

STEVEN M. BROWN

*“I Make Jews”:
The Role of Rabbi David Mogilner, z”l,
and His Influence on Ramah*

IT WAS MY FIRST SUMMER in camp, 1961. I was in Bogrim (entering eighth grade) at Ramah Poconos, and I was trying to fit in. One day, my bunkmates decided to lift the table during the phrase in *birkat hamazon* referring to “this table at which we have eaten.” For some reason, Rabbi David Mogilner, who stormed over to our table in red-faced fury, chose to throw me out of the *hadar ochel*. He commanded me to wait for him outside. My Hebrew was good enough to have understood that much. I stood outside waiting for the next shoe to fall—maybe I would be sent home. The wait seemed interminable. All the campers and staff had already left the dining room. Finally, I saw him come out, take a seat on one of the white Adirondack chairs scattered in front of the dining room, and begin to schmooze with a few staff members. At long last he lifted his hand and beckoned me with his index finger. I think he said in Hebrew something like, “Do you know why I threw you out?” I replied in the affirmative, and he said something on the order of, “Don’t let it happen again.” I quickly returned to my bunk and huddled with my *madrish* who was aware of what had happened. It was at that moment that I learned the meaning of the bunk as “home haven,”¹ a term I was to learn formally years later when I entered the Mador program for counselors in training. But what I now know is that the phrase, which I thought “Mogy” had invented, was one he learned from his teacher, Joseph Schwab (Brown, 1997). As we learned from him, so he learned from his mentors and teachers. The elements of my encounter with Rabbi Mogilner are echoed again and again in tens upon tens of loving comments, reflections, and tributes sent to me as I began contemplating this retrospective tribute to my teacher and mentor.

RABBI STEVEN M. BROWN, Ed.D., is the head of school at the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy in Philadelphia and a former dean of the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

As I write this chapter, my career as a Jewish educator is in its forty-third year. Not a day goes by that I do not remember something Rabbi Mogilner taught me or that I do not ask myself how he might react to what I am doing, saying, or thinking. He is alive and well in my heart and mind. When I offered to write this retrospective on his influence on Ramah and me, I asked Rabbi Mitch Cohen, National Ramah Director, to send an e-mail message requesting other people's recollections of Rabbi Mogilner's work and influence. I was overwhelmed with responses. Accordingly, I decided to allow those voices to speak in this article. My own recollections about him and how he influenced me were affirmed repeatedly by testimonies to many of the same ideas, values, and philosophy of education that I feel shaped me as a young educator and have stayed with me throughout my career. Many of the reflections on particular "Mogilnerisms" stem from a document that he used to teach his famous course at the *Mador Le'immun Madrichim* (National Counselor Training Institute).

This retrospective on Rabbi Mogilner's life and influence as a Jewish educator includes a look at his strong and powerful personality as a force in itself; his role as rabbi, teacher, and mentor to a whole generation of Ramahniks; an analysis of his educational principles and theory of educational practice; comments on the centrality of Hebrew and Israel in his work; and a summary of his educational administrative approach, drawn from respondents' accounts and his own memoranda.

Launching Mogilner

David Mogilner was a bunk counselor in Camps Massad, Sollel, and Ramah Wisconsin. He directed Ramah Wisconsin (1958–59); Ramah Poconos (1960–67, 1975); Ramah Israel Seminar (1969–70); Mador (1966–67 in the Poconos and 1971–75 in the Berkshires); and served as National Ramah Director (1968–74). He graduated from Yeshiva University in 1952 and was ordained by the Rabbinical School of The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1957.

Respondents recall Rabbi Mogilner in vivid ways: a giant in my mind, fresh and enthusiastic, our rebbe, at once a tyrant, a father, a master teacher, and a source of inspiration to a seventeen-year-old kid; he was the professor for teaching group dynamics and education theory, as well as a camp director and a terrific rabbi. Some were quite afraid of him, especially when they were younger. Others, like Rabbi Wayne Franklin of Temple Emanu-El in Providence, Rhode Island, recall that "he was prepared not to be the most beloved person around because he was hard-driving and insistent. But he had his eye on the ball and helped everyone in his camp community learn to share the goals and reach the goals with him." Architect Daniel Alter describes him as "an intense man with

wavy dark hair, olive skin, a slight paunch, dark framed glasses, and a cigarette in his hand. He would shout or yell if he felt that was required to make his point. But he was often seen smiling and his intensity was part of his charisma.”

Rabbi Mogilner was a product of a different age in American education and society. Given his commitment to role modeling and being an example of the ideal person, his addiction to smoking, his often enraged temper, and his sometimes intimidating way of disciplining campers and staff probably would not be well received today. He once told us that he “decided” when he would get angry and to use anger purposefully. I wonder how much of that was a cover for his intense drive to perfect the educational environment for which he had charge and constantly to tune every aspect of it to align with his vision.

Although he enjoyed being the center of all things at camp, he could be self-effacing. Rabbi Shalom Lewis of Congregation Etz Chaim in Cobb County, Georgia, fondly recalls his 1966 Mador experiences with Mogy:

At the morning Mador meetings in front of Mogy’s house, he took one glance at our group (total of seventy-five) and could identify who was not there. It was amazing . . . no hesitation but literally a split-second glance. I recall another such meeting; for some reason none of us was sitting up close to Mogilner. He pulled off his shoes and smelled both feet as he asked, “My feet don’t smell, why are you all sitting so far back?”

Longtime Ramah staff member and Jewish educator, Edwin Frankel, Poconos radio station director, responded to Rabbi Mogilner’s request to be interviewed on the first day of camp for later broadcast (in Hebrew, of course):

Having lived for a year in Israel, I opened the give and take with the words *kevod harav* [Honorable Rabbi]. He immediately stopped me and demanded, “*Kera li David*” [call me David]. It was never easy to call him David, but from that moment his humility shined.”

So central was Rabbi Mogilner to the spirit and culture of the camp that it is easy to understand the memory described by William Agress, a religious-school teacher at The Jewish Center in Princeton:

I was at Ramah Poconos in 1964. The candidates for U.S. President that year were Johnson and Goldwater. So we decided to run our own candidate for President: David Mogilner. To this day more than forty years later, whenever I hear the song “Waltzing Matilda,” in my mind it becomes “Launching Mogilner, launching Mogilner, *anahnu* launching Mogilner *hayom*.”

The song went on with the words: *hu oleh ve’oleh umistovev bamarom, anahnu* launching Mogilner *hayom*. But William neglected to add the second verse, which I remember very well. Lest anyone think Mogilner’s decisions and personality were always popular with campers, another verse was later appended: Launching

Mogilner, launching Mogilner . . . *hu yored veyored umistovev begebinnom, anahnu launching Mogilner hayom!*²

The approach-avoidance many felt toward Rabbi Mogilner is captured by attorney Morton M. Steinberg, the immediate past president of the National Ramah Commission, who remembers him as camp director in Wisconsin (1958–59).

He always spoke *only* Hebrew to the campers, which distanced him from us but in retrospect was the encouragement we needed to learn the language— if you wanted to know what was going on and what was being said during announcements, you had to learn Hebrew. As a result of his demeanor and his Hebrew, we all expected that he would be very strict in his discipline if we had to encounter him directly for any misbehavior. Of course, when the time came when I had to face him directly (I was fourteen), I was not happy. . . . It occurred when about five of us were horsing around in our cabin and eventually caused the pipe to a bathroom sink to break, spurting water all over the bathroom of an adjoining cabin. This was major and the next day we were called into the director's office. He was very serious and spoke in a grave tone of voice. Of course, he spoke in Hebrew so I didn't understand a word of what he said, but one of the guys did, and he was our spokesman. And he responded repeatedly with *ken* and *lo*. Finally, it was evident that Mogilner was through talking, and we got up to leave. When we got outside, we all asked our friend what our punishment was to be—we each had to pay camp a 25-cent canteen book coupon for the repair of the pipe! I was never so relieved in my life.

