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Camp Ramah and Adult Jewish Identity:

Long-Term Influences on Conservative Congregants in North America

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The organized Jewish community in North America sponsors hundreds of summer camps. Of them, few have been characterized by a highly planful and intensive educational effort; and, of these, the Camp Ramah system of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (of Conservative Judaism) is among the largest. The Ramah family of camps (each is autonomous, yet all follow similar educational approaches) now includes eight camps in the United States, and one each in Canada, Russia, Argentina, and Israel (serving primarily North American youngsters).

Since the founding of the first Ramah camp in 1947, followed over the next two decades by the others, Ramah officials estimate that they have enrolled in the neighborhood of 75,000 campers, some for just one season and some for a half dozen or more summers. As of this writing, almost all the "Ramah alumni" are between the ages of 16 and 65. The majority of these ex-campers have found their way into the Conservative congregations of North America where, as we shall see, they now comprise about 6% of the laity (and growing), as well as most of the recently ordained Conservative rabbis. (Shapiro [1989] reported then that almost half the recently ordained Conservative rabbis had been to Ramah at the time he collected his data in 1979. The proportion figures to have grown since, particularly in light of an organized effort, since 1990, to have JTS rabbinical students serve as Ramah staff members.)

The sheer size of this enterprise, its considerable longevity, the urgency with which organized American Jewry now views issues of Jewish continuity, and the distinctive character of Jewish educational camps in general and Ramah in particular all underscore the importance of assessing the long-range impact of the Ramah system. With the exception of Shapiro's limited attempt in 1989, no one to date has conducted and published systematically analyzed quantitative data on this issue.

The research literature in cognate fields generally buttresses the expectation of impact. Furthest afield, studies of religious education in the United States generally report small to moderate effects of childhood religious education on measures of adult religious involvement. Effects are greater for more intensive forms of education and for instances where religious education is supported by more religious families and communities (see, for example, Erickson 1992; Greeley and Rossi 1966; Ozorak 1989).

With respect to American Jews, much of the social scientific literature on religious education has focused on Jewish schools. Here the principal findings concur on the effectiveness of the Jewish day school. However, they divide over whether part-time schools are at all influential (Bock [1976] and Himmelfarb [1974, 1979] argue against the effectiveness of supplementary schools, as opposed to Cohen [1974, 1988, 1995] who argues the other way, as does, more tentatively, Fishman [1987], Fishman and Goldstein [1993], Lipset [1994], and Rimor and Katz [1993]). Two studies of Jewish summer camps (of Ramah in particular), assessing their immediate impact, documents substantial near-term effects in several areas of Jewish involvement emphasized by the camps' educational programs (Dorph [1976]; Farago [1972]).

None of these findings would surprise those most familiar with Camp Ramah – directors, staff, volunteers, campers, and former campers. It is safe to say that they generally assume that the Camp Ramah experience exerts a salutary, long-term impact on adult Jewish identity (Fox 1997; Shapiro 1989). As Shapiro wrote, in almost an off-hand manner:

> That Ramah has had a profound effect on the Conservative Jewish scene is certainly not seriously questioned today. Ramah alumni dot the Conservative Jewish landscape in the United States, in Canada, in Israel, and elsewhere. (1989: 113)

In a manner of speaking, for many involved observers of Conservative Jewish life, the evidence of impact is all around them. Ramah alumni seem to disproportionately comprise the success stories of Conservative Judaism. They make up a large number of rabbis, cantors, educators, olim, Jewish studies professors, communal workers, lay leaders, Schechter day school parents, and Ramah parents (i.e., parents of current Ramah campers). This circumstance has led many to assume that Ramah has served as a powerful breeding ground for lay and professional Jewish leadership, both within Conservative Jewry, and in other parts of the Jewish world.

Of course, in theory, impressions can be misleading. They derive from anecdotal evidence drawn from limited social circles and ranges of experience. Members of elites (Jewish or otherwise) tend to know one another, and are likely to come in contact with others who fit the expected mold (i.e., in this case, Ramah alumni in leadership positions), reinforcing the possibly distorted impressions. Moreover, even if the phenomena of Ramah background and prominence in Jewish life do in fact coincide, they are not necessarily causally related. In other words, just because many Ramah alumni are now Jewishly successful, perhaps other factors deserve the true credit for their long-range Jewish success. Many of today's prominent middle-aged Conservative Jews may have attended Ramah in their youth, but the Ramah experience may not actually have "caused" their high levels of Jewish involvement. How much of the putative success of Ramah can truly be attributed to Ramah, and how much to corollary and to antecedent factors remains to be seen.

Without question, Ramah campers derived disproportionately from stronger Jewish homes with higher than average levels of ritual observance and synagogue involvement (Dorph 1976). It also stands to reason that Ramah campers were subject to other Jewish educational experiences that contributed to their high rates of Jewish involvement later on in life. They proba-

bly went to synagogue more often, attended day schools and better (or at least more intensive) Hebrew schools as well as Hebrew high schools, participated in United Synagogue Youth (USY) or the now-defunct Leadership Training Fellowship (the Conservative movement's youth groups), and went to Israel in their teen years. Ramah camps require enrollment in year-round formal Jewish education. If for no other reason, that requirement certainly would serve to set Ramah campers apart from the total pool of Conservative synagogue teen-agers.

If all this is so, and if one or more of these factors influenced adult Jewish identity years later, then how can we say that the Ramah experience per se contributed any *net* causal impact, that is, net of the home and other potentially effective Jewish educational instruments? To be sure, the same sort of argument can be, and has been, leveled at claims for the educational effectiveness of all other major Jewish educational experiences. The well-known problem of *self-selection* (where participants in Jewish educational experiences are drawn from stronger Jewish homes and communities) raises questions about any assertion of educational effectiveness for any sort of Jewish educational experience (Cohen 1995).

In addition to the question of *whether* Ramah exerted an impact on adult Jewish identity years after having participated as a camper or staff member, we can ask *how,* i.e., in what areas of Jewish identity, Ramah may have exerted an impact. In particular, we would expect the Camp to be most effective in those areas where it devoted educational emphasis, such as prayer skills and kashrut. At the same time, observers have noted how Camp Ramah, not unlike other intensive educational settings, may have provoked some alienation from conventional religious settings and leaders, that is, congregations and rabbis. Indeed, part of the Ramah philosophy was to create Jews who would be unsatisfied with the culture of their home religious communities and might

work to transform them. Dorph (1976) that Ramah succeeded in provoking a distancing of campers from what he termed negative family norms toward Jewish life and practice.

