

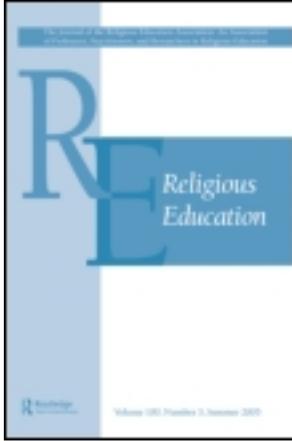
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### Developing Ethical Knowledge in the Spirit of Judaism

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## DEVELOPING ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE SPIRIT OF JUDAISM

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### *Abstract*

This study attempts to describe Jewish teachers' perceptions about their ethical dilemmas based on stories derived from the Bible. Sixty teachers were asked to submit descriptions of their ethical dilemmas to the study website; submissions were then discussed in focus groups. The findings were grouped by the ATLAS.ti into five categories: Telling the truth versus protecting from potential harm; egalitarian approach versus differential treatment; collective sanction versus personal sanction; fair process versus fair outcome and school standards versus family educational agenda. The findings may help to develop ethical knowledge in the spirit of Judaism in Jewish institutions.

Ethics and ethical behavior of individuals within organizations have been of interest to researchers for decades. The literature reflects the importance of ethics in education, by relating to the teacher as a moral agent and as the moral authority for accountable practice in education (Sergiovanni 1996; Tirri 1999). This reflects the school world as ethically complex (Delattre and Russell 1993; Higgins 1995; Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993; Ryan 1993).

An ethical dilemma in teaching is defined as a problem situation, usually arising from a conflict of obligations among various relationships, in which issues of right and wrong conduct are at stake and complex decisions about appropriate responses must be made (Campbell 2000). Teaching involves ethical dilemmas, since teachers have the task of educating the young people under their charge. The complexity of teaching, due to limited time and the variety of tasks, provides many situations in which ethical dilemmas can arise (van Maanen 1995).

Although researchers, educators, and scholars have argued that ethics is important to teaching and critical to the practice, very few have addressed how ethics is involved in teachers' lives and in

their growth and learning (Lyons 1990). Thus, although the subject of teachers' ethics has been discussed in educational research since the mid-1980s, we may conclude from these studies that teachers are not sufficiently aware of the ethical impact of their actions (Campbell 1993; Husu and Tirri 2001; Oser 1991; Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993). Some researchers of educational philosophy are concerned with the ethical dilemmas of teaching. They draw attention to the need to develop teachers' awareness of the ethical dilemmas themselves and of how they deal with them (Carr 1999; Colnerud 1997, 2006).

The present article aims to gain a better understanding of Jewish teachers' ethical dilemmas and to determine how they are handled among various nuances of Jewish tradition (i.e., Ultra-orthodox, Orthodox, traditional, secular). This may strengthen the Jewish identity of teachers, especially of those who have not received a traditional Jewish education.

### ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN TEACHING

The concept of ethics is complex and calls for deeper clarification. Ethics draws on human dispositions, attitudes, and behaviors such as evaluating, selecting, and acting and is concerned with desirable actions, which deal with our relations to and responsibility for other people (Norberg and Johansson 2007). An ethical dilemma is perceived as a choice between two or more courses of action, when obstacles on every side make it difficult to decide which course to pursue (Berlak and Berlak 1981).

Teacher ethics have been discussed in the research literature since the mid-1980s. These studies suggest that teachers are insufficiently aware of the ethical impact of their actions (Husu and Tirri 2001; Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993; Thornberg 2008). Consequently, educational philosophers, concerned with the ethical dilemmas involved in teaching, argue that attention should be paid to the need to develop teachers' awareness of their own actual practice when faced with these dilemmas (Colnerud 2006).

An abundance of literature explores the nature of ethical dilemmas in teaching (e.g., Campbell 2000; Colnerud 1997; Husu and Tirri 2007; Tirri 1999). One of the most common dilemmas is tension between protecting others from potential harm (students, colleagues) and the duty to report (because of the need to adhere to school rules or professional standards). This can occur, for instance, when a teacher is

faced with the need to act in a student's best interest, while remaining supportive of a colleague who appears to be behaving unprofessionally. Concern for equity, that is, that all students have a right to learn and to be considered capable of learning (Gore and Morrison 2001) poses another dilemma. Constraints are imposed by the recognition of the different needs of students and the diverse ways of meeting these needs (Carr 2005).

