

"Judaism Intertwines with Worldly Good": A Qualitative Study on Religious Rehabilitation Programs in the Israeli Prison Service

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Abstract:

Background: Religion with its religious institutions has played a key role in shaping punishment and rehabilitation of offenders throughout history. The aim of these programs is to transform a person spiritually and lead them to intra-personal changes on the religious level by prompting repentance or the reaffirmation of one's faith.

Objectives: We present qualitative findings from an evaluation of two religious programs operating in the Israeli Prison Service: The Torah Rehabilitation Program (TRP) that functions as a religious community within prison walls, and the Torah Study Program (TSP) in which prisoners participate faith-based studies four hours a day. The main research question that led the researchers was how Judaism provides opportunities for prisoner's rehabilitation.

Method: This research is a qualitative study that includes seven interviews with seven Rabbis who work in the Israeli Prison Service and lead the religious programs. The interviewees were involved in the formulation and implementation of the religious correctional programs.

Results: The interviewees have raised a link between Jewish beliefs and practices, including atonement, and the foundations of prisoners' rehabilitation. Among the themes that have been raised: promoting moral action; giving prisoners a second chance; providing opportunities for repentance and atonement; supervision; placing emphasis on behavioral norms; focusing on belonging and commitment to a community; working alongside Torah; learning and providing a unique response to each individual according to their characteristics and needs.

Conclusions: The emerging themes raised in the interviews correspond well with theoretical ideas found in the field of corrections in general and in positive criminology in particular.

Keywords: Religious Rehabilitation Programs, Israeli Prison Service, Judaism, Qualitative Study, Staff Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of corrections, religion and its institutions played a key role in shaping punishment and rehabilitation of offenders (Clear, Hardyman, Stout, Lucken, and Dammer, 2000; Johnson, 2004; Morag and Teman, 2018; Ronel, 2015; Ronel and Ben-Yair, 2017; Schaefer, Sams, and Lux, 2016; Wilson, 2016; Yun and Lee, 2016). Within this perspective, offenders are viewed as morally flawed, and the pursuit of moral and spiritual correction of their souls through atonement, work, obedience, and prayer – are common practices in the rehabilitating of offenders (Dodson *et al.*, 2011; Ronel and Ben-Yair, 2017; Schaefer *et al.*, 2016). According to this approach, punishment by incarceration aim to lead prisoners to soul-searching and avoiding anti-social and criminal behavior (Baker and Booth, 2016; Johnson, Larson, and Pitts, 1997; Mears, Roman, Wolff, and Buck, 2006; Wilson, 2016).

Religious rehabilitation programs are based on what some have termed as "positive criminology" model

(Elisha, Iidis, and Ronel, 2012; Johnson, Lee, Pagano, and Post, 2016; Ronel, 2015; Ronel and Ben-Yair, 2017). The overall aim of these programs is to transform a person's spirituality and lead them to intra-personal changes on the religious level by prompting repentance or the reaffirming of one's faith, thereby steering prisoners to a non-criminal way of life, and easing their reentry to society (Dodson *et al.*, 2011; Morag and Teman, 2018; Stansfield, Mowen, and O'Connor, 2017; Wilson, 2016). In turn, it is not simply the religious who have looked to religion as a method for encouraging reform, many therapists and scholars recognize the importance of combining a religious element in prisoners' therapy programs, both while in prison, and upon their release (Duwe and Johnson, 2013; Roberts and Stacer, 2016; Stansfield, 2017).

Despite their prevalence in prison settings, the findings associated with religious rehabilitation programs in prison remain controversial. Of the few studies that have focused on assessing religious prison programs, several have indicated positive influences, while others were more skeptical (see below for a review). Moreover, these studies suffered from

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methodological limitations pertaining primarily to the absence of appropriate comparison groups. In addition, there are a wide variety of religious programs in prisons, and evaluation studies generally do not differentiate between different types of religious programs and evaluate their possible differential impact on recidivism.