Why are these incidents so seared in our memories? They are not bitter memories, but ones in which we were deeply impressed with the man's principles and standards. Was he the demanding parent, the drill sergeant, or just a man who was passionate about his vision of how things ought to be? He had a clear, articulate vision of 24/7 educational theory and practice that guided every waking moment. Perhaps this comment from attorney Lois Gimpel Shaukat helps us better understand the combination of strictness and benevolence that characterized this man:

I learned from Rabbi Mogilner many things and for some reason the thing that stands out—and this seem peculiar to some—is that “less is more.” His presence—both in stature and style was imposing—at least to me, and I'm pretty sure to other campers as well. With that imposing presence was an incredible warmth and sense of caring—a pretty atypical combination of personality traits. The way I learned from him that “less is more” is that with a glance—either approving or disapproving, a smirk or a stern eye—he conveyed a very clear message. Without saying a word, he was able to convey depths, and I used to find myself amazed at the extent to which he seemed

to know exactly what was going on where and with whom at all times. I learned from his behavior . . . that few words and small gestures have more power than many words and big gestures.

Interestingly enough, long before cognitive research in education pointed to the power of covering less content but studying it in greater depth (less is more), Mogilner seemed to intuit this research-based finding, making it part of his own theory of practice.

Rabbi Mogilner's humility and constant role-modeling manifest themselves in small but powerful ways. Joanne Ginn Glassoff, teacher at Solomon Schechter Academy in Howell, New Jersey, and at Congregation B'nai Israel in Toms River, New Jersey, recounts her summer in Bogrim when it was her bunk's turn to wait tables.

Somehow I was assigned to the *hanbalah* (senior staff) table. It was my first experience carrying so many dishes and doing all that is involved with meal time tasks. . . . I was in awe of the rabbinic presence and weight at the table. Rabbi Mogilner always helped me clear the table and stack so I would not be the last one into the kitchen with my dishes, as he saw I was having trouble getting the adults to finish so I could clear. I remember a kind hand and face that I could count on at each meal that week.

He also could be quite insistent about the way people treated one another in day to day encounters at camp. Cindy Goldfarb Blum, an early-intervention specialist, describes one encounter:

As a Bogrim camper at Ramah Poconos during the summer of 1966, I developed a friendship with a slightly older boy who was a member of the kitchen staff. Typically, during meal times, he would venture out of the kitchen into the *hadar ochel* to be sure the wait staff was performing adequately. If he neared my table, we would exchange greetings. It was during one of these greetings that Mogilner overheard me refer to my friend as "kitchen boy." What a mistake that was! Swiftly, Mogy escorted me outside, chastised me for using a term that could be interpreted as referring to a person of lesser value and embarked on a lecture about social strata and respect for all individuals regardless of the role they played in a community. The incident left me in tears for more than a day. Despite the fact that I had used the term in jest, playfully flirting with this older boy, the incident had a strong impact on me. And, quite surprisingly, as a college student and in my developing professional life, it remained a constant reminder of the place in society people often find themselves and the dignity they must to perform a contributory role. I spent a great part of my career in special education and early intervention working for a nonprofit human services agency in Head Start communities in Philadelphia. It was in these communities that Rabbi Mogilner's words constantly reverberated in my ears.

Rabbi Mogilner was a passionate, zealous, and assertive presence—always “on” and always in charge. He was mission driven, could get upset if things were done that violated his educational and religious principles, but would show that half smile, acknowledging his delight and embrace of campers and staff when pleased. Rabbi Benjy Segal, who directed the Ramah Programs in Israel, summarizes this complex man when he says:

Perhaps I should immediately correct the impression that he was our “rebbe.” He had his Hasidim [disciples], and I was one of them, but he did not play the role of *tzaddik* [righteous person]—or if he did, it was a *tzaddik* for an age that was cynical, sober, enlightened, doubting, an age of faith that was more determination than blindness. He did not hide his faults. He was too busy doing to worry about that. He did not pretend to be holy or particularly spiritual, and I grew to understand that refusal to reflect his self-image as an educator, one who eschewed any hint of manipulation. . . . Certainly David would not be comfortable with my sentimentality, though I can imagine him smiling because, among his other charming characteristics, he knew he was that good. I might only conclude by saying that his biggest heritage was the demonstration that education works. That simple message has supported me throughout my professional career.

The full force of Mogilner’s personality, energy, and drive left lasting impressions on campers, staff, and even parents. Parting the veils of nostalgia would force us to admit that he might have tried more subtle approaches at times to make his points and still be successful in getting his message across, but then we might not have attributed so much of what we learned to his influence and overwhelming force. I do not think he acted this way to create a legacy; he just lived out his mission, passion, and vision day to day, thus leaving so many indelible impressions.

His decision to teach the Mador and his madrichim on a regular basis (two to three times per week) also should be noted. Modern management theory suggests that leaders should delegate everything possible to subordinates *except that which only they can do themselves*. Rabbi Mogilner understood well that if he were to have a profound influence on the camp culture and educational milieu, he had to work with his staff, personally, on a regular basis to help shape their thinking and work. I learned from that, and when I became head of a large Solomon Schechter day school in Philadelphia, I taught my Jewish studies faculty weekly and the entire faculty monthly. Nothing I did made more of an impact than that “teacher-student” relationship with my staff. It was a profound lesson I learned from Rabbi Mogilner. As Ramah reaches its sixtieth anniversary, the directorate ought to remember its critical role in shaping the minds and hearts of staffs and recognize the tasks that should be delegated and those that remain the prerogative of the top leader.

Ramah is My Pulpit

David Mogilner also was a rabbi and teacher of great significance for numerous campers and staff, leaving a life-long imprint on their minds, souls, and hearts. Vicky Kelman, director of family education at the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) of San Francisco, upon receiving the 2003 Covenant Award, wrote:

I became a Jewish educator because a significant teacher (Rabbi David Mogilner) told me one summer, “You have the power to change the world.” His words became entwined with the famous Robert Kennedy saying, “Some men see things as they are and say ‘why?’ I dream things that never were and say ‘Why not?’” A gift of having come of age in the Sixties is the optimism that one individual can make a difference and that a group of individuals with shared goals can change the world. (Covenant Foundation, 2003)

For many respondents and for me personally, David Mogilner was in every sense a rabbi, teacher, and mentor. Unfortunately, he left us very little in the way of articles or writings, other than his camp handouts, administrative memoranda, and one article, entitled “Ramah is My Pulpit,” which appeared in the Ramah fiftieth anniversary volume in which he enunciated his personal mission as rabbi and teacher:

Immediately upon being ordained by the Seminary, I accepted an appointment as a Ramah director. My mother was upset; what could tell [*sic*] her friends when they asked about me and the pulpit I didn't accept. She found it difficult to say that I was a camp director. After all those years of study and preparation, it didn't sound like a “job for a nice Jewish rabbi.” She didn't think to say I was a Jewish educator—there was no formal school building involved. She chose rather to say, “He works with youth.” She really was right; Ramah was my pulpit and my constituency was young people. . . . Through the years, whenever I would speak to a group of parents about Ramah, I would define Ramah as a “Jewish, educational institution in a camp setting.” I would talk about Ramah and not Camp Ramah. I was very careful about the words that I chose and I wasn't playing semantic games. Yes, the “Ramah experience” takes place in a camp setting, but the notion of Ramah as “just a camp” does injustice to it as the major force it is in Jewish life. . . . Every Ramah director is the director of a “*heder* under the elms”—which provides Hebrew language studies for everyone; Jewish ideas for everyone; each according to his own level, her own background and intellectual maturity. . . . Next time they ask you, Ma, tell them what I do, tell them why I do it. Tell them I have a job that befits a “nice Jewish rabbi.” Tell them I wouldn't have done it differently if I had to start over again. But, most important of all, Ma, tell them “Ramah makes Jews.” (Mogilner 1997, 89, 90, 93)

Perhaps, without even knowing it, Rabbi Mogilner eliminated the over-used and misunderstood dichotomy between formal and informal education.

