REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

THE HEART OF JUSTICE: SOCIAL WORK INNOVATIONS IN ISRAEL

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Special Issue
The Heart of Justice: Social Work Innovations in Israel
Guest Editor: James J. Kelly
Consulting Editor: Ray Berger

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Letter from the Editor

Eileen Mayers Pasztor, DSW, California State University, Long Beach

Welcome to Volume 17, Issue No. 4 of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping,* special issue on *"The Heart of Justice; Social Work Innovations in Israel."* Instead of a general issue which provides a collection of narratives on diverse topics that have been approved by the journal's own editorial board, a special issue such as this one is quite different. It presents a theme, in this issue: social justice and social work innovations in Israel. Readers are invited to be present in the journey of the authors who share their experiences through their individual processes of helping others and bringing about social change.

A special issue begins with a concept proposed by an individual or team who are invested in a particular topic and dedicated to seeing their idea come to life in print. This special issue reflects the extraordinary commitment of a unique team working between California and Israel. Dr. James (Jim) Kelly and Dr. Ray Berger are the guest and consulting editors for this special issue. Dr. Kelly's commitment to *Reflections* dates back to its birth nearly two decades ago. As the director of what was then the CSULB Department (now School) of Social Work, he supported the birth of *Reflections.* Dr. Kelly is renowned in numerous arenas, including as past president of the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and for his expertise worldwide in new program development and educating social workers on several continents. Those of you who are subscribers to *Reflections* will remember the remarkable issue that focused on social justice in Africa, co-guest-edited by Dr. Kelly, who is the president of Menlo College in Atherton, CA (San Francisco Bay Area).

This time, Dr. Kelly collaborated with a long-time colleague, Dr. Ray Berger, Professor (Retired) who served at the CSULB Department of Social Work and was recognized then for his commitment to social justice issues. Such an endeavor requires the dedication and expertise of an Israel in-country colleague, so Drs. Berger and Kelly turned to Dr. Itzhak Lander, a lecturer at the Department of Social Work at Sapir College in Hof Ashkelon. The investment of Dr. Lander was so meaningful that Drs. Kelly and Berger have provided a separate acknowledgements page for him on page 5.

The *Reflections* executive and editorial boards and staff extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Berger and Dr. Kelly for the selfless and countless hours of time invested in conceptualizing the special issue, working with prospective and confirmed authors, and copy editing, especially when authors are writing from Arabic and Hebrew to English. Across the thousands of kilometres, we also thank Dr. Lander for his generous and expert commitment. In the United States, social workers have our NASW Code of Ethics which is embodied in six major principles: being competent, having dignity, having integrity, respecting human relationships, providing service, and advocating for social justice. In Israel, there is the practice of tikkun olam, which means "to repair the world." Ethical practice knows no borders. You will find all of these concepts come to life in the pages of this special issue of "The Heart of Justice: Social Work Innovations in Israel."

For the Cover art, we again turned to CSULB Professor of Art, Dr. Robin Richesson, MFA. She worked with the elegant graphic nature of the Hebrew and Arabic script to create the image for this cover, which reads "social justice" in these languages.

To all who worked on this issue and to our readers: Toda Raba and Shukrun (Hebrew and Arabic transliteration for "thank you").

The Heart of Justice: Social Work Innovations in Israel
Introduction to the Special Issue

James J. Kelly, Ph.D., President, Menlo College, Atherton, California

Shining a Light on Innovative Work

When we first planned this Special Issue on Israeli social work, we expected to find that a great deal had been written about social work services in Israel. After all, social services have always been a part of the modern state of Israel, and Israel is well-known for its extensive philanthropic and government-supported system of social services. We were surprised then, to discover that the published literature lacks a recent overview of social work in Israel. Although this Special Issue provides a sampling, rather than a comprehensive overview of Israeli social work, it nevertheless shines a light on a variety of innovative work that is being done every day by social workers in Israel.

Helping Across Cultures

The first four papers in this Special Issue explore the dimensions of Israeli social work across cultures.

In her paper, Merav Moshe Grodofsky describes her work as Director of the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building. She details the extraordinary challenges of establishing and coordinating rights-based community practice centers in Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. These centers advocate for economic and social justice within Jewish and Arab communities, and, in the future may serve as the basis for cooperation among all the people of the region.

Alean Al-Krenawi presents a model for social work with Arab populations in Israel. He explains the deficiencies of Western models of social work when applied to this cultural group. In its place, he proposes a model that respects local values and integrates Western with traditional approaches. In a series of fascinating case histories, he applies his proposed model to the issues of polygamy, blood revenge, and honor killing.

On the other end of the cultural spectrum, Hester Fass and Ronit Lazar tell the story of an ultra-orthodox woman who finds herself called upon to help members of her community cope with issues such as child neglect and spousal abuse. Her solution?: secure an education as a professional social worker. Like Dr. Al-Krenawi, she finds a middle-way that combines modern social work practice with respect for local customs and values.

One of the great challenges of Israel has been the incorporation of people from undeveloped areas of the world into a modern, democratic state. Itzhak Lander describes the history and social service needs of one of the largest of these groups: Ethiopian Jews. Once again we see that effective interventions require the application of social work principles within the context of local cultures. Dr. Lander recounts his experiences as a social worker with two troubled families.

Services for Unique Circumstances

The next two articles describe innovative services that respond to the unique circumstances of Israeli life. Noemi Edlis and Ronit Sadger describe a treatment center for victims of sexual abuse. They alert social workers to the unique dynamics of working with survivors, which require attention to such issues as client projection and displacement, client reluctance to use services, and emotional reactions of social work professionals.

The husband-wife team of Peter and Pamela Mond describes an innovative program, much needed in the often hectic and stressful environment of Israel, but potentially useful in many parts of the world. The Monds

relate their own story, and that of several of their clients, in applying a training program to teach clients how to reach inner quiet. This practice has been a solution to a host of behavioral problems, from the acting-out behavior of children, to the development of self-control in a war veteran.

Activism

Those of us who are social work educators often talk about the need to integrate classroom learning with real-world practice. The next two authors have done it. Using a recent social service worker strike in Israel as backdrop, Ayala Cohen and Atalia Mosek tell the story of involving students in the process of advocacy in the midst of a rancorous strike. They confront the possibilities for enhanced student learning, as well as the dangers and institutional barriers to this type of advocacy. Roni Kaufman describes the genesis and history of an innovative social justice program at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. She carefully takes the reader through the processes of community research to document the dimensions of selected advocacy issues. She then shares her own experiences of community activism and student learning around the issues of food security, and the labor struggle of non-unionized social workers.

Lifetime of Experience

In the final paper of this special issue, Ruben Schindler looks back on a lifetime of experience as a social worker in Israel. In this highly personal account, Dr. Schindler takes us on a journey through his life—from his childhood fleeing Nazi persecution to his present day work as Dean of a school of social work. He details the history of Israeli social services and their transition from a universalistic perspective in the early years of the state, to the current emphasis on a work ethic. Along the way, we learn about the challenges of massive immigration, and the increasing professionalization of the Israeli social work profession.

We hope you learn as much from these papers as we have. – James J. Kelly

James J. Kelly is the president of Menlo College in Atherton, CA, and the former president of the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Comments can be sent to: jkelly@menlo.edu.

Acknowledgement For Itzhak Lander, Ph.D., Lecturer, Department of Social Work, Sapir College, Israel

"Itzhak," We complained into the phone. "We're worried about the Special Issue."

It was one of our Friday morning calls from us in California to Itzhak, our colleague and point-man in Israel. For Itzhak, it was the end of a long work week, and night was about to fall.

"We really need someone to write about the Arab sector in Israel," we continued. "Can you help?"

Itzhak was never short of ideas. "I believe I know someone who would be very good to write about that. I'll get in touch with him."

We imagined that, while most of Israel prepared to rest on the Sabbath, Itzhak was busy hatching ideas about ways to help us recruit authors. Often we heard him say, "You know, as we talk about that, I am thinking of someone else." Another time he told us, "Of course, there is the father of my colleague, who would be a great one to write about the history of social work in Israel."

In one of many phone calls, we commented, "Itzhak. It is awfully nice of you to do all of this for us when we can't give you anything in return!"

"Don't people always help each other this way? I think they do, in Israel," Itzhak replied.

We thought, "No, certainly not everyone would work so hard for complete strangers....not in any part of the world."

No part of this Special Issue would have been possible without Itzhak. He used his extensive network of colleagues and associates in Israel to locate potential authors. And he followed up—often more than once—with those who evidenced an interest in writing for this Special Issue. He prodded authors and guided us all along the way.

One more thing sticks in our minds as we think about those Friday morning chats with Itzhak. He would sometimes begin our conversations by saying, "It has been quiet today."

In most places that might mean the children behaved well that day. Or perhaps that the pace of life had slowed in preparation for the weekend. But the Middle East is not most places, and we knew too well what Itzhak meant—that the sirens had not gone off that day; that no one had raced to the shelters; that no missiles had fallen that day.

We hope this Special Issue will make a small contribution to that time when all peoples of the Middle East, regardless of nationality, religion or ethnicity, will say at the end of the day, "It has been quiet today..." and they will be thinking of quiet children instead of missiles.

Whatever happens, we will miss our Friday morning chats with Itzhak.

- Dr. James J. Kelly
- Dr. Ray Berger

Reflections on the Role of a Social Worker in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Merav Moshe Grodofsky, Ph.D., Sapir College, Hof Ashkelon, Israel.

The role of the social work profession in regions of political conflict and in areas of acute armed conflict has recently become one of the most popular fields of interest in the social work literature. This narrative describes the author's experience as a social work professional in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The paper is pertinent given the number of political conflicts around the globe and suggests that social workers can be significant shapers within these contexts by addressing the root causes of conflict.

"Lo Alecha HaAvoda Legmor-It is not for you to complete the work."
–Hebrew Saying

This narrative focuses on my role as a social work professional in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For over a decade I have worked with the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building (MMEP). MMEP is committed to the reduction of inequality and the promotion of civil society as cornerstones of sustainable peace both within and between societies in conflict. The program directs its efforts towards the establishment of rights-based community practice centers in some of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

Rights-based community practice centers, such as the MMEP, address individual and communal disentitlements and advance empowerment practice so that individuals and communities learn to advocate for and access economic and social rights. In the process, they become active citizens exercising civil and political rights and strengthening civil society and democracy — the foundations for more peaceful societies.

Jordan, Palestine and Israel have unique economic, political, cultural and social contexts. Hence, the rights-based community practice model is implemented somewhat differently in each of the three societies. Nonetheless, the centers share a common conceptual framework, principles and action strategies. These commonalities enable the centers to function as part of a regional network of rights-based community practice and peace building centers in the Middle East (Moshe Grodofsky, 2007).

My role as regional coordinator of the program has evolved over time and has been influenced by program developments, the changing political landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and my own reflections on my changing identity within the context of the conflict. This article will present aspects of my role and will highlight my reflections as to the relationship between the "personal, the professional and the political" as illustrated in the evolution of my work.

I begin with a brief description of the background of the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building. I then focus on the different phases of my role as MMEP regional coordinator and share my thoughts and reflections in regard to the experiences within each of the phases.

The McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building

The rights-based community practice model was developed by Professor Jim Torczyner at the School of Social Work at McGill University in Montreal. I met Jim in the United States in 1992 when I was the assistant director of student field education in the Department of Social Work at the Ben Gurion University in Israel. Three months after our initial meeting, eight senior social work students from the Department of Social Work began their field placement in what eventually

led to the establishment of the rights-based community practice model in Israel, later to become known as Singur Kehillati-Community Advocacy.

In 1992, at the same time we were developing the rights-based practice model in Israel, larger developments were occurring in the Middle East. Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were engaged in peace negotiations that culminated in the signing of The Declaration of Principles in September 1993. In 1994 Israel signed a Treaty of Peace with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. These events led Prof. Torczyner to Jordan and later to Palestine to identify academic institutional partners to facilitate the development of the rights-based practice models in their societies.

In the fall of 1997, following the securing of an agreement between the University of Jordan and McGill University, two Jordanians and two Israelis began their MSW studies at McGill University as the first fellows of the rights-based community practice cross-border initiative. The four fellows became well-versed in the theory and practice of the rights-based approach. Upon their return to their respective countries they were to begin to create the groundwork for the establishment of the model in Jordan and to work in the already established centers in Israel. Since 1997 four additional cohorts of Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian fellows have attended the MSW program and returned to their home countries to continue to establish and work with the rights-based practice model.

The history of the program in the Middle East is beyond the scope of this article[1]. For the purpose of this article it is sufficient to briefly delineate four primary stages of the program. In its first stage, the focus of the program was establishment of rights-based community practice centers in Jordan and Palestine and reinforcement of the two existing centers in Israel. Fellows who returned from the MMEP Graduate Fellowship Program in Canada led these efforts.

The second phase of the MMEP focused on the development of the regional network of rights-based community practice centers and peace building. This stage entailed expanding the relationships between the centers beyond those that had been established among the returning fellows, to include additional center staff and community constituencies.

In the third stage of the program additional rights-based community practice centers were established, increasing the total number of centers in the region. In the fourth and present stage, the program is focused on securing financial sustainability for the centers and the regional network and establishing Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian national bodies.

The Role of Regional Coordinator

I began my role as MMEP regional coordinator in 2005. By 2005 roughly forty Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian fellows had returned from their studies at McGill University. Two rights-based practice centers had been established in Palestine and one center in Jordan. In Israel fellows had returned to the three established centers. The program partners were well-positioned to begin to consider cross-country exchange.

My work as MMEP regional coordinator can be divided into three phases. I refer to the first stage as the "logistics stage." Here my primary task was to identify and address the logistical needs of the centers and to coordinate regional programs.

The second stage of my work was dedicated to facilitating exchange between the centers. In the third phase I became the program trainer of the rights-based practice model in centers in Palestine and Jordan. Currently I serve as the Israeli National Development Director. In the next section I will describe each of the roles and present some examples to illustrate the issues faced in the different phases of my role as MMEP regional coordinator.

The Logistics Stage

This first stage of my position was the most uneventful, yet the most critical. My primary activities revolved around securing the logistical needs of the program so that any activities defined as "regional" would function smoothly. This entailed securing travel visas

and permits for the partners, arranging the logistics of joint meetings between the partners and the visits by program funders to the region. It involved long phone conversations with the partners to adjust scheduling. This was a challenge, due to the political complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that oftentimes meant that programs that had been scheduled were cancelled at the last moment, given travel restrictions placed on the Palestinians by the Israeli Government. These tasks required that I establish working relationships, not only with the program partners, but also with the Israeli Embassy in Jordan, the Israeli army in the Occupied Territories, funding representatives in the region, travel companies and more.

Early on in my work one of my colleagues commented that this was a job that a good administrative assistant could do. I saw in the work an opportunity to begin to build relationships with my colleagues, particularly in Palestine and Jordan. I was an Israeli and despite the fact that Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians had chosen to partner in the program, we were still in the midst of a political conflict. As a social work professional I recognized that logistics are linked to needs. Social workers begin to build relationships based upon needs identification and addressing the needs of others. This basic principle of the profession was certainly applicable to this program.

One may question how, as a party to the conflict, I was able to transcend my loyalty to my own people. I saw an opportunity to create a process that might enable us to build relationships within a complex political reality. I felt professionally, personally and politically aligned with this endeavor. Perhaps this was enlightened self-interest. Good relationships with one's neighbors benefit all of the neighbors.

This first stage in my work culminated in the coordination of the MMEP regional conference held in Istanbul in 2006. The conference brought together one hundred Palestinians, Israelis and Jordanians including center staff, center steering committee members and community constituents. For many of those who attended the conference it was the first time that they met "the other," "the enemy" from the other side of the conflict. For many of the community members who attended the conference it was the first time they had left their countries and the first time they had boarded a plane. Given this reality, the planning and coordination of every aspect of the conference had to excel. It was extremely important that the accommodations meet the specific needs of the Muslim and Jewish participants.

We had originally planned to hold the conference in East Jerusalem at a location that would be accessible for the Palestinians so that we would not be dependent upon travel permits that might be refused at the last minute, hence threatening conference participation. I invited one of my Palestinian colleagues to join me when I visited the Notre Dame Cathedral in East Jerusalem to determine its suitability for the conference. We were shown the conference rooms and the dining hall and then asked to see the sleeping accommodations. Each of the bedrooms had crosses over the beds. My Palestinian colleague and I simultaneously recognized that for both the Muslim and the Jewish participants this might cause discomfort. Looking back, I think this was a critical moment where we understood the complexity of what we were trying to do; every aspect of the conference needed to be considered, based upon the needs and sensitivities of our communities. It would be impossible to expect the participants to relate to one another if they felt that we had not addressed their needs.

Sometime into the planning of the conference we decided to move the location to Jordan, thinking it would be a less complicated travel destination than East Jerusalem. I spoke to one of my Jordanian partners about the necessity of ensuring that we would have kosher food for the Israeli participants who kept kosher. He assured me that there was no place in Amman where we would find kosher food. I arranged for an Israeli caterer to cater the conference; however, this meant that we would have to bring three days of food across the Jordanian border. Moreover, given the rules of kosher cuisine, I explained to my colleague that we would need to have the hotel in Amman agree

to bring in the food, to heat it and to serve it on a separate set of dishes that the caterer would provide. Imagine! My Jordanian partner proceeded to the hotel and to the border police to explain the rules entailed in keeping kosher. In the Middle East this was unique and was indicative of the close relationships that we had developed.

We ultimately held the regional conference in Istanbul and it was by every measure a true success. At the end of the conference the one major criticism that we heard was that the conference had not been long enough. Worrying about "logistics" served as the basis for successful peace building in this stage of my work and enabled me to build upon this in the next phase of my role.

Facilitating Bilateral Relationships

The complexities and costs of organizing a regional conference helped us to recognize that, as program, we would need to consider bilateral exchanges between centers as an additional avenue to reinforce the regional network. An opportunity for such exchange presented itself when the Israeli Government introduced the Wisconsin Plan, a welfare-to-work pilot initiative. Neighborhoods in West Jerusalem, with a predominantly Israeli population, and neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, with a predominantly Palestinian population, were chosen for the pilot project.

Soon after the commencement of the Wisconsin Plan, MMEP's West Jerusalem center initiated what was called "Wisconsin Watch" a monitoring strategy to document disentitlements experienced by the program participants as the basis for advocacy work in regard to the program with the Israeli Government.

I organized a joint meeting between the staffs of the West Jerusalem and the East Jerusalem centers to discuss possibilities for joint cooperation regarding the impact of the Plan on the two communities. One of the principles behind the rights-based community practice model is universality-that we are all entitled to the same rights. We recognized that governments oftentimes divide identity groups and that the best way to put the principle of universality into practice is to bring together people of diversity who suffer from the same disentitlement and yet are traditionally divided.

At that first meeting the Israeli and Palestinian center staffs sat around the table sharing the experiences of their constituencies and telling about what they had done to date to assist them. The stories they told about the experiences of their constituencies who participated in the Wisconsin Plan were almost a mirror image of the other. In this context it did not matter if you were Palestinian or Israeli. What mattered was that the constituencies, Jewish and Palestinian, were poor and dependent upon government programs that ultimately disempowered them.

It was a very exciting time for me for I was seeing how rights-based practice and peace building come together and how professionals can play a role in bridging the divides created by political conflict by identifying and organizing around common rights issues.

For a period of about a year the centers worked in cooperation and my role was to facilitate their efforts. Anyone who has ever done inter-organizational work knows how complicated this can be. Added to normative complexities were issues that paralleled those of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict-issues of power, decision-making, expertise, autonomy and more. Addressing these was critical to the ability of the staffs to continue to work together and required different strategies at different stages of the process. At times I would meet with each of the partners individually to allow for ventilation and regrouping. At times we would meet together to work out the sensitivities of the two communities.

The centers were able to hold joint activities, including a public meeting, community outreach, lobbying, and a demonstration in the heart of Jerusalem, where Israelis and Palestinians stood side by side advocating for their rights. The efforts eventually influenced the government to adopt significant changes to the original Wisconsin Plan. At the same time, these often heroic efforts to cooperate across the conflict were not without compromise. Excerpts from a letter that I received from our West Jerusalem center

director following a joint conference were telling:

> The conference itself was important in terms of the message of working together and the information that those there received. Unfortunately, but as I predicted, the Jewish participation was very small—about ten people all together, and all but one from our core group of activists. It was clear that coming to both East Jerusalem and a church was an unrealistic challenge to people who are not closely involved with our center. While the conference clearly gave the message that the Wisconsin Plan brings people together across their differences, and it was amazing to have a conference in Hebrew and Arabic, including a Knesset member who translated for himself, it did not have an impact on our organizing of the Jewish participants. We will have to do a similar conference in West Jerusalem very soon to raise the energy level.
>
> Because the time is so critical in terms of what must be moved forward—all of our claims have been publicly adopted by Eli Yeshai[1], with whom we have worked regularly, and he is expecting us to give vocal support—I feel that currently I need to focus and put most of our time into working with the Jewish community to get them out into the streets and to the Knesset regularly. We will obviously coordinate joint activities, but they will be focused on doing things publicly in our community, in the Knesset and in opposition to the Treasury Ministry. Obviously we will coordinate as much as possible with the group that L. is working with [in East Jerusalem][2]

Clearly the center director was committed to the peace building aspect of the MMEP. At the same time, I recognized that the peace building element that was central to my role was to a great extent secondary to the rights-based work within each center's constituencies. To put it simply, if the centers ceased to address the needs of their constituencies they would cease to exist. Hence this had to be their first priority.

Now well into my position as regional coordinator, I recognized that in order to strengthen the regional network we needed to strengthen each of the centers so as to enhance a more equal exchange between them. The first Israeli centers, which had been set up close to a decade before the Palestinian and the Jordanian centers, had obvious advantages as the veteran organizations within the rights-based community practice regional network. While there was an openness and willingness to share experience and knowledge, it was important that the partner centers develop their own expertise and reinforce their autonomy. One can view this micro process within the context of the conflict as parallel to a peace process, whereby it is critical that there be both autonomy and interdependence between the parties to a peace agreement. Agreements can be honored best when there is a balance of power among the parties to the agreement.

This understanding led me to approach the director of the East Jerusalem Palestinian center to begin to think about how to strengthen the capacity of her staff. Our discussions led to a two-year training program for the staff that I facilitated. This development, within my role as regional coordinator, was particularly significant for me in that I understood the depth of the trust that the East Jerusalem Palestinian center director and I had built. My role at this stage was like that of an external trainer or supervisor who is brought into an agency by the agency director. In any circumstance this would require a relationship based upon mutual trust. Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where an Israeli was being asked to accept a role within a Palestinian organization, it was all the more challenging.

Training and Supervision

Of all of the work I have done with MMEP, the two years I spent working directly with the center staffs in East Jerusalem, and later

in Jordan, were the most exciting and fulfilling. I was drawn to the people I met. In many ways, just as I had wanted my partners to see me not only through the prism of the conflict, I too needed to find a way to see the center staffs, and the Palestinian and Jordanian communities they worked with, in all of their identities.

When I began to work with the entire center staff, both my Palestinian and Jordanian colleagues introduced me as the regional coordinator of MMEP from Canada. Because I am American-born, my North American roots were never questioned. My partners explained that, given the political reality, they could not introduce me as an Israeli. Although some may take issue with this, I trusted my colleagues' judgment. They had opened a door for me and now it was up to me to build relationships with the staff members that might allow us, over time, to become more open with one another.

Over the two years of my work with the staff in East Jerusalem, I visited the center on a bi-monthly basis. We spent one year discussing the conceptual framework of the rights-based practice model and figuring out its relevance to Palestinian society. We translated the central concepts of the model into Arabic and worked together to define them and to adapt them to the Palestinian reality. My goal in this first year was to ensure that the staff had a conceptual and theoretical framework, compatible with their professional practice and the language and practice used by the centers in the regional network.

Oftentimes the staff would be so engaged in their discussion of the ideas in Arabic that they would forget to stop to translate for me. I didn't mind and honestly it did not matter that I understood every detail. I was able to observe the process of the staff's excitement with the ideas and to see them as they debated the ideas among themselves. I trusted that if they were stuck, they would bring me into the conversation. I was fascinated by what I saw and the energy I felt. I had a sense of a group of professionals in a process of growth and of a society in development. The excitement in the room often reminded me of what I had felt some thirty years earlier when I had visited Israel for the first time and felt the energy of the developing Israeli society.

My position as the MMEP Canadian Regional Coordinator afforded me the opportunity to bring examples of the work being done in each of the three societies, Israel, Palestine and Jordan, to the staff counterparts. For example, when the Palestinian staff spoke about disentitlements among the poor in Palestine, I was able to bring examples of the work being done in parallel realities in Jordan and Israel. This kind of sharing had two purposes. The first was to create the links between the centers in the different countries by impressing upon the staff that parallel work was being done with the other side to the conflict. In addition, by sharing the realities of the other societies, we were breaking down stereotypes. Many of the Palestinians were surprised to learn that there are poor communities in Israel that are disentitled. By bringing examples we began to look at how governments disentitle their own citizens. My professional knowledge and experience permitted me to hear and see the realities of life under occupation without having a sense that I needed to defend or uphold Israel or my government. This enabled me to be seen, I think, as fair. I visited Palestinian homes and met with the community. I saw the suffering of a people living under occupation.

What I saw oftentimes depressed me and it would have been understandable to give in to the feelings of disempowerment that the situation rendered. Instead, I demanded, in the most positive sense, that the staff members and I recognize our role as professionals with a knowledge base that could enable the staff to focus its efforts on using the rights-based community practice model to build community solidarity and to fight for common rights. This challenge helped to solidify a sense of solidarity among the staff members.

In the second year of our work together I suggested that in each of our meetings a different staff member would present her work and questions related to her work for discussion. This process involved more personal and professional exposure and my goal was to focus on how each staff member's work reflected the rights-based community

practice model that we had struggled with the year before.

In this second year I was invited into yet another layer of intimacy with the staff at the East Jerusalem Palestinian center. The majority of the staff was women and we developed a process that allowed us to bring ourselves as women to our meetings. One by one, the women pulled me aside to share something personal-difficulties with dieting, a failed attempt to become pregnant, nervousness before a marriage, difficulties with a mother-in-law, deliberations about professional choices, a family member who had left the family fold and disappeared somewhere in Israel after changing her identity. I was approached by one of the staff members who told me in Hebrew that she was studying Hebrew. It was not uncommon for the women to call me or write to me in between our meetings and I often wonder who did more for whom? I learned about the issues of the community-teenage marriage, violence against women, parenting difficulties and more. I was thrilled to be part of a joint effort to assist the staff and the community in organizing efforts to cope with these issues. Our meetings were incredibly dear to me.

We arranged a visit from the East Jerusalem center to the Israeli center in Beersheva and this led to visits by our Jordanian center staffs to the Israeli centers as well. There are very few things that raise the emotions in me in the same way as a meeting between the center staffs. During this period they were many. I was filled with a sense that we were at the core of developing rights-based community practice in the Middle East and peace building between the peoples of the region.

Operation Cast Lead

In the winter of 2008 Israel launched Operation Cast Lead, a twenty one day battle against Hamas, the militant ruling party in the Gaza Strip. Tensions between Israel and Hamas had grown. For over a seven year period, Hamas had launched Qassam rockets into civilian populations in Israel. Israel had placed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, restricting the daily lives of the Palestinian population in Gaza.

I was opposed to the Israeli Operation and to the Hamas rocket attacks on the Israeli civilian population. Within days after the outbreak of the Operation I had organized peace vigils together with my students and Jewish and Arab citizens living in the south of Israel in areas defined as part of the war zone. Yet while I was involved in aspects of the conflict, I realized that by organizing and attending the vigils, I was about to make a clear political statement at a time when it seemed that the majority of Israeli society supported Operation Cast Lead. I called one of my MMEP Palestinian colleagues who leads an initiative for non-violence in Palestine to strengthen my courage. Afterwards I proceeded to the vigil.

Some months after the end of Operation Cast Lead, the MMEP regional management committee met in Jordan. The morning of the first day of our meetings was spent discussing our thoughts and feelings about Operation Cast Lead. In the context of that discussion I brought my Israeli identity to the table in a way that I had never done before. It was astonishing, not only for me, but also for my regional partners, because I had spent many years in my role as MMEP regional coordinator without emphasizing this aspect of my identity, and I had just been actively engaged in peace vigils that did not reflect the views of the majority of the Israeli public. Yet as I listened to my Palestinian and Jordanian colleagues speak about their feelings about the Operation, I realized that it was equally important to share the Israeli reality. I brought the voices of my Israeli students who live near the Gaza Strip and have been most deeply affected by the Qassam rockets. I brought my reality as a senior lecturer at the Sapir College, located just twenty kilometers from the border, and the experience of running to the bomb shelters during lectures.

In that meeting I was a party to the conflict- an Israeli, and I felt that real partners needed to hear about my reality no less than I had heard and seen my partners' reality. If we are ever to have a sustainable peace this

reality needs to be known and recognized no less so than that of the Palestinians.

We emerged from the meetings with a ten year plan to expand the rights-based practice model in the three societies through the establishment of twenty new centers in the region. To an outsider this must seem surrealistic. How is it possible that we entered into the meetings so divided by the Operation and emerged so united? There is no simple explanation. We have worked together for over a decade and have survived as a network throughout what have been the worst of times in the Middle East. Today it is more difficult to give up on these relationships and the progress that we have made together in our own communities and regions, than it is to allow the political situation to break us apart. We keep fighting back.

Aftermath

My activism during Operation Cast Lead was an eye opener for me. Today I recognize that the biggest challenge I face personally, professionally and politically is within my own society. Operation Cast Lead exposed me to aspects of Israeli society that I had not paid enough attention to previously. My society has moved to the right of the political continuum. Social, economic and psychological gaps between diverse identity groups within the country have grown. There is less tolerance for the "other" from within and the "other" from without. Addressing these is critical if we are ever to be prepared to live peacefully.

Our present goal is to ensure financial sustainability for the centers in each of the societies. I am currently developing a new center in the city of Sderot, located some twenty kilometers from the Gaza Strip. In addition, I serve as the Israeli National Development Director for the program.

The current political reality in the region is not encouraging. I imagine that as a program, and as individuals, our commitment to working together will continue to be challenged. Today I am more pessimistic about the possibilities for peace in the region than in the past, yet this does not deter me from my path. In my moments of despair I remind myself of the Hebrew saying, "Lo Alecha HaAvodah Legmor" –"It is not for you to complete the work." We are however, responsible to fulfill our part to advance the work. I may never see peace in my lifetime but I remain committed to doing my part to advance peace in our region.

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(Endnotes)

[1] To learn more about MMEP see Moshe Grodofsky (2007) and Torczyner (2000).

[2] The Israeli Government Minister responsible for the Wisconsin Plan.

[3] The excerpts have been included by permission of the center director.

