

5 “KNOWLEDGE HAS A FACE”  
*The Jewish, the Personal, and the Pedagogical*

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The ultimate conflict in the classroom is who we are when we encounter and are swallowed up by the artificial world of academia, our fleshly selves slumbering in hard chairs, and how does this strange ritual come to mean anything to us. Our private lives occur in terrifying places where we grapple alone with the impossibility of certitude or peace. Teaching these conflicts means addressing that, opening the windows of academia and letting life seep in like air.

*Abby Bardi, graduate student*

The movement of Eros and the movement of the mind cannot take place separately, converging only at the end. In the person, the student, they interact and interpenetrate. They must be treated so in interactions with a person. They must be moved together.

*Joseph Schwab*

Our Rabbis taught: If one sees a great multitude of people, one says, “Blessed [are you God] who is wise to secrets.” Just as all their opinions are different from each other’s, so too their faces are all different from each other’s.

*Talmud Brakhot*

FINDING A VOICE

I am not quite sure how to begin this essay. A book whose subject is “the place of the personal in the academy” is bound to raise so many rhetorical expectations. I imagine my readers eagerly anticipating liberation from dry impersonal, academic prose, and wondering what secrets might be revealed. So I ask myself: Which rhetorical form should I use in this piece? Must it be a monologic narrative? Could I write it as a dialogue or letter? But which “I” do I present here? What will be my persona?

I am comforted to learn that the word “personal,” is derived from “persona,” which in turn designates the “mask” used by actors in ancient Greek drama, the *dramatis personae* who spoke through it: *per + sonare*, “to sound through.” Let me continue to take refuge in etymology and philology as I try to find my voice, my way of here “sounding through the mask.” The word “voice” itself

comes from *vocare* and is connected to “vocation,” derived from the Latin *vocatio*: a “bidding, an invitation, a call, a summons.” So vocation is a profession as a “calling.” Here I begin to recognize connections between the personal and the academy . . . if one views the academy as I do, as truly a “vocation,” a “calling.” Needless to say, this sense of profession as a calling to “service,” as having a moral and even religious component, has been obscured by the more contemporary meaning of “professionalization.” Today, the term connotes the achievement of technical skill, specialized theoretical knowledge, and admission to an elite community of self-governing practitioners.<sup>1</sup>

Being “professional” is also commonly taken to mean being able to remove one’s own “personal” prejudices and emotions from the task at hand. Yet a “professor” is also defined as one who “professes”: from *pro-fateri*, to “declare loudly,” publicly; one who “makes open declaration of his statements or opinions, one who makes public his belief.” “Con-fess” and pro-fess share this same Latin root; so one also “professes one’s faith, love, or devotion.” I am intrigued by the way this etymological chain of connections moves so swiftly into the theological—to the extent that even the word “Parson,” (the representative head of a parish church) appears under the entry for “personal” along with the “Three Persons of the Trinity”; “Divine being, hypostasis.”<sup>2</sup>

I have to stop. The dictionary supplying these definitions has now taken me into the heart of Christian theology, supplied me quotes from Chaucer, Milton, Dryden, Shakespeare, and the New Testament. But one of the central concerns of my academic (and personal) life has been finding and hearing the “Jewish voice.” And being caught between voices: the voices of my secular, elite Ivy League education, and the voices of Jewish tradition: the clamorous, argumentative voices of the Talmud, the creative, ironic story-telling of the Midrash, the rapturous voices of Jewish liturgy, the deliberative voices of Jewish philosophy, the lyrical, yearning melodies of Hassidism.

Contemporary literary theory has enabled me to read these classical Jewish texts in new ways, and in my previous academic work, I tried to reveal some of the underlying Jewish strands in that theory itself. Yet I have written by “sounding through certain masks” and not others. Early in my academic career, I felt compelled to write in a certain way, as I myself became professionalized, entered the ongoing conversation in the field, mastered its lingo and codes. In mid-career now, I have acquired a sense of how quickly the theories, topics, and interests of what we in literary studies often refer to as “The Profession” change. Those exciting, radical books about “Structuralism in Literature” from my graduate school days are now abandoned in a remote corner of my bookshelves. I sometimes wonder how soon it will be until those new volumes which took their place on the main shelves—on body studies,

queer theory, post-colonial and cultural studies—will become their dusty, neglected neighbors.

It's not surprising to me, then, that the recent move towards "personal criticism" was spearheaded by mid-career, highly successful and well-known literary critics who had previously been engaged in the highly theoretical discourse of the 1980s. Like Cultural Studies, the turn towards "the personal" both continued and reacted against those modes of criticism. But I suspect that the shift in these critics' perspective also has to do with the changing course of inner life as one matures in years. I know that "inner life" is not exactly an *au courant* theoretical term; and I don't remember any academic preparation for dealing with the kinds of unexpected turns one finds oneself making in one's self-definition as a scholar, colleague, or teacher as one progresses in a career. Like several other of my contemporaries, though, I find our previous ways of writing, teaching, and talking about literature to be unsatisfactory and constraining.

And so I have refocused my earlier highly abstract theoretical work in deconstruction and hermeneutics, to a concern with the ethics of criticism, and an intense interest in pedagogy. . . . an interest that was always implicit in my work, but not able to find open expression.<sup>3</sup> I have returned to that older meaning of "profession" as "calling," and it is much more the question of what are we "called" to do in the University with our students that preoccupies me now I seek also to hear my students' voices in a different way. For I keep finding that they—in their resistance and awkwardness and naiveté and freshness and unprofessionalized sense of things—are often more provocative, unpredictable, and challenging than many of the latest new theories or interpretations.

#### READING AS CALLING TO EACH OTHER

I also take with me from Jewish tradition a deeply-rooted sense of teaching and learning as "holy" and "redemptive" endeavors, and of being bound to a three-thousand year old community of memory, study, and practice which has endured the vicissitudes and traumas of history. I write this essay in the city of Jerusalem, on a special Fellowship for educators from around the world. And I partake here of the "quiet revolution" occurring in women's access to the most rigorous and advanced forms of traditional Jewish learning.

In Hebrew, the word for "calling"—*kriyah*—is also the word for "reading." In this sense, reading is not just a matter of "textual" or "cultural" analysis. It is a voicing, calling to the other, a being called to account, a summons to be present. From my previous academic work on the great modern Jewish philosophers Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1994) and their relation to literary theory, I have seen how Western culture, too, has to be "called into account" by Judaism. Rosenzweig and Levinas both

came out of the monumental German-Jewish tradition of philosophy, and abandoned the project of constructing grand theories, meta-narratives of knowledge long before the familiar contemporary postmodern critics we all customarily cite did so.