In a previous study, conducted by the authors of the current one, two religious programs offered to Jewish inmates by the Israeli Prison Service were examined. The first, entitled the Torah Rehabilitation Program (TRP), was relatively intense, and operated as a religious community. The second, the Torah Study Program (TSP), was less intense, requiring prisoners to participate in religious studies just four hours a day. The study found that neither program effectively reduced recidivism on its own. However, the rate of recidivism among prisoners who participated in TSP, and, upon completing it, moved on to the more advanced and intense program (TRP) and was significantly lower as compared to the control group. The study highlights the importance of the repentance process, and the role of prisoners' intrinsic motivation in their rehabilitation process (Haviv, Weisburd, Hasisi, Shoham and Wolfowicz, 2019). The present study is a qualitative study that accompanied the quantitative one, and examines how the rabbis heading these religious rehabilitation programs perceive the rehabilitation process undergone by participating prisoners. Specifically, through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the study examines perception of those rabbis about how Judaism can serve as a stepping-stone towards normative behavior and desistance from crime.

Religion as a driver of normative behaviors

The body of knowledge that Cullen (2012) regarded as religious criminology (or "criminology of religion") has thus far engaged in understanding the impact of religion and religiosity on criminal involvement, and mostly addressed the idea that religiosity may be an inhibitor of deviation and delinquency, and driver of normative behaviors (Harris, Ackerman, and Haley, 2017; Kelly, Polanin, Jang, and Johnson, 2015; Koenig, King, and Carson, 2012). The research in this area is scant; however, there is an overall consensus over the negative correlation between religiosity and crime (Giordano *et al.*, 2008; Harris *et al.*, 2017; Pirutinsky, 2014; Schroeder and Frana, 2009), as well as the fact that people whose level of religiosity is lower (mainly measured by involvement in and commitment to

religious lifestyle) tend to be more involved in crime (Harris *et al.*, 2017; Johnson, De Li, Larson, and McCullough, 2000a; Johnson and Jang, 2011; Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb, 2002; Pirutinsky, 2014).

Although there is a rich descriptive literature in criminology that connects religion and crime, many scholars have argued that this connection lacks a clear theoretical framework (Camp, Klein-Saffran, Kwon, Daggett, and Joseph, 2006; O'Connor and Bogue, 2010; Power, Ritchie, and Madill, 2014; Schaefer *et al.*, 2016; Stansfield, Mowen, O'Connor and Boman, 2017). For instance, early theories maintained that religiosity acts as a controlling factor (deterrence effect) due to the belief that negative deeds in this life will be punished in the afterlife (Hirschi and Stark, 1969). However, some have argued that these perceptions depend on the religious composition of the community in which the prisoner lives. Therefore, individuals who live in religious communities would be more deterred than individuals who come from secular ones (Kelly *et al.*, 2015; Sturgis and Baller, 2012).

Religious frameworks have also been seen as having a structural impact on individuals' daily lives. The religious value system translates into a long line of structured activities that comprise a considerable portion of one's daily routine, allowing prisoners to develop their new self, and weakening their affiliation with former (deviant) identity (Felson, 2013; Johnson and Jang, 2011). Moreover, religious activity turns released prisoners' attention away from their criminal past, making them focus on the legitimate actions of the present (Jang and Johnson, 2001; Johnson *et al.*, 2000b; Kelly *et al.*, 2015). Religiosity also has a possible effect on the cognitive level (MacKenzie, 2006). Repentance, as well as the associated changes in social framework and image, may directly impact prisoners' self-perception and esteem. Thus, alongside the religious transformation undergone by prisoners, they adapt to a new social and culture of belonging. This new image is an important condition for the offenders' rehabilitation, as it harbors a certain promise of a better, non-criminal, future, that may be recognized during the course of the rehabilitation process.¹ During

¹Maruna (2001, 2010) similarly indicated the importance of self-identity during the process of desisting from crime, arguing that, in order to do so, ex-convicts must develop coherent, pro-social identities for themselves. He further maintained that repentance is often associated with extreme and significant changes in individuals, including a shift in stances, beliefs, behavior, and worldview. These changes gradually improve individuals' social and personal image, enabling them to present themselves in a pro-social light, and helping them establish a sense of control over their lives, and face their criminal past

incarceration, religious rehabilitation provides prisoners with a unique opportunity to make such a change. Incarceration in itself is an extreme pressure factor, where inmates may experience an identity crisis (Clear *et al.*, 2000; Maruna *et al.*, 2006), and might view their time in prison as an opportunity for mending their identity, and changing their personal narrative (Jang, Johnson, Hays, Hallett, and Duwe, 2017).