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Socio-Cultural and Political Aspects of Social Work with Arabs in Israel

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The profession of social work is rooted in Western ideology and infused with Western interpretations of social problems and solutions. This system has limited relevance in non-Western cultures, despite attempts at transplanting and adapting practice. The Arab people of Israel, who exist as a disadvantaged non-Western minority, serve as an important example of the cultural disconnect between Western social work practice and the needs of traditional non-Western populations. In this narrative the author describes the author's experiences involving the Arab cultural phenomena of honor killings, polygamy, blood vengeance, and Koranic healing to illustrate current deficiencies within the field of social work. I elucidate how we may blend local knowledge with Western processes to address these phenomena. By amalgamating the strongest facets of Western social work practice with local practices—we create an integrated approach. Through an understanding of the Arab people of Israel and their customs, a more culturally-appropriate and integrated approach can be administered in Israel and within the current framework of social work.

The following Arabic saying reflects some of this paper:

"Alshakwa Lager Allah Medallah" (Translation: Complaining to somebody except God is humiliation.) This explains the reluctance of Arab people to express economic, psychosocial, and familial problems, and hence, their reticence to use social work services.

Although the profession of social work is practiced in many different cultures and contexts, its Western roots frequently result in a fundamental disconnect between social workers and their clients from traditional cultures. Professionals must be cognizant that the current social work model is embedded within a Western tradition, which alienates many indigenous populations and unintentionally serves to further marginalize, rather than advance, their status. While the field of social work has made great strides in becoming more holistic and inclusive of global practices and customs, much work remains to be done towards fostering more culturally-responsive practices, amplifying culturally representative voices and understanding the appropriate use of the local context within global social work practice with indigenous peoples (Crabtree, 2008; Walton, Medhat & Nasr, 1988). Ibrahim Ragab (1990) uses the Arabic word *Ta'seel* (to seek direction from the roots, to restore originality or to become genuine) to describe an approach that seeks authentic, locally grounded determinants of practice, suggesting that there are useful assumptions, methods and theory that can be applied from both indigenous cultural practices and conventional practices within the helping professions.

The Arabs in Israel could serve as the ideal case study in examining the indigenous versus globalized aspects of social work. Israel is a country with a complex dynamic characterized by the collision of Western and traditional cultures. Social, cultural and religious phenomena, such as polygamy, honor killing, blood vengeance and the use of indigenous healing to address psychosocial and familial problems, are a significant part of daily life and customs for Arab Israelis. While these practices have largely been ignored by Western-driven social work education and research, they represent a significant challenge for social workers in the Israeli context. This manuscript recounts my personal experiences to illustrate that there is a significant gap within the current system of social work, namely, a failure to appropriately address these Arab practices. While it is impossible to become fully competent on all aspects of diverse

cultures, it is necessary to have basic knowledge of cultural phenomena. The narratives depicted in this manuscript aim to help prepare professionals to navigate cultural divides and diminish or even eradicate misunderstanding and misrepresentation of indigenous knowledge and practices.

Indigenization and Islamization of Social Work with Arab people

The local (community) and global (social work) can co-exist and coalesce towards a new and unique dynamic. Ragab (1997) elaborates on the principles of Al-Faruki and addresses the Islamization of social work, an effort to "recast knowledge as Islam relates to it, i.e., to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusions, to re-project the goals—and to do so in such a way as to make disciplines enrich the vision and serve the cause of Islam" (Al-Faruki, 1982, p. 15 cited in Ragab, 1997). Islamization demonstrates the progression of local knowledge within the global field of social work, and is of particular importance for the Arab in Israel. Islamization is a response to indigenization and the Western model of social work, a reactionary and different model which gives the minority Muslim communities a voice in the global process. Islamization represents a methodological approach to "Islamic legacy and modern knowledge" (Ragab, 1997 p. 3). This approach is a direct reactionto the Western model, and serves to add voice and agency to the minority Arab population within Israel. The principles of professional intervention with honor killing, blood vengeance, polygamy, and traditional healing, as discussed in this paper and in my other work, are part of this enterprise.

Within this manuscript I highlight the example of the Arabs in Israel in order to illuminate the disconnect between Western models of social work and effective social work practice with non-Western groups. I also share personal accounts of events which have challenged me as a person and as a professional, causing me to examine my value system and beliefs. Before exploring these experiences, however, it is important to examine the Palestinian Arabs (who will be called Arabs throughout this paper) within Israel in order to set the context for appreciating socio-cultural and political influences.

The Palestinian Arab in the Israeli context

The Israeli State is composed of two cultures – the native indigenous Arab population, currently a minority in Israel, and the Jewish majority. The Arab population comprises about 20% of the population of Israel (Shmueli & Khamaisi, 2011; Chernichovsky & Anson, 2005; Baum, 2006). In many instances, the Arabs of Israel are the victims of ongoing political, cultural and economic discrimination (Lowrance, 2006; Jamal, 2007; Amara, 2003; Abu Baker, 2003). Many Palestinians are not given equal opportunities for employment; a practice justified by the Jewish majority by citing security concerns (Lowrance, 2006). This lack of employment and under-representation in policy making and leadership positions has relegated Arabs within Israel to the bottom of the social and economic ladder. Large economic and social gaps exist between the two ethnic groups of Israel, and the Jewish Israelis are aligned at the top of every category (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011; Abu-Saad, 2006; Lowrance, 2006).

The Arabs within Israel are a stratified group with a diverse population, consisting of Christians, Muslims and Druze (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011; Lowrance, 2006). While the vast majority of the Israeli Arab population is Muslim (82%), 9% of Israeli Arabs are Christians and 9% are Druze (Nir, 2003). The Israeli Druze, members of a distinct Muslim sect, live almost entirely in northern sections of the country and number a little over 122,000 (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011). The Druze hold a higher standing than Muslim Arabs in Israel and are trusted enough to serve in the military, which is regarded as a privilege within Israel (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011). The population of Christian Arabs in Israel is approximately 175,000, comprising more than 2% of the total population of Israel (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011). The majority of

Arab Muslims in Israel are Sunni (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011).

Rouhana (2007) has studied Palestinian perspectives on equality in Israel, Arab participation in the functions of the State and their views on Jewish statehood. Findings attest to the resounding dissatisfaction of many Arabs. Most of the respondents reported that, in contrast to Arabs, Jews were given preferential treatment, reaped more benefits, were treated far better by the police and government, received better employment (particularly higher positions), and were represented in higher levels politically, socially and economically (Rouhana, 2007). There are also two separate school systems within Israel, one for Arabs and one for Jews. As Arabs are not represented in high positions in the Ministry of Education, there is a corresponding lack of resources and funding for the Arab education system, while high unemployment results in fewer opportunities and limited means to raise additional funds for the Arab system (Jamal, 2007; Abu Baker, 2003).

Compounding these inequalities is the threat of political violence; based on World Health Organization political violence defined as a form of collective violence by a civil society or state group towards an individual, group or community based on the latter's ethnic, geographic, racial identities (WHO, 2009). While the Jewish population of Israel may be exposed to more political violence (Al-Krenawi, 2010), it is the Arabs who suffer a double trauma because of their social, political and cultural disadvantages. In my research, I discovered that the political situation is very difficult on all populations of Israel, but is particularly problematic for Arab youth, who experience a wider variety of psychological symptoms than their Jewish counterparts, such as PTSD, heightened anger and severe anxiety (Al-Krenawi, 2010). I was among the first to compare the impact of political violence on youth of both Jewish and Arab ethnicity. Due to this double trauma and disadvantaged position, Arab adolescents (and Arabs in general) are in a more vulnerable position than their Jewish counterparts (Al-Krenawi, 2010).

The other problem lies in the misrepresentation, ignorance and lack of "cultural recognition" (Jamal, 2007) of Arabs in Israel. Many Arabs perceive Zionism as a racist ideology, one that favors the Jewish Israeli. The great economic divide—the average Arab income is about 60% of the average Jewish income in Israel (Jamal, 2007), and 45% of the Arab population in Israel live below the poverty line, compared to 16% of the Jewish Israeli families (Sikkuy Report, 2004 cited in Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011)—heightens this distrust and contempt for the Other. The marginalization and misrepresentation of Arabs in the media, within the Israeli education system (Abu-Saad, 2006) and in the public sphere serve to further exacerbate cultural disconnects and discord (Jamal, 2007).

Socio-Cultural Phenomena of the Arab People

As Arab myself, the socio-cultural practices of the Arab people of Israel have always been prominent themes for my academic work. I have been among the first social workers to study social, cultural and religious practices such as honor killing, blood vengeance, polygamy and the use of traditional healing system. Having conducted extensive research on all these areas, I firmly believe that we, as social workers, must work towards the indigenization of social work by addressing these cultural practices and examining local beliefs. I believe that closer examination of these phenomena will open a dialogue between Western and traditional non-Western world views. Hopefully, this process will lead social workers around the globe to become more creative in their work with clients from different ethnic backgrounds.

Honor Killing

Honor killing refers to the killing of women by their male relatives or a male concerned about preserving family honor or prestige. "Crimes of honor" not only refer to killing, but can include physical abuse, verbal threats and psychological violence, and are a response to the sexual behavior of a female family member (Al-Krenawi & Graham 1997; 2008; Kulwicki, 2002; Hasan, 1999). Honor killings and crimes have a long tradition and follow specific rules

outlined by *Sharia* (or Islamic) law (Hasan, 1999). Terminology exclusive to these processes exist; terms like "cleansing" and "washing" are applied to the blood of the accused female (Kulwicki, 2002; Hasan, 1999).

Honor killings have occurred and continue to take place in various areas of Israel such as the Negev, West Bank, and Gaza Strip and the mixed cities (Tel-Aviv and Haifa), as well as throughout the Middle East in Egypt, Syria and Jordan (Kulwicki, 2002). While outlawed by the legal system, social acceptance of these crimes is apparent. The police commonly ignore these actions, categorizing them as "family disputes" (Hasan, 1999). The media do not cover such offenses, and a majority of these crimes, along with abuse of all forms, are never reported (Hasan, 1999; Kulwicki, 2002). Muslim cultural practices and customs frequently supersede legal action; often domestic violence, crimes of honor and honor killings go unpunished. Many community members perceive these killings to be "just" and essential in restoring family honor (Hasan, 1999; Kulwicki, 2002). While this may seem appalling or barbaric to many Western practitioners, this is a reality in the Middle East. Social workers must strive to become knowledgeable about these practices. These crimes need further coverage and, as social workers, we need to address honor killings in our practice and within the research literature. To fully comprehend how honor killings are perceived and why they are performed, we must first examine the structure of Muslim families and the values of Arab culture.

Arab culture exists as a highly collectivist entity (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999a; 2001; 2009), whereby the family is valued ahead of the individual and the greater good of the family is of crucial importance (Al-Krenawi, 1999). A central tenet of Islam and Arab culture involves *sharaf*, or honor (Kulwicki, 2002). The individuals of all families represent the honor of the family, so therefore, if *ayb* or shame (Kulwicki, 2002 Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2004) befalls any family member, then it taints and disgraces an entire family. The family unit is of the utmost importance in Middle Eastern culture, accentuating morals, character and values over all else (Hasan, 1999). Within Arab society, the *Hamula* (extended family) and the *Ahl or Ailah* (the nuclear family) are the most important family units (Al-Krenawi, 1999). A violation by any member of the *Hamula* brings shame to the entire family.

Women are regarded as inferior to men in Muslim culture (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999; 2001; 2011; Hasan, 1999). Men hold the power in both patriarchal structures (with men in control of women due to a cultural and economic dominance) and patrilineal structures—women attached to the males of her family, husband, brother, father—and the system is predicated on female domestic subservience to males (Kulwicki, 2002). Arab women are dominated by men and are expected to be loyal and sexually "pure." Muslim culture values female sexual purity and forbids premarital sexual relations, pregnancy when unwed, adultery and any sexual behavior which brings shame (*ayb*) to the family (Hasan, 1999; Kulwicki; 2002; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997; 1999). Female honor, "*ird*" and "*sharaf*," are to be preserved and if "*zina*" or a sexual violation of the honor of the family is discovered, then honor killings may be invoked to restore family honor (Kulwicki, 2002; Al-Krenawi; 1999; Hasan, 1999). With much of the honor and prestige of the family tied to the physical sexual condition of the female body, *diyafa* (bravery, kindness) and *hamasa* (courage) are vital (Kulwicki, 2002). In Arab culture, weakness signifies an invitation for violence and attack; a fear which stems from the desert tradition of the Bedouin under nomadic conditions (Al-Krenawi, 2002). Male relatives who fail to respond to female sexual misconduct are considered to be cowardly and dishonorable, and are perceived as accepting public disgrace of their family's name (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009).

This practice, which originated in ancient times to ensure security and preserve moral standards (Al-Krenawi & Graham 2009; 2001; 1999b), must be challenged through legal action (Hasan, 1999); we must not ignore these events. Responses must, however, be grounded within the socio-cultural context; we must be aware of the Arab cultural structure,

the importance of family and the hierarchal/ patriarchal nature of this group.

Below I share an experience that I had concerning honor killings and how to prevent this phenomenon. This case made me question my own beliefs and training as a Western professional. In this instance, in order to resolve my conflict, I had to reconcile my professional training and ethics with existing cultural norms and values.

Honor Killings: A Case Study

A young, unmarried, pregnant Arab woman was referred to me by a non-Arab general practitioner, as I was the only social worker in a small Arab village. The doctor informed the seventeen year old (who will remain nameless in order to protect her identity) that she was six months pregnant. She understood honor killings, Arab traditions, and the severity of her situation; her concerns brought her to me. The woman also understood the grave severity of her condition, and feared that her family would kill her if they were to learn of her pregnancy.

At this point in my career, I did not have any professional experience with this issue and experienced many conflicting emotions. My Bedouin values caused me to feel angered by her actions and, at our first consultation, I momentarily lost touch with my prior training and commitment as a professional. I expressed anger towards her for allowing this situation to develop, as well as anger for the father of this child, who also would have understood this delicate predicament. This created a clear ethical dilemma for me, as my cultural/religious values conflicted with my professional expertise and training. I soon calmed down, however, and realized that I must act as a professional social worker and remain cognizant of the cultural context and the importance of our Bedouin beliefs. I needed to empathize with and support her, a being complicit in her protection would elicit severe repercussions if discovered.

My anger and frustration increased when I realized that the father would not be part of the solution to this problem. This meant that I would have one fewer option at my disposal: a mediation or resolution involving the father of this child. Questions raced through my mind concerning the consequences of her family or my family finding out what was going on. What would happen to this young woman? Finally, what would happen to me, both professionally and in terms of my personal safety? The Arab culture strictly forbids premarital sex, and a child conceived out of wedlock brings shame and taints the *ird* of the family (Al-Krenawi, 1999). I knew her family would not be supportive if they learned of her condition.

My fears deepened when the young woman described her family situation. The majority of her siblings had not received a high school education, and her mother, from a polygamist marriage, was largely neglected by the young girl's father. This family was therefore very likely to be traditional and to value their honor more than her life. I considered many options; finally, in consultation with her physician, we tried to arrange an abortion. Much like premarital sex and unwed pregnancy, abortions are strictly prohibited by the Arab culture and within Muslim teachings (Al-Krenawi, 1999). This abortion, if discovered, would place the woman in grave danger. Although the young woman was under the age of consent and therefore would need her family's approval for the abortion, her general practice physician and I made a professional ethical choice and ignored this fact, feeling that her life was more valuable (Al-Krenawi, 1999). The situation was, however, further complicated when the ethics board of the hospital denied her request for an abortion. She was in her third trimester and an abortion could not be granted unless her life or the life of the baby was in peril (Al-Krenawi, 1999). While her life was in fact at risk, the medical system did not see her likelihood of being killed by her family as medical justification for the abortion.

Drastic action had to be taken. Not only would her life be in danger, but if her family learned of the truth and that I was helping her, they could end my professional career. Since the helping professions were still relatively new and unestablished within the Bedouin community, this would have been a fatal blow for other practicing social workers as well. I quickly contacted the physician and we

decided that the only suitable course of action was to take the girl to a shelter away from her family in order to ensure her safety. We told the shelter of her situation and they agreed that they would take her and keep her situation confidential. We informed her family that she had contracted a contagious disease and that she was in care. They were informed that we would update them on her condition several times a week, and we did. I met with her mother over the following three months and informed her of her daughter's health. Moreover, I informed the young woman of my actions, keeping her apprised of the falsehoods I told. It was decided that she would place the baby for adoption at birth; however, the adoption did not happen, as the baby died of complications three days after the birth (Al-Krenawi, 1999).

I had one last meeting with the young woman before she returned home, to ensure that our stories matched and that her family would not know what had truly happened. She assured me that she realized the gravity of the situation, and that she would never again engage in premarital sex. She kept her word and later married and had several children (Al-Krenawi, 1999).

This difficult situation was successfully resolved through careful consideration of the personal and professional issues raised by this complex scenario. A deep understanding of the relevant cultural values, norms and practices enabled me to resolve the ethical dilemmas I faced in order to effectively ensure my client's safety. The needs of this young woman required me to use an approach that was foreign to my social and professional norms and cultural practices. Although many ethical conflicts were created, I tried to address all of them, and was acutely aware of why I had to take the actions I had taken. I pushed the boundaries of my professional ethics and expertise in order to ensure the woman's survival. I had to act with only the help of the physician and did not have the luxury of involving my community. Confidentiality was maintained as I sought whatever methods were needed to protect and preserve this young woman's safety.

Blood Vengeance

Cultural norms and social order affect conceptualizations of women's sexuality and identity, as well as perceptions of violence. These norms and practices are seen as a cleansing or rectifying action in certain interpretations of Arab culture. This is best evidenced through a practice exclusive to the Arabs of the Middle East: blood vengeance (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997; Al-Krenawi, Slonim-Nevo, Maymon, Al-Krenawi, 2001). I define blood vengeance as "the obligation to kill in retribution for the death of a member of one's family or tribe" (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009, p.102). In the West, the closest comparable phenomenon is gang warfare (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001), although blood vengeance has more cultural significance and is regulated by the *hamulas,* or family units, with very strict rules, practices and customs. Guidelines for blood vengeance are outlined in *Sharia,* although it is officially outlawed by most countries of the world (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009).

The rules and rituals of blood vengeance are complex and intricate. The level of vengeance must correspond to the initial crime or perceived damage done to one's family. If a male is killed, this is viewed as a direct assault on a *hamula*, or *kahams*, "the group formed by all descendants of one ancestry to the fifth generation" (Marx, in Ginat, 1984, p. 80 in Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009); hence the family must respond. Due to the patrilineal structure of Arab society, this attack on a male is seen as a direct attack on the family and disadvantages the family economically, socially and in a security capacity (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). The only way to erase the shame of this dead male family member is to kill a male of the murderer's family (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997).

If it is a female who is a victim, then four males from the offending family must be killed. If the murderer is female, then a female must be the respondent from a tribe or family (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001; Al-Krenawi & Graham 2007; 2009). These actions are undertaken to avoid perceptions of weakness, which, in Arab culture, places families at psychological and physical risk of violence. The system involves

all family members and a murderer essentially places his or her whole family on "death row" (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997 2009). The threat applies to everyone involved, with someone having to pay for a murdered family member. Children are taught that no murder goes unpunished and that vengeance may last forever. If the murderer dies before vengeance can be attained, an innocent member of the murderer's family must be slain (Al-Krenawi, et al., 2001). Blood vengeance can, unfortunately, generate widespread blood feuds.

The term "*Thaar*" is Arabic for vengeance and can be translated to mean "to ask for his blood" or "to kill the killer" (Al-Munjed, 1975; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009). When a family member is killed, the avenger or person who takes just vengeance is referred to as "*Al-Thaar*" and is honored as a hero (Al-Munjed, 1975; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009). In Arab culture, people are taught from birth that revenge is not only a right, but a duty necessary to preserve family honor (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001).

These practices have occurred for many generations in the Negev, West Bank, Gaza Strip and in various countries throughout the Middle East (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). Although blood vengeance lasts generations and kills many, it is often ignored by the courts and legal system, even in Israel (Al-Krenawi, et al., 2001). It is largely dismissed by legal authorities as a family feud by the legal authorities because it is perceived to be an Arab cultural phenomenon that is easier to avoid than grapple with (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997; 2009). In order to avoid being paralyzed by the cultural divide, it is necessary to develop an understanding of Muslim values and consider culturally relevant solutions to this social problem.

While Western perspectives view violent revenge through the lens of individual or relational pathology, these explanations do not apply to the Arab context of blood vengeance (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). It is critical for social workers to understand the cultural role played by this phenomenon. In Arab society and culture, this practice was necessary in order to maintain security in the desert, where resources were scarce, conflicts and injustices were common, weakness could be preyed upon and no courts, police or other type of protection or intervention were present (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2008).

The practice of blood vengeance serves several functions: families view their security as predicated on the perpetuation of this practice, while social cohesion and identity are reinforced (Al-Krenawi, Slonim-Nevo, Maymon & Al-Krenawi, 2001). Despite the sense of abhorrence that may be felt by the social worker who observes the suffering caused by blood vengeance, the development of effective responses must be done with awareness of the functionality of such practices and the negative consequences for individuals who choose to abstain. "Obvious" legal solutions are also not likely to be successful, since perceived obligations for pursuing vengeance are not lessened by the threat of legal sanction. Culturally sensitive mediators are more likely to have success in developing solutions that are acceptable to the families as collective units, particularly if prominent male elders of the *hamula* and traditional mediators (*wasit*) are engaged in developing the solutions.

In the tradition of blood vengeance, *diya* or blood money can be used when the killer and their victims are of different *kahams* (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009). There is an *atwa*, or undisclosed waiting period, to determine if the blood money will be accepted. Tribal relations may also cause members of the same *kahams* to be exiled for years called *meshamas* (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009). There is additionally a custom known as "*Gharret el-Yadd,*" or the Arab process of conflict resolution, "*Sulha*" (Hasan, 1999). Sometimes, but only if tribal relations are strong, a virgin female member, known as a *ghura,* may be sent to join the aggrieved tribe until she delivers a male child (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009; Hasan, 1999). This is considered to be just if one of her family members has killed a male from the tribe she has gone to.

I have undertaken research on blood vengeance and honor killings (Al-Krenawi, et al., 2001; 2009) and, unfortunately, I witnessed

a wide scale family feud that lasted over two decades in Ramla, a mixed city in the center of Israel. I have also, along with my colleagues (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001), studied the effects of this large scale blood vengeance on children. My argument for social workers is that we must not view this blood vengeance as random acts of violence, but rather as highly regulated, planned and implemented cultural warfare. In many instances, the sacrifice of individuals for the good of the collectivist ideal of the family is invoked. Individuals want to end the vengeance, yet are ridiculed and pressured by family members if they do (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). While it may seem counter-intuitive for social workers to further promote social cohesion in families where pressure comes from the family unit to perpetuate such violence, my research has shown that a supportive family environment does, to an extent, mitigate the stress experienced by children who witness ongoing blood vengeance (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001).

The Practice of Polygamy

Polygamy is another cultural phenomenon that has been relevant to my experience as a social worker. In the course of my practice within the primary and psychiatric health care systems, many women from polygamous marriages were referred to me by general practice physicians. Some of the major complaints included somatization and family problems. After gaining significant practical experience working with members of polygamous families, I decided to include polygamy as one of my primary topics of research interest when I entered academia in 1995. Since that time, I have examined the psychosocial characteristics, family function and marital quality of women and children in polygamous marriages. Subsequently, I have extended my research beyond the Arabs in Israel to focus on the Middle East and Africa particularly, Jordan, Egypt, Nigeria, Syria, the West-Bank and Gaza. In this paper, I address polygamy in the Middle East to situate this topic within international public discourse.

Polygamy and its Psycho-Social and Economic Consequences

Polygamy remains widespread in the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia (Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine, & Abu-Saad, 2002). Around the world, it has a unique psychosocial impact on the lives of women, men and children. Polygamous wives may live together in the same house or in separate households. Ideally, the family unit should make decisions that would benefit all of its members, but in fact family members differ in their access to resources, and sometimes decisions are made that favor certain members over others. This family structure forces cooperation between the wives in household chores or in the fields, while they are subject to the husband's authority and in constant competition for his love, attention, and financial resources. The husband's approach and treatment of the women and their children determines how the family will function as a unit. The husband may "divide and conquer" or be attentive and even-handed in the distribution of the various resources (Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2008).

Researchers from diverse disciplines, including health, anthropology, social work, psychiatry and psychology, have studied how polygamy affects women and their families. Women in polygamous households commonly experience elevated rates of intimate partner violence, socio-economic distress, low status and discrimination (Al-Krenawi, 1998). Polygamy can lead to co-wife jealousy, competition, and unequal distribution of household and emotional resources (Adams & Mburugu, 1994; Al-Krenawi et al., 1997; Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Abuelesh, 2001; Kilbride & Kilbride, 1990; Wittrup, 1990), generating acrimony between co-wives and between the children of the different wives (Al-Krenawi, 1998; Ware, 1979). Polygamous women also report worse family functioning, lower self-esteem, and lower levels of marital and general life satisfaction than their monogamous counterparts (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006; Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2008; Jankowiak, Sudakov & Wilreker, 2005). Life satisfaction levels are, however, mitigated by factors such as age (Jankowiak, Sudakov & Wilreker, 2005), acceptance of the

polygamous marriage by their sons and support received from their sons (Gwanfogbe, Schumm, Smith & Furrow, 1997).

Al-Sherbiny (2005) has documented a culture-specific condition in Egypt, which he termed the "First Wife Syndrome," that involved an array of psychological and physical symptoms experienced by the senior wives of polygamous relationships. Likewise, in a review of the relationship between cultural factors and the rates of symptoms of mental illness in Algeria, Al-Issa (1990) identified polygamous marriage as a potential contributor to mental illness in both mothers and children. Other researchers have identified a significant prevalence of female mental health problems in polygamous marriages (Abbo, Ekblad, Waako, Muhwezi, Musisi, & Okello, 2008; Ghubash, Hamdi, & Bebbington, 1992; Patil & Hadley, 2008). The impact of polygamy on mental health varies, however, and is affected by such factors as the number of unions in the family, how the culture and religion value polygamy, the wife order within the polygamous family, and whether polygamy is imposed on the senior wife or initiated by her (Elbedour et al., 2002).

Research has also identified some benefits for women in polygamous relationships, namely, opportunities for companionship and socializing with other women, as well as greater autonomy because of opportunities for sharing responsibility for childcare and other household obligations (Anderson, 2000). While polygamy could potentially ease economic burdens by facilitating collaboration and the joint pursuit of a family's economic well-being, most of the literature indicates, however, that the opposite is true (Campbell, 2005). In Ghana, for instance, women in polygamous regions tend to have less schooling and to experience greater economic hardship than their counterparts in monogamous regions (Agadjanian & Ezeh, 2000). Likewise, a study of polygamous women in the Gaza Strip and Jordan indicated that polygamous women, particularly senior wives, experienced elevated levels of economic distress (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Ghariabeh, in press; Al-Krenawi et al., 2001).

Scholars have variously perceived women in polygamous marriages as incapable of relating to each other except through competition (Pogrebin, 1987 cited in Al-Krenawi, 1998), or as establishing cooperation and friendship in an effort to empower themselves against male control and domination (Al-Krenawi, 1998; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). However, studies of polygamy across cultures suggest that women's attitudes towards polygamy may vary within and across societies (Adams & Mburugu, 1994; Dorjahn, 1988; Kilbride, 1994; Potash, 1989; White & Burton, 1988) and that their experiences and perspectives can only be understood within a particular socio-cultural, religious and personal context (Madhavan, 2002).

Islam and Polygamy

Guidelines for the practice of polygamy are outlined in the Koran, which limits the number of wives one man can marry to four. There are also strict rules outlining appropriate conduct within polygamous marriages; the husband must pay equal attention and care to each wife economically and socially (Al-Krenawi & Slonim Nevo, 2006). Nevertheless, in Muslim society, the status of the first wife is often lower than that of the second wife (Al-Krenawi, 2001), and her husband may even surprise her by marrying an additional wife without telling her in advance (Topouzis, 1985). In such traditional societies, first marriages are usually arranged by parents and stem from "political" considerations related to class and power relations in the family and extended family (Al-Haj, 1987; El-Islam & Abu-Dagga, 1992). In contrast, marriage to a second wife is often the result of free choice, whereby the couple unites out of love or as a manifestation of independence. Under such circumstances, junior wives enjoy preferential status compared to first wives in regard to economic resources, social support and the husband's attention (Al-Krenawi, 1998; Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Polygamy has traditionally served several important functions within Arab society. The process was initially enacted to protect widows by offering them a social structure and power relation after their husband's death

(Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2009). Polygamy is also a key tool in the maximization of the production of offspring. Because, in Arab societies, boys are considered to bring prestige, honor and safety to families, polygamy has been used to produce as many male offspring as possible (Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2006).

Although no accurate data can be obtained, scholars contend that 20% of all Bedouin-Arab marriages are polygamous (Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2006). As helping professionals, we must become knowledgeable about polygamy as the women from polygamous relationships are more likely to experience increased stress, have more physical and mental problems and experience greater tension than their counterparts in monogamous marriages (Al-Krenawi, 1998). Lower education rates, higher rates of domestic violence and maladjustment of children of polygamous marriages (Eldebour et al. 2002) are all phenomena that we as social workers must understand. We must be aware of the cultural context and trauma associated with polygamous marriages for wives and for their children in order to find potential solutions.

Social workers who attempt to assist women and children from polygamous families must develop an understanding of the personal and cultural meanings associated with this practice, and consider how programs and policies must be adapted to ensure that the needs of polygamous clients are met. For example, family programs are currently modeled on monogamous marriages and therefore do not always meet the needs of polygamous families. Social workers should also be aware of the unique difficulties experienced by women in polygamous relationships, and understand potentially traumatic life changes that can occur, for example, when a woman's husband takes on another wife (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003c). School teachers, social workers, nurses and other helping professionals should also be informed about the difficulties that children experience within polygamous families, whereby competition over access to social and economic resources within the family may affect their academic, social and personal development (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003c). Social workers should also learn how to work with women in polygamous marriages through creating opportunities for them to join coalitions and support each other; this way they may increase their influence and control within the marriage, for example by preventing the husband from marrying another wife. Another important strategy that should be used when working with polygamous families is to use the children's psychological problems as a way to access the family system; given that the well-being of children is likely to be a concern shared by both the husband and the wife, it is a potential avenue of connection and productive work with families (Al-Krenawi, 1998; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003c).

Indigenous Koranic Healing Systems

The cultural and religious phenomenon of traditional healers is not exclusive to the Arab people of Israel; rather, it is common among indigenous peoples around the world. This practice illuminates key differences between local and globalized approaches. Although Koranic healing is widely practiced in the Muslim world, many use both the Western medical system as well as traditional healers. To better understand why the Arabs consult traditional healers, several cultural beliefs must be examined.

Traditional Muslims often attribute health problems and certain mental health issues to supernatural powers and beings (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2004; Popper- Giveon & Al-Krenawi, 2010). I have concentrated much of my previous research and studies in the Middle East on these beliefs, the consultation of Arabs with traditional healers and the local view of the Western healthcare method. Many mental problems or ailments are attributed to supernatural powers such as the *Jihn* or what we in the West would associate with demons or evil spirits, along with the *Nathla* or evil eye/magic and *Iblis* (viewed as the son of Satan) (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011; Al-Krenawi et al., 2002). The consultation of the traditional healers, or *Dervishes* (Al-Krenawi & Popper-Giveon, 2010), is often used to rid the mind and the body of these external forces.

In this paper, I want to focus on Koranic mental health healers.

