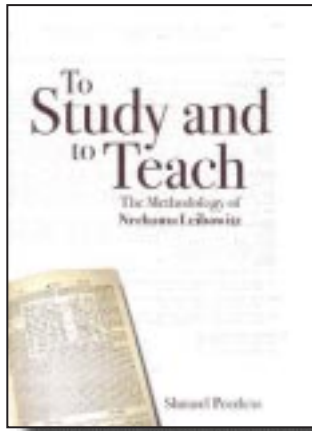


To Study and to Teach: The Methodology of Nechama Leibowitz

By Shmuel Peerless



The Lookstein Center and Urim Publications
Jerusalem, 2004
183 pages

Reviewed by Mordechai Spiegelman

Nechama Leibowitz was a teacher of Torah for over seventy years. Her thousands of students can now treat themselves to a familiar, pleasurable experience by reading the recently published volume by Rabbi Shmuel Peerless, a perceptive and diligent former student of Nechama. For those who have no previous exposure to Nechama's study sheets (*gilyonot*), this book will be an eye opener. In this

Rabbi Spiegelman, a resident of Jerusalem, previously served in the United States as a congregational rabbi, yeshiva principal and director of the Department of Yeshivot at the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. He presently teaches a weekly Torah class at the Seymour J. Abrams Orthodox Union Jerusalem World Center.

user-friendly book, Rabbi Peerless introduces the reader to Nechama's classroom.

Rabbi Peerless points out that much of the material in the book was taken from courses that Nechama delivered between 1990 and 1992, under the auspices of the Jerusalem Fellows program. He also meticulously cites additional sources for each of the nine chapters that comprise this volume.

The book's title is most revealing; first and foremost in discussing Nechama's approach to Torah is "Study." Anyone seeking to study Torah *Shebichtav* (the Written Law) will find in this book an indispensable road map that will undoubtedly be constantly consulted by the serious student. How does the Torah student maneuver among the differing commentaries? What literary devices and nuances should the reader look for as an indicator of the Torah's direction and message? Chapters six and seven focus on these questions.

The second half of the book's title—"and to Teach"—refers to Nechama's methodology. How does the teacher convey the message? To Nechama it was axiomatic that the student be an active participant rather than a distant observer. Spoon-feeding students and rote learning were anathema to her. She was opposed to teachers asking mostly factual questions rather than analytical ones. She also discouraged frontal teaching and was displeased with students' emphasis on note taking. Nobody could sit in Nechama's classroom and simply relax.

The volume contains detailed model lessons for teaching the Torah's narrative sections with practical suggestions on how to involve every student. Thus the book serves not only as a guide and a prod for teachers but also as a

mirror wherein teachers can compare their methodology against Nechama's. Just as we accept the Talmudic teaching that "No two prophets prophesy in the same style" (*Sanhedrin* 89a), so do we take it for granted that each teacher has his or her unique teaching style. But all should agree that a successful Torah lesson entails having students internalize the lesson and emerge with a significant educational message. Although Nechama never allowed herself to become embroiled in public controversy, there is no doubt that this volume will pose a serious challenge to those teachers who emphasize memorizing commentaries and do not teach students to connect the commentary to the text.

Nobody could sit in Nechama's classroom and simply relax.

When it comes to tests, many (if not most) students believe that the more one writes, the better. In her study sheets, Nechama's incisive questions never required long answers. If you weren't able to answer the question in less than three sentences, you knew you had to rethink the answer. It should be interesting to see how parents react to the book as they compare Nechama's methods to those currently used to teach their children. There is no question that this work can be a vehicle for parental empowerment.

If Nechama's methodology is to be taken seriously by Torah educators, then all Tanach tests should be open-

book (where students have access to texts). This would ensure that test questions deal with *why* Rashi made a specific comment rather than *what* Rashi said. Successful preparation for such tests would not depend on memorizing a "good set of notes."

What Rav Soloveitchik did for Torah *Shebe'al Peh* (the Oral Law), Nechama did for Torah *Shebichtav* (the Written Law). She required that her students seek out the underlying insights contained in the Biblical text and commentaries through vigorous analysis, precise definitions and clear conceptualization.