Despite the above explanations, the mechanisms that form the basis for the connection between desistance from crime and religiosity are yet to be fully understood. Scholars acknowledge the complexity of this relationship (Ulmer, 2012), and some studies have found that it is mediated by many factors, such as age (Giordano *et al.*, 2008), gender (Kovacs, Piko, and Fitzpatrick, 2011; Young, Gartner, O'Connor, Larson, and Wright, 1995), ethnicity (Chu and Sung, 2009; Stansfield, 2017), victimization and crime involvement (Baier and Wright, 2001; Kelly *et al.*, 2015; Stark, Kent, and Doyle, 1982).

Faith-Based Programs and Recidivism

Religious rehabilitation programs are commonly offered by correction facilities but have received little empirical attention, and only few studies have assessed their efficacy (Fraizer, 2010; Johnson, 2008; Johnson *et al.*, 1997; Mears *et al.*, 2006; O'Connor and Duncan, 2011; O'Connor *et al.*, 2006; Willison, Brazzell, and Kim, 2010). Two main research approaches have emerged from the few studies that explored the efficacy of religious rehabilitation programs: one focused on the effect of such programs on inmates' behavior during incarceration (Camp, Daggett, Kwon, and Klein-Saffran, 2008; Jang *et al.*, 2017; Kerley, Copes, Tewksbury, and Dabney, 2011; Kerley, Matthews, and Blanchard, 2005; Schaefer *et al.*, 2016; Steiner, Butler, and Ellison, 2014); whereas the second approach has examined the effect of such programs on reentry into society upon release, relying primarily on recidivism rates (Dodson *et al.*, 2011; Johnson, 2002, 2004; Johnson *et al.*, 1997).

While many scholars have hypothesized that religious rehabilitation programs would help decrease the rate of recidivism among their participants, the empirical evidence is still limited and inconsistent (Dodson *et al.*, 2011). Dodson *et al.* (2011) published a systemic review of seven studies that examined the

efficacy of religious rehabilitation programs, in both prison and the community, on reducing recidivism, and were found to be effective. The findings supported the conclusion that faith-based rehabilitation programs effectively reduce recidivism rates. However, the small sample of studies in the review makes it difficult to draw conclusion, and at most one might say that their findings are encouraging.

Of the seven studies reviewed, three presented only descriptive findings of religious programs targeting youth (Hess, 1976; Thompson, 1994; Winship and Berrien, 1999), with two of the three – Hess (1976) and Thompson (1994) – examining only those who completed the program. Of the remaining four studies (Bicknese, 1999; Johnson, 2002; Johnson *et al.*, 1997; Young *et al.*, 1995), the one by Young *et al.* (1995) examined the recidivism rates among prisoners who underwent training in a religious seminar, comparing them to released prisoners who had not taken part in the same seminar. The control group was based on a multi-phased sampling method: first, a sample representing 50% of all federal prisoners sentenced to more than one year in prison and released during the first six months of 1976 was selected; next, layers were sampled in order to match the control group to the treatment group by several criteria using a logit regression: age, gender, ethnicity, and level of risk. The study findings revealed that the rate of recidivism among seminar participants was significantly lower than those who did not participate (40% versus 51% respectively). The differences between the groups were stronger when the rates of recidivism were analyzed for men and women separately².

The study of Johnson and his colleagues (1997) divided the religious rehabilitation program into three categories – high, medium, and low – according to level of involvement in the program, attendance in religious activities and Bible studies. Highly involved prisoners in these programs were less prone to get rearrested within 12 months of their release than both their medium- and low-involvement peers, and the control group prisoners who did not participate in the program (Johnson *et al.*, 1997). In a follow-up study to Johnson *et al.* (1997), Johnson (2004) showed that

without it posing a threat to their new, non-criminal identity (Kerley & Copes, 2009; Maruna *et al.*, 2006).