Another important ethical dilemma that many teachers encounter concerns the issue of confidentiality. They must choose between maintaining the trust of a confiding student and abiding by school rules that obligate them to report the confided information to administration and parents (Tirri 1999). Another typical dilemma involves the tension between advancing societal values and adhering to the curriculum that is primarily geared to the transmission of knowledge (Barone 2004). The literature also describes another ethical dilemma involving the tension between school standards and the educational agenda of the student's family. This can occur when teachers question whether the parents' requests are in the child's best interests (Klaassen 2002).

Most of the studies indicate that teachers perceive themselves as powerless and lacking in adequate tools for decision making in these matters (Block 2008; Campbell 2006; Carr 2005; Colnerud 2006; Gore and Morrison 2001; Husu and Tirri 2007). The present study aims to tackle this lack of competence through exploring teachers' ethical dilemmas and derived Bible stories in order to develop ethical knowledge among Jewish teachers, which may strength their ability to deal better with ethical dilemmas.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF JEWISH RELIGION IN DAILY LIFE**

It is quite evident that people of faith often struggle to integrate their religious beliefs with their work (Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen 2008; Miller 2006). The integration of these two domains takes on various forms, from religion and work being conceptually disconnected, to religion serving an ethical role at work, and up to religion providing a comprehensive lens through which to view all aspects of work and life.

Previous studies indicate that educators play an important role in preparing students to consider the possibility of leading productive and socially useful lives, in which religious commitment does not contradict life, but rather serves an inseparable part of it (Armstrong

1996; Ciulla 2000; McClay 2000). For example, the January–February (2001) issue of *Academe* indicates that contributors from diverse religiously affiliated colleges and universities, such as Calvin College (Christian Reformed Church), Luther College (Lutheran), University of St. Thomas (Roman Catholic), and Yeshiva University (Orthodox Jewish) all shared a strong consensus that the sectarian character of their institutions does not constitute a constraint to their individual academic freedom, and that they were able to retain strong commitments to both their religious traditions and to academic freedom.

Throughout its history, Judaism has emphasized that true spirituality means practical compassion for all human beings in their daily life (Dresner 1999). For nearly four millennia, Jewish precepts and teachings found in Torah, Talmud, and Mishna have dealt with such matters as fair weights and measures, relations in the workplace, fair labor standards, and quality and environmental standards, if to use present-day terminology (Epstein 2002).

In summary, the expanding literature regarding the important role of religious faith in the workplace and especially regarding Judaism as part of our practice encourages the development of practical ethical knowledge based on Jewish tradition.

## DEVELOPING ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE

According to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory, perceptions lead to behaviors. Studies show that people who deal differently with ethical dilemmas also differ predictably in their perceptions (Felton and Sims 2005; McCabe and Trevino 1993; Peppas 2002; Swanson 2005). Applying this theory to this study, we can anticipate that ethical knowledge based on Jewish tradition will expand and deepen teachers' ethical perceptions. This may lead to a more effective resolution of ethical dilemmas. In the Jewish educational setting, it is extremely important to find ways of handling ethical dilemmas, since Jewish tradition is based on moral principles and teachers are expected to educate toward these values (Amsel 1995; Levison 2005; Schwartz 1983).

More specifically, ethical knowledge enables teachers to make conceptual and practical links between core values such as fairness, compassion, respect for others, and the nuances of their own daily choices and actions. Where ethical codes suggest generalities and overall vision, specific ethical knowledge attends to the details. It moves

teachers beyond the technical, curricular, disciplinary, and evaluative aspects of teaching and leads them to appreciate the potential ethical impact of their practice on students, both formally and informally (Campbell 2006).

This study tries to provide a better understanding of the ethical perspectives of the Jewish teachers in different Jewish schools in Israel, by mapping tensions between ethical values and Bible stories narrated by the teachers.