From the book, it would appear that Nechama's approach is geared for high school students and beyond. In truth, Nechama's methodology is applicable to all ages. While the volume contains suggested activities for younger students, it might have been more helpful had Rabbi Peerless included some "Nechama stories" that illustrate her views on teaching elementary school children.

For example, here are a few such stories that I heard her tell: Once, while teaching *parashat Korach* to a class of elementary school children, Nechama called upon a student to read the verse in which Dan and Aviram defied Moshe's call to discuss their grievances (*Bamidbar* 16:12). The student read the verse in a lethargic manner. Nechama then asked the student to come to the front of the room and demonstrate how Dan and Aviram rejected Moshe's call. At that point the student energetically stamped his foot on the floor and shouted "*Lo na'aleh!*" "We will not go up!"

When Nechama was a young teacher, she taught Hebrew composition to elementary school students. She assigned the students to write on the topic of, "Who would you want to be if you could be somebody else?" Students chose various Jewish historical figures including King David and Rabbi Akiva. One student wrote that he would want to be the owner of a kiosk in the Sinai Desert at the time that Bnei Yisrael were encamped there.

"Imagine," he wrote, "how many cups of soda I could sell." Nechama was effusive in her praise of that student's Chumash teacher because the teacher had succeeded in making the Torah text come alive for this student.

Another story: Nechama was once carrying a bag of groceries. An eleven-year-old girl approached her and offered to carry the bag. Nechama accepted. As they walked, Nechama mentioned that the girl's help was truly an act of *chesed*. "It's a mitzvah in the Torah," replied the girl. "Where does the Torah teach that?" Nechama asked. The girl explained that in *parashat Mishpatim*

What Rav Soloveitchik did for Torah Shebe'al Peh, Nechama did for Torah Shebichtav.

it states that if a donkey is in trouble because its burden is too heavy, a passerby should help. How much more so if a human being is carrying a heavy package, one should help! Nechama pointed out that the student was able to apply the teaching about offering aid to animals to the realm of human beings. The student in this case had truly internalized the Torah lesson.

Indeed, Nechama was the paradigm of one who internalized the Torah. Some days before she passed away (5 Nisan 5757), she was hospitalized. Relatives present at her bedside realized that her life was ebbing away. At one point, a close friend and long-time student, Yitzchak Reiner, came to visit. He approached her bed and related that he was having difficulty understanding Rashi's commentary on the second verse of *parashat Pekudei*, which deals with a disagreement between Moshe and Betzalel

on how to build the sanctuary and its appurtenances. Suddenly, Nechama, who had been incoherent, became alert. She quoted, from memory, Rashi's comment in its entirety and then clarified the difference between Moshe and Betzalel in (typically) two short sentences! The patient in the next bed pulled back the curtain separating them and exclaimed, "I want to hear more of her explanations."

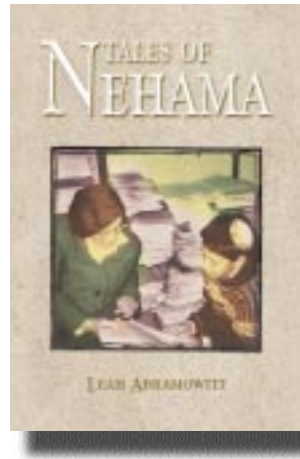
Throughout her long teaching career, Nechama made Torah come alive for her students. As she approached death, Torah breathed into her moments of lucidity and vitality. Until the end of her life she retained the cherished title that is the only epitaph on her tombstone: "Morah."

In his book, Rabbi Peerless expresses the hope that through examining Nechama's teaching methodology, readers will come to see her personality and character. Indeed the personality of a teacher plays an important role in the education process; one of the reasons Nechama was an effective teacher was because she used personal stories to help illustrate textual points.

