

THE SEMINAR OF JUDAISM AND JEWISH HISTORY FROM CRISTIAN

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According to the myth of Orpheus, because he looked back to be sure of his ideal, Eurydice, which was the gift of the gods, because he dared enter the Inferno and fight for what he had lost, it was considered to be an act of doubt, of mistrust and he was punished accordingly. Orpheus would return to his world while Eurydice remained in the world of Hades.

I do not wish to develop other meanings that the myth of Orpheus could have, especially for this action of “looking back”, but it seems to me that it is one of the great advantages of the people who, in a way or another, have the responsibility of developing, teaching and guiding the youth. We, those who received with this gift, do have such moments, occasions in which “time stands still”, in order to look back and assert what we do.

We do look back with envy, with regret, from a critical point of view, full of concerns, satisfactions and sometimes sadness and discontent—we look back at ourselves as well as at others, but we look back because ours is a great, difficult responsibility, and because we need the past, we need an ideal and a dream so as to go on, so as to prevail... The seminars of Judaism and Jewish History from Cristian are critical moments of introspection



regarding what Jewish education means for us in Romania. If we look back in time, and if we do this every time, together or separately, we realize that these seminars incorporate the greatness of a dream – to offer the youngsters a framework within which they can learn about Judaism and Jewish history – and in the same time, they incorporate the modesty of the imperfect work performed by those involved. This seminar appeared six years ago as an attempt to fill in the empty space resulted from the

lack of a Jewish educational system in the country, and it is today a means of “filling” the lives of the youngsters who want to think, have fun, make friends and live as Jews. When analyzing the programs of these seminars along the six editions, the evolution is obvious. There have been discussed issues concerning the history of the Jews from Abraham to the creation of the contemporary State of Israel, in only ten days; from notions of Talmud, Mishna, Siddur, Machzor – during the first years – to

organizing a trial of the Jewish values, creating a history newspaper for Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews – to creating a tourist guide for Israel and a contest of love poetry and literature after discussing the Songs of Songs from the Tanach; from lectures – more and more interactive and supported by the participants – to discussing and creating texts, video materials, plays or sketches on Jewish themes by the participants. The history of these seminars is the history of this “retrospective look” of the people who became a team, who carry together the responsibility of educating and developing all those who want to be Jews. A special presence among us, together with Iulian Sorin, FEDROM’s Secretary General, Rodica Radian Gordon, the Ambassador of the State of Israel, JOINT Director for Romania, dr. Zvi Feine and his wife, was Mrs. Annie Sandler. Due to her generous contribution, as well as to that of the Joint in general, for all the activities organized by the Youth Department, the camp from Cristian has facilities that allow it today to be a hospitable place for scores of Jewish children and youngsters from Romania. We feel that it is necessary to mention in our pages the importance of such generous gestures for the continuation of Jewish life in Romania.

Translation by: George Weiner

