laid on the teachers training and the issue of the teacher-students relationship;

As for the curriculum, a set of modules has to be designed in form of a framework embracing specific subject and contents, which the teacher should be able to handle in a flexible way according to the needs, adjustments and skills of the class; the way of teaching should be based on kindling real interest and – whenever possible – on immediate interactive communication;

The teacher should further be able to allow and foster learning according to the student's specific learning modes, habits and skills (See: Sandra Segal's "Human Dynamics").

To enable the teacher to take on this task, he must be trained to develop his own personality on a basis of true self-awareness and humanity. He needs to be well prepared and have a feeling of vocation to his job. He not only needs to comprehend the ways of pedagogy and the handling of teaching technology and media and to know the contents of the modules to be taught, but even more the modes of learning and the patterns of personalities and temperaments of the children, as well as to develop skills and ways of handling inner and outer emotional conflicts of him etc.

Altogether the teacher is to be able of initiating an act of enthusiastic, flexible and interactive teaching-learning process centered in the needs and abilities of his students. Only then he will be able to become an empathetic friend and true guide to the aspiring soul of the disciple.

This alone is integral education, when teacher and student are relating with each other in a temporary lively process of all-encompassing human communication and interaction, flexibly adjusting and dealing with the particular subjects and contents of the specific modules in a way that is related to the true interests of the student, the purpose and meaning of humanity and the tasks and experiences of our daily lives.

Keep as guiding principles the proverbs:

"Education is what is left, when you forget what you have learned"

“Saving a child is like saving the world.”

## **5. 7 Some Aspects Concerning Actual Needs in Developing Curricula, Pedagogy and Teachers Trainings**

The opening of third millennium can be characterized basically by two opposing significant factors: On one side we have an incredible advancement in scientific achievements and its application as high tech, communication technology and consequently a tremendous rise of social awareness towards an accelerating process of globalization, and on the other a rapid decline of moral and spiritual awareness, attitude and responsibility.

To abide with the above mentioned goals and principles of education, a school reform has to provide both – a strong impetus on value, character and the transcendental roots of our life as well as for adjustment to the fast change and development in technology and its impact on world globalization.

Having dealt with the primary importance of the idealistic foundation of education in the first part of this proposal, we now will deal with the more technical and methodological side of teaching and education.

These days the adult generation is witnessing the unbelievable capacity of children to handle all kinds of technical instruments, especially communication and computer devices. They are born with skills enabling them to easily adjust to modern technology and enjoy and make use of their benefits and advantages. Hence pedagogy and pedagogic materials/media can be widely and comprehensively rely on and implement these technical devices and resources. As long as we are keeping the awareness that the use of media cannot replace our face-to-face communication enhancing a vivid culture of deep inner feeling and sharing, there will not be the danger of degrading or perverting our human self-understanding and interactions, our entire dealing with each other to a mere technical or mechanical issue, and help us in establishing an attitude of adopting them as mere tools and devices.

The application and implementation of communication and computer devices in education of course has different implications (which need specific pedagogic attention). Here we want to just look at three aspects:

The first impact on the teaching-learning process – related to the question, how children learn – is that digital technologies are enabling the children to become more active and independent learners, taking charge of their own learning through direct exploration, expression, and experience. Thus – in the likeness of playing games – the focus shifts from ‘being taught’ to ‘learning’.

The second implication is the impact of digital devices and media on the level of the subject of learning. Most of what children learn in pre-digital schools is designed for the use of paper-and-pencil. With new technologies, children can easily undertake projects (and learn concepts) that were seen as too advanced or complex for children in the pre-digital era.

The third aspect relates to who children learn with. Global connectedness can enable new 'knowledge-building communities' in which children (and adults) around the globe collaborate on projects and learn from one another. Especially in a region like the Middle East and in a country with such a fragmented multi-cultural society as Israel, these efforts require new multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-modal approaches to learning.