That dichotomy has become an unhelpful canard in education. A “*heder* under the elms” is a wonderful way of eliminating the false notion that educational settings or institutions are either formal schools or informal experiential places. Both have elements of informal and formal structures in order to be impactful and compelling. As we shall see later, his educational principles crossed these artificial boundaries to create a holistic approach to education that enveloped the whole person. Ironically, the “*heder* under the elms” image was all too true. Although the camp reflected a Deweyian progressive philosophy, often the “formal” classes were mired in a traditionalist, frontal, very non-progressive approach. Ramah has struggled with this conundrum for years, often lessening or eliminating some of its “formal” classes. But we ought to realize that less of bad is not better. The same dynamism and creativity that goes into the rest of the program should be used to target a reconsideration of the “formal” or text study portion of the program drawing from the constructivist, personal meaning-making approach based on cognitive research on how people learn best. The “*heder* under the elms” could become a place where students learn cooperatively, actively, and are able to make personal meaning from what they study.

Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Rector of the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, eloquently testifies to Rabbi Mogilner’s hands-on style of leadership and the life changing role he played in campers’ lives:

It was the summer of 1958 at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin. I was 15. Every Monday night throughout the summer Rabbi Mogilner met with the Machon [the division of the oldest campers] to discuss Jewish practices and beliefs. At the first session, he started by asking how many of us kept kosher in and out of our homes. A certain number of people raised their hands. Then he asked how many of us did not keep kosher at all, and some of us raised our hands. Then he asked how many of us kept kosher at home but not out, which was my family’s practice, and so I raised my hand along with others. Then he said: “It’s you guys that I don’t understand!” After all, we were inconsistent. Then, from week to week, beginning with concrete issues like *kashrut* and Shabbat and gradually engaging more abstract issues like revelation, prayer, and finally God, he was on the attack, effectively asking how anyone in his or her right mind could follow any of the traditional practices or believe any of the traditional beliefs. Now I recognize that was an ingenious tactic to take with teenagers, for it made us defend the tradition, rather than the other way around. Furthermore, for me, a rebel at heart . . . , this was nothing short of a revelation. Here was a rabbi, someone who had devoted his life to the Jewish tradition, and he was not only willing and able, but actually eager to ask questions that would undermine the basis of everything Jewish. More than any of the answers any of us suggested that summer, what stuck in my mind is the depth of the questions and the openness to consider and evaluate any answer. This convinced me that you did

not have to turn off your mind to be seriously Jewish, that Judaism clearly engaged your emotions, made an art of your life, and stimulated you to act morally, but it was open to deep intellectual inquiry as well. It was after that summer that I became an observant Jew. . . . David Mogilner had instilled in me the sense that my Jewish commitments were not simply a matter of habit or family tradition, but of serious and well thought-out conviction.

Rabbi Mogilner's influence was more than as a camp director or teacher.

Rabbi Benjy Segal writes:

I see David as my teacher and rabbi, and I understand his influence on my life to have been immense. . . . David . . . was the first person to teach me Jewish thought, in monthly evenings [sessions] he would hold for teenagers in his home; and [he was] one of the first people to teach me Talmud (in a small group of three, all intending to go to rabbinical school). This model of personal integration of Jewish knowledge from various fields and general knowledge taken from varied disciplines was and remains for me the challenge of a decent Jewish educator. He achieved it, lived it, and demonstrated it, leaving it as a model for all who worked under him.

Paul Plotkin of Temple Beth Am in Margate, Florida, a youth director and rabbi for over thirty years recounts what he learned from Mogilner:

This is not a nine-to-five job I have. It is a lifetime calling of "Mogilner education," causing people to choose to change their behavior to a more intense Jewish life. Therefore, my life needed to be lived but always in such a way that it didn't interfere with my calling. I and my family, of course, had many needs, and we addressed them and lived them (well and fully I hope) but always 'off the clock' because when I was 'on duty' I was educating, and that was my focus. I chose this life, Mogilner framed it for me, and therefore, I was not resentful nor ever saw the job as in conflict with my needs. I always took care of them, but I learned at Mador to take care of them first and then totally dedicate myself to my "students."

Laurie Hoffman, executive director of the Center for Jewish Education of Rockland County, New York, remembers Rabbi Mogilner's teaching abilities:

[M]y teacher Rabbi David Mogilner, may he rest in peace, was by far the best teacher I have ever learned from. He integrated every aspect of teaching and learning into our [Mador] program. He was an excellent example, he made us into a group, he taught us process and used the process himself, he taught us problem solving by giving us *real* problems to solve. He was an example in total of what he taught.

Yes, he ran things like a boot camp and was very demanding. And yes, educational theory has changed considerably since then as have so many Jewish communal dynamics, but his passion for teaching and touching lives remains as an enduring legacy. Rabbi Moshe Saks adds:

I had already decided to apply to JTS Rabbinical School, and both working for David Mogilner and getting to know him only strengthened my desire to become a Conservative rabbi. . . . Even today, I still use a Mogilner phrase when asked what I do for a living (the same question Mogilner was often asked by his mother when he was a camp director). “I make Jews,” he used to say. After twenty-five years in the rabbinate, I haven’t found any other phrase that so perfectly fits what we do.

Rabbi Cliff Miller, senior cataloger, Library of JTS, and rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Bayonne, New Jersey, recalled a phrase in Rambam (Maimonides) he learned from Mogilner in a section warning about whom to appoint as a judge. Though Rambam states this concept in the negative, that is, not to appoint one who is not of the following characteristics, Rabbi Miller remembers it in the positive sense as summarizing Mogilner as teacher and rabbi to so many:

Isb hagun vebakham behokhmat hatorah—‘a worthy man, learned in the wisdom of the Torah’ (Maimonides). David Mogilner used the strength of his personality; his strong, principled, and integrated approach to education and Judaism; and his natural teaching abilities in the service of shaping and molding the hearts and minds of many who would go on to leadership positions in the Jewish community all over the world. He understood Ramah’s original mission to prepare leaders for the Conservative Movement and North American Jewry. His success in achieving those goals reverberates till this day.

***Da Lifnei Mi Attah Omed*³: Some Principles of Mogilner Education**

In a course I regularly taught in the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at JTS, “Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction,” I always began the first class by asking students to review what in my opinion is the finest curriculum ever written. I divided them into groups and assigned different parts of the curriculum to each, inviting them to extrapolate or tease out the underlying educational principles that are antecedent to the particular curricular item. We then generated a list of principles and analyzed them. That curriculum, “The Counselor’s Daily Routine,” (see excerpts in Appendix A and related educational principles in Appendix B) was written by Rabbi Mogilner who used it as the centerpiece of his education course for the Mador Le’immun Madrichim, the National Ramah Counselor Training Institute, which he headed. He spent the entire summer unpacking its underlying conceptual and educational basis.⁴ It was the first, most powerful, and still to this day, the finest course in education I have ever had. Many of the respondents to my call for reminiscences for this article concur. It is the richest, most powerful expression of the daily enactment of a truly integrated approach to formal and

informal experiential learning. And though fashion may change (few of us put on *maggafayim* [overshoes] when it rains), his concern for the physical welfare of children, for example, is still very much central to any educational enterprise. A fusion of principles 17 and 20 (see Appendix B) still means that camp staff should spread out among campers during *tefillah* and “over pray” to serve as role models and encourage imitation.