One could easily picture Nechama in her honored place in the *Yeshiva Shel Ma'alah* (the Heavenly Academy) taking note of the publication of this book. She would probably have three reactions: First, she would thank her student: "Shmuel, *asita avodah tovah*" (You did a fine job!); second, she would express the hope that the book be translated into Hebrew, and third, she (with a slight frown) would say that the tribute to her at the end of the volume wasn't necessary. I imagine those who were privileged to be in Nechama's classroom disagreeing with the last comment. They would point out that future generations of students who study her *gilyonot* should also know who she was and what she meant to her students. To drive this point home, I imagine them quoting from Isaiah (30-20) "...your eyes shall see your teacher." Nechama would then slowly shake her head while displaying an indulgent smile. **JA**

Tales of Nehama: Impressions of the Life and Teaching of Nehama Leibowitz

By Leah Abramowitz



Gefen Publishing
Jerusalem, 2003
302 pages

Reviewed by Yaakov Kagan

Leah Abramowitz wrote *Tales of Nehama* “to describe Nehama’s outstanding personality and unique teaching skills.” She achieves this goal by interviewing nearly seventy of Nehama’s students, colleagues, neighbors and family members. She then arranges these impressions in chapters such as “Beginnings,” “Teacher” and “Qualities and Convictions.” This last chapter is further divided into topics, each a few pages long, such as “Simplicity,” “Self-deprecation,” “Relations with Brother,” “Modesty,” “Non-feminism,” “Zionist,” “Kindness,” “Scholarship” and “Piety.”

Abramowitz acknowledges her inability to evaluate Nehama’s scholarly contributions and leaves the task to the authors whose articles are reprinted in the appendices. While she presents chapters on Nehama’s publica-

Professor Kagan is a retired professor of education at Brooklyn College. He attended many of Nehama’s classes in Israel while on sabbatical in 1979 and during visits afterward.

tions and teachings, the treatment is anecdotal, rather than analytical or evaluative.

The book is an informal, qualitative study and, as such, highly readable, even hard to put down. Readers are not told what procedures the author used to select her interviewees or what questions were asked. An index of names (there are no indices at all) would have been helpful.

While Abramowitz is highly complimentary of Nehama, some balance is maintained. According to Jon Bloomberg, whose article appears in one of the appendices, Nehama was too extreme in her condemnation of the frontal lecture method. Earlier in the book, there is an account of Nehama giving a lecture on the evils of giving lectures. One student had the temerity to ask his teacher about this contradiction. Nehama ordinarily had a sharp and ready wit, but in this case, she just gave the student a dirty look.

Nehama was occasionally quite rough on her students. Dr. Rachel Salmon describes how, in her first class with Nehama, she, like every other student, was asked to read aloud. Not being a native Hebrew speaker, her pronunciation was poor. Nehama instructed her to leave and not return until she had read the entire Torah aloud to another student who had the same problem. When she was finally finished, Salmon was warmly welcomed back to class and, presumably as compensation for her ordeal, was never again asked to read aloud. Neither Abramowitz nor Salmon seem bothered by this approach, but certainly questions could be raised concerning undue harshness, failure to account for different backgrounds, et cetera. Apparently no permanent damage was done to Salmon, though she did feel “near despair about ever being able to learn properly.”

Some students were turned off by Nehama’s “harshness and demand for precision.” According to Dr. Barry Samson, Nehama became “less for-

bidding” as time went on. Frima Garfinkle reports that as a new student from Russia, she was treated with great warmth and understanding. From the many other accounts of students becoming interested in serious study, one can conclude that Nehama’s classroom management style, which occasionally employed “*zeroke morah betalmidim*” (a Talmudic expression regarding instilling fear in students), probably did much more good than harm. Her students discovered that Torah was not to be learned in a casual, nonchalant manner. Punctuality, preparedness and participation were *not* optional. Nehama’s job, as she saw it, was “*ledoresh elbono shel Torah*” (to protect the Torah’s honor).

In the chapter on teaching, one searches for the methodologies promised in the introduction but finds mainly adjectives such as “mesmerize,” “enthrall” and “magic.” Unfortunately, Abramowitz does not prod her interviewees for details. The reader is not told, for example, what Nehama’s “unique teaching skills” were or how they could possibly be acquired by men and women not possessed of extraordinary intellectual powers.