This study, then, in full awareness of all the obstacles to assessing educational effectiveness, tries to examine the impact of attendance at Ramah upon several measures of adult Jewish involvement. It draws upon a portion of a recently collected sample of Conservative congregants in the U.S. and Canada. It examines two generations of Conservative Jews: today's adults (the respondents), and, much less comprehensively (owing to the available data) their children, upon whom the adult respondents, their parents, reported.

In particular, this study explores the ways in which Ramah campers derive from home environments different from those of their contemporaries who do/did not attend Ramah. In so doing, it measures with some precision the Jewish socialization advantages possessed by campers. With respect to the respondents (all of whom are now adults), the analysis examines the extent and nature of impact Ramah exerted on several aspects of their current Jewish identity, that is, at least twenty years or so after having attended Ramah. With respect to the children of the respondents, the analysis focuses on the only outcome measure available, albeit a crucial one: the likelihood of marrying a Jew or of intermarrying. Here the analysis tries to discern the independent impact of the Ramah experience upon the chances of marrying a Jew, taking into account the Ramah alumni's many Jewish socialization advantages.

The Data and Their Limitations

This study uses data drawn from the 1995 Study of Conservative Synagogue Members, conducted by the Ratner Center for Conservative Judaism of the Jewish Theological Seminary of

America (Cohen 1996; Wertheimer 1996). The study surveyed 1617 members of 27 randomly selected Conservative congregations in the United States and Canada. (Approximately 300,000 households appear on the lists of about 800 synagogues in North America affiliated with the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism, the continental roof organization). The survey addressed concerns pertinent to the study of Conservative Jews, their identity, and their relationship to their congregations. It is the first comprehensive attempt to interview a large, representative random sample of Conservative congregants in North America. To be clear, the original purposes of the study were not to examine the impact of Camp Ramah; rather, by analyzing the data that were collected for other purposes, this paper tries to tease out some preliminary and tentative findings related to the topic at hand.

Table 1. Comparison of NJPS with Ratner Survey on Selected Variables (Sub-samples of Conservative Synagogue Members in the U.S.)

	1990 NJPS	1995 Ratner Center
Age		
65+	36	29
55-64	13	15
45-54	16	27
35-44	21	25
Less than 35	14	4
Generation		
First (immigrant)	11	10
Second (child of immigrant(s))	47	40
Third (parents American-born)	34	41
Fourth (3-4 grandparents native)	9	9
Men's education		
Graduate school	30	57
BA	34	24
Less	36	20
Women's education		
Graduate school	19	40
BA	29	28
Less	52	32
Denomination raised (Jews only)		
Orthodox	34	26
Conservative	56	57
Reform	7	11
Other	3	6
Jewish education (main form)		
Day school	14	6
Part-time (2+ times a week)	48	49
Sunday	17	17
None or tutor only	21	28
Fasts Yom Kippur	87	79
Lights Sabbath Candles	35	56
Kosher Dishes	27	31
Spouse is Jewish	92	95
Been to Israel		
Never	50	37
Once	27	28
Twice or more, or born there	23	36

To what extent does the Ratner Center sample in fact adequately represent affiliated Conservative Jews in North America? Comparisons of items found in the Ratner survey and the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, (Kosmin, et al. 1991; Goldstein 1992; Goldstein and Goldstein 1996) facilitate the identification of possible sample biases in the Ratner Survey. Table 1 compares an extract from the NJPS – members of Conservative synagogues – with a large extract from the Ratner survey (U.S. respondents only).

With respect to most Jewish identity characteristics, the Ratner Center Survey is reasonably representative and unbiased; Jewishly, the respondents generally look like they are supposed to, using the NJPS as the standard. However, the sample departs from representativeness with respect to three issues. First, the Ratner sample under-represents Conservative congregants in certain major metropolitan areas. Within the US, just just one congregation (out of the 22 across the country) represents the New York region. In Canada, the random sampling procedures picked all five congregations outside Toronto and Montreal, Canada's two largest Jewish population centers. The reasons for these departures from randomness are straightforward: the sampling procedures selected congregations, controlling only for size of congregation and country, with no further geographic constraints.

Second, the sample over-represents socially upscale congregants, that is, those with higher levels of education and income. The NJPS relied on the telephone to conduct the interviews, while the Ratner Survey relied primarily upon a mail-back survey. (Of the 1617 respondents, 200 were, in fact, interviewed by telephone.) The more educated more frequently return written survey instruments.

Finally, the sample under-represents congregants under the age of 35. The reasons for this bias are unclear. Perhaps the particular congregations sampled have relatively few members who are so youthful. Perhaps, younger members were under-represented on the congregational lists that were, of necessity, about a year out-of-date by the time we processed them. Perhaps younger adults are busier or less interested in completing 10-page questionnaires, be it on their Conservative Jewish identity or other matters.

Since this study is concerned with relationships between variables rather than with simple frequencies, these sampling biases are probably not all that problematic for the purposes of this study. The sample may over- or under-represent the number of Ramah alumni in North American Conservative congregations; but none of the sampling discrepancies are likely to affect estimates of how Ramah alumni differ from the others.

But having said that sampling biases probably exert little impact upon the estimates of impact, the same cannot be said for another feature of the sampling design, that is, its restriction to current members of Conservative synagogues. For a study assessing the long-range impact of Ramah, this circumstance figures to produce results that under-estimate the impact of the Ramah experience.

A moment's reflection upon the nature of this sample should serve to clarify this point. From the evidence presented below (if not from other sources), we know that Ramah alumni score higher than others do on measures of Jewish identity. As a sample of current members of Conservative synagogues in the United States and Canada, it is restricted both in terms of Jewish identity and geography. Among those excluded from this sample are current members of Orthodox synagogues and olim (migrants to Israel), individuals who, on the whole, lead more intensive Jewish lives than those found among North American Conservative congregants. Also excluded

are groups that tend to lead less intensive Jewish lives, such as members of Reform temples, and the non-synagogue affiliated and, as a corollary, the intermarried. In short, by sampling what is Jewishly a slice of the population in the middle of the Jewish identity spectrum, we excluded the more intensive and less intensive wings.