Rosenzweig also left a brilliant career in the German University to found an Institute for Adult Jewish Education in Frankfurt, but all too quickly died from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease). He continued to write, translate and teach as his physical capabilities diminished solely to the ability to blink his eye. Levinas emerged as one of the most influential philosophers in post-War France after surviving in a prisoner-of-war camp, and losing many relatives in the Holocaust. His work helped inspire Sartre to engage in phenomenology and Derrida to critique ontology. Above all, Levinas called philosophy to account and placed ethics prior to metaphysics. He also had dual pedagogical career, engaged both as a French University professor and a teacher training young French Jews at the preparatory school of the Alliance Israelite Orientale. He too, wrestled with the problem of being, as he put it, a Jew "speaking Greek," the language of the academy and of philosophy.

I also wrestle with this problem and I, too, sympathize with Rosenzweig's departure from the suffocating German academy of his time to become another kind of "Teacher"; yet I am not ready to abandon my career in the University. But I do hope university learning can be changed, and believe that Jewish models of study and commentary have much to say to educational reform. Ultimately, what I learn from Jewish tradition is that "texts" are not only, nor primarily "books"—or "cultural practices" or "discourses" or "ideologies"—but ultimately "Teachings" (this is the root meaning of the Hebrew word *Torah*, used to refer to all the biblical and rabbinic literature). For me now, hermeneutics or cultural studies or political critiques or pedagogies of the oppressed are not, in the end, enough to encompass the meaning of "teaching"; on the contrary, there is a sense in which "teaching" instead encompasses them. Or as Rosenzweig writes:

Literature is written only for the sake of those who are in the process of development, and of that in each of us which is still developing. Hebrew, knowing no word for "reading" that does not mean "learning" as well, has given this, the secret of all literature away. For it is a secret, though a quite open one, to these times of ours—obsessed and suffocated as they are by education—that books exist only to transmit that which has been achieved to those who are still developing" ("On Jewish Learning" 216)

I have spoken here of "teaching" and of "voices," but so far carefully avoiding the word "God." Needless to say, the relation of the modern University to religion is vexed. As I leaf through the pages of the most recent *PMLA*, and its

book ads, I wonder: Should I instead talk about these "Jewish voices" in terms of "hybridity" and "alterity" and "marginalization" and "diasporic ethnicity" or the "symbolic construction of the Jewish body" or "cultural and discursive practices?" Perhaps were I at another stage, I would find this language and its rousing calls for liberatory practices more useful, but now I seek to let the sounds of a Jewish voice be heard differently—differently even from standard "Academic Jewish Studies," which itself has always had a complex relation to the University.

Moshe Idel, the preeminent living expert on Jewish mysticism has recently argued that the conception of Jewish learning as "experiential, transformative and intended to go beyond the strictly mental level" was marginalized in much foundational academic Jewish scholarship.<sup>4</sup> This was due in part to the culture of the nineteenth century German University in which modern academic Jewish studies was born. Idel argues that Torah study, however, was never seen solely as matter of content, or the amassing of knowledge; it was not even ultimately about "knowing," but the changing of one's way of life. Even the "Book" itself, in much of Jewish thought was seen as only one step on a long trajectory of performative religiosity; learning, in other words, was instrumental and "knowledge," (though of course important) was not its ultimate purpose.

Traditional Jewish modes of learning, moreover, attempted to bring people together into what Idel calls a "sonorous community"—a "sound community." In traditional Jewish study and reading, the text is activated by being sounded out orally, loudly vocalized, sung, exteriorized. This practice rested in part on the view that since language mediates the experience of God, words become forms of power. Shouting out the sacred text also created an external reality that encompassed all those together in study . . . just as God creates in the Bible by "calling"—*kriyah*—not by fiat. (This understanding of study was especially prominent in Hassidism and Kabbalah.) "Learning," concludes Idel, is "entering an ambience as much as it is an acquiring of knowledge" and we need to be cautious in overemphasizing the purely mental aspect when we describe the historical phenomenon and practice.

The traditional *Beit Midrash*, "House of Study" was, and still is today, a place of clamorous noise, quite unlike the hushed university library. One of the traditional modes of study which is still quite alive in *yeshivot* (advanced Jewish religious schools), and which I have personally most loved, is to learn orally with a fixed study partner—*hevruta*—with whom one intones the text aloud, line by line, and engages in vigorous questioning and argument about its linguistic nuances and meaning. A passage in the Talmud *Kiddushin 30b* describes that relationship: "R. Chiya bar Abba said, even a parent and a child, or a teacher and his student who are studying Torah together . . . at first

become enemies of one another—but they do not move from there until they become devoted friends of one another.” That is, the passionate debate at first makes the study-partners opponents; each disputes the other’s interpretations as they seek to fathom the meaning of the text, each bringing his or her own background, associations, experiences, questions. Nevertheless, they are engaged in a collaborative enterprise, in a face to face intimate dialogue. Out of this intense reciprocal interchange, hierarchical relations dissolve, and they become in the end intimate friends.

In their analysis of the sociology of the *Beit Midrash*, where a large community of study partners sit and learn in the same room, Moshe Halbertal and Tovah Halbertal note that the volume and gesticulations of all these pairs together create a physical choreography of bodily movement, voice and noise, a kind of “acting out of a page of Talmud.” The students, that is, are enacting the voices of the same rabbinic sages whose own debates with each other constitute the pages of the Talmud the students are studying. At the same time, the students are also interpreting this “script ; it becomes a text and drama at one time. This approach to the text is non-chronological; all the previous commentators printed on the pages of the Talmud, dating back a a thousand years and spanning the entire Jewish diaspora, are taken up along with the current students in a kind of a contemporaneous conversation, a discourse above time and place (Halbertal).

The technique of learning in small groups or pairs has been rediscovered in the past few years by educational theorists, who now call it “co-operative learning.” Its advocates support their work with epistemological claims that all knowledge is in fact, social, dialogic, communal. They offer abundant evidence of the pragmatic effectiveness of co-operative learning and its success in creating classroom community, a truth I can affirm from my own use of these techniques in my classes.

What further, I wonder, might models of “sacred learning” have to say to the “secular” University, and how could they be used in non-dogmatic ways? Especially when we in literary studies tend to talk about everything in our “discourse” of ethnicity, multi-culturalism, alterity, and critical pedagogy except God and religion. A recent story in my Smith College alumna magazine about “religion on campus” quoted a student who said: “It is harder to come out as a spiritual person than as a lesbian here at Smith (Fisher, 12). In an ironic way, “spiritual persons” have become “marginalized” “silenced” voices in many classrooms. Yet the “postmodern” world is indeed a post-secular one as well, and the old dichotomies between “critical thinking” and “religious belief,” or “science” and “religion” are just as outmoded as those between “subjectivity” and “objectivity.”<sup>5</sup> In sum, I agree with Mary Rose O’Reilly who writes: “The

question for me is, how do we teach people who are profoundly, and even stubbornly, spiritual beings? I think we assume that spiritual beings is the last thing they are (because it is one of the last things they will let us know" (138).

