

JEWISH-ISRAELI IDENTITY AMONG ISRAEL'S FUTURE TEACHERS

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The question of Jewish-Israeli identity is one of present-day Israeli society's cardinal and pressing issues. The identity of a citizen of Israel is not that of a purely Israeli identity, nor is it a purely Jewish identity. It is, in varying degrees, a synthesis of Jewish and Israeli components, depending on the particular subgroups or subidentities. Stress develops around the relationship between Jewishness and Israeliness and around the relationship between Jewish religion and Jewish natinality. Our findings revealed four distinct models of Jewish-Israeli identity: 1) Non-religious (secular); 2) Traditionalist (religious tradition-oriented); 3) National religious (State Religious sector); 4) Ultra-Orthodox (Independent sector). A meaningful shift has occurred in the attitude of Israeli youth toward the Holocaust. The Holocaust has become a major factor, at times the uppermost factor, of Jewish identity. However, the meaningful shift in attitudes toward the Holocaust does not involve a shift in attitude with regard to other periods in the history of the Jewish diaspora, nor is there any change in attitude toward Jews living in the diaspora.

An unprecedented study of the components of Jewish-Israeli identity was conducted at Israeli seminaries and teachers colleges, where the future generation of teachers is being trained to teach at schools linked to the various streams in Israel's educational system, including the State, State Religious, and ultra-Orthodox streams.

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The study sample involved students, both men and women. The sample group was selected on the basis of data supplied by the Teacher Training Division of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the student-teacher body in training colleges nationwide. Three hundred and sixty students (64 percent of the sample) were training to teach in the State secular schools, 132 (23 percent) in the State Religious schools, and 72 (13 percent) in the Independent school network of the ultra-Orthodox community. This breakdown corresponds almost exactly with the proportional distribution of those groups in the total student population of the teacher training colleges. The questionnaires were distributed during April, May, and early June 1990. A large majority of the students were women, mostly aged 21-26.

All the future teachers attending the religious training colleges were themselves religious. At the State secular colleges, 25 percent defined themselves as traditional, 4 percent as religious, and 71 percent as not religious. It was found that the breakdown by sector and by degree of religious identification did have a statistically significant influence on the attitudes of the students. The overwhelming majority of the students in the sample (90 percent) were native-born Israelis. In most cases, at least one of the parents was born abroad, but parents' origins were rarely a significant factor in the students' attitudes.

Finally, the importance of the fact that the population studied consisted of young student teachers cannot be overemphasized. If the educational system does affect attitudes, it is these students who will mold to a significant degree the next generation's views, attitudes, and knowledge of its own Israeli and Jewish identity.

Another study that we conducted in 1994 and has not yet been published, both on high school students and student teachers, appears to give very similar findings on these subjects.

The study focused particularly upon attitudes toward the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora; the Holocaust and its repercussions on identity; attitudes towards the State of Israel and Zionism; and attitudes towards the Jewish religion.

Four Models of Religious Identification

The identity of a citizen of Israel is neither purely Israeli nor purely Jewish. It is, rather, a synthesis of Jewish and Israeli components, varying by sub-group or sub-identity. The variable of religious identification emerged as the most significant factor affecting

Jewish-Israeli identity, with an influence greater than that of any other variable such as country of origin.

Our findings revealed four distinct models of Jewish-Israeli identity:

1. Non-Religious (secular).
2. Traditionalist (religious tradition-oriented) — individuals belonging to these first two groups attend seminaries of the State sector.
3. National Religious (State Religious sector).
4. Ultra-Orthodox (Independent sector).

Non-Religious (Secular) Identity

Those in this group comprise the majority in the State sector. Individuals falling in this group see themselves more Israeli than Jewish, although to a lesser extent than in the past. Members of the secular group are tied by very strong bonds to the Israeli components of Jewish-Israeli identity — the State of Israel and its land. On the other hand, their ties to the Jewish components — both the Jewish people and religion — are far less powerful and meaningful, and are at times even marked by reservations. The Israeli component in their identity is in a state of decline, a condition that reflects the difficulties of being Israeli, perhaps even the existence of a crisis or rupture in Israeli identity. The historical events they perceive as most meaningful are the Holocaust — the dominant factor in their Jewish identity, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the wars in Israel's modern history.