This exclusion probably had different effects upon the Ramah and non-Ramah portions of the sample. Insofar as Ramah alumni are generally more involved in Jewish life and, as a result, some found their way to Orthodoxy or Israel, the restriction of sampling to Conservative synagogues means the absence of a disproportionate number of Ramah alumni who are very Jewishly involved (in Orthodoxy or Israel). Insofar as the counterparts of the Ramah alumni (largely those raised by parents who were members of Conservative congregations in the 1950s and 1960s) more readily arrived at lower levels of Jewish involvement, the sampling restriction (to Conservative congregations) produced a sample of this universe that is probably more identified than the entire cohort of middle-aged individuals who grew up in Conservative homes in the 1950s and 1960s. The bottom line is that the Ramah alumni in this study may be somewhat *less* Jewishly involved than all Ramah alumni, and that the non-alumni may be *more* Jewishly involved than the population they are supposed to represent (the Conservative-raised friends of the Ramah alumni). Clearly, under such circumstances, the Ramah/non-Ramah gaps in this study are not as wide as they would be were a truly unbiased sample available.

These considerations apply to only the half of the analysis that related to Ramah alumni. They do not affect the analysis of the children of the respondents. Here, the restriction to Conservative member households has little impact upon the Jewish characteristics of the current generation of Ramah campers, or even of the adult children of respondents who are also the subject of the analysis below.

Another limitation is that the questionnaire did not ascertain either length of attendance or the year(s) in which respondents attended. Thus, we have no idea whether respondents attended just once or for many summers, or whether they attended only as campers or as staff as well. These limitations in the data also serve to minimize the estimated impact of the Ramah experience as they allow only the crudest classification of the critical independent variable, namely a simple dichotomy between Ramah alumni and non-alumni.

The final limitation of these data concerns the number of cases. Of those age 60 and under, the sample includes a total of 981 cases, of whom just 63 (or 6.4%) attended Ramah, and 918 who did not. Though 63 cases may seem a barely adequate number from which to generalize, the use of significance tests in the analysis below offers some protection against too hastily drawing unwarranted inferences from a small number of cases. Among the next generation, middle-aged and older respondents reported on 1,225 children, of whom 196 or 16% had gone to Ramah.

Findings

More Ramah Alumni Among Younger Respondents

Overall, about 6% of current Conservative congregants age 60 or under attended Camp Ramah. Since hardly any members over the age of 60 in 1995 attended Camp Ramah, it made sense to exclude them from the analysis. The first Ramah Camp opened in 1947, and respondents who were born in 1935 (age 60 in 1995) would have been 12 years old at the time.

As Table 2 demonstrates, prior attendance at Ramah is more frequent among younger congregants, standing at 4% among those 45-60, rising to 9% among those 35-44, and reaching 18% among the small number of respondents under 35 years of age. Over the years, the growth in camps and camping opportunities left its imprint on an ever-widening participation rate among today's younger adults.

Table 2. Percent of respondents who went to Ramah by age

Age (in 1995)	Went to Ramah
45-60	4
35-44	9
Under 35	18
All (up to age 60)	6

Higher Observance among Parents of Ramah Alumni

The suspicion that Ramah alumni came from stronger Jewish homes than their counterparts is well borne out by the data. The respondents reported on the ritual observance of their parents when they (the respondents) were growing up, generally in the 1950s and 1960s. In every case, the parents of Ramah alumni outscored the parents of the others (see Table 3, where larger differences are shaded in gray).

Table 3. Aspects of Jewish involvement of respondents' parents, by whether respondent went to Ramah

When you were 11 or 12 years old, did one or both of your parents …	Went to Ramah? Yes	No
Fast on Yom Kippur	100	87
Usually light Shabbat candles	76	62
Use separate dishes for meat and dairy	54	41
Not eat meat in non-kosher restaurants	27	22
Have their own Succah	16	6
Attended services at least twice a month (average of mothers and fathers)	48	19

Some of the results are truly startling. In a period when most American Jews lived in cities and few built Succot, as many as 16% of the parents of Ramahniks in mid-century had their own Succah as compared with just 6% of the other parents. Perhaps even more impressive is the gap with respect to attending synagogue services twice a month. Nearly half (48%) of the Ramah alumni parents attended so often as compared with less than half as many (19%) of the parents

who did not send their children to Ramah. Indeed, throughout our analysis we will see a repeated connection between synagogue involvement and the Ramah experience.

All of these questions need to be taken as indicators. Yes, to religious educators and leaders, they are important in and of themselves; but to the researcher, they need to be seen as signifying broader sorts and other sorts of engagement, involvement, and commitment.

Richer Jewish Educational Experiences

Higher levels of their own involvement in Jewish educational contexts mirrored the higher levels of parental Jewish involvement of Ramah alumni, be they before, during, or after the Ramah experience. On all measures of Jewish educational involvement in their youth, Ramah alumni out-scored their non-Ramah counterparts, and often to a substantial degree (Table 4).

Again, measures of synagogue attendance provide some striking contrasts. At age 12, the proportion of alumni who attended services twice or month or more was more than twice that of other youngsters (76% versus 36%). In the college years, a huge gap also characterizes monthly Shabbat service attendance (48% versus 19%).

But the differences between Ramah alumni and their counterparts do not stop here. The Ramahniks were twice as likely to attend day school, and more likely to attend part-time Jewish school as well. They were nearly three times as likely to participate in USY or LTF (the Conservative movement's youth groups at the time), by a difference of 73% to 26%. An astounding 62% visited Israel before the age of 22, far greater than the 28% among those who never attended Ramah. (By way of comparison, under a third of all adult American Jews have visited Israel.)

Table 4. Jewish activities of respondents through their college years by whether they went to Ramah (Percents)

	Went to Ramah?	
	Yes	No
Attended services at least twice a month, age 12	76	36
Attended Jewish Day School (usually Orthodox)	14	7
Attended Part-time Jewish school	75	55
Participated in USY or LTF	73	26
Visited Israel before age 22	62	28
Took Jewish Studies courses in college	49	23
Took part in any activities of Hillel	68	40
When in college, monthly (+) Shabbat services	48	19

When they attended college, the more intensive Jewish involvement was evident in other ways. In addition to the more frequent Shabbat service attendance already mentioned, Ramah alumni were more than twice as likely to take courses in Jewish Studies (49% versus 23%), and substantially more likely to participate in Hillel activities (68% versus 40%).

Higher Levels of Current Ritual Observance

In all areas of ritual practices available in the study, Ramah alumni (current adult respondents), outscore their counterparts (Table 5). However, in at least three areas, the order of magnitude of the gaps is not very different from that reported for the parents of the respondents in mid-century, some thirty or forty years ago. Thus, with respect to fasting on Yom Kippur,

lighting Shabbat candles, and having a Succah, the Ramah experience apparently had little or no impact.