In the following we give a short draft of some Guiding Principles for this new opening:

As these required changes and adaptations will not happen automatically, they have to be introduced and initiated in a systematic manner. Although declining costs will make digital technologies increasingly available to children around the world, access to computers and Internet connections is not enough. Many of the software products that are being developed for children today serve to narrow, rather than broaden, children's intellectual horizons. To create a true learning revolution, we must create technologies that support a new vision of learning and a new vision of children.

In our work towards this goal, we are guided by the following principles:

1) *Direct exploration*: The traditional view is that children learn about the world directly (by crawling, touching, chewing – that is, by exploring) until preschool, but then they need to be 'taught' more advanced ideas. Our goal is to develop digital technologies that enable children to continue to learn ever more advanced ideas by direct exploration and experimentation. For example, children who live in remote villages should be able to contribute directly to their community's agricultural efforts by using computers connected globally to the Internet, and locally to sensors, to run experiments on the quality of soil, air, and vegetation.

According to Steiner's perception, the children's development of learning skills is leading from imitation, over imagination and intellectual understanding, to independent self-sustained reasoning and intuition. Using electronic devices all these facts will manifest in different ways, speeding up the development of skills of abstraction.

2) *Direct expression*: New media will enable children to relate their own stories and ideas – and relate them to a much broader and more diverse audience – rather than having adults do the talking for them. The traditional view is that children should focus on 'absorbing' ideas from adults, not on expressing their own ideas. Even what children know about themselves and their culture is what they hear from adults. The goal should be to go beyond this traditional view and develop digital technologies that enable children to express themselves to others through storytelling, communicating, designing, and inventing in new ways – in effect, to find their own voice.

3) *Direct experience*: In the future, children will no longer rely only on their parents for reports of the great big world out there. Instead, they will experience it directly through their own personal contacts with other people around the globe. Through electronic eyes and ears, they will be able to see how the other side of the world looks and sounds. This experience will diminish the impact of national frontiers, although local cultures – what

children experience in their own schoolyards and homes – will remain important. Perhaps most important, children will develop a different sense of themselves as intellectual agents – as valuable members of real and virtual communities. Children will become accustomed to expressing themselves across boundaries of geography, culture, language, and age.

4) *Immediate practical work*: Besides the availability of all kinds of media and communication technology – along with their advantages and disadvantages –, the ability and beneficial implication of simple practical work should not get lost or underestimated. It still proves to be of great positive implication on the physical, mental and psychological condition for the student, to experience the ability and skill of his hands in working with elemental materials like clay, wood or metal. The use of his own hands in crafts, pottery, gardening etc. as well as the immediate experience of visible and tangible material results from ones own concentrated effort brings about a certain feeling of contentment and satisfaction which helps to pace our soul and mind. Opposite to the work on PCs, notebooks or other digital media the work with ones own hands has a much positive impact on the development of our personality and character. In many ways it has a similar effect as contemplation.

5) *Multicultural*: Most technologies support only a limited set of cultural styles and approaches. With global connectedness come both a need and an opportunity for more encompassing approaches, encouraging participation by children from all different cultures. Our goal is to develop new digital technologies that provide multiple paths of entry and multiple patterns of use, while also encouraging children around the world to share and learn about one another's cultural traditions.

6) *Multilingual*: To date, the great variety of languages spoken around the world has been perceived as a major obstacle to the development of a global community. With global connectedness comes an ever greater need for children to “speak a common language,” and an ever greater opportunity for children to learn more about one another’s languages - and about language in general. Our goal is to develop new tools that enable children to communicate with one another across linguistic boundaries, while supporting their learning of other languages, and enhancing the value of their own.

7) *Multimodal*: The channels of communication between children and computers have been extremely limited: keystrokes and mouse clicks in one direction, text and graphics in the other. By enabling computers to understand and produce gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication, we will enrich the nature of the interaction between children and computers. By the same token, computers that understand verbal and nonverbal communication can open up computing to a broader range of ages and cultural traditions (including non-literate people). That is, children who cannot (yet) type, can certainly speak and gesture in the direction of their computer, and understand the speech and gesture that the computer returns.

