Narrative practices in a 'Charedy' Orthodox Jewish Community

by Yishai Shalif[i]

Poststructuralist and postmodern trends in the social sciences (McNamee & Gergen 1992, Friedman 1993), have led to many creative criticisms of the colonialism of modern therapies (Hoffman 1992). This in turn has opened the door to ways of practicing therapy in different cultures that do not impose western ways of living on others. The Just Therapy Team in New Zealand seems a wonderful example of the possibilities created by these explorations (Tamasese & Waldegrave 1993, Waldegrave 1990,1998).

In the following pages, I will describe an example of work that I believe also fits within this general trend. It involves the use of narrative practices in my work as a school psychologist and family therapist in a 'Charedy'[ii] community, here in Jerusalem. As I consider myself a 'Charedy' Jew, this paper is a personal portrayal.

I am a part of the community in which I work and engage with similar beliefs and practices. I'm sure someone else witnessing this work would describe it differently.

In this paper I'll try to articulate some of the narrative practices and ways of thinking that to my mind are suitable to work in my community. I'll also try to describe the influence that the culture of this community has on the ways in which I engage with narrative practices. No doubt any form of therapy is influenced by the community in which it is being used, but this is particularly true for those ways of working which respect, honour, take into consideration and try to learn from and about the culture in which they are being applied.

I'll also explore the ways in which my personal life as the practitioner influences my practice of narrative therapy. Within the wide expanse of narrative practices, everyone makes choices as what to stress, what to leave aside, what to highlight, and what to leave in the shade. I would like to trace how these choices are influenced by culture of the practitioner.

These two spheres of influence – how community ideas and beliefs transform narrative practices, and how my own personal life and culture influence my participation with these ideas, cannot really be separated. In this paper, both aspects will be interwoven as I consider different aspects of the relationship between narrative practices and the unique Jewish 'Charedy' culture.

Multiplicity of perspectives

One of the very common discourses on religions and traditional cultures in general, and about religious Judaism in particular, is that they are very restrictive and have a mono-view on behaviour and thinking. However, if one was to open and read from any of the Jewish traditional texts they would find a different situation. From the Midrash[iii] through the Talmud[iv] written more than 1500 years ago, to contemporary commentaries and legal texts, one would find multiple opinions expressed on almost every issue. From a very young age (6-7) children will learn about Machloket (arguments) between Rabbis in which many opinions are quoted and considered legitimate.

Mordechai Rotenberg (1983, 1987, 1991) has written some very interesting books in which he tries to develop a theory of psychotherapy based on an acknowledgment that as there are many narratives from which we construct our lives, it is possible to re-author the past in many different ways. He contrasts these ideas to the psychoanalytic mono-view of life[v] which assumes a universal truth about mankind and how this enables it to seek to re-author the past through the single lens of the oedipal complex. Rotenberg's acknowledgment of the multiplicity of narratives through which we understand our lives is based on Jewish traditions of thought and the ways in which the Midrash and other early Rabbinical texts relate in a multiplicity of ways to verses of the bible.

These cultural histories and understandings make it easy for me to adopt narrative practices which are embedded in acknowledgments of the multiplicity of meanings and voices. This common belief in a multiplicity of meanings is also a resource to draw upon in therapy within the Charedy community. Abraham and Sarah[vi], came to meet with me after Sarah had developed some kind of virtual relationship on the internet. This relationship had begun through a

professional connection. Abraham, who is a teacher at a Yeshiva (place of study of rabbinical texts), had found out about this relationship by accident. He felt and thought that this relationship was too personal for the values of their community, which has clear proscriptions about the sorts of relationships that are okay for people who are married to be having with other people. Although this situation was causing a lot of distress between the two of them, and had the quality of an affair, what enabled us to find a way through was the common cultural belief that there were multiple ways of understanding this situation. This belief enabled Rabbi Abraham to consider a multiplicity of perspectives in ways that would not have been possible if he had resolutely held onto the idea that there was only one particular truth of the matter.