I was the first to examine Koranic mental health healers, as I observed some of their clients, practices, assessments and treatments (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). Koranic healers called *Sheiks* or *Moalij Bel-Koran* base their healing on the *Hadith* (the teachings of Muhammad the prophet) and the Koran (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). These healers are always male, and are required to be educated (many in my previous studies were teachers), have very high moral values and a superior understanding of the Koran. Women cannot be Koranic healers, nor can they be treated in isolation by these healers; they must have a male relative present, and they must be covered in a *Hijab*. The Koranic healers are male, due to the patriarchal system of the Muslims, which does not inherently trust females, who are believed to be more susceptible to *Iblis* and the *Jihn* (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). This differs from other types of Muslim healers such as fortune tellers, who are usually female. (Popper-Giveon & Al-Krenawi, 2010).

Koranic healers approach mental illness and problems with a very strong religious worldview. They believe that *Iblis* and other evil spirits are punishment from god, or God's will enacted on human beings (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). The clients, as opposed to the Western system, are not referred; rather they hear about Koranic healers and willingly approach them with their problems. The healers create a treatment atmosphere which resembles the Western concept of exorcism: the healer acts between a mediator for God and the spirits (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). The healer diagnoses the client through dream analysis and contact with the spirits. These healers believe that the supernatural world and real world coincide and that mental illness is a sign of possession by the spirits. There are many treatments used by healers, for example, pouring water over the Koran to purify the spirits, feeding honey and black seed together to cleanse the body and soul, and, singing songs and citing verses (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b).

The healers remain in contact with their patients and often refer them to the Western system simultaneously with their healing. The healers also record many of their sessions and give these recordings to Western professionals or workers to further educate social workers on their methods and client-healer relationship. They, similar to their Western counterparts, have extensive training (university education and extensive knowledge of the Koran), as well as developed ethical guidelines and procedures for their processes. The healers respect their clients and put them at ease by involving their families; this is not seen as taboo, and in fact, creates a strong support network. These healers are the most educated and occupy the highest standing in Muslim society (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b). Social workers, and their clients, would benefit from referring their patients to these healers (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999b).

As social workers, we must understand the positive impact that the traditional system can have. It is more empowering and less stigmatizing than Western approaches. Healers share a common language and belief system with their clients, and implement treatments in a manner consistent with their clients' beliefs and expectations. Mental health conditions are, for example, seen as imposed by the will of God or the possession of demons, thus emphasizing an external locus of control that is intrinsic to the Arab world view. Traditional rituals serve to strengthen connections with family and community, and reinforce the client's sense of identity and normalcy. hese practices can be juxtaposed with the Western system which treats the *Jin* as neuroses, dementia or other mental illness, and promotes an internal locus of control (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2010).

Healers within the traditional system often refer clients to the medical system (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2011), and we in the Western system, need to be aware of the importance of the traditional system. By understanding the cultural context and belief system of the Arab people, the notions of the *Jin* and *evil eye* are not as easily dismissed. This phenomenon of consulting traditional healers and methods is the epitome of local

knowledge in a global field. Because many clients use both systems concurrently, the process of integration between systems has already been initiated by Arab clients, thus modeling the blending of local and global interventions that is the key to effective work with indigenous people.

Discussion

The Arab population in Israel is disadvantaged politically, socially, and economically. This disadvantage translates into disproportionately more Jewish than Arab social workers and other helping professionals (Baum, 2006). Added to the cultural differences between Jews and Arabs is the perception, by Arabs, of Jewish social workers (who are conjoined with psychologists in the Arab view) as the enemy (Baum, 2006; Rouhana, 2007). This conflict and tension is always present when Jewish social workers work with Arab clients, although it is sometimes at an unconscious level (Baum, 2006; Al-Krenawi, 2005). Distrust, fear and anxiety emanates from this dynamic (Baum, 2006) and must be addressed if our profession is to evolve (Al-Krenawi, 2005).

Current political and cultural shifts will have significant ramifications for the Palestinian Arabs of Israel and for Arabs throughout the Middle East. Arab society is currently undergoing a modernization process, and is experiencing significant political, cultural and social adjustment. It is imperative that we, as social workers, are prepared to respond to the challenge to assist in this transition.

Consultation of helping professionals is one area where attitudes are slowly changing. Arabs still perceive the practice of consulting mental health practitioners as taboo and signs of weakness; the Arabs believe that they should deal with "God's will" on their own or consult the traditional system if they have psychological problems (Al-Krenawi, 1999, 2005). Stigma still exists toward this mental healthcare system, including social work. Many times, Arabs interpret social work practice as ignoring their views, and even worse, trying to change their views, eliminate their practices, and slowly affect their cultural identity (Al-Krenawi, 2005; Mass & Al-Krenawi, 1994). Arabs view the Western treatment process as having a hidden agenda. They believe this hidden agenda will attempt to quell Arab identity, assimilate the Arabs into a Western mindset, and ultimately, destroy Arab culture. These practices by the Arab people are some of the last vestiges of a process of passive resistance in a continually changing landscape. When social workers comprehend the prism and lens by which Arabs view the process, then this stigma and reluctance will wane. Education regarding Arab familial and social structures and the cultural norms and practices of Arab clients is therefore necessary for the functional evolution of the profession. Effective service to Arab clients necessitates efforts to understand the local beliefs of our Arab clients and employ a culturally-appropriate approach. As social workers, our job is not to be moral judges, but rather to help the disadvantaged groups which have been neglected.

Problems evident within the current political system of Israel influence all levels of society. Arab professionals perceive themselves to be discriminated against and treated as secondary to the Jewish majority when it comes to social systems, social welfare, and funding policies (Rouhana, 2007). Policy development is not culturally informed or attuned to the needs of the Arab women and children affected by polygamous marriages, nor do they address those who have suffered through honor killings and blood vengeance. The Arab population is a special needs group, one which is at risk. There remains widespread ignorance towards their culture and practices to this very day within Israel. As social workers, we can attempt to diminish or eradicate this ignorance by understanding these cultural and religious strategies and integrating them in our intervention programs. Moreover, by incorporating and applying appropriate canons and elements of both traditional and global systems, we can advance a global model of intervention, resulting in more appropriate solutions and remedies for families, the individual and the community.

I have shared my experiences in an attempt to enlighten and expand the literature concerning social work practice in Israel

among Arabs, and to provide a voice for non-Western minority communities. My experiences pertain to Arabs in Israel, yet the ramifications of these studies and findings have a global impact. They apply to many societies which do not share the same values, norms and practices of those reflected within the Western model of social work. To gain the trust and credibility of our non-Western clients, we must learn about other ethnicities and their polemics. Cultural learning, sensitivity and appreciation are merely starting points in moving forward in building a proper cross-cultural model. If we are to truly serve our clients from different ethnic backgrounds, then we must approach them with accurate knowledge and methodologies which put them at ease and prevent alienation (Baum, 2006).

Israel presents a complex situation for social workers, yet we still strive to do our best by dealing with difficult situations and by remaining cognizant and respectful of the political situation which unfortunately divides the country's Jewish and Arab residents. We must continue to work through this difficult relationship. In order to flourish in this environment, we must bridge this divide and create trust, cultural understanding and attentiveness (Al-Krenawi, 2005). It is not sufficient to respect the backgrounds of other ethnic groups; we must strive to understand and learn their religious, cultural and social practices. This will help put to rest some of the difficulties and tension between client and practitioner (Al-Krenawi, 2005). Additionally, by becoming knowledgeable about the client's national and ethnic background, the process of social work becomes more creative (Al-Krenawi, 2005).

The overarching question that emerges through my research and that of others is, "How do we provide social work services for disadvantaged individuals?" The social worker and client each brings his/her own culture and worldview to intervention processes, resulting in a complicated dynamic whereby, many clients terminate treatment after one or two sessions, because they feel that the social worker does not understand them and therefore they will not be helped. We are all aware of the significance of the concepts of trust and credibility in the intervention process; however, translating these ideas into practice with indigenous populations has remained problematic. The answer resides in a more globalized approach. This process combines the local/indigenous traditions, experiences and customs with the global/Western treatment methods.

In my work, I have consistently endeavored to raise the voices of the overlooked and disadvantaged Arab minority. My research mirrors that of many professionals who also represent disadvantaged minorities globally. I have studied social phenomena rarely addressed within our field, both in the literature and in practice. We must utilize the knowledge that I have presented and undertake culturally-inclusive research to influence policymaking in Israel. Policymakers must address the needs of the Arab people and provide the disadvantaged with equal funding and appropriate programs for the Arab minority within Israel. In moving forward, our Westernized profession can no longer ignore the diverse and rich Arab culture. Analogously, with the emergence of Islamization and indigenization as responses to a flawed Western model of social work, we are entering a new phase of more inclusive and holistic practice within our field – an integrated practice.

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Social Work and the Haredi Community in Israel: From Rejection to Acceptance as Reflected in the Narrative of a Haredi Social Worker

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The Haredi community, about 8% of Israel's Jewish population, is characterized by strict religious observance and relative isolation from modern influences. The Haredi community in recent decades has experienced major changes such as a rapid population growth, an increase in poverty levels and an increase in the severity and magnitude of social problems. Under these conditions, the traditional voluntary treatment of social problems inside the community is no longer effective. Yet, in previous years, relations between the Haredi community and the state welfare system were characterized by suspicion, hostility and lack of cooperation.

The state welfare professional community has recognized the need to intervene in a culturally sensitive way and has developed unique models of social work intervention for this community. In this paper we discuss these models using the narrative of Sarah, a Haredi social worker who symbolizes the changes that Israeli social work has recently experienced.

"Do not turn aside from the decision that they announce to you, either to the right or to the left." (Deuteronomy 17: 11)

"Commentators explain that you have to do all that the Sages tell you, even if they say 'your right is left and your left is right'..." (Rashi)

This verse reflects an essential component of Haredi values and emphasizes the total authority given to the Torah[1], religious-scholars (rabbis) and the unquestionable adherence to their rulings in all aspects of daily living. The centrality of this component of the Haredi way of living will be noted throughout this paper.

Haredi Jews are strict observers of Jewish laws and customs and view daily Torah study as the pillar of true Jewish life. Haredi Judaism developed in the modern era as an isolationist reaction against the ways in which the freedoms of modernity pushed Jews away from the observance of Jewish law. The Haredi community has strict boundaries and rules that differentiate between "them" and "us" in order to protect its members from what is conceived to be the corrupting influences of modern life, such as sexual permissiveness and individualistic and liberal ideologies (Heilman & Friedman, 1991). Television, movies, secular newspapers, and the internet are generally forbidden. Crossing the boundaries may have negative implications, mainly regarding social status. Thus, a family with television will have its children expelled from school.

Modesty is also central to Haredi values, resulting in the separation between men and women in different aspects of life: the educational system, public events and recently also in the public transportation system[2]. Men do not acquire secular education and are encouraged to dedicate their life to studying Torah. Consequently, over 60% of the men do not work and poverty levels are high.

The relationship between the mainstream secular society in Israel and the Haredi community is strained due to controversy regarding the degree to which the Haredi community participates in, and contributes to,

Israeli society in several areas. These areas include military service, the workforce and the educational system. Controversy about the educational system arises because, although Haredi schools are financed by governmental funds, only limited secular studies are part of Haredi curricula.

Haredi Jews tend to deny the existence of social problems because obeying strict religious laws is perceived to regulate normative behavior and prevent "deviant" ones, such as incest, child abuse, and alcoholism. Once social problems are acknowledged, seeking help from "outsiders" is viewed as a threat to religious values, because interventions that are offered to Haredi families by non-Haredi social workers may conflict with their values and life style. For example, the Haredi community would not accept the placement of a Haredi child in a non-religious foster family (Hoffman, Guy & Feldman, 2004). Solutions to social problems have relied on resources within the Haredi community, such as rabbis and volunteers. Referrals to government agencies (such as social service departments and mental health clinics) have been made only as a last resort (Dahan, 2004; Goodman & Witztum, 2002).

Traditionally, the welfare system's efforts to help the Haredi community cope with its increasing social problems have been met with suspicion, fear and lack of co-operation. Haredi newspapers often portrayed social workers as "child-snatchers" who seek to place Haredi children out of their homes in order to force them to abandon their beliefs and observant way of living.

Despite these defensive tendencies, the Haredi sector is part of the general society and is constantly negotiating the social boundaries within their communities and between it and the "outer" world (El-Or, 1994). As a result, we witness changes and areas of co-operation with the secular world. In this paper we will describe the changes that occurred in the relationship between the social work profession and the Haredi community, through the narrative of Sarah, a Haredi woman who became a social worker.

Prologue: Jerusalem, 1995

On a cold winter night, Sarah, a 27 year old Haredi mother of four, had a moment to reflect on what was waiting for her after putting her children to bed. In just an hour they would come and desperately need help. They were sent to her by the community's rabbi who had asked Sarah and her husband David, to start an organization to help families in need.

Sarah was thinking of the first two people who would come that night: a couple in their 30s who have been married for more than a decade and were parents to seven children. They were caught in a turbulent relationship, yet after years of conflict were still motivated to save their marriage. While Sarah was fixing her head covering[3], she thought of the young mother who was coming later and was not well. The rabbi had advised Sarah to make a plan in which the young mother would be supervised in her home 24/7 by members of her extended family so she would not 'hurt herself again', as just a few weeks ago she had tried to do the unthinkable. Sarah tried to remember what was written in the letter from the hospital; it said something about a "borderline personality," but what did it mean? Sarah did not know, but it was clear to her that the young mother was in distress.

Sarah is neither a social worker nor a psychologist, and has no secular education. However, motivated by a deep belief in G-d, she and her husband began an organization to voluntarily help their fellow community members in difficult times.

I listened to their problems, supported them and tried to find creative solutions for their difficulties. At times, my listening

relieved their burdens, but often I did not understand the complexity of the situations they were dealing with, and did not know what to do. At times, I felt helpless and overwhelmed. There was no possibility to get help from social services because the social workers were mostly secular and did not understand our values. I also knew that solutions that were acceptable to the community did not exist. My husband often assisted families to oppose the recommendations given by social workers and find alternatives regarding out of home placements of the families' children.

After a few years, the local social service department in Sarah's hometown recognized its limited success with Haredi families and decided to join Sarah and David's efforts. They approached Sarah's organization and offered to subsidize and professional support a new center for families dealing with domestic violence. The new center would operate under joint management: a social worker from the Social Services and Sarah. The rabbi granted his approval and Sarah and David successfully negotiated how the center would operate. However, Sarah and David could not agree with Social Services about the new center's name.

Social Services did not understand that is was impossible to use the term "domestic violence" in the center's name, or in any other context related to the center. No one would come to a center that has a sign saying it is a center for victims of domestic violence. Avoiding stigma, the name had to be neutral, and eventually we settled for the "Center for Family Advancement.

This joint venture of the Social Service department and Sarah, a woman from inside the community without formal education, was one of the first efforts to develop a culturally sensitive intervention model to be used in the Haredi community. For Sarah this was the first opportunity to interact directly with a social worker. She soon realized that a professional approach was different from the way she had worked with families over the years. The recognition that Haredi families needed professional help, and that in the current situation Social Services was not providing adequate assistance to the Haredi community, caused her to pursue a bachelor's degree in social work.

I realized that in order to help families to deal better with their difficulties I should study social work and become a social worker. I asked our rabbi for permission[4] and he gave me his blessing. I was very excited about all that I was about to learn, I still remembered the term "borderline personality" and wanted to know what it meant and what implications it had. Yet I was also anxious about being exposed to study materials that might conflict with my religious beliefs. I remember that we learned about Darwinism in psychology courses, and the first time I heard the name Darwin I had a physical reaction and started to tremble and to sweat...I asked my rabbi what to do and he told me to continue with my studies but not to believe in it....

There are two levels of religious guidance given by rabbis: an individual level and a community level. Decisions suitable for the individual are not always suitable for the community. The permission Sarah received from her rabbi to study for an academic degree at a secular university was at the individual level. Therefore, even though Sarah received her rabbi's blessing, she could not tell her friends or even her children, out of fear that she and her family would be labeled as "too modern", a label that would affect their social status in the community.

I could not tell anyone, only my husband, and I remember being scared that my children would see the mail I received from the university and would ask me about it, or worse, that they would tell their friends and teachers...I used to run to the mailbox and hide those letters..."

During the period described in this paper, the Haredi community was coping with changes that were caused by a rapid population growth due to high birth rates, and the joining of tens of thousands Ba'ale teshuva[5] to the community over the years.

As the community grew, there were more and more cases of dysfunctional families, and yet community resources were lacking. At the same time, the Haredi educational system for boys was dealing with problems of its own. For boys, Torah learning makes up the entire study program without alternatives. Youth who did not want, or were unable to study Torah all day, dropped out of the Haredi school system. They did not attend secular Israeli schools. Thus they were left without any secular education or vocational skills and, in addition, were often rejected by their families. These "drop outs" were often found wandering the streets engaged in negative behaviors.

This new phenomena of wandering youth, caused the majority of the Haredi community[6] to understand that professional help, provided by local social service departments, was needed in order to provide care and solutions for youth who did not fit into the world of Torah studies.

All this led the welfare system to the understanding that changes in the approach towards the Haredi community had to take place, and that ways to work with the community in a culturally sensitive way were needed. Culturally sensitive approaches are also recognized in other places around the world, reflected in guidelines for culturally competent social work (NASW, 2001).

In order to contribute to mutual trust, new ways of working with the Haredi population emerged in the Israeli welfare system, using the following principles in the development of culturally sensitive social work for the Haredi community[7]:

Rabbinical approval and involvement. Significant changes in this regard have taken place in the child welfare system. Israeli social work practice applies a group decision-making model to the routine work of child protection practitioners, through decision committees. These committees provide a forum for inter-organizational and multi-disciplinary teams of all relevant participants to meet in order to exchange information, evaluate current and future risk, explore various treatment options, discuss each of them and develop a detailed treatment plan – all regarding children who are at risk of abuse or neglect (Dolev, et al., 2001). Leading rabbis serve as permanent members of multi-disciplinary teams in several social service departments (mainly in Haredi cities) (Miller et al, 2009). Additional efforts are also made to gain rabbinical approval and involvement in a variety of other interventions and programs, such as a shelter for battered women and a drug rehabilitation clinic (Palant, 2004).

Employment policies. When possible, social service agencies should hire orthodox social workers to work with Haredi clients in order to prevent misunderstandings and distrust. Another strategy has involved hiring well-known and accepted figures from the community to assist in building relationships based on mutual trust between the Haredi community and social workers.

Adherence to the community laws concerning modesty. Social service agencies should operate separate programs for men and women, and enforce modest dress for all personnel.

Minimization of social stigma. Recognizing social stigma as a serious barrier for service utilization, efforts have been made by Israeli social service agencies to introduce non-stigmatizing titles for intervention programs. When possible, services have been operated in different locations from social service departments.

By the time Sarah received her bachelor degree in social work, a new center for at risk Haredi children opened and she was hired to work there as a social worker.

> *At the center, specific strategies were introduced in order to increase cooperation with the community and to gain its trust. We made it clear that we do not want to harm Haredi clients and families, or influence their religious belief and cause them to become secular. The center was co- managed by a well-known author who is not a professional, but was widely accepted in the community; his presence opened a lot of doors for us. It is different if I call a Haredi school and present myself as a social worker, or when he calls a school and presents himself as the well-known author, there is more chance they will listen to him.*

Another major change in the Haredi community was the result of the realization that culturally sensitive social work was essential for the community's success, and the awareness that secular education options for Haredi youth were lacking. In 1998, the first Haredi college opened allowing Haredi students to receive an academic degree in social work (and in a number of other fields) in a culturally-adapted educational environment. The college opened with the cooperation of leading rabbinic figures and has operated under policies that are sensitive to the needs of the Haredi community, such as separate programs at different times of the day for men and women, only accepting applicants that are married or above a certain age (twenty seven). More Haredi colleges followed and hundreds of Haredi social workers have graduated to date.

Sara worked as a social worker for a few years and then decided she wanted to advance her skills and get her master's degree in social work. This time, Haredi colleges existed but because they only offered bachelor degrees, she again asked her rabbi's blessing—this time to study for an advanced degree at a secular university:

> *My rabbi gave me his blessing and this time I did not have to hide that I was studying at a university and I was even proud to tell my children about it....yet my decision to get an advanced degree was pragmatic – I needed it in order to advance my skills and get better job opportunities....*

A few years after Sarah received her master's degree in social work, Haredi colleges began to offer master's programs, reflecting the community's appreciation of the social work profession.

Sarah then joined a PhD. program, driven this time by academic curiosity rather than a pragmatic need to get a better job. Sarah knew it would be extremely difficult to recruit a Haredi research population, as academic research was taboo in the community. She was looking for a topic that would not be perceived as threatening and therefore she excluded research topics which were not suitable in the Haredi context, such as sexuality and child abuse. Eventually she chose to do research on grand parenting in the Haredi community.

Epilogue: Jerusalem, 2011

Sarah, who recently received her PhD., is a now at lecturer at a Haredi college, serving as a role model for Haredi women wanting to become social workers. She also works as a private clinician; her Haredi clients feel comfortable with her because she is a professional social worker.

Going through Haredi blogs and newspapers, it is now common to read positive stories about social workers, as their image within the Haredi community has changed from "child- snatchers" to "saving angels."

Sarah's advancement in her career as a social worker was ahead of the community's pace. But change is afoot in the Haredi community and we believe that many of Sarah's Haredi students also will strive for academic careers.

Looking back, I now realize that my journey towards secular education was similar to the journey of the Haredi community towards cooperation with social workers. Some similar components include the need for rabbinical approval, the anxiety regarding threats to our belief system (like exposure to Darwinism), and the concern about social stigma. Today I live in harmony with my religious beliefs and academic knowledge. I teach developmental theories that are based on Darwin, but analyze them in relation to our beliefs, and show where they go together and where they conflict.

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(Footnotes)

1 The Jewish scripture.

2 Mainly in Haredi cities.

3 Married Jewish women cover their hair as a sign of modesty.

4 In the Haredi community,, studying at a secular university is rarely permitted.

5 Refers to the process in which secular Jews return to Judaism and adopt an observant lifestyle.

6 The processes described in this article refer to the mainstream Haredi society, yet there are still subgroups who continue to reject any cooperation with social services.

7 These principles are widely accepted by social workers, yet they are not officially adopted as a policy.

Strengthening Ethiopian Immigrants to Israel: An In-home Family Intervention

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This narrative recounts the author's experiences applying a family intervention with new Ethiopian immigrants to Israel at high risk for child maltreatment and domestic violence, and presents narratives of empowering social work practice with two families. Initially, the reader is provided with a brief introduction to the large contribution of immigration to the development of the state of Israel, as well as the nature of Israeli immigrant resettlement. The author presents the historical origins and characteristics of Jews of Ethiopia, as well as an account of their distinct waves of immigration to Israel during the past four decades. The many obstacles faced by the Ethiopian Jewish community within Israeli society, as well as some of their achievements, are noted.

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'" (Genesis 12:1)

The central purpose of this narrative is to recount the author's experience applying a family systems intervention with recent Ethiopian immigrants to Israel at high risk for child maltreatment and domestic violence. Two narratives of empowering social work practice with hard-to-engage families within their homes and cultural and linguistic context, highlight fundamental dilemmas related to assisting immigrant and refugee communities in Israel and without.

Another aim of this paper is to place the story of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel—its history, immigration, way of life and struggles—firmly into the social work literature, as well as to help this narrative find a larger place within the dominant Israeli account of its immigrants and their resettlement.

Ethiopian Jewish immigration and resettlement in Israel: Background, scope and national context Israel is a migratory nation fortified with a constant influx of immigrants from Jewish communities scattered throughout the world. This migratory character exemplifies an essential theme in the Israeli national ethos: the reunification of the Jewish people. This has beenaccomplished both by proactive endeavours to attract voluntary Jewish immigration, as well as efforts to actively relocate endangered Jewish communities to Israel (Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, & Clark, 2005). The ingathering of the Jewish people to Israel has been facilitated by the Law of Return (1950), conferring upon Jews the right to immigrate to Israel, and the Law of Nationality (1952), granting automatic Israeli citizenship to all Jewish immigrants upon their arrival. Immigrant resettlement has essentially been the responsibility of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, typically having received newcomers into large absorption centers where they could initially reside and learn the Hebrew language (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004).

Upon its establishment in 1948, the population of the state of Israel stood at 873,000. After a seven-fold increase in less than 50 years, in 2003 the population was approximately 6.5 million, with Jews comprising 80% of the citizenry. Israel's Jewish majority is comprised of two main ethnic clusters: orientals (sephardim) and ashkenazim. Members of the first group, or their ancestors, immigrated to Israel from the Near East, North Africa,Yemen, Ethiopia, the Balkans, Iran, Iraq, India, and the Moslem republics of the Former Soviet Union. The second group originated in the Americas and Europe. In 2003, 34% of the Jewish population of Israel either originated in Asia-Africa or

were born to parents born in Asia-Africa; 40% either originated in the Americas-Europe or were born to parents born in the Americas-Europe; and 26% were born in Israel to Israeli-born parents (Lavee & Katz, 2003). Indeed, nearly 40% of the country's Jewish population were born abroad.

In its first 57 years of independence Israel had absorbed more than 50% of its population through immigration. Immigration to Israel was built on a number of large waves, or distinct migratory movements originating in specific demographic regions, representing more than 70 countries from around the world. The two contemporary waves of immigration originated in the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia (Ben David & Ben Ari, 1997; Lavee & Katz, 2003; Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, &Clark, 2005; Weil, 1995).

The immigration to Israel of the Ethiopian Jewish community, known as "Beta Israel," the name given them by Emperor Yashaq I in 1270 A.D, essentially marked the end of a largely autonomous six hundred year old Jewish presence in Northern Ethiopia. Since its beginnings, Beta Israel had held sacred Rabbinical biblical canon, as well as the books of Enoch, Jubilees, Baruch , and the Books of Ezra. A book entitled Te-ezaa Sanbat or, the Precepts of the Sabbath, was considered especially important. Beta Israel liturgical works included weekday services, Sabbath and festival prayers and various blessings. Social contact between the Beta Israel and other Ethiopians was always limited. Ethiopian Jews were forbidden to eat the food of non-Jews. Unlike their fellow countrymen, the Beta Israel shunned the very popular raw meat dishes such as kitfo and gored gored. Though originally speaking Cushitic languages, Ethiopian Jewry eventually adopted Amharic and Tigrinya, both semitic languages (Avner, 1988).

The precise origins of the Beta Israel remain controversial. Some scholars posit that they immigrated along with other Israelites to Egypt after the destruction of the first temple, where they remained until forced to flee when Julius Caesar defeated Cleopatra in 35 BCE. While many wandered to South Arabia and Yemen, still others fled to Sudan and continued on to Ethiopia, entering through Auara, adjacent to the Sudanese border, or via Eritrea. Alternatively, many Beta Israel believe they are the direct descendants of the Israelite tribe of Dan who, after fleeing civil war in the kingdom of Israel, settled initially in Egypt and from there moved southward up the Nile river to Ethiopia. Still other Beta Israel assert that their Danite origins go back to the days of Moses himself, that immediately after the exodus a group of Danites parted from their fellow Israelites and moved southward, ultimately settling in Ethiopia (Kessler, 1996).

This narrative recounts the author's experiences applying a family intervention with new Ethiopian immigrants to Israel at high risk for child maltreatment and domestic violence, and presents narratives of empowering social work practice with two families. Initially, the reader is provided with a brief introduction to the large contribution of immigration to the development of the state of Israel, as well as the nature of Israeli immigrant resettlement. The author presents the historical origins and characteristics of Jews of Ethiopia, as well as an account of their distinct waves of immigration to Israel during the past four decades. The many obstacles faced by the Ethiopian Jewish community within Israeli society, as well as some of their achievements, are noted. The precise origin of Beta Israel notwithstanding, this community managed to live for hundreds of years, in relative geographic and social seclusion, in Northern Ethiopia. For much of this period they ruled their own wholly autonomous Jewish kingdom, with its capital city Gondor.

Their relocation from central Ethiopia, to the more defensible regions of the north was necessitated by Beta Israel's armed struggle against their forced conversion to Christianity by the Ethiopian dynasty, which had declared Christianity its official religion.

The following centuries oscillated between prosperity and modest territorial expansion for Beta Israel and their Jewish kingdom, and war and defeat at the hands of empire forces. The golden age of the Beta Israel kingdom, under Queen Judith, lasted from approximately 858-1270 CE. It was during this time that world Jewry first heard from world explorers,

accounts of this remote Jewish community. By 1414 CE however, Emperor Yeshaq had totally conquered and annexed the Jewish kingdom, forcing the Jews to either convert to Christianity or surrender their land. His decree is said to be related to the origin of the name sometimes given Beta Israel, "falashas," which means "wanderers" or "landless persons." In 1627 a particularly cruel Emperor Susenyes sold many of the Beta Israel into slavery, burned their religious books and forbade the practice of any form of Judaism. Nonetheless Beta Israel still numbered approximately one million, and managed to reach relative economic prosperity, as the Jews agreed to work as builders and carpenters for the empire, occupations that Christian Ethiopians shunned (Avner, 1988; Kessler, 1996).

The contemporary history of Beta Israel is purported to begin with the reunification of Ethiopia in the mid-19th century. Under the reign of Theodore II, English missionaries succeeded in converting many members of the community to Christianity. Those who converted, as well as their descendents, eventually became known as the Falash Mura. The missionary efforts however, did stimulate European Jewish interest in the Beta Israel. This culminated in widespread European rabbinical recognition of their Jewishness, as well as generous philanthropic contributions toward their Hebrew education. In 1921, the chief rabbi of the British mandate for Palestine, Abraham Isaac Cook, similarly acknowledged the Beta Israel as Jews. Tragically however, the majority of the Beta Israel population had succumbed to the brutal famine, and related typhus and smallpox epidemics, that broke out across Ethiopia in 1888 (Naim, 2003).

By 1936 the armed forces of Italy invaded and occupied Ethiopia and the racial laws enacted in Italy began to be applied in Italian East Africa. In 1940 Italian forces publicly executed senior Beta Israel leaders. In 1941 the fascist Italian regime sent an order to Ethiopia to annihilate Beta Israel, similar to the Holocaust in Europe. However, the early liberation of Ethiopia by Allied forces prevented its implementation (Naim, 2003).

With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 many Ethiopian Jews began to contemplate immigration to Israel. However, Emperor Haile Selassie refused to grant the Beta Israel permission to leave his empire (Ashkenazi & Weingrod, 1987; Naim, 2003). Despite the prohibition, from1965 until 1975, small numbers of Ethiopian Jews did succeed in immigrating to Israel, initially entering the country for work or study purposes and staying on illegally. Due to substantial popular support, these individuals succeeded in receiving regularization from the Israeli authorities and, after undergoing symbolic conversions, brought their families to join them. Their status in the country was further bolstered by the 1973 public recognition of the Jewishness of Beta Israel by both the chief Sephardic and Ashkenazic rabbis: Ovadia Yosef and Shlomo Goren. Two years later the Beta Israel would be recognized as Jews, for the purposes of the Law of Return and immigration to Israel, by the government of Yitzhak Rabin (Ashkenazi & Weingrod, 1987).

