

*To Suzi, Lital, Vered, Avigail, and Noam
For being the bliss of my earthly existence*

There is an initiative trust, an investment of belief, underwritten by previous experience but epistemologically exposed and psychologically hazardous, in the meaningfulness, in the “seriousness” of the facing or, strictly speaking, adverse text. We venture a leap: we grant *ab initio* that there is “something there” to be understood [...] All understanding [...] starts with an act of trust. This confiding will, ordinarily, be instantaneous and unexamined, but it has a complex base. It is an operative convention which derives from a sequence of phenomenological assumptions about the coherence of the world, about the presence of meaning in very different, perhaps formally antithetical semantic systems, about the validity of analogy and parallel.

—George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 312

To quote is to reflect on what has been said before, and unless we do that, we speak in a vacuum where no human voice can make a sound.

—Alberto Manguel,
The Library at Night, 224

The search for references to universality in the Scriptures and in the texts of the spoken Law still derives from the process of assimilation. These texts, across two thousand years of commentary, still have something other to say.

—Emmanuel Levinas,
Assimilation and New Culture, 287

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ATTUNED ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are two types of memories. One is sterile: it feels like a fixation of the past; it is a memory wherein the past dominates the present and paralyzes it. And there is a second type of memory: a vivid memory, one that is at work in the present; a memory that affects the present and nourishes it, and by which the present, in some sense, governs the past.

The completion of a book is a time of reminiscence.

A time of *hakarat hatov*, of gratitude toward all those who, through past and present encounters, have nourished this book.

Our encounters took place throughout several decades.

They have amassed as a slow-growing awareness.

During classes.

In *chavruta* learning.

I was a student.

I served as the teacher.

I studied as a *chavruta* partner.

Precious moments of learning.

Touched by something ineffable.

Moments of learning with and from friends, teachers, students, and texts.

Marcel Proust writes that some of our childhood reading experiences leave behind in us vivid images of those places and times. Similarly, some learning moments live inside me as fragments and images.

Of faces, of spaces, of times, and of emotions.

They are living glimpses of the past that enlighten my teaching, my learning, and my research.

These memories are *lived* time.

Kairos overcomes Chronos, to reconnect with the voice and the face of the beloved teacher, with the insights offered by texts, with the smiling faces of learning partners, and with moments of excitement in the wake of students' comments.

Chapters Three and Four discuss paired learning. They are dedicated to my friend and *chavruta* partner, Gabriel Strenger. Your ways of being and of doing in our years of *chavruta* learning have nurtured my sensitivity toward spiritual and ethical dimensions of *chavruta* learning.

Chapter Five, which discusses the idea of transformative teaching, is dedicated to my friend and colleague Gail Dorph. Your wisdom of practice and your passion for people's learning were critical in helping me think and re-conceptualize the study of rabbinic texts for teachers' professional growth.

Chapter Six discusses students' awareness and is dedicated to the many students I have been privileged to interact with, since my very first hesitant steps as a teacher. Many fragments of our learning interactions continue to dwell inside me as a conscious and unconscious silent presence thanks to your curiosity, your questions, and your contributions to our shared explorations.

Chapter Seven attends to the mysterious impact of the face. This chapter is devoted with feelings of longing to my beloved teacher, Rav Moshe Botschko, of blessed memory. Since his passing away, his face has become an increasingly living presence. A glimpse of that radiant face implanted in me the seeds of three most precious gifts:

A trust in the texts of our tradition: that many of these texts have something to say that deeply matters for life, sometimes beyond what first meets the eye.

A trust in myself as a learner of that tradition; in my moral-religious obligation to make the text speak through the filter of human reason and ethical sensitivity.

A trust in my ability to innovate and to generate new meanings.

In the process of crystalizing disparate thoughts into a cohesive book, I have been fortunate to benefit from the friendship of Professor Marc Brettler and Professor Avi Sagi. Each of them spared no effort to assist and provide me with wise advice whenever it was needed. Each taught me new meanings of attuned collegueship.

Last but certainly not least: Sari Steinberg joined this project as editor. Her talent competes only with her gentleness, and her ability to hear the voice of spoken and written words is a true model of human attunement.