Change

My work as a psychologist involves conversations with people about making changes in their lives. These conversations occur within a cultural context of meaning about change itself. In Jewish thought and practice there are many particular understandings about change.

Much of Jewish life is arranged around particular cycles. The months accord with the lunar calendar (with accommodations to the solar cycle, by adding an extra month once in a few years). The lunar cycle through which the moon reveals and hides its luminous face, symbolises to us how we as humans move through our times of darkness, and how these can be transformed to luminous periods.

There are also cycles of Jewish life. The Jewish new year's day and the ten days which follow are a time for reflection, atonement and repentance. This is not only about our relationship with God. First and foremost it is our behaviour or misbehaviour towards other people that is the issue. For Jews, on the Day of Atonement, our sins cannot be atoned for if we don't first ask and receive the forgiveness of the people whom we have sinned against.

This has been absorbed into the daily practices of Jews. The Jewish library has a whole section called the moral or ethical books. These books talk about duties and ways of becoming more ethical and moral in our relationships. Many conversations that I share with religious people have to do with their own behaviour towards their spouses, children or other people in their lives. I often hear remarks like 'I know I should fix my character or my traits but...' or 'to change a trait is more difficult than learning the whole Talmud[vii] (this is a task that usually would take someone a few years)'.

Yaacov first came to talk to me because his daughter Rivka was having social difficulties in school. She was acting strangely and people were concerned. When they came to talk with me, Yaacov reported that he had recently changed some of the inconsiderate and maybe even verbally abusive ways in which he had been relating to his daughter. Up until that point he said he had felt almost compelled to replicate the abusive ways in which he himself had been raised. In the conversations we shared, what became clear was that Yaacov was very connected to an awareness of a duty to 'better one's deeds'. This was a rich tradition in which to ground Yaacov's desire to make changes, and provided resources to assist in the transition. As Yaacov became more aware of the effects of his behaviour on his daughter's life, it became a matter of translating this awareness of his duty to 'better one's deeds' into practice. As he had already changed many of his behaviours, there were many learnings that could be built upon. Yaacov stated that these conversations offered him hope for change.

It is also possible to utilise cultural narratives that are resources for change in ways that relate to past events. Ahron who is a 'Chozer BiTshuva'[viii] (i.e. someone who has become observant) consulted me about his relationship with his son. Ahron felt that he could not control his son's behaviour. Events from Ahron's own life however soon became the focus of our conversations. He told me a story about himself as a soldier in the 1973 war in which his tank was hit. It was an event about which he had always felt profound guilt for not being able to save two other soldiers who were in the same tank. As we spoke about this story, it became possible for Ahron to re-author it. Alongside the story of guilt, evolved a story of providence in being saved at the last moment, and also a story of heroism as Ahron had carried a wounded soldier with him as he ran from the burning tank. This re-authoring, was based very much upon a religious notion discussed by Rotenberg (ibid.) when describing a Midrashic source as saying 'how great is repentance that his purposeful sins become merits[ix]'. Through conversations in the present, Ahron came to very different relationships with events of the past. This 'religious' re-authoring enabled him after 25 years to visit the graves of his comrades and get in touch with both families for the first time.

Knowledge as power

As a postmodern therapist, I'm aware of how much what I do, ask, practise in therapy has to do with my own beliefs, histories and knowledge. If I don't see possibilities other than those dictated by the dominant culture, or if I as a therapist begin to feel helpless, there is a big chance that the problem-saturated stories in the lives of the people with whom I am speaking will increase their influence. So how do I as a therapist overcome the tendencies of the culture to lose heart, to see negatives or to contribute to the pathologising of other people's lives?