Table 5 (and several subsequent tables) also presents a column of figures labeled, "adjusted net impact." The entries here represent the gaps between Ramah alumni and others on the respective measures, after controlling for parental Jewish identity characteristics, Jewish education, and demographic characteristics. Positive numbers indicate that, all other things being equal, Ramah alumni surpass the others; negative entries indicate that the Ramah alumni trail the others. Generally, the entries are smaller in absolute value than the original gaps, deriving from the fact that the application of the control variables tends to shrink the differences between Ramah and non-Ramah respondents. In other words, one reason Ramah alumni are more observant than others is that they derive from more observant parental homes, had more intensive and extensive Jewish educational experiences, and share certain demographic characteristics. And one reason for their more intensive education is simply that Ramah requires its campers to be enrolled in supplementary Hebrew schools, a requirement met by only a small minority of Conservative youth.

Table 5. Current ritual practices of respondents by whether they went to Ramah (Percents)

	Went to Ramah?		Adjusted Net Impact
	Yes	No	
Fast on Yom Kippur	95	82	4
Light Shabbat candles	64	58	0
Separate dishes for meat and dairy at home	45	30	6*
Do not eat meat in non-kosher restaurants	33	13	16***
Household has its own Succah	21	15	3

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***P<.001

In contrast with the practices where Ramah had little impact, the two measures of kashrut observance do show considerable differences that may clearly surpass the gaps found among the parents of respondents. With respect to maintaining two sets of dishes for meat and dairy, the Ramah alumni outscore others by 45% to 30%. (The gap here in absolute terms is about the same as in the parents' generation; but in relative terms, the gap is much greater.) With respect to refraining from eating meat in non-kosher restaurants, only a small gap characterizes the parents of our respondents: 27% for the Ramah parents to 22% for the others. However, among the respondents in 1995, the gap grows to 33% versus 13%. In other words, with respect to kashrut observance, the non-Ramahniks, relative to their parents, substantially declined. In contrast, the Ramah alumni slightly increased their frequency of kashrut observance over that of their parents. If the Ramah alumni's kashrut observance had moved parallel to their counterparts' levels, we might have expected a decline to 18% (nine points below their parents). Instead, as we have seen,

as many as 33% report not eating non-kosher meat. In a way, comparing actual (33%) with expected (18%) levels, Ramah and Ramah alone may have nearly doubled the kashrut observance.

Although kashrut is clearly an area where Ramah made a difference, Ramah educators cannot be totally gratified by these results. Of Ramah alumni who are current Conservative synagogue members, most do not maintain two sets of dishes for meat and dairy, and two thirds say they eat non-kosher meat in non-kosher restaurants. In a word, despite the clear, strong impact of Ramah upon kashrut observance, most Ramah alumni eat non-kosher foods outside their homes.

Higher Levels of Current Synagogue Involvement

On almost every measure of synagogue involvement, Ramah alumni outscore others (Table 6). They are somewhat more likely to attend services (though the gap in monthly service attendance is not all that substantial: 50% versus 43%), and little difference inheres with respect to having accepted an *aliyah* to the Torah during the past year . However, more impressive differences emerge with indicators of synagogue involvement that signify liturgical leadership and expertise. These include three of four key liturgical activities within the past year: chanting the Torah reading (21% versus 8%), chanting the Haftarah (20% versus 7%), and leading services (15% versus 5%). No difference is associated with giving a d'var torah (7% versus 6%). In all, as many as 18% of the Ramah alumni performed at least two of these functions during the previous year, as compared with just 6% of the others. In short, Ramah alumni may not go to services much more often than others; but when they go, they more often undertake leadership roles that reflect more advanced and sophisticated liturgical skills.

Table 6. Current synagogue worship practices of respondents by whether they went to Ramah (Percents)

	Went to Ramah? Yes	No	Adjusted Net Impact
Attends services monthly or more	50	43	-1
During the last year …			
Accepted "aliyah" to the Torah	50	52	-12
Chanted the Torah reading	21	8	11***
Chanted the Haftarah	20	7	12**
Led services (as the cantor)	15	5	7**
Gave a d'var torah	7	6	2
"Liturgical leader" (2-4 out of last 4 items above)	18	6	11**

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***P<.001

Alienation of the Sophisticated

> Reflecting on the impact of Ramah, Aviad wrote:
>
> Ramah encouraged campers to feel that they formed an elite which bore responsibility for the future of the Jewish people, and which could be the force for cultural continuity and renewal. This sense of mission fed the natural tendency of youth to perceive itself as superior to the preceding generation and as forging a different and better future. (1988: 204)

Consistent with these observations, the data point to an "alienation of the sophisticated" among Ramah graduates with respect to their current congregations (Table 7).

An indirect piece of evidence emerges in connection with their stated reasons for joining their congregations. To appreciate this evidence, we need to recall that although much religious activity in the United States is prompted by the presence of children and parental obligations, observers for decades have often pointed to an excessive degree of child-centeredness on the part of American Jews (e.g., Gans 1958). The critique embedded in the term "pediatric Judaism" is that Jewish adults lack a personal Jewish agenda, and instead undertake Jewish activities with their children primarily in mind. A primary message of the Ramah experience is one of personal commitment and responsibility for one's Jewish involvement. Accordingly, it follows that Ramah alumni, far less often than their counterparts, cited child-related reasons for joining their congregations. In this regard, the first index listed in Table 7 is comprised of four items including a question in which the respondents report that they joined the congregation so that their children could have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah (see Appendix). With respect to scoring high on this index, Ramahniks substantially trail the others (24% versus 41%). Clearly, Ramah alumni are more often in congregations for themselves (for one reason or another), rather than primarily for their children, setting them apart from their fellow congregants. The distance of Ramah alumni from "pediatric Judaism" lays a foundation for other forms of dissatisfaction with extant Conservative Jewish congregants, rabbis, and denominational attachment.

Yet another expression of the alienation of Ramah alumni from conventional patterns of Jewish life emerges in connection with attitudes toward the congregational rabbi. Wherever the questionnaire tapped attitudes toward the rabbi, Ramah alumni emerge as slightly more removed or aloof than others. On the index measuring attachment to the rabbi, Ramah alumni significantly trail the others (21% scored high versus 34%). The pattern is striking especially in light of their higher levels of ritual observance at home and liturgical leadership in the synagogue. If the re-

sults are to be believed, today's Conservative congregational rabbis may be enjoying more success in establishing relations with typical members, than with Ramah alumni. Many of the former Ramah campers learned to practice a more self-reliant Judaism, rather than to live their Judaism as a vicarious experience through the clergy (in data not shown, Ramah alumni are also more remote from the cantors).