Traditionalist Identity

Members of this group view their Jewishness and their Israeliness as highly meaningful. The group's bonds to the State of Israel and its land are very strong. They also perceive their ties to the Jewish people and the Jewish religion as being very meaningful. Members of this group usually come from families with a greater degree of religious observance than practiced by them. In many respects this is a transition group, moving from a greater degree of religious observance to a lesser one. Movement in the opposite direction, from no religious observance towards observance of one degree or another, does not produce a traditionalist identity. A prominent component of this group are Jews of Mediterranean descent. The historical events perceived as meaningful are the same as in the secular

group, with the addition, in a far less meaningful form, of events related to ancient Jewish history.

At the high school level we can find members of the traditionalist identity in the State sector, but also in the State Religious sector; whereas at the seminary and teachers college level, members of this group are studying only in the State non-religious stream.

National Religious Identity

Judaism as well as Jewishness stand out as the dominant components of this group's identity. The national religion, which is joined to the Jewish people by inextricable ties, is at the core of the group's Jewish identity. The attitude of group members towards both the Land and State of Israel is also very intense and their Israeliness is perceived as highly meaningful.

Events considered to be of major importance are the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the giving of the Torah, the Book of the Law. On issues such as Zionism, Israeliness and the State of Israel, their approach is similar to that of the traditionalists, and in certain respects is even more nationalist and Zionist than the secular group's approach. When particular aspects of their religious attitudes were examined (attitude towards existing religious trends; the role of religion in affairs of state and in the life of individuals; religion's task of preserving the Jewish people, etc.), a very similar approach was revealed to that of the ultra-Orthodox.

Ultra-Orthodox Identity

Members of this group consider themselves solely as Jews. The attitude of group members with respect to their Israeliness may be one of reservation, suppression, denial, or repudiation. Their religious identity is the essence and meaning of their Jewish identity and the source of their highly meaningful bond to the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. The group's attitude towards Zionism as a political-ideological movement is reserved and often negative. Group members also subject the State of Israel to ample criticism. Events in Jewish history that are considered meaningful are the Holocaust and the giving of the Torah, followed by additional events in ancient national-religious history.

Table 1 illustrates the differences in self-perception between the secular and religious sectors, with those in State Religious schools identifying overwhelmingly as firstly Jewish, while those in the

secular system almost evenly split between primarily Jewish or Israeli identities. Table 2 reveals the differences between those with non-religious, traditional, and religious identities over a six-point continuum from Israeli to Jewish.

Table 1

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE YOURSELF?
FIRSTLY ISRAELI OR FIRSTLY A JEW
(in percentages)*

	Firstly Jew	Firstly Israeli
State	47.84	52.16
State Religious	99.06	0.94

* The directors of the ultra-Orthodox sector asked us to eliminate this series of questions from their questionnaires.

Table 2

ISRAELI-JEW CONTINUUM

	Israeli			Jew		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-Religious	14.35	24.47	26.58	23.63	8.02	2.95
Traditional	2.60	6.49	18.18	35.06	15.58	22.08
Religious	0.85	0.85	3.42	34.19	21.37	39.32

The Perspective of Time: Attitudes Toward Jewish History and the Prominence of the Holocaust

Attitudes to the Jewish people are also expressed in attitudes toward Jewish history. In the past there were complaints about the indifference of young Israelis toward Jewish history. Tendencies have existed in different circles in Israeli society demanding a disconnection from Jewish history in the diaspora (e.g., the Canaanite movement of the 1950s).

Respondents from the four major identity groups were asked to name three historical events which affected the destiny of the Jewish people, as well as three historical events which affected themselves or their own destiny in particular. The results are detailed in Table 3.

The young secular Israelis answered both parts of the question with reference only to events in recent Jewish history, particularly in the twentieth century. Moreover, the events named most often in both categories were identical: the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and Israel's wars.

It should be noted that these events are all connected with Jewish national history, in many respects with Zionist history, and perhaps also with Israeli history. The Holocaust is, of course, a different kind of event in this context. Yet we found that many of the young Israelis examined it largely from a Zionist and Israeli — rather than a Jewish — point of view, and still less from a universal point of view.

Table 3 also shows that, with one exception, the Holocaust is the event most frequently mentioned in all three sectors as having influenced the destiny of the Jewish people and the participants' personal destiny. The one exception to this pattern was that among the students in the State Religious sector; the establishment of the State of Israel was mentioned most frequently as a historical event which affected their personal destiny (76 percent compared with 51 percent for the Holocaust). Practically every participant in the secular sector mentioned the Holocaust or — much less frequently — World War II.¹ Most of the participants in the Religious streams mentioned the Holocaust. In other words, the students attributed the greatest subjective and objective historical significance to the Holocaust (with the exception of the State Religious sector).