A particular Jewish concept has been very helpful to me. This is one of the most powerful ways in which I feel that the culture has affected my practices. There is a very interesting Jewish concept which states that one should 'Dan Lecaf Zchut', literally meaning to 'judge to the side of merit'. When one is thinking badly about someone, this concept encourages you to try and find a different narrative which will be more favourable. What I find so interesting about this, is not only the concept of trying to change the narrative to a more favourable one, but the use of the verb 'to judge'. I've written previously (Shalif 1999) on the ways in which 'judgment' can so easily be a part of normalising judgment (Foucault 1979). However, within this Jewish tradition I believe a different territory is opened. Here, judgement is not about measuring someone's actions or ways of being against a set of norms. Instead, the word is used to encourage an orientation to life that is deliberately un-pathologising, that seeks to acknowledge complexities, ambiguities and compassion.

Now, when professional practices, and other factors, try to influence my thinking towards normalising judgment, I am reminded of 'Dan Lecaf Zchut'. This is not always successful in immediately enabling me to notice the openings to alternative narratives, however it does help me to instantly open to the possibility of their existence.

As this is a shared cultural concept, it is also possible to evoke it in conversations with others. I can ask what a particular situation might look like through the perspective of 'Dan Lecaf Zchut'. This can open alternative perspectives and stories.

David and Rachel came with their daughter Rivka to see me. David was very pessimistic about achieving any change and seemingly belittled any change that did occur. While working with David, I found myself thinking that he did not, for whatever reason, wish to collaborate in the work. By utilising the concept of 'Dan Lecaf Zchut', I could release myself from these ideas and speculate that there must be good reasons which were causing him to react in these ways. In our next discussion we explored together what it might be that was holding David back in noticing any change or having any hope of change. Following this meeting, I gave David the choice of deciding whether or not he wanted to continue. Most of the members of the reflecting team privately felt that he would not come back. Over the next few days however he rang my office a number of times trying to get in touch with me to say that he would like to continue. I distinctly remember the enthusiasm in his voice.

Language

The importance of language in creating reality appears both in social constructivist writings (see Gergen 1991, Freedman & Combs 1996) and also in the text analogy of therapy (White & Epston 1990). As White and Epston explain:

> *In accepting this premise (meaning is derived through the structuring of experience into stories) we are also proposing that we ascribe meaning to our experience and constitute our lives and relationships through language.* (1990 p. 27)

This idea fits closely with the Jewish tradition that understands that it was through language that God created the world. In Genesis, chapter 2, it is written that God "breathed into his countenance the breath of life" and with this action human beings became "a living personality" (ver. 7). A traditional translation (to Aramaic) of 'living personality' means 'the ability to speak'. In this way it is expressed that it is language that is the aspect of the human being which is divine.

There are endless examples within Jewish culture of the importance of the spoken and written word. The other day I was reading an article in a 'Charedy' newspaper which was talking about the prohibition within Jewish culture of gossip and slander. The writer was describing how realities are created in and through words, and was therefore reflecting upon our responsibilities in our use of them. Jewish tradition depends upon the oral transmission of culture. Fathers are commanded to transfer the laws and beliefs of Judaism to their sons. The tellings and re-tellings of the different traditional stories create and recreate the lives in which we live.

Questions

Different cultures have different understandings in relation to the use of questions. It has taken me some time to recognise the significance of the practice of asking questions within Jewish culture, because their significance is so taken-for-granted. I live constantly immersed in Jewish ways of learning which are almost always through question and answer form. Almost all Jewish texts - legal and philosophical - are similar to a transcription of a recorded conversation.

At Passover night which is held once a year to celebrate the day the Jews were freed of their bondage in Egypt, the 'Seder' is focused around the children asking questions of their parents. This tradition evolves from a verse in the Bible which begins 'if your son will ask you...'. The children are encouraged to ask as many questions as possible about the different practices of the night. This is very different than practices in cultures in which children are educated not to ask questions of their elders. There is a commonly known saying that a Jew always answers a question with a question. We are comfortable with questions, they are a part of our cultural repertoire, and as such it is appropriate for me as a psychologist in my community to inquire with questions about the meanings of events in people's lives.