It is time for a personal anecdote. A brilliant honors student in a recent senior seminar of mine told me she was having great trouble choosing a topic for her honors thesis. She wanted to write, she said, with an ironic half-smile, on "The Meaning of Life." Her advisor, however, discouraged her and said, "Why does it always have to be about you?" She said to me wistfully "Maybe there's something wrong with me, but I always want to see how it relates to my life. I was assigned to write a paper for my American Literature class on 'Financial Exchanges in *Huckleberry Finn*' But I'm just not interested in that." In other words, our students, too, are desperately trying to find their "personal place in the academy." This student does not see the world as entirely "produced and constructed by material, historical factors, in a network of political and economic exchanges" . . . and neither do I.

How, then, can students like this feel more at home in the University? Can and should we also attempt to help our students in their spiritual struggles, which they often keep so hidden from us and from the classroom but which are so much a part of how they try to make sense of the world? As a very bright undergraduate once poignantly and somewhat bitterly said to me: "You professors here in the University pull out the rug from under us—and we never even had a floor." So true: we contemporary academics, especially in literary studies, often describe our pedagogical and intellectual goals in terms of "critique, subversion, interrogation"—or what Lionel Trilling felicitously called "the unmasking principle" that has influenced intellectuals since the French Revolution. Marx and Freud, Trilling wrote, "taught the intellectual classes that nothing was as it seemed, that the great work of intellect was to strike through the mask" (Dickstein, 1998). That wonderful phrase comes, of course, from one of Captain Ahab's grand anguished speeches in *Moby Dick*. It also re-echoes the etymology of "persona": can we ever *strike* through, or only *sound* through? What are the pedagogical consequences of these attempts? And how can our students' *resistance* to our work also teach us? As the Talmud says, "Much have I learned from my teachers, even more from my colleagues, but from my students, most of all" (*Ta'anit 7a*).

#### KNOWLEDGE HAS A FACE

"As the Talmud says." With that phrase, I revert to one of my most comfortable Jewish voices; citing a classical rabbinic text and commenting in the margins . . . with the adverb "as" signaling a commitment to the text before the moment of analytical questioning, debate, and interpretation. There is a way in which I

would probably be most “personal” here if I assumed that rhetorical role of rabbinic-style commentator on a Jewish text. For I must say I am not entirely satisfied with my “voice” in the sections I have just written. My resort to English philology and etymology was a way of historicizing the words dealing with the “personal” and the “professional,” in order to open them to the traces of other meanings inscribed in them. Of course, I also wanted to find a shared language with my readers, and try to move a theological discussion to common ground.

I would be equally uncomfortable, though, with a purely “confessional voice,” or an autobiographical narrative. The individual “confessional” voice is not such a major part of classical Jewish discourse, in part because Judaism is not a “confessional” faith dependent on an individual’s affirmation of certain dogmas, or a conversion experience, but instead a covenantal membership in a People with a collective history, fate, and destiny. Even on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year, the numerous “confessions” of sins in the liturgy are said in the collective: “We have transgressed, we have betrayed, we have robbed, we have slandered,” and so forth. My sense of myself as a Jew, and my voice as a Jew is indeed at its most “personal” when it is most bound up in that collective and transhistorical “sound community” of study-partners and interpreters who shout and sing out and wrestle with the sacred text together, who argue and laugh together, celebrate each other’s sorrows and joys together through the liturgical cycle of the Jewish year, which itself recapitulates and re-enacts the dramas of Jewish history. As the biblical scholar Michael Fishbane once remarked, the most “authentic” Jewish literary genre is, perhaps, the *anthology*—a simultaneous compilation of diverse texts, voices, sources. That is the way the Bible, the Talmud, Midrash, halakhic codes are constructed—as massive anthologies . . . the collective voices of scores of generations superimposed on each other, jostling each other on the page, calling to each other.

Even amongst the Jewish mystics, there is a paucity of personal, confessional experiential accounts, especially compared to the Christian tradition. I have no space here to analyze further why that is so, or attempt a “history of the self,” or the notion of “peoplehood,” or the rhetoric of commentary in Jewish thought. If I think, however, about resources in Jewish thought and literature to examine the “personal” and its relation to contemporary teaching and scholarship, I go back again to Rosenzweig and Levinas, who model for me a way to exist as a Jew in the modern Western University, and to some key passages in the Bible upon which they have commented, foundational texts familiar to all.

The well known early chapters of the Book of Genesis describe the creation of the first “person,” Adam. In the Hebrew Bible, “Adam” does not initially signify a proper name; it is a pun on the word *adamah*, “earth, ground,” and so signifies



"the earth creature." Nor does this word in itself signify a gendered creature. In one of the classical midrashic (rabbinic exegetical) readings of the creation of Adam, this "earth creature" is described as a kind of androgyne with "two faces" (*du-parzufim*) which are positioned away from each other, one in front and one in back (*Ber. Rab.* 17:6; *Berakhot* 61a). God's splitting of this double-faced creature into two, and turning the faces so they could see each other, is also the origin of "male and female." This reading is based on interpreting the Hebrew word *tzela* in Gen.2:22–23, usually translated as "rib," in another possible sense: "side." On another level, one could say this midrash also teaches that human identity is from the beginning "bifurcated": "identity," "personhood" come only when one faces the other.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the word for "face" in Hebrew, *panim* is a plural noun which takes a plural verb. Its verbal root, *panah*, means "to turn towards." The living face is never still and singular; it is always a moving, changing set of gestures, expressing/concealing turns of feeling and thought. The Hebrew word for "innerness," *pnimiyut*, is also derived from *panim*. The face is physically the distinctive mark of our individuality, the most "personal" aspect of ourselves. Yet, paradoxically, we cannot see our own face directly.

The face also acts as an interface between self and world. What it means to "face the other," and what it would mean for "knowledge itself to have a face" are central issues for both Rosenzweig and Levinas. And, I would add, for any teacher, for any pedagogical scene. I have finally found here, I think, a Hebrew counterpart to the English word "personal." I want to use this notion of the "face" to guide the rest of my thinking in this essay about the meaning of the "personal" in the academy. In that way, I hope to sound my "personal" Jewish voice, and perform a Jewish mode of study while trying to clarify our larger collective professional and pedagogical goals in the University. In much of my past research, I engaged in meta-theoretical analyses of rabbinic hermeneutics; here I also want to enter "inside" that exegetic process itself. Yet like Rosenzweig and Levinas, I aim to move dialectically between "inside" and "outside," to illumine what in Jewish tradition speaks to all of us, Jews and non-Jews, professors and students, persons of faith and atheists.