From 1977-1984 thousands of Beta Israel escaped Ethiopia by foot, making their way to Sudan. Upon arrival they were housed in makeshift U.N. refugee camps. During the 70's and 80's life in Ethiopia had become untenable. The country experienced armed revolt, civil war and a series of famines that left tens of thousands dead. What is more, the situation of Ethiopian Jewry was exacerbated by the open hostility demonstrated toward them by the pro-communist military dictator Mengistu. This animosity notwithstanding, Mengistu initially closed his eyes to the illegal emigration of Ethiopian Jewry after the Israeli government agreed to supply arms to his revolutionary government, at that time at war with Somalia (Ashkenazi & Weingrod, 1987).

Growing Israeli concern for the fate of Beta Israel led to its first large scale rescue operation of Ethiopian Jews in 1984 – Operation Moses. Over a period two months Israeli secret service forces airlifted 7000 Jews who had resided in refugee camps in Sudan to Israel, the Sudanese permittingthis undertaking due to strong American diplomatic pressure. Only a short while later, in Operation Sheba, another 5000 Ethiopian Jews were similarly brought to Israel. However, the largest rescue of Ethiopian Jews by Israeli

special forces occurred in 1991, effectively resolving the immigration of Beta Israel. Known as Operation Shlomo, and lasting no more than 36 hours, 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted, in El Al (Israeli national airline) planes that had their seats removed in order to achieve maximum passenger capacity (Pozkanzer, 2000).

Sadly, during the course of the various waves of Beta Israel emigration, more than 4000 men, women and children lost their lives to famine, sickness and armed robbers, either on the treacherous roads they travelled or in the grossly overcrowded refugee camps in which they found temporary shelter (Odenheimer & Rosen, 2006).

The past 20 years has witnessed the slow irregular immigration to Israel of the Falash Mura, who publicly declared themselves Jewish and as a consequence, in possession of the right to live in Israel. Their claims were subject to much political controversy as Israeli authorities refused to consider them Jewish and therefore eligible for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. This notwithstanding, many have been allowed to come to Israel on humanitarian grounds, while still others participated in formal conversion processes organized by Israeli rabbis so that they might be allowed to immigrate under the Law of Return (Odenheimer & Rosen, 2006). In November 2010, the Israeli cabinet approved a plan to allow 8000 Falash Mura to immigrate to Israel (Eglash, 2011).

Currently, the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel numbers approximately 120,000, with the majority, about 70%, born in Ethiopia. Over time most have moved out of the large government run absorption centres, where they may have stayed initially for a period of several years, into their own apartments, dispersed in towns and cities throughout the country. The purchase of these modest apartments was made possible by the support of Israeli government authorities who granted the new Ethiopian Jewish newcomers both generous and long term loans as well as direct grants (Hertzogm, 1999; Yilma, 1996).

Similar to other groups of Jews who have "made aliyah,"(immigrated to Israel), the Ethiopian Jews have faced serious obstacles in their integration into society. Perhaps most of their difficulty can be attributed to a relative lack of cultural codes as well as vocational and academic preparation needed to cope successfully in an industrialized nation such as Israel. The encounter of the Beta Israel with an urbanized and technologically advanced Israeli society has often been nothing less than shocking for the newcomers. Important here has been the grave difficulty of the patriarchal Ethiopian family structure to make the necessary transformations to insure the optimal growth and development of its members in the new mileau. Other significant barriers to Beta Israelintegration have included their relatively limited Hebrew language skills and ability to communicate, as well as manifestations of discrimination and racism in particular sectors related to their Black African ancestry.

Hence, the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel has experienced a relatively acute sense of exclusion and distress which has at times been worsened by the paternalistic approach of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption towards this community. Within this context they have experienced high levels of family discord, domestic violence, and child maltreatment, as well as alcohol abuse.

The difficulties of the Ethiopian community in Israel notwithstanding, they have made important progress in integrating into mainstream Israeli society. This has been partially attributed to the fact that many young Ethiopians have excelled in their mandatory military service and, as a result, have been able to increase their chances for better employment and educational opportunities (Ben David & Ben Ari, 1997; Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Ringel, Ronell, & Getahune, 2005; Ponizofsky; Ginath, Durst, & Wondemeneh, 1998; Roer Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni & Clark,2005; Schwarz, 2001; Weil, 1995)

A number of Ethiopian Jews have become especially well known for their achievements across Israeli society. They include soccer players such Baruch Dago and Ziv Cabeda, marathon runners Steng Ayele and Assaf Bimro, singers Cabra Kasai and Ayala Indegashat who performed the national anthem

at the opening ceremonies of the 2009 Macabiah Games, internationally renowned model Esti Marno, and ex-member of parliament Mazor Behaiyna.

A Narrative of Social Work Practice with Ethiopian Israelis: A Family-Based Intervention for Child Maltreatment

Piny, age 11, resided with her father Moguba, age 40, and her step mother, Adamnesh, age 29, (names of all family members are pseudonyms). They had immigrated to Israel 6 months earlier from the vicinity of the city of Gondor, in Northern Ethiopia. Since their arrival the family resided in a large government immigrant absorption center along with hundreds of their fellow Ethiopians. Moguba and Adamnesh studied Hebrew five days a week for 6 hours each day, within the center, while Piny, along with the rest of the children in the center, attended an elementary school in the community.

Piny and her parents were referred to me for treatment after the municipal social worker had received a telephone call from the girl's school expressing concern about her wellbeing. Her teacher had reported that Piny was demonstrating relatively serious acting out behavior in the classroom. In addition, she had come to class with bruising on her forearms, albeit minor, that she could not satisfactorily explain. I arranged to meet Piny, Moguba and Adamnesh in their apartment located in the government run immigrant absorption centre. As the parents reportedly spoke only the most basic Hebrew, I requested an Amharic-Hebrew translator to work with us.

I approached the absorption centre on foot. It was a high rise apartment building. I wondered about the hundreds of people who lived behind row upon row of tiny square windows. Were they happy? What did they eat today? What did they talk about to each other? A large number of men, women, and children lounged around on the outside front steps; half of them dressed in Western garb, the others wrapped in white traditional clothing. Beside them, and very noticeable by virtue of his rosy white complexion, stood a young pistol carrying guard, just like one finds at the entrance of every public building in Israel. As I came closer and started climbing the steps I felt a bit awkward, as if everyone was staring at me. I am so white! I pondered about whether they felt uncomfortable about their skin color when they left the protective auspices of the absorption centre. I concluded that they probably experienced, several times every day, what I was now feeling.

After I signed in with the guard, a common security practice in Israeli public buildings, I entered a relatively small and cramped lobby. How could such a tall building which obviously was home to hundreds, have a lobby the size of my living room?

Immediately I was overwhelmed by the strong odors of food I was unfamiliar with. After just a minute or two a cute boy, of elementary school age, came up to me and said, "Hi ferangee." In Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, the word "ferangee" means foreigner. I had heard that for some this word had derogatory connotations. However, I felt that the boy was just beingfriendly. I smiled at him and said "shalom." He looked embarrassed and quickly disappeared.

In a short while a formally dressed man approached me, and introduced himself as my interpreter. We headed off together for the elevator that would take us to the 7th floor where the family lived. I could not help but think how strange it must have seemed for the newcomers to ride an elevator for the first time in their lives; the very elevator where I was now standing. Were some of them afraid? Did any of them refuse to enter? What if one of the older people could not get used to the elevator and had to climb many flights of stairs to get home?

I remembered at that moment the very difficult time I myself had adjusting to Israel 20 years ago when I arrived from Canada. What tremendous and overwhelming adjustment difficulties were these people going through? How could they not be traumatized by their shocking encounter with Israeli society where high-tech- is the new divinity of the 21st century? I sensed that I was becoming aware of a fundamental dilemma relevant beyond the borders of Israel and the experience of 100,000 Ethiopian Jews. I could

not help but ask myself whether we should have not interfered in these peoples' lives and just let them remain in their mud houses in their own villages in rural Ethiopia and live out their lives. At this moment it did not seem humane to have uprooted them from all they had known and to place them for an indefinite period of time in a new high rise apartment building on a busy residential street.

As we climbed higher and higher the odor of the food became even stronger and I asked myself whether it was permissible to let myself be disgusted by it? Somehow that feeling did not seem professionally appropriate. I was a bit ashamed of myself for this temporary crack in my usually strong sense of professional propriety. I was saved by the bell, finding myself and the translator standing right in front of the door of the family's apartment. I knocked and after a minute or two a man opened the door just wide enough to identify us. My interpreter, Adenele, spoke a few words in Amharic to to the man after which he motioned us to come in. I thought to myself that it is uncomfortable not being able to understand what others are talking about. This triggered memories of my own first years as an immigrant in Israel when I often felt like a small child, unable to understand what was happening around me and feeling helpless and frustrated. This was a strange and unpleasant way to feel,because in my native Canada I was used to being an independent person, competent to function autonomously in my environment.

Once we entered the family home I saw before me a small studio apartment furnished with the bare essentials. My eye caught something unfamiliar. Over the stovetop lay a large metal disk, and on top of that, a round flatbread. It is called anjara, and its odour is foreign to me and difficult for me to smell. Mother, father and daughter were dressed in western clothing, which appeared new and likely purchased in Israel. We sat down on a heavily used sofa and I began to speak to Moguba, through the interpreter. Adamesh and Piny sat silently.

I started by introducing myself. They had difficulty comprehending exactly what a social worker is. That was acceptable to me as I believed I could explain to them better as they saw how our work unfolded. They did seem to understand however, that I was sent by a government representative, and also that I wanted to help them. I made a decision not to speak at this time about the details of the school's concerns about Piny and instead decided to listen to the father, and thus allow the family to define the initial scope of our work together.

Moguba quickly started to complain about his daughter. He described at length how Piny had been misbehaving at school: speaking out of turn in class, frequently leaving her seat without permission, not doing her studies when asked to by the teacher, and also, scratching and hitting her classmates. Moguba emphasized how this behaviour was new, now that they were in Israel, and how Piny was a good and well-behaved student in Ethiopia. He claimed that since their arrival "bad spirits" had entered his daughter and influenced her behavior.

I quickly sensed that I had stumbled upon another basic dilemma related to immigration and resettlement. I had to ask myself if I should be directly challenging father's conception of the supernatural nature of the origin of Piny's difficulties? Would such a confrontation of his long-standing narrative be useful, and if so, to which family member? Perhaps the family could come to adopt an expanded narrative of the causality of the daughter's problems, where traditional and modern accounts might co-exist? And maybe the family could come up with such a revised narrative mostly on its own, as the therapeutic process progressed?

I asked father if he would permit me to meet Pinay each week for an hour, in the absorption center's administrative office. I would come up to the apartment to collect her and return her home immediately when we were done. I saw that Piny's level of Hebrew was high enough that I could manage, most of the time, working with her alone, without a translator. I proposed that after I met with their daughter six times we would meet together once again so that I could share with them my impressions of their daughter and her difficulties, but also her strengths. Father smiled widely and agreed. I was not totally

sure that he completely knew to what he was agreeing but I told myself that the girl will surely benefit from our meetings. I was hopeful that next week when I knock on their door he will permit Piny to accompany me downstairs for our session. After a quick shaking of the hands, as is done in Ethiopia (the translator demonstrated for me) we both left the apartment, took the elevator to the lobby and left the absorption center. I was relieved to be on my own to think about all that had just happened.

Next week I made my way to Piny's apartment by way of the same entrance stairs, lobby and elevator and the various feelings and thoughts from last time reappear with similar intensity. I am surprised about that but it seems it will take a while to get used to the immigrant absorption centre. When I immigrated to Israel I did not live in such a center – immigrants to Israel from the Americas and Europe have a choice as to whether to live in such a place upon their arrival. The Ethiopians did not have any choice. I knocked on the family's door and father readily sent his daughter to me. She took my hand, we went downstairs and sat together in a small office. We sat down together on the floor and I gave her paper and crayons.

Without any hesitation she started to draw, as if she was somehow waiting for this opportunity. She drew almost precisely the same picture, over and over again, several times during this initial meeting and again and again, in every one of our next three sessions. Covering the entire bottom tenth of the page was a strip of brown, signifying earth and on top of it many green trees with hundreds of meticulously drawn green leaves. In the top corner was an atypically large sun with very long rays. In the sun there was an Ethiopian flag. Among the trees was a small brown hut. Beside the hut was the figure of a woman making bread, the same anjara bread I saw in Piny's home. When I asked Piny to explain what she had drawn she used her basic Hebrew: sun (shemesh), home (bayit), trees (etzim), and eema(mother). She had no word for flag, so I taught her "degel." As we drew, and played card games, and ate cookies together our relationship strengthened.

I invited the translator to join us for the fifth meeting so that I might hear Piny's full description of her strikingly identical drawings. At first barely able to stop sobbing and speak, she eventually told of how much she missed her mother as well as her maternal grandmother, uncles , aunts and cousins whom she left behind:

> *"Everyone here thinks Adamnesh is my mother but she isn't really. One day my father went to the city and came back divorced from my mother. She didn't even know that he was going to do that. Later that day he took me to another house in the village. Adamnesh was there. I never saw her before that. They went to sleep together and I cried myself to sleep in the corner. He told me I would not see my mother anymore, that from now on I had a new mother."*

Piny went on to speak at length about her conflictual relationship with her step mother and disclosed how Adamnesh hits her when Piny does not listen to her or misbehaves. Of most concern to Piny was her uncertainty about whether she would ever speak to or see her mother again in her life. Piny was not totally sure her mother even knew she was in Israel.

> *"I need my mother a lot. I am sad all the time. I can't get her out of my heart. My father won't even let me mention her name. For him she is dead."*

Equipped with this much more authentic and comprehensive understanding of Piny's thoughts and feelings, I called a family meeting, which I conducted along with the translator so that the family would be able to freely express themselves. The primary purpose of this pivotal session was to make a central place within the family's narrative for the daughter's thoughts and especially her feelings related to her separation and loss of her mother, her extended family on mother's side,

and her homeland, in all its majestic physical beauty.

Most important and empowering here, indeed a turning point in our therapeutic process, was when I taught the family about emotions, and we took the next several meetings to do what was essentially psycho-educational family therapy. We systematically reviewed, in understandable terms, basic information on loss, separation, and mourning, as well as emotions, both primary and secondary; including longing, fear, sadness, disappointment, guilt, and worry. We learned about what happens to a person's physical health when he keeps his thoughts and feelings inside and does not share them with anyone.

I sensed that I had stumbled upon yet another fundamental dilemma in work with immigrants and refugees. I felt compelled to ask myself whether I should be introducing this family to notions that would have revolutionary effects on each of them and their relations – the notion of feelings, loss and separation from loved ones and homeland. After all, they had not asked for such a thing. It would be painful for them to open this Pandora's box. On the other hand, they did not have free choice in this matter. They had never had the opportunity to be exposed to such ideas. It is often said that knowledge is power. I did truly want to empower this family – both parents and child.

Thankfully, a surprising therapeutic development relieved much of my ambivalence. For the first time in many years, father mentioned his ex-wife's name in front of his daughter: Kalikadan. He applied what he had just learned about various feelings and openly admitted feeling guilty for keeping Piny from having any contact with her mother. He expressed concern to Piny about her mother's well-being in Ethiopia: "She is a good woman. It was just that we did not get along as man and wife. I have nothing against her. I just thought you would feel worse if you spoke with her, or if I mentioned her. I hope that she is alright. I have not heard anything about her for years. Where she lives they usually grow enough food unless the famines get very bad."

Moguba promised to try and call Kalikadan's village and let Piny speak to her. He could not promise that this would work, but did say that from now on he and Piny could speak about Kalikadan from time to time. He proceeded to promise Piny that he would forbid his wife, Adamnesh, to hit his daughter. Daughter, upon hearing this, ran up to father, threw her arms around him and smiled. They cried together. I felt much satisfaction that the family had started to reclaim affect and communication about emotion, and was almost certain that should this be sustained, the family would make great strides in solving its problems, and that each of its members would function more optimally.

We met several more times after this in order to deepen the family system change that had taken place. In particular, I helped Adamnesh to openly express her feelings, for the first time, about Piny and how it was frustrating to raise another woman's child. Adamnesh felt significant relief after her own feelings had been validated and could start to reach out to the girl. Piny's last drawings were fundamentally different from those she had drawn at the start of our meetings. They were pictures of various sites and people she had encountered since coming to Israel. She had stopped drawing about Ethiopia and her loved ones who were still there.

Several months after I stopped meeting with Piny, the referring municipal social worker sent me a letter confirming that Piny's behaviour and school problems had all but vanished. Moreover, she had renewed contact with her mother, and uncles and cousins in Ethiopia and her relationship with both father and stepmother had become increasingly positive.

A Narrative of Social Work Practice with Ethiopian Israelis: A Family-Based Intervention for Domestic Violence

Yehuda, age 12, resided with his father, Moshe, age 34, mother, Yafa, age 32, and his two siblings, Miriam, age 15, and Dan, age 16 (names of all family members are pseudonyms). Recently they had moved from the immigrant absorption centre, where they had lived three years, to their own apartment in the community. They received a very large grant from the government in order to purchase

the home. Father worked as a grocery store clerk and mother as a cleaner in a local shopping mall, both at minimum wage.

The family was referred to me for treatment by the municipal social worker. She had received a complaint from Yehuda's school that on several occasions he had drawn pictures that portrayed people hitting each other. When asked by his teacher to explain, he adamantly refused. I arranged to meet the family in their home.

I quickly found the building where they lived. It was in a run down part of town where I had been many times before on client home visits. It was important for me not to be late for our scheduled meeting time and I found myself running up the several flights of stairs to their apartment. I knocked on the door and a tall, strikingly pretty woman answered. With a warm smile she invited me inside. She had been working on her daughter's intricate hair braids in the middle of the very small living room. I could not help but stare as mother took such great care to manipulate each strand of hair into its precise position. While she worked, Yafa intermittentlyhugged and caressed her daughter, and also spoke with her. I sensed that mother was making a painstaking effort to communicate with Miriam in Hebrew. This scene triggered memories of my own children, whom, upon immigrating to Israel at a young age, insisted that I speak Hebrew with them instead of my native English. When out in public with me, they became highly embarrassed when I spoke English rather than Hebrew like everyone else.

Approximately half an hour later Moshe and Yehuda came in through the front door. I told myself that it was important to accept that their sense of time may be different than mine, and I made no mention of the delay. Father immediately and without any apparent hesitation, instructed Yafa to prepare "the guest" coffee and popcorn, a favourite combination in Ethiopia.

I was confronted with yet another dilemma that seemed relevant for social workers practicing with many immigrant and refugee populations. I asked myself whether I should accept and cooperate with the patriarchal family structure unfolding before me, or should I openly challenge it as contradictory to professional values I hold very dear: most importantly, theinherent integrity and value of every human being. And what about individual self determination? It is painful for me to think of relegating these principles to a matter of simple lip service.

At the moment I felt uncomfortable being waited on by a person who is obligated to serve me on the basis of her gender. Miriam said nothing as she handed me the bowl of popcorn. However I imagined that after three years in Israel, most of which she has worked outside of the home, she felt at least somewhat conflicted about her husband's gender-based expectations of her. I was also concerned about what the children were learning from seeing their mother act in such a compliant fashion toward their father and how they may transpose this undesirable learning to their own nuclear families one day. On the other hand, as a social worker I have been taught to respect the culture of our clients, as well as their culturally-bound family structures. Furthermore, if I was to confront the patriarchal nature of their family relations I might inadvertently cause father to use more aggressive means to hold on to his power, which would lead to suffering for Yafa and the children.

When Yafa brought our refreshments I simply thanked her and began our session. As it seemed paramount that I build a therapeutic relationship with the family, and in particular with the father, whom I perceived as the family's gatekeeper, I decided to relay the school's concerns about Yehuda in a general manner. I chose to refrain from showing them Yehuda's drawings at this time.

Next, I took ample time to explain to Moshe and the others, in very basic Hebrew, about the social work profession. It was hard for them to understand but father appeared to accept my announcement that I wanted to meet with them in order to help further strengthen their family. I emphasized how they must be very strong in order to undergo a difficult immigration from another continent. I suggested that initially we meet several times, in order that I may get to know them better and thus have a more solid foundation for any

subsequent conjoint work. I intentionally concluded my sincere invitation with some self disclosure regarding my own immigration:

> *"When I first came to Israel everything seemed up side down. But after a couple of years I could begin to look at all that had happened, at all that I had gone through, along with my family, from the moment we decided to move from Canada, to packing our things, to flying and landing at Ben Gurion airport, to our first grocery shopping, and so much more that occurred in those first months and years in Israel."*

Immediately upon finishing my remarks father took my hand, and in Ethiopian style, bid me farewell, telling me how I may come to his home the same time next week.

When I next returned we all gathered in the living room, with our usual coffee and popcorn. I requested that father, and his wife and children, tell me the full story of their immigration –from their departure and separation from Ethiopia, to their dramatic transport and complex resettlement in Israel. I assured them that this virtual journey could take as long as they wanted, that it would not have to be limited to today's meeting. Indeed, father began what would be the detailed narration, by all the family members, of the family's remarkable journey through time and space.

> *"We were brought by the people from the secret service and Jewish agency from our village to Gondor. Many of us lived together in the same compound. They gave us what we needed; thechildren learned Hebrew and we learned about life in Israel. They showed us toilets and stoves, that was the first time I saw such things. We dreamed of going to Jerusalem, the holiest of holies.*

> *"One day they told us we would be leaving very soon. In a couple days buses came and took us to the airport. That was the first time I ever saw an airplane. It was scary. The children thought it would crash. They had no idea what kept the big bird up in the air. Myself, I had gotten used to Gondor and I already missed it. We had it very good there. The food on the airplane was so strange, I missed my own food.*

> *"When we landed everyone kissed the ground. I could not. I will never forget when I first stepped out the door. It was all different – the trees, the air, the sunlight, the color of the ground.*

> *"After a few months I could see what was happening. The kids were doing well. They learned Hebrew fast. They started to be embarrassed when I spoke Amharic. They still loved me but they didn't listen to me like before. My wife quickly found a job. This changed her a lot. She stopped doing what I wanted. She started arguing with me. It started with the money she earned, she wanted some of that money for herself. For me, it was harder to learn Hebrew. I couldn't find work. I missed the ways things used to be, the landscape, the food, Amharic, no 'ferangees.' Mainly I missed the way our family used to be. In Ethiopia they respected me."*

Eventually mother and children joined father in the telling of their accounts of the immigration. Together they shared their personal and moving stories with me. After three meetings they showed the few black and white photos they had managed to bring with them from Ethiopia. After three meetings they were feeding me anjara bread topped with shero (lentil paste). The story and the storytelling had brought us much closer.

It was at that point in the therapeutic process that I believed I could attempt to share with them the pictures Yehuda had drawn at school that had so concerned his teacher. However, beforehand, I reminded the family, and especially father, that I was here to help and that I in no way intended to cause them harm. Father nodded his head and told me to take the drawings out of my backpack and show them to him.

The first moment Moshe glanced at the pictures he immediately blurted out that the pictures were of him and his wife. Without hesitation he admitted that he had been hitting his wife when he was drunk, and that since coming to Israel he had been drinking too much beer. He spoke about the violence in a rather matter of fact manner, as if striking his wife was relatively acceptable. I found myself facing another dilemma. I wondered whether I should attempt to accept a style of marital relations and communication that normative in Ethiopia, in contrast to Israel, where marital violence is strictly prohibited. Or, should I attempt to widen this family's idiosyncratic reservoir of knowledge, by pumping new information into the system? There was much to share with them about the western concept of abuse: its causes, effects, even its trans-generational implications.

A turning point in therapy occurred when we were sitting all together in the living room, and I was speaking about the multidirectional relationship between child abuse and domestic violence. Without much prior indication, father began to cry and proceeded to disclose to his wife and children something important he had never shared with them before. Visibly moved, he described how, as a boy, he saw his own father beating his mother, and how he used to do all that he could to get between his parents' blows. "I now see that I grew up with abuse and that I also abuse my own wife today. But what was OK in Ethiopia is not OK in Israel. I don't want to be like my father anymore. Itzhak, can you help with that?"

In light of the family leader's overt and heartfelt request for assistance from me, I believed that a window of opportunity had opened for important multi-systemic work – with individuals in the family, as well as with various dyads and triads.

I began with a series of individual meetings with father that focused on further identifying and processing the multiple losses he had incurred during his emigration and resettlement. Together we explored the concepts of traumatic loss and separation, post traumatic responses, post traumatic stress disorder and post traumatic growth. In addition, I helped Moshe locate potential friends in his new community and build a more effective support network. During our final meetings together I succeeded in persuading him to attend an outpatient substance abuse treatment program.

Next I held numerous conjoint meetings with Moshe and Yafa. In a largely blame free atmosphere, we worked to deepen each partner's understanding of the losses and advantages the other had experienced through their emigration from the known to the unknown. Most prominent here, I helped Moshe identify and clearly express to Yafa his perceived significant loss of gender and age-related power and influence in the family. I helped him openly express to his wife his sadness over this loss, as well as his abundant fears about a possible future loss of power. Of particular therapeutic value, in these meetings Yafa was able to affirm her husband's difficulty and declare her continued desire to support him, as well as their family unit as a whole.

I also convened a series of important meetings between father and children. Here, the focus was on helping Yehuda, Miriam and Dan increase their empathy for their father and what he had experienced in the last several years. I succeeded in persuading the children to more actively support Moshe emotionally. As a result, the three children together asked their father to sit down with them every Sabbath and tell them about life in Ethiopia. They also agreed to request from father that he teach them Amharic, which had always been very important to father.

The family appeared to fare much better through the course of therapy. There were no additional complaints about Yehuda's well being from his school. Father had more or less stopped drinking alcohol to excess and so had

also managed to refrain from hitting — or more accurately—abusing, his wife. Despite his relative progress, father maintained his bi-weekly attendance at a local substance abuse treatment program. The relationship between Moshe and Yafa had strengthened, as did father's relationship with his children. Yehuda, Miriam, and Dan were learning Amharic and could even speak in simple sentences, which made father extremely proud. Most important, father began taking his own Hebrew language study more seriously and eventually found a job at a nearby grocery store. This raised the family's standard of living significantly as well as father's self-esteem. Ultimately Moshe became a leader in the local Ethiopian Jewish community and devoted a good portion of his spare time to helping his fellow Ethiopian immigrants.

Concluding Remarks

It has largely been due to the validation I have received from my Ethiopian Israeli social work students that I give public voice to my narratives of professional helping. During lively classroom discussions they have encouraged my family-centered, home based and respectful approach. They have echoed my belief that these are essential elements for a social work practice that will ultimately empower Beta Israel families. My students have especially applauded the professional "chutzpah" (audacity) required to squarely put on the table of the Ethiopian Israeli family such fundamentally new concepts as feelings, separation, trauma, loss, and abuse.

Postscript

It is June 1, 2011, just two weeks days before submitting this manuscript. My Ethiopian students inform me that after our social work practice with families class there will be a memorial service in the college auditorium for the "heroes" of Beta Israel who perished during their immigration to Israel. Each year on Jerusalem Day the Israeli government and public, and in particular, the Ethiopian community, pay homage, in memorial services held throughout the country, to the more than 4,000 men, women, and children who tragically lost their lives on their treacherous journey to "Jerusalem."

Approximately 500 students and professors from a range of academic departments fill the front half of the hall. The service is very respectful, but at the same time relatively brief; a sad song, a couple of poems about the Beta Israel immigration, and a short black and white movie showing film footage of the suffering of Beta Israel as they crossed Sudan prior to being airlifted to Israel.

At the end, just as in every public gathering held in Israel, we are all requested to rise for the singing of the national anthem, "Hatikvah" (hope). I am overwhelmed with emotion. Here I am in southern Israel, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants to Canada, paying my respects to the memory of Jews who lived in the remote northern mountains of Ethiopia, who, like me, had a dream of the reunification of the Jewish people in their homeland, where together we might become a "light unto the nations."

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Reflections on Working with Sexual Abuse Victims

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As we observe clinicians working with victims of sexual abuse, we can see their dedication, caring and love toward clients. But the therapeutic process requires more than clinicians' devotion to clients. It also involves a complex interplay of clients' behaviors, including client projection, displacement and other protective mechanisms. As a result, clinicians are faced with complex emotions and multiple dilemmas when working with these clients. In this paper we discuss these therapeutic dilemmas. By understanding the parallel client-therapist process we are better able to understand our clients' experiences. By doing so, we become better therapists.

Two are better than one, for their reward is in their toil and if they fall, one shall lift the other (Ecclesiates 4:9)

Victims of sexual abuse suffer from multiple long term consequences of their traumatic experience: psychologically, physically, and on a functional and cognitive basis. Loss of control is inherent in the sexual trauma, as well as the syndrome of secrecy, which later affects interpersonal relationships and cognitive schemata's. These in turn, prevent victims from perceiving reality for what it is; instead they project their inner perceptions onto external events.

The Acute Center for victims of sexual abuse and the Multidisciplinary Treatment Center for long term therapy of sexual abuse victims were founded for the purpose of providing therapy for the victims, and preventing or healing the consequences mentioned above.

The Acute Center for victims of sexual assault and abuse sees the victim immediately after the assault, for medical treatment and examination (injuries, pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease) evidence collection and psychosocial intervention.

The Multidisciplinary Treatment Center for Victims of Sexual Abuse provides long term psychotherapy for victims of incest, as well as rape, either immediately after the sexual attack or years later.

In the following narrative we discuss the consequences of working around sexual trauma, on the professional care takers, as a result of parallel processes between clients and staff.

The Dynamics of Secrecy

Secrecy results from external as well as interactive factors. External factors relate to multiple themes. Sexual abuse occurs behind closed doors, and therefore there are no witnesses to the act. There is also lack of evidence, because the victim does not approach the police or acute centers, immediately after the sexual assault or abuse. As a result, the victim realizes that she will have to confront the perpetrator directly, and it would be her words against his. She is also aware that due to the consequences of the abuse, she is emotionally unstable with symptoms of anxiety, depression, and dissociation. The perpetrator, in contrast to her vulnerability, feels empowered, due to use of minimization and denial. In this confrontation she believes he will have the upper hand.

In addition, she is aware of the accusations and minimization, she might face, from her family, as well as from the community around her. Sometimes she is threatened by the abuser directly, and even if she is not, she understands that the consequences of exposing the abuse will be harmful for her and her family.

All these factors affect her decision to keep the abuse secret. Yet there are other reasons for secrecy: interactive ones. These have to do with the parallel process that is

being created. The victim's room, an ordinary room during regular hours, becomes the abusive room in which the trauma occurs. The character of the abuser: his voice, touch and smell change when he turns from an ordinary human being into an abuser. Above all, there are beginning and ending ceremonies that repeat themselves every time the abuse occurs. They separate the acts of the abuse every time it happens, from the regular routine of the victim.

The combination of these external and interactive factors leads the victim to keep the abuse secret. As a result, she lives in two parallel worlds. This may result in dissociative processes later on.

It is important to observe the parallel process, between the abuser and the client, within the therapy room. The therapeutic setting differs from all other settings. It is secluded, private: no one enters the room, during the session. In that sense it resembles the room, in which the abuse took place. There are also beginning and ending ceremonies. When clients enter, we welcome them and lead them to our room. When the session ends, we set the next meeting, collect our fee, and accompany them to the door.