The major goals of this study can be stipulated as follows:

1. Contributing to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between teachers' ethical dilemmas and ethical knowledge among Jewish teachers.
2. Enhance Jewish teachers' competence in dealing with ethical dilemmas and strengthen their affiliation with Judaism through a consideration of stories derived from the Bible.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The data were collected in one academic year (2010–2011). The research included 60 Israeli Jewish teachers, 44 women and 16 men, from 60 Jewish schools. The ratio of women to men is representative of the general composition of Israeli education personnel (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2008). The average age of the participants was 40.20 ( $SD = 5.65$ ) and their average school seniority was 18.30 ( $SD = 4.70$ ). The teachers participated voluntarily in this study. All teachers belonged to one of the largest Ministry of Education districts in Israel. The teachers came from different disciplinary backgrounds (e.g., biology, mathematics, history, Bible studies, and physics) and taught at different high schools. The schools they came from varied in size and type (Ultraorthodox/religious state/state), representing a cross-section of Israeli Jewish schools.

### *Data Collection*

After receiving approval from the Israeli Ministry of Education, the author approached principals from different high schools in the selected district and explained the goals of the study. The principals were asked to allow teachers from their school to participate in

the study, and all consented. The research assistants were asked to randomly approach one potential teacher from each school list (working with code numbers and no identifying details). In the case of refusal, another potential teacher was randomly chosen. Of the teachers approached, 75% agreed to participate in the study.

All teachers received a formal letter describing the goals of the study and the two-phase design of the study—the *first phase* consisted of submitting cases involving ethical dilemmas to the study website with sociodemographic characteristics of the teacher (e.g., Ultra-orthodox, religious, traditional, or secular, age, school seniority); the *second phase* was the convening of focus groups. The letter also described the researchers' obligation to preserve anonymity according to the Helsinki Treaty.

An informed consent form was signed by the teachers, including specific consent to video-record the focus group sessions. Teachers were assured confidentiality regarding all ethical events that would be discussed in the focus groups. As the study dealt with sensitive ethical issues, the research assistants conducting the focus groups were specifically instructed as to how to ask questions and which questions to ask. Among the questions, which were based on the responses that the teachers had submitted online, were: (a) Can you share with us one or more ethical dilemmas submitted to the website? (b) Who was involved in these ethical dilemmas? (c) Do you remember a Bible story with similar ethical features? Can you explain?

Data collection was performed via a two-phase design:

- *Phase one*: Data were collected from cases that teachers sent to the study website. The case descriptions included the teachers' ethical dilemmas.
- *Phase two*: The second phase, aimed at providing contextual information and depth, was based on the focus group meetings. The teachers were randomly divided into six focus groups (ten teachers per group), each group led by a research assistant experienced in facilitating focus groups. Through a sharing process, participants reflected on their own interpretations of their ethical cases, which were sent to the study website, and their perceptions regarding related Bible stories. This process enables in-depth analysis and elaboration on the data initially gathered (Morgan 1998).

### ***Data Analysis***

The research assistants conducting the meetings identified the participants in their focus groups through the video-recordings and

linked them to their code numbers. The advantage of using two data sources is in ensuring that data are trustworthy and sound, and less prone to bias (Guba and Lincoln 1989; Lather 1986).

The cases that were submitted online and the discussions in the focus groups were transcribed verbatim and processed as text. We selected Grounded Theory (GT) as our methodology because it emphasizes the emergence of ideas and themes from raw data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

Data analysis followed a three-step process, as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998):

- *Step one—Open coding.* Open coding involves the comparison, conceptualization, and categorization of data. Raw data were examined for similarities and differences, and initial conceptual categories were identified.
- *Step two—Axial coding.* The process is termed “axial” because coding occurs along the axis of a category. For example, in the current study, we found that the category “collective sanction vs. personal sanction” was perceived to be related to the Bible story “The Rape of Dina by Shechem.”
- *Step three—Selective coding.* This stage involves selecting the core categories and organizing them around a central explanatory concept. Figure 1 illustrates our main findings in this study. The figure shows a model of teachers’ ethical dilemmas, and the Bible stories related to them. In this study, tensions between values were grouped into categories of ethical dilemmas. The central category was “teachers’ ethical dilemmas” and five core categories of ethical dilemmas were found related to this central category (Telling the