After completing his philosophical magnum opus *The Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig wrote and taught very differently. In a letter to his fiancé in 1920, just before he became ill, he said: "You see, I can no longer write a "Book"; everything now turns into a letter, since I need to see the 'other'" (in Glatzer, *Rosenzweig*, 90). That indeed was the inevitable rhetorical and pedagogical consequence of the philosophy he formulated in the *Star*, the last few pages of which end with a vision of truth itself as a "countenance," a face (*Star*, 418–24).

For what else do we mean by the "personal" than to "give a face" and voice to something? For knowledge to be "personal," in this sense, would not mean

for it to be biased, confessional, ideological, but on the contrary to have a “face”—that is, to be turned towards another, vulnerable and susceptible to the face of the other, in all her or his particularity . . . an address to the other. This position would imply a similar foundational pedagogical stance.

Another way Levinas, and Rosenzweig articulate that stance phenomenologically, and the meaning of the “personal,” is through the expression “Here am I” (*hineni* in Hebrew; *me voici* in French), which is also the response of the biblical heroes in climactic moments of their being summoned: Abraham to the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1); Moses to the burning bush (Ex 3:4); Isaiah to his prophetic call (6:8).

Instead of evasion and blame, “Here am I” should have been Adam’s response to God’s question “Where are you?” in the Garden after the first sin (Gen. 3:9). Rosenzweig interprets God’s question here as God’s own quest for the “you”; this address is a kind of indefinite deictic which opens the possibility for an other to be constituted who can freely confront God as an “I.” Comments Rosenzweig: “The I discovers itself at the moment when it asserts the existence of a Thou by inquiring into its Where” (*Star* 175.) But the answer *hineni*, the opening of the concealed isolated, locked self, comes for the first time in the biblical narrative only later in Gen 22:1 when God calls out to Abraham before the sacrifice of Isaac, in the vocative, in direct address, not with an indefinite “you” but with his proper name, “Abraham!” That is, in all Abraham’s non-conceptual particularity and individuality, and in love for his singularity: “Now he answers, all unlocked, all spread apart—all ready all soul ‘Here am I.’ Here is the I, the individual human I . . . wholly receptive” (*Star* 176).<sup>7</sup> Deborah Kerdeman (1998), using Gadamerian hermeneutics, argues that indeed education should not focus on “self-understanding” through the question “Who are you?” That assumes the self could be reflected upon apart from the situated relationships in which self-understanding is constituted. In the existential hermeneutics of Gadamer, “self-understanding is rather constitutive of our being, an indication of how we are situated in relation to people and events . . . an expression of practical engagement that illumines and shapes our moral orientation. The key question for Gadamer thus is not “Who”? But “Where? Where are we? We’re always someplace. Are we present? Or are we hiding?”

For Levinas, influenced by Rosenzweig, “Here am I” is a phenomenology of the self answering the violence of philosophical ontology. Over and over again in his philosophical work, the word *I* comes to mean “*here am I*” answering for everything and everyone—a self constructed not out of “ontological presence” but ethical responsibility, as a “reason beyond the cogito.” This “I” is not a manifestation of “innerness” but an extra-version a breaking out of the narcissistic, enclosed self to be exposed and vulnerable to the other, to the extent that

one becomes completely responsible for the other. Or as Levinas puts it: the “here am I” is a kind of bearing witness, the self at the service of others “without having anything to identify myself with but the sound of my own voice or the figure of my gesture—the saying itself” (*Otherwise Than Being* 149). The “calling” of the face of the other is met by the sound of my voice, saying “here am I for you.”

Behind his emphasis on this term is Levinas’ own bitter experience as a Jew in France during World War II, and the transformation of his former teacher Heidegger into a Nazi sympathizer. So it is also precisely the phenomenological *impersonality* of “Being” in Heidegger, that spurs Levinas to link neutrality to indifference, and ultimately to violence and murder. This position underlay Levinas’ critique of all anonymous and impersonal structures of thought including Structuralism, and its descendants. Neither was the answer the existentialist emphasis on the cry of the subjective self, for he viewed the ego in its natural state as self-enclosed, self-interested and violent. This is a complex philosophical discussion which I have explored in depth in *Fragments of Redemption*. Here, though, I’m more interested in how it all relates to pedagogy in the contemporary University.

#### TEACHER AND STUDENT: A RELATION OF TWO FACES

As waters [reflect] face to face, so is the heart of one person to another.

*Proverbs 27:19*

One way a text is “made personal” is by being embodied in the living voice, face, and being of the teacher in dialogue with the student, and the students with each other. This mediation is a key pedagogical aspect of the hermeneutics of the tradition of rabbinic interpretation in Judaism—also called the “Oral Torah.” The Oral Torah is the record of the collective voices of the teachers and their students through the generations as they debate and perform the meanings of the teachings, and search out what rabbinic tradition calls the “seventy faces of the Torah.” It began to be written down in the early centuries of the Common Era, and includes the Talmuds, midrashic literature, legal codes and analyses—all that is not explicitly written in the Bible. Oral Torah is also invented and continued every time we in turn read, teach, argue over, and interpret these texts, find a new face in them. So I have often thought it would be more appropriate to call Jews the “people of the Mouth” rather than the “People of the Book.” Even the Hebrew language is written without vowels; in the very act of reading it, one must vocalize the words, even if only mentally supplying the vowels that make the words have a sense .

I spent a great deal of intellectual energy in my first book, *The Slayers of Moses*, trying to understand the creative freedom of rabbinic interpretation,

and its wondrous exegetical extravagances. I linked that hermeneutic to the creativity of contemporary secularized Jewish interpreters from Freud to Derrida. But I missed this key pedagogical link: “Oral Torah” attains that creative and interpretive freedom because it is a lived teaching and not only a book or a system of signs. It is mediated and embodied by the relations of teachers and students who literally breathe voice into and give a face to the written text in the context of a community of memory, obligation, and practice. In this light, one can understand some of the many poignant Talmudic stories and Jewish laws that compare a person to a *sefer Torah*, a Torah scroll. Says the Talmud, for example:” A person who is present at the death of someone, is obligated to tear his clothes [a sign of mourning] To what is this similar? To a Torah scroll that has been burned.” (*Shabbat 105b*).<sup>8</sup>

I want to move into another kind of “Jewish voice” now, and turn from Rosenzweig and Levinas the university philosophers, to Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a remarkable nineteenth century hassidic Rebbe. In addressing the ruptures modernity had brought to the Jews, he wrote not only commentaries, but also parables, stories, and songs and was one of the sources for modern Hebrew literature. The relation between a hassidic Rebbe and his disciples was particularly intense, and led R. Nachman to intriguing reflections on the nature of the teacher-student relation. R. Nachman especially stressed the importance of *seeing the face* of one’s teacher rather than only reading the teacher’s writings, or hearing from another person what the teacher has said:

Know: one who has the eyes to see, can see and recognize in the face of the student who his teacher was, even if the student only saw him once, for “Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a thing? A person’s wisdom makes his face shine, and the boldness of his face is changed [Eccl. 8:1].” And therefore when the student receives the wisdom of his teacher, he receives his face [*kabbalat panim*, a pun on the phrase “welcome”]. And for this it is necessary to look in the face of his teacher at the time when he is receiving his wisdom, as it is written [Isaiah 30:20]: “And your eyes shall see your teacher” [referring to the messianic era and vision of God]; for wisdom is in the face, as explained above, and therefore, when one looks in the face of the student, one can know who his teacher is. (*Likkutei Moharan 230*)

In the next quote, this “teaching” relation is inscribed as well between friend and friend.