Table 7. Attitudes to congregational life by whether respondent went to Ramah (Percent scoring high on selected indices)

	Went to Ramah? Yes	Went to Ramah? No	Adjusted Net Impact
Scored high on index of …			
Joined for the children	24	41	- 5**
Attachment to rabbi	21	34	-16*
Attachment to congregation	39	53	-19*
Critical of religious services	26	13	14**
Conservative affirmation	36	27	- 3

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***P<.001

The pattern continues with respect to the congregation as a social organism. On an index composed of three questions measuring integration in the life of the congregation, Ramah alumni, with all their *higher* levels of Jewish commitment, report *lower* levels of social integration with the congregation (39% scored high versus 53% for the others).

The alienation from the congregation and the distance from the rabbi find a parallel in critical attitudes toward the prayer services. The survey asked respondents whether they would attend Shabbat service more often if one or another conditions were met. As testimony to their

prayer skills, hardly any (7%) of Ramah alumni said they would attend more often if they felt more competent with prayer skills, as contrasted with 24% of the others. Clearly, Ramah camps – in conjunction with a lifetime of higher than average rates of synagogue attendance – succeed in dispelling a major obstacle to synagogue attendance; predictably, Ramah alumni feel competent in the synagogue even if they don't always feel comfortable. In contrast, they were far more likely than others to express critical attitudes toward the services in their synagogues. By fairly large gaps (from 10 to 15 percentage points), they were more prepared to say they wanted shorter services, that were more meaningful and more spiritual, and to pose these criticisms as obstacles to their attending services more often. On the index combining these items, twice as many Ramah alumni were highly critical of the services (26% versus 13%).

In recent years, members of Conservative congregations have become more forthright in their attachment to their movement. Whereas once many may have seen it as a compromise with modernity and Orthodoxy as more authentically Jewish, increasingly Conservative congregants regard themselves as affirmatively Conservative rather than Conservative by default. An index comprised of 17 agree-disagree items measures this emerging Conservative affirmation. The items measure attachment to Conservatism, rejection of Orthodoxy, rejection of Reform, and agreement with several distinctive official policy positions. Previous research demonstrated higher levels of support on this index among younger Conservative congregants and among those more active in Jewish matters at home and in the congregation (Cohen 1996).

As might be expected, then, the proportion scoring high on this index is substantially higher among Ramah alumni than among others (36% versus 27%). This finding clearly indicates that Ramahniks are more likely to partake of an affirmative attachment to the Conservative movement and its official stances, while distancing themselves from Orthodoxy and Reform.

However, this is not the entire story. As the last column which presents "net impact" demonstrates, Ramah itself, on average, exerted no positive effect on Conservative attachment and may even have dampened it very slightly (hence, the negative coefficient). Apparently, Ramah alumni are more predisposed toward Conservative identification because of other factors in their background, but Ramah per se did nothing to draw them closer to an institutional or denominational attachment to Conservatism, consistent with the other signs of alienation from other Conservative Jews indicated previously. Indeed, were we to control for extent of ritual observance and liturgical leadership activities, the gap in Conservative affirmation between Ramah alumni and non-alumni would grow even wider. In other words, given their strong Jewish backgrounds and higher levels of current involvement, one might expect Ramah alumni to more frequently express attachment to the Conservative movement and ideology. In actuality, the gap is not as large as we might expect, leading to the conclusion that the Ramah experience per se, exerted some sort of dampening effect upon explicit attachment to the Conservative movement in its normal congregational setting.

Fox's observations complement and illuminate these findings:

> We didn't achieve an effective transition between the rarefied atmosphere of Ramah and the camper's home community. … After a summer at Ramah, campers found it hard to return to a [synagogue] service that suddenly seemed stilted and complacent, and to a rabbi who seemed formal when contrasted with the informality and warmth of the camp. We even had youngsters who refused to attend synagogue services after camp because the service no longer felt authentically Jewish to them. (1997: 42)

Taken together, the survey results point to the production of a sophisticated elite, frustrated by and alienated from the leadership and laity that inhabit most Conservative congregations. Indeed, over the years, Ramah graduates have often initiated breakaway prayer groups characterized by intimacy, intensity, and lay control. At least one former Camp Ramah director of the 1960s claims responsibility for initiating the havurah movement, the phenomenon of small prayer-and-study communities that emerged in significant number in the early 1970s. Many of the early pioneers of the Jewish feminist movement at the time were also recent Ramah alumni. All of these phenomena (and others attributed to the Ramah experience) presuppose the type of effects pointed to by these data. Ramah alumni emerge as more competent, more learned, and more Jewishly committed than others. At the same time, as a group they seem to exhibit a degree of elitist alienation from prevailing customs, current leadership, and conventional community. Indeed, part of the Ramah success can be linked to the extent to which the camps offer an alternative model of Jewish living. This in turn leads to dissatisfaction with current practice and induces Ramahniks to distance themselves from typical Conservative Jews and their communities.

More Attached to Israel

Attachment to and knowledge of Israel has long constituted a key educational objective of the Ramah program. Some long-time observers of Ramah wonder whether the camp succeeded in this objective. As Fox remarked in an extended interview on his association with Ramah:

> I made a … mistake with regard to Israel, which didn't always receive its rightful place on our agenda. On the other hand, the fact that hundreds of former Ramah campers now live in Israel suggests that we much have been doing something right in this area. (1997: 40, 41)

Yet, notwithstanding these concerns, other signs point to some serious connections with Israel and Zionism. The camps have long hosted delegations of Israeli staff, aside from other efforts to emphasize the meaning of Israel. Moreover, a handful of former directors (who constitute a sizable fraction of all directors over the years) have made aliyah, as have several hundred (no accurate estimate is available) of Ramah alumni.

The few measures of attachment to Israel (Table 8), in fact, point in the direction of an area of considerable impact of Ramah. Ramah alumni significantly surpass others with respect to ever having visited Israel (82% versus 60%). Even more substantial is the gap with respect to having visited Israel twice or more, a more powerful indicator of serious attachment to Israel than the single visit. Here, the ratio almost reaches 2:1, as 61% of Ramah alumni have been to Israel that many times as contrasted with just 33% of the others. With respect to having considered living in Israel, the Ramah advantage is smaller, and, in fact, reduces to a statistically insignificant five percentage points once controls for antecedent variables are introduced.

