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"A Connection of the Upper and the Lower Spheres":

Perceptions and Positions of Observant Dance Teachers Towards the Teaching of Dance to Pupils in the Israeli General-Religious Education

Talia Perlshtein

Abstract

This article seeks to examine the perceptions and positions of religiously observant dance teachers towards the teaching of dance to pupils in the Israeli Jewish general-religious education curriculum. This is a pioneering research, sounding for the first time the voices of observant dance teachers, who are partners to paving the road towards the construction of dance education in the spirit of Halacha [Jewish Religious Law]. The research included eleven dance teachers, graduates of the dance department at a religious academic college of education, who held teaching positions in elementary schools of the general-religious education. The participants were interviewed in semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews were analyzed using two methods: inductive, data-oriented analysis (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), and deductive, theory-oriented analysis, using Brinson's model (1993), which classifies the contribution of the art of dance to school curriculum into six categories.

The findings showed that the teachers imparted a particular validity to Brinson's universal model. It was also found that the interviewees related more extensively to the contribution of the subject to pupils in the category of personal and social education. It may be surmised that their emphasis on

this category derives from their perception that dance is a means for reinforcing values and for personal development. The analysis through the inductive, data-oriented method enriched the model with sub-categories and indicated that the teachers were dealing with a cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1985 [1962]) between their perception that dance contributes to self-realization in the physical, emotional and cognitive dimension, and their fear of influences contradicting Halacha. The integration of the two methodologies in decoding the interviews clarified that the interviewees overcome this dissonance with a heightened sensitivity to maintaining the boundaries of Halacha when teaching dance, out of their perception that the subject contributes to religious and spiritual empowerment. Despite the small scope of the study, its contribution is in making available information on the teaching of dance in the general-religious education, and its implications for teachers.

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Introduction

This article examines the perceptions and positions of Jewish observant dance teachers towards the teaching of dance to pupils in formal school frameworks of the Israeli general-religious education system. These teachers are graduates of the dance department at a religious academic college of education. This department was launched in 1998, following an approach made by religious women to the then Minister of Education, the late Zevulun Hammer, to enable them to have an academic training that would combine elements of a religious worldview with choreographing and teaching dance. The establishment of the

department created the first and only framework in Israel for the religious sector, in which observant women can train towards teaching dance in the spirit of Halacha.

The establishment of the dance department may be seen as another expression of the gradual change the religious-Zionist community has been undergoing since the second half of the 20th century. Modern cultural influences, headed by the feminist movement raising the flag of gender equality, led to significant changes in the lives of religious women. The road was paved for having options for gaining higher education and integrating into the labor force, as well as for changes in the division of roles

between genders within the family, and more. The spiritual leaders of religious Zionism did not object to the cultivation of equality between the genders, as long as these changes remained within the boundaries of Halacha. In the education of girls in religious Zionism gradual changes occurred in structure, organization and contents, following demands by students and graduates to realize their self-development. Since the 1980's an essential scholastic change took place with the establishment of frameworks for Torah studies for women [Midrasha]. This revolution was characterized by an active search of the female students for spiritual meaning in Torah studies as part of their intellectual studies (El'or, 1998; Dagan, 2006; Perelshtein, 2011).

The demand that arose from the field for the establishment of the dance department led to the creation of a reservoir of observant dance teachers seeking ways for expressing spiritual processes by means of dance. These teachers provide an answer to the ideology of the general-religious education, according to which the educational staff in its institutions should identify with its values and set a personal example in their life patterns and behavior (Dagan, 2006). Being pioneers in the field in the religious sector, the dance teachers who graduate from the department deal with the challenges of integrating the subject into the general-religious education system. First and foremost, they deal with the concern of principals and educators about integrating dance into the curriculum, in fear it might introduce a foreign cultural spirit into school. The source of this concern is the lack of religious guidance with aggregated experience that could respond to the various questions that arise following the integration of dance into the curriculum. They must also create a syllabus that is suited to the school culture and all its students, with the conception that "educational dance" is intended to expand the educational horizons of all pupils and is not meant to train professional dancers (Ron, 2006; McCutchen, 2006).

As part of their worldview and their training process, these teachers pave a religious road for dance teaching out of their coping with educational questions and ideological dilemmas that art education presents in the religious sector. One of the main dilemmas with which they deal is the tension between free personal expression and maintaining Jewish Halacha. In dance this means, among other things, coping with the issue of modesty, which requires sensitivity to a balance between body and soul in the path of the Torah, especially for an art in which the human body is the main instrument of expression. An additional aspect of the issue of modesty is the teaching of boys in dance lessons led by female teachers. This aspect was examined as part of the Halachaic clarification that accompanied the writing of the vision for the dance department, and regarding this aspect Rabbi Yaacov Ariel had ruled that in teaching the subject the group of boys should be separated from the group of girls starting in the third grade. From this age and up, female teachers will teach only girls.

This article deals with one aspect of a wide-ranging combined study, conducted regarding observant dance teachers, graduates of the dance department. This is in fact a pioneering study in the field of dance education in the general-religious education

system in Israel, which broadens the knowledge base created by previous studies about a multitude of aspects of dance education in Israel, as part of formal and informal national education (Ophir, 2012; Nativ, 2010; Peretz, 2003; Ronen-Tamir, 2007; Ron-Ronkin, 2009).

Theoretical Background and Research Context *The Importance of the Arts in Education*

Researchers and theoreticians of education claim that the objective of art education in school-based programs is to promote aesthetic education for all students, as part of their basic curriculum. The objective of the curriculum is for students to experience and to produce work in the various arts; understand the importance and role of the arts in human culture and history; react to the qualities of the arts; and form well-founded judgments regarding the arts. According to these researchers, artistic education develops thinking abilities, deepens understanding and sensitivity, expands on knowledge of the world and facilitates learning of new concepts (Dewey, 2001; Eisner, 1998; Goldberg, 2012; McCutchen, 2006).