One has to make limpid and clear one’s face, so that each person can see his own face in his face as in a mirror, until, without rebuke or preaching, his friend will immediately repent over his deeds, just from looking into his face. For in looking

into the other's face, he will see himself as in a mirror, how his own face is sunk in darkness." (*Likkutei Moharan*, "Tefillah L' Habbakuk." 19)

What possible translation of these passages is there for the University? What further could we understand as the relation between knowledge and the face? Perhaps that the "face" here signifies something about the *relation between* student and teacher over and above the *content* transmitted, the way in which any true wisdom is ultimately inscribed in a human relation and is not simply a "text." The way the teaching ultimately comes from the teacher on a level deeper than pure intellect, and beyond its verbal representations. The way in which the teacher embodies the knowledge in an act of giving forth to the other out of desire, and connection. That the moments of illumination a student has are when she or he discovers his or her "own face" through the face of the teacher, which means that the face is not a simple mirror which passively reflects a similitude but refracts back actively. And this requires not imitation of the teacher, but the work of the student, who senses the need for inner change. Likewise, to "receive the face" (*kabbalat panim*) is not a passive act. "Reception" and "reflection" here are modes of self-transformation. This "mutual seeing" is the opposite of the one-sided, eagle-eyed view of the Hegelian philosopher who observes all from above, or the sinister all-seeing gaze of the Foucauldian Panopticon, or a rapacious, objectifying sexual gaze. Nor, could the "virtual, electronic face" of a teacher in the video version of "Distance Learning" fully express it. There is something in the living face that eludes this capture. (Redefining knowledge as a relation to an other rather than a reflection of some independent, essential substance is, of course, a paradigmatically postmodern epistemological position.)

One could try to translate these passages in psychoanalytic terms. Arthur Frank, in an essay on "Lecturing and Transference: The Undercover Work of Pedagogy" also asks what induces people to attend lectures in person, when reading a written text is so much more efficient. He insightfully analyzes the latent desires of audience and lecturer—and by extension student and teacher—in this living pedagogical situation. The ritual and celebratory nature of the occasion, of course, draws the attendees. The auditors further believe they can somehow glean more by contact with the personal presence of the speaker. The actual text of the lecture, he then suggests, is in reality only a pre-text—just as the manifest content of a dream, in the Freudian paradigm, is the screen that allows latent meaning to be transmitted. In the same way, the pedagogy of the lecture is highly personal, but the lecturer for the most part conceals that element and purports to be coolly only transmitting knowledge and information. Like the dream, then, "the lecture works precisely by *concealing*

the personal essence; stated another way, the personal element is effective only *if it is concealed*" (30).

The same holds true, Frank argues, for the student-teacher relation which he also configures in terms of the Freudian notion of "transference" in psychoanalysis. "Transference," simply defined, is the unconscious projection of desire and fantasy by the analysand onto the analyst; "counter-transference" is the unconscious projection of the analyst onto the analysand. The student (like the analysand, or audience at a lecture) projects the teacher as the one who possess the Truth, or in Lacanian terminology, the Subject-presumed-to-know: "I do not mean the truth of the subject matter of the course, but rather the supposed truth of the lecturer herself and the truth of the students themselves" (31). Inevitably, then, the teacher/lecturer/analyst is also the "one who never says what they want him to say":

I propose that the desire of the students is for the speech of the animator's self—not the spoken text the animator presents (that is only the price of admission), but the *speech of what animates* the text. For structuralists (if there are any left) the subject may be dead, but for students, the key to ideas is in the biography of the thinker. This principle of truth deriving from life experiences pervades students' relations not just to those they study but to their teachers. (30-31)

Since this autobiographical speech is concealed and never fully given, the desire of the student is stimulated by this lack: "What this desire is for, insofar as desires are ever *for* anything, is for the subject-presumed-to-know to reveal herself in some exercise of authority." The key to successful psychotherapy, however, is the conscious understanding, working out, and resolution of the transference. Frank argues that the role of the educator parallels that of the good analyst, who understands that the issue is ultimately not her or his own self-revelation but rather querying the analysand: "What do you want from me" and "What should you expect from yourself": "The essence of what I call moral education is this capacity for self-reflection: to become moral beings we must see our actions as they are seen by others." (32-33). Citing Irving Goffman, he adds that this kind of moral education can't be "taught"; it can only be modeled during teaching: modeled not as a method of scholarship or knowledge, but rather as "a mode of how to handle oneself in the matter of one's own claims to position" (34).

Compare R. Nachman again: "One has to make limpid and clear one's face, so that each person can see his own face in his face as in a mirror, until, without rebuke or preaching, his friend will immediately repent over his deeds, just from looking into his face. For in looking into the other's face, he will see himself as in a mirror, how his own face is sunk in darkness." On the one hand, this, too, could

be a kind of "transference relation": without speech, one's silent face, made limpid and clear,"without rebuke or preaching" enables one's friend or student to sense her own lack, and stimulates her desire to transform herself. The analogy goes only so far, however, for R. Nachman implicitly also reminds us that to make one's face limpid and clear involves one's own moral-spiritual work. The classic injunction to the psychoanalyst to make her face a "blank screen" is not the same as shining visage emanating from a lived wisdom that has left its luminous trace on the body. I, too, still believe in a truth deriving from life experiences, (and from texts) written on the face. And I also identify with that student of mine who still was half-hoping, to find "The Meaning of Life" in what she was reading. What was she really asking of me? What was my responsibility for her?

Martin Buber, in his eloquent essay "The Education of Character" describes a moment in a teacher's facing a group of typically unruly and resistant students:

But then his eyes meet a face which strikes him. It is not a beautiful face nor particularly intelligent; but it is a real face, or rather, the chaos preceding the cosmos of a real face. On it he reads a question which is something different from the general curiosity: "Who are you? Do you know something that concerns me? Do you bring me something? What do you bring?" (112)

Do not our students come to us "in search of their face," and do we not need to bring them something more than the negative moment of undoing our authority? Do we not promise them something by our very act of standing before them? What do we owe them?