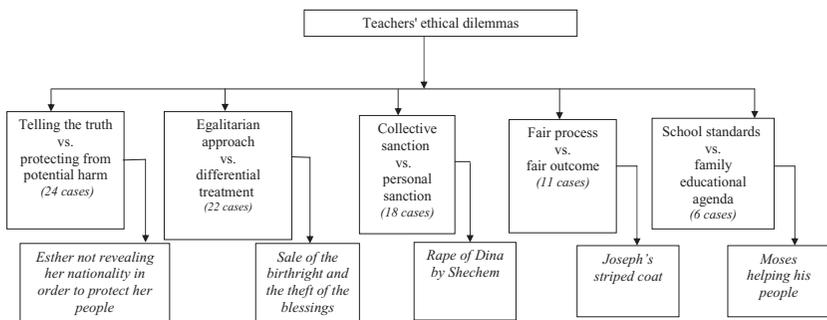


FIGURE 1. Teachers’ ethical dilemmas and derived bibles stories: General outlines.

truth vs. protecting from potential harm; egalitarian approach vs. differential treatment; collective sanction vs. personal sanction; fair process vs. fair outcome and school standards vs. family educational agenda).

The author and the research assistants used a cross-checking procedure of independently coding data. We met to reflect on the emerging categories and to search the data for disconfirming cases. Following Boardman and Woodruff (2004), the number of agreements over disagreements was calculated against the author's response codes, yielding reliability scores of 93 percent.

In order to ensure accuracy of the analysis, data were analyzed using the ATLAS.ti 5.0, a software package that allows qualitative analysis of textual data (Muhr 2004). The software helps to methodically organize and document themes within data and allows the user to collect text passages from one or more text documents (Crego, Alcover de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo 2008).

## FINDINGS

Based on the teachers' self-reports and their transcribed meetings, five main categories of ethical dilemmas were created as follows: (1) Telling the truth versus protecting from potential harm (24 cases); (2) Egalitarian approach versus differential treatment (22 cases); (3) Collective sanction versus personal sanction (18 cases); (4) fair process versus fair outcome (11 cases) and (5) school standards versus family educational agenda (6 cases).

In the following sections, an elaboration of each of the five main categories is presented. Although some of the categories were found at a higher frequency than others, we will present only one typical quote per category for illustration.

### ***Telling the Truth versus Protecting from Potential Harm***

The tension between telling the truth and protecting from potential harm represented the largest category of ethical dilemmas, with 24 identified cases. This dilemma is expressed through the teacher's perception of organizational standards on the one hand, which is that the whole truth should be told to the parties involved, and on the

other, their fear that something might happen to the student if the truth is indeed told.

Sometimes, we have to invite the parents to school. . . . I called the student's home. His parents are divorced. The mother asked not to invite the father to the meeting because the father's reaction to his son's misbehavior is violence against his son. . . . Then the question is whether or not to tell the father? How much to report? (*Michal, female, Orthodox, 32 years old, high school homeroom teacher*)

In this narrative, Michal seems to be crying out for a clear policy of whether or not to report, what to say, and how to say it. According to the school's educational agenda, the teacher is supposed to inform parents about a student's bad behavior. Michal hesitated, however, as to whether to tell the father, and if so, whether to tell the whole truth, when she suspected that the father would be aggressive towards the son as a result. In the focus group, this event brought up the Bible story, when Mordechai tells Esther not to reveal her religion in order to help her nation. If she did reveal it, her people would suffer (Esth 2:10–4:14).