There is also the issue of confidentiality in therapy, which resembles the dynamic of secrecy (so familiar to the victim), from the sexual abuse. This dynamic leads to displacement processes, between the therapist and the client. At first, due to the similarity in the setting, the client is in touch with tremendous anxiety, which is displaced onto the therapist, either in avoidance, by testing, or by aggression.

We also have to consider the process of identifying with the abuser, which is typical of some of the victims. As a victim, the person being attacked, feels extremely helpless- a feeling, which is difficult to contain. The abused person tries to overcome this feeling, by identifying with the perpetrator, who is perceived to be in control. In this process the victim tends to behave with aggression, for the purpose of establishing control. For the therapist, coming to the session with best intentions, the aggression and the accusations are difficult to contain. That's where the secondary traumatization of the therapist begins.

Protective Mechanisms

Feelings which are difficult to contain within oneself are often projected onto another human being, in an attempt to resolve those feelings. The person receiving those feelings might feel contaminated or overwhelmed, especially if he is not aware of the projection process. This process is important to notice, on both individual and organizational levels, so that receivers can contain those feelings which are directed towards them. Another option of protecting from one's own feelings is by protective mechanisms, which enable the person to distance from his feelings.

Within the Acute Center, the dynamic of perpetrator-victim, might be reenacted. The victim feels violated, on two levels: by the questioning of the social worker, as well as by the gynecological exam. The questioning is required, in order to get the information, necessary for the exam. The exam itself is required for the purpose of treatment and evidence collection. Even though the procedures are necessary, they are nevertheless intrusive. That most gynecologists within the Acute Center are men leads the client to emotionally re-experience the trauma. The painful experience of the client is often directed at the staff through client expressions of anger, mistrust and suspicion.

Another protective mechanism is splitting. Traumatic events affect cognitive schemata, and prevent victims from perceiving life in multiple colors and variations. Victims tend to perceive the world in "black and white," "good or bad." This split enables them to have a sense of control. The split is projected onto the staff. It is another hazard for the staff, because it may diminish the mutual support, needed for this kind of work. In many cases the boundaries between social workers and clients fade, and both client and therapist direct their anger toward the physicians, leaving themselves as well as the doctors feeling isolated and vulnerable.

Clients of sexual abuse always feel violated, as a result from their trauma. It is interesting to observe how this feeling might

find its way into the therapist. Evidence for this dynamic can be found in therapists' dreams, characterized by themes reflecting lack of boundaries and control, sexual abuse and fear. Therapists may also engage in avoidant behaviors: difficulty in joining with clients, fatigue, physical illness and distancing from staff members. They may find themselves coping with their own irritation, anger and sadness, as well as feelings of anxiety and violation, projected onto them by clients.

It takes experience, resiliency, containment and knowledge, to identify and cope with projective processes. Thus, it is important to recruit suitable professionals for this work, as well as to provide them with knowledge and supervision, to increase their therapeutic ability and prevent secondary traumatization of therapists.

Dilemmas Concerned with the Acute Center

On many occasions victims arrive to the acute center with no concrete memory of the sexual assault, due to alcohol use or ingestion of a rape drug. On these occasions, there is loss of time periods and loss of memory about events. The victims find themselves, in weird situations, many times partially naked, or in unfamiliar places. Upon their arrival, victims may hold the fantasy that the physician will be able to provide answers- especially with regard to whether the client was raped. Physicians cannot provide this answer and the clients remain with uncertainty and confusion. Victim frustration and anger follow this confusion and the physician becomes the target.

Another perspective of the clients in the acute center has to do with the process of reporting. In some incidents, the staff is mandated to report to the police or to external professionals, even if the client chooses not to file a complaint. When we realize that the client feels a loss of control as a result of the abuse, it is easily understood that the report amplifies these feeling. Although the reporting is done with the clients' knowledge, with explanations and transparency, mistrust often follows.

Some sexual assault victims who arrive at the center are residents of hospitals for the mentally ill or developmentally disabled. The sexual abuse occurred within these institutions that were meant to protect their clients. Based on that experience, coming to the acute center—yet another "institution"—reignites clients' difficulty in trusting the staff or using their services. Clients' frustrations often result in a feeling of frustration among staff.

These examples present the parallel process in which clients experience the difficulty in the acute center, and the strain put on staff members. Both clients and staff pay a price for events of which neither group is responsible. The client is not responsible for the sexual assault and the staff has to receive the feelings projected onto them. The human soul of the client subconsciously finds a way to activate the caretakers' feelings.

Crisis Intervention within the Multidisciplinary Center

Victims of sexual abuse are violated profoundly. Many of them suffer from clinical depression, complex post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and dissociative personality disorder. The abuse affects their emotional stability and coping mechanisms. These effects lead to many crisis situations that have to be handled outside the therapeutic setting.

During night times and holidays, our phones and emails are extremely busy. Loneliness and lack of structure, as well as internal pain makes it difficult for our clients to survive. During these times we are expected to provide support and guidance for our clients and to assess the danger to their lives. The responsibility placed on our therapists, combined with the absence of suitable places for client hospitalization, leaves the therapists with a heavy burden.

The therapeutic relationships which are close and strong have an additional effect on therapists, when dealing with crises situations. One particularly difficult situation arises when a therapist receives a message from a clients, in which the client states she is about to commit suicide and then immediately loses contact with the center. The therapist faces a difficult dilemma: should she send the police to take the client to the emergency room and thereby threaten the therapeutic relationship? Or wait until the client contact us again? There are no

conclusive answers, and the responsibility for life is heavy. It is hard to put into words the emotional burden on the therapist in these all-too-common situations.

In some crises we have to get involved with clients' children. If we assess that children might be at risk, we have an obligation to report possible abuse or neglect to the authorities. In these cases we are breaking the therapeutic bond, which we have been developing for so long. The therapeutic principle of transparency requires that we communicate our actions directly to the parent. The parent may respond by directing anger and aggression at the therapist. The parent may feel betrayed by the therapist and may even project her own feelings of incompetence, on the therapist. The therapist experiences ambivalence, aware that any action will hurt either the parent or the child. On a professional level, it is possible for the therapist to survive this crisis, yet on a personal level we feel that we "messed up" and we experience sorrow and regret.

We have reflected on the dilemmas we face during our work at the centers. These reflections are the tip of the iceberg because we work with severely abused clients, who carry tremendous pain that has its effects on every aspect of their being. As we provide acute and long- term therapy for sexual abuse victims, clients project and displace their pain and difficulty onto their therapists. In the future we would like to devise organizational structures and policies that will take account of these therapeutic dilemmas in order to ensure optimal services to our traumatized clients.

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In the Quiet Space: Inner Quiet as a Community Resource

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In this narrative, the authors examine the use of inner quiet and how it can serve various populations in the community as a coping resource in time of need. In a modern world that is confusing, insecure, noisy, and rapidly changing, the lack of inner anchors exposes populations in need to many pressures. They describe how the "In the Quiet Space" program has taught self-calming coping skills to a client with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; a holocaust survivor and bereaved mother; a foster mother; social workers; drama therapists and a child care leader. This is a program that is useful to both children and adults, and to clients of various social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The testimonies of these clients suggest the need for more quiet spaces in the community. Note that pseudonyms are used to describe their clients' experiences in order to protect their privacy.

"Nor is it good to be without knowledge of the soul."(King Solomon, Proverbs)

Commenting on the above proverb, Irving Bunim, in *Ethics from Sinai*, says:

> *"Everyone should be aware of those conditions that enable the soul to expand and thrive. Silence is such a condition. When your body is quiescent, when your ears get a vacation and your eyes relax and your tongue lies still, then can your soul speak up. In the distracting din of ceaseless chatter, the 'thin silent voice' of Divinity is often drowned out"* (Bunim 1964).

This was written just under two thousand years ago, a good while before Facebook, Twitter, Internet, iPods, Kindle, telephone, television, fax, cars, Google, DVD, and the advertisement explosion. By the 1940s, Aldous Huxley had already named the twentieth century "the century of noise," and that was well before the telephone was commonplace. But he was referring to more than the level of physical or mental noise in a rapidly urbanized western world. He was intuitively telling us that we were entering a new stage of humanity in which the technologies of the media—then, only film, radio, television, and newspapers—were devoted to a never-ending noise of desire.

It was AlvinToffler (1971), who thirty years later, in his book *Future Shock*, opened our eyes to the consequences of living in what had become not just a very noisy world, but one that was accelerating at an unheard of speed in terms of technology, information, and change. We had lost and discarded many of those anchors—myths, religion, social solidarity, traditions and identities—that, in the past, had helped us cope with the vagaries of life. At the same time, the rate of change had disturbed our inner equilibrium by increasing the pace of life and complicating its structure by multiplying the number of roles we were required to fill and the number of choices we were required to make. In short, life had become far more complex. People needed to be far more adaptable and capable than ever before, and needed to search out new ways to anchor themselves.

A new program called In the Quiet Space (ITQS) is such an anchor for the modern world. ITQS is like a bricollage, a new creation that uses old materials in a different way. The two main elements of ITQS are a simple sensory room/corner and a conditioned self-calming technique. The experience in this kind

of quiet space, combined with the learning of the technique, provide a cognitive-behavioral coping skill for all kinds of populations in a variety of contexts.

All the components of the sensory environment, called the Quiet Space, are specifically designed to encourage an atmosphere of trust, calm, and quiet. The colors are soft and soothing; there is low, pleasant music; lights are soft, never harsh; there is a pleasant aroma in the room; and the furniture or floor cushions are soft and comfortable—it is as if each of the senses receives a gift that quickly reduces tension in body and mind.

Within this quiet and pleasant environment, we teach a technique of conditioned calming, which systematically associates a gentle cue with a positive physical and emotional state. The special cue or key words are three Hebrew words: Naim, Shaket, Ragua (in English: Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm). The cue words radiate tones that are phonetically pleasing and echo the essence of the words. The learning, too, is easy and pleasant, and when practiced daily for five minutes over a period of a month, the feeling of calm becomes conditioned. After this, when someone says the three words silently during a time of pressure, whenever and wherever they are, they automatically reconnect to the profound feeling of calm and quiet experienced in the Quiet Space. The result is an ability to think more clearly, and then cope with pressure from a place of higher functioning—no longer responding with old, ingrained patterns of past behavior, but with new, positive avenues of action.

My wife, Pamela, and I, with the help of several other professionals, all working in the north of Israel, developed the ITQS program over ten years ago.

How ITQS Began: Pamela's Story

"It was on the path of learning new ways to help children with severe developmental problems that I was exposed to a special experience that offered me a new sense of profound calm for the first time in my life," says Pamela.

At the time, she was working as a drama therapist at the Child Development Center, which was a department of the Seiff Hospital in Tsfat, a small city in the hills of the Galilee. The children who came to this Center were all suffering from developmental difficulties such as Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Down's Syndrome, and various behavioral and cognitive difficulties.

One afternoon, Pamela and the other therapists and teachers at the Center attended a lecture sponsored by the Ministry of Education at a conference in Tel Aviv. The lecture was presented by Mimi Semuha, an experienced supervisor in the field of autism, who spoke about the use of relaxation techniques in her work with autistic children (Semuha, 1992). Mimi had learned a similar technique from her father, a psychiatrist, who had introduced her to the technique when Mimi was a child, to help her overcome her fear of dentists. The scientific basis of the technique was Pavlov's research on conditioning. Years later, when she was teaching in America, Mimi remembered how her father had helped her overcome her fears, and she decided to implement the technique with an especially difficult class of autistic children, whose tantrums were extremely hard to cope with. Her success encouraged her to continue using and developing the conditioned relaxation technique in Israel.

"Mimi had us lying on the floor, on mats, in a darkened space, with classical music playing in the background," Pamela said. "We were doing progressive relaxation exercises but with an addition: the repetition of the words, Relax, Quiet, Calm Down, and within five minutes, I experienced a great sense of calm. But not only did I feel it within myself, I felt it all around me. The whole group of women, who were behaving like a bunch of noisy school kids just moments earlier, had become calm and quiet."

Pamela immediately invited Mimi to the Child Development Center in Tsfat to help implement the conditioned calming technique with the children she was working with.

In time, Pamela adapted Mimi's technique of conditioned calming to her own uses in her work as a drama therapist at the Development Center, and then in much broader contexts. Pamela explains that the key anchor Hebrew

words that we came up with for the conditioning were Naim, Shaket, Ragua (Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm). The acronym for Naim, Sheket, Ragua—NSR—is pronounced Nesher. And Nesher in Hebrew means eagle, a fitting image, one that we have used ever since. An eagle hovers high above the ground waiting calmly before it acts down below. The eagle is referred to as the king of birds, reminding us that a successful king in human terms must first learn to have good control over himself so that he can function better as a ruler.

Pamela successfully implemented this technique using the Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm key words in four different kindergartens of Arabic and Hebrew speaking children. She recalls one of her earliest experiences:

> *"I was working with a child, who had learned the Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, technique. This child had many temper tantrums daily, especially when any type of transition or anything unusual was in the air. That day there was a birthday party in the kindergarten and I was sitting next to her in a circle waiting for the party to begin. Suddenly the kindergarten teacher put on some music and started the party. The child sitting next to me became very tense. I recognized the signs and I knew that she was about to start screaming, so I just touched her on the shoulder and whispered to her, 'Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm.' She made a big sigh, as if she had released all of her negative energy. Her tense shoulders and face changed from scream mode to listen mode. She looked around and saw that the music was only 'Happy Birthday to you.' She forgot all about being upset and began to enjoy the party."*

As it happened, someone had brought a video camera to the party and had taped the scene with Pamela and the little girl. This was the first time we had been able to see the process at work from a distance.

According to Pamela:

> *"The practice of Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm in the kindergarten had brought about a change in the whole atmosphere of the classroom. The practice involved dimming the lights; playing soft, pleasant music; and sitting on mats with the children, whom we cradled or stroked because of their developmental needs and young age. We found that, in most cases, touch helped to contain the children. At the beginning, we lay down, and then two-thirds of the way into the practice we started sitting in a circle on the floor, instead. This promoted eye contact and nurtured a feeling of care and intimacy.*
>
> *"The staff loved this quiet, intimate practice time because it enabled a special relationship to develop with the children. But for them, too, it was something special to find a place of real quiet and calm in the middle of the day's pressures. We were very pleased to notice that this good atmosphere did not end with the experience itself. The readily observable benefits of the ITQS practice sessions were the ability of the children and staff to get more out of each following session: more listening, more concentration, more eye contact, and more calm. And the transition from one activity to another was made easier, too."*

The major benefits to the children showed themselves after approximately one month's daily practice, when the inner calm feeling experienced during practice sessions became conditioned. The staff then had a skill to use to calm the children individually or in a group, whenever needed. Some children were able to self-calm without the help of a staff member

and even began to help their classmates by suggesting, with a gentle touch or whisper, that they say the key words instead of crying.

During this time, Pamela took a trip to England, where she made her first visit to a Snoezelen room, which is a multi-sensory environment, initially developed in the Netherlands in the mid 1970s. It was a purposely designed environment or room (mostly white), providing controlled multi-sensory stimulation for people with physical and/or mental disabilities. The purpose was to help connect patients to the world around them, through stimulation of their senses.

Inspired by the concept of the Snoezelen room, and especially influenced by the feeling of care and respect that the room offered, Pamela helped create a special sensory room in the Child Developmental Center in Tsfat. In time, she left behind the expensive equipment and whiteness of the Snoezelen environment and developed, instead, her own inexpensive and simple sensory environment, devoted less to arousing the senses and more to calming them.

Practicing drama therapy in this Quiet Space furthered a faster and deeper relationship with the children than she had ever experienced before, which enhanced the therapeutic work.

Pamela described her experience:

"After the Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm technique was successfully implemented in a sensory environment within the framework of special education, we started to imagine the benefits that an approach based on ITQS could offer to mainstream education in kindergartens and schools.

"During those same years when we were implementing ITQS in special education, there was an effort within the Israeli education system as a whole to generate new ways of coping with the rise of behavior problems in schools, in particular violent behavior. So when we offered ITQS to a mainstream school to help reduce the level of tension and pressure, it was gratefully welcomed. From then until now, ITQS has spread into various social, educational and therapeutic programs. But initially, we created the sensory rooms in the schools. For the children, this was like going into a magical wonderland, a dramatic change from the drab school environment.

"What we understand today is that the children who learned the self-calming technique in the special sensory room can still feel the magic in a less dramatic environment, such as their regular classrooms. The conditioning still works and they still feel something special when they come into any style of quiet room or space, for example, in the classroom where they work under the guidance of the class teacher, who uses a special training disc that we recorded for this purpose. The pupils practice the technique while sitting in their classroom chairs, with only a few sensory additions, such as music and soft light, for five minutes daily. Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm still has its calming effect just as it did in the special sensory room."

The concept of a Sacred Space was the contribution of one of the original members of the ITQS team, the philosopher Dr. Mark Cohen. His suggestion of adding a spiritual element helped us appreciate the real potential of a Quiet Space in people's lives. Mark said the new environment should be created with love, care and respect for all. He believed that because the room has something special about it, and into which we also bring our energy, it is a place one enters with respect. So we taught this to the children, and we created rituals like taking off shoes before entering the room; entering the room individually or in twos; not talking at the beginning, but just sitting and

looking around quietly. And it is in those first seconds in the Quiet Space that participants begin to sense that they really are in a sacred space.

Even if ITQS is in the classroom, many of the rituals that promote respect and quiet and calm behavior still remain. One of the rituals we sometimes use at the end of sessions involves the use of a talking box, which is any small object that can be held and passed from one child to another, designating who has the right to speak. A talking box is a reminder to listen to the person who is holding the box without interrupting, to give each other physical and emotional space, and to give care and respect to each person in the room.

Implementing ITQS in the Wider Community

After many years of working within health and educational institutions, we realized that inner quiet is not a luxury item, but a necessary resource for all. Why, we asked ourselves, should it not be made available to the wider community? What could we do that would provide an anchor for a scared three-year-old child in a kindergarten, a teenager failing in school because of Attention Deficit Disorder, a dysfunctional family with six young children, a group of burnt-out teachers, a pregnant woman about to give birth, a sick and elderly person before an operation, or a group of children in an afternoon care facility or on a hospital ward?

With these questions in mind, we established an ITQS Center in Tsfat, the town where we live, to promote inner quiet as a local and regional resource. And from the ITQS Center, the practice of the Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm self-calming technique in a special sensory room or corner has migrated into homes and other venues throughout our town and the surrounding areas.

Through the eyes of those who have put into practice the ITQS approach in their homes, places of work, institutions, and professional work, we shall examine some of the benefits and drawbacks of the approach in these contexts.

In a Children's Afternoon Day-Care Center

Naomi runs a Children's Afternoon Day-Care Center. She has fifteen needy children in her care, all from difficult socio-economic backgrounds:

"I'm always very skeptical about new programs, but, anyway, for our first training session, as I walked into the room, which had been prepared in a very short time, I was immediately taken by the way it had been organized, by the fragrant smell in the air and by the relaxing music in the background. The atmosphere was very calming. I was pleasantly impressed by it all. The learning was then presented in the same vein of respect.

"I learned to prepare a Quiet Room in our Center, though I wasn't sure at all at the beginning how I would be able to get the children involved in it. The children are all from very difficult backgrounds. Not only that, I knew what sort of music they liked—loud and fast, not slow and calm. I knew they would like the Quiet Room because it was very attractive, but the whole quiet, calm atmosphere, that was something else. As soon as I put on the music, as anticipated, the comments started: 'What's this music? What are these words?'

"We held the first meeting in the main area of our Center because that's what was suggested. I just put on the music in the background and we talked a bit. By the third meeting, the laughter had stopped, the children were already practicing Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, and they were more attentive. By the fifth meeting, the children were also starting to use the talking box and opening up in the group in a way they had never done before. In the

past, personal issues would come up in one-on-one conversations with me. This whole process happened very quickly and easily.

"For example, in one activity, we had the music on in the background while the children chose a picture of nature that appealed to them. After that, we talked about the picture and practiced Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm. At the end, we did a round of sharing using the talking box. During the sharing, one eight year old girl started crying, telling how during the practice she had seen herself and her brother running very happily through a field of flowers with their father. This was a girl who was very upset that she had not seen her father for quite some time. Another boy chose a picture with icebergs. He saw himself on the icebergs; two angels accompanied him and then lifted him up above the iceberg. These are tough kids talking.

"When we started work in the Quiet Room you could see the children really felt they were entering some sort of very special space. We made sure the children took off their shoes and were given slippers. We gave the place a lot of importance, a place where we don't play around, we talk little and don't shout. Today the children are very protective of the room and don't allow any strangers in there.

"One of our children recently got in a fight in school, which was not very unusual, but what was unusual was the fact that he had not responded aggressively. He was called to the headmistress's office for a talk, and he told her what had happened. She told him that she greatly admired his ability to restrain himself. 'How did you manage it?' she inquired. He explained that he had used Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm at the time of the quarrel and controlled himself, and added that if he hadn't done so he would have 'beaten the hell out of him.'

Today the children have more patience toward each other; when one speaks, the others are quiet; when one child has something to say, the others give him their respect. The group today is a lot more together; the kids share more openly with each other; overall I can see clearly a change in the way they react to each other and the staff. What made the difference was enabling the children to connect to their own place of inner quiet and truth. This led to a quieter community atmosphere. The level of sharing expressed a new-found belief and mutual respect in the group. Two of our children recently received a monthly award in the school for excellence. I cried when I heard about it.

"I myself have changed. I'm less anxious, calmer and more capable of controlling myself. The children, I think, feel it and are more open to me."

Coping with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

A couple had been referred by the Ministry of Defense to Pamela for drama therapy because they were having difficulty coping in the family with the husband, an ex-soldier, who was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The need to cope 24 hours a day with the repercussions of PTSD meant living with intense non-stop pressure.

Avi, the husband:

"Within a short space of time since I have been coming to the ITQS Center for drama therapy, a

lot has changed in my life. I used to suffer greatly from anxiety, nerves, loss of control, explosions of anger, and a general lack of stability. Today I am a lot calmer without taking any medication. The words—Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm—resound in my head; no matter whatever is happening around me, I can use them. I avoid fractious situations and my relations with my wife and children have improved. When I arrived at the Center, I immediately felt comfortable. There was a calm, spiritual atmosphere there. I said to myself, 'this is a place I want to be; this place is good for me.'

"I listen to the training disc very often, especially in the car. Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm is in my subconscious; it's stuck there. Let me give you a few examples of how the technique works: I get less angry on the roads when I'm driving; the Sabbath is more like a real day of rest; it helps me calm down after getting angry or waking up.

"I feel today that my brain is like a computer. It knows how to navigate things so that there will be no complications on the way; it plans things so that life can flow; it's like a large control center. The background music on the disc communicates automatic calmness for me; it helps me to distance myself from my nerves, and from my disability.

"A few days ago I was in synagogue. Now, I really don't like it when people disturb me at the time of prayers. A teenager with a large hat stood next to me. He kept touching me as he swayed back and forth in prayer. It annoyed me considerably, so much so, that I was just about to punch him and push him away from me, when all of a sudden, I just touched him on his hand. He then continued as before. I stopped again in the middle of the main prayer, and the feeling of Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, came to me automatically, the sense of the quiet place and fragrant smell. My aggressive feelings completely disappeared, even though he kept on touching me.

"Someone nearby who knew me, saw what had happened, and came over to me. He asked me how it happened that I didn't just give him a good flick. 'In the past,' he reminded me, 'you would have shouted at him and left angrily.' I just smiled at him; he knows I can't stand anybody touching me. 'I just controlled myself,' I told him, 'and coped calmly with the situation; I just didn't pay any attention to what was going on, and all this happened without me even having to say the words.'

"On another occasion, I was also surprised in the synagogue when somebody came up behind me and shouted in my ear. I went into shock and started punching him. People had to come and separate us. The culprit was someone with a mental problem who goes around making all sorts of noises. I went outside in order to get away from him. There, it was quiet, a little chilly and even a few drops of rain were falling. I did Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, breathed in the clear air, and then realized what I had just done; I had just beaten someone up. I went over to him to apologize. He, in the meantime, had gone looking for me. When we met, I told him I was completely out of order and he gave me a hug. At the time of the shock, Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm couldn't have helped me, but

afterwards it helped me to go and apologize."

Sarah, the wife:

"When I first entered the Quiet Space I immediately felt the atmosphere. It was a special feeling, like being in a spiritual place. It was there we first learned a tool to work with: Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm. There was a time when all the family heard it together. We created our own Quiet Space at home, with a nice fragrance, which helps a lot.

"Now when I am under pressure, my brain sends messages of calm to my body: remember the quiet and the smell. This creates for me an inner quiet atmosphere. Overall I feel less pain, strain, anxiety and anger. The talking we share in the Center also helps, meeting with someone from outside the family with whom we can share things. It's fun for us to do something together as a couple. Though you should know, it has all been a process of much work.

"I am learning to not get so angry, to relax more, and to let God in. The difference is now I have a way to do it, something very practical. Our oldest son (age 10), used to get annoyed that we were listening to the disc so often, so we decided to bring him with us for a session. Afterwards, we practiced at home and he joined in with us. Our three-year-old also listens to the disc; he asks to hear it. There were times when he would be crying so I would put on the disc and he would immediately calm down. It is obviously not just any piece of music. We need to get back to listening to it regularly again and creating the calm atmosphere; unfortunately things just get in the way at times. It's a shame we don't, because solutions can come, where one is more creative. When I feel pressured all I have to do is say the words."

A Large Family
Including Foster Children

Integrating the Quiet Space into family life is a challenge, especially in a household where there are ten children. One example is Rachel and her family. She is the mother of ten children, one of whom was in a children's drama group in our ITQS Center. Three of her children are foster children, all with special needs; one of them is in drama therapy in the Center. Rachel herself learned the ITQS technique in a mother's training session:

"I had some problems with my 10-year-old biological daughter who stopped going to school. She would have very bad moods and we couldn't do anything about it. She would suddenly start crying and nothing would stop her. She became so sensitive to the tinniest little thing, getting hurt by her brothers' and sisters' remarks. She is, however, a good learner; she behaves well usually and has friends.

"We tried all sorts of different ways to convince her to go back to school and nothing really worked. Then I went to the school counselor who told me about children's groups at the ITQS Center in which they learn the Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm technique. She seemed to think if my daughter would have more inner peace, she could get herself together. So that's what we did.

"I noticed that soon after she started going to the children's group, she started using Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm at home. Instead of crying right away and becoming hysterical for a few hours, without anyone being able to get her out of

the situation, she began to control her moods more. I could tell she was doing something she wasn't used to doing, like thinking about something before she got in a crisis. You could see her doing it. And if she forgot, I'd go over to her and remind her of it, whispering in her ear: Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm. You could just tell the immediate difference and that was only after she was in the group about four times and had also been practicing at home. It worked very quickly and had a very strong impact.

"When my daughter was in a bad mood, her screaming affected the whole atmosphere in the home. But now everybody is much happier again. At the beginning, the other children weren't sure about Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm. My older kids would say, 'that's a little weird, Mom, what are you doing?' But now they respect it, and some of them are even doing it, with the disc. The disc is definitely a big plus because the music is so relaxing.

"When my daughter says Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm she is reminding herself of the calmness she experienced in the quiet space, the place where she practices the technique. For me, it's easy to understand. When I was very young I used to go on holiday with my parents to a small town in France four times a year; each time for about six weeks. Whenever I say the name of the town, I remember the place and become completely relaxed; it doesn't matter what's going on. It's like word association. So I think even without using the technique, if somebody has a very good positive memory or experience in the past, then they can connect to it and use it.

"My daughter sometimes asks me to do it with her. Usually we go up to my bedroom, which is the quietest place. We lie down on the bed, put the disc on, turn on a light that provides a pleasant atmosphere, and enjoy a nice fragrant smell. I have noticed another change in my daughter. She has asked for more privacy in her room. She requested we put a little curtain by her upper bunk bed. It was her way of saying she wants to be more by herself, which I took very positively, because it showed me she was looking for some inner peace, some way to find herself. So we made her a private space and it helped. I know now that what was bothering her and making her so frustrated was the fact that there are so many people in the house; she was saying, 'I need my own space.'

"When I saw it was working, I thought about trying it out with others. The little one, who is three years old, had learned Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm in the nursery at the Child Development Center. Even though he can't sit still for very long, he can still remember the words. For example, if he doesn't want to go to bed, as soon as I mention it to him, something happens and he calms. I have another 10-year-old boy with us in foster care, who comes from a very difficult background. I also sent him to a children's group, but he needs a lot of individual therapy, in addition to learning to calm himself."

These case histories attest to the difference between children and adults. Children are usually more flexible and receiving. Older people come into any situation with their minds closed, while children's minds are open from the beginning. That's why

positive memories are so important. However, as the next case history illustrates, not everyone is fortunate enough to be sustained by good memories.

Loss and Trauma in Old Age

Ruth, 85 years old, is a Holocaust survivor and bereaved mother; her son was killed in the Yom Kippur War. She has been in therapy for four years:

"I never knew anything about calming techniques. After all that I have been through in my past, as a young woman, I see that physical suffering is something I can bear, but emotional matters are still always very difficult for me. I learned Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, during drama therapy sessions some years ago to help me cope with my bereavement and daily living difficulties, and it is a great boon for me. Even so, I often forget that I have something that can help me to cope better. When I remember, I say the words immediately to calm myself. At other times, I listen to the disc, which works on the soul of a person, and that is just what I need. I need to feel inner calm. Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm is my medicine. It has helped me a lot, thank God, so I don't have to take any tranquillizers.

"Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, helps me to calm down. For example, I used it a few days ago at the wedding of my grandson. Another time I used it was when I went to have two cataract operations on my eyes. I almost couldn't see beforehand, but they succeeded so well now I can see; the doctors said to me they had never seen anybody so calm before an operation. I always use the technique before medical checkups; it helps me prepare mentally for things.

"For me, there are all sorts of situations where pressure comes up, and then I put the disc on or say the words that help me to cope. The word most fitting is strength; it strengthens me emotionally. I also have problems that are connected to my age, for which there is no medical solution. I don't want to take pills because they are poison. Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, is something neutral that goes to the soul. What I have been through, I cannot forget. My son was killed in the Yom Kippur War; I often see him and talk to him, and then it helps me to cope when I say the words.

"I was a good pupil. I learned Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, quickly and easily. Someone who is really in need learns a lot quicker. My daughter knows that I do it, my grandchildren don't. I don't want them to think that I am a weak person. Sometimes my daughter reminds me to use Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, especially when I am visiting her and her husband."

Attention Deficit Disorder

Rebecca is a drama therapist of nearly 20 years' experience, who today works in various educational settings:

"I studied Reiki over 15 years ago, and have always been interested in meditation and other ways of calming. It really is part of my nature. So when, many years ago, I experienced the self-calming technique taught by Pamela in our creative arts therapy supervision group, I naturally took an interest.

"However, it is only a year ago, since I acquired the training disc, that I started practicing and using Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, in an

orderly fashion. It joined the other disc I keep by my bedside, a guided-imagination disc. I always fall asleep with one of them. They are a special part of my every-day life.