Table 8. Israel-related measures by whether respondent went to Ramah (Percent)

	Went to Ramah? Yes	No	Adjusted Net Impact
Been to Israel at least once	82	60	17**
Been to Israel twice or more	61	33	21***
Considered living in Israel	34	24	5

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***P<.001

The questionnaire lacked other Israel-related items. But these limited findings, especially those with respect to the net impact on having visited Israel at least twice, seem to document the impact of Ramah upon attachment to Israel. That impact would be even more highlighted were statistics available for the relative numbers of olim from Ramah and from other Conservative backgrounds.

Better Jewish Memories in Teen Years

The evidence presented thus far on the impact of Ramah concerns current practices and attitudes among adults, measured some thirty to forty years after the Ramah alumni were last at camp. For the most part, this evidence points to some fairly dramatic consequences of the Ramah experience. The survey also contains a different sort of evidence of the impact of Ramah, albeit oblique and indirect, and, for that reason, highly persuasive.

We asked respondents to reflect on different periods or crucial points in their lives and to report whether their involvement in Jewish life during those periods increased, decreased, or remained the same. In most cases, more respondents reported increasing rather than decreasing involvement (Table 9). With respect to the college years, though, we find the opposite trend: far more reported declining as opposed to the few who reported increasing Jewish involvement.

The other exception – and the key period for our purposes – is the teen years. Here, the number who increased was about the same as the number who declined in their Jewish involvement, and such is the case among the vast majority of the respondents who never attended Ramah (32% increased and 29% decreased their Jewish involvement in their teen years). However, the Ramah alumni report a very different pattern. In contrast with the balance found among the

non-Ramah majority, the Ramahniks reported over four times as many who increased their involvement as who decreased in that period of their lives (62% versus 15%). Since the Ramah experience takes place primarily in the teen years, there can be no doubt that Ramah left these individuals with memories of a Jewishly positive adolescence, in contrast with the decidedly mixed reports among the others.

Table 9. Perceived changes in Jewish involvement during the life course by whether went to Ramah

"During each of the following periods or events in your life, did your involvement in Jewish life increase, decrease, or stay about the same?"

	Went to Ramah		Did not go	
During this period, Jewish involvement …	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Decreased
During teen years	62	15	32	29
During college years	18	62	13	54
When you married	34	25	49	18
Birth of first child	55	0	59	3
Child goes to school	66	2	74	1
Bar Mitzvah of child	71	3	75	1
Israel trip, as adult	41	0	42	2
Death of a loved one	40	0	47	3

Impact on Jewish Child-Rearing

As we move on to consider the children of the respondents, it is fitting to examine a issue that bridges the two generations: how did the Ramah experience influence the Jewish educational choices made by the respondents for their children? Table 10 reports the impact of having been to Ramah, having gone to a day school, and having participated in USY on the same three outcomes for the children (those not raised Jewish are excluded from this analysis). The analysis

controls for age, sex, and the religiosity of the parents of the respondents (i.e., the grandparents of the children whose educational patterns we are examining). In other words, we are asking the extent to which the Ramah experience (or day school or USY) in the 1950s and 1960s affects the likelihood that one will send one's child to Ramah, to a day school, and to USY in the 1980s and 1990s, holding constant other factors. (To be sure, the day school the respondents may have attended is very different from the day school to which they may be sending their children. The few who went to day school in the 1950s and 1960s largely attended Orthodox day schools. The significant minority of Conservative congregants who send their children to day school today are sending them to Solomon Schechter schools, affiliated with the Conservative movement.)

Table 10 demonstrates the substantial impact of Camp Ramah on educational choices for the next generation. With many other things being held constant, compared to a Conservative synagogue member who did not go to Ramah, one who went to Camp Ramah in their youth is about 35 percentage points more likely to send their own child to Ramah today (or recently). In addition, Ramah alumni stand a far better chance (a differential of 27 percentage points) of enrolling their children in day schools. However, the Ramah experience exerts no significant impact, a generation later, on one's child's chances of participating in USY.

The effects of having gone to day school (to reiterate, probably in the 1950s and 1960s when few non-Orthodox day schools were available), are smaller and more limited. Conservative congregants who are day school alumni are somewhat more likely (14 percentage points) to enroll their children in day schools than are those congregants who did not attend day schools in their time. The effects of childhood day school attendance on the other two measures are insignificant. The impact of USY participation on the three Jewish education measures for one's children are all small and statistically insignificant.

Table 10. Impact of Respondents having attended Ramah, day school and USY on the likelihood of their children participating in the same educational frameworks, controlling for ritual observance, mixed marriage, age, and sex.

	Net impact upon children's chance of going to:		
Respondent went to:	**Ramah**	**Day school**	**USY**
Ramah	35**	27**	4
Day school	- 2	14**	3
USY	0	- 8	3

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***P<.001

Thus, with respect to a key feature of Jewish continuity – educating one's children in intensive Jewish educational contexts – the Ramah experience seems relatively successful, certainly more successful than the day schools or Conservative youth groups of the mid-twentieth century.

Today's Parents of Ramah Campers: More Jewishly Involved

We now move fully to the next generation, the children of the respondents. If the previous analysis focused on the parents of the respondents and the respondents themselves, here we are

focusing on respondents and their children. When the text speaks of "Ramah parents," it is referring to the respondents who are parents of Ramah campers. (Too few "Ramah parents" in this sample attended Ramah as youngsters some years ago, precluding the possibility of performing potentially intriguing separate analyses of two-generation Ramah families.)

Repeating a pattern we saw earlier, Ramah parents are indeed more Jewishly involved, as indicated by a wide range of behaviors and attitudes, than are parents who fail to send their children to Ramah (Table 11). Moreover, the particular areas where Ramah parents in this generation excel resemble those where the parents of Ramah alumni differed from their counterparts in the previous generation. Thus, Ramah parents today, more than others in their Conservative congregations, keep kosher, have their own Succot, attend religious services regularly, and take on a variety of liturgical leadership responsibilities.

A moderate difference separates Ramah parents and others with respect to having been to Israel at all (77% versus 62%). However, when we raise the standard to visiting Israel twice, the gap widens (52% versus 33%). Of course, these results parallel those reported earlier in the comparisons of Ramah alumni with others.