### ***Egalitarian Approach versus Differential Treatment***

The tension between egalitarian approach and the need for differential treatment was another important category of ethical dilemmas, with 22 cases. This is illustrated in the following case reported on the study website:

I teach the deputy-mayor's daughter. . . . His daughter is always tired. . . . Her achievements are low. I set up a meeting with her father, just like I do in similar situations. The deputy-mayor insisted that his daughter was doing well in all other courses and maybe I'm more stringent with her . . . because she is the deputy-mayor's daughter. (*Alon, male, traditional, 43 years old, high school mathematics teacher*)

This category emphasized the importance of treating everybody equally. However, Alon brings up his difficulty: How do you behave fairly when the deputy-mayor of the city where the school is located believes that you are discriminating against his daughter and therefore to achieve justice, you must treat her differently? Should you act unvaryingly, regardless of the student's background? Or should different treatment be used in consideration of the father's request? In this narrative, Alon chooses an egalitarian approach. Alon invites the

deputy-mayor to a meeting, just as he would any other parent. But this egalitarian approach is lost when the deputy-mayor perceives a discriminatory attitude. In the focus group, this case brought up the issue of “sale of the birthright and the theft of the blessings.” Rebecca orders Jacob to lie to Isaac in order to receive the birthright blessing; since she knows that Isaac prefers Esau and intends to bless him, therefore she chooses to discriminate against Esau in order to have her younger son blessed by Isaac (Gen. 27:5–17).

### ***Collective Sanction versus Personal Sanction***

A total of 18 cases belong to this category. This category reflected the tension between collective sanctions and personal punishment. It was illustrated in a posting on the website:

One of the students has stolen the final exam from my desk. I did not know what to do: whether to stop the lesson until one of the student gives himself away and then punish him or whether to continue with the lesson so as not to harm the other students . . . they need to finish the entire curriculum by the date of final matriculation exam . . . (*Nurit, female, secular, 41 years old, high school literature teacher*)

Nurit wishes to discipline the student who has stolen the test. She must deal with the dilemma of whether or not to stop the lesson until the student reveals himself, which will indirectly punish the other students because it may harm their academic advancement. In the *focus groups*, this case brought up the issue of *Rape of Dina by Shechem*. Dina is kidnapped and raped by Shechem. Shimon and Levy retaliate by destroying the entire city, thereby punishing those who did not participate in the rape (Gen. 34:1–29).

### ***Fair Process versus Fair Outcome***

The third category deals with teachers' perceptions of tension between two different dimensions of justice: fair process (procedural justice) and fair distribution of rewards (distributive justice), with 11 cases, illustrated in the following case reported on the study website:

How can I tell a teacher that even though he works as a coordinator, I can't remunerate him for this activity because I don't have teaching hours to give him. . . . We don't have enough resources. Whom should I reward and whom shouldn't I reward? (*Shani, female, 35 years old, secular Jew, educational coordinator in high school*)

Shani perceives that the school lacks a process of fair justice, thereby an unjust outcome is created. The teacher deserves additional rewards because of the extra work he does. He does not, however, receive them because of the school's insufficient resources. In addition, Shani does not know how to divide the limited hours between all the teachers who perform additional work such as coordinating. Based on this, the conflict arises. In the focus groups, this case brought up the issue of the Bible story "Joseph's coat of many colors." Jacob gave the striped coat to Joseph because he loved him more than his other sons; thus he believes that the just deed is to give his favorite son more than his other sons. In this case Joseph's brothers perceive that the outcome of resource distribution is not fair (Gen. 36:3–5).

### ***School Standards versus Family Educational Agenda***

This ethical dilemma with a total of six cases deals with the tension between school standards and parental perceptions of the proper educational way for the school to act.

I was the educational coordinator for the tenth grade. One father was displeased with the academic level of the students in his son's class. He wanted me to transfer his son to the parallel class. I didn't believe that this change was good for his son. I explained to the father, that socially it was better for his son to remain, but he insisted. . . . I knew it was a mistake but I gave in under the pressure. (*Shmuel, male, ultra-orthodox, 38 years old, educational coordinator in high school*)

Shmuel's narrative expresses the tension between his desire to act according to his beliefs and expertise and the school standards, on the one hand, and parental pressure on the other. In this narrative, Shmuel expects the student's father to respect the teacher's opinion since he believes this can help the student. The school has its own standards and criteria for placing students in each class. The father, however, has another agenda, namely, the desire for educational excellence. Shmuel thus faces a dilemma: Is it acceptable to bend school standards in order to cater to the father's educational agenda?