The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1995), which claims that human intelligence is not a single mental entity, but rather a combination of many separate intelligences, strengthens this approach. Gardner identified, so far, eight distinct intelligences of equal importance: linguistic intelligence; mathematical-logical intelligence; spatial intelligence; musical intelligence; physical-kinesthetic intelligence; interpersonal intelligence; intrapersonal intelligence and naturalistic intelligence. Each of the intelligences has a distinct location in the brain and unique mechanisms for processing and expressing information. An implication of the theory of multiple intelligences is that students are different from one another. Every one of the students is intelligent in their own way, and hence they each deserve teaching that is suited to their talents and inclinations, in order to enable them to acknowledge the full potential embodied in them, and to enrich their existence and the environment in which they live.

The integration of the arts in education allows students, in whom these intelligences are fertile, to discover their strengths on the one hand, and on the other hand to develop and find expression not only in the fields of the arts, but through them to also gain strength in other areas. Goldberg and Eisner (Goldberg, 2012; Eisner, 1998) strengthen Gardner's attitude and claim that art education is important to all students, and not only to those with special talent, since the arts allow for educational experiences that enable students to express themselves through independent creation, to deepen their sensitivity and awareness of the external and internal worlds, and to hone their critical thinking on the aesthetic qualities of art and life.

Despite the above mentioned factors, art studies in school are often marginal in relation to the core of the formal curriculum. This division is based on the positivist perception, which values 'knowledge' that is empirically tested, and which may be proved or disproved. According to this approach, the cognitive activity

of thought can be mediated only verbally. An adoption of this perception leads to the promotion of a hierarchy of knowledge topped by scientific knowledge and distancing the arts from their proper place in the development of cognition (Eisner, 1998). This hierarchic structure of knowledge, which characterizes the positivist conception, underlies the policy of the Israeli Ministry of Education in the last decade. This policy creates a distinction between core subjects and enrichment subjects. Declaratively, the Ministry of Education ascribes great importance to art education, since through them the Ministry expects the school to impart to children skills and values (Ministry of Education Management Circular, 2005). But in fact, the schools may choose which enrichment studies to offer, amongst which art education is included, as part of a selection of studies that make up merely two weekly hours. The delimitation of art education as 'enrichment' studies posits them in a lower status, which makes it difficult to teach them in reality, and does not allow pupils personal development or enjoyment of the qualities of each of the art subjects.

The marginality of enrichment subjects in general, and of the art subjects in particular, in the Israeli education system is only part of the gamut of difficulties encountered when attempting to integrate them into the curriculum as part of the general-religious education. The following discussion will elaborate on the unique struggles facing dance education in the general-religious education, some of which were already raised in the introduction.

Brinson's Model: the Contribution of Dance Education to the Formal Curriculum

Brinson (1993) described the contribution of the art of dance to the school curriculum as part of formal education in a form of a six-category model: artistic and aesthetic education; cultural education; personal and social education; physical development; general studies and pre-professional education.

1. Contribution to artistic and aesthetic education – dance education imparts a different form of knowledge and understanding, which includes two aspects: theoretical knowledge, such as concepts and history; and practical knowledge, such as a movement "vocabulary," rules for constructing a dance, acquaintance with the body, and developing sensitivity to the meanings that the body conveys. This knowledge provides the students with tools for discovering, understanding and expressing the logic of their inner world and that of the world surrounding them (McCutchen, 2006). Acquisition of practical knowledge develops, among other things, perceptual and performative skills. The students are required to pay attention, to store the representations in their memory and to memorize the details of the movement and of the movement sequence. They are also required to listen to instructions, while remaining involved in the study of the dance technique, the feelings, the ideas and the thoughts conveyed by the dance. Along with this, observation of dance performances boosts students' multi-sensory perceptual awareness (Hanna, 2008). Theoretical and practical education in dance also develops creative thought and action, expressed in daring to approach the new and connecting things that were unrelated to one another before (Landau, 2001).

Tasks in a creative lesson, alongside tasks related to performance and to directing, encourage students to find movement solutions while thinking and using their imagination and their inventiveness (Kraus, Gottschild, & Hilsendager, 1991).

2. Contribution to cultural education – Art works reflect the aesthetic conception and the social, political, and economic background of the period in which they were created, and they impart a highly imaginative form to the historical facts. Art education - dance included - allows students to study the connection between the content and the form that the art takes on and between the culture and the time in which it was made. Students' deep engagement with the dance they observe or perform expands their understanding of their history, philosophy, customs, styles and life circumstances as well as those of people from different cultures and countries (Adshead, 1988; Eisner, 1998).

3. Contribution to personal and social education – While working individually and in a group as part of dance lessons, or in preparation for a dance performance, students develop personal skills, such as perseverance, discipline and self-awareness, as well as interpersonal skills in planning and making group decisions. An agreement on common goals provides an opportunity for collaboration, for giving and receiving constructive and judgmental criticism, for meaningful involvement among members of the group, and for enhancing the sense of self-confidence and group pride (Anderson, 2004).

4. Contribution to physical development – Physical education and the art of dance share overlapping points in the development of physical ability. Both disciplines contribute to the refinement of the body, to improving coordination and to the development of personal skills. But the values and the emphases are different. In physical education the connection between the body and the soul has an achievement-oriented aim. In contrast, in the discipline of dance the connection between body and soul generates artistic expression, which makes it possible to organize and express individual worldviews (Brinson, 1993).