Rabbi Mogilner was really the first college professor for many of my generation. We had just graduated from high school and entered the Mador program. He treated us as young adults, not older teenagers. He took Schwab’s approach to inquiry methodology seriously and created an academic and curricular structure that made us think. He asked us to work backwards, to extrapolate from the givens of camp (e.g., waking up before the campers, waking them individually, looking at routine behavior as a source of understanding developmental and personal issues) the underlying educational principles that gave rise to these particular ways of enactment in everyday camp life. No wonder so many respondents credit him with such a profound influence throughout the rest of their adult lives. He was the first person to invite us to reflect somewhat objectively on our own educational experience and to teach us a way of mature thinking and acting that was transferable to parenthood, professional life, and standards of educational practice. He transmitted a theory of practice.⁵ Though the “Counselors Daily Routine” looks like a cookbook, he used it simply as a starting point to engage Madorniks and counselors in thinking about a theory of educational practice that was holistic, learner centered, and transformative. He was, quite simply, the master of what we call informal education, which is better termed, educating the whole person. He translated theory into everyday tangible practice. Ruth Tomases Joffe, Ph.D., recalls:

After a fellow Madornik was tardy to class, Rabbi Mogilner taught that when one arrives late to a class or meeting, it suggests that the person who is late values his own time above that of others. While I cannot claim to always be punctual, I make an effort to be, in part because of this view. This perspective has influenced my way of approaching human interactions in general by encouraging me to take into consideration the influence of my behavior on others.

The first summer I was a madrich, I was in charge of the youngest bunk in camp. One of my ten-year-old campers was having a very bad day and evening and was getting into fights and fisticuffs with other kids in the bunk. I actually had to wrestle him down to the ground and get on top of him to stop his outbursts. He had lost his father not too long before, and I think he was angry inside. When I tried to calm him, he just screamed back, “Why should I stop?” I replied without hesitation: “Because you are a Jew, and this is not how

Jews behave!” I felt all the tension go out of his body. He relaxed. I guess the combined weight of my body and three thousand years of Jewish tradition gave him pause. We had no further trouble with him the rest of the summer. This incident was for me the coming together of all that Mogilner taught me about the teachable moment, and the necessity of understanding the importance of daily, routine behaviors in children in order to educate them toward a given end.

Judy Dvorak Gray, director of communications for Masorti Olami, the World Council of Conservative Synagogues, details yet another example of the teachable moment, which occurred during the summer of 1962 when she and several other twelve- to thirteen-year-olds were sent to Rabbi Mogilner’s house by their counselors after picking on a fellow camper:

We sat on the rug on the floor of his home, and he stood over us, looking each one of us directly in the eye: “*Da lifnei mi atah omed!*” he boomed out. “Know before whom you stand!” he repeated. I knew who was standing before me, and I was petrified! It took me a while to realize that he was talking about God and that he was teaching us that God judges all of our actions including how we treat our fellow human beings. It was indeed a powerful lesson. By the end of the session, we were crying—not because of any punishment imposed on us, but because we realized the effect of our actions on our bunkmate. To this day, when I hear that expression, I am back on the rug in his house and trembling!

Although those of us who knew Mogilner thought most, if not all, of his ideas were his inventions, it is important to note that he was part of a cohort of pioneer Ramah directors heavily influenced by the guiding hand of Rabbi Seymour Fox, dean of the JTS Teachers Institute. In the service of Ramah, Fox drafted many JTS faculty members and other well-known educators such as Ralph W. Tyler of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and Joseph Schwab, Harper Fellow of the University of Chicago (Brown 1997). Fox, Mogilner, and the other early pioneer directors were heavily influenced by Lou Newman, who directed Ramah Wisconsin (1951–53) and later became my predecessor as head of the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education at JTS.

His ideas were strongly influenced by those of John Dewey, and the Progressive approach to education permeated many elements of his thinking. Committed to participatory education and to a democratic environment, Newman was noted for his dual belief in respect for the individual and individual respect for the group. Most important, because he believed that camp could affect character, he wanted to create an atmosphere to build it—not only one that would teach Hebrew and provide a “good time.” (Schwartz 1987)⁶

The “Counselor’s Daily Routine” is a very detailed list of actions based on theory. Mogilner was a stickler for details because he believed the educative process was embedded in the myriad of daily encounters and decisions made by staff relating to campers. Professor Joe Lukinsky, z”l, reminds us:

David was extremely careful about preparation. He hated sloppiness in this regard. He was famous for “Mogilner’s Laws,” which were actually the famous “Murphy’s laws” although he may have had a few original ones, too. The one that he stressed the most was: “Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong.” If you were using a film projector or slide projector, it had to be in working order and the one in charge of the program had to test it in advance and know how to work it, too. Also crucial was the matter of alternatives. What will you do if, in spite of all care, the projector does not work? What is your alternative in reserve, and it had better be good, too. No excuses.”

Ultimately, it was from his behaviorist definition of education that all the myriad of details flowed: education is a process of changing people’s behavior with a given goal or end in mind. Notice his important use of the word process, which implies iteration, recursiveness, and repetition. This notion of changing people’s behavior based on values was reinforced daily by Mogilner. Long before the movement for outcomes-based assessment appeared that is so prevalent today, he focused his staff on an outcomes- or goals-oriented approach to educational planning. Formative and summative evaluations were not much a part of his teaching, other than to be implicitly contained in thinking through the planning and execution of an educational program.

Careful attention should be paid to the list of educational principles in Appendix B derived from the “Counselor’s Daily Routine.” The last six are particularly powerful metacognitive approaches to educational practice. Mogilner defined morality as the conflict between right and wrong. He taught that ethics is the conflict between opposing “rights” or forces. Thus, in many educational settings, the tension that must be negotiated is between conflicting rights, for example, attending to the needs of the group while caring about the individual. On another level, it’s the conflict of allocation of scarce resources (money and personnel) in an educational setting; or about resolving the tension teachers face as to whether coverage of more material or in depth treatment of less material is the way to shape instruction.⁷ Similarly, as in #17, sometimes the educational means to an end is a goal in itself. The way a madrich leads a bunk discussion on a group problem or on setting up a routine task such as daily *nikkayon* (bunk clean up) teaches a methodology of democratic problem solving in a respectful manner. Perhaps most critical to the educational enterprise is #21, that is, very few educational situations can be reduced to the application of only one principle. This is the counterweight to a cookbook approach that the “Counselor’s

Daily Routine” might seem to infer. Teaching recent high school graduates in the Mador on the verge of their college years to think this way was a bold and innovative approach to shaping their theory of educational practice. Mogilner’s emphasis on detail, the interrelatedness of all the parts to the educational whole made him the exemplar of holistic, integrated, and transformative educational theory and practice.

Ivri — Dabber Ivrit!