Jerusalem, Adar/March 2015

Part One

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Chapter One

THE CONCEPT OF ATTUNED LEARNING¹

The main thing about schools is that they are one of the very few remaining public interactional spaces in which people are still engaged with each other in the reciprocal, though organizationally patterned, labor of producing meaning—indeed, the core meaning of self-identity.²

—Philip Wexler

Instead of teaching, I told stories. Anything to keep them quiet and in their seats. They thought I was teaching. I thought I was teaching. I was learning.³

—Frank McCourt

You—the reader of this book—are familiar with the whispering voice of your consciousness. Despite its evasiveness, you allow it to lead you in your social relationships. What would happen if you paid close attention to that whisper as you moved through your daily interactions, especially in educational settings—whether as a teacher, a student, or a co-learner? The concept of *attuned learning* conveys this type of deliberate alertness to an individual's own mental, emotional, and physical workings, and awareness of others within the complexities of learning interactions.⁴ This

¹ In most cases of unspecified gender, this book favors the feminine pronoun, in an effort to balance the masculine-dominated language of ancient texts and scholars.

² Philip Wexler, *Becoming Somebody: Toward a Social Psychology of School* (London and Washington DC: Falmer, 1992), 10.

³ Frank McCourt, *Teacher Man: A Memoir* (Old Tappan: Scribner, 2006), 19.

⁴ The term “attuned learning” is inspired by the title Michael Fishbane, *Sacred*

term has been used in recent years regarding attention *by* teachers *to* students' different learning styles and capacities; but it can be expanded and enriched so that it becomes an essential human disposition, the humane dimensions of learning interactions, not only for teachers but also for students and co-learners. This type of deliberate self-cultivation that infuses teaching and learning with ethical and spiritual dimensions is a new discovery—yet it reflects values that were embraced in ancient times. This book looks from a contemporary perspective at rabbinic texts that seem, by design, to prescribe attuned learning as a way of raising individuals' introspection and their attitudes toward each other within the actual learning dynamic. These dispositions, then, also become part of the individuals' lives beyond the classroom or the *beit midrash*.^{5*}

This book, like the author's practice-oriented philosophy of Jewish learning, focuses on the potential cultivation of learners' ethical dispositions* in and through their interactions with texts, teachers, and co-learners.⁶ The integration of the pedagogical with the ethical, and imaginative and critical thinking with human interactions, forges a philosophy that fosters habits of the mind, the hand, and the heart, and assumes that learning through inner as well as outer dialogue is a worthy way of living. All of this has led to the conceptualization and design of a model of *chavruta** learning (the study of texts by a pair of learners) comprised of three categories of practices that can be taught and learned: intrapersonal (an individual's perceptions, feelings, and ethical sensibility),

Attunement: A Jewish Theology (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵ Terms annotated with a star (*) are elaborated in the "Glossary of Technical and Foreign Terms and Language Usage."

⁶ Elie Holzer, "Ethical dispositions in Text Study," *Journal of Moral Education* 36, no. 1 (2007): 37–49; Elie Holzer, "What Connects 'Good' Teaching, Text Study and Hevruta Learning? A Conceptual Argument," *Journal of Jewish Education* 72 (2006): 1–22; Elie Holzer, "Allowing the Text to do its Pedagogical Work: Connecting Moral Education and Interpretive Activity," *Journal of Moral Education* 6, no. 4 (2007): 497–514; Elie Holzer, "Educational aspects of hermeneutical activity in text study," *Modes of Educational Translation*, in *Studies in Jewish Education*, ed. Jonathan Cohen and Elie Holzer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008–2009), 205–240.

interpersonal (interactions with others such as a teacher, student, and/or co-learner), and textual-interpretive (engagement with the subject matter), as well as the discussion of the formative ethical aspects of these practices.⁷

Rabbinic literature illuminates this book's exploration of another essential component of this philosophy. While other scholars have examined some aspects of learning and of ethics in rabbinic culture, this book uniquely interprets rabbinic texts that concern habits of the heart—the marriage of interdependence, emotion, and self-awareness in individuals' attitudes toward each other and toward the subject matter within the actual learning dynamic.