5. Contribution to general studies in school – The integration of the arts with core subjects enhances students' level of learning and improves their understanding and achievements through the use of the various learning skills and teaching styles that characterize art education. Dance contributes to general studies since in this art form all the senses, and not only the cognitive dimension, collaborate in an experiential manner of content processing. The integration provides opportunities to use the knowledge as well as the benefits of the dance in the different subjects and challenges students to create systems of contexts and insights, while using metaphorical and analogical thinking. This integration does not diminish the value of dance as a distinct field, but rather acknowledges its force and extent (Bond & Stinson, 2001; Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000).

6. Contribution to pre-professional education – Educational dance lessons enable students, who have the physical and mental qualities required for a professional career in dance, to stand out. Recognition of their unique talents, as part of the educational dance curriculum, opens for them the option of choosing pre-professional dance studies at dance schools that train students to perform professionally (McCutchen, 2006).

In conclusion, the point of departure for educational dance is

that all pupils should have access to the varied aspects of dance education, as a form of art. That is because dance, as all the other arts, amplifies the pupils' range of intellectual capabilities, develops their creativity and contributes to their personal growth in the three dimensions – the cognitive, the physical and the emotional.

The Vision of Art Education in the General-Religious Education

In the circular of the administration of the religious-general education (2007) Rabbi Adler, head of the administration, spelled out his religious-educational vision, pointing to the importance of integrating arts into education. Among other things, he writes there that (p. 10):

Artistic creation is one of the tools meant to express our spirit, our great aspirations. Through it our Land shall be cleansed and sanctified, since art can not only be reflective and reactive to reality, but it can also influence reality, and to a certain degree even mold it [...] hence those wishing to build the land are called upon today, perhaps more than ever before, to devote their powers to the refinement of all spiritual, artistic, and creative talents.

This vision is based on the teachings of HaRaAYaH Kook (1865-1935), one of the leaders of religious Zionism, who viewed art as the realization of all that is hidden in Man's soul. As Rabbi Kook claimed, "literature, its drawing and carving, are about to execute all of the spiritual concepts imprinted deep in the human soul. And so long as even one drawing hidden in the depths of the soul is missing from execution, the work of art is burdened with the duty to bring it to light" (Ollat Re'ayah, part B, p. C). Zuckerman (1988) claims that the Rabbi's reference to literature represents his attitude towards all arts. Rabbi Kook saw the arts as a means for achieving a higher spiritual goal, whereas the modern secular concept views cultural creation as an entity in and of itself. It should be mentioned that the Rabbi encouraged the study of, and engagement in, the arts, which bring enjoyment as well as mental and spiritual elation to a person, so long as they are carried out within the boundaries of Halacha.

Another innovative concept that arises from the writings of Rabbi Kook is the challenge of finding the balance between body and soul in the path of the Torah. In general, Judaism does not view the occupation with the body and the use of it as a negative concept, since the body serves as a central instrument for the worship of God – it is the abode of the soul and the executor of Man's thoughts, wishes and aspirations. However, since ancient times and following the encounter with Greek culture, where the body was an object of admiration, Jewish spiritual leadership has warned against the dangers imminent in turning the body into an object of deification and of realization of desires, which constitutes idolatry. Through the ages this fear led to a focus on the spiritual aspect of the human being, and an abandonment of the body as a focus within the various Jewish congregations throughout the diaspora (Kaufman, 1999).

However, contrary to the orthodox perception prevalent in the time of Rabbi Kook, which held holy only scholastic learning,

the Rabbi himself emphasized the importance of cultivating the body. The Rabbi warned that "sometimes, through an effort to become overtaken by higher spirituality, all the forces of spiritual life are carried up into the world of upper thought, and the body is neglected by the soul, thus being left to the control of vices" (Orrot haTeshuva, 1985, 14,B). In order to avoid this depravation, and as a means of reaching a higher level of spirituality, the Rabbi explains that the challenge facing the public is to return to the body, both on the personal level and on the national level, and through it to reach the divine.

On the personal level, the importance of physical strength derives from its contribution to spiritual activity, since "where the recuperation of the body is in order it raises the spiritual light and reinforces it" (Orrot haKodesh, C 80:54). On the national level, Rabbi Kook embraced, in effect, the Zionist ethos of 'muscular Judaism' coined by Max Nordau, and imparted a religious meaning to it. Spiritual strength is a pre-condition for the national resurrection, and the light of the Jewish soul shall be reinforced in the powerful body. In his words,

Our physical demand is great: we need a healthy body. We have dealt much with mentality, but have forgotten **the sanctity of the body**. We have neglected physical health and bravery, we have forgotten that we have holy flesh, no less than we possess a holy soul (Orrot haTeshuva, p. 80. Emphasis mine).

Karmi (2003) claims that the correction that Rabbi Kook demanded was part of his revolutionary worldview, which believed that the path to a new religious, Zionist, Hebrew culture passes through a rehabilitation of the material aspect of life, through the rebuilding of the body and an introduction of general content to religious educational institutes, as part of the molding of the student's spiritual world as a whole person and Jew. However, Rabbi Adler writes, "Rabbi Kook had set a high spiritual challenge, but did not explicate how to deal with it. The proper decryption of human creation and the identification of its Godly components await a redeemer. That is the deep role of arts teachers in religious education" (2007, p. 8). These educators are required, first and foremost, to help their students cope with the tension between the Western concept of artistic creation as a personal expression, free of all authority, and the approach of Halacha, which views art as a means for connecting with the divine.

The subject of dance is unique in the educational challenge with which it presents the religious-general education, due to the neglect of the sanctity of the body, as it was termed by HaRaAYaH Kook, by the religious public. The observant teachers are demanded to repeatedly clarify the borders of artistic creation in the spirit of Halacha, in light of the fear that emphasizing the external aspect of that creation might "diminish Man to the forgetfulness of the Lord" (Sherlo, 2002). These teachers have to deal with dilemmas that arise from the field, such as the expression through dance of the inner world, versus the desire to retain the virtue of chastity and modesty, or through encounters with Western cultural heritage of the art of dance, which does not coincide with their religious perception.