It was 1963, and I was a camper in the Machon, the oldest division in the Poconos. My wonderful counselor, Shelly Podwol (now Rabbi Shalom Podwol of Congregation Am Ehad in Park Forest, Illinois) decided our bunk would perform two songs in front of the camp at dinner one evening in the *hadar ochel*. One song was in Hebrew, the other in English. After the applause, we sat down at our tables, and Rabbi Mogilner stormed over, enraged. He said in Hebrew, of course, to us, “Thank you very much for destroying Hebrew in camp!” Mild-mannered, sweet Shelly was stung because he meant no harm. Quietly, over the next few days he procured a translation of the English song, and we proceeded to learn it in Hebrew and perform it in the *hadar ochel*. Rabbi Mogilner was pleased. I remember the first words of the song to this day: *levanah kehullah hibbita alai levad, beli halom benafshi, beli ahuvati*—the first line of “Blue Moon.” It was a time in the history of Ramah in the Poconos when the only permissible language spoken in the *hadar ochel* or in any public setting was Hebrew; no compromises, no justifications for English.

Lois Gimpel Shaukat recounts a poignant story of Mogilner’s powerful commitment to speaking Hebrew at camp:

[J]ust a few days before his sudden death, we performed [the play] “*Isb Hasid Haya*” [Once There Was a Hasid] as our *edab* (Bogrim) play. One of the vignettes was the story of a very large man named Gedalia. . . . I played the part of Gedalia, and . . . I needed to borrow a pair of pants from Rabbi Mogilner. I didn’t exactly relish having to ask Rabbi Mogilner (in Hebrew, of course, since he would ignore you if you spoke to him in English) to borrow his pants for a play. I did ask him, . . . and of course, I had to explain to him exactly why I needed to borrow *his* pants—a delicate matter for a fourteen-year-old girl with not great Hebrew. And of course, Rabbi Mogilner in his inimitable style of few words and heavy gestures, insisted on a detailed explanation—anything to get a kid to keep speaking in Hebrew. Anyway, I borrowed the pants, stuffed them with lots of pillows, performed the play, and I returned them to him at dinner a couple days later, the day before he died. I mostly think of Rabbi Mogilner as having pants that were not easy to fill.

Mogilner's commitment to Hebrew was soulful and natural. Edwin Frankel recounts it well:

From the very start it was clear that Hebrew, a Ramah value that I held especially dear, was truly central to him. Ramah directors at all the camps in which I worked spoke Hebrew publicly. He also spoke Hebrew in private, depending on who was around. It was fully natural, never strained, and rarely particularly sophisticated. The Hebrew he spoke was Hebrew that the campers and staff could readily understand.

David was always an accessible role model. How many of us recall the famous Mogilnerisms: "*Hasha'ah achshav, lefi she'oni shehu be'etzem she'on hamahaneh, hi . . .*" and "*Im kar li, kar lachem, vekar li!*"⁸ William Agress reminds us that "he had a unique way of combining English and Hebrew that allowed campers to understand him and learn Hebrew at the same time. Whenever we left the *hadar ochel* [or when instructing waiters to continue their work during announcements], we were told to do it '*besheket uv-finesse.*'"⁹ Rabbi Mogilner was heavily influenced by his knowledge of the approach of Camp Massad in the 1940s and inspired by his own experience at Sollel, a work-study, Hebrew-speaking camp for seventeen-year-olds with differing approaches to Zionism (Schwartz, 1987).

For Mogilner, the Hebrew language was the key to the kingdom of Jewish identity, learning, and love of the people and land of Israel.¹⁰ It was central to the formation of a unique group culture and individual bonding with the larger group. From his earliest days as a counselor at Massad, Sollel, and Ramah Wisconsin, he was an ardent Zionist and eventually fulfilled his lifelong dream of making aliyah.

Mogilner's lifelong commitment to Israel and his personal goal of aliyah is echoed in the offering of Rabbi David Geffen, Ph.D., author of the *American Heritage Haggadah*:

[I] met him twice—once at camp, the other [time] at a study group for Conservative professionals, not rabbis, in Judaica, at the home of the Tigays [Dr. Jeffrey and Helene] in Philly . . . we were studying material from *Yehezkel* [the prophet Ezekiel] . . . Chaim and Adina Potok, the Tigays, the Silbersteins, the Mogilners. . . Jeff Tigay presented, Potok responded, the rest of us were quiet. Mogilner shouted out: "Why in the world are we studying *Yehezkel*? We all belong in Israel where the dry bones¹¹ (he said it in Hebrew) are truly alive. If we want Conservative Jewry to make an impact on Israel, you Tigays, you Potoks, you Silbersteins, you Geffens must make aliyah." A year later, Mogilner [was] dead; three years later we made aliyah.

Mogilner was very instrumental in increasing the number and quality of Israelis (the *mishlahat*) who were recruited to work in the Ramah camps each

summer. He insisted that they be met at the airports (I assume as a gesture of hospitality and to prevent them from taking any side trips before arriving at camp!). In June 1972, he wrote in a memo to directors:

It is my understanding that those *mishlabat* members who will be going to Canada and Wisconsin will be housed overnight, and all others will be picked up at the airport and taken directly to camp. Please arrange that this be done by someone more than just a driver, whose Hebrew is a bit more expansive than *ken or lo*. (Mogilner, June 13, 1973)

Checklists and the No Trust Assumption

Long before modern business theory and practice touted the benefits of “management by walking around,” Rabbi Mogilner practiced that strategy zealously in his daily administration work at camp. Dr. Baruch Feldstern of Pardes Institute in Jerusalem testifies to Rabbi Mogilner’s penchant for knowing what was going on and demanding that people think through their educational decision making:

While I cherish my years at Ramah and greatly enjoyed the summers that I was a counselor, the role itself of being a counselor under Mogilner was not relaxing. I think I went around expecting that at any moment he might pop out from behind a tree and ask me, “What is your educational justification for the activity that you just ran?” Once it actually happened just that way. One Shabbat morning my campers had tefillot, followed by a talk or some other program in which they were totally passive, followed by lunch. After lunch they were supposed to have, say, forty-five minutes of rest time. I felt they had had more than enough inactivity already, plus I knew that they often missed out on tennis courts or sports fields because older campers beat them to it Shabbat afternoons. After half an hour I let them leave the bunk for the fields. As I was myself walking up from the bunk, Mogilner popped out from behind that ominous tree and said, “Where are your campers?” Feeling like Adam in the Garden, I told him what I had done and spelled out my rationale. He simply said, “Okay,” and moved on, probably looking for another tree to hide behind. I don’t think he thought that I had done something great. But I think that at worst, he may have considered what I had done as an error of judgment, and he was satisfied that I was thinking the way he wanted his counselors to think.

There is an important message in this tale of Mogy hiding behind the trees. He was not a perfectionist so much as someone insistent upon thinking through one’s educational goals and objectives. He could tolerate errors of judgment but had little patience for sloppy planning or lack of thoughtfulness in making educational decisions.