²The rate of recidivism among female participants in the program was 19%, whereas among female prisoners who did not participate in the program the rate was 47%. Among the men, the differences were smaller: the rate of recidivism among male participants in the program was 45%, compared to 52% among the male prisoners who did not take part in the seminar (Young *et al.*, 1995).

prisoners with high involvement level in the religious program were at low risk of being rearrested two to three years following their release. However, after three years or more, this effect disappeared. One limitation of these studies is that by analyzing the participants' level of involvement, there is an internal selection bias threat, since participants' level of involvement in the program may reflect their level of motivation to create change in their lives (Volokh, 2011).

One study compared religious programs in two prisons in Brazil, Braganca and Humaita. One of them was based on secular models of employment and vocational training designed to prepare prisoners for reentering society, and the other adopted the religious approach in all areas of its activity. For three years the rate of recidivism among released prisoners, from both correction facilities, was measured, as were the severity of their crimes, and the time they had spent in prison. The findings show that while the rate of recidivism in both prisons was relatively low, there was a 20% gap between them – 16% among prisoners released from the religious prison, and 36% among those released from the vocational one – despite the fact that the former were at greater risk of returning to crime following their release (Johnson, 2004). However, Johnson in his book notes that the two prisons were significantly different in environment, because in the Humaita prison the level of risk of the prisoners was much higher, which could have caused a bias. The seventh study of Bicknese (1999) focused on adolescents, and did not examine recidivism rates, but concentrated on other outcome measures.

A recent study that analyzed the efficacy of a religious rehabilitation program (the Inner Change Program) on recidivism compared a group of 366 released convicts who volunteered to take part in a religious program and had met the acceptance criterion (having 18 months left to the completion of the sentence) with a control group of 366 prisoners who did not participate in the program and were released during the same period of time (August 2003 to December 2009) (Duwe and King, 2013). In order to assess the impact of the program on recidivism, the study used four separate outcomes: re-arrest, re-conviction, reincarceration, and parole violation. In addition, they controlled for 27 variables, such as age, criminal history, risk level, offense type, and disciplinary violation during incarceration. In order to minimize bias between the treatment and the comparison group, a quasi-experimental method (propensity score matching) was employed (Duwe and King, 2013).

Findings showed that the program significantly reduced among the participants the rate of the three outcome measures associated with recidivism (re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration). A drop of 26% was recorded in re-arrests, a drop of 35% in re-convictions, and a drop of 40% in re-incarcerations, when compared with the comparison group. However, no significant effect was found on violating parole. The study also showed that the most significant effect was found among those participants who continued to take part in the program after being released from prison (Duwe and King, 2013).

Duwe and King (2013) also noted that the rehabilitation program examined in their study shared some attributes with other rehabilitation programs of proven efficacy. First, it includes education and coping with drug addiction. Second, similar to therapeutic communities, program participants live in a separate unit in prison. Third, participants receive continuous treatment, and are provided with guidance and support from the community one year following their release. These characteristics also play a part in creating community ties and expanding participants' social support networks and might explain the positive results of the study (Duwe and King, 2013).

Other studies that examined the effect of religious rehabilitation programs on recidivism showed mixed findings (Mears, 2007; O'connor, 1995; Thomas and Zaitzow, 2006). It has further been argued that, despite the religion's contribution to rehabilitating released prisoners, the decline in criminal involvement is but a secondary benefit of such programs (Hallett, Hays, Johnson, Jang, and Duwe, 2015; Johnson, 2011; Maruna et al., 2006; Wilson, 2016).

Moreover, many of the studies who showed positive effects suffer from methodological issues (Schaefer et al., 2016). For instance – it is difficult to assess the study's internal and external validity since most of these studies either didn't employ random allocation to study or control group, or they didn't select an appropriate comparison group (Mears, 2007; Schaefer et al., 2016). Hence, there is a high risk of bias in these studies (Camp et al., 2006; Johnson and Larson 2003; Volokh, 2011; Willison et al., 2010). Such biases are extremely common since religious program participants are typically low-risk a priori, with a high motivation to change (Camp et al., 2006). Therefore, they are less likely a priori to be involved in disciplinary violations in prison, or in offenses following their release (as low risk criminals).