For Buber "Education worthy of the name is essentially education of character" (104) which does not mean *giving instruction* in ethics. He argues that only the whole being of the teacher can affect the whole being of the students, and often this happens when the teacher has the least thought of affecting the students. Yet Buber urges the teacher to will to take her part in the stamping of the student's character, along with all the uncontrollable multifarious influences that are inevitably affect students lives. For Buber, "great character" is a person who in "every living situation" acts out of a "deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being and its willingness to accept responsibility" (114). Buber envisions a "rebirth of personal unity, unity of being, unity of life, unity of action" to move "beyond all the dividedness of individualism and collectivism" and which is the way also towards genuine community (116). In an era where absolute values have been destroyed, he says, an educator can begin by fostering the student's painful sense of lack of this unity, nurturing it into a desire, and showing students some glimpse of that unity, as far off as it might be,

In our fractured postmodern era, especially in literary studies, we rarely hear words such as this; we tend to stress instead rupture, divided selves, fragmentation, the dark binds of power and ideology, the difficulty of “agency.” We begin with lack but often do not move far beyond it, “pulling out the rug when they never even had a floor.” We cannot return to a naive innocence, but Buber’s vision is a kind of needed pedagogical counterbalance which also, I think, describes the deeper yearning of students, the moment when their faces are open to ours.

What, I wonder further, is pedagogical desire? Who gives and who takes? What do we yearn for in wanting to teach and wanting to learn? How do we keep this yearning, this dialectic of giving and receiving from becoming manipulative and degraded? In an intriguing essay entitled “Eros and Education” Joseph Schwab also traces the vicissitudes of Eros and argues that education cannot separate the intellect from feeling and action. “Eros, the energy of wanting, is as much the energy source in the pursuit of truth as it is in the motion toward pleasure, friendship, and fame, or power.” For Schwab, the teacher’s task is to locate those objects to which “youthful Eros” readily attaches, and then direct it to more enduring objects. Eros, he points out, is first located and activated by “a certain face-to-face relation between teacher and student,” an interpersonal relation involving a reciprocity of evocation and response (109-110). Schwab means this quite physically and concretely, and supplies a vivid and subtle picture of classroom dynamics:

If in the first moments of the first meeting of a new class, the teacher’s gaze wanders first to one, then to another and another of the anonymous faces before him, those faces which are not readable yet as to promise and performance, and if, in this wandering inspection, two or three students answer his regard in a way which signals to them their curious awareness of him as a person, a start has been made. The person who is thus aware of me is a person of whom I become aware. The wandering movement of my eyes is stopped. They return to him or her. From an anonymous sea of faces, from the mere collective, individuation has begun; the “class” is beginning to be “persons.” The teacher thus answers the awareness he feels in the student; he examines more closely the person who has signaled interest in him. In reciprocity, this new inspection is no longer felt by the student as mere curious awareness, but as awareness of himself as a person. More, the student feels his own movement from item to individuality, from anonymity to personality. And he is grateful (110–111).

Eros at bottom for Schwab is a “desire for selfhood: To experience another’s recognition of one’s self is to receive reassurance of that self’s existence.” That initiates further growth and gratitude, which the teacher also in turn experiences, knowing that she is needed and useful. And in the end, the teacher



"wants to convey not merely what he knows, but how he knows and how he values it. He wants to communicate some of the fire he feels, some of the Eros he possesses, for a valued object" (124).

GIVER AND RECEIVER: CONTRACTING THE SELF

Or, I would add, as the Talmud puts it, "More than the calf wants to suck, the cow wants to give" (*Pesachim* 112a). That relation of suckling infant to nursing mother is also a not-so-simple dynamic of desire. Who indeed "initiates" and "controls" the relation, the mother or the infant? Many texts and stories in Jewish tradition use the feminine imagery of nursing to describe not only the teacher-student relation, but the relation between text and interpreter. Among the most extraordinary is the following Talmudic statement: "Why were the words of Torah compared to a nipple? Just as with a nipple, whenever an infant fondles it, he finds milk, so it is with the words of Torah— whenever a person ponders them he finds relish in them" (*Eruvin* 54b).

There is also way in which the desire of the infant to nurse activates the milk of the mother, and the way the desire of the student to learn activates the desire of the teacher to teach. To use kabbalistic terminology, the "receiver" [*mekabel*] activates the "bestower" [*mashpia*]. The tension between withholding and giving, holding on and letting go is also itself key to the pedagogical act. In Jewish mystical tradition, the relation of "bestower" and "receiver" is itself an ever shifting dialectic of desire and fulfillment, meeting and separation that is seen as structuring the entire creation—from the most interior fluxes of the divine godhead, to the relation of the divine and the human, human and human, male and female, and so forth. Kabbalistic texts describe the initial act of creation not as an overflowing self-expression of the divine, for that would have left no place for the other, and for a separate finite world. Instead, there was a primal "self-contraction," by God, a *tzimtzum*, a "concealing or withdrawal" of the divine light in order to leave an "empty space." In that space, however, remains a "trace" [*reshimu*] of the divine. And in that hollow, the world subsequently begins to develop (as in a womb) as further divine contractions and emanations are projected into the void. In a sense one could also say that "self-contraction" is really the secret of human relations, and of ethics: I let go and make space for the other person.

Many chassidic and kabbalistic thinkers also understand this cosmological withdrawal as a paradigm of pedagogy, and vice versa. The analogy is made to the teacher who also has to make a number of contractions and concealments, in order for her or his thoughts to be apprehended by the receiver. For if the teacher would try transfer her or his ideas directly on the level s/he conceives them, that student would be overwhelmed. As R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneerson

(1880–1950) puts it, in order for the student to absorb the influence of the teacher, the teacher must first entirely “remove the light of his own intellect, and conceive an intellectual light that is on the receiver’s level.” The concealment, however, is ultimately for the purpose of revelation, just as the *tzimtzum* is made for the purpose of a new independent creation. (Schneerson, 21).

This dialectic of revelation and concealment would be another way of analyzing “sounding through a mask,” or the role of masking in being “personal” in teaching. The “concealment” of *tzimtzum*, however, is a “masking” not for the purpose of manipulation, or a postmodern play of surface mirrors, but an ascetic-ethical-spiritual gesture in which one limits oneself, in which one moves out of one’s own position into the position of the other. I indeed use this model to instruct me in my own teaching, conceiving of my role less as expansive self-expression but as leaving a “trace” (*reshimu*) of myself in the space I create for my students, a trace that hints, points, invites, but does not compel. (Thus also my reluctance to write a highly “confessional,” autobiographical narrative here as well.) Students should also have the freedom to withhold their personal beliefs. But the larger lives we all live should be felt at the edges, indicated, traced.<sup>9</sup> R. Nachman further understood in his own brilliant way that this act of emptying out is also deeply productive for the teacher. For in the act of teaching, of comprehending and giving of knowledge, the teacher, so to speak, “empties” herself of her knowledge,” and so creates an open space within herself that enables entirely new knowledge to enter her mind. The bestower becomes the receiver.