"Since I have had the disc, I have found it very helpful in my work with school children. I could teach the technique myself in the drama therapy session but I prefer to put on the disc rather than say the words because it allows me to be fully available for what is going on with the child. There have been very few children who didn't want to hear the disc. Some like it a lot; in particular I can think of one very special case, a 10-year-old boy who liked the disc so much that he wanted to teach it to the whole school! He spoke about it to his teacher and to all his class. His teacher came to me asking, 'What is this Pleasant, Peaceful, Calm, that he taught me? He's taught all the class.

"He is a boy with ADD who really needed help and was able to ask for it. We heard the disc together and he immediately asked to hear it again. He felt the benefit of the technique. He told the teacher it helped him to concentrate, so much so, that he asked her to practice it with him in the class and if she couldn't, at least to let him do it by himself. She agreed to this and now it gives him the time he needs to self-calm when he becomes overly agitated, pressured, and frustrated because of his learning difficulties. He cannot keep up with everybody, and he gets very frustrated. He was desperately in need of something immediate to help him calm. He's a child who really knows how to make use of what has been given to him.

"I really don't know how to explain the change. It's very interesting. It's not that all his problems have been solved. But it is something he has internalized; it has become part of his life and has helped him learn to calm himself when in need. I have never had a child who wanted to teach others what he has learned.

The three words are special. They are also symbolic of the eagle, and that is something I speak about with the children. The three words take us up high to where the eagle hovers, a place of vision, a place above the problem where we can contemplate before making a decision. There's something very spiritual in this imagery, evoking a feeling, a place, a voice. It raises the spirit; it's as if you have taken a pill that has a calming effect on you, changing your mood. When I listen to the disc before I go to sleep, it helps me to go above those daily things that are disturbing me. For me it's not a technique but a way of life.

"But not every child reacts in such a calm way. I had a very introverted 13-year-old girl in my drama therapy session. One day I suggested to her that we listen to the music on the training disc; she agreed. But on hearing the music, she started crying, saying that the music made her think of her father and brother who had recently left the country. She didn't want to hear the disc again after that. While listening to the disc can clearly have a calming effect on a person, at the same time, the music can also touch a person in a very intimate and inner place, which potentially can be threatening or overwhelming for some. But we were able to do some work on this issue, which she had never brought up before. So the ITQS music actually helped her progress in a totally unexpected way."

Adapting to a New and Different Culture

Moving from a traditional African way of life to a modern western (albeit Middle Eastern) capitalist way of life can also be very threatening and overwhelming.

Shoshana, born in Ethiopia, immigrated to Israel with her family. She is a social worker who works in an absorption center for new immigrants from Ethiopia who have arrived in Israel during the last year.

"What attracted me to the ITQS program from the beginning was the sense of calm, peace and quiet that it provides. During the daily pressures of work and home, the continual running throughout the day, there is a special time when you can sit by yourself, and go inside quietly. It is for me an opportunity to reconnect to myself again.

"The Quiet Room we set up in the absorption center adds something special to the atmosphere here; it gives a feeling of purity, something clean and aesthetic. I work in the room with children. I would like to use the room even more, but because of our full and pressured routine, it's difficult for me to find the time.

I remember when the children from a drama therapy group entered the room for the first time; they opened their eyes and said 'wow.' They enjoyed being in the room; the physical appearance of the room had a very positive effect on them.

Some of the parents checked out the room. Most of them said it seemed something very special, though there are a few who were a bit wary. Overall there has been very positive feedback; the room has for them a very special presence. All the time children ask to be able to go inside; it's a lot easier for them to connect to their feelings and express their needs in the room.

"For myself, I use the technique mostly in the car. It calms me. Even if I don't say the words, the music is very special. It touches my innermost feelings. The peace and calmness make their way inside, without me really knowing how, and touch me in a very deep inner place.

"I like using the room more with the women; they are honest and work very hard. They don't have much opportunity to rest, taking the children back and forth from kindergarten, and taking care of the home. They don't have the time to sit quietly by themselves. My feeling is that women connect more to themselves in the room than the men do. Women are more willing to try out new things.

"Ethiopian people are calm and peaceful by nature. People tell the time from looking at the sky, not from looking at a watch. Here in Israel, it's completely different; here you have to be on time, and to run and run, not knowing exactly where you are running to. In Ethiopia, there was a calm and peaceful life, which makes it very difficult for new immigrants to integrate into modern western life. The parents cannot educate the children as they did in Ethiopia. If the father in Ethiopia said to the child be quiet, he was quiet. Today the children do what they want to do. The children are now exposed to another culture very different from that of their parents. Here, you have to be on time, to succeed, to bring a wage; there you worked in your fields. In the summer you worked, in the winter you rested. There was a lot of time for rest. There was a connection to the fields, nature. Here? There is no place or time for people to relate to their longing for their past life in Ethiopia. We could

use the quiet room for people to tell their stories."

MicroCalming: Peter's Story

After the ITQS Center had long been established, a word suddenly came to me when I was thirty-thousand feet above the Earth, high on the wings of a Boeing jet, and gazing at life down below. The perspective was something like an eagle's: The word was MicroCalming.

I had been inspired by the work of Professor Mohamed Yunus and the Grameen Bank he had helped to establish in Bangladesh. The goal of the bank was to help the poorest of the poor, through microlending: small, interest-free loans that people were given to use as they saw fit to further their own welfare. Microlending was something small that had the potential for achieving something big in the lives of people.

I saw the parallel to In the Quiet Space, which offers something small—MicroCalming—that has the large potential to provide many people with access to inner quiet, to mobilize personal resources, and strengthen coping skills. These skills are necessary to living effectively, as the modern world accelerates rapidly toward the future. As Alvin Toffler (1971) suggested in his book, *Future Shock*, successful living may depend solely on an ability to adapt to a rapidly changing, volatile and complex world, crowded with stimuli, demands and choices.

As Rinpoche (1992), the Buddhist master said, it had to be something simple, but profound, that could be integrated by all into their lives. What could be simpler than inner quiet, yet what could be more profound?

Conclusion

What could be more needed than internal calm in the vibrant, dynamic, multi-cultural Israeli society of tension, noise, stimuli, rapid change, long-term effects of security concerns, terror, and war? Our understanding grew that a new environment was called for in order for inner quiet to take root in the kindergarten, school, hospital, place of work, day-care center, home, and community. "In the Quiet Space" became this new, special sensory environment.

After over ten years of implementation, on the well-trodden path of trial and error, we can view the ground down below from a place of experience. While we are very satisfied to note the successes that this program has achieved and the service it has provided, there have also been some challenges.

Place is critical to the implementation of ITQS, but in many homes this can be difficult. Many homes have no spare rooms and no spare space at all, so creating even a "corner" as a quiet environment is problematic because of the noise level in the environment. In work places, finding a suitable, available room is often hard, sometimes impossible. We help with the setting up of portable, mini ITQS environments—on a small table in the center of a room, for instance. But beyond the actual physical space, more challenging is developing awareness that ITQS is not just another room; it is a special space, a sacred space that must be protected as such.

For example, a room set up in a children's hospital ward was not protected as a special, sacred place, and it soon became, also, a doctors' room of rest. It was often left untidy and unaired and it soon lost its unique quality. If there is no staff member designated to look after and preserve the specialness of the space, then it loses its raison d'être.

Working with staff in educational, health or welfare agencies is often problematic. Within today's economic climate, funds are limited, affecting the time that can be devoted to staff training. Finding enough time to help staff members understand the meaning of sacred space is a serious challenge when for so many people, such a thing is no longer part of the vocabulary. However, we have been heartened to see that many people today are so aware of the need for respite and peace in a non-stop, fragmented world, that they are prepared to try out something new.

The key to the future of ITQS lies with people who are most in need, who will be changed and affected by their initial experience of profound quiet, care and respect. For many, this will be an entirely new experience. And with ITQS, the experience is the essence.

Even though we often try to describe it in words, to truly understand what it is, how it works, its ease and simplicity, it must be experienced.

According to Rinpoche (1992):

"...human beings have come to a critical place in their evolution and this age of extreme confusion demands a teaching of comparably extreme power and clarity. I have also found that modern people want a path shorn of dogma, fundamentalism, exclusivity, complex metaphysics, and culturally exotic paraphernalia, a path at once simple and profound, a path that does not need to be practiced in ashrams or monasteries but one that can be integrated with ordinary life and practiced anywhere."

The effect of any practice must be profound in order that people will have the motivation to continue that practice. How often have we heard from teachers how difficult it is to control a class, how they are pressured to achieve results, how they really need help? And yet, when offered a practice that requires only five minutes a day in the classroom, the staff reply, "We all want to practice but I'm too busy and pressured....I know it will help the children be calm and cope better, but there was no time this week." Even in families, creating a sacred space and time comes up against the non-stop dynamic flow and demands of modern life.

We hope that in the near future (there is already interest in the idea) there will be the first Community Quiet Space Center in Israel for all those in need of reaching inner quiet. The goal is to reach the general population, most of whom live their lives surrounded by inner and outer noise of one form or another, who don't have the means or the knowledge to reach their inner place and use it.

Small, profound experiences, no less than peak ones, can break through the inner and outer layers that prevent us from touching that simple but profound place. MicroCalming enables us at any time or place to regain control of our lives and discover or rediscover that each of us has untold inner resources.

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Social Activism in Social Work Education: A Labor Dispute as a Learning Experience

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This article documents the reflections of an academic professor on her students' involvement in a labor dispute. This dispute provided the data for an assessment of the connections between students' academic study in the area of policy practice and their ability to translate the theoretical material learned in class into social activism within the practice arena. The article traces the developments that led to the labor dispute. Insights are gained through listening to the voices of students, social workers, colleagues and academic superiors. With these reflections, the author generalizes from her experiences, and weighs the possibilities and limitations involved in teaching policy through the involvement of students and staff in militant action for change.

"If I am not for myself, who is for me? And when I am [only] for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" Ethics of the Fathers, Chapter 1, Episode 14

It was an ordinary day at Tel Hai Academic College, the day after the end of the social workers' labor dispute that ended in a "surrender agreement." A social worker, evidently depressed, said to me, "I feel so humiliated and frustrated by the agreement. It conveys no respect for me as a person nor for my professional work. I don't know how I can face my clients."

I (A.C.) was concerned about her mood. In an attempt to encourage her to look ahead, I said, "It is not over…our struggle for social change is just beginning."

Ongoing dialogue with a colleague (A.M.) that included in-depth narrative interviews and reflective explorations of the data served as the foundation for this article. It reflected my belief that this social workers' protest went beyond a mere labor dispute. Rather, it presented a challenge to the status and significance of the social work profession in Israel. It highlighted my mission as a social work educator: to train social workers who view social activism as a personal and professional commitment and as an integral part of their identity and practice. Reflecting on the students' participation in the labor dispute provided me with a unique opportunity to understand this experience as a product of the students' academic learning and a testimony to their ability to translate their theoretical study in class into action in the practice arena.

Personal and Professional Background

Our college advertises itself as being "on the frontier of Israel's education." This definition relates to its geographical position on Israel's northern border and to its social commitment to involvement in and contribution to the region. Its vision of community involvement is stated as:

> *"...being a social and economic engine for the development of the Upper Galilee and the entire Israeli society. Its deepest commitment is to produce caring and socially conscious graduates. The students are engaged in numerous programs that reach out into the community and bring about real social change."*

The roots of Israel's welfare state go back to 1942, when the first welfare department was initiated by the mandatory government. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the welfare department was integrated into a national social welfare system developed

to cope with the diverse needs of the residents of the new state, many of whom were new immigrants (Gal, 2005). During the early years the foundations of a welfare state were laid, designed to care for the general population with particular focus on those living in poverty and deprivation (Doron, 2007). Since 2000, however, a regression has been noted in all areas of welfare services, but particularly in social security benefits, which became selective in nature rather than universal. This was a function of the transition from a European-style welfare state run by a social-democratic regime, to an American-style neo-liberal welfare system typical of the conservative United States Republican regime. This resulted in a gradual erosion of the welfare state.

The privatization and commodification of social services is a concern for policy makers in Israel, as in the rest of the western world (Spiro, 2010). Although this is not a new phenomenon, its consequences are becoming more evident in many areas of social services such as education, welfare, housing, health and employment. As a result, many services that were previously regarded as the government's responsibility are now provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operated on a voluntary or commercial basis. This process has accelerated during recent years, encouraged by social policy-makers and economic, political and professional factors (Katan, 2007).

Social workers need to understand the significance of these changes in order to cope with their damaging consequences for their clients as well as for themselves. The proliferation of managed care services has led many social workers to be employed by contractors who do not provide employment benefits, and in some cases even violate the minimum salary law.

Social Activism and Social Work Education

Values are regarded as essential aspects of the professional socialization of social workers (Pike, 1996). The two value domains of social justice and personal caring were identified as key ideologies within social work education. As a caring profession, social work emphasizes ethical practice that relies heavily on one's personal and professional values. Carpenter and Platt (1997) reported that the values most important to social work students at the time of graduation were compassion and caring, respect for humanity, altruism, moral values, and missionary zeal.

Another study, using a developmental perspective on the process of professional education, indicated that social work students began their studies with an abundance of motivation and values. Second-year students showed a marked decline in both motivation and values and placed growing emphasis on their use of self and skills. During the third year, a slight rise in motivation and values occurs, alongside greater focus on social justice (Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2010). These findings suggest that the firm value base that draws students to the profession is eroded during the educational process.

When I began teaching at the social work department at Tel Hai College in 2004, the dominant orientation was 'casework.' This was in line with the primary career path of social workers in Israel, which favored casework over group and community work, and psychotherapy over radical social action (Weiss, 2005). A close look at the curriculum revealed a preference for casework-therapeutic methodology, whereas community practice occupied a marginal position. Most students did not see a substantial reason to learn or practice community work. In my early days at Tel Hai College, I realized that a change of attitude was required within the social work department in order to create a legitimate foundation for my professional mission: training social workers who are aware and able to create social change through social activism.

I began by collaborating with colleagues who were teaching and practicing community work. Together we proposed a curriculum that integrated knowledge, practice in community work and, eventually, involvement in social activism, as an integral part of the three year program. The ecological systems perspective, which uses the person-in-environment approach, provided the framework for a better

balance between casework, group work and community work, and policy.

Our first year "Introduction to Social Work" course imparts knowledge concerning the development of the profession, based on a dual focus on charity and community. Second year students participate in a "community practice" course that runs for two semesters. During the first semester they learn the theory and practice strategies of community work and spend the second semester planning a viable community intervention. During their third year of study, they are involved in developing and implementing a small-scale supervised community intervention, designed to empower members of the community to act for themselves. Students are required to invest at least six hours a week on this intervention. One result of the strong community work emphasis in this program was a significant increase in the value attributed to social justice by third year students (Hantman et al., 2006).

Additional courses that were added to the curriculum are "The Welfare State" during the first year, and "Social Policy" in the third year. I believe that the "Welfare State" course, during which students are exposed to social welfare policy, plays a significant part in directing them toward social activism. Policy practice is gaining recognition as a crucial practice skill for social workers who intervene at the organizational, local, national and international level (Weiss-Gal, 2006). It is therefore considered to be an essential part of social education programs (Adams, 2004; Council on Social Work Education, 2001; Moore & Johnston, 2002). By effectively using policy practice, social workers can influence decisions made by political leaders, thereby impacting social policy.

The final assignment in our "Welfare State" course requires students to complete a challenging experience in policy practice. They are asked to choose a practice domain that interests them; investigate existing policy; and interview clients, workers and stakeholders in order to evaluate the fit between needs and solutions offered by current policy. They are then asked to suggest viable options for policy change. The students' output shows that this assignment contributes to the development of critical thinking and trains students to plan for social change.

The Social Forum, a structural element of the program, enables us to appreciate the extent to which the students' commitment to action and social justice is embedded in their developing professional identity. For the past eight years we have run a face-to-face discussion group for professors and students as one of the committees within the social work department. Initially, the forum was used to provide feedback and evaluation and to develop initiatives for the improvement of the academic program. When I became the forum's chairperson, the students expressed their need for action and talked about improving a playground for Druze children. This made me aware that we should move the focus toward social action. These aspirations were, however, not brought to fruition. During the meetings, which were held far apart, positive energy flowed, but between the meetings nothing seemed to happen. The intent to act was declared, but in practice it was difficult to initiate activity. My fellow professors lost interest in participating in the forum. The advent of the social workers' labor dispute captured the interest of the participants in the Social Forum, induced them to create contact with the national students' union and local social workers' organizations, and thereby prepared fruitful ground for activism.

The National Labor Dispute

Two major demands sparked the labor dispute: a call for a significant raise in social workers' salaries, and an "extension order" to ensure that all social workers, irrespective of their place of employment, would receive equal payment. These demands were considered to be imperative to the preservation of the status of social workers since the processes of privatization continue to create quasi and non-governmental organizations (QUANGOs) and a growing number of social workers, even in the governmental sector, are being employed through manpower companies. Both these approaches are employed to bypass laws and regulations governing compensation for social workers.

Following 17 years of stagnation in salary updates and the latest failure to reach an equitable labor settlement with the treasury, the social workers' union, with the support of the general labor federation, declared a labor dispute. Two weeks after this declaration, the union called upon social workers in the public sector to begin an open-ended strike, since they were the only workers who were organized and protected by the union. Compliance with this directive was impressive, as social workers who have always found it difficult to fight for their own benefits by withholding services from clients were this time determined to fight for the cause. A letter circulated by email conveyed the significance and resoluteness of this move:

> *"Today, we are struggling for the image of our welfare state in general and the face of the social work profession in particular. Let us stand firm against all pressures imposed by the treasury. We will not surrender until all our demands are met."*

Ending the labor dispute without an extension order would have rendered the struggle worthless. Messages posted by a social worker on the web conveyed the need for perseverance:

> *"The field is burning! Social workers and students are ready to fight, and they will continue doing so until we achieve genuine change. The public is with us, and is beginning to understand that our struggle is a public issue. This is a fight for the State of Israel as a nation we can be proud of. Ending this dispute with no real achievement will, within a few years, result in a return to the conditions that prevailed before the dispute, forcing us to settle for these unthinkable work conditions for the next 17 years. At this historical moment we must not surrender! What we fail to achieve during the dispute will not be gained after its termination!"*

To me, the outbreak of the strike was the realization of a dream. All my own and my students' energies, charged during our mutual work in courses and in the Social Forum, erupted. I felt ecstatic, celebrating this moment with a sense of destiny and awareness of its urgency. The national social work union actively recruited students and social workers. They used slogans such as:

"We have no time, the battle is now, it will determine our personal and professional fate."

"Let's give it all we have, unite together in a shared effort."

"Let's not look back and regret that we did not do enough."

I felt that the 'strike' had acquired an independent personality. She was simply dressed in a red t-shirt associated for me with the clothes of the early pioneers: khaki trousers, flip flops, a round, brimless hat. Her voice was heard through a demonstration kit that included megaphones and drums, decorated with red ribbons (the symbols of working class demonstrations), posters and whistles. Her volume alternated between boisterousness and serenity, like an orchestra that begins with a very strong staccato followed by a quiet, serene section, and repeats this sequence incessantly. A sort of ritual was created. It began with attempts at organizing that resembled a chicken coop. Students were chatting, speaking together, tossing around ideas and questions and then falling silent. Slogans were yelled, and the silent interludes were tense with a readiness that signaled waiting for further action. To me, the strike had a distinct smell. It smelled like soil! It was grounded, basic, and sweaty. I figured this was the demonstrators' sweat, but to me it signified the lack of beautification, real substance, something very simple, such as folk dancing.

The strike continued for three weeks, during which I devoted myself completely to her. I talked about her in all my classes. The students used our classes for updates, to pass

and exchange messages. I permitted this to go on. I felt unable to continue my regular academic teaching, and was delighted by the extent of the students' interest and involvement in the strike. I spent all my time at the college talking with students, both individually and in groups. I did not have a minute to myself. It was insane and exciting.

In general, we regard our students as being in need of information and guidance. By contrast, during the strike, I chose to be at the end of the parade. I made sure, in a conscious manner, to provide them with what they needed in order to function on their own. I purposely refrained from leading activities which I could easily have done. For instance, when the media came I refused to be interviewed, leaving the stage to the students. It felt it important to allow the students to take center stage. To me this was not an act of concession, since I felt that it made no difference who would be interviewed because the students represented me and echoed my thoughts.

The strike and the demonstrations were a critical event for the students. It enabled them to express and to channel their enthusiasm, commitment and involvement into social activism. When asked to sum up his experience, a student said:

> *"The activities had rich smells and tastes, like in India. The close contact we had with social workers, not as young students but as people who explained, guided, encouraged, was flattering. We were in contact with authoritative personnel at the college, officials of the Social Workers' Union, and members of the National Association for Social Change. We were exposed to the media. There were endless interactions with students, quarrels, friction, anger, which at times reached high volumes. Everything was so moving, vulnerable, and significant – everything was simply more than usual."*

Another student's perspective:

"My involvement in the strike was geared to 'social work in the public view'. It comprised several stages. At first it was mostly a matter of salvation. The demonstration felt to me like a social workers' battle-field. There were the same slogans relating to complaints about the salary ("we want justice not philanthropy"), and gradually they began to acquire a social nuance, such as "the people demand social change". Our vocal chords were strained and we shouted, jumped and danced to the sound of the drums. In light of what eventually became clear, the second stage took on a different shade. The focus changed from social injustice to preparing ourselves for the inevitable disappointment that would result from the likely outcomes. Our actions became cumbersome; the burnout was beginning to take its toll. The strike began to acquire a bitter taste. But despite the harsh disappointment, the bitter taste did not last. I sense a change in the unity of social workers, their perception and understanding of the value of their professional work. This is to me a source of great hope, and I was therefore left with a sweet taste and a smile on my face."

Students took part in demonstrations that were held in the vicinity of the college as well as in other parts of Israel. They possessed organizational capabilities and the power to get people onto the street. The dean of students provided them with resources for their activities, such as organized transportation. They gained a sense of their own power and strength, and the admiration and appreciation of the wider public for their active involvement, and this encouraged them to continue. This enthusiasm is apparent in a letter sent to our school by the National Students' Association:

"Today we had a remarkable day of demonstrations with many activities and interviews in the media. Credit to you all! You are doing admirable work! We see amazing work throughout the country, in which students are taking a central role."

Additional reinforcement regarding the contribution of our students was a phone call I received from a demonstration organizer who told me, "Where are your students? Without them our demonstration is so quiet."

Throughout this period, students met frequently to discuss their position and plan activities. They included me in their debates through phone calls, corridor discussions and emails. I felt that they were seeking my approval for their actions. I can't deny the fact that this made me feel important, special, smart and significant. It reinforced the sense of mission that originally led me to choose social work as a profession.

During the demonstrations I met social workers who had been my students. They told me how much this struggle signified for them and what they had learned in my classes, which in turn had generated and shaped their commitment toward their clients and the profession.

Suddenly I understood the meaning of being a supportive professional model of social activism. I was ecstatic and floated during the demonstration like a bride on her wedding day. But I was also conscious of ambivalent feelings. I felt that the stage belonged to the students, and I was somewhat uncomfortable at being the center of attention. I moved from mingling with the students to standing on the sidelines with the head of the social work department and another professor. When several students were detained by the police, I felt committed to defend them. My plea to the officer in charge to release the students went unheeded. This contributed to a more humble assessment of my sphere of influence. I felt that the students had, throughout the demonstrations, deliberately stressed the importance of my presence as a positive stimulant for them.

Throughout this period I continued to be a facilitator for the students' activities. I made a point of updating them with information gained from personal and professional contacts, at the local and national levels. I arranged the liaisons needed to support the students' activities with functionaries within the college and beyond. I chose to be *with* the students rather than to act *instead of* them. I used my clout only when this was essential (such as defending their absence from classes, or enlisting the help of a social lobby consultant).

The responsibility and logistics involved in field organization were handled by the students themselves remarkably well. The students' abilities were unquestionably acquired during the command training Israeli youngsters receive during their military service. The student community was divided into commanders and soldiers, those giving and receiving orders. But they were all dressed in red and equipped with whistles, drums and posters, prepared in advance. Social workers who observed the students were shocked and amazed.

I found myself moving between the commanders and soldiers. This reminded me of my own experience in the army as a mental health officer. On the one hand I was responsible for training the team of leaders, and on the other for providing encouragement, support, ventilation, consolidation and unification. My role in the strike was to help the commanders to make reasonable and effective decisions (for example, how much force to use in demonstrations, the appropriateness of making coalitions with political associations), and to address the individual soldiers' reactions (for example, dealing with absence from academic work, or feeling unheard, left out, or unappreciated).

The End of the Strike

For 23 days, active protests continued in parallel with the negotiations over a new labor contract. An atmosphere of secrecy and filtering of the information transmitted from the negotiators to the field activists prevailed, stimulating fears of surrender and

acquiescence to an unacceptable agreement. This suspicion grew when, after two weeks, despite the unmistakable support of the public and the media, the negotiators were inclined to accept an agreement that failed to meet the rank and file's expectations. The student leaders pulled their fellow students out of the classroom, and within minutes a spontaneous demonstration was in place. This protest, which was duplicated throughout the country, prevented acceptance of the proposed agreement. However, the heads of the Labor Federation, the Social Workers' Union, and the Ministry of Labor criticized the protest, and the latter threatened to file a court action that would require essential social workers to return to work. There was a feeling that the wide support for the strike had been lost, and that continuing the strike may jeopardize the meager gains that had been achieved.

The final agreement provided for a marginal increase in salary spread over a number of years. The Finance Minister claimed that it was not in his power to enforce an 'extension order' (to ensure that all social workers, irrespective of their place of employment, would receive equal payment) and suggested that social workers working outside the public sector would receive at least the statutory minimum wage. It was important for me to prepare the students for the imminent end of the strike, since I suspected that their disappointment would be as great as their expectations had been. After the event I found out that the students were angry with me since they perceived me as a representative of the organization, who was conveying a message of agreement to the concession. They felt that I had not been prepared to fight to the end. The dispute that began with loud applause, ended in a whisper and feelings of loss and anger.

When reflecting upon my personal response, I discovered an association with a collective narrative widespread among Israeli community workers that highlights the balance between opportunity and risk involved in social action. The course taken by a demonstration and its outcome are clearly unforeseeable. This narrative is linked to the "Black Panthers" movement created in 1971 by Israeli youngsters living in a poor neighborhood in Jerusalem to protest against the discrimination they felt as descendants of immigrants from Arab countries. Although encouraged to protest and fight for their rights by their community worker, some of them were physically and emotionally damaged by the brutal police response. This recollection raised my awareness of the potential risks to my students and to me, entailed in continued demonstrations. I found myself reconsidering my intention to encourage social activism in light of the diminished support to be expected from the college and the degree of trust and investment of effort to be expected from students.

The end of the strike struck a sour chord, as can be concluded from this message passed on to the demonstrators by the students' union:

> *"Shalom, we had an angry and frustrating night. We all feel a sense of disappointment at the agreement signed and even more so at the way it was done, and rightfully so."*

Like many others, I had the feeling of a missed opportunity, but at the same time also felt great satisfaction and pride in our students. I was not alone in sensing the potential for creating partnerships and moving ahead, as can be seen from a message sent to the school by the national students' union:

> *"It is not yet time to draw conclusions; there is still a lot of hard and difficult work ahead. The amazing thing we created together must turn into a significant and influential force."*

At the end of the strike, a number of students who shared my feelings said: "We know we can do it, and the field expects us to do it." We decided to continue to work together for social change. The students devoted many hours to discussions, and shared their action plans with me. They decided on an "arousal march." They allocated responsibility for the different tasks and I joined the "content committee." In order to help them recruit

support for the march, I contacted my friends in other academic institutions and asked them to "spread the word" among their students. Following this step, I was invited to a meeting by the head of the Social Work Department. He began by praising my activism and expressed his belief that my actions stemmed from good intentions, but demanded that I coordinate all action with him, as the representative of the college. It became clear that the college now took the position that since the strike was over, I as well as the students should return to normal academic life.

The planned march encountered further obstacles. The police would not approve our walking along main roads. Considerable resources were needed for such an operation. I approached people in the college who had previously assisted us, but was rebuffed. I felt that doors that were previously open were now closed. After a while I realized that the students and I were functioning independently. The student leaders were finding it difficult to re-involve the students in activities. They urged me to continue planning activities together, so as to maintain the momentum. I personally believed that we needed a time-out for reassessment and evaluation. However, I was apprehensive about disappointing them further or being the one to discourage them. I therefore continued to support their initiatives. Finally, a small group of students made their way by car to Tel Aviv where they managed to hold a small rally, returning exhausted but satisfied.

Reflections on what was for me a stormy emotional period led to significant personal and professional insights. This analysis helped me to make connections between this labor dispute and the possibilities and limitations of teaching policy practice, and of involving social work students and colleagues in social activism.

What did the Students Learn?

The students learned that social work has a social manifestation, in which they have a role to play. They were given a mandate and public support to act and felt that it was within their competence to implement social change. Specifically, they learned a series of operations that constitute social activism, which include: organizational politics; working with the media; enlisting resources; formulating social messages; team work; allocating roles; delegating authority; building public awareness; social marketing; strategies for inducing people to act; and more. The students' experiences during the labor dispute enabled them to internalize theoretical material through critical evaluation (What do the concepts mean? How are they applied? What is their sphere of influence?) and in a personal sense (How is this related to who I am? What is my comfort zone? What are my current abilities and what do I need to work on?) Among the major social activism issues that were explored were: How important is it to let people act alone and be there for them as a source of support and encouragement? How difficult is it to sustain a long-term process of change while kindling the motivation for this in ourselves as well as in our clients? How important is it to discuss the relationship between the expected change and actual outcomes (since frustration and a sense of missed opportunities may become overwhelming)? How difficult yet important is it to maintain a social network that supports mutual interests relating to social solidarity? Students learned what it meant to act professionally, beginning with data collection and analysis and raising social awareness as a foundation for action. A paramount lesson was learned by experiencing the importance of expressing one's voice on all issues and situations and acknowledging that, even if there are no immediate outcomes, this is part of the inevitable process of change.

Social Activism is Reinforced through Experiential Learning

The labor dispute brought home the significance of experiencing as a learning process. When the students applied the content of their learning in practice, the 'gleam in their eyes' was apparent. In their own words: "We only did what we talked about in class, but now it is alive, breathing and kicking." Their active participation in the dispute led to internalized learning that could not have been accomplished through listening to a lecture or reading an article.

Another significant area of learning for the students was the recognition of their ability to create change. Their meaningful engagement with the social workers' labor dispute contributed to their proximity and sense of belonging to the social work profession, in which they are investing a great deal to gain membership. On the other hand, when the students initiated more radical activities they lost the support of authoritative figures. These experiences enabled students to sympathize with the feelings of silenced clients, whose voice is often ignored in decision making processes.

What did I learn? Dedication to Policy Practice

Teaching policy practice is a mission that requires passion, loyalty and commitment to theory and action. As a social worker who believes in social activism, this event clarified for me the balance between my personal and professional priorities. All my life I have navigated between family and career, without setting clear priorities. I surprised myself by making a clear choice to devote all my resources to the labor dispute for its duration. I was even more surprised when I realized that this devotion persisted even after the end of the dispute.