There are numerous references to Nehama’s “flair for using dramatics and stories” (she feigned horror at mistakes, gave heavy praise for correct answers). Nehama would walk into class and pose intriguing word riddles related to the text she was about to teach. According to the interviewees: “She hammed-it-up to get a point across.” “She used jokes and personal experiences.” “She was a terrific actress.” It is not surprising that Nehama’s drama remains fixed in many of her students’ memories. The reviewer begs permission to call Nehama’s occasional antics in the classroom *shtickim*, which is not to be confused with Nehama’s *trickim*, a term that she coined. The latter is also defined by both Professor Moshe Sokolow and Rabbi Shmuel Peerless in articles in the appendices.

Shtickim are the unusual acts performed *by the teacher* to draw attention to the topic of discussion. For example, exaggerated praise or feigned horror, dramatic storytelling, et cetera. *Trickim* are teaching methods designed to activate pupils. These include having students, for example, divide the text into a number of distinct meaningful sections; punctuate a given sentence differently according to various interpretations; find differences between two similar passages or between Rashi’s wording and that of his source, et cetera.

It would have been instructive to ask Nehama’s students who pursued careers in teaching how Nehama influenced

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highly readable,
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their teaching styles. Specifically, it would have been helpful to ask those students who use Nehama’s *gilyonot* (study sheets) in their own classrooms, including Abramowitz herself (who taught for a while), how these sheets could be used with youngsters of various ages and backgrounds.

Did these teachers ever try to imitate any of Nehama’s *trickim* or *shtickim*? How did Nehama mentor teachers? Did she encourage them to write their own worksheets and other teaching materials? In short, did she spawn any future Nehamas (or Nahmans)? There may be many more tales waiting to be told and collected, encouraged by Abramowitz’ splendid example.

What about Nehama’s inner life? Was she proud of her accomplishments and broad national recognition? Abramowitz does not go into these matters, perhaps out of respect to Nehama’s plea to her: “Write about what I teach, not about me.” We do learn from Professor Tamar Ross that Nehama

regarded family and motherhood as “the most worthwhile activities a woman could engage in.” We also learn that Nehama revealed her real fears to Torah scholar and psychologist Dr. Avigdor Bonchek. Personal details could not be provided, and Abramowitz does not speculate, knowing that Nehama would abhor being the subject of psychological inquiry.

Abramowitz learns from Nachum Amsel—who once cleaned Nehama’s books for Pesach—that, in addition to Torah commentaries, she had books on philosophy and grammar as well as novels and classics. There was no mention of any works on pedagogy or on the supervision of teachers. While “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence,” it seems unlikely that Nehama was familiar with the professional literature on education because, to the best of my knowledge, Nehama never referred to modern educational or psychological learning theory.

Regarding Nehama’s preparation for lessons, one of the interviewees states: “I suddenly realized, here was a woman who had taught this material for sixty years, and she still sat for three or four hours preparing for a forty-five minute *shiur*.” But Abramowitz should have probed further. For if the lesson in question was one Nehama had given before, and she had the relevant *gilyonot*, why should three or four hours of preparation be necessary?

Perhaps the time was spent looking over her students’ papers. Nehama would not teach without her handouts, otherwise she would be forced to lecture, and she feared this would make the more passive students lose interest. Her worksheets presented textual material and questions, which impelled the student to write answers. Nehama would walk around the room, looking over students’ shoulders to glance at the responses. Typically, the students would hand in the *gilyonot* at the end of the lesson. At the beginning of the next lesson, each student’s work-

sheet would be returned with detailed comments in Nehama’s legendary red-ink script; she never had an assistant mark her papers.

Abramowitz presents articles in the appendices without critical comment, even though there appear to be discrepancies in the various authors’ presentations. For example, Professor Sokolow sees Nehama’s main contribution in pedagogy: “Erudition has existed before and since, but the panoply of pedagogical devices which she invented or refined was uniquely, and characteristically, hers.” Jerry Tepperman, on the other hand, observes that most of Nehama’s writings were concerned with analyzing Torah texts rather than providing approaches to teaching them. Tepperman derives a theory of teaching, “a road map to Nehama’s methodology,” from her writings. He finds “no dramatic surprises” and presumably no pedagogical inventions. Tepperman cites a long quote from Nehama listing suggested activities for learners

“upon which—in their variety and number—the ultimate success of the lesson will depend.” These include some of the *trickim* cited above, such as quiet reading by individuals; reading the entire chapter and individual passages; interpretive classroom debate and reading selected *midrashim*, et cetera, “in order to open up the heart.” These may be sound pedagogical activities, but Tepperman seems right about not finding any dramatic surprises. Though Nehama refers to them as *trickim*, there doesn’t seem to be anything tricky about them.

