Blog Post: The Dispositions of Jewish Service-Learning

By Jon Levisohn
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Earlier this year, after publishing an article in the Journal of Jewish Communal Service on the topic of the goals of Jewish service-learning, I posted some of the ideas from my article on this blog. I wrote that, while the goal of service is to benefit the person or community served, the goal of service-learning entails the growth or development of the person doing the service as well. And that growth, I argued, ought to be understood in terms of dispositions.

Which dispositions? I proposed that we ought to consider three:

- service-humility, a stance in the face of deep and abiding social problems that is not oriented toward the generation of solutions primarily but rather, more simply, toward doing God’s will in the world;
- service-discipline, avoiding the ideal of moral heroism in favor of non-heroic, small-scale work in the world, characterized by showing up every day;
- service-wisdom, exercising our critical and independent judgment in order to discern what God wants us to do in the world.

I’m delighted that these ideas have resonated with some readers. Most recently, I was honored that Rabbi Jan Katzew and Wendy Grinberg asked for permission to publish a revised and abbreviated version of my article on their new online journal, Avodat ha-Kodesh: A Journal of Sacred Service Learning. That revised article is now online.

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