Ultimately, this concept of *tzimtzum* and necessary contraction reminds me of what my many years of teaching experience have also led me to conclude: *that one can never really teach anything “directly.”* The teaching that is truly received and absorbed by the student is done via indirection. And the arousal of the desire to know itself also comes so often through indirection, through a lack which prompts desire, through a glimpse of a trace which tracks a glimmering light. Indirection, as R. Nachman understood so well, was also the secret power of stories. Stories, he said, help people who have “fallen asleep,” who are sunk in an existential darkness and lack of awareness to awaken and, as he puts it, “find their face,” without the light overwhelming and blinding them. Stories “garb” and “enclothe” the light so it can be received, enable the sleeper to awaken gently, like blind person healing and slowly coming to see illumination (*Likkutei Moharan* “Patakh. R. Simon” 60)<sup>10</sup>

Maria Harris, in *Teaching and the Religious Imagination*, has also described teaching-via indirection using Kierkegaard’s idea of “indirect communication.” In indirect communication, the communicator’s intent is nevertheless to “confront the hearer in a way that enables the hearer to discover that a rigorous

demand is set before her or him," an "existence possibility" that forces the reader to choose her relation to the communication (positive or negative). In so doing, the hearer chooses her own subjectivity. This is not a choice for or against the "subject matter" as a system of clues, but the *relation toward* that possibility or subject matter. The hearer does this through a "double reflection: through apprehension of the form presented, and through approbation of the form in relation to the self" (66). Ultimately, then the student/hearer is aroused "not only to *do* something (or be something or dream something, or await something, or allow something to happen) but to recognize that one is morally, ethically religiously *called* to do something" (69).

LETTERS: SEEING THE FACE OF THE STUDENT

I cannot conclude this essay without at least offering a glimpse of some of the faces in my classroom, and of modes of teaching I have tried to develop to "see the face of the other." In the end, for me it all comes down to what occurs in the classroom, when teacher and students meet "face to face." Jane Tompkins says it well when she writes that despite all our professed academic goals of critical thinking, or social change, or transmission of cultural heritage, or professional training,

I have come to think that teaching and learning are not preparation for anything but are the thing itself. . . . The classroom is a microcosm of the world; it is the chance we have to practice whatever ideals we cherish. The kind of classroom one creates is the acid test of what it is one really stands for. And I wonder, in the case of college professors, if performing their competence in front of other people is all that amounts to in the end. ("Pedagogy," 659)

For all the proclamations of contemporary cultural and postmodern theory about the social and dialogical nature of knowledge, and how knowledge is created through the conversations we engage in with communities of interpreters, and for all our idealistic talk about the University as a "community"—all too often, the academy is lonely, fragmented, and anxiety-ridden place for both faculty and students. A philosophy professor friend once bemoaned to me that he could not find a community in which he felt at home: his only real "community" are the people for whom he writes his academic essays, and who come to the conferences he runs. But that is an *audience*, not a community. Despite our attempts to create classroom and University "community," we often are really only "audiences" for each other's monologues.

Like Rosenzweig I find it harder and hard to write "books," and more and more use an epistolary mode in my teaching and writing in order to see the face of the other. It was one of the students in a graduate seminar I offered on

the topic “Literary Theory and the Teaching of Literature” who spurred this change in my teaching. She pointed out to me that the “ memos” I had asked all the students in that seminar to write to each other about the micro-teaching exercises that each did for the class, had become wonderfully interactive letters. She persuaded me from then on to stop having students write “journals” in my classes, and convert to a form of “communally published letters.” I am eternally grateful for this advice to Mary Alice Delia, whose dissertation, *Killer English: Postmodern Theory and the High School Classroom* (1991) includes an excellent chapter on letter writing.

This practice radically changed my teaching and the dynamics of my classroom; students write with a rare creativity, eloquence, and passion, and form closer relationships amongst themselves. The rhetorical form of the letter frees the writer to choose her or his persona and is, of course, a way of simultaneously “sounding through a mask,” and “facing the other,” a way of revealing and concealing at the same time, without coercion. The writer can be as intimate or as distant, as analytical or as emotional, as direct or indirect as she or he chooses. I ask each person to read his or her letter aloud, and I, too, write along with everyone. In the end, this letter writing makes every one a participant, gives everyone a voice and a face, even those who are shy or afraid to speak.<sup>11</sup>



That frustrated student who had wanted to write her Honors Thesis on the “Meaning of Life” wrote the following end-of-the-semester summary letter to our “Bible as Literature Class”:

*Dear Class:*

*We’ve chatted long and hard about the Old Testament and discovered more ways than I thought possible to look at it. We talked of good and evil and love and humanity, and almost all of creation. We’ve looked at families and gender and cycles of forgiveness. And perhaps some of us are in agreement with Jan’s statement about the Bible, that “it is not supposed to make sense.” But that’s exactly why it does make sense. We can look at it from any angle and see a semblance of ourselves in its reflection of the world. We find connection (and in a small way, comfort) by that recognition. And that’s the marvel. That’s why so many millions of people have turned to it, and continue to turn to it,*

*While I started out the semester asking, “What is the meaning of life?” and I’m not necessarily any closer to the answer, I’ve learned more ways to search for it . . . it comes down to us to judge ourselves.*

*We may all be "tools" in a master plan. Or there may truly be free will. We may all be doomed to isolation and failure—no character in the entire Bible exists without suffering, and an occasional mistake. Even the "upright and blameless" Job must bear his share. Whatever the truth of reality is (which we have no way to ultimately determine) it is only ourselves that we can hold accountable . . . We lose things when we lose track of ourselves. The Bible is one way of finding ourselves. Our connections with the characters, our instincts to fill in the spaces by relating what we would feel or think, that is what provides meaning, what unifies us all as humans.*

*We often cannot make sense of the data of our lives, because like Jacob who doesn't know how to reconcile himself with what he's done because "he's done something that is greater than his awareness of himself. He has moved into his destiny" (Hugh O'Donnell), we cannot always see past our present knowledge to the changes that are occurring in our being. We can only take Pam's interpretation of Eve to heart and realize that not just the serpent, but God and ourselves are "necessary to the realization of our purpose: to live."*

"We can look at it from any angle and see a semblance of ourselves in its reflection of the world": her words uncannily echo the key trope I have been working with here all along. In this class, not only the text, but each of us was a kind of refracting mirror which allowed her to see a "semblance" of her face—and to connect with the faces of others.