Attorney Gerry Kobell, a former Poconos business manager, a long-time member of the Camp Ramah in New England executive committee, and

a former officer of the National Ramah Commission (NRC), has eloquently summarized the thoughts and experience of many respondents' views of Rabbi Mogilner's administrative talents and focus:

David Mogilner was a master teacher, who taught me, as his business manager at Camp Ramah in the Poconos for five years, from 1962 through 1966, (and as a Bogrim madrich in 1961) to find the ways and means, even in a remote setting with [a] limited budget, to enable specialists to actualize their ideas and programs to the maximum extent. The achievement of excellence was always the objective. David was also a consummate administrator, and the camp hanhalah meetings unhesitatingly tackled the myriad of programming and scheduling conflicts that taxed our limited facilities, especially on rainy days. We had schedules for *yom bruntsb* [brunch day], *yom bruntsb gashum* [rainy brunch days], *yom meyuhad* [special days], and *yom kerikhim* [sandwich days], all with their special changes involving seven *edot*. . . . And he did it all in Hebrew and with good humor. I remember one day in late April, in my first month as business manager that he called me with what he called "good news and bad news." What was the bad news? The caretaker just quit. What was the good news? David said that he was not very good anyway! It was hardly an auspicious beginning for a new business manager entering into his senior year of college, but David was not worried. He had utmost faith in the people he had chosen for an assignment, and we all felt strongly committed to fulfill his expectation to the maximum extent possible. David also seemed to have boundless energy. Despite the late night meetings, he was the first one up to meet with the camp doctor, dining room steward, and myself to review the day and the problems that could be encountered. David did not have late mornings. He only had late evenings. . . . He was also keenly aware of the enormity of the task before us as Jewish educators. He knew that many of our campers encountered varied degrees of practice and observance at home and that the Jewish living we were teaching could not always be continued through the year. "*al na nerammeh et atzmeinu*" he would say, "we should not deceive ourselves that we would always be successful."¹²

Miles Bunder, retired Jewish educator and founder of Yashar Lachayal in Israel, comments on his experience of Rabbi Mogilner's administrative concerns:

In 1965 I served as assistant steward in Poconos as part of a training program approved by Burt Cohen. Did it again in 1966 and in 1968 took over as steward in Camp Ramah Canada for four years. Then Palmer in 1973. . . . Rabbi Mogilner taught me the importance of serving good, wholesome food to staff and campers, and how it affected each and every day. We would meet every morning, and when we saw rain, or a particularly tough day, we would change the menu to offer a better dessert, or add some "child friendly" items to the menu. I loved Rabbi Mogilner. I considered him one of the reasons I went into Jewish education and stayed with it for forty years.

He was the ideal director, except for one fault, which he and I joked about—he looked terrible in shorts.

Two major administrative philosophies were foundational to Rabbi Mogilner. He believed strongly in creating an administrative checklist for all educational programming and planning and using that list to insure that all the details of a plan or project were fine tuned, checkable, and thought through in advance. This made an indelible impression on Rabbi Wayne Franklin:

I remember learning from David about making checklists for programs—learning to think through each and every detail that would be needed to prepare for an event, execute an event, and finish up after one. I still use what I learned from him. It may not be the most profound lesson he taught, but it has been very helpful. And I can tell when others don't prepare this way!!

His second major managerial belief was his “no trust assumption.” Although he believed in delegation of responsibility, he also believed that it was the supervisor's sacred responsibility to assume that the tasks assigned may not be properly performed unless the supervisor checked on progress and verified compliance. Dr. Joe Freedman, director of Ramah Programs in Israel, puts it this way:

The No Trust Assumption: don't rely on any person or thing unless you have a reason to (from experience). Sounds very cruel—like something Donald Trump would say, but it really works!

Rabbi Mogilner became the first National Ramah Director in 1968. Unfortunately, Ramah's economic health and the momentum of the founding generation was in decline and Rabbi Mogilner “reaped the whirlwind” (Brown, 1997). Similarly, the youth culture of the late sixties and early seventies became suspicious of authority and “presented the camps and their sponsoring institution (JTS) with unprecedented challenges” (Brown, 1997). Rabbi Mogilner's administrative style as National Director reflects this mode. His memoranda to camp directors preserved in the JTS Ratner Center for Conservative Judaism Archives are quite stark, commanding, top down, and no nonsense. He is focused on proper billing and collection of fees; sees himself as commander-in-chief of all the camps and head steward of upholding their fiscal and spiritual standards and quality. But that half smile is evident in his ability to poke fun at himself, such as in a memo that begins: “I am enclosing a literary selection from the *Wall Street Journal* regarding opening and closing dates of camp, mishlahat evaluations, Ramah printing, all past sins and future omissions.” It is a cartoon of an executive sitting behind a desk piled high with papers, talking to a colleague standing alongside saying: “These memos are to remind me of those memos” (Mogilner 1972).

He worked with the camp directors as a cohort and was open to innovative approaches to deal with some of the youth culture issues such as the proposal by Poconos director, Danny Margolis (now the director of the BJE of Greater Boston), in 1974 to

restructure the camp educationally, religiously, and programmatically (as well as administratively) in order to improve the quality of the camp's program, as well as to test a series of alternative designs for how summer camps, particularly Ramah camps, should be structured and organized.

Although open to this radical proposal, Mogilner's memo to directors reads:

I must insist on an immediate reaction, if you have not already done so (see my memorandum to you of October 10). I think Danny's proposal will have a tremendous effect on the Ramah camps if followed in its entirety and before allowing him to go ahead, in whole or in part, I would like to hear from you." (Mogilner 1973)¹³

The financial woes of the camps and the Seminary's vulnerability resulted in numerous memos on fiscal prudence and responsibility. In one colorful memo, he wrote:

I am writing to remind you of the need for monthly billings, even during the course of the summer, for all your camper and accounts receivable, so that you do not get caught in September with the huge account receivable sums that were outstanding at the end of last session.

He adds five colorful stickers that can be appended to different bills urging payment or noting past due status. In response, another director sent him an alternative set of stickers that his camp preferred. It's not clear whose stickers prevailed (Mogilner 1971a).

He was driven even in this national role to make people live up to what he perceived as their responsibilities and would brook no equivocation: "If you don't return immediately your comments on the general salary scale and the medical salaries sheet you will spend a lot more time sitting at the directors meetings" (Mogilner 1970).

Rabbi Mogilner's own tensions between caring about others and achieving his educational objectives in his way are evidenced by the following two examples of his administrative style and thoughts as National Ramah Director. In one memo he bemoans

the noise level and time wasted during meetings [of Ramah directors]. Along with individual's [*sic*] senses of frustration are problems (serious problems) in our own group dynamics. I'm not a nut on sensitivity training and dynamics—certainly not in the light of what has been said around the table before about these—BUT it is incredible how often we interrupt

each other, how often we are defensive, we go out to score points and not to raise issues or arguments, and wind up shouting and trying to get things out without any realization of where we've been, where we're trying to go, etc. We cannot afford to look forward to seven days of meeting with no agreement on these matters. I refuse to participate in sessions where one person will say "please don't interrupt, let me finish" and then go right on and interrupt someone else. I'd like your comments. (P.S. There are others who felt similarly). (Mogilner 1969)

All this from the man to whom we all looked to learn the art and practice of group dynamics with campers and how to lead a discussion with them! In his attempt to centralize authority and leadership of the camps in the national office, he writes:

I am writing in regard to the Ongoing Ramah Policies. Now that the book is pretty much complete, I expect the procedures to be followed at every one of our camps and in all areas. I would expect that every administrator especially familiarize himself with those sections that deal with tuition procedures, guest procedures, medical procedures, fiscal procedures and administrative, maintenance and commissary procedures. I would expect records to be kept according to the procedures, inventories to be made up according to the procedures, etc., etc. *Deviation from these procedures as presented will not be acceptable without written confirmation from me.* [Italics are mine] (Mogilner 1971b)

Rabbi Mogilner's complexity as a man and an educational leader led, I believe to constant tensions within him between the *matzui* and the *ratzui*—between reality and the desirable. Perhaps this final vignette, which captures yet another side of his administrative role, for example, relating to parents, best captures that tension: Sandy Savitz Gruenberg, Judaic Studies Curriculum Coordinator and Learning Center Director of the Solomon Schechter Lower School of Westchester, writes:

Rabbi Mogilner was frequently so cool and strict with parents. One year when I was on staff, my parents could only come up on one day, and it turned out to be Tish'ah Be'Av. When my parents entered the camp, and he saw them, he said in his firm tone, "Don't expect to get any food here today." My mother in her inimitable polite manner replied, "Rabbi Mogilner! The food we came to camp for they don't serve in the dining room." He gave his little smile and could not have been sweeter to my parents the entire visit. He was someone to me who could always learn from others and could accept people on their terms.