Spirituality in Education

The call by Rabbi Adler (2007) to educators in Jewish general-religious education to "devote [their powers] to the refinement of all spiritual, artistic, and creative talents" requires an examination of the meaning of the term spirituality in general, and of spirituality in education in particular.

Spirituality as a super-essence, in the opinion of Tadmor (2012), holds within it different experiences for different people. According to him, there are those for whom a spiritual experience as an intellectual-philosophical peak, one of revelation and insight into truth; for others it is an aesthetic, artistic peak, the creation of an artist, or the enjoyment of the listener, the reader or the observer – which imparts a sense of elation. There are people for whom spirituality is expressed in an intellectual discussion or a conversation over a common creation that combines receiving, giving and completeness. For yet others spirituality is an ecological experience, one of connecting with nature, the sense of being an organic part of cosmic reality. And there are those for whom spirituality is a purely religious experience expressed in God's work and a sense of proximity to the Lord.

Researchers who have studied the concept of spirituality have concluded that it relates to two central elements. The first is transcendence, which is the perception, experience and knowledge of a supreme entity that is beyond material reality, binding all that exists in it. This entity is dialectically perceived as both existing beyond materiality, and yet also as an essential part of this existence. The practical meaning of this element is that the process of spiritual development includes the development of an ability to connect with this dimension, perceive it, experience it, and apply insights that arise from spiritual experiences in daily life.

The second element in the definition of spirituality is the question of meaning. Practically speaking, spirituality includes a reference to essential questions regarding human existence, such as, what is the material reality and what is the purpose of being? The connection of a person to a spiritual world and the insights they derive from it shine a new light on their worldview, the significance of their place in it and the purpose of their lives. This change leads to a deep experience of purpose, which holds within it significant implications to a one's way of life (Piedmont, 1999).

A combination of both elements can be found in the writings of Maslow (1971), who believed that an essential aspect of the nature of every person is their spiritual core. In his later writings he expanded on his theory of needs, adding the concept of transpersonal psychology that refers to the stage beyond personal realization, which is Man's transcendental stage. In this stage, claims Maslow, Man rises above egocentricity and the focus on the self. This transcendence leads one to harmonious relationships, love for the other and love for creation. In this stage, the individual achieves a connection between their personal consciousness and a wider spiritual awareness, thus being granted access to a supreme reality, to an existence that is beyond material existence. According to this perception, in order

for Man to be able to realize all dimensions of his existence, he must open up his soul, his heart, his mind and his body to his spiritual core, and allow the potential of spiritual force innate in him to find expression (Mayseless, 2012).

Man's potential of spiritual force was also examined by Emmons (2000). He claims that the category of intrapersonal intelligence defined by Gardner (1995) should be expanded to include Man's spiritual intelligence as well. This intelligence includes the capability of transcendence; the ability to stay in higher states of awareness; to experience and to see the sacred in daily activities; to find assistance in spiritual sources to solve problems; and also to express virtues such as expressions of modesty, gratefulness, forgiveness and compassion.

Tadmor (2012) believes that in every person there is a connection to spirituality, but its realization demands self-improvement and direction. Education, in his opinion, is necessary to cultivate the spiritual intelligence inert in man. This shapes the educational ideal that aspires to design, for the student, experiences that include a combination of thought, emotion, body, soul, and spirit.

To conclude, research on art education, as well as the teachings of Rabbi Kook, emphasize the position claiming that the arts serve as an instrument for the realization of human potential. Both approaches uphold the claim that the arts harbor a force that carries those engaged in them beyond factual reality and imparts to them an existential meaning. The role of education is to open for the students a hatch to the process of realization through art, which in the religious belief is part of the aspiration to live a life of Torah in all walks of life, in the spirit of the verse, "in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6).

Researchers of human psychology who have dealt with the spiritual core of Man – as an intellectual, aesthetic, religious or other super-existence – attest to the importance of spiritual connection to the high-quality existence of Man. The results of these studies shed light on the call made by Rabbi Adler upon religious educators to devote their best efforts to cultivating the spiritual talents of their students through the arts as a meaningful path to a connection with the divine.

This article, then, gives voice to observant dance teachers and identifies their perceptions and positions towards the teaching of dance to pupils of the general-religious education, in an attempt to broaden the academic discourse on dance education in Israel, and to contribute to development of the field and to integrating dance into the general-religious education system.

Research Method

Population of interviewees: 11 observant dance teachers who had found positions as teachers in elementary schools of the general-religious education system were interviewed. The interviewees have 3 to 12 years of experience teaching, their ages range from 27 to 36, and they come from various places of residence in Israel.

Interviews: in semi-structured, narrative interviews, the

interviewees were asked to tell their story as observant dance teachers. In addition, they were asked designated questions, such as: What is, in your opinion, the significance of dance education to pupils? What are your positions towards the teaching of dance in connection with faith? What are the challenges with which you cope in teaching the subject? What are your motivations for choosing dance teaching?

Procedure: an appeal was issued to 120 graduates of the dance department with a request to interview teachers who teach dance in formal education. A positive response was received from 37 graduates, out of which 11 teachers were chosen who teach educational dance, varying in their ages, in seniority and in geographic location. In order to avoid bias in responses, due to the position of the researcher as head of the department and as a lecturer the interviews were mostly held by observant research assistants, trained for this purpose.