## **New Initiatives**

It is especially the [MIT Media Lab](#) which is already working on many of these ideas in research projects, and they are planning to create a major new research center that focuses explicitly on issues of children and learning. They are also working closely with [2B1](#), a new foundation that supports innovative educational uses of computers in the developing world.

So far as for new pedagogic technology.

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Etush Kessler (hand-in-hand schools),  
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In cooperation with the educational teams of  
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Dina Lahlou (Amman),  
Dr. Sadiqa Hillis (DoE, El-Azhar University, Gaza);

## Literature on Integral Education:

Pirke Avot;

Ramchal: Mesilat Yesharim;

Reb Nachman of Bratzlav: Likutei Moharan, Likutei Etzot, Shivechei Moharan;

Adin Steinsaltz: A Dear Son to Me;

Rav Kook:

Martin Buber: Between Man and Man,  
I and Thou,

Morris van Cleve: Existentialism and Education,

George W. Kneller: Existentialism and Education,

Kurzweil: Buber on Education,

Joshua Weinstein: Buber and Humanistic Education;

Ze'ev Ben Shimon Halevi: Adam and the Cabbalistic Tree;

Yitzchak Guinsburg: The Art of Education;

Salanter:

Rabbi Dov Katz: The Mussar Movement,

Chaim Ephraim Zaitchuk: Sparks of Mussar,

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi: "How Gertrud teaches her Children"

John Dewey: The Child and the Curriculum;

Rabindranath Tagore: Personality (Chapter "My School")

Parker J. Palmer: To know as we are known;

Mikhael Aivanhov: Youth: Creators of the Future;

Anne Franck: Diary;

Victor Frankl: The Unheard Cry for Meaning, The Search for Meaning;

Erich Fromm: The Art of Loving;

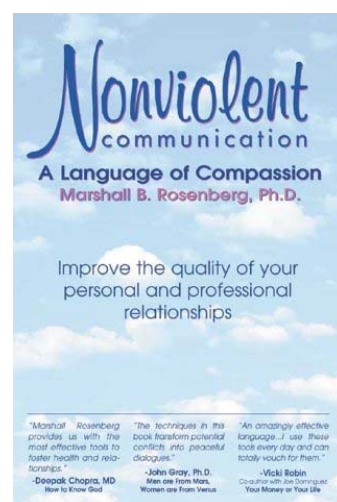
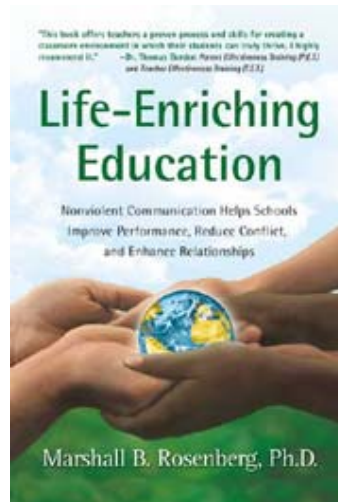
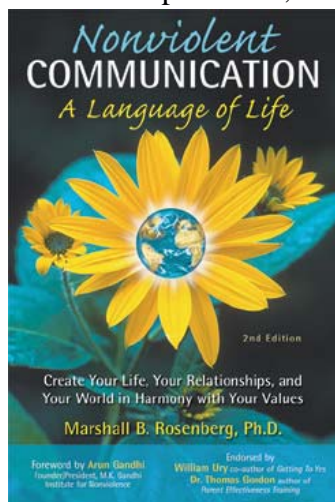
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Marshall B. Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication;

Marshall B. Rosenberg: Mutual Education: Towards Autonomy and  
Independence;

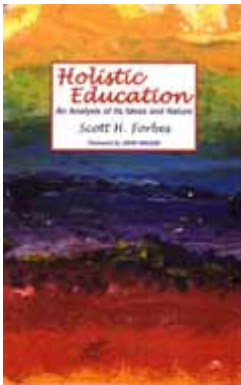


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Mahatma Gandhi: Autobiography;  
Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine, The Ideal of Human Unity;  
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Rudolf Steiner: Human Values in Education;  
[Maria Montessori: To Educate The Human Potential](#);  
[Maria Montessori: The Absorbent Mind](#);  
Maria Montessori: Education and Peace;  
Naomi Drew: Learning the Skills for Peacemaking: A K-6 Activity Guide to Resolving Conflicts;  
Naomi Drew: [Peaceful Classroom in Action](#);  
Naomi Drew: [Communicating and Cooperating](#);