Mogilner was the first National Ramah Director. Clearly, he operated under the assumption that there was to be a unified, national administrative, educational, and religious policy shared by all the camps, and that indeed, JTS

was in charge of the camps' educational mission and vision. I doubt the other directors were always happy with his commanding voice, but it is clear he had a coherent vision of shared mission that informed all his work and administrative strategies. We are in a very different place today with camps demanding a certain amount of independence from the central authority of JTS and the National Ramah Commission. As Ramah reached its sixtieth anniversary, the questions of what unifies the camps as a whole and where individual differences can exist and flourish without straining the meaning of what it means to be called a Camp Ramah, continues to be a crucial issue.

Baruch Dayyan Ha'emet

David Mogilner died suddenly of massive heart failure at Camp Ramah in the Poconos in 1975 when he was serving as interim director. He was forty-four years old. One could assume that given his Type-A personality, overweight frame, his moderate-to-heavy smoking, his hard-driving determination, and sometimes volatile personality that such an end was always a real possibility. How ironic that his brother was serving as camp physician and could not help him. How ironic that David created the ultimate teachable moment for the staff and campers. The loss felt by his family, Sue Schiff Mogilner (Fox)¹⁴ and his children, Hyim, Avinoam, Shifra, Elisheva, and Eitan was incalculable. Rabbi David Seed of Aduth Israel Congregation in Toronto, Ontario, captures best what many respondents who were in camp that tragic summer recall:

I was a Madornik in [the] Poconos in the last summer of David's life. I actually remember giving a *devar torah* on the *Ashrei* with the edah that morning and seeing an ambulance drive out of camp. We later learned the news that he was gone and all of us, especially the Madorniks were devastated. We had worked so closely with him as our teacher and mentor, and now we would no longer have the opportunity to learn from him. We understood quickly that we had responsibilities to our campers to fulfill while learning to deal with our own grief. It colored the rest of our summer, but instilled in us the idea that if we were going to continue to keep his legacy alive, we would have to do so by sharing what he had taught us if not in his name then by teaching others the lessons he had given us.

David Mogilner taught us to be role models; to know before whom we stand; to make Jews, and to make a difference. He was in so many ways *ish bagun vebacham behochmat hatorah*.

Appendix A

Selections from Rabbi David Mogilner's "The Counselor's Daily Routine"

I. Wake-Up Period

- A. Wakes up 15 minutes before campers to attend to his own needs.
- B. Wakes up campers individually.
- C. Sees that the camper is properly dressed for weather and that he changes clothes daily. (Waker-upper will advise counselor as to proper clothes for that day's weather.)
- D. Sees whether they wash and brush teeth and use the bathroom.
- E. Whenever possible encourages camper to make bed before going to services.
- F. Sees that camper leaves for services on time.
- G. One counselor leaves with the first group, second counselor stays until last camper leaves.
- H. During this period the counselor looks for:
 1. Variations in wake-up habits.
 2. Variations in personal standards of cleanliness.
 3. Relation of each youngster's behavior on awakening to behavior rest of day.
 4. Kind of interpersonal relationships practiced among campers.

II. Helping during the Services

- A. Sits among campers.
- B. Helps set up prayer area prior to prayer.
- C. Concerns oneself with the aesthetic appearance of the prayer area.
- D. Brings benches and prayer books during the services if necessary.
- E. Helps campers follow service.
- F. Serves as an example to the campers, here, as well as elsewhere in camp program.
- G. "Over prays" in the sense of partaking in the prayers in a "louder" tone than usual.
- H. Concerns oneself with proper replacement of used religious articles.
- I. Sees that campers get into dining hall for breakfast on time.
- J. Walks among campers on way to dining room.

III. Meals

- A. Arranges for one staff member to be at table before campers enter.
- B. Concerns oneself with *hamotzi* allowance.

- C. Sees that campers' behavior is indicative of the fact that *hamotzi* is a prayer.
- D. Sees that there is a minimum of noise and confusion at the table.
- E. Sees that each camper receives a portion on first serving.
- F. Encourages campers to eat.
- G. Complains to *proper* authority if quantity or quality of food is deficient.
- H. Deals with waiter in Hebrew unless campers can do so.
- I. If there is singing or someone speaks in front of the dining hall, he makes sure his table pays attention.
- J. He makes sure the dishes are passed up at the end of the meal.
- K. Sees that campers are aware that *birkat hamazon* is a prayer.
- L. Sees that campers have copies of *birkat hamazon* until they know it.
- M. Sits at the table in such a way as to:
 1. Be physically close to as many campers as possible.
 2. Be in a position to always see the dining room control area.
- N. During the meal one watches for:
 1. Routine Hebrew usage.
 2. Campers interpersonal table relationships.
 3. The manner in which a camper eats.
 4. The kind of food a camper eats.
- O. The counselor realizes that he is on display:
 1. His table manners
 2. The food he eats
 3. The way he reacts to food
 4. His participation in *birkat hamazon*
- P. Takes last always.
- Q. Plans for non-eating "waiting periods" at the table.
- R. Sees that the campers walk leisurely out of the dining room.

Appendix B

Some Principles of Education Evident in Rabbi David Mogilner's "The Counselor's Daily Routine"

1. Education may be defined as a process of behavioral change toward a given end.
2. Pre-planning of all aspects of an educational activity is essential for success.
3. Every counselor is at all times the "example" of the ideal personality.
4. The counselor acts toward individuals individually.

5. The counselor acts in areas that concern the physical (broadly defined) welfare of the camper.
6. A counselor can never attend to his or her “private business” and work with campers at the same time.
7. The physical environment helps to shape any educational experience.
8. Every educational situation has its own set of priorities and so flexibility on the counselor’s part is essential for sound educational programming.
9. The counselor sees routine as a means by which a camper’s personality is expressed.
 - 9a. The counselor views a camper’s break of routine as a problem of the camper’s learning to accept and deal with responsibility.
10. Counselors must be aware of the developmental tasks applicable to any given age.
11. Every educational group has its own dynamics and personality that point to the way in which that group should be educationally managed.
12. A good educational goal clearly defines the desired end-achievement in behavioral terms.
13. Good educational planning should take into consideration the following components: awareness, anticipation, atmosphere.
14. Educational methodology should always be the result of a clearly stated goal.
15. The pacing of an educational activity is crucial to its success.
16. A variety of media over time should be used to reinforce educational goals.
17. Sometimes the educational means to an end is a goal in itself— e.g., a counselor’s method of allowing campers to choose how the bunk will be cleaned teaches problem-solving skills.
18. There are times when a counselor does something herself because of the values inherent therein, e.g., picking up a piece of trash along the way.
19. Educational planning may be programmable via the use of administrative checklists, but an approach to education makes sense only in terms of general principles rather than specific laws.
20. A counselor uses his or her physical proximity to children to affect the instructional situation.
21. Very few educational situations are reducible to direct application of only one principle.
22. The conflict of two principles poses an “ethical problem.”

Notes

¹The camper's bunk was to serve as a refuge or safe haven from the expectations, pressures, even the tensions of living in the camp community and participating in various activities with specialists and teachers.