The difference in the gaps, when using one standard or another, is emblematic of the ways in which Ramah families differ from others. Where the activity or attitude is fairly common, Ramahniks (however defined) differ only marginally from others. But where the item is fairly rare and demanding, that is, something that may mark off a Jewish elite, the gap between Ramahniks and others can be truly large. Research on Jewish denominational variations in observance and affiliation patterns shows a similar pattern: the gaps separating Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and non-denominational Jews are small with respect to the "easy" items (Passover Seder at-

Table 11. Measures of Jewish involvement for current "Ramah Parents" (send their children to Ramah) versus others

Child went to Ramah?	**Yes**	**No**
Fast on Yom Kippur	86	76
Shabbat candles	67	52
Separate dishes for meat & dairy	46	26
No meat eaten in non-kosher restaurants	28	12
Household has own Succah	25	9
Attends services twice a month or more	41	27
Able to read prayer book in Hebrew	79	72
During last year…		
Accepted an aliyah to the Torah	61	52
Chanted the Haftarah	15	8
Chanted the Torah reading	16	6
Gave the "d'var torah" or sermon	13	6
Led services (as the cantor)	11	6
Been to Israel	77	62
Been to Israel at least twice	52	33
Seriously considered living in Israel	29	19
Type of Marriage:		
Born Jew & Born Jew	79	84
Born Jew & Convert	17	10
Born Jew & Gentile	4	6
	100	100
All/almost all closest friends Jewish	39	27
High on Conservative Affirmation Scale	37	28

tendance, lighting Chanukah candles), but much larger with respect to the "harder" practices (two sets of dishes, lighting Sabbath candles). So it is with Camp Ramah. Its impact is most pronounced with respect to what may be called the upper ranges of Jewish involvement.

The marriage patterns are somewhat revealing. Parents of Ramah campers have somewhat lower rates of intermarriage than others (4% versus 6%), although the numbers are too small to carry much significance, statistically or otherwise. However, Ramah parents are distinguished by a much higher rate of conversionary couples – where one partner is a born Jew and the other a convert to Judaism – than among their counterparts (17% of families sending their children to Ramah are conversionary versus just 10% of the others). This result may derive from the well-known tendency of converts to conform to the demands of the religious community more readily than born-Jews. Converts, at least those who join Conservative synagogues, and at least with respect to Ramah camping for their children, are reflecting a greater commitment to assuring that their children grow up as active and competent members of the Jewish religious community. Obviously, some combination of fervor, sincerity, and anxiety about being marginalized affects the behavior of converts and their spouses.

Ramah parents more frequently report that all or almost all of their closest friends are Jewish by a wide margin (39% versus 27%). This result testifies to the stronger informal ethnic communities enjoyed by Ramah parents.

Ramah Campers: More Attend Day Schools, More in USY

In general, a particular form of Jewish education figures to be more effective if accompanied by other supporting experiences (obviously, the same may be said of religious education and education generally). We have seen how Ramah campers tend to derive from more Jewishly involved homes. By examining patterns of Jewish schooling and USY participation, we now find that Ramah campers are also more likely to participate in other forms of Jewish education (Table 12).

Table 12. Day school attendance and USY participation by Ramah participation among children of respondents, by age of children

	Up to 30 years old		Over 30 years old	
% who went to:	Ramah	Not Ramah	Ramah	Not Ramah
Day school	45	26	31	18
USY	76	46	67	43

To take into account conceivable age-related shifts, the table divides the children of the respondents into two groups: those 30 and under and those over 30. In both groups, Ramah campers exhibit higher levels of utilization of the other two forms of Jewish education. Focusing on the younger group, while nearly half of the Ramah campers in recent years attended some day school (it could have been a year, but most likely more than that), just about a quarter of the others have any day school experience (45% versus 26%). The gap within the same age group for

USY participation is also very substantial: 76% of the Ramah campers have been in USY as against just 46% of the others.

Clearly, Ramah campers benefit from several sources of Jewish socialization and education beyond Ramah itself, and may well be stimulated to participate in them as a result of the Ramah experience. Among these are more ritually observant parents with a stronger attachment to the Conservative movement, more familial contact with Israel, more intensive Jewish schooling, and wider participation in USY – and these are only the areas we measured on the instrument. Undoubtedly other factors help make for a richer Jewish environment overall for the Ramah camper.

These observations are not to suggest that Ramah by itself does little to advance Jewish identity in later years. However, any assessment of the impact of Ramah obviously needs to take possibly confounding factors into account.

Intermarriage: The Ramah Advantage

The Ratner questionnaire asked about the respondents' oldest children, and whether they attended Ramah, a day school, and USY. It also asked about just one Jewish identity outcome measure, albeit a critical one: for those who married, whether they married Jews. Given this information, we are able to examine the impact of each of the three types of educational experiences on the chances of intermarrying.

To be clear, the results here are for the grown children of middle-aged and older Conservative congregants, the vast majority of whom were between the ages of 55 and 81, with a median age of 69. The children on whom they are reporting were mostly between the ages of 31 and 52 (born 1943 - 1964) at the time of the survey. Accordingly, they were in schools and at-

tending camps for the most part between the years 1950 and 1980. During this period, of those who attended day schools, few would have attended Solomon Schechter schools. Thus, here as well we are comparing the impact of generally Orthodox day schools with two instruments of education sponsored by the Conservative movement: the Ramah camps and USY.

We need to recall that those respondents who were available to answer questions about their grown children are a somewhat selective group. They are adults who have, for the most part, been members of Conservative congregations for decades and, unlike some of their counterparts, chose to remain members after their children completed their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies as well as their formal Jewish education. Since these are the congregants who remained members, they are likely to be more affluent and more Jewishly involved than those who left. These features, in turn, are associated with somewhat higher levels of Ramah participation and somewhat lower levels of intermarriage, to an extent that cannot be known precisely. In point of fact, contrary to some impressions, not all that many Conservative congregants drop out when their last children reach the teen years; so the bias is not all that severe. This phenomenon is somewhat less characteristic of Orthodox congregants and much more typical of Reform congregants.

Table 13. Impact of children's attendance at Ramah, day school, and USY upon their chances of marrying a non-Jew, controlling for child's age, and respondent's characteristics (age, ritual observance, in-marriage, and number of Jewish friends)

	Adjusted net impact
Ramah	-12
Day school	- 2

Of the 501 children of respondents who had married, 31% had married non-Jews. Among children who were Ramah alumni, 16% had intermarried as against 34% of those who never went to Ramah, for a discrepancy of 18 percentage points. Of course, for reasons delineated earlier, not all of this discrepancy can be attributed entirely to Ramah. To assess the net Ramah effect on intermarriage, we need to take into account the Jewish identity advantages generally held by Ramah alumni (in particular, stronger Jewish homes and more in the way of other forms of Jewish education) as well as their more youthful character, a "disadvantage" in terms of intermarriage. Table 13 reports the results of a Multiple Classification Analysis that isolates the effects of the three forms of Jewish education on intermarriage probabilities, controlling for each other, age, and their parents' (i.e., the respondents') relevant characteristics (their ritual observance, whether they themselves were mixed married, and the number of close friends who were Jewish, a fairly useful predictor of intermarriage probabilities among the children).