This question also illustrates the change that has taken place since earlier studies where the Holocaust was mentioned much less frequently. In Farago's 1985 study, 44 percent of the students mentioned the Holocaust as the historical event which affected their destiny more than any other event. In Herman's studies, the Holo-

Table 3

HISTORICAL EVENTS WHICH INFLUENCED THE DESTINY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND YOUR PERSONAL IDENTITY*

Event	Jewish Destiny				Personal Destiny			
	1	2	3	To- tal	1	2	3	To- tal
<i>State Secular</i>								
The Holocaust	54.4	27.6	8.7	90.7	41.6	13.8	8.2	63.6
Establishment of the State of Israel	5.1	33.3	30.4	68.8	22.2	23.6	9.6	55.4
Receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai	2.3	0.6	1.6	4.5	0.3	-	0.5	0.8
The Jewish Dispersion in Exile	4.8	1.4	1.6	7.8	0.6	-	-	0.6
The Destruction of the Temple	7.9	2.9	3.8	14.6	-	-	-	-
Events in the History of Zionism	4.2	6.6	9.9	20.7	5.6	5.8	8.2	19.6
World War II	6.2	3.7	1.3	11.2	2.6	2.2	0.5	5.3
The War of Independence	1.4	8.9	4.8	15.1	2.6	4.7	1.9	9.2
The Six-Day War	0.3	2.3	12.8	15.4	3.9	8.4	9.1	21.4
The Yom Kippur War	-	0.6	4.2	4.8	2.9	6.9	7.7	17.5
The Lebanese War	-	0.6	4.2	4.8	6.1	14.5	13.0	33.6
The Wars of Israel	0.3	1.7	3.2	5.2	0.6	6.5	5.8	12.9
The Intifada	-	0.3	1.9	2.2	2.3	4.0	12.5	18.8
The Peace Agreement	0.6	0.6	4.8	6.0	1.6	3.6	12.0	17.2

(Table 3 cont'd)

Event	Jewish Destiny				Personal Destiny			
	1	2	3	Total	1	2	3	Total
<i>State Religious</i>								
The Holocaust	19.5	34.4	28.2	82.1	17.7	27.4	6.0	51.1
Establishment of the State of Israel	1.6	16.8	44.7	63.1	19.5	21.7	34.5	75.7
Receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai	23.4	12.0	0.8	36.2	25.7	6.6	7.1	39.4
The Exodus from Egypt	31.3	2.4	4.4	38.1	4.4	-	-	4.4
The Destruction of the Temple	14.1	6.5	3.5	24.1	3.5	3.8	3.6	10.9
Events in the History of Zionism	2.3	1.6	4.1	8.0	7.1	9.4	8.3	24.8
The Six Day War	-	3.2	2.4	5.6	1.8	9.4	7.1	18.3
<i>Ultra-Orthodox</i>								
The Holocaust	18.0	14.5	32.7	65.2	44.7	7.7	20.0	72.4
The Establishment of the State	0.0	3.2	9.1	12.3	4.3	10.3	6.7	21.3
The Jewish Dispersion	7.8	6.5	9.1	23.4	4.3	10.3	3.3	17.9
Receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai	28.1	16.1	5.5	49.7	21.3	10.3	16.7	48.3
The Exodus from Egypt	15.6	8.1	7.3	31.0	-	5.1	6.7	11.8
The Destruction of the Temple	6.2	29.0	7.3	42.5	4.3	7.2	-	11.5
The Expulsion from Spain	6.2	9.7	7.3	23.2	-	5.1	3.3	8.4

* The participants were asked to choose three events in response to each question. The order in which the choices were listed is also significant. Accordingly, the events chosen were expressed in percentages, in the order in which they had been entered.

caust was graded in most cases, as the third most important event, after the establishment of the state and the most recent Israeli War: the War of Independence, which occupied first place in 1965; the Six-Day War, which was second in 1968; and the Yom Kippur War, which was second in 1974.² The Holocaust has now become the most conspicuous event in Jewish history among all three sectors, even more than the establishment of the state. For the secular and the ultra-Orthodox, the Holocaust has also become the historical event which most affects the students personally, despite the passage of time which might have been expected to produce a reverse trend. The target population for this study belongs to the second and third generations since the Holocaust.