#### THE PASSING OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

These letters often forged deep connection between myself and many of these students. In the cycle of teaching and learning, though, the student and teacher often reverse roles, and ultimately have to part from each other. Mary Alice Delia, the graduate student who inspired me to use letters in the classroom, and who became my dear friend, was an award winning High School teacher whose battle with leukemia forced her to retire early, until the end came in November, 1997.

Ironically, the day before Mary Alice passed away, I was talking about her creativity as a teacher to a colleague in Jerusalem while we were examining texts from Jewish tradition about various forms of leave-taking, and about teachers and students. We were again looking at that greatest teacher in the Bible, Moses, and the way he responds to God's telling him that the time has come for him to leave the world, and reiterate he will not be able to go into the Promised Land. At the very end of the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses has to

accept this decree and make arrangements to pass his teachings and authority on to his student and successor, Joshua. There are many intriguing *midrashim* which creatively expand on this narrative. In many of them, Moses protests, argues, and refuses to accept God's pronouncement that the end has come. In one of the most extraordinary, Moses again asks God for the chance not to die and God tells him:

“This is how I have decided, and this is the way of the world: each generation has its interpreters, its economic guides, its political leaders. Until now, you had your share of service before me: now, your time is over and it is your disciple Joshua's turn.”

Moses answered, “Lord of the world, if I am dying because of Joshua, I shall go and be his student.”

God replied, “If that is what you wish to do, go and do so.”

Moses goes to become Joshua's student, conceals himself at door of Joshua's tent and listens to him teach, but suddenly the methodological and pedagogical rules of wisdom are taken from Moses and he no longer understands. The children of Israel plead with him to teach them the last words of the Bible, but he says, “I do not know what to tell you,” stumbles and falls. And he then says to God, “Until now I asked for my life, but now my soul is given to you.” (Midrash *Tanchuma*, end of *V'Etchanen*).

In this midrash, in order to hold on, Moses is willing to abandon his role as teacher and become his student's student. But that perhaps is the way of any great teacher. Both the way a teacher begins to learn how to be a teacher, and the way a teacher ends her career as a teacher.

So, finally, I often wonder what indeed does remain of all the classes we have prepared, committee meetings attended, writing we have read and published, and students we have taught. I will remember Mary Alice as much as, if not more than, the books and lectures I have written and heard. For in the end, what are they all about but to facilitate each other's illuminations, to recognize and confirm each other's faces? So I end this essay with these reflections not to depress or sadden, but to help us remember the preciousness of our lives together in the University, and the shortness of the time. The writer Grace Paley once said: “To me teaching is a gift because it puts you in loving contact with young people.” As I think back on my life in academia, perhaps that what will be what most endures.

#### NOTES

I would like to express my gratitude to the Mandel School for Advanced Professional Educators in Jerusalem where I was a Jerusalem Fellow from 1997–1999 for the time and support needed to write this essay. I am equally

grateful to the many friends and colleagues in Jerusalem, who stimulated my thinking about this topic, helped me formulate ideas and track down sources, and who represent to me what Jewish learning, superb pedagogy, and humanistic education are all about: Rav Daniel Epstein, Melila Eshed- Hellner, Walter Hertzberg, Menachem Kallus, Rav Marc Kojovsky, Daniel Marom, Simi Peters, Jeffrey Saks, Ora Wiskind-Elper, Sassona Yovel, Noam Zion, Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg.

1. See Lee S. Shulman, "Theory, Practice, and the Education of Professionals." *The Elementary School Journal* (98:5):511–526. That turn of the century "ideology" of professionalism, writes Shulman, valued the technical "objective" and "scientific" but also had an equally strong moral and "service" aspect which we need to recover.
2. The dictionary I refer to here is the online <http://www.dict.org> which is the DICT Development Group: Online Dictionary Query, a database of several dictionaries. I also used the online Middle English Dictionary <http://www.hti.umich.edu>.
3. My earlier books were: *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory*, and *Fragments of Redemption: Jewish Thought and Literary Theory in Scholem, Benjamin, and Levinas*. Recent work on pedagogy includes: "The Torah of Criticism and the Criticism of Torah: Recuperating the Pedagogical Moment," in Steven Kepnes, ed. *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age* (New York: New York UP, 1996): 221–242; "Dear Class," *Essays in Quality Learning: Teachers' Reflections on Classroom Practice* in Steven Selden, ed. (University of Maryland, IBM Total Quality Learning Project, 1998):17–32;" We Cleverly Avoided Talking About God': Personal and Pedagogical Reflections on Academia and Spirituality," in *Courtyard: Jewish Theology Seminary* 1:1 (1999); "Emunah: The Craft of Faith," *Crosscurrents: Religion and Intellectual Life* 42:3 (1992): 293–313.
4. Moshe Idel, "Models of Learning in Jewish Mysticism," unpublished lecture to the Summer School of the Institute for Advanced Study, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, June 26, 1998.
5. For more on the relation of the modern secular University and religious issues, see works such as Parker Palmer, *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993); Jane Tompkins, *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996); Mark Schwen, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (NY: Oxford Univ P, 1993).
6. This precise formulation comes from my friend and colleague Simi Peters.
7. God again asks a similar question to Cain: "Where is Abel, you brother" (Gen 4:9) In response, comes the famous rhetorical question: "I know not. Am I

my brother's keeper? There is an implicit textual connection with the "where" question addressed to Adam, and the two non-answers—between the inability to face one's own actions and the inability to face the other . . . resulting in murder. Following the narrative logic of the Bible in the early chapters of Genesis, perhaps we could say that the original "personal identity" question is not, "Who are you" but "Where are you?" . . . where are you situated in relation to others, present or hiding?

8. See the excellent analysis of Martin S. Jaffee, "A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (65.3): 526-549. Jaffee insightfully analyzes the dialectic of Oral and Written Torah in terms of the "face-to-face encounters" of the rabbinic teacher-student relation, and the sense of teacher as "living text" to be decoded and recomposed by the student for his or her life.
9. I thank R. Zvi Blanchard for helping me formulate the relation in this way.
10. I am grateful to Ora Wiskind-Elper for her kind personal assistance in helping clarify R. Nachman's work for me, and aid in tracking down sources. See also her book on R. Nachman, *Tradition and Fantasy*, p. 220 and her entire Ch 2, "Telling Tales, or the Physic and Metaphysics of Fiction."
11. See also Wayne Booth's well-known essay "The Rhetorical Stance." Booth points out that most college students have no sense of a real audience when they write, nor can they find the proper tone of voice—for after all, the reader is the instructor with the red pencil and grade book, and that is not a "real" audience. So students write in the pedantic, disembodied voices that suppress any personal relation to the reader, or between the writer and the subject, and lose any sense of what the writing is *for*. In *Writing Teacher's Source Book*, ed G. Tate and E. Corbett. (New York: Oxford UP, 1981).