Included in the appendices are several selections written by Nehama herself. One wonders why they were included in this book since they are presented without any comment and are readily available elsewhere.

Abramowitz mentions other aspects about Nehama including her genuine piety, kindness and love of the land of Israel and of the Hebrew language;

the anecdotes about Nehama giving freely of her meager possessions and precious time are astonishing. As Professor Meir Weiss states in the book, “She was a genius not only in *parshanut* but in *gemilut chassadim* (kindness).” Abramowitz implies that these personal qualities are evident in Nehama’s writings, by virtue of their emphasis on ethical concerns. Rabbi Yochanan Fried believes that there is a connection between Nehama’s simple way of life and her preference for the *peshat* (literal explanation). What seems to emerge from all these memories of Nehama is a self-possessed

Nehama regarded family and motherhood as “the most worthwhile activities a woman could engage in.”

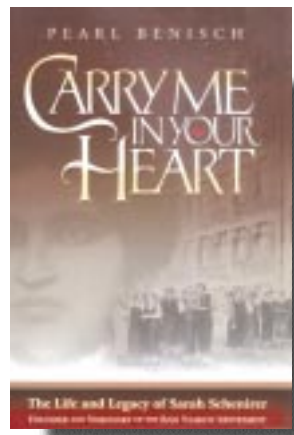
person, one who totally identified with her mission of teaching Torah to Klal Yisrael.

Has Abramowitz met her objectives? The mighty flow of anecdotes provides a marvelous montage of Nehama’s life and personality. The book succeeds on its own terms, allowing the interviewees to convey their impressions in their own words. The book would have been stronger had the authors in the appendices been given the opportunity to comment on one another’s work. Alternatively, Abramowitz could have commented on the various authors, though she modestly denies having the ability to do so.

Much has been written about Nehama, including the monumental 700-page memorial volume, *Pirkei Nehama*, but none provides as intimate and loving a portrayal of Nehama as Abramowitz does in her *Tales*. **JA**

Carry Me in Your Heart: The Life and Legacy of Sarah Schenirer

By Pearl Benisch



Feldheim Publishers
Jerusalem, 2003

471 pages

Reviewed by Leslie Ginsparg

As a graduate of a Bais Yaakov high school, I am no stranger to Sarah Schenirer’s story. Every year in high school we had a speaker or assembly commemorating Schenirer’s *yahrzeit*. I am sure that the vast majority of Bais Yaakov graduates can tell the story of Schenirer’s movement. But the version the Jewish community tends to remember focuses on the humble beginnings of the movement, when Schenirer held classes in her small seamstress shop in Cracow, Poland. While there is nothing inaccurate about that image, it does not do Schenirer or the Bais Yaakov movement justice. What seems to be lost from our collective memory is the recognition that Bais Yaakov in Europe evolved into a sophisticated and innovative educational movement.

Pearl Benisch’s *Carry Me in Your Heart* dispels the one-dimensional image of Schenirer and her schools by

Leslie Ginsparg is a doctoral student at New York University, where she is researching the history of Bais Yaakov in America, and a Wexner Foundation Graduate Fellow. She teaches history at Touro College in Manhattan.

providing a more nuanced picture of the movement. Bais Yaakov is such an entrenched institution in today’s *frum* society that it is easy to forget just how radical the idea was at its inception. While there had been schools here and there, formal Jewish education for girls was not the norm in Schenirer’s day. Schenirer became convinced that such education had become a necessity. She gained approval for her endeavor from three *gedolei hador*: the Belzer Rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim and the Gerer Rebbe. By obtaining rabbinic approbation, she was able to institute her radical innovations within a Torah framework in a way that was lasting and effective.