Externalization

One of the ways in which narrative practices try to free people from the power of problems and discourses is through the use of externalizing language (White & Epston 1990). This empowers the client by relating to the problem as if it is external to the person, as opposed to a part of the person's essence or self.

There are similar concepts within Jewish traditions. At one of the girl schools[x] in which I work, two girls in the second grade were having a hard time. They came from families from disadvantaged backgrounds. The girls came to school with dirty and unironed uniforms, their hair was not brushed, and the lice in their hair was easily visible. Other students were trying to avoid these two girls and keep as far away from them as possible. Sometimes the girls were laughed at and unkind remarks were made towards them. This situation bothered the teacher and headmaster very much. The teacher tried to talk about it in class to no avail. I offered to try and have a conversation with the whole class.

We shared a conversation around the following three questions:

'How would you like the social atmosphere of the classroom to be?'

'What needs to be done for this to occur?'

'What are examples of actions and practices that they (the students) have already been involved in'

I was moved and exited by the openness, sincerity and enthusiasm of the girls. They shared with me the sorts of practices that they engaged in to make the classroom the type of place they wanted it to be. When I then asked whether these practices included the whole class, the students were candid enough to tell me that sometimes they didn't implement these practices in relation to the two girls that the teacher had been concerned about.

When I asked 'what causes you to behave differently to these girls?', some girls tried to explain their behaviour by blaming the two girls concerned. I realised that my question was not such a useful one as it did not invite an externalised conversation. After talking a little more about the kind of social atmosphere they wanted, I then asked a different question: 'What is it or who is it do you think makes you behave sometimes differently than the ways in which you wish to behave?'. Spontaneously a few girls cried out together 'its the 'Yetzer Hara''.

One of the basic tenants of Jewish thought is that all mankind was created in order to be able to achieve greatness through practising free will. A metaphor that is commonly used is that the human being is pushed or pulled by 'inclinations' - the positive and the negative (Yetzer Hatov and Yetzer Hara). A parent may tell a child from a young age when s/he misbehaves 'don't let the 'Yetzer Hara' over come you'. Similarly, positive actions may be seen to be representative of the Yetzer Hatov.

In the context of the school class, the idea of Yetzer Hara, enabled the girls to acknowledge that their actions had not been good and to take a stand against them, all without needing to negatively evaluate themselves as people. This meant that the conversation could occur without shame. Apparently the conversation contributed to an improvement in the social atmosphere of the classroom.

Just as with all externalisations, care needs to be taken around the use of 'Yetzer Hatov' and 'Yetzer Hara' - especially as they are so much a part of the culture. It seems important to ensure that the concept of 'Yetzer Hara' is not used by those with authority to judge and define what is wrong about the actions of others. Instead I believe it can be a helpful cultural resource in separating people from problems.

Community

The life of an observant Jew consists of constant communal practices, many of which require at least ten people (the three daily prayers in shull[xi] being an important example). This communal aspect of life can be seen in many forms. Usually members of the Charedy communities choose to live close together in high density apartment buildings. Very few choose to live the suburban way of life that is so common in many modern countries.

These structures of communal living enable a lot of 'social work' to be done without the involvement of any 'professional'[xii] resources. One of the girls schools in which I work is run by an outstanding Principal. When one of the school students comes from a home which hasn't the money or the capability to send the daughters to school with clean and neat clothing, the Principal will find a way to acquire new clothes whether from her own resources or by asking for a donation from the community. There is no easy division between her role as Principal and that of social help. Discourses of professionalism have a different meaning when as a professional you are linked in so many ways to the lives of those with whom you are working. The detachment, or compartmentalisation that is seen as beneficial or necessary in some professional discourses is simply not possible. It becomes a matter of playing one's part well within a network of communal relations.

Marginalised people

As in all communities, within the Charedy there are some people whose identities are marginalised. There are also many traditions within Jewish thought of the need to empower the marginalised.