My experiences during the dispute confirmed my belief in social activism and affirmed my commitment to it. I realized that my major source of strength was my ongoing dialogue with the students, and I therefore now actively seek to be involved in mutual activities with them. Establishing clear priorities enabled me to liberate myself from the endless attempt to meet the expectations of my family and of academia and to connect to the personal and professional mission that I have set myself in life. The interesting aspect of this outcome is that, since my decision, I seem to receive more agreeable feedback at home and in the college, and to enjoy my interactions with the students.

Awareness of the Power an Academic Professor has on Students' Consciousness

Reflections on the kind of relationship that developed between the students and me during the labor dispute raised my awareness of the strong impression I made on the students, for better or for worse. I feel that my tendency to express resolute attitudes based on ideology excites them, but leaves no room for critical evaluation. I feel that this negates to some extent my teaching goals, which underscore the development of a critical perspective toward social policy. I realize that in my dialogue with the students I need to adopt a listening position and to make fewer categorical pronouncements.

Moreover, I feel some remorse. There were students who chose not to participate in the demonstrations and felt uncomfortable about this. Although I stated that participation was voluntary, I felt the need to apologize for making them feel uneasy. I did this by saying that social work is a diversified profession, in which social workers are at liberty to choose the area of intervention that appeals to them.

Relationships with Students

The labor dispute offered an opportunity to develop intensive relationships with students that confirmed my perceptions regarding the kind of interaction that is beneficial to them as well as to me. My relations with the students reflected a basic characteristic of all my relations, namely, adherence to the idea of 'personal responsibility.' To me, this entails a continuous process of self-awareness and clarification of expectations, and an ongoing assessment regarding delivery on my promises. It is of paramount importance to me not to raise expectations that I am unable to meet. The labor dispute made me aware of how significant this aspect is. I feel that my relationship with the students is rooted in the dialogue on division of responsibilities and constant feedback about expectations and their fulfillment. I tell them straightforwardly what our goals are and they tell me what they need in order to succeed. I encourage them to give me feedback about my teaching, and I therefore often hear at the end of the class remarks such as:

"This was an interesting lesson."

"This lesson left me with many open questions."

"You did not leave enough room for our participation."

I value the students' expectations and believe they know their learning needs better than anyone else. I find that students value lessons that present new material and add to their reading assignments, especially if they feel they will be able to apply these lessons in their future professional work. They value learning that challenges their ideas and thoughts, and appreciate teaching methods that stimulate criticism, independent thought and self expression.

As part of the socialization process, I believe students need to experience the type of relationship they are expected to create with their clients. Therefore, I make a point of stressing elements of partnership, sincerity, commitment, respect and collaborative empowerment. In my relationship with students I make an effort to leave them room to express themselves. I often feel that students are not fully involved in designing their academic framework, and furthermore are frequently silenced and thought to be unable to assess their well-being and needs, rather like other marginalized populations.

Relationships with Colleagues and Superiors

My relationships with my superiors and colleagues during the labor dispute period were markedly different than usual. I deliberate in which ways these differences facilitate or hinder my goal of enlisting partners to my drive toward social activism.

The relationship with my superiors and colleagues was influenced by the complexity of involvement in social activism on the part of an academic person. The head of the social work department reprimanded me for what he considered to be my overly zealous involvement in the dispute, and reminded me that my role in the college was that of professor rather than social worker. Therefore, I should not lose sight of my primary commitment to insure that the students' academic achievements are not compromised. This concern, in my opinion, was his way of rationalizing his ambivalence about supporting students who actively participated in the labor dispute. When I conveyed to him the students' feelings of lack of support by the department and their need for a clear understanding of his position regarding their academic duties during the dispute, he replied by asking me to modify my involvement and to allow the students to act on their own. I felt bewildered and betrayed by his approach.

Throughout the years, I had been encouraged, and even required, to run a college forum for social activism. When the opportunity for action presented itself, however, our wings were clipped. In a meeting between senior personnel at the college and students' representatives, convened to explore how the college could assist the students in their activities during the labor dispute, it was made clear that the college would only support academic activities. I felt betrayed again, but at least the message was clear. I suddenly realized that my understanding of their expectations may have been incorrect. I recognized the familiar gap between declarations and deeds. I once again came to a familiar conclusion encompassed in the saying: there are many partners to success, but in times of difficulty you stand alone.

These feelings were reinforced by my interaction with my colleagues during the labor dispute. At the end of the strike our secretary asked me: "Are you with us or with them?" Suddenly I understood that in the eyes of my colleagues there were two camps. On one side were the students and me; on the other side stood the other people in the department. I was astonished by my lack of awareness. It appears that I was not aware of my colleagues' desire and need for a leader who would involve them in the labor dispute. People felt that I was responsible for my colleagues' behavior and asked me: Why don't other professors come to the demonstrations? The students also expected me to create consensual support within the department for their activities. I realized that, in contrast to other relationships, I had refused to take personal responsibility for my colleagues' behavior. During this period I chose to share my experiences mainly with colleagues who had a similar agenda to mine. I was not receptive

to different opinions or experiences. I began to wonder to what extent this behavior was equally typical of routine times, and how it influences my status and ability to collaborate with colleagues in the department, I find this revelation important, since from my perspective such partnerships are essential to reach our mutual goal: socializing social work students to strive actively for social justice.

How can Policy Practice be Applied?

The academic institution leaves teaching content and methodology to the discretion of the professor. Activities in the field enable students to choose where and how to intervene and whom to approach for assistance and guidance. Therefore, their field experience enables students to put their abilities into practice, and leads them to relate their success to their proven efficacy. Reflections on my position as an academic professor convinced me that remaining outside the limelight and offering ongoing and significant support from the sidelines suits me. Although most people regard me as having self confidence, I often feel a lack of confidence that protects me from embarrassment. For example, a photo of me drumming during a demonstration was uploaded to Facebook with the caption: "Protestor Number One." This made me very uncomfortable. The students saw this as a token of their appreciation for me, but to me it was highly embarrassing.

Reflections upon my conduct during the labor dispute led me to realize that my leadership style is emotional and ethical. I chose to take an active part in the students' "content committee" in order to ensure that everyone understood that this was not an ordinary struggle for better wages. We were fighting for moral and ethical recognition of the revival of our welfare state. During the demonstrations I paid special attention to ethical considerations pertaining to the effect of the strike on clients who joined us in the demonstrations. We spent a lot of time thinking about the statements we issued, and how to relay important messages without hurting the people involved.

What Lies Ahead?

My hope is to attain legitimacy from the college to continue to act with students to change our society and profession. An example of this could be the college's acknowledgment of students' involvement in the Social Forum by awarding them academic credits for their participation. My leadership of the Social Forum could be acknowledged by regarding it as part of my job, rather than expecting me to perform this task voluntarily. Such actions would demonstrate that policy practice is not only a subject taught in the curriculum, but also a topic worthy of resources.

I have emerged from this experience more certain of my professional agenda and of my desire to be active in promoting social change. I find myself thinking about my future path toward social activism. I wonder whether this activity should be carried out within academia or outside it. Perhaps I should turn to politics and operate within the sphere where actual decisions are made? Even though the labor dispute left me confused and troubled, it enabled me to make a connection between my academic teaching and my love for social activism. I learned from my own experience the tremendous potential in actual experimentation, as well as the need to let go and to deal with situations of uncertainly and lack of control. I see myself in the future developing the area of experiential learning in social activism by working in different cultures together with colleagues around the world. My vision is that social activism will one day be an integral part of social work education programs.

In sum, my involvement in the labor dispute contributed greatly to my personal and professional development, as a parallel process to the students' experiences. The reflective process led me to understand that when I am engaged in something that I believe in, there is progress in all areas, even those I regard as less significant or feel less sure about.

Through the reflective process, I felt that I achieved balance and integration between personal and professional aspects of my life. I reaffirmed my identity. I realize that I enjoy my work as a social work educator and believe in my ability to contribute to shaping the

students' identity as agents of social change through the unique relations that developed between us. I feel that my sense of purpose and mission has been revitalized. I have noticed that, following the reflective aftermath evident in this article, I breathe more freely, and the people around me notice that I am more agreeable to doing things that I previously regarded merely as chores.

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Serving the Community: Teaching and Researching Community Engagement for Social Justice at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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The decline of the welfare state, the erosion of social benefits and growing privatization of social services have exacerbated social problems in Israel, including food insecurity, hunger and abusive employment. The weakness of community organizations and agencies thrusts greater responsibility onto schools of social work to address these problems.

In this narrative the author relates his personal experiences during the last ten years in developing and implementing an innovative program that integrates teaching, training, research, and community engagement to promote social justice.

"Nae Doresh Nae Mekayem."
Translation: *"Practice what you preach."* - Talmudic saying

A significant barrier to direct Higher Education (HE) community engagement for social justice is the lack of practical knowledge among students and faculty: How do you start an activity and how do you maintain it over time? How do you mobilize the students? How do you integrate policy change activities, teaching, and research?

My main goal in writing this reflection is to encourage both faculty and students to promote direct social justice activities in their schools by involvement as an organized action group rather than as individuals. In this paper I describe the social justice program that I developed in collaboration with students and other faculty members of the Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) during the 2000s. The Department of Social Work (which I will refer to as "the Department") is a mid-size generic school of 450 students in a mid-sized university numbering approximately 20,000 students. Because direct social justice programs are not common in HE, I preface my reflections with a short discussion of the need for such programs and the major barriers to their initiation.

The Need for a Social Justice Program

In the current anti-social-justice climate of Israel and other Western countries that have adopted a global economy approach and conservative ideology and practices, HE in general, and schools of social work in particular, must actively engage their faculty and students in planned and organized activities to promote social justice. The weakness of community organizations in such an environment has imposed even greater responsibility on schools of social work to address social problems such as poverty and hunger and the abusive employment of marginalized and non-unionized employees. In an era defined as a "war against the poor," social work faculty and students should champion victimized members of society and actively use their unique expertise, as well as their personal and organizational resources, to fulfill their professional mission and code of ethics of promoting social justice (Israel Association of Social Workers, 1994). It is not enough to teach our profession's commitment to social reform and the methods of community organization solely as a legacy of the profession, if it remains detached from the daily

practice of social workers. While at the university, every social work student needs to go through a meaningful experience of intervening in social problems, both in the classroom and in the field. Students who learn and actively participate in such interventions are more likely to embrace them as a part of their practice after they graduate.

As there is growing interest in scholar activism and intellectual public engagement (Croteau, Hoynes, & Ryan, 2005; Hale, 2008; Johnson, 1994; Krager & Hernandez, 2004), and HE leaders (for example Boyer, 1990) have legitimatized and even called for direct HE social justice engagement, the time seems ripe for it. Recently, the Israeli Academy of Higher Education established a special program to support HE community engagement for social change (http://law.huji.ac.il/merkazim.asp, 2011)

Barriers to HE Community Engagement for Social Justice

The literature points to various barriers and obstacles to the development of effective, direct and ongoing HE community engagement for social justice. In an article I authored with a colleague about the first phase of our activity (Weis & Kaufman, 2006) we mentioned the following barriers: (1) The intensified process of professionalization in social work in Israel (Spiro, 2001); (2) the conservative nature of many HE faculty and students and their identification with mainstream community institutions and power structures; (3) the preference of schools and students for micro-practice and the role of neutral, non-political spectators or experts; (4) the lack of educators and students who are trained community organizers; (5) the limited opportunities in HE for training, learning and experiencing social activism; (6) the limited time available to students and faculty for voluntary work; and (7) the absence of intra-academic action structures and mechanisms that can facilitate both training and action.

After our 10 years of community engagement, my conclusion is that it is possible to overcome most of these barriers to a certain degree if three preconditions exist: *legitimacy*, both internal (school and university) and external (community), *commitment* of faculty and students for ongoing community engagement, and *competence* in community organizing strategies (Kaufman, 2004).

Overview of the Social Justice Program

The main incentive behind the initiation of our social justice activities and their ongoing existence is the scarcity of community action to change the anti-social policies of the government, which affect many people in the southern part of Israel—the Negev—and in the country in general. The Negev, where our university is located, is one of the most socially and economically vulnerable regions in the country. It has the largest number of income-supplement recipients in Israel, and the Bedouins, comprising 25% of the region's population, are the poorest residents of the country.

It was clear to me that this social context demanded that we as individuals and as a Department become involved in social change activities and that we train our students to act as agents of social change. In 2000, I suggested that our Department initiate a project promoting social justice through intervention in social problems. The objectives were to encourage students and faculty members to become involved in social activism, to educate and train students as social change activists, and, from the academic point of view, to develop much-needed knowledge on the role of HE as an agent of social change and on socialization for social activism.

During our 10 years of activity we applied three major strategies to achieve the first two objectives. In the beginning we relied mostly on informal strategy: mobilizing students and faculty on an ad hoc basis to support selected community struggles for social justice initiated by students and faculty or by the community. For example, in 2001 we initiated a community conference, a petition campaign and rallies at the University in support of the struggle of organizations of the disabled for better social security benefits. Our second strategy was to initiate pro-active campaigns promoting social justice policy, and building coalitions with community groups and organizations to implement these campaigns. The social

problems we focused on were food insecurity and hunger and abusive employment of non-unionized social workers and unionized University cleaning staff. We chose to intervene in these issues because, at that time, they had not been resolved by other meaningful agents of social change, and because our students and faculty felt profoundly that we had the obligation, as well as the ability, to make a difference.

Main Achievements and Contributions of the Program

Although it is difficult to evaluate the impact of a specific intervention program on community change because of the many variables involved, I can nevertheless point out the following major achievements and contributions of our activities (jointly conducted with various community and university allies):

1. The establishment, in 2000, of the Faculty and Students Joint Forum for Social Justice. The Forum has since served as the major infrastructure for ad hoc social justice activities.

2. The establishment of a community coalition that successfully lobbied for the legislation of the national Hot Lunch Bill in 2005. The bill ensured provision of a hot meal to 140,000 children throughout Israel. It was the first expression of governmental responsibility for food security and opened the door to community demands for more programs and policies.

3. The 2007 establishment of the National Food Security Center (NFSC), a community-Forum partnership which is a Department-based non-governmental organization (NGO). The NFSC plays a leading role in grass roots organizing and advocacy and in research on the scale and impact of food insecurity and hunger in Israel.

4. The acknowledgment by the Israeli Social Work Union (ISWU) and other major social work institutions (universities, the Ministry of Welfare) and the social workers themselves of the severity of the problem of the abusive employment of one-third of all social workers employed in privatized (formerly governmental) welfare services. This led to the inclusion of the social and labor rights and benefits of privatized social workers as a central issue in the ISWU national strike in 2011 and in the agreement signed between the union and the government.

5. The foundation in 2008 of the National Center for Social Workers Labor Organizing (NCSWLO). This center, jointly established by the Forum and the ISWU, is actively engaged in the organization and unionization of workers; in the education of social workers and social work students on their social and labor rights; and in the campaign for legal reforms in employee conditions.

6. Building an intra-University coalition (professors and students' organizations) to protect the rights of the cleaning staff against hostile actions by University authorities and contractors; organizing the cleaning staff to formally unionize and hold public and democratic elections (for the first time in Israel); and providing ongoing organizing assistance to the cleaning staff union.

A recent summary of the main social change activities that occurred as part of our program in 2001-2011 reveals the intensity and the scope of the program: five national campaigns and two intra-university campaign; 20 petition campaigns and various street and media protest events; seven community action studies and surveys; 16 public conferences and rallies, most within BGU but also in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and other locations. Most of our students participated in the activities, at various level of intensity, and hundreds of publications appeared in the local and national media. The projects were presented in numerous forums, including most schools of social work and in Israeli conferences to promote HE community engagement. Thus far 12 scholarly publications and thesis papers have appeared on various aspects of these projects. A good pictorial summary of the activities (petitions, rallies, demonstrations) can be found in a special publication prepared for

our Department's 25th anniversary: "Eight Years of Struggle for Social Justice" (Department of Social Work, 2009).

My Professional Orientation

The structure of this narrative reflects my belief that one of the best ways to understand the entrepreneurial activities of community organizers is to view their activities as an interaction between their own background and orientations, the issues they choose to focus on, and the opportunities they identify to promote their social change agendas (Taylor, 2007).

When I joined the Department in 1998, I was impressed with its declared and actual commitment to the various communities in the Negev. But at that time the University and Department's engagement with the community was based on the "traditional model," i.e., collaboration with major community institutions and power structures, an apolitical, consensual and expertise-based orientation, and the provision of direct service to needy individuals. There were no opportunities or action structures for social change engagement: collaboration with oppositional community organizations; promotion of activities that were political and conflict-oriented when the situation called for challenging decision makers; or activities aimed at politicizing the disadvantaged and promoting their interests by developing oppositional power bases.

When I was an undergraduate social work student at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in the late 1970s, both the political atmosphere and the nature of community engagement were very different from what I encountered at BGU. In the late seventies, hundreds of students, conservative and progressive alike, were involved on a daily basis in debates and demonstrations on issues of social justice and peace. I joined the progressive student organization and was active in it for three years, acquiring excellent informal training in activism for social change. I learned how a social movement functions organizationally and politically and how to mobilize people for social justice campaigns. I also discovered the power of students. The media showed much interest in our activities, perhaps because we acted out of idealism and were highly motivated. I was also surprised at the interest that many local and national politicians showed in our activities; no doubt some were looking for our active support in their political campaigns.

In addition to this experience, in classes on community organization and in my field training I studied methods and processes of grass roots organizing, developed in the U.S., which I found very effective for organizing poor people. My favorite book at that time was "Rules for Radicals" (Alinsky, 1972), which introduced me to several useful tactics to pressure establishments to change policies in regard to the victims of social problems. During my studies I met Israeli community workers and activist social workers who were working with the Israeli "Black Panthers" protest movement, which was very active in the early 1970s (Cohen, 1972). Years later, I wrote an article on the important work done by one of them, Avner Amiel, which presented an ideal model of a social worker committed to activism for social justice (Mansbach & Kaufman, 2003).

The three years of my BSW studies provided me with a solid activist orientation and know-how, as well as with faith in the efficacy and relevance of student community engagement. In the 1970s and early 1980s, social protest supported by many segments of Israeli society led to significant progressive welfare reforms. Like many social workers, I too believed then that Israeli society was on the way to becoming a leading welfare state in the world. To our disappointment, Israeli governments since 1985 have embraced the conservative values and practices of a global economy. The government's adoption of neo-liberal economic principles has led to a pronounced erosion in social benefits, major cuts in social budgets, the decline of the welfare state, and changes in the job market. All these have led to the exacerbation of existing social problems. For example, from 1998-2009 the rate of Israeli children living below the poverty line increased by 60%, and from 1989-2009 it increased by 90%. As a result, Israel is presently leading the Western world in the rate of children living below the poverty line (36%) and is only second to the

United States in the gap between rich and poor. New social problems have also arisen, such as food insecurity and hunger and the abusive employment of non-unionized workers, those problems upon which we later focused our activities toward social change.

Having presented the rationale, my personal motives, and the contribution of our activities, I will consider important junctures in our work.

Starting the Activity – The First Community Action Study

Before I joined the Department in 1998, I had worked as a community organizer for 20 years, both in governmental and non-governmental agencies (Korazim-Korosy, 2000). Naturally, I was assigned to teach community organization and social justice courses, which I found problematic to teach because I felt the discussions were theoretical only. Most of the students had not experienced active engagement in social change activities in their field work (BSW) or at agencies (MSW). During my first years in the Department I realized that some of the faculty and students shared my desire for a more activist engagement with the community. I also discovered that the powerful president of BGU was community-oriented; and in 2001 I received the green light from the new Department chairperson, Vered Slonim-Nevo, "to activate the students."

I decided to use a community action research technique that I had often found effective for mobilizing passive and unorganized communities. This technique integrates academic activity - research - with activities to promote community change (Stoecker & Beckwith, 1992). Research of this type helps raise the awareness of community members to issues addressed in the study questionnaire and defines common problems in an operative manner. It provides data needed for action, empowers the participants in the research, creates foci of power within the community, and activates a previously passive community (Rubin & Rubin, 2001). In order to turn research into a mechanism for social change, the research team needs to expand its involvement beyond data collection to the following activities: sharing the findings about community needs and problems with the general public (through the media) and decision makers (by preparing a policy paper); organizing community meetings with all parties that have a stake in the social problem in order to develop a community plan to achieve the desired change goals; "cutting the issue," i.e., selecting an aspect of the social problem that has the best chance of supported from the public and demanding that decision makers accept the community program for policy or service on this issue; conducting a social change campaign to advocate for the desired community solution; developing a formal structure that would monitor policy changes and their implementation and press for solutions to further problems.

I started by designing a survey for action research with a group of eight students from my community research course. First, we conducted open interviews with selected faculty and students. Next, we surveyed all students, faculty and field supervisors by means of a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that there was a near-consensus among students and faculty that we, as a Department, should be directly involved in promoting social justice.

Hundreds of students and many faculty members joined an open meeting I called in order to decide what to do in light of the survey results. One operative decision was to create a new structure within the Department that would enable students and faculty to engage in meaningful community change action. Another decision was to add social-change-oriented courses to the curriculum in order to enhance student willingness and competence to engage in social action. Among the courses added were "Community Interventions in Social Problems," "Building Community Coalitions and Partnerships," and "Activism in Social Work." In addition, a field experience track in social change organization was built for all first-year students.

In 2000, a group of 40 students and faculty members formed the Joint Faculty and Students Forum for Social Justice, an informal and voluntary community intervention platform

that has been the source of all social change projects. I was appointed Forum Coordinator. During its first two years, the Forum's main activities were to support community struggles for social justice. For example, on the national level we supported the struggles of the organizations of single mothers and of the disabled against cuts in their social security benefits. Locally we supported the housing struggle of young couples in Beer-Sheva, the city in which BGU is located. Our activities included petition campaigns, joining demonstrations and organizing community conferences at the University. Hundreds of students and faculty members participated in these activities.

The Forum activists who had participated in the decision making processes and organized the events gained practical experience in community mobilization for social justice. In addition, working relations evolved between the Forum and organizations in the community, such as the Union of Social Workers, welfare agencies in the Negev, advocacy groups, client organizations, local and national media, and politicians. This stage demonstrated that the Department was interested in and able to act for social justice, and had formulated the action principles which guided future activities, especially the use of community action research as the main mechanism to integrate action, teaching, and research. Two of our key projects, the right for food security project and the labor rights project, were developed along similar lines.

Majority Strategy

During my MSW studies in the United States (1983-85, Hebrew Union College [HUC] and Washington University) and at a two-week community organizers' training course at Midwest Academy, I was introduced to a model for organizing for social change in conservative times,:"Majority Strategy" (Bobo, Kendall & Max, 2001). I used the model a number of times while organizing with various excluded and marginalized communities, such as the Bedouin and Ethiopian Jews. The model calls for building inclusive community coalitions with a wide community base and a variety of members: victims of social problems, community activists, public leaders, unions, advocacy organizations, politicians, students and professors. Such coalitions are based on cooperation between members and agreed mutual goals and may be active with differing intensities of involvement on an ad hoc or ongoing basis. In my PhD dissertation I focused on issues related to the successful operation of such coalitions and concluded that social workers have an important role, an obligation and the requisite knowledge base to construct and operate social change community coalitions (Kaufman, 2001). I thought this strategy could be suitable for organizing for social justice in HE settings and, reflecting back on 10 years of activity, I still consider it very effective.

Mobilizing for the Right for Food Security

Following the success of the Forum, I felt we had the infrastructure and ability to proceed to more pro-active social change activities. In 2001 I suggested to the Forum activists that we direct our efforts at promoting policy changes vis a vis the new social problem for which the government refused to take responsibility, namely, food insecurity and hunger. I thought this problem was suitable for our engagement and that there was a clear need for our intervention. Moreover, I knew that both the University and the community would legitimize our activities, even if we confronted the government about the scope of this problem and the government's lack of action. On the local community level, a major source of legitimacy was the soup kitchen founded by Department faculty and students in collaboration with BGU and community service agencies. The first of its kind in the Negev region, the soup kitchen was highly regarded by the community because it provided a much-needed service. It also provided an opportunity for interested students and faculty members to study the problem of hunger, which had not been studied before in Israel.

A review of the literature on strategies to fight hunger in the U.S. and other Western countries (Poppendieck, 1997) led us to realize that voluntary activity could provide only a partial and very limited solution. It became

obvious that the government, and not society, should take responsibility for this social problem. The question was how to "force" the government to define food insecurity as a social problem, formulate policies and allocate funds to deal with it. Based on the American experience (Eisinger, 1998), it became clear to me that the first step should be to show that the problem could be measured, since measurement was likely to transform the public and professional discourse from "feeding the hungry" to assessing how widespread the problem was, and determining the populations at risk that required special programs and services. I hoped that once "scientific" data on the scale of the problem were publicly presented, the government would stop treating food insecurity in Israel as a minor, episodic problem that could be handled by volunteers. We also hoped that after our findings were made available to them, community organizations and leaders would be encouraged to add the right to food security to their agendas and demand governmental responsibility and appropriate programs.

Our initial step was a community action study; For the first time in Israel, we surveyed clients of social services with the Food Security Core Survey Module, an instrument widely used to measure food insecurity and hunger (Holben, 2002). The development and application of the questionnaire was a Department project; faculty and students in research courses participated in developing the questionnaire and in the data analysis, and about 100 students collected the data. The students surveyed 953 clients of 23 social services in 11 localities in the Negev, including cities, small towns, and Bedouin settlements.

The findings showed that only 28% of households surveyed enjoyed food security, and that 50% of the children were at risk for food insecurity. These findings had tremendous repercussions: they garnered abundant media attention, even making front-page headlines in one of the national newspapers. I was invited to report our findings to professional agencies and political institutions. But I knew that only massive community pressure would lead to policy change. An immediate effect of our survey was the 2003 national food security survey undertaken by a government-sponsored research institute, which revealed that 22% of households nationwide were food-insecure, a rate twice as high as that of the U.S. at the time (Kaufman & Slonim-Nevo, 2004).

In a Forum-sponsored community conference held to present the findings, the conference participants decided to campaign for the right to food security. Using my personal connections with social change organizations, I convinced the leaders of two major national social change organizations, "Yedid" (the Association for Community Empowerment in Israel) and "Shatil" (the Empowerment and Training Center for Social Change Organizations), to collaborate with us in this campaign. The coalition that was formed included the Forum, these social change organizations, school activists, and politicians. We decided to focus on children's food security, assessed as meaningful for many in the community, widely felt, and potentially "winnable." The coalition designed and launched a public campaign for a universal food program in schools, including a national petition campaign and two community action studies. One survey was conducted in 15 schools in the Negev and provided the first available data on the scale of food insecurity among children in Israel, with one-third of the respondents reporting food insecurity. The second survey was carried out among 250 professionals (social workers, health professionals, and teachers) and found that the vast majority of these professionals encountered food insecurity or hunger among children they met and that almost all of them were in favor of a national and universal food program for children. Following a community conference in which the findings were presented, parents, teachers and other professionals joined the campaign; a majority coalition was formed. What followed was intensive lobbying activity in the Knesset, including a conference in which Forum activists presented the survey findings. Hundreds of students participated in the research work and the petition campaign, in which tens of thousands of signatures were collected. Students and parents also initiated

several protest and media events which assured the campaign ongoing media coverage. These activities led to the formulation of the School Hot Lunch Bill, drafted by two Knesset members, Yuli Tamir (Labor–opposition) and Eti Livni (Shinui–coalition). The School Hot Lunch Act was passed in 2005 and the national program went into operation in 2006. The following summary by a student who had been active in the campaign for three years demonstrates what he learned: *"I learned about the power of academia, and as a student, about my ability to promote solutions to social problems, mainly by investigating the problems before starting the process. I learned how to identify community stakeholders and how to mobilize them to promote social change."*

The Establishment of the Center for Food Security

The euphoria that I and other activists in the Forum felt in the wake of the Hot Lunch legislation vanished in 2007, when accumulating reports from parents and professionals revealed how problematic program implementation was proving to be. Mediocre drafting of the bill itself, coupled with inept implementation, led to the failure to supply meals to tens of thousands of children included in the program, and to the total exclusion from the program of hundreds of thousands of children, among them all the children living in Jerusalem, one of the poorest cities in Israel. I realized that in order to ensure food security it was not sufficient to assume the role of a mere catalyst.

When I teach and write about community intervention in social problems, I emphasize that achieving a new welfare program is not the end of the road, and that the program must be continuously monitored. And that is precisely what we had to do in this case. To effectively monitor the Hot Lunch Program, we needed to organize the clients at the grass-roots level. Monitoring and organizing activities demand a formal organization, able to raise funds for paid staff to coordinate activities. Thus in 2007, we established the Israeli Center for Food Security (ICFS), a partnership between the Forum and Jewish and Bedouin community activists. Since its establishment, the ICFS office has been located at the Department, which also assists with administration. The budget for paid staff and advocacy activities is raised from progressive foundations. The ICFS functions as a training center; each year ten students carry out their field work in the context of its projects, and other students carry out research and policy projects for various courses. In addition to organizing and campaigning for reform in the School Hot Lunch Program, the ICFS lobbies with national and local authorities to take full responsibility for developing and implementing policies and projects to reduce and eliminate food insecurity. The lobbying is carried out by community action groups organized in four poor communities in the Negev, a Tel Aviv group, and groups in Haifa and in the Galilee. In cooperation with other organizations, the ICFS holds an annual alternative Passover meal as well as an annual march, near the Knesset, demanding reform of the Hot Lunch Program. More than 500 demonstrators from across the country, representing all sectors of the population, participated in the Passover meal in March 2010, including members of the Knesset, community activists, academics, and students. These events received extensive media coverage.

A recent ICFS achievement was its involvement in the food insecurity report prepared and published by the Ministry of Welfare. This was the first time the Israeli government officially related to the scale and severity of food insecurity and hunger in the country, thus exhibiting increasing responsibility for the problem. The authors of this report consulted ICFS experts and adopted many ICFS recommendations for government policies to minimize food insecurity, among them reform of the Hot Lunch Program.

Mobilizing for Equal Labor Rights for Non-Unionized Social Workers

In 2008, one year after the establishment of the ICFS, another social justice center was founded in the Department in partnership with the Forum and the Israeli Union of Social Workers (IUSW): the Israeli Social Workers' Labor Rights Organizing Center (ISWLROC).

This center is chaired jointly by me and by the elected IUSW chairperson, Itzick Perri. Its main goals are: (1) to promote the rights of non-unionized social workers and other welfare workers employed in the formerly governmental and now privatized welfare services by helping them negotiate, organize and unionize; (2) to educate all social work students in Israel on their labor rights and to teach them how to secure these rights; (3) to organize clients of privatized services to advocate for their rights; and (4) to oppose further privatization of additional welfare services by national and local authorities (Kaufman & Ehud, 2008). Like the ICFS, the ISWLROC has a paid staff (a graduate of BGU School of Social Work who carried out field work in the center) whose salary and expenses are paid for by the IUSW; the Department provides office space, student supervision, and administrative help. About ten students do their field training at the center every year and many others do their field research there (especially in community work and policy courses).

The ISWLROC's establishment was the result of a two-year educational campaign conducted by the Forum to promote the social work community's awareness of the plight of social workers in privatized services (most of whom graduated during the 2000s). Before we undertook activities on behalf of these workers, many of whom had been students in our own MSW program, their problem had not been on the agenda of any major social work organization and no programs promoting their labor rights existed (Kaufman & Ehud, 2008). The main goal of our activity was to activate both the social workers and the social work institutions to demand policy changes that would eliminate abusive practices.