Whereas the earlier studies pointed to the growing prominence of the Holocaust in the historical consciousness of young Israelis, this study shows a marked increase in its prominence. This is evidence of the central position occupied by the Holocaust today in Israel's national consciousness.³

The study's results may reflect the effort invested by the Israeli educational system in teaching about the Holocaust, the event's transformation into a central component of Israel's "civil religion," and the tendency to find in the Holocaust a unifying factor about which there is a consensus in Israeli society.

There are elements in Israeli society, notably in the secular sector, but also in the State Religious sector, who believe that the Holocaust ought to constitute a central factor in the Jewish and Zionist education of the young Israeli. They believe that if the Holocaust is made a central factor in Israeli national consciousness and in the Jewish and Zionist education of young Israelis, and if students are made aware of the relevance of the Holocaust for them as Israelis, then this might reduce the scale of emigration and the confusion surrounding Zionist education and its results (cf. the recent debate in Israel surrounding the goals of organized youth visits to Poland).

There can be no doubt that significant changes have taken place in the attitude of young Israelis to the Holocaust, at least on a declarative level, although the extent to which these changes have been internalized is not entirely clear. It has not been determined if these changes have been accompanied by a change in attitudes to the Jewish people and to the history of diaspora Jewry, which young Israelis tended to regard with indifference or even contempt.

The assertion sometimes heard now in Israel that "all the Jews were heroes" is no less problematic than the lack of understanding and alienation displayed in the former "sheep to the slaughter" accusation. "They were all heroes" reflects an ahistorical perspec-

tive on the Holocaust. The same is true of the gulf between current attitudes to the Holocaust and to the pre-Holocaust period of the *shtetl*. The preoccupation with one and the complete indifference to the other also reflect an ahistorical perspective.

Yeshayahu (Charles) Liebman maintains that "Israel is no longer as cut off from religious tradition or from the Holocaust as it once was." Moreover, "according to the new civil religion, Israel is the continuation of Jewish history and it is directly linked to the suffering of Jews in the diaspora."⁴ Whereas the current study corroborates that Israel is no longer cut off from the Holocaust, which has become a central component in what Liebman terms the "civil religion" of the State of Israel, it contradicts Liebman's assertion regarding Israel's sense of continuity with all Jewish history.

Young Israelis feel "directly linked" with the Holocaust, which they perceive as encapsulating the entire experience of the Jews among the gentiles, but they do not feel "directly linked" to Jewish history and the Jewish people as such, before or after the Holocaust.

The Holocaust's increasingly prominent place in Israeli consciousness is not of itself evidence of a comprehensive and balanced historical consciousness of the Holocaust and its ramifications. It shows at best a partial understanding of the event.

Prominent in the perspective of time of the young religious Israeli (unlike that of the young secular Israeli) are historical events from the early history of the Jewish people: the Exodus from Egypt, the receiving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, Jewish dispersion, the destruction of the Temple, etc. Yet these events are hardly mentioned in the secular sector. Other than the fact that this is a longer perspective of time, we have also to be aware that these events are connected to the national-religious identification of the Jewish entity. These are events that formulated Jewish existence in the past and, according to the religious attitude, also in the present.

Attitudes to Jewish Communities and Jews Outside Israel

In order to gauge attitudes toward Jews in other Jewish communities outside of Israel, students were asked about their affinity to Jewish communities abroad. Table 4 details the results by educational stream. Answers of "very great affinity" and "great affinity" were defined as an "attitude of affinity." "Little affinity" and "lack of affinity" were defined as a "lack of affinity." While the lack of affinity is relatively moderate concerning the Jewish community in

Table 4

ATTITUDES TO JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE DIASPORA

Jewish Community in:	Affinity			Lack of Affinity		
	State Secular	State Religious	Ultra-Orthodox	State Secular	State Religious	Ultra-Orthodox
U.S.A.	36.2	47.3	65.1	63.7	52.7	34.9
Ex-USSR	38.8	58.0	57.8	66.4	42.0	42.2
Western Europe	26.9	32.6	60.0	73.1	67.4	40.0
Arab Countries	25.5	42.8	44.3	74.5	57.2	55.7
Ethiopia	25.8	37.7	27.4	74.3	62.4	72.6

the U.S.A., it becomes more and more common toward other communities and becomes widespread with regard to the Jewish community in Ethiopia. In our opinion, this attitude to a large extent contradicts the popular expression: "one people" (*Am Echad*) or "the Jewish people." It is as if many of the young teachers use these expressions only with reference to Israeli Jews.