Recently, on two separate occasions, women who were divorced from their partners came to talk to me about their relationships with their children. I was more than happy to see them together with their children, but in both cases the children didn't want to attend the session. After seeing the second woman, and knowing that there were more women in similar situations in the city, I wondered about trying to create a group for women who had gone through divorce. These women would have been subject to a degree of marginalisation due to their experiences. When I mentioned this idea to one of the women, who was newly divorced and in search of some way to better her social situation, she became very enthusiastic. A few weeks later I was honoured to participate in their first meeting.

The following morning, however, I received a phone call from the local Rabbi asking me to stop the meetings. As a result we had a long conversation. The turning point in this conversation came when the Rabbi himself said 'these women are having a very hard time' to which I responded 'that's exactly what motivates me to have these gatherings'. After contemplating the issue, the Rabbi agreed for the groups to continue. In this conversation, the belief in caring for a marginalised group overcame other considerations. Since then, the women have held a number of meetings which have been very empowering, not only for them, but for me also.

I can recall another experience in which this attitude of seeing the duty of empowering the marginalised overcame other considerations. This was when the girls school I work at, for the first time, had to create a special class for girls with learning disabilities. Children with learning disabilities are all too often marginalised. Often Principles and schools see them as bringing only difficulties or 'headaches'. The classes we were hoping to start would support these children in ways that would then enable them to be within the mainstream school for more than half of every day. I believed the chances of this proposal succeeding were meagre.

I have learnt since not to underestimate the practices that infuse the community which wish to empower the marginalised. When I asked the headmaster of the school what she thought we should do about the girls from the kindergarten with learning disabilities who need a special class, she responded immediately by saying 'if needed, we will create a special class. Aren't they human beings too? Then they should be part of this school'.

Professional practices

Paying attention to the ways in which our own practices can contribute to marginalising the experiences or voices of those with whom we work seems important. In the our agency[xiii] we try to ensure that parents and students participate in any meeting that relates to the stories of their lives. This can be difficult for many of the professionals who are working with us, as they are so used to talking about, and not to, the parents and children. Their intentions are often very good. They often fear that there is information that we as professionals have that would be painful and harmful

for the families. When we explain that the reason we have meetings in these ways is because of respect and a belief that the families are the owners of their own stories, other professionals almost always join with us in this way. They are also genuinely amazed at how well the meetings go.

Talking across cultures

Last year I was hired to be a school psychologist of a 'Cheder'[xiv] that was established seven years previously as a private institution to help children that could not make it in the mainstream 'chadorim'. For financial reasons, the school hierarchy decided to seek the government's approval which would then enable the school to be financial by the Ministry of Education. This wasn't an easy transition for many reasons. This school was very different than the 'normal' special education schools with which the supervisors of the Ministry of Education were familiar. Some of the differences included the following: the teachers weren't trained in the conventional terms; the teachers and heads of the school knew very little of the professional language of special education; the curriculum was very different from the regular special education curriculum (there was much more stress on rabbinical texts than on a curriculum for a common western school); and the school was persistent in relation to not having female teachers instruct groups of boys.

It was very difficult to convince the supervisors of the Ministry of Education to take what I would call an anthropological journey, to try to understand this school in terms that are familiar to the culture to which the students and teachers belong (a 'charedy' orthodox Jewish culture) rather than trying to understand the school through their own professional western culture terms. These differences of perspective will no doubt be a source of ongoing dialogue.

Hierarchy and the expectation of expert knowledge

So far in this article I have described some of the ways in which narrative practices and ways of thinking fit with work within the 'Charedy' community of which I am a part. There are however also aspects of life within the community that do not fit easily with narrative practices.

In contrast to most communities in the western world, the leaders of this community are very much involved in the everyday life of its members. The communal Rabbis[xv] and academic teachers[xvi] are trusted with personal conversations by the members of the community. Many legal, moral and day-to-day questions are consistently asked of these leaders by community members. This opens the possibility for collaboration between myself as a psychologist and these leaders in a variety of different situations.