In 1917, with twenty-five elementary school-age girls, most of them former customers of her seamstress business, Schenirer opened the first Bais Yaakov school. It was housed in the room that used to be her workshop. By the end of 1918, she had eighty students and was forced to move into a larger apartment. Word of the school spread, and Schenirer was asked to help start schools in other towns. Schenirer started a teacher-training program, which later became the Bais Yaakov Seminary, to train older girls to staff new schools. These teachers-in-training studied, ate and slept alongside Schenirer in her small apartment.

By 1933, Bais Yaakov had become a sophisticated educational network, with 265 branches and over 37,000 students. The Bais Yaakov movement grew to include day schools, afternoon programs for girls attending public school, summer institutes, youth groups and publications, as well as the famed teachers’ seminary, which continued to train girls to fill the demand for more branches of Bais Yaakov all over Europe.

As Benisch states in the introduction, *Carry Me in Your Heart* is not a biography of Schenirer. It provides little information on Schenirer’s personal life. Additionally, there are no annotations identifying sources, an absolute necessity in any historical work. Rather this book is a sentimental tribute from a student to her teacher.

Benisch bases this work mainly on her own recollections and on those of her fellow students.

In Benisch’s book, readers see Schenirer as a scholarly, dynamic and righteous woman. Schenirer was highly educated in both Jewish and secular studies and wrote in her journal about her studies in Tanach, Mishnah and Gemara. Schenirer was an admirer of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch and avidly read his works. While she was not able to pursue formal secular education past age thirteen because of financial constraints, she continued her studies through reading and attending lectures. (At those lectures, she lamented the fact that many of her contemporaries did not have a Jewish education with which to balance the ideas they encountered in secular lecture halls—this was the eventual impetus for her starting Bais Yaakov.)

Throughout her life, Schenirer continued to be innovative. At the time, it was not socially acceptable for single women to attend shul. However, Schenirer felt that it was essential to her students’ spiritual development that they pray with a minyan, so she began going to shul with them.

Schenirer passed this ideology of action along to her students. Benisch recalls Schenirer teaching her students that they must learn to balance two important concepts: “*Kol kevudah bat Melech penimah*” and “*Eit la’asot laHashem*,” that is, there is a time for turning inward, for modesty, and a time for turning outward, for extraordinary action. Throughout her life Schenirer managed to expertly maintain this balance, a talent that contributed greatly to her success.

“Carry me in your heart”—the title of the book—was a request Schenirer made of her students. She told them she did not want them to hang a picture of her in any school, rather they should carry her image in their hearts.

Benisch writes that Schenirer’s students adored and emulated her. It almost seems as if in the highly

Chassidic environment of interwar Poland, the girls made Bais Yaakov their *Chassidut* and Schenirer their *rebbe*.

Benisch provides several stories that attest to Schenirer’s *tzidkut*, humility and integrity. The book, however, would have been more effective had the author shown us how Schenirer underwent spiritual challenges and ultimately rose to greatness. As Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner writes in *Pachad Yitzchak*, too often those writing about *tzaddikim* or *tzidkaniot* only write about the stage of life when he or she has already achieved

While many Bais Yaakov schools today view secular education as a necessary evil, the early schools stressed the ways in which secular studies could bring one to have greater yirat Shamayim.

greatness,¹ limiting our ability to learn from that person’s struggles.

At times, Benisch’s portrayals of the Bais Yaakov students are so glowing that the book becomes wearisome. However, the excessive praise is likely related to the fact that many of the students mentioned died in the Holocaust. Indeed, this general reluctance to criticize individuals who died *al kiddush Hashem* has led to a trend of romanticizing pre-Holocaust Europe.

Essentially, the Bais Yaakov movement in Europe ended with the Holocaust. While Bais Yaakov was replanted, mainly in Israel and in North America, neither the Israeli nor the North American schools are replicas of the original institutions.

The difference in attitude towards secular education is especially stark. While many Bais Yaakov schools today view secular education as a necessary evil, those in Europe, which were influenced by the philosophy of Rav Hirsch, had a more positive view towards such studies. Bais Yaakov instituted a rigorous secular studies curriculum, all the while stressing the ways in which secular studies could bring one to have greater *yirat Shamayim*.²

In recent years, several articles appearing in the Jewish press have analyzed methodologies used to teach secular studies in Jewish schools.³ Interestingly, many of the suggested approaches in the articles, such as training *frum* teachers to instruct secular subjects, generating our own textbooks and framing secular studies in religious terms, were all successfully implemented by Bais Yaakov eighty years ago. Educators today might benefit greatly from studying the methods and programs of the original Bais Yaakov.