Contextual Awareness and Ethical Sensitivity

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum discusses moral attentiveness as central to living a good life. According to Nussbaum, "perception without responsibility is dangerously free-floating, even as duty without perception is blunt and blind."⁸ Ethical engagement implies awareness of a given situation, not only to achieve the correct action, but as a valuable aptitude in its own right.⁹ Similarly, attuned

⁷ Holzer, "Ethical dispositions in Text Study"; Miriam Raider-Roth and Elie Holzer, "Learning to be Present: How Hevruta Learning Can Activate Teachers' Relationships to Self, Other and Text," *The Journal of Jewish Education* 75, no. 3 (2009): 216–239; Elie Holzer with Orit Kent, *A Philosophy of Havruta: Understanding and Teaching the Art of Text Study in Pairs* (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2013); Elie Holzer, "Welcoming Opposition: *Havruta* Learning and Montaigne's *The Art of Discussion*," *The Journal of Moral Education* 44, no. 1 (2015): 64–80.

⁸ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press 1990), 155.

⁹ This view is grounded in Aristotelian ethics, particularly in Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. According to Aristotle, a virtuous person is someone who consciously chooses the virtuous action. This view of ethics emphasizes the moral character of the person, in contrast to deontological views of ethics, which emphasize duties or rules, and in contrast to consequentialist views of ethics, which emphasize the consequences of actions. Aristotle's moral philosophy is therefore intertwined with his view of moral habits or dispositions. According to Aristotle, these dispositions cannot be taught and do not exist innately in humans. They can be nurtured and become stable

learning involves an ability to discern and to act keenly in the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and textual-interpretive realms within particular learning situations.¹⁰ Attuned learning thereby connects to a number of educational, psychological, and philosophical theories regarding reflection and ethical dimensions of learning interactions.

*Theoretical Underpinnings:
Reflection as a Form of Mindfulness*

For over three decades, reflection has been a topic of constant research and practical implementation in teachers' professional development. The works of theorists such as John Dewey, Donald Schon, and Paulo Freire—to cite just three examples—have been instrumental in redefining teaching as a reflective practice and in conceptualizing reflection as a form of self-awareness that lies at the heart of what it means to understand the practice of teaching.¹¹

traits of an individual's character through habituation of ongoing moral behavior. For a philosophical discussion of phronesis in relation to teaching, see Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). For the similarities between this view and ethical theories in rabbinic literature, and for its implications in the context of text study and *chavruta* learning, see Holzer, "Ethical Aspects of Text Study"; Elie Holzer, "'Either a Hevruta Partner of Death'—A Critical View on the Interpersonal Dimensions of Hevruta Learning," *The Journal of Jewish Education* 75, no. 2 (2009): 130–149.

¹⁰ For the co-creation of relationships and learning, and the discernment of the interpersonal and the subject matter as keys to learning, see James G. Greeno and Melissa S. Gresalfi, "Opportunities to Learn in Practice and Identity," in *Assessment, Equity, and Opportunity to Learn*, ed. Pamela A. Moss, Diana C. Pullin, Edward H. Haertel, James Paul Gee, and Lauren Jones Young (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 171: "The ways that individuals are positioned with respect to others and the content of the activity is inseparable from their engagement with the content itself. Thus, learning involves participation with both interpersonal and informational aspects of an activity." For a related genre see Michael DePaul, "Argument and Perception: The Role of Literature in Moral Inquiry," *Journal of Philosophy* 85 (1988): 552–565.

¹¹ Nona Lyons, ed., *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry* (New York: Springer, 2010).

Drawing on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*, educational researchers Fred Korthagen and Jos Kessels discuss the nature of perceptual knowledge, which requires discrimination and judgment but also flexibility and congruency to the situation at hand.¹² Such knowledge is acquired through experience and develops into an individual's self-perceived ability for insight in real-life situations.¹³ A generative example of awareness by a teacher in the midst of teaching and learning interactions is discussed by educational philosopher David Hawkins, who conceptualizes the roles of the teacher (*I*), the student (*Thou*), and the subject matter (*It*) in their reciprocal interactions.¹⁴ Hawkins uses this triangular representation as a heuristic framework to help teachers grow into "diagnosticians of learning" by refining their perception and heightening their awareness of students' learning and the complex intertwinement of the three elements.¹⁵ While the interactions have reciprocal effects, teachers have the greatest impact on the dynamic. The teacher brings the *It* into the room, facilitates the learner's relationship with the subject matter, prompts, questions and offers feedback to help the learner progress through it. For Hawkins, being attuned to these interactions allows a teacher to be intellectually and psychologically available to himself, the students, and the subject matter. Hawkins shows that the teacher's awareness of and concern for the student emanates from his caring about the student's learning of the subject

¹² Jos P. A. M. Kessels and Fred A. J. Korthagen, "The Relationship between Theory and Practice: Equality or Inequality?," in *Teacher Education for Equality*, ed. Edvard Befring (Oslo: Oslo College, 1996), 357–365; Jos P. A. M. Kessels and Fred A. J. Korthagen, "The Relationship between Theory and Practice: Back to the Classics," *Educational Researcher* 25, no. 3 (1996): 17–22.