For those people who would prefer not to go to a 'professional' for help, a word of a Rabbi might be motivation enough for change to occur. In other situations, teamwork may be required. Joseph was a young adult who had lost taste (both literally and spiritually) in life. He had adopted a very strict and unrelenting way of life in which he had tried to stop having any pleasure whatsoever apart from what he considered the pleasure of religious duties. Without the help of his religious teacher who explained to him that it is part of religious duty to enjoy one's food and other physical aspects of life, he would not have been able to begin to change his way of life. Any conversations with me would not have been enough. In situations like this, I have found it very helpful to involve the caring 'authority' of a Rabbi or teacher. I understand their interpretations of the religious teachings at these times as significant acts of healing.

The ways in which Rabbis and teachers commonly offer expert advice however, is very different from the ways in which I wish to relate to those with whom I speak. There is a common expectation that I will be the 'expert' to give 'etzot' (advice). So strong is this expectation, that at times when I am trying to speak from a decentred position (White 1997), I wonder if I am not imposing upon them a way of thinking that is strange to them and therefore, in a curious way, an act of power.

I have thought about this a great deal and my rationale for still trying to work in a decentred way is that usually before people come to me they have heard plenty of 'etzot' (advice) - from the neighbour, the uncle, the grandmother, friends and others in the community. By the time people come to talk to me, it is usually clear that the advice has not worked and what is needed is not more of the same, but something different.

Apart from this rationale, I am clear that it does not fit for me personally to be giving advice, or acting from a position of authority in relation to another person's life. So, my way through this dilemma has been to always act in a transparent manner. From the first conversation I share with people, even if this is over the telephone, I am clear about the ways in which I work and clarify that others work differently. In this

way I am giving them a choice as to consult with me in this way or not.

The do's and don't do's

The fact that this community of which I am a part is very close knit, and has many very clear 'do's' and 'don't do's' can sometimes make life difficult for people who don't abide by these precisely. Rose is a young woman who comes from a family that has experienced many hardships. Although it is completely forbidden, she had a relationship with a young man for which she was ostracised by her community. Parents forbade their daughters to visit her and she was thrown out of the school she attended. Even her parents, believing this was for the best, participated in this discourse by keeping a very stringent discipline at home.

As I am a member of this same society, there are many beliefs that sometimes pull me away from the stance I would like to take. Ideas such as 'maybe you are encouraging the person to go against the community's values?' or 'aren't you going to be responsible for her violation of the law?' etc. sometimes confuse me.

What enables me to deal with these very strong beliefs is my understanding that every person has been given a degree of free will to exercise responsibly in their own way. There must be this degree of choice, and respect for it, otherwise practices of power over other people's lives can cause devastating harm. In Rose's case I think I was the first person who expressed anger at what had been done to her. Over time it was possible to join with others in the community and in her own family to explore different directions concerning her life. These explorations which acknowledged Rose's choice and will, enabled common ground to be found, but also enabled Rose to find her own path in life.

Spirituality

I would like to end by describing some personal developments that have occurred for me as a result of these explorations

In the accepted discourse of western culture in general, and professional discourses and practices in particular, there is little space for talking of God and spirituality (Griffith, 1995). Many of the above aspects of narrative practice allow space for people to speak about what gives meaning to their lives and for some people this involves personal experiences with God and spirituality.

I have found very helpful the idea that a therapy session is similar to "an anthropological voyage" – a journey into another person's world of meaning. This is not a voyage of interpretation. It is my role to be listening to the stories of the people I am meeting with, and to remain aware that I cannot know what their stories mean to them. I have a responsibility to do the utmost not to impose upon them the meanings I attribute to life, and instead to inquire constantly as to their meanings, beliefs and understandings.