The educational methodology of Bais Yaakov is only one of many facets of the movement that deserves greater attention. There still is no full-length biography of Schenirer, and many of Benisch’s stories seem to reveal an aspect of the movement that demands further study. For example, Benisch writes about Devorah Gur-Aryeh, who ran one of a number of *hachsharot* (preparatory institutes) that prepared Bais Yaakov girls in Poland for *aliyah*. The *hachsharot* taught young women skills that would be marketable in Palestine as well as *lemudi kodesh* (Jewish studies). Benisch attests that Schenirer had a great love for Eretz Yisrael and inspired many students to join religious *hachsharot* and make *aliyah*.

Bais Yaakov also formed a number of trade schools to teach professional skills in a religious environment. The schools then helped place the graduates in factory jobs that would accommodate the girls’ religious requirements. As in America, finding a job in interwar Poland that allowed employees to observe Shabbat was a challenge.

Benisch records how Schenirer

had much help growing the movement. Dr. Leo Deutschlander, a Western European expert on education, joined the movement in 1924. He came in contact with the schools while in charge of Agudath Israel's *Keren HaTorah* fund, which raised money for Jewish schools in Europe. Deutschlander professionalized Schenirer's movement by raising money; hiring Western academics to teach and designing syllabi, curricula, examinations and summer training institutes for teachers.⁴

Deutschlander brought Dr. Judith Grunfeld, a German woman with an advanced degree in education, to Poland. While Schenirer was initially concerned that the Polish Chassidic Bais Yaakov girls would not be able to relate to teachers from Western Europe—where Jews were considered to be more “modern”—Grunfeld proved to be a good fit.

Both Deutschlander and Grunfeld were heavily involved with the Bais Yaakov Seminary, which became arguably the most important institution of the movement. The seminary, which had an intensive two-year program of Jewish and secular

studies, only wanted the most qualified girls and consequently instituted high admission standards. Additionally, students had to commit to teach for two years in a Bais Yaakov school. Some staffed established schools, while others were sent to start new schools in remote towns. Grunfeld recalls the new teachers, themselves only teenagers, learning to use hairpins to style their hair in a way that would make them look older. In a sense, Bais Yaakov was a predecessor of modern-day programs like Teach for America, which sends college graduates to teach for two years in inner-city public schools, and the Avi Chai foundation's Jewish Teacher Corps, which sends Jewish teachers to day schools across the country.

Even after Deutschlander took over the day-to-day operations of Bais Yaakov, Schenirer remained its spiritual leader. She continued to be a prominent figure in the movement. During her lifetime (she died in 1935), she was constantly traveling, helping to open new schools and visiting already existing institutions.

Carry Me in Your Heart is an impor-

tant contribution to the body of literature on the Bais Yaakov movement. For educators, it presents a teacher worth emulating, and a school system worth exploring. For every individual, it shows the great impact one person can have on the world. **IA**

Notes

1. “Letters and Writings,” 128.
2. For more on the history and curriculum of Bais Yaakov, see Deborah Weissman, “Bais Ya’akov as an Innovation in Jewish Women’s Education; a Contribution to the Study of Education and Social Change,” *Studies in Jewish Education*, 7 (1995), 278-299 and Shoshana Pantel Zolty, *And All Your Children Shall Be Learned* (New Jersey, 1993).
3. See Deborah Schechter, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Schoolhouse,” *Jewish Action* (winter 2001) and Richard Altabe, “Secular Schools: A Crisis Within Our Schools,” *Jewish Observer* (September 2001).
4. For more on Deutschlander, Schenirer and the Teacher’s Seminary, see Judith Rosenbaum-Grunfeld, “Sarah Schenirer,” *Jewish Leaders: 1750-1940*, ed. Leo Jung (Jerusalem, 1953), 407-432.