¹³ Philosopher Martha Nussbaum describes a person who possesses perceptual knowledge as someone who "inhabits the human world" (Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 314). See also Gary D. Fenstermacher, "The Knower and the Known: The Nature of Knowledge in Research on Teaching," in *Review of Research in Education* 20, ed. Linda Darling-Hammond (Washington, DC: AERA, 1994), 3–56.

¹⁴ David Hawkins, "I, Thou and It," in *The Informed Vision: Essays on Learning and Human Nature*, ed. David Hawkins (New York: Agathon Press, 1974), 48–62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

matter. Thus the relationship between teacher and student is imbued with confidence, trust, and respect.¹⁶ These qualities do not exist prior to, but rather emerge from, their teaching and learning interactions.

Educational researchers Fred Korthagen and Angelo Vasalos discuss the limitations of analytic models of reflection, which provide teachers with a better understanding of their practice, but which do not significantly contribute to their professional efficacy. Korthagen and Vasalos attribute this shortcoming to the emphasis on abstract concepts at the cost of teachers' ability to establish connections within concrete classroom situations. Thus, a teacher could understand the concept of *caring* and its importance for her relationship with students, and still fail to develop such relationships.¹⁷ The researchers suggest that teachers develop and nurture the inner strata of their personalities and their professional identities, which will have a positive impact on their interactions in real classroom life.¹⁸

Particularly relevant to attuned learning is the concept of *presence*, which educational psychologists Carol Rodgers and Miriam Raider-Roth define as the teacher's "experience of bringing one's whole self to full attention so as to perceive what is happening in the moment."¹⁹ Grounded and reflected in several philosophical

¹⁶ Ibid., 56.

¹⁷ Fred A. J. Korthagen and Angelo Vasalos, "From Reflection to Presence and Mindfulness: Thirty Years of Developments Concerning the Concept of Reflection in Teacher Education," (paper presented at the EARLI Conference, Amsterdam, August 2009), available at <http://www.kernreflectie.nl/Media/pdf/EARLI%20paper.pdf>.

¹⁸ Paulien C. Meijer, Fred A. J. Korthagen, and Angelo Vasalos, "Supporting Presence in Teacher Education: The Connection between the Personal and Professional Aspects of Teaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 25, no. 2 (2009): 297–308. Other scholars have become aware of the role feelings, instead of only "thinking about the feelings." See Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (London: Heinemann, 1999), 279–295.

¹⁹ Carol R. Rodgers and Miriam B. Raider-Roth, "Presence in Teaching," *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 12, no. 3 (2006): 267. See also "Human consciousness [. . .] is always situated; and the situated person inevitably

and spiritual traditions, the essence of this idea is the ability to be present simultaneously to oneself and to the environment; it is a state of being in which an individual is “sensitive to the flow of events.”²⁰ In that regard, attuned learning is a form of mindfulness.²¹

*Theoretical Underpinnings:
Ethical Aspects of Learning Interactions*

Nel Noddings and other educational philosophers have challenged and criticized the discourse of technical rationality in education—a view of teaching as a professional activity consisting

engages with others, reaches out and grasps the phenomena surrounding him/her from a particular vantage point and against a particular background consciousness” (Maxine Green, *The Dialectic of Freedom* [New York: Teachers College Press, 1988], 21). Green writes about “wide-awakeness” with regard to the professional preparation of teachers: “If teachers today are to initiate young people into an ethical existence, they themselves must attend more fully than they normally have to their own lives and its requirements; they have to break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual” (Maxine Green, *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for the Modern Age* [Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973], 46). Alfred Schutz uses the term “wide-awakeness” to denote the consciousness that originates in full attention to life and its requirements (Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, ed. Helmut R. Wagner [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970], 69; Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers Vol. I*, ed. Maurice Natanson [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967], 213).