Higher Levels:

Antoine Nicolas Condorcet: Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progres de l'esprit humain;  
Roger Cousinet: L'education nouvelle;  
St. Hillaire: Education and the Aim of Human Life;  
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Reb Nachman of Bratzlav: Likutei Moharan, Likutei Etzot, Shivechei Moharan;

Adin Steinsaltz: A Dear Son to Me;

Rav Kook:

Martin Buber: Between Man and Man,

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Morris van Cleve: Existentialism and Education,

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Links

[Analyze an organization's learning climate](#) – set of tools concerning cultural aspects of organizational development.

[The Business Researcher's Interests: Organizational Learning & Knowledge Management](#) - Lots of links.

[Index of links to learning organization websites](#): some ideas for getting started in learning about learning organizations.

[Learning Org -- A Discussion of Learning Organizations](#). Contains current messages and archives of the Learning-org mailing list.

[Learning organization profile](#) – checklist produced by ASTD (American Society For Training and Development)

[The Learning Organizations Homepage](#): articles on the nature of the learning organization plus articles and links.

[The Learning Organization](#): journal.

[The Learning Organization: Transformational Change](#): article

[Organizational fitness Website](#)

[Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations: An Overview](#)

[QuaSyLaTic Model / Thinking](#) - Learning Organizations inspired homepage

[The Society for Organizational Learning](#)

[Stanford Learning Organization Web \(SLOW\)](#): The Stanford Learning Organization Web (SLOW) is an informal network of [Stanford](#) researchers, staff, and students along with colleagues and friends from the corporate world interested in the nature and development of learning organizations.

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Please refer to <http://www.great-ideas.org/30.htm> for complete annotations of these and other great background resources on holistic education and related topics.

Links to Holistic Organizations and Schools

Organizations Supporting Various Aspects of Holistic Education:

[AERO: Alternative Education Resource Organization](#)

[AllPIE: Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education](#)

[Association of Waldorf Schools of North America](#)

[Down to Earth Books](#)

[Education in Search of Spirit](#)

[EnCompass: Center for Natural Learning Rhythms](#)

[Folk Education Association of America \(FEAA\)](#)

[Great Ideas in Education](#)

[Home Education Magazine](#)

[John Dewey Project on Progressive Education](#)

[Montessori Foundation](#)

National Association for Core Curriculum (NACC; Kent, OH)

[National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools](#) (NCACS)  
National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA; Rhinebeck, NY)  
[Paths of Learning](#)  
[Rethinking Schools](#)

Schools Demonstrating Elements of Holistic Education:

[The Community School](#) (Camden, Maine, USA)  
[Liberty School](#) (Blue Hill, Maine, USA)  
[Play Mountain Place](#) (Los Angeles, California, USA)  
[Puget Sound Community School](#) (Seattle, Washington, USA)  
[Venice Hill School](#) (Vasalia, California, USA)  
[The Windsor House](#) (North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

This review was developed by the Paths of Learning Resource Center, at [www.PathsOfLearning.net](http://www.PathsOfLearning.net) - designed to serve your holistic and learner-centered education resource and information needs.

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[Montessori](#),  
[Steiner](#),  
[Krishnamurti](#).

[Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice](#), published by Holistic Education Press (P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733; ph. (800) 639-4122) which also lists several books on the subject. The

[Ontario Institute for Studies in Education](#) Press, in Toronto, has published work by [John P. Miller](#) that provides a good introduction to holistic education;

[OISE](#) also hosts courses and conferences. There are separate bodies of literature on spirituality in education, eco-literacy, multiple intelligences, whole language, and cooperative learning that address more specific aspects of holistic education.