We began with two surveys and community action studies, one among 400 workers employed in privatized welfare services and one among union leaders (150 elected social workers). The findings, which revealed large-scale abuse of labor rights, were presented in two public conferences at BGU which received considerable media attention. Interestingly, when I suggested at a Forum meeting that we intervene to promote the labor rights of social workers in privatized welfare services, several faculty members and students raised objections, claiming that, as a Forum, we should focus on problems of clients not those of social workers. Once the findings and testimonies concerning the difficult circumstances of this marginalized group of workers became public, all objections vanished.

After a large demonstration with the participation of hundreds of students and "privatized" social workers wearing masks (to demonstrate the state of the unprotected workers), the union accepted my offer to establish a joint center to organize and promote the rights of social workers and their clients in privatized settings. Our activities increased the interest of students at BGU and at other schools of social work in labor organizing and stimulated them to join the union. Students connected to ISWLROC activities formed a national union of social work students, which played an important role in a recent national strike of social workers.

Our activities in support of the labor rights of social workers inspired students and faculty from the Forum to initiate the organization of BGU cleaning staffers, who also suffer from employment abuse. As I write this article, the first strike of cleaning personnel is taking place in response to the refusal of the BGU administration and the employees' contractor to negotiate with the union representative. Tens of our students are active on a daily basis in mobilizing faculty and student backing as well as public support and resources to help the cleaning staff in this struggle.

Crossroads

In the ten years since we began the BGU social justice program, its goals have remained unchanged. We focused on promoting social justice in our own community (the University), in our professional community, and in Israeli society as a whole. We constructed activities to promote student participation and education toward the values and methods of community mobilization against the neglect of social problems. We also maintained our "majority strategy" and other action strategies and tactics. Significant changes have occurred in

the action structures we employ. At first, our activities were based on the Forum, an informal, ad hoc, voluntary structure; now they are based on two formal social justice centers partnering with community activists and the IUSW. Working with partners demands joint decision making, which sometimes makes it more difficult to design activities that meet the needs of students. The formalization of activities intensifies the internal tensions that are embedded in every social change organization. The need to raise money every year for staff salaries demands from me, as chair, a considerable investment in time.

Because the centers train students, we are constantly involved in searching for qualified field supervisors. Paradoxically, the centers' successful campaigns raised reservations concerning the legitimacy of our community engagement, reservations voiced by some of the target institutions against whom we campaign, by community organizations in competition with us for funding resources, by BGU's new administration, which is more conservative than the previous one, and by other groups. Following a student strike against our Department's field training system, questions regarding the program's contribution to the Department were raised by new faculty members who had not participated in the development of our social justice activity. Recently I also discovered that formalization makes it harder to mobilize students on a voluntary basis, perhaps because they do not have the same sense of ownership as the students who were active in the Forum.

I feel that the program has reached a crossroads and decisions need to be made regarding the future format and nature of our social justice activities. We have developed a useful and effective model for HE community engagement for social change and for promoting interest and ability in community activism on the part of social work students. But I am not certain which action system is more suitable: the informal model of the Forum, or the formal model of the centers.

The advantages of the Forum's informal model are that it demands little organizational investment and enables ad hoc mobilization. This model can support the role of community change catalyst, which is instrumental to community action aimed at achieving specific goals. The disadvantages of this model include its limited ability to influence issues that demand more structured and ongoing activities. Furthermore, the Forum's informal structure enables only informal student instruction in the art of social change, while the centers facilitate the training of professional community organizers for social change. Another advantage of the formal center model is the ability to achieve long-term goals, such as building strong community coalitions and community groups and maintaining ongoing educational and advocacy campaigns. The disadvantages of the centers are the substantial maintenance costs which limit their action ability. I discovered, not for the first time, that as a social entrepreneur, I personally derive more satisfaction from the innovative rather than the maintenance phase of social change activity. Different characteristics and personality traits are needed to best practice each of the phases of the social change process. Following this reflection and analysis, I concluded that the nature of future social justice activity should be discussed and decisions need to be taken by all stakeholders: Forum students and faculty activists, the directors and student supervisors of the centers, our community partners and activists, union leaders, and the graduate of BGU School of Social Work who volunteered and led the Forum over the years. Can we create a hybrid model? Or do we need to move in one direction only and let others take the lead in the one left behind?

My main goal in writing this reflection was to encourage HE community engagement for social justice. Such activity is sorely needed in the present anti-social services era. Two paths for the promotion of social justice lie before scholars who are also activists: they can either teach social justice values, theories, and methods in class and practice their activism in non-academic social change organizations, or they can integrate teaching, research and activism. I hope that my experience highlights some of the processes, dilemmas and benefits of an integrated approach.

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The Work of a Lifetime: One Man's View of Social Welfare in Israel, Past and Present

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Meeting common human needs is a nation's obligation to its citizens. But ways to meet those needs are often debated from diverse ideological visions. Such was the case of Israel in its emergence to statehood. The work ethic was elevated to a value of the highest order and thus, assistance to the indigent was disapproved. From the author's perspective, this approach countered the principles of Jewish ethics, embedded in the writings of the prophets and the Talmud. In time however, progressive social welfare policies were introduced in Israel, as reflected in universal services. Mass immigration, severe economic strains, and health concerns justified the need for these services. In addition, social work practice was given legitimacy in the creation of university and four year college programs to train cadres of social workers. Today these social workers are making inroads in helping a variety of client populations in urban and rural areas.

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever." Isaiah 17:17

Altruism is the basis of my interest in helping others. I recall a cold October morning in Munich, Germany. It was 1939 and I was five years old. My mother had just taken me and my brother to school, but lingered at the school entrance, reluctant to leave. She told us that she would be traveling and could not meet us after school. Our neighbor would do so. This was the beginning of a drama that has remained in my memory until today.

Nazi Germany was on the march as my parents struggled to find a safe haven for our family. My mother had made temporary arrangements for my brother and me to reside in a local facility for Jewish children, which was comparable to a modern community center. Until today I recall the loneliness and yearning for my parents' return. My grandparents were sent to work camps, thus my closeness to them had also been severed. It was some months later that my brother and I were notified of our imminent departure to Holland. I recall traveling to our destination together with German soldiers, the latter unaware of our identities. At frequent train stops, women in white from local communities provided food and drinks. They assured us that someone would be waiting for us at our destination. It was only later that we were informed that our trip to safety was made possible by a volunteer group smuggling children out of Europe. Arriving in the Netherlands, we were provided temporary housing with the understanding that we would be leaving in a few days for the United States.

Although sixty years have passed, I still recall the loneliness and abandonment that permeated my very being. To this day these feelings often emerge and I share them with my classes when topics of development and trauma are discussed. Self-disclosure, when appropriate, has enriched my discussions with students.

The acts of altruism during this time appeared never-ending. On the long journey from Holland to America we were accompanied by an unidentified young couple. They taught us a few rudimentary words in English and provided the security and protection that was vital to our journey. As we drew closer to the shores of New York and saw the Statue of Liberty in the distance, an assembly of flags was hoisted on the bridges above our boat. One of the ship's crew commented, "They have come to welcome you." Hours later I was to learn that the flags were hoisted to commemorate George Washington's birthday. But the joy of arrival was in no way diminished.

Upon arrival we were met by my father. My mother was nowhere to be seen. Father

subsequently related that he had received a telegram from Munich that only one of us would be arriving. For my mother the news that she would be unable to welcome both of her children was devastating. Many years later I learned the fate of our young Jewish classmates from the community center. On a recent trip to Munich I discovered documents revealing that of the two hundred children in our residence, only four had survived. They did not have the good fortune to be saved and their memories are forever with me.

The Historical Perspective

Israel is a young country. It is only sixty three years old. In my college days I occasionally visited Israel and decided I wanted to join in the excitement of a pioneering society. After graduating from the City College of New York (today the City University of New York), I decided to pursue my social work studies at the New York School, Columbia University.

It was in graduate school that I made my career choice. I was influenced by Mitch Ginsberg, the dean, who was subsequently appointed commissioner of Social Welfare of the city of New York. My field placements in Manhattan focused on immigrant groups from an array of countries, an experience that would enhance my practice in Israel. After completing my doctoral studies in social work at Yeshiva University, I joined Bar-Ilan University in Israel. My interest at the time was in the areas of social policy and immigration studies. I felt it important to research the ideology of the welfare period prior to the state's independence in 1948, as I believed its early roots influenced its future directions, institutions and policies. These historical developments had hitherto been given limited attention by social work scholars and planners.

Jewish life is predicated on the idea of pursuing "deeds of loving-kindness," that is, kind acts performed for the sake of our fellow man. This is seen as more virtuous than charity because it includes the giving of our personal selves through acts such as comforting the bereaved, visiting the sick and supporting those in need. These have become universal values. In pre-state Israel (the Yishuv), it was the charitable necessities that emerged as vital to the survival of the small Jewish community in Palestine. In pre-state Palestine, many Jews devoted their daily lives to the study of the Torah and Holy Scriptures. These Jews were supported financially by their brethren abroad, known as *halukah*, meaning literally, "distribution." The latter had its origins in the religious community of the sixteenth century, and symbolized the financial support for the Jews of Palestine by their brethren in the Diaspora. Its philosophy was based on religious motives. Through financial support for one's fellow, a mutuality of interests is served. The provider fulfils his or her charitable obligations and the receiver is expected to devote his time to religious study.

Religious motivation, however, was not the only reason for establishing mutual aid. Economic reality prompted this support. For example, the small community of 20,000 Jews in the main cities of Jerusalem and Safed were unskilled. The rate of employment was high and motivation for work was not a value of the highest order. *Halukah* thus became a necessity and means for survival. This arrangement of mutual aid took a dramatic turn in the latter part of the nineteenth century: the work ethic was to become the value of highest order.

The Work Ethic: Central to the Ideology of Statehood

Immigration began to accelerate at the turn of the twentieth century in the pre-state. A number of factors contributed to this mass immigration, referred to as the Second Aliya (literally, "ascent"): the pogroms in Eastern Europe, the rise of political Zionism under Theodor Herzl and the realization that freedom and independence can best be achieved in a land of one's own. Members of the Second Aliya advocated the idea of *kibbush ha'avoda*, (conquest through labor). The pioneer's was to settle the land, cultivate its fields and be prepared to carry out his and her chores, however arduous and dangerous.

The most difficult challenge facing the immigrant was to "conquer" himself or herself. It became a matter of principle that only those

who lived by their own toil could join this "new and enlightened society." Members were to learn self-discipline and self-sacrifice through physical work. Both men and women would be expected to work the land, which had been largely unpopulated for centuries. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, noted that "not through money and not through benefits but through our work will [we] earn our country" (Ben Gurion, 1927)

A.D. Gordon, an influential leader of the pioneering movement, echoed a similar theme, speaking of work in terms of a modern religion. A secular mystic born in Russia, Gordon arrived in Palestine in 1904. He was committed to the ideal that the spiritual redemption of the Jew could only emerge through physical labor. He urged his brethren to abandon their non productive activities abroad and "free themselves" through tilling the soil.

The ideology expounded by early labor leaders had a profound impact on Israeli society in general and social welfare policies in particular. A central idea of this ideology was a society based on physical labor, non exploitation and equality for all. Immigrants who did not subscribe to the ideology of the new frontier or lacked the physical will, would find themselves in a minority. The following section elaborates on the historical consequences of this ideology.

Work, Philanthropy and Welfare Assistance

As the work ethic was elevated to a spiritual level, old forms of charity and philanthropy were abandoned. The new work ethic became so firmly entrenched that it affected the practice of mutual aid and philanthropy, traditions of long standing in the Jewish community. Furthermore, the antagonism toward philanthropy subsequently affected other forms of assistance. The new society rejected help to the needy, even when they faced the most difficult conditions. For example, the world economic crisis of the 1920s also affected life in Palestine. Between 1925 and 1927 unemployment took its toll. In a work force estimated at 26,000 people, about 35 percent were without jobs. In Tel Aviv the proportion was higher, with approximately 50% of the work force unemployed. When Ben-Gurion was confronted by hundreds of people crying, "Give us bread," he responded: "I do not have bread, but I do have a vision" (Ben Gurion, 1927). His vision was to harness all possible resources for a united effort toward productivity.

Although any form of assistance related to unemployment was denied, other welfare services were rendered to members of the ruling labor establishment. Outstanding among these were health services, assistance to orphans and the widowed, support for the elderly and help for the disabled. It might appear contradictory that the very movement which so vehemently opposed any form of aid should inaugurate such services, but there was a rationale for the assistance programs. First assistance was based on the principle of mutual aid, with the more fortunate assisting their fellow members in time of need. It was selective, however, offering assistance only to members of the Histadrut, the recognized labor union. Second, benefits accrued only after insurance payments were made. Third, and perhaps most significant, all services were linked to a fund for the creation of work projects. The ultimate goal was to return as many people to the work force as possible. As a consequence, the principle of work and productivity dominated welfare programs. With opposition to assistance so firmly established by leaders of the future state, it is not surprising that unemployment assistance was not instituted until two decades after the creation of the State of Israel.

With continued immigration to the pre-state, it was vital that basic social services be available to all. This effort was vitalized when a striking personality from America reached the shores of Palestine. Her name was Henrietta Szold, a charismatic and influential woman who was able to reach out to those facing hardship in the Yishuv. In 1931, the Department of Social Services was established and placed under Szold's direction. From the outset, its activities were defined and the client population identified. The local bureaus were called upon, not only to devise and dispense constructive relief, but to be pension master to the old, the blind, the maimed, the paralyzed,

the chronically sick, that is, all those who could not be trained to perform the lightest form of productive work (Szold, 1932).

Over the short period of two decades, Israel's welfare policies emerged in meeting the needs outlined by Szold. Indeed, Israel's welfare policies appeared to be progressive in introducing a national insurance bill. The first draft was drawn up in November 1947, a year prior to the founding of the state. Five years later the national insurance bill was introduced in Israel's Knesset(parliament) and, in time, was passed. This included the establishment of six insurance branches covering a broad spectrum of human needs, including: maternity allowance, insurance for industrial injuries, payments for the aged, widows and orphans, unemployment and children's allowances and health services.

As I look back on this history, I have a number of reflections. First, ideological principles and helping others are not limited to a specific society. Although I have described the Israeli scene, there are countries, specifically the United States, whose views have their own ideological roots. In my class discussions with students, we refer to the Protestant work ethic as a religious dictum. The classic approach of Weber points to this view:

> *"The pioneers of the modern economic order elbowed their way to success in the teeth of the established aristocracy of land and commerce...What is significant is not the strength of the motive of economic self interest...it is the change of moral standards which converted a natural frailty in to an ornament of the spirit...Labor is not merely an economic means, it is a spiritual end"* (Tawney quoted in Weber, 1958, pp.2-3).

Inevitability, my students, when placing their views in context, would quote from religious sources. One student commented: "Simon the Just...used to say: on three things the world stands—on the Torah, the temple service and on deeds of loving-kindness. And the latter is more valued than the giving of charity (*tzedaka*). The latter is performed with property where loving-kindness includes our possessions and personal selves."

Historically, the work ethic also influenced the nature of health services, which for years was reserved for members of labor unions. With the establishment of Israeli health services, universal programs were introduced. Students attending my courses on policy were inclined to support the latter. They likewise lauded the virtues of Great Britain's health care system, which was open to all, regardless of economic class. With critical thinking in mind, I introduced my view, which was molded by growing up in America. The students could not accept, however, that citizens of the richest country in the world had limited access to health care. I suggested to them that selective, rather than universal, social services have benefits. Although selective programs serve fewer people, they may provide more in-depth care, and more carefully executed research. My students were not convinced. They were, however, more convinced when I described my recent doctor's visit. After a brief greeting, my doctor asked me what hurt, looked at his computer, suggested I take some pills. That concluded my visit. In less than five minutes, I was out. I asked my doctor humorously, "Why the hurry?" and he responded with a kind smile: "Well, today my limit is four minutes per patient." This anecdote reflects the pressure on the health system and demands placed upon physicians under a universal program.

A number of contemporary themes cut across borders and societies where health care emerges as central. The focus today is on cost, caregiving, longevity, and dealing with patients who suffer from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. Increasingly, social workers discuss the challenges facing such families and consider helping models with a particular focus on the "fourth age" (80 and beyond), extending theoretical formulations on the life cycle and quality of life.

Immigration and the Challenge of Diversity

Israel, as a land of immigrants, comprises a vast kaleidoscope of cultures. This is best reflected in a senior seminar course that I teach. Although the majority of students were born in Israel, their parents emigrated from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Morocco, Romania and the United States. Two Arab students round out the range of backgrounds. The school of social work, which is comprised of some 500 undergraduates, also includes students from India and South America. The topics chosen for their seminar papers reflect their interests and the challenges that new immigrants face. My student from Romania is researching her grandparents' experience upon arriving in this country in the mid-fifties and their move to one of the country's transit camps, which was their first step to permanent housing. She is collecting information about this transition and the complexities of living in such a setting. She is examining the ecological implication of living in what turned out to be a "tent city." It took the state of Israel a long time to complete permanent housing because of the country's limited resources. This student is currently interviewing her grandmother, who is now in her eighties. Migration as crises and trauma will likely be the theme for her final paper.

Trauma was also of interest to my Ethiopian student. She recalled her parents' trek from Ethiopia via the Sudan desert. Although she was only ten at the time, the events are still very much with her. Her family had escaped prior to the mass exodus of Ethiopian Jewry two decades ago, which took place in May 1990 when 14,000 Jews were airlifted to Israel via the Sudan in a dramatic 34-hour journey Code-named Operation Solomon, it was a touching and historical event. Biblical sources write of the origins of Ethiopian Jews in the south west of Arabia and their relationship to the Queen of Sheba. Tradition relates that the latter was married to King Solomon and folklore suggests the Ethiopians were from one of ten "lost tribes" of Israel. They were ecstatic on their arrival, kissing the ground inhomage to Zion—a name often applied to the land of Israel. In time, this enthusiasm was tempered as questions arose about their Jewish origins. Fortunately, these issues were resolved when a number of rabbinical scholars unequivocally authenticated their Jewish origins.

My Ethiopian student enabled me to explore the importance of indigenous culture, a focus that can enrich practice .In her studies, my Ethiopian student explored the ancient Ethiopian concept of the "Zar" spirits. In Ethiopia, there are those who believe that physical symptoms are caused by named spirits which take possession of the person. The person is engulfed by the spirits and daily functioning becomes unbearable. Mental health practitioners will recognize this as disassociation, a consequence of post-traumatic stress disorder. Within the Jewish Ethiopian context, treatment is given by a senior cleric who uses his knowledge of the Zar to exorcize the spirit.

On one occasion I traveled with my student to Jerusalem and met with a leading Ethiopian rabbi to inquire about the Zar spirits. He noted that the phenomena of the Zar is mentioned in Talmudic literature. The term *shaydim,* demons, is common usage and widely documented in the many tracts of ancient Jewish literature. The Kessoq, the Ethiopian religious leaders, have always been viewed as the wise counselors of the community, and it was their spiritual insight that facilitated the treatment process. Indigenous community counselors were also involved in mental health support. A *shimagille*, an elderly guide and "wise person," was consulted when family issues arose. Fortunately, with modern technology, we were able to view how the Zar is exorcized. One of our students was able to access a video tape, which graphically showed a young woman being freed of her Zar demon. The video illustrated the intense involvement by the patient, as emotional catharsis is very explicit when the demon is freed.

Another issue related to immigration involves language. One of the students, a Russian immigrant, spoke of her responsibilities to her family in becoming the interpreter for all matters relating to their welfare. After two years in the country, she spoke Hebrew fluently. Her parents did not. This presented a

problem regarding access to services, such as those relating to health services and immigrant rights. We explored the options for her in seeking assistance. As a social work student, she was encouraged to contact the many services for immigrants. We suggested that her parents join an ulpan (intensive Hebrew-language institute) to learn the language, explore the rich support services in her community, search the Internet for a host of services open to the public and sign up for the subsidized bus services in order to do the shopping. While these issues were primarily about access to services, a yet more formidable challenge was taken up in class discussion.

Some class members decided to focus their seminar papers on language and identity. A recently married young student spoke of her difficulty in addressing her two-year-old daughter. Her husband was a recent immigrant from Spain and he wanted to preserve his primary language. They both agreed on the duality of language. I moved the discussion to the importance of valuing one's mother tongue for development of the core and subjective self which is integrally related to identity. There are times in the classroom situation when I share with students my own quandary about language. My seminar classes are conducted in Hebrew, although I think in English. In clarifying a complex idea, I move into my mother tongue where I feel confident. But then my students may be more confused. I often wonder how my students cope with their mindset in Russian, Arabic, Amharic (Ethiopian) and French.

Language also brings us back to our early memories of our country of origin. A class illustration most recently brought this home to my students. I mentioned reading a review of a book about the Nobel Prize winner Joseph Brodsky. In his native Russia, at the age of twenty-four, he was imprisoned for subversive activities and was confined to a mental hospital. Later he emigrated to the United States. Literature and poetry brought him fame in America, but his yearning for his homeland never ceased. In spite of his anguish over his imprisonment, the affection for his homeland never ceased. Language was one of the key elements of his nostalgia and yearning.

From Voluntarism to Professional Education

A number of years ago I discovered a letter by Henrietta Szold (an early pioneer in developing health and social services in Israel) in one of the archives in Jerusalem. She had taken on the directorship of the social welfare offices dealing with the Jewish community. One of the issues raised in the letter was how to upgrade knowledge for volunteers in the social services. She was debating whether to establish seminars for social work practice or let altruism take its course. She argued that Jewish tradition had as its central mission caring for the destitute and indigent. Why not continue with this ancient tradition and pursue these normative practice principles? Her decision to introduce courses was the outcome of mass immigration and the hardships facing pioneers. In the early 1930s she established the Department of Social Services. Three years after its creation, nearly 12% of the population was being helped by local welfare bureaus.

With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 social work began to gain increasing recognition as a profession. In Israel today one can find volunteers, paraprofessionals and professionals working with a wide range of client groups in human service settings. These include social welfare bureaus, mental health centers, informal settings for early childhood education, community centers, homes and centers for the aged, correctional institutions, rehabilitation centers, counseling and family service agencies. As an outgrowth of these services, a framework for increasing knowledge and accountability through university education was created.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was established in 1955 and schools were opened in other major cities including Tel Aviv, Haifa and Beer Sheba in the Negev. Today five major schools of social work offer programs in a variety of fields of concentration, which include B.A., M.S.W. and Ph.D. offerings in clinical, policy and community work.

When I arrived at Bar-Ilan University in the early Sixties, the student population numbered less than a thousand. Social work was not part of the university curriculum. The school was subsequently established in 1967 and was integrated into the faculty of Social Science. The growth of the school and the university reflects the growth of higher education in Israel. The school of social work numbers about 600 today and the total student population has reached approximately 40,000. In the past decade new challenges have emerged which relate to the cutting edge of social work education. These challenges have also prompted my own involvement in the process which I discuss in the following section.

New Horizons

While I was on sabbatical at Rutgers University in New Jersey about ten years ago, a colleague inquired whether I would teach a course in policy on my return to Israel. A new social work program was planned for one of our southern cities an hour from our main campus in the city of Ashkelon near the Mediterranean. The offer intrigued me because the program was new, and a number of challenges prompted my positive response. Because the city was known as a hub of immigrants with newcomers from the Soviet Union, Ethiopia and North Africa, it was an opportunity to meet and become familiar with these cultures. In addition, I learned that Ashkelon has a large percentage of elderly, the third highest in the country. I was curious about the social agencies and services they provided and how they coped with the population of the "fourth age." Were the day centers, health services, homes for the aging and access services similar to those in other urban areas of Israel? It was an opportunity to engage in research with this emerging population.

My curiosity also focused on the pioneering work of a new social work program. With a class of only fifteen students our venture progressed modestly. The students I met were from diverse cultural backgrounds ranging from North Africa to women from the Bedouin rural community. The curriculum was very much Western in orientation, much like the traditional university framework. The program centered on field experience which was based on individual supervision covering a three-year period. The student engaged with client populations focusing on the needs of individual, family and community. The importance of the client's indigenous culture, and populations with specific needs, were stressed. A number of illustrations follow.

We found that Russian families had limited experience of the roles and functions of social service agencies and service providers. This should not be surprising because the social welfare structure in the former Soviet Union was unlike that of Western social services. Within the Ethiopian community one has to be sensitive to the very nature of time which is viewed differently than in the West. The counseling sessions have to be arranged with much flexibility, and the 'therapeutic hour" as we know it and which is common in mental health centers is not the norm in Ethiopian society. It is not unusual to spend two to three hours with clients until the objectives of the session have been achieved. In addition, it is important to encourage proactive responses from clients, and the expression of feelings toward the worker. Giving legitimacy to these actions is vital since it may conflict with the "code of honor" of their culture. This code is very clear about showing respect and honor for the elder and the "one who has wisdom." I feel with sound supervision the duality of honoring and empowering clients can be achieved.

As I write this a decade later, there have been significant changes in social work education and practice. There has been a growing interest in the profession and opportunities for students who live outside city centers. In the past decade, a host of new social work programs have been opened in rural settings. These include the city of Safed in the northern Galilee, and the city of Ashkelon (where I currently teach and serve as Dean). In all, there are five schools which serve communities countrywide.

In order to appreciate these developments, I reflect on my own Social Work Program at Ashkelon College in southern Israel, which

commenced twelve years ago. There were a number of factors which led to our development. With the influx of immigrants to the south, the need for qualified social workers took on urgency. Immigrant groups called for greater representation of their community in the helping services. In addition, the professional services stressed the importance of training in fields of practice where shortages existed. Specifically, these population groups included the elderly and children's services. A particularly important development was the call for the skills of school social workers to engage teachers and parents to increase children's welfare.

Over the years many social services hired paraprofessionals to meet the increasing needs of their clients. It was now important to move them along professionally in order to enrich their knowledge and practice competence. In addition, the School of Social Work at Ashkelon College has established a retraining program of graduates in all disciplines who seek a major in social work.

Expanding educational institutions to rural populations has always been the policy of the Israeli government, but it has not always been vigorous in meeting these goals. However, I have found students who are now pursuing higher education with enthusiasm. Many students have not had opportunities in studying at university centers because of steep entry requirements and economic demands. It is the former, the issue of admissions, that has preoccupied me in the last few years. I have always felt that students who did not do well in high school and failed to meet our admission requirements should still be given opportunities for further education. Thus, life experience of our applicants should warrant serious consideration for entry. One case in point was a candidate who had spent two years in a small town near Israel's border. In her role as support staff in the local school she had to deal with children's trauma in light of continuous missile fire. Her resilience to these challenges matured her and her motivation to help others led her to social work as a career.

A rather touching response from one candidate who was accepted into our program occurred at the conclusion of our opening assembly. When faculty and students returned to their classes, she commented that this was her first exposure to academic life. She loved being with other students: the atmosphere, the library, access to computers. Growing up in a small village, this was all new to her and she felt privileged to be with us. When I met her the following year, she mentioned that her grades were above average and her interest was in community development. I was delighted.

Many meetings within the school and college are spent discussing the virtues of formal academic standards. I tend to take a liberal view, particularly toward students with life experience and those who display a genuine interest in helping others.

Three- and four-year colleges in rural communities are now designing curricula for graduate programs. At Ashkelon College, I hope to see our first entering class of social work graduate students in the fall of 2013. The focus of study will be on fields of practice including aging populations and children. Both tracks are likely to be over-subscribed because entering students, many of whom are practitioners, are seeking new knowledge in meeting common human needs.

The Next Decade

Predicting the future in times of uncertainty is perilous. Recently I received an invitation to attend the annual meeting of an Israeli social work group to discuss social work professional trends over the next decade. What follows are some of my reflections on this topic.

As I noted earlier, Israel has almost reached universal social services in meeting common human needs. An emerging concern is how to best advance the cost effectiveness of resources. For example, the proportion of aged, who now comprise ten percent of Israel's inhabitants, will increase significantly. The fourth age of eighty and beyond is expected to consume further resources of the country. No less important are the moral and ethical issues of how to advance the quality of life. There is increasing literature today that places the year 2045 (not quite 2021) as the period when man becomes immortal. I raised these issues in one of my seminars and asked

whether any of my students could imagine living eternally. One or two acknowledged they would like to experience life at age one hundred and twenty, viewed as a blessing in Jewish tradition, but not beyond that. Moving to the present, the emerging challenges of intergenerational responsibilities comprising five generations is very much a reality today. Family loyalties, care giving priorities, career choices, sharing cherished values of com passion and empathy bring further challenges for family members.

Immigration will continue to preoccupy policy makers and practitioners alike in the years to come. In this paper I discussed the Russian and Ethiopian populations. Immigrants continue to arrive, but in more limited numbers. In the past two years they have come from the Yemen, Tunisia, South America, and Great Britain. Multiculturalism is the focus of debate, and the issue of identity is one of its central features. Specifically, how can we integrate newcomers into Israeli society and yet retain the values of their indigenous cultures? How should we go about connecting them to the values of the Jewish state, the language, and its historic roots? And above all, how can we encourage established communities to welcome the newcomer with greater acceptance and tolerance?

I believe there will be further opportunities for students to study social work in rural communities in the years ahead. At this writing a number of undergraduate and graduate social work programs are awaiting accreditation. As I mentioned, Ashkelon College is in the process of completing its master's proposals. We anticipate that accreditation will be completed by Spring of 2013. In Israel, academic assessment procedures fall within the purview of the ministry of higher education and budget committees.

Trends in Israeli social work education have been influenced from abroad. We have been enriched by the cutting edge research, and expertise that has come from the United States. Three of our major schools have been established with the cooperation of leading social work educators from America. Much of our curricula followed the American model with the classic policy, research, social work methods, and fields of practice as the major curricular areas. In Israel there are efforts to focus on the unique and indigenous content relevant to the country's rich cultural influx. It is my hope that these efforts will increase in the years ahead. The overwhelming interest in clinical social work is now incrementally being balanced by community development and social policy concentrations. These tendencies can only strengthen social work knowledge and education in the next decade.

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Message to Social Work and Social Services Faculty:

With the new school semester starting, *Reflections* provides numerous opportunities as a teaching/learning resource. Whether for policy, program, or practice classes, adding *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* (a peer-reviewed publication) to your course bibliography is an excellent addition to your syllabi. A number of these narratives relate to student-faculty relationships and mutual learning. For examples of this use in child welfare, social welfare, and social policy advocacy courses, please contact: epasztor@csulb.edu.

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REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping (ISSN 1080-0220) is published quarterly by the University Print Shop at California State University, Long Beach under the auspices of the School of Social Work. Annual Subscription Rate: individuals, $40.00; libraries and institutions, $65.00; outside USA, add $15.00. Single copies: $10.00. Payment: check, money order, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard, please include number and expiration date). Please send to **REFLECTIONS: CSULB School of Social Work; 1250 Bellflower Blvd., SSPA 161; Long Beach, CA 90840-4602.** We remind subscribers to please immediately notify *Reflections* of address changes, providing both new and old addresses. Please allow six weeks for address changes to take effect.

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