²Launching Mogilner, launching Mogilner, we are launching Mogilner today. He goes up and up and orbits on high, we are launching Mogilner today. Launching Mogilner, launching Mogilner, we are launching Mogilner today. He goes down and down and orbits in Gehinnom (the netherworld), we are launching Mogilner today.

³"Know before whom you stand."

⁴Professor Lee Shulman, President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, proudly reports that David was his counselor in Wisconsin in 1953 and 1954. Shulman recounts hearing discussions among junior counselors who studied with Dr. Seymour Fox at Wisconsin, and who had a powerful influence on Mogilner: "Fox conducted a daily seminar with the junior counselors. Nearly every day we would hear them recite mysterious names like Bettelheim, Redl, Erikson, and Dewey. There was one particular text that captured our attention. We suspected that it was a dirty book because its title, *Love Is Not Enough*, could hardly have been used to describe anything else, and it was reputed to include photographs. Late one night, after the junior counselors had gone off to do whatever such elders did after they were deluded into imagining that we campers were asleep, the most intrepid of us stole onto the cabin's front porch and found the forbidden volume. *Love Is Not Enough* was a real disappointment, at least from the erotic perspective!" L. S. Shulman, "Education Theory and Ramah," in *The Ramah Experience*, ed. S. C. Ettenberg and G. Rosenfield (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary and the National Ramah Commission, 1989), 49–56.

Interestingly, Mogilner, who studied with Fox, made the choice not to immerse counselors-in-training in theoretical literature, but to teach them how to create and implement their own theory of practice based on the work of many of these theorists. For the camp setting, I believe Mogilner's approach was more developmentally appropriate for the Mador cohort.

⁵In today's educational lingo, he really taught us how to be a real *madrich* (counselor/guide). His "Counselor's Daily Routine" lays out a wonderful way of learning to be a guide on the side, rather than a sage on the stage!

⁶Mogilner and others modified Newman's approach, but "Fox, Mogilner, Cohen, Abrams, Lukinsky, and others never abandoned them altogether." M. Brown, "It's Off to Camp We Go: Ramah, LTF, and the Seminary in the Finkelstein Era," in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, ed. J. Wertheimer (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), 1:823–54.

Later it was Schwab who took the pioneer group through a reconsideration of camp staffing patterns and methods. It was Schwab who helped them develop the notion of the bunk as home haven, an unpressured retreat from the specialty areas of camping skills, sports, crafts, and the arts. It was Schwab who emphasized careful "planned education," which led Newman to propose the Mador training program, which later Mogilner inherited and developed. So as we listen to some of the voices of generations of Ramahniks who felt the spell of Mogilner's educational influence, we need to understand that he, too, had his mentors and teachers. Mogilner probably developed his anti-competition approaches from Newman's influence; see S. R. Schwartz, "Ramah Philosophy and the Newman Revolution," in *Studies in Jewish Education and Judaica in Honor of Louis Newman*, ed. Alexander M. Shapiro and Burton I. Cohen (New York: Ktav, 1984), 7–21.

⁷Attorney Jonathan Funk of San Francisco remembers the summer of 1975: "Rabbi Mogilner told our Mador group that summer, 'The world is not black and white, *kindertakb*; it is gray.' Perhaps not the most profound of his teachings, but to a group of know-it-all teenagers, it

was a message worth learning. These words have come back to me many, many times over the years as I have confronted difficult situations, and it has given me reason to assess things from more than one perspective.”

⁸“The time now, according to my watch, which is in essence the camp clock, is . . .” and: “If I am cold, you are cold—and I *am* cold” (implying the need to dress accordingly!).

⁹“Quietly and with finesse,” using the English term “finesse” in the Hebrew sentence.

¹⁰Ruth Tomases Joffe remembers: “. . . when Rabbi Mogilner talked about his reasons for making aliyah. He told the staff that when they decided to get married, Sue told him she couldn’t imagine living anywhere other than in Israel.”

¹¹This term is a reference to Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones in chapter 37.

¹²Mogilner often opined that if we were successful 20 percent of the time with 20 percent of our learners, we should consider that phenomenal success. We might not agree with that level of success today, but it probably gave him cause for great optimism and energy in his efforts.

¹³Mogilner’s openness to innovation, change, and personal initiative was remarkable for such a disciplined and focused leader. I had the *hutzpah* in 1968 after taking a course in the development of liturgy with Dr. Avraham Holtz at JTS, to propose a loose-leaf siddur approach to reigniting interest in Jewish prayer in camp. On the first day of camp, all the campers received a loose-leaf book with the skeletal framework of the *matbea shel tefillah* (traditional halakhic prayer structure). Literally, it contained only the surrounding *berachot* that formed the *petihot* and *hatimot* (openings and closings) of the prayers. It included the three full paragraphs of the *shema* and the first three full paragraphs of the *amidah*, followed by just the *hatimot* and finally, *aleinu*. After the first day’s five-minute tefillah, campers exclaimed: “We never realized that there were so many *berachot* in the siddur!” The rest of the summer was spent in rebuilding the siddur. A separate curriculum was created for each *edah*. Campers cut out the “filler” from pages printed and included in the end of the loose-leaf book; pasted the filler (e.g., *ahavah rabbah*) in the correct place on the blank page ending with the pre-printed *berachab*, e.g., *haboher be’ammo yisra’el be’ahavah* (“who chooses the people Israel in love”) the night before it was to be introduced into the service by *madrachim*. They then studied it in their formal classes, added their own glosses and interpretations, pictures, dried flowers around the prayer or on the blank facing page, or added three-hole punched ancillary materials distributed by the staff. By the end of the summer, campers went home with their own personalized siddurim. This lasted several summers until it collapsed under the weight of reproduction and fatigue! I do distinctly remember Mogilner commenting when asked why he let me do this: “I have a counselor who is *meshugga ladavar* (crazy about the matter). Should I not let him do it?”

¹⁴Some years after David’s untimely death, Sue Schiff Mogilner married David’s friend, colleague, and teacher, Dr. Seymour Fox. As dean of the Teachers Institute at JTS, Fox created the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education and after making aliyah, was head of the School of Education of the Hebrew University and then became President of the Mandell Foundation. Ironically, Seymour died in Israel suddenly of heart failure on July 10, 2006. He was 77 years old.

References

- Brown, M. 1997. It’s off to camp we go: Ramah, LTF, and the Seminary in the Finkelstein era. In *Tradition renewed: A history of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, ed. J. Wertheimer, 1: 823–54. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Covenant Foundation. 2003. Covenant Awards Booklet.

Dorph, S. A., ed. 2000. *Ramah: Reflections at 50: Visions for a new century*. New York: National Ramah Commission.

Maimonides, Moses. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Sanhedrin, perek 3*.

Mogilner, D. 1969. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 1970. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 1971a. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 1971b. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 1972. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 1973. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. June 13, 1973. Unpublished memorandum. New York: Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

———. 2000. Ramah is my pulpit . . . to my (or any Jewish) mother. In *Ramah: Reflections at 50: Visions for a new century*, ed. S. A. Dorph, 89–93. New York: National Ramah Commission.

Schwartz, S. R. 1984. Ramah philosophy and the Newman revolution. In *Studies in Jewish education and Judaica in honor of Louis Newman*, ed. Alexander M. Shapiro and Burton I. Cohen, 7–21. New York: Ktav.

———. 1987. Camp Ramah: The early years, 1947–1952. *Conservative Judaism* 40 (1): 12–43.

Shulman, L. S. 1989. Education theory and Ramah. In *The Ramah experience: Community and commitment*, ed. S. C. Ettenberg and G. Rosenfield, 49–56. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary and the National Ramah Commission.