²⁰ Rodgers and Raider-Roth, “Presence in Teaching,” 235. See also A-Hameed Almaas, *Essence: The Diamond Approach to Inner Realization* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1986); A-Hameed Almaas, *The Unfolding Now: Realizing Your True Nature through the Practice of Presence* (Boston and London: Shambala, 2008); Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Betty Sue Flowers, *Presence: Exploring Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society* (London: Nicolas Brealey, 2004).

²¹ Mindfulness differs from a more detached conceptual awareness in that its mode of functioning is more perceptual or pre-reflective. See Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan, “The Benefit of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-being,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84 (2003): 822–848; Christopher K. Germer, Ronald D. Siegel, and Paul R. Fulton, eds., *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 2005).

of instrumental problem-solving by the application of scientific theory and technique—for its lack of caring, compassion, and passion.²² Social critics and philosophers such as Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, and educational thinkers including Harvey Svi Shapiro, lament the loss of the teacher-student relationship as a priority in educational discourse.²³ Social and feminist activist bell hooks calls for a reconsideration of teaching practice, asking whether there is room for spirituality in teaching and in education.²⁴ Concern for one another comprises the ethical aspects of the teaching and learning interactions.²⁵ These voices are but a sample of those expressing concern about the increasingly technical discourse of education in general and of teaching in particular. Instrumental models of education are perceived to originate in values and concepts from consumerism and market economy, which frame the educational experience as a business transaction, with the goods (information) going *from* an educational supplier (teacher) *to* a client (student).²⁶

²² Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Noddings is only one among other similar voices. See, for example, Kenneth M. Zeichner, *Educating Teachers for Cultural Diversity* (Michigan State University: National Center for Research, 1993).

²³ Ira Shor, *Empowering Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1993); Harvey Svi Shapiro, *Losing Heart The Moral and Spiritual Miseducation of America's Children* (London: Routledge, 2004).

²⁴ bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (London: Routledge, 2003).

²⁵ This work uses the concepts of dispositions (Footnote 9). However my use of “ethics” in reference to a person’s attunement toward others is inspired by the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, according to whom ethics lies in this fundamental openness to what lies beyond oneself: “It is the meaning of the beyond, of transcendence, and not of ethics that our study seeks. It finds this meaning in ethics” (Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes To Mind* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998], 200). The intertwining between the ethical and transcendence is addressed in Chapter Four, Footnote 26, and Chapter Eight, Footnote 12.

²⁶ Jane Tompkins, “Learning from the Workplace: Professional Life as an Opportunity for Personal Growth,” in *Living the Questions: Essays Inspired by*

And yet, discussion of relational and dialogical aspects of education is not a new frontier. Earlier works have already portrayed the educational experience as having subjective, contextual, and holistic qualities. They also have demonstrated that learning establishes and is nurtured by relationships, whether among a teacher and students or between two learners.²⁷ This book seeks to contribute to this school of thought by hearkening back to ancient times and connecting it to time-honored themes as well as to contemporary perspectives on educational discourse and practices. Through this book, less experienced teachers and students may become more aware of learning interactions, and experienced educators and co-learners may want to think further about some of their experiences. This book is unapologetically passionate about ethical and spiritual concerns in teaching and learning, as well as a commitment to seeing attuned learning flourish in the contemporary classroom. It is written for the motivated reader and/or educator for whom education remains an existential passion, who feels enhanced when examining, expanding, or revisiting her own educational beliefs and practices. To that end, it also offers critical reflections to assist in furthering such processes in the wake of its reading.

the Life and Work of Parker J. Palmer, ed. Sam M. Intrator (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 89–97. See also the discussion in Chapter Eight, in the section *Teachers' Attuned Teaching*.

²⁷ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (London: Routledge, 2002); Elaine Riley-Taylor, *Ecology, Spirituality, and Education: Curriculum for Relational Knowing* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Andy Hargreaves, "Emotional Geographies of Teaching," *Teachers College Record* 103 (2001): 1056–1080. For a discussion of relational theories of teaching, see Raider-Roth and Holzer, "Learning to be Present." Another source for understanding the intersubjective nature of instruction is the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1996). For its application in Jewish education, see Deborah Kerdeman, "Some Thoughts about Hermeneutics and Jewish Religious Education," *Religious Education* 93, no. 1 (1998): 29–43; Jon A. Levisohn, "Openness and Commitment: Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Teaching of Jewish Texts," *Journal of Jewish Education* 67, no. 1–2 (2001): 20–35; and in the context of *chavruta* text study, see Holzer with Kent, *A Philosophy of Havruta*.