Method of analysis: the interviews were taped and transcribed. In order to deepen the findings and enrich them (Creswell, 2008) analysis of the findings combined two methodologies, which allow for an examination of the selected text from different perspectives. In the first stage an inductive data-oriented analysis was used, through which various categories, based on the data, were identified (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In the second stage, all interviews were analyzed again using a deductive method of analysis, theory-oriented content analysis, in accordance with Brinson's model (1993). The model was chosen since it integrates all of the presented aspects, as described in the report of the American organization, National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), for 2013 (Bonbright, Bradley & Dooling, 2013), and in major research on art education in general and dance education in particular (Eisner, 1998; Hanna, 2008; McCutchen, 2006). The use of this model for analyzing the findings grants universal validity to the study in the context of teaching dance. In addition, the analysis of the findings of the study in connection with this model will enable an examination of the validity of the model among observant dance teachers as well.

In each stage an outside expert judge examined the validity of the analysis and ensured it was true to the data. In the third stage, common aspects to both analyses were identified, according to Brinson's model. Additional aspects, which arose in the analysis from the first stage, according to the data-oriented inductive analysis, (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), created sub-categories to Brinson's model. The combination of the two methodologies deepened the ability to hear both the unique and the universal in the voices of the observant dance teachers.

Ensuring the rights of the interviewees

As noted above, all interviewees had stated their consent to participate in the study. In addition, all quotes were referred to the interviewees to obtain their consent to publish them. A full consent was obtained to publish their words without identifying details but for the initial of their first name, as is accepted in qualitative publications (Ezer, 2012).

Findings and Interpretation

This section shall present the findings that arose from the theory-oriented content analysis according to Brinson's model (1993) and the sub-categories that were added to the model from the analysis according to the data-oriented inductive analysis (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

1. The contribution of dance teaching to artistic and aesthetic education: In this category Brinson (1993) notes two aspects – acquisition of practical knowledge and acquisition of theoretical knowledge. In the interviews the teachers did not refer to the contribution of dance lessons in the theoretical aspect. In the practical aspect they referred to the development of the artistic and aesthetic abilities of their pupils for the purpose of expressing their inner world through movement, and to the ways of acquiring the skills needed to develop these abilities. In this category three major aspects arose –

– Developing sensitivity – interviewee Z. described the development of the pupils' ability to listen in dance lessons: "I discovered that the pupils learn to listen. Dance is an instrument of attention, attention to the body, attention to images, to what comes from within, attention to the music."

– A unique expression of meaning – interviewees said that the added value of the dance lessons lies in the fact that in them pupils can express themselves in a different way than their usual existence in school. This is apparent in the words of interviewee M.: "There are children who are very quiet, who find it difficult to speak in front of the group, but suddenly in dance they open up, they are no longer mute, their body speaks, breaks their own barriers [...], expresses them and their thought."

– Developing creative thought and action – one of the interviewees described a learning process in dance that encourages finding movement solutions while thinking, using the imagination and physical fitness. According to A, "Creating dance is actually learning how to solve problems. This is something that is very important to pupils, and they work on it all the time in dance lessons. I give them an exercise, like creating a dance or phrasing a movement phrase according to some rule we were working on in class. Everyone does it. Yes, it works."

S. described the influence of the feeling of realizing the potential that derives from self-creation that stirs up happiness, in contrast with what is perceived as "dull" school work – "School is such a dark place, and suddenly they thrive, and create [...] it is so much fun to see them bringing things out of themselves and creating, and just enjoying and feeling happy in it. The joy comes from expressing themselves - aha, they can create from themselves."

The teacher contrasts the blooming in dance lessons and the dark school, and one may assume that she means passive learning that focuses mainly on the imparting of knowledge by the teacher and its memorization by the pupils, and does not encourage involvement and emotional identification with the studies. The words of interviewee S. echo the perception of

the interviewees above, according to which meaningful learning is active learning that enables pupils to better understand the world and even find and invent themselves in it, stimulating their dedication and commitment to learning.

The words of the teachers coincide with the statement by arts researchers that engagement in the arts leads to a realization of the human potential through experiential-creative learning that requires attentiveness, openness, curiosity and daring (Landau, 2001; Dewey, 2001; Eisner, 1998; Goldberg, 2012; McCutchen, 2006). Also, their claim that dance enables pupils to gain a unique expression of meaning fits the educational significance of the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1995). Dance studies encourage the operation of several different intelligences – among others, bodily-kinesthetic, musical and spatial – and thus enable pupils to process information and express it in unique ways.

2. The contribution of dance teaching to cultural education: The tension with which observant dance teachers deal in outlining the nature of dance teaching in the general-religious education reflects the conflict in the religious-Zionist society between the desire to be part of the modern world and the wish to maintain the boundaries of Halacha. According to B., "I search for the balance between high-quality Jewish music for dances, and music the pupils are influenced by, such as MTV, or any other secular fashion." Her words show that there is a fascination of young people in the religious-Zionist society with the secular culture surrounding them. The teacher, on the other hand, expresses a desire to impart to her pupils values, expressed in the choice of "high-quality" music, as she defined it. It can be understood from her words that the solution, for her, is in finding a balance between the wishes of the pupils and her educational and religious conception.

Interviewee C. referred in her words to cultural processes of change: "In elementary school I teach folk dances, we call it 'Folk Dances – Nostalgia'. Yes, it is possible bring in some nostalgia, [...] Today's children have no clue... it is just unbelievable, they don't know these songs... They come from an entirely different culture, as opposite as heaven is from earth [...] In my view it is amazing to dance folk dances, which are truly our entire people, Jews everywhere know how to dance these dances." The term "nostalgia" indicates a yearning for the past, which is perceived as idyllic. Learning the "nostalgic" folk dances, as C. describes them, allows her pupils to be exposed to the culture of Israeli folk dances that reflected the values of the young Israeli state. It is evident that the interviewee cherishes these values, believes that they stand higher than current norms, which she perceives as opposite to them "as heaven is from earth." The study done by Roginsky (2012, pp. 305-6) reinforces the assumption that Israeli folk dances reflect values. As she claims,

Israeli folk dances embodied the symbolic collective expression of the unity of action [...] the dancers' physical grasp of each other (bringing together hands and shoulders) creates a human chain and emphasizes the mutual link between the individual and the collective, as the circle defines and mandates equality, uniformity,

integration and cooperation between the individuals in it in order to perform the dance [...] the ideological messages are imprinted on the individual in a distilled and direct manner, in their physical being per se.