The attitude of lack of affinity usually becomes stronger as we pass from the ultra-Orthodox sector to the State Religious sector and to the State secular sector. Within the State secular sector the lack of affinity to the Jewish communities in the diaspora is stronger among the non-religious (secular) students in comparison with the traditionalists. We have found similar attitudes — a lack of affinity — in studies we conducted among high school students in the State sector.

Two factors influence the feeling of affinity of young Israelis toward diaspora Jews: readiness to immigrate to Israel; and religiosity or non-religiosity. The students from both State sectors feel closer to Jews in the diaspora who are ready to immigrate because of this very fact. But the attitude of the students from the State secular sector toward religious or non-religious Jews abroad — without knowing their attitude to immigration (*aliya*) — is far less close.

Table 5
AFFINITY OF STATE SECULAR STUDENTS
TOWARD JEWS ABROAD

	Very Great Affinity	Great Affinity	Little Affinity	Lack of Affinity
Religious Jews abroad	7.4	11.0	32.9	48.7
Non-Religious Jews abroad	5.9	20.7	50.7	22.7
Jews ready to immigrate	29.0	36.3	27.9	6.8
Jews not ready to immigrate	6.8	11.3	36.7	45.2

Table 6
AFFINITY TOWARD ASSIMILATED JEWS ABROAD

	Very Great Affinity	Great Affinity	Little Affinity	Lack of Affinity
State	9.0	4.5	22.8	63.7
State Religious	6.9	11.5	29.2	52.3
Ultra-Orthodox	4.5	-	9.0	86.6

If we take into consideration that the great majority of Jews who live in the diaspora have no desire or intention to immigrate to Israel, then we have to ask ourselves what framework of relationships will be created in the future between the young Israeli who lives in Israel and the young Jew who lives in the diaspora.

Also very interesting are attitudes toward Jews who are defined as assimilated. A lack of affinity toward these Jews is very prominent in all three sectors and is very similar to the lack of proximity they expressed toward non-Jews.

In the past the non-religious Zionist movements thought it their duty and their task to maintain ties with assimilated Jews and to try to reach out to them. It seems that they managed to transmit to the second and third generations only their reservations about assimilated Jews and not the ties and the understanding that the older generation felt for them.

On other questions we found that a very great majority believe that large-scale assimilation is likely to take place in the Jewish community in the U.S.A. (85 percent among the State secular students, 90 percent among the ultra-Orthodox students and 97 percent among the State Religious students). There is no doubt that assimilation (and anti-Semitism) are considered as the most serious dan-

Table 7

ATTITUDES TOWARD NON-RELIGIOUS JEWS ABROAD

	Very Great Affinity	Great Affinity	Little Affinity	Lack of Affinity
State	5.9	20.4	51.0	22.7
State Religious	9.9	29.0	43.5	17.6
Ultra-Orthodox	10.4	16.4	50.7	22.5

ATTITUDES TOWARD RELIGIOUS JEWS ABROAD

State	7.9	11.0	32.9	48.2
State Religious	28.5	34.5	26.2	10.8
Ultra-Orthodox	68.6	17.1	8.6	5.7

gers to the Jews of the diaspora. To a large extent they perceive the Jews who live in the diaspora — or in Exile, as many define it — as assimilated Jews, practically or potentially. On the whole they believe that only immigration to Israel can save them as Jews, spiritually and sometimes even physically.

The attitudes of religious students are also influenced by the degree of religiosity of the Jews who live abroad. They feel much more closely attached to religious Jews.

The feeling of affinity of the ultra-Orthodox students is influenced by the religious factor, whereas the attitude of State Religious students is influenced also, as noted above, by the willingness to immigrate to Israel.

Problems of Identity Confronting Secular Israelis

The main ideological difficulties exist among the secular group, which is the largest in Israeli society. The questions of identity confronting non-religious young Israelis, which in certain cases turn into problems of identity, are more complex and intricate than the ones facing their peers in the religious groups.

The Jewish-Israeli identity, as fostered by large sections of the non-religious education system, often lacks the consistency, clarity, and completeness required for a harmonious, comprehensive framework. Stress develops mainly around two focal points: the relationship between Jewish religion and Jewish nationality and its influence on Jewish identity; and the relationship between Jewishness and Israeliness.