The net effect of the Ramah experience is to reduce the probability of intermarrying by twelve per cent, as contrasted with the raw difference reported above of eighteen percentage points. The net Ramah effect considerably exceeds that attributed to day schools of the time (two per cent) and slightly surpasses that associated with USY participation (ten per cent).

To be sure, all these results are somewhat fanciful, the outcome of statistical calculations that purport to produce equality with respect to the control variables. They are also fanciful in that they refer to educational experiences and marital choices that took place some years ago. The past is no sure guide to the future. Nevertheless, the results do point to yet another positive con-

sequence for the adult Jewish identity of Ramah alumni: a significantly greater chance of marrying a Jew.

Summary and Implications

Four themes run through these findings:

1) Ramah campers come from stronger Jewish home backgrounds and participate in more Jewish educational activities in other contexts than do those who do not attend Ramah. Accordingly, Ramah campers and alumni enjoy certain Jewish educational advantages which undoubtedly reinforced the Ramah experience, and which deserve some of the credit for the positive Jewish educational outcomes associated with Ramah. To an unknown extent, the Ramah experience undoubtedly influenced the Jewishness of the campers' homes and their educational choices. In other words, youngsters from more Jewishly involved contexts went to Ramah; but, Ramah youngsters also positively influenced their Jewish contexts, even as they were growing up.
2) Ramah alumni and parents are generally more active in Jewish life and more committed to participating in Conservative Judaism than others. Areas where they seem to excel include observing kashrut, exercising liturgical leadership, maintaining a connection to Israel, and marrying Jews rather than Gentiles. In general, they seem to comprise a disproportionate number of "elite" Jews in lay and professional life, both within Conservative congregations (as we have seen here) and outside of them (if we are to believe scattered pieces of ancillary evidence).
3) Ramah alumni show signs of an alienation from aspects of conventional Jewish life. They more readily express reservations about rabbis, cantors, worship services, con-

gregations, and the Conservative movement. These aspects of alienation are all the more striking given their high levels of Jewish involvement.

4) All of the findings are tentative and somewhat speculative.

The last point is not meant to constitute the formulaic conclusion to an academic paper, meant to anticipate and defuse potential critics or to project a false modesty. This truly is a case where a rich set of questions confronts a limited set of data, collected for other purposes.

To be clear, the analysis was limited by the absence of several crucial pieces of information. In particular, we would have liked to have known more about the Ramah experience. Absent is such information as: the number of years of attendance (probably those who attended longer display greater effects than those who went for a year or two); at what age they attended; in what years they attended; which camps they attended (Dorph [1976] demonstrated different effects for camps situated in different regions); whether they served as staff or just as campers; and, subjective evaluations and recollections as to the nature of their experience. A study designed specifically to assess the Ramah impact would also include more detailed and comprehensive questions on outcome measures, such as kashrut and Shabbat observance, as well as participation in and attitudes toward text study.

Nevertheless, as a pilot study, this analysis clearly establishes the likelihood that the Ramah experience – albeit measured in crude, imprecise, and conceptually limited terms – has exerted a long-term influence on the Jewish identity of adults several decades after they attended camp. In particular, it points to the success of Camp Ramah in producing a Jewish elite, perhaps a success greater than in elevating the average level of Jewish involvement of the average Ramah camper. To be sure, the elite Ramah shaped constitute only a minority, albeit a significant one, of

its alumni. Moreover, Ramah did not succeed in isolation, but was complimented by families, schools, congregations, and communities. And last, the production of a Jewish elite comes with the price of some alienation. Some of the most committed Jewish "products" of Camp Ramah dropped out of North American Jewish life by moving over to Orthodoxy or eastward to Israel. As we have seen, those who remained within Conservative Judaism harbor reservations about its leaders, congregations, and services. But all this is to be expected when one develops people who are more educated, committed, and proficient in Judaic skills.

Undoubtedly, a more detailed and comprehensive study could provide richer and more substantiated understanding as to the nature of the impact and the processes by which it came about. However, that such an impact took place, and that it is of considerable consequence, seem well supported, even by the limited evidence at hand.

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Appendix: Indices and Their Component Items

Joined for the children

Thinking back to when you first joined this congregation, how important was each of the following reasons in your decision to join?

For the pre-school or nursery (Very important)

For the religious school (Very important)

For the youth program (Very important)

So that my child(ren) could have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Very important)

Attachment to rabbi

Thinking back to when you first joined this congregation, how important were each of the following reasons in your decision to join?

Liked the rabbi (Very important)

How important is each of the following reasons for why you attend services?

I like the sermons or the discussions (Very important)

I like the rabbi (Very important)

Attachment to congregation

Members of my congregation are friendly to newcomers (Agree)

I feel included in the life of my congregation (Agree)

There's a group of people in my congregation with whom I feel very close (Agree)

Critical of religious services

Would you attend Shabbat services more frequently if ...

The services were shorter (Yes)

The services were more meaningful (Yes)

The sermons were better (Yes)

Conservative Affirmation

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

(Score one point on index for each answer in the correct direction: A = Agree; D = Disagree.)

I don't think I could ever be Orthodox (A)

I don't think I could ever be Reform (A)

I don't really think of myself as a Conservative Jew (D)

Orthodoxy is "more authentically Jewish" than Conservative Judaism (D)

Reform is "more relevant" than Conservatism (D)

Orthodoxy is too shut off from modern life (A)

Reform is too much influenced by non-Jewish culture and ideas (A)

Conservative Judaism is too "wishy-washy" (D)

Conservative Judaism lets you choose those parts of Judaism you find meaningful (A)

Conservative Jews are obligated to obey Halakha (Jewish law) (A)

Jews who don't ride on Shabbat should join Orthodox rather than Conservative congregations (D)

A Jew can be religious even if he or she isn't particularly observant (D)

My being Jewish doesn't make me any different from other Americans (D)

I don't find synagogue prayers especially moving or meaningful (D)

In terms of Jewish religious services, women should have the same rights as men (A)

My rabbi should be willing to perform intermarriages (D)

Anyone who was raised Jewish -- even if their mother was Gentile and their father was Jewish -- I would regard personally as a Jew (D)