It can be assumed that the teacher's choice of teaching "nostalgic" folk dances derives from her perception that the art of dance enables pupils to experience in their bodies the ideal significance of the dances of the early days of the state, and thus to absorb their values.

3. The contribution of dance teaching to personal and social education –

Personal education – this category received wide reference in the words of the interviewees on various aspects, such as

– Self-realization – A. claimed that "dance enables the pupil to grow and to develop as a human being, to bring to the world what they have in them."

– Increasing self-confidence and self-esteem – according to H., "there are girls who are very weak in all other subjects, but are gifted in dance. Then, suddenly, there is a field within the school in which they have this place to stand out as the successful girl, and it truly empowers them... the lesson gives them confidence, socially."

– Education for perseverance – Z. explained that "dance teaches the pupils to work on a movement sequence. To do a task from beginning to end, which is something they must have later, for a life as adults in the community".

– Self-discipline – according to L., "dance encourages pupils to think! To make an effort! To invest themselves! Because first of all, dance is investment, you can't avoid it, it is physical investment and people today don't like to make an effort, and it's also a thing of self-discipline and seeing that when you invest yourself, things happen... and what happened is yours. I have no doubt that it goes on with them. Those who really go for it win, it continues with them."

The personal development described by the interviewees coincides with the skills and values detailed as the objectives of art education according to the Ministry of Education (circular of the general director, 2005). Their descriptions are also compatible with the claims of the literature regarding the positive contribution of dance to young people in getting to know the forces latent in them and in reinforcing their values and personal development in the aspects of self-discipline, punctuality, order, seriousness and responsibility (Moorefield-Lang, 2008; Stinson, 1995).

The analysis of the interviews through the inductive data-oriented analysis (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) added to Brinson's model a sub-category, unique to this population group: religious empowerment.

– Religious empowerment – according to N., "dance is an instrument for the worship of the Lord. Through the movement it deepens the pupils' work on their virtues and their awareness of the connection between body and soul within the boundaries of Halacha... the body suddenly receives different dimensions [...] in the sense of 'All my bones shall say.'" It is evident in this quote that the potential of teaching dance as a means for religious empowerment

of the pupils is connected to the two elements that make up the term "spirituality" – transcendence and an answer to the question of the meaning of existence (Piedmont, 1999). According to the interviewee, in its highest essence dance serves as an expression of a connection to the divine through the movement of the body. In this it allows for knowledge and an experience of a sublime existence beyond the material reality, in seemingly daily actions. The inclusion of the biblical quotation "All my bones shall say, 'O Lord, who is like you'" (*Psalms*, 35:10) in her words reflects the aspiration to maintain a life of Torah in all walks of life, in the spirit of the verse, "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths" (*Proverbs*, 3:6). Her words also attest that dance lessons can develop spiritual intelligence, the components of which – beyond an aspiration to transcendence and an answer to the question of existence – include the nurturing of virtues (Emmons, 2000).

Social education – many of the interviewees noted the contribution of dance lessons to the contents of ceremonies in school, especially on the social-educational aspect. A., for instance, stated that "the dance lesson develops pupils' sensitivity to respect the other. For instance, we held a ceremony in memory of [the assassinated prime-minister] Rabin. I chose for the ceremony dance the song titled *Equal*, by Ran Danker, which has amazing lyrics – 'You are black, I am white / I am in the dark, you are in the light...'. We had a creative process in couples, and the division was intentionally random. The task was to create a duet together. We talked about types of duets, for instance dancing the same, or doing something opposite on purpose, or just dancing something different than the partner. The pupils went through a long process, at the end of which a dance was created, which we performed in the ceremony. Not like a regular class, in which you talk about the other, they experienced what happens when you have to deal with someone who is different from me, who moves differently. It was a true experience with the body. It was amazing. I felt that there, I was performing with them something that we truly breathed life into together. They created something significant in this process. Before going on stage I told them that they had an opportunity, through the dance, to pass something on to other children, to give something to someone else through this ability they have in movement."

In this quote the interviewee refers to two aspects of the contribution of dance to the social education of the pupils. The first is the process she led with her pupils as part of an educational dance lesson in the elementary school where she teaches. This process allowed for the development of interpersonal skills in planning and making group decisions. As claimed in works of theoreticians, an agreement on common goals in a creative process encourages meaningful cooperation and involvement between group members and empowers senses of self-confidence and group pride (Anderson, 2004). This process is an example of humanizing creativity, which grants a voice to all partners of the creative process and accepts the difference between them as essential (Chappell et al., 2012). In this case, the creative work enabled all partners in class to express themselves, not only a

selected few, and legitimized the differences between them as an essential part of the group construction of the creation.

The second aspect refers to the integration of this dance into the school ceremony in memory of Rabin. The role of the ceremony in society is to mold and reinforce norms and values in order to construct a culture common to the entire community. The dance the pupils had created in class is an expression of knowledge learned in their bodies and realized in an original work of dance that constitutes a new cultural text. The integration of the dance in the school ceremony turns the dancers into cultural agents who may influence the audience of pupils in a direct, experiential manner and contribute to the development of their aesthetic sensitivity and artistic attentiveness.