In the focus group this ethical dilemma evoked the story of Moses. He was considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and according to this status, he could choose to be part of the nobility and adopt the rules and values of the Egyptian kingdom, Moses in fact chose his family's ideological agenda, to help the Children of Israel achieve freedom from the Egyptians (Ex. 2:10–12).

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

*First*, in the focus groups, in relation to several Bible stories, the teachers did not approve of the behavior of the protagonists. For example, they did not like the fact that both Isaac and Jacob preferred one son over the other and gave these sons preferential treatment. The teachers expressed their abhorrence that Dina's brothers preferred collective sanction rather than specific sanction against Shechem, the actual wrongdoer. On the other hand, they sided with Moses who chose to be loyal to his people instead of to the Egyptians, and with Esther, who in order to protect her people, chose not to tell the truth.

*Second*, although the submitted ethical dilemmas and the derived Bible stories were not found to be a direct match, in the focus groups the teachers related their ethical dilemmas to similar ethical dilemmas in Bible stories, which helped them understand that they can learn from discussing and reflecting on the complexities of conflicting values how to deal better with their own ethical dilemmas. The teachers maintain that relating their cases to the Bible stories helps them be more competent to deal with ethical dilemmas and also strengthens their Jewish identity.

Finally, despite the different group affiliation (e.g., Ultra-orthodox, Orthodox, traditional, secular), we did not find that the issue of belonging to a particular group arose during the discussions in the focus groups.

## DISCUSSION

This study attempts to describe Jewish teachers' perceptions about their confrontation with ethical dilemmas by taking into account Jewish tradition. Hence, this approach may provide additional tools for Jewish teachers to deal successfully with their ethical dilemmas, thus adding to previous studies which did not focus on Jewish tradition as a factor in decision making.

The findings support previous studies that ethics is an integral part of teachers' work (Clark, Harden, and Johnson 2000; Johnson and Nelson 1999; Warren 2005). The unique value of this study is revealed in the findings indicating that teachers perceive the Bible stories as a tool that may help them choose a course of action when

they are faced with an ethical dilemma. For example, Bible stories may provide tools for raising teachers' awareness about showing partiality that distorts judgment, this, by reflecting on the deeds and outcomes related in these stories. Cultivating critical thinking by learning from Bible stories will help teachers develop more complex interconnections and the reflective thought characteristic of expert thinkers that, with appropriate practice, renders teachers more autonomous in their dealing with ethical dilemmas (Barnett 1995). In addition, teachers with critical thinking may become the catalyst for developing expertise in reflective thinking among their students (Short and Rinehart 1993).

Each ethical dilemma was conceptualized in terms of a tension between values. While most previous studies focused on ethical tensions inside the classroom (e.g., Campbell 2000; Higgins 1995; Husu and Tirri 2001), our findings indicate that the ethical tensions went beyond the classroom doors. We identified tensions outside the classroom, for example, how to divide the limited resources between all the teachers who do additional work. The nature of the ethical dilemmas that emerged from the teachers' reported events sheds light on the complexity of the teacher's work. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple paradigm approach emphasizes that practice in working through a multiple ethical paradigm will provide a broadened perspective when dealing with complex and difficult ethical dilemmas that have an impact on education. While the study findings emphasize the difficulty in coping with various ethical dilemmas in teaching, we prefer to adopt Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) approach, whereby these ethical dilemmas may promote a dynamic dialogue that can lead to a competence in dealing with ethical dilemmas, especially when we consider the different varieties in Judaism.

Several of the revealed values appear to be universal and cross-cultural, such as the egalitarian approach or the willingness to protect pupils or colleagues from potential harm (Barone 2004; Colnerud, 1997; Higgins 1995; Tirri 1999). Other ethical dilemmas that surfaced in our study could be explained within the particularities of the Israeli context, for example, the tension between fair process and fair outcome. The Israeli educational system, which is characterized by limited resources (Ofek Hadash Reform 2009), creates a situation where Israeli teachers are highly sensitive to issues of just distribution of resources for their students and for themselves. A recent publication, *Education at a Glance* (OECD 2006), provides evidence that the annual

expenditure in high schools for all services *per student* (U.S. dollars converted using Purchasing Power Parities [PPP] of Gross Domestic Product [GDP]) is lower in Israel (5,959) than in Germany (7,173), Italy (7,938), Korea (6,410), the Netherlands (6,996), the United Kingdom (7,290), and the United States (9,590). The limited resource allocation of the Israeli educational system may explain why Israeli teachers therefore more frequently experience ethical dilemmas.