When asking people with whom I work about the things which embrace them in times of hardships I often hear answers such as, "belief in God", "prayer", "trust in God" or "God's closeness". In the past I believed that such statements were openings to religious issues that should only be expressed and dealt with in religious institutions. I was influenced by ideas within this culture that a person should speak only to her Rabbi or teacher about such matters and that they ought not to be my business. Since questioning these limitations, I have found myself within conversations that have discovered many hidden aspects of human existence which enrich therapy and which make it much more meaningful both for the people I work with and for myself.

I have also been thinking a great deal about what it is about this work that I personally find spiritual. I remember a colleague once saying to me that the most meaningful aspect of what she'd experienced within narrative practices was what she described as 'the magic of the quality of listening'. This rings true for me. There is something about the particular qualities of this non-interpretive 'anthropological' listening – curiosity, respect, care, thoughtfulness – that enables the possibility of a kind of connection between people which to me feels spiritual.

Rabbi Samson Refael Hirsch lived in Germany a hundred and fifty years ago in the cradle of modern society as we know it today. He wrote a great deal about the cruelty of modern life. The Hebrew word for cruelty is 'achzar' and derives from two separate words - 'ach' and 'zar' - meaning 'only' 'estranged'. Rabbi Hirsch describes that as modern western society seeks as its ideal the individual, and as it constructs life primarily through a metaphor of a fight for existence, that this creates an environment of 'only estrangement' or cruelty. To me, the qualities of listening and communication that I have described in this paper, stand apart from so much of what makes up modern western culture.

Chasidic[xvii] sources believe that one's mission in this world is to watch out for and dis-cover the divine spark or hidden presence which keeps any person or object alive or existing. In this dis-covery both the person/object in which the spark is discovered and the discoverer are changed and elevated. For me, there is a close fit between such ideas and narrative practices in the ways in which I understand and work with them.

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Notes

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ii In Hebrew, 'Charedy' literally means anxious, however it has come to mean 'strict in preserving the Jewish Law'. Charedy Jews are a part of the religious Orthodox Jews known for their strict observance of Jewish Rabbinical law.

iii The Midrash is a compilation of Rabbinical exegeses from Biblical verses. These texts were compiled in different times from a few hundred years before the Christian Era to a few hundred years after.

iv Talmud, literally meaning learning, refers to a compilation of Rabbinical texts which is now the main text learned in Yeshivot (academies for rabbinical studies). It was compiled approximately 500 years prior to the C.E.

[v] This mono-view of life has been described by Lois Shawver (1987) as logocentric.

vi All names and places in this article have been altered in order to maintain confidentiality.

vii See note number 4.

viii Chozer BiTshuva, literally meaning returning in repentance, refers to Jews who once did not observe a religious way of life and have since decided to take upon themselves to observe the Jewish (religious) laws.

ix This is a quote from the tractate of Yuma (p 86a of the Talmud). As was mentioned previously in this paper, this idea could not apply if one was working with someone who had committed great wrongs against others. If this were the case, the emphasis on ways forward would involve the full forgiveness from the person who was sinned against would be needed.

x In the 'Charedy' community the education of girls and boys occurs separately from childcare to post high school.

xi A shull, or synagogue, is the Jewish temple for daily prayer.

xii I have placed the word professional in brackets here since I believe that many people who are not officially qualified make equally significant contributions to the lives of those in the community.

xiii Every municipality in Israel has an agency called 'School Psychological Services'.

xiv Cheder, literally meaning a room, is the name given to a religious school for boys. Historically, in the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe children were often taught in a small room adjacent to the synagogue.

xv A Rabbi is a learned person in Jewish law who is also expected to be a pious person and who leads the community by the merit of his greatness in the eyes of the community members.

xvi The teachers in the 'yeshivot' (academies for rabbinical studies) are called Rabbis. They are trusted by their students and many times also by others.

xvii The Chasidic movement is a movement within Jewish history that began in the Ukraine and Poland close to three hundred years ago. It stressed the importance for all Jews to help to bring out the spark of divinity in each person and object.