The pupils' process of creation and performance realizes the double roles of artistic creation - as a reflection of existing reality, but also, at the same time, as an influence on it, or even as a molding of it. In this case, this example echoes the vision of the contribution that integrating the arts into the general-religious education can make (Adler, 2007).

Similar to the creative process presented above, in her research on pupils in specialized dance programs in Israel, Nativ (2012) examined, among other things, the manner in which improvisation activities in dance lessons shape the social world of the dancers. She claims that dance improvisation lessons enable those dancing in them to participate in the shaping of the social world out of the physical action of the body. In this process,

The girls experience their private bodies as an active subject created within the public sphere but also producing it, and in this they gain an understanding of the world and interpret it [...] in this sense, the body serves as a source of self- and social- doing and learning, unlike the silent and silenced body in traditional school classrooms. This perception extracts the body from a passive stance and gives it powers that are partner to the formation of the selfness and of the socialness (ibid, p. 368).

These testimonies from the field of study reflect the fact that dance lessons provide pupils with a type of laboratory to investigate their personal and group identity, both as part of educational dance lessons and in specialized dance programs in pre-professional frameworks. Thus, the art of dance influences the school culture and contributes to its creation.

4. The contribution of dance teaching to physical development – in the responses of the interviewees the distinction between the teaching subjects of dance and physical education stood out. Similarly to Brinson (1993), they emphasized the importance of the connection between body and soul in the art of dance, for purposes of personal expression and not just refining the body.

– Reinforcing body image – in this sub-category there stood out the position of the interviewees that physical development in dance contributes to the reinforcement of the perception of self as an inseparable wholeness of body and soul. According to M., "I teach twelve-year-old girls. At this age the girls are bent over, and they have no openness in their bodies. In class I needed to very gently correct the

way they worked with their bodies... even to just broaden the range of shoulder rotation, the way they opened their hands, the shoulder blades, the entire chest area, a lot of work. Gentle, gentle, gentle. One day the principal told me that the girls who were studying dance with me have changed greatly in their body image, in their stance and confidence. She was amazed to see how the body and the soul are truly one. I believe that in class they get to know their body, and thus learn to love it."

In this quote the interviewee presents two voices, her own and that of the principal, whose words give force to the perception of the interviewee. The speaker attests that she refines the pupils' bodies to a degree, and in her own words – gently. The words of the principal – linking the strengthening of the pupils' posture with the boost in their self-image – exemplify the practical contribution of dance to the personal empowerment of the pupils.

Beyond this, the combination of the two methodologies, the inductive data-oriented analysis (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), and the theory-oriented analysis, (Brinson, 1993) raised two sub-categories unique to this population group – developing an awareness to a moderation in the cultivation of the body, and developing an awareness to body-soul links as a means for connecting with the divine.

– Developing an awareness to a moderation in the cultivation of the body – the responses of the interviewees indicate that they perceive the dance lessons as enabling a renewed construction and definition of the attitude towards the body. M. noted that "some of the pupils are embarrassed by the exposure," which indicates they are sensitive to the exposure of both body and soul. Interviewee H., in whose words we may see that she aspires to enhance her pupils' sensitivity and awareness to the significance of their use of body movement, explained that "as a teacher, it is values that I pass on to my pupils; chastity [...] when I am with my body from such a place that externalizes it, and when I am with my body from a place which is upright, but not protruding."

Z. expressed her fear of a cultural influence that encourages the externalization of achievements in the development of the body, saying "it is important to me that the movement does not squirt ego or virtuosity". It can be understood that the refinement of the physical ability and the achievements are, for her, a means and not an end.

– Developing an awareness of body-soul links as a means for connecting with the divine – in the responses of the interviewees their position regarding physical development in dance lessons stood out as a means for refining the personal-religious expression. According to N., "in dance there is a place of developing the body as an instrument. It requires honing and a sort of attentiveness that is on an entirely different level than that of sports lessons, in which you learn how to work with the body, but not to say something through the body. Because in dance there is a place of creativity, of expression, of being able to bring myself. On the one hand, this is really material, but on the other hand it is also innerness, which is the spirit, the soul

[...]; it [dance] greatly expands the borders of this world. It is something that touches both on the beyond and on the here and now, it is a connection of the upper and lower spheres... to me that is the goal".

According to L., "dance lessons are important especially in religious frameworks. Religious girls naturally do not deal with their body too much. Dance lessons enable them to understand their body, listen to what comes from within, learn the power latent in their body... this is also in the religious sense, yes, in the spiritual sense of connecting with myself and through that connection to myself, worshiping the Lord."

The first interviewee expressed her perception that the spiritual expression of dance stands in the center of teaching the subject. Her educational goal, which she defines as "a connection of the upper and lower spheres," reflects her being an observant dance teacher. As such, she deals with the challenge posited by Rabbi Kook to the religious education institutions – to mold the pupil's inner-spiritual world as a whole person and Jew, through the development of the body and an artistic-creative activity.

The words of the second interviewee indicate that although almost one hundred years have passed since Rabbi Kook had called upon the religious public to return to the body, the process has not fully matured among women. This is probably due to the norm of hiding the female body, represented by the verse "The King's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). Her words indicate a change of consciousness that has begun in this population, expressed, among other things, by the recognition that the return to the body through the art of dance empowers the pupils both personally and religiously. We may also identify this change as a part of the influence of the spirit of feminism on this society.

5. The contribution of dance teaching to general studies in school – the following words of the interviewees attest to their perception that dance lessons enhance the understanding of the pupils in other subjects thanks to the use of multiple intelligences. According to L., "dance deals with learning 'hard core'- the way we learn things, the way we understand things, the way in which we can explain things differently. How to use the body to learn to read, to learn how to subtract and to add fractions, in order to... all sorts of very, very interesting things."