The tension between school standards and family agenda can also be explained in the Israeli educational context. Demographic data indicate that Israel is regarded as more family oriented than Western and Eastern Europe (Feldman, Shafiq, and Nadam, 2001). Studies indicate that the Israeli family is being pulled in opposite directions by two main forces: one that moves the family toward greater modernization, while the other acts to strengthen traditional values (Lavee and Katz 2003). This may, then, constitute a significant factor affecting the kinds of ethical dilemmas that teachers reported facing with their students' families.

The study findings indicate that parents and teachers use different frames of reference in their consideration of what is important for their children. Parents are emotionally involved in their own children's upbringing, while teachers' point of reference is the functioning of the class as a whole. Therefore, as Klaassen (2002) suggests, instead of engaging in confrontation, parents and teachers should make their visions known to each other. Regarding the tension between telling the truth and protecting from potential harm or the tension between collective sanction and personal sanction: although at first glance, institutional rules might seem to prevent teachers from voicing certain ethical dilemmas, the findings of this study suggest that ethical guidelines seem fundamental to preserving basic ethical standards in teaching. Where difficulties arise in ethical judgment, these ethical guidelines may provide tools for dealing with resultant ethical dilemmas. This study proposes that ethical *guidelines*—rather than *rules*—be established, because rules demand full compliance while guidelines allow the autonomous critical thinking that is needed in solving the ethical dilemmas that teachers encounter.

In summation, the teachers' sense of uncertainty about how to handle dilemmas as they arise presents a challenge. Although a single study cannot clearly establish the advantage of dealing with ethical dilemmas by referring to Bible stories, the results of this study do suggest that a reflective and critical analysis of Bible stories might help facilitate the decision-making process among teachers.

## TOWARD ETHICAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS IN THE SPIRIT OF JUDAISM

Within Judaism there is a variety of beliefs and modes of observance. Some believe the Bible and the commandments to be the revealed word of God, while others see them as historical text. Some distinguish between practice and belief, whereas others combine the two aspects (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan 2003). In this article, the author attempts to empower teachers dealing with ethical dilemmas, by highlighting the benefits of exploring religious belief and practice in connection with teaching. This is carried out by examining teachers' ethical dilemmas in the spirit of the many nuances of Judaism, opening the door to exploring workplace pluralism and work-faith integration.

Ethical knowledge is power (Campbell 2006). Currently, teachers are not granted the necessary time or space in their working lives to consider the ethical dimensions of their practice. Teacher collaborations on defining the ethical problems of practice are considered "luxuries," rather than essential components of their work. Creating teacher education programs as part of the identity of Jewish schools, discussing and analyzing cases of ethical dilemmas in teaching drawn from teachers' own experience and perspectives and from Bible stories, can provide a valuable resource to deal better with ethical dilemmas.

Teacher education programs in Jewish institutions should offer insights for teachers into the dilemmas of teaching associated with rights and fairness, egalitarian approach, and ethical guidelines. Additional avenues for cultivating ethical knowledge could be regularly scheduled open forum discussions and school ethics committees, based on Jewish tradition, in which teachers form internal communicative networks to discuss professional ethical matters and dilemmas as they arise. All these may increase teachers' capacity to deal successfully with ethical dilemmas.

### CONTRIBUTION

The study findings may contribute to existing work on ethical dilemmas. *From a theoretical perspective*, the analysis of each dilemma in terms of the tension between the conflicting values involved sheds light on teachers' values, attitudes, and perceptions based on Jewish

tradition. *From a practical perspective*, the results may guide Jewish teachers and their leaders in developing ethical knowledge through appropriate educational programs, focusing on the issues that emerged in the narratives. This may assist teachers in handling their dilemmas based on Jewish tradition, and may strengthen their Jewish identity.

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