On the other hand, the world of both the ultra-Orthodox and National Religious groups is shaped and nurtured by their religious outlook. This philosophy, provided it does not waver or collapse, equips the religious youth with consistent and complementing answers that create an all-encompassing wholeness, thus allowing future teachers who are religious to clearly and self-confidently define their own identity. Being Jewish takes on both a national and religious meaning for religious youth (with the ultra-Orthodox sector excluded on matters concerning the State of Israel and Israeliness), creating a profound and meaningful attitude towards religion as well as toward the people, country, and State of Israel. The issue of Israeliness does not present difficulties today for National Religious youth, who perceive their Israeli identity to be extremely strong and meaningful.

In our opinion, the main vulnerable points in the Jewish identity and education of non-religious youth are their national Jewish identity and their attitude towards the Jewish people in the past and present times. The Jewish component of this non-religious identity is incomplete and fragmented, a condition manifested by their attitude towards Jewish history of all ages, towards the Holocaust, and particularly towards the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora in the post-Holocaust period. Group members do not consider themselves in a deep, meaningful sense as part of the Jewish people. They relate to the term "Jewish People " (Am Yisrael) mainly in the restrictive sense of Jews residing in Israel.

According to the findings of the study, the chief weakness of the State education sector is inherent in the fact that there is hardly any effort to foster an attitude towards Jewry that is open, understanding, mindful of existing complexities, and not oblivious of the existence of others. This state of affairs is also a result of a waning of the trend of tolerant secular nationalism in Israeli education. Such a process has taken place despite the fact that advocates of this trend have for many years been participating in the shaping of Israel's education system.

In addition to fostering Israeliness and the rapport with the State and Land of Israel, the education system has also cultivated the preeminence of Zionism and the large measure of "Israelo-centrism" that goes with it, as well as a negative attitude towards the diaspora and the particular traits that characterize diaspora Jews.

Young Israelis raised by this system indeed consider themselves first and foremost as Israeli. The salient features of this identity are the attitude towards the State of Israel and its land and an occasional limited display of Zionist tendencies that emphasize the State of Israel.

The study reveals that the Israeli components of identity have been reduced in strength in opposition to the increased strength of the Jewish components. Although we are not able to positively determine the dimension of these processes, it is possible to point out the following:

1. There is a weakened sense of Israeliness, as was indicated in various instances.

2. The above process may explain, at least partially, the increased strength of Jewishness. On the other hand, it is difficult to determine that there has been a meaningful change in attitudes towards ourselves as Jews. The question remains whether today's young Israeli feels more Jewish only because he or she feels less Israeli, or because his or her Jewishness has been enhanced.

3. There is no doubt that a meaningful shift has occurred in the attitude of Israeli youth towards the Holocaust as significantly manifested in this study. The Holocaust has become a major factor, at times the uppermost factor, of Jewish identity. In this respect then, the present attitude does indicate a heightening sense of Jewishness, but, nevertheless, it carries obvious Zionist overtones.

4. The meaningful shift in the attitude towards the Holocaust — such as a sense of empathy for the victims and a feeling of pride with regard to their conduct — does not involve a shift in attitude with regard to other periods in the history of the Jewish diaspora, nor is there any change in attitude towards Jews living in the diaspora.

The reason the Holocaust has become such a significant factor in Israeli-Jewish identity cannot be found simply in the time that has elapsed since the Holocaust. It is sometimes argued that, as the years passed, Israelis gradually and in a natural way internalized the Holocaust and confronted it, but this is only a partial explanation. The question of the importance of the influence exercised by the educational system is, of course, beyond the scope of this study. The hypothesis needs to be substantiated by research, but it does appear that the socialization system, including the educational system, strove to turn the Holocaust into a dominant element in Israeli-Jewish identity and, judging by the results of this study, is succeeding.

The fact that the Holocaust has become such a significant factor in Jewish-Israeli identity raises substantive questions both with regard to identity and from an educational point of view: Is it possible in the long term to foster an identity on the basis of elements which are fundamentally negative? Does the development of one's identity not require greater balance and the inclusion of positive Jewish elements?

Some Reflections

It appears that the main shortcomings of non-religious institutions are more a matter of what is made part of the Jewish and Zionist education they impart rather than what is left out of it. As the findings of this study seem to corroborate, this fault stems from the fact that we are doing little to cultivate an open and understanding attitude towards Jewry.