The interviewee relates to experiential-movement experiences that illustrate abstract concepts through the organs of the body and enable the pupils to learn and to internalize these principles through the body and to apply them to their general studies. Her perception relates to the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1995), which implies that pupils should be exposed to a variety of teaching methods so as to be able to realize the potential latent in them.

According to A., "a dance teacher can promote pupils in other fields. This may not be the most important goal, but in my opinion it is really significant. It is another way of learning contents taught in class, and it is also a different, experiential way [...] also from

my experience as a pupil. I ask myself what I remember best, what influenced me the most, and those are the places of... experiencing something, actually doing it physically, experiencing it and not just learning it in theory." Her words reinforce those of the first interviewee, both based on her experiences as a pupil and from her point of view as a teacher. These words support the claims of the professional literature that experiential teaching arouses in the pupils interest and involvement in the learning process (Dewey, 2001; McCutchen, 2006).

6. The contribution of dance teaching to pre-professional education – Not many references were found to this category in the interviews. The words of S. praise the revolution that is occurring in the general-religious education with the introduction of dance to the curriculum. She states, "I see girls in my classes in the 5th and 6th grades, how they thrive in dance lessons! There are pupils who started attending afternoon classes following our lessons in school, and many choose to continue learning dance in junior high, in the arts school. I see how it is built up. I see this revolution of dance lessons in religious schools as a very positive thing. The pupils' needs are met within, and they do not have to go looking for it outside. There are so many talented girls, and it is truly fortunate that dance lessons in school have exposed them to their natural gift." The relative lack of references of the interviewees to pre-professional training can be ascribed to their being dance teachers in elementary education, not engaged with teaching that is directed at professionalism, which takes place in high school specialized dance programs (Perlshtein, 2002).

From the interviewee's reference to the 5th and 6th grade we can assume that the sequence of dance lessons in her school stimulates in gifted pupils the desire to continue and develop in the field. And indeed, in recent years eight matriculation-level dance programs were opened in religious high schools for girls, as a pre-professional training for pupils interested in deepening their development.

The uniqueness of the investigated population – observant dance teachers – is expressed in this category as well. The content of the interviewee's words reflects the growing thirst in her pupils' population group for pre-professional training in the creation and performance of the art of dance within the boundaries of Halacha. The interviewee praises the change that has been enabling observant pupils to realize their talent within a religious framework, since before dance was integrated in the general-religious education, they were not provided with a suitable professional-religious answer to their needs.

Summary and conclusions

The theory-oriented analysis of the interviews shows that these dance teachers' experiences give particular validity to Brinson's universal model (1995). The analysis of their personal stories, which reflected their perceptions and positions towards the teaching of dance, provided references to all six categories in this model. However, it was found that the interviewees discussed more extensively the significance of the subject of dance to

pupils in the category of personal and social education. It may be assumed that the emphasis these teachers placed on this category derives from their perception that the art of dance is a means for reinforcing values and for personal development.

Another aspect that arose is the emphasis placed by these teachers on the unique value of the subject of dance, which contributes to the development of each pupil. This finding was especially prominent in the category of pre-professional education. This finding can be explained by the fact that these interviewees teach elementary school classes, and for them the contribution of the art of dance is not in professionalization but in the development of all pupils through a process of understanding the body, connecting through the body with oneself and with others, cultivating expression and creation and reinforcing personal development of aspects such as commitment, attentiveness, sensitivity and dedication.

The analysis of the interviews according to the inductive, data-oriented analysis (Kupferberg, 2010; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) raised unique sub-categories that enriched Brinson's model (1993). In the category of personal and social education arose the sub-category of "religious empowerment," and in the category of physical development arose two sub-categories – "developing an awareness to a moderation in the cultivation of the body," and "developing an awareness of body-soul links as a means for connecting with the divine." These sub-categories reflect the religious identity of the observant dance teachers. The analysis of the interviews brings out that these teachers view religious empowerment as an inseparable part of the pupils' personal development through dance. This indicates that they are coping with a cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1985 [1962]) that is triggered by the tension between free personal expression, which underlies all arts, and the desire to maintain the laws of Halacha.

The following words of the interviewees provide a substantial and touching expression of the emotional intensity that accompanies the observant dance teachers when they attempt to integrate dance into the general-religious education:

"I feel that in dance there is something extreme to both sides [...] In my eyes it has enormous power, but the danger from it is also somewhat greater." [R.]

"As a woman of faith, before every lesson with my pupils I pray... to find, to be exact, not to sin." [Z.]

The first quote summarizes the cognitive dissonance experienced by the teachers, testimony to the acknowledgement of the power of dance, in the face of the fear from the danger latent in it. The prayer for finding the right way, in the second quote, is an expression of the way these teachers deal with this dissonance. The combination of the two methodologies in decoding the interviews in this study make it clear that the interviewees overcome the dissonance through a heightened sensitivity to guarding the boundaries of Halacha when teaching dance, issuing from their perception that the subject contributes to a religious and spiritual empowerment of the pupils.

In conclusion, the contribution of this study is two-fold: methodologically – in the combination of two approaches for analyzing the data, which enriches the findings and deepens them (Creswell, 2008); and educationally – in the identification of the teachers' perceptions as leverage for cultivating the field of dance in the religious-general education.

This article gives voice for the first time to observant teachers who are partners to paving the road towards the construction of dance in the spirit of Halacha in the general-religious education system. Despite the small scope of this study, its contribution is in making available this information. Its significance from the point of view of the teachers is in revealing the revolution taking place as a result of providing an answer to the call from the field for establishing a department for training academic dance teachers who will unite elements of a religious worldview with the teaching and creating of dance. As stated by HaRaYaH Kook, "We have learned from this to what degree we must wisely aspire to the accomplishment of such physical refinement, as from it there are outcomes to all spiritual refinement" (*Orot HaKodesh* 1, p. 146).

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