

***Foundation for Jewish Camping
Senior Camp Leadership Program
March 15-16, 2010
Jane Shapiro***

Mitzvot ben Adam l'Makom: Jewish Ritual Observance

- I. Playing around with Idea/Values/Vision based practice
- II. Deconstructing Mitzvah, Deconstructing Practice: How to use an idea to shape your work
- III. Reframing Mitzvah, Reframing the role of prayer at Camp

Some Texts on Vision

Seymour Fox and William Novak *Vision at the Heart: Lessons from Camp Ramah on the Power of Ideas in Shaping Educational Institutions* New York: CIJE 1997 p. 5.

A vision is a vibrant entity. It's a portrait of ideal human beings shaped by education – an image rich and exciting enough to guide your future choices. A vision is inspired by your belief about human possibility, while being influenced by your experience of human fallibility. An educational vision must be able to answer certain questions: What kind of people will graduate from this school, camp, or other educational setting? What will they understand and believe? How will they behave? What will they know how to do? In what ways will they be able to contribute to the community? And what qualities, intrinsic to your vision, will enable them to keep growing and learning.

Maimonides *Hilchot Deot* (Laws of Moral Disposition and Ethical Conduct)

How shall a man train himself (*Yargil et atzmo* in dispositions, so they become ingrained? Let him practice again and again, and the actions prompted by those dispositions, which are the mean between the extremes, and repeat them continuously until they become easy and no longer irksome to him, and so the corresponding dispositions will become a fixed part of his character.

Isadore Twerski "What must a Jewish Study and Why?" In Seymour Fox, Israel Scheffler, Daniel Marom, *Visions of Jewish Education*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 50

Maimonides taught that the Torah is an educational resource whose purpose is to shape the supreme spiritual-moral character. Our inquiry will prove and emphasize that this assumption concerning the purpose of the Torah...is the intellectual focus of ...

Maimonides' philosophy: The practice of each and every *mitzvah* contributes something to human perfection – moral and intellectual – spiritual perfection. Religious acts lead to perfection.

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Moshe Greenberg

Underlying this essay is an image of a learner as a creature impelled by curiosity concerning the world about him and his own inner life – the meaning of what his senses take in. The need to know these is second only to basic subsistence needs (food, shelter, health, reproduction). The desire to know and understand is implanted in human nature from infancy, and what the child learns in school must satisfy that desire, through a curriculum crafted accordingly.

Knowledge of the facts of the nonhuman, material, natural world is necessary for human existence... But knowledge of the nonhuman realm, be it ever so profound, does not enable one to understand oneself – the structure of one's psyche: its needs, aspirations, fears and hopes, and the realms of value and significance.

The soul knows no rest until it gains some comprehension of, and makes some order in, the realm of value. This restlessness has generated spiritual creativity in every human society, a ubiquity that attests to a vital need...

Menahem Brinker

...Students (campers) have no...obligation to adopt a specific "Jewish" doctrine as a condition for preserving their Jewish identity. Their responsibility for Jewish and Israeli life in the present and future is dependent only upon their will and readiness to see themselves as part of this life. Without any external coercion or obligation, they can, if they so desire, transform the fact of being born to a Jewish family, into their own free choice, which can be made on an ongoing basis. Jewishness is always a given that can be changed. Only when it is continually renewed by free choice does it cease to become a fact and enter the realm of value.

Ahad HaAm

Just as Israel has kept the Shabbat, so has the Shabbat kept Israel.