It is necessary to bring about a meaningful change and devote intellectual and educational efforts to this factor. A suggested field of instruction, "Contemporary Judaism," which can otherwise be

defined as "the Jewish world today, in Israel and the diaspora," should be developed to broaden knowledge and understanding and bring about a shift in existing attitudes. This field of instruction would center on the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora, on what unites them and what makes them unique, on their similarities and divergences. It would assist young people and young teachers in examining issues that are material to their Jewishness and Israeliness over a broader perspective of time and space, that is: Jewish existence in the Modern Era, on the one hand, and Jews in Israel and the diaspora, on the other.

It is necessary to break out of the limits of Israeli reality and, by way of addressing the issues that are vital to Jewish existence in Israel, reach out to the Jews of the diaspora. The study and discussion of this group may thus achieve relevance in the eyes of the young people being educated in Israel and become part of their body of knowledge and frame of reference, perhaps even causing them to examine themselves from a new perspective.

We must strive for a more adequate and just balance than exists today between the human, Jewish, and Israeli components. Therefore, being part of human society, we are human beings who are Jewish and Israeli. Drifting from the national to the nationalistic can happen very swiftly. Nationalism is indeed the venomous destructive force of our era. This type of danger is particularly liable to lurk at the doorsteps of an identity that is based, at least partially, on negative identity-factors and is shaped in the course of an extended conflict. It is necessary to be aware of such danger, which is more acute among religious sub-identity groups.

On the opposite side:

Does the sense of Judaism and Jewishness, particularly of the non-religious, born-and-bred Israelis, relate mostly, and at an ever growing rate, to negative factors (the Holocaust and the wars of the modern State of Israel)? Is it not essentially a form of Judaism that is based on negative elements in the Sartrean sense? A Judaism that has emerged following the virtual collapse of Israeliness and the failed attempt to build an identity based on positive elements.

It is not a question about teaching past and present history of the Jewish people in an uninspired routine fashion. The vital and difficult questions are: How can we tackle these issues and still maintain an authentic dialogue with the young generation? It is a basic condition, even though it may not be sufficient to generate a sense of relevance and involvement. How do we bring about intellectual and emotional development?

Will it be possible to attain an educational process that can lead to genuine identification with a positive, creative, relevant and

vibrant brand of Judaism? One that will appeal to and be the choice of Jewish-Israeli youth? It is repeated here again that Jewishness, Israeliness and Zionism will not become valuable and meaningful to Israeli youth unless they become their own choices.

I would propose a comprehensive and balanced approach to Jewish-Israeli identity: Judaism is both a religion and a nation. The modern Jew prefers to define himself according to his affinity to one or to both components.

The reality of numerous forms of Jewish existence in Israel and the diaspora must be accepted and in this respect pluralism is a historical fact. The spiritual and ideological tensions produced by this complex reality can prove fruitful provided that in the struggle between the variety of trends, approaches, traditions, views and life-styles, the groups will accept each other's legitimate existence and keep an open-minded attitude towards the different and the odd.

Notes

1. The Holocaust or World War II were mentioned by 354 out of a population of 360 in the secular sector. In aggregate, the Holocaust and World War II were mentioned in slightly more than 100 percent of the cases, because a small number of students did not answer the question. The percentages are based on the total number of answers given. There were a few students who mentioned the Holocaust and World War II separately.
2. See Uri Farago, "Jewish Identity of Israeli Youth 1965-1985," *Yahadut B'zemanenu*, 5 (1989), p. 274; Simon Herman, *Jewish Identity, A Social Psychological Perspective* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), p. 84. For a larger analysis concerning the attitude toward the Holocaust, see Yair Auron, "The Holocaust and the Israeli Teacher," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Fall 1994):225-257.
3. By contrast, there is a perceptible trend toward giving less prominence to Israel's wars, and toward a more ambivalent attitude than in the past to Israeli identity, the Lebanese war, and events connected with the State of Israel (for example, the intifada). This is true at least with respect to some of the students.
4. Yeshayahu (Charles) Liebman, "The Holocaust Myth in Israeli Society," *Tefutsot Israel*, 19:5-6 (Winter 1981):110-111; originally published as "Myth, Tradition and Values in Israeli Society," *Midstream*, 24:1 (January 1978):44-53.