How This Book Is Organized

Chapter Two discusses how ancient texts force readers into a new critical awareness of their own attitudes, per the interpretive and literary theories of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. From the vantage point of a contemporary educational researcher, rabbinic texts can be a powerful resource for reawakening aspects of teaching, and modern scholarship of rabbinics provides essential tools in the examination of these texts. The chapter discusses the origins of the work presented in this book, and the methodological tools that have been used in accomplishing its task.

The following chapters provide a literary analysis of late-antiquity rabbinic texts, with original analyses that reveal intra- and interpersonal dimensions of learning interactions for co-learners (Part Two) and for teachers and students (Part Three), and together unfold into an expanded conceptualization of attuned learning.

The Introduction to Part Two integrates the exploration of rabbinic texts that address attuned learning into the broader concepts of collaborative and argumentative learning in Talmudic* and post-Talmudic texts. Chapter Three discusses self-refinement in argumentative learning, through an analysis of rabbinic texts that invite co-learners to reveal their personalities and defend their strongly held opinions while engaging in such learning. At the same time, these texts raise study partners' awareness regarding potential negative effects of this style of learning, such as animosity, hubris, or the clash of egos, and alert them to the necessity of introspection and the cultivation of a complex set of abilities and refined consciousness. Chapter Four analyzes a Talmudic legend that has served for centuries as an icon of co-learning in rabbinic literature. This new reading reveals that it raises critical awareness of co-learners' own expectations of collaborative learning and reveals pitfalls of radically self-serving and controlling attitudes. It sensitizes them to a sincere concern for the joint project of sense-making and a deep investment in the co-learner's learning progress.

The Introduction to Part Three connects attuned learning in teacher-student interactions with rabbinic texts that show a concern for the concrete, subjective, dynamic, and unpredictable—in short,

the *experiential*—aspects of teaching and learning. Chapter Five explores the teacher’s awareness of transformations that ideally occur within the student, the subject matter, and the teacher through their interactions. Chapter Six discusses disruptions that students may experience in their interactions with teachers and with subject matter, and a student’s and the larger community’s responsibility for the repair of those disrupted relationships. Chapter Seven focuses on the role played by the visage in the interactions of teacher, student, and subject matter, and the potential to attune teachers and learners to a type of seeing and being-seen. This includes sensitizing them to the personal qualities and the uniqueness of each other and of the subject matter, and helping teachers notice their own projections on, and impressions of, differences in students’ facial radiance. Chapter Eight concludes by circling back to discuss the educational significance of attuned learning. Attuned learning demands the cultivation of habits of the heart and of action, as well as patience with the unpredictable nature of human beings’ reactions. It can occur only through everyday dilemmas and opportunities offered by learning interactions, by which teachers, students, and co-learners grow in the practice of teaching, of learning, and ultimately of living. The chapter concludes with critical reflections designed to fuel readers’ own explorations of ideas elicited by the rabbinic texts, in contemporary educational and cultural contexts.

Chapter Two

READING RABBINIC TEXTS FOR EDUCATION

The illusion is not in looking for a point of departure but looking for it without presuppositions. There is no philosophy without presuppositions.¹

—Paul Ricoeur

Understanding is to be thought less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated.²

—Hans-Georg Gadamer

Words are effective not because of what they carry in them, but for their latent potential to unlock the accumulated experience of the reader. Words “contain” meanings, but, more important, words potentiate meaning.³

—Fred Mendelsund

“What is reading?” asks Louis Althusser in his commentary on *Das Kapital*. This may appear to be a simple question, but Althusser warns us: “As there is no such thing as an innocent reading, we must say what reading we are guilty of.”⁴ Likewise, Hans-Georg Gadamer, a philosopher of reading and interpretation, insists that in any research project, our first aim should be to articulate an

¹ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 348.

² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 290.

³ Fred Mendelsund, *What We See When We Read* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 302.

⁴ Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: NLB, 1970), 14.

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