It should also be noted that there is tremendous variation among religious programs offered in addition to those considered as "typical" ones—some combine secular, evidence-based therapeutic elements, and others, while defined as religious programs, do not contain any religious element at all, but help provide jobs, housing, and other social resources necessary for released prisoners in order to reenter society (Mears *et al.*, 2006; O'Connor and Duncan, 2011). This variation has a substantial impact on the overall assessment of these programs and call for the need to analyze the outcome of treatment in different type of programs (Mears *et al.*, 2006).

To conclude, few studies have examined the impact of religious programs on recidivism. Of those that have, the findings show that participating in such programs lowers the rate of recidivism moderately, while few of them found no effect of religious treatment on recidivism. In addition, most of these studies suffer from methodological deficiency, where respondent's selection bias associated with groups' level of religiosity being one of the key issues that emerged. The literature also lacks a differential examination of different religious programs and their impact on recidivism. Generally, the studies conducted to date have focused primarily on Christian religious programs, and literature lacks an empirical study of other religions (i.e., Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.).

Qualitative Studies on Religious Programs in Prison

As mentioned, the relationship between religion and crime has been extensively investigated. In this regard, the effectiveness of religious programs were examined by comparing treatment and control groups in rates of disciplinary violations during imprisonment and rates of recidivism. Although qualitative research in this field is not as abundant as the quantitative research, it is more diverse as it focuses not only on the effectiveness of the programs but also on the various processes that the prisoners undergo as part of the program and on the aspects that help them recover. In addition, due to the fact that most qualitative studies conducted in-depth interviews with the prisoners themselves, there is a need to examine these programs from the aspect of the staff that operates them. Below we review the main findings of the qualitative studies conducted.

In a study conducted in both religious divisions in the Israeli prison and in which 60 inmates were interviewed, Timor examined the processes that helped

the prisoners recover, from their point of view. In this study, Timor emphasizes the spiritual process that prisoners go through in the prison wings and identifies the great influence that veteran prisoners have on new prisoners, and especially on the assimilation process of religious values. In addition, among the main themes identified by Timor are the role of religious language and socialization in the wing on the rehabilitation process, the positive impact of religious rituals on the individual and the possibility of repentance offered by religion to the sinner (Timor, 1998).

In another study (Clear *et al.*, 2000) conducted in a number of prisons in the United States, 20 inmates were interviewed in an attempt to understand the prisoner's religious experience. The researchers emphasize the unique way in which religion helps inmates deal with feelings of guilt, the great change that accompanying religious strengthening, the possibility of feeling complete and peaceful in prison and the ability provided by religion to express empathy and solidarity with others.

In another study, 70 interviews were conducted with former prisoners who served long sentences in Oregon, it was found that religiosity and strong feelings of shame were key to building a normative and productive post-prison life compared to a control group (Kenneth *et al.*, 2002).

A study examining the reasons for participating in religious rehabilitation programs in two prisons located in the United States distinguished between prisoners with intrinsic motivation (sincere and profound) for joining the programs and prisoners whose motivations for participation were external or insincere. For those in the first group, the causes of joining were motivations for change, a belief that religion can direct life's path in positive ways, a belief that religion can bring peace of mind and raise one's self-worth. Among the motives for the group of interviewees whom the author deems to be for reasons that are not sincere are the need for protection in prison, the desire to take part in the prisoners' meetings, the desire to meet the volunteer women and the desire to gain from the material prison resources invested in the programs (Dammer, 2002).

Another 2006 article analyzing the life stories of 75 inmates who repented claims that religious change is primarily about managing the shame apparatus. The notion at the center of the article suggests that the prisoner's new identity replaces the previously identified identity, planting meaning to the prisoner's

life, allowing him to be a messenger of God, recognizing the importance of forgiveness and providing him with some control over his life (Maruna et al., 2006).

A more recent study analyzing life stories of 25 former prisoners who participated in religious activities explains the desistance from crime among those prisoners through three theoretical paradigms: Through the Cognitive Transformation paradigm (Giordano et al., 2002) the authors (Hallet and McCoy, 2015) suggests that denigrating crime in the religious context relies on the *openness to change*, the *exposure to hooks for change*, which will allow the individual to achieve the desired change (religious writings, positive authoritative figures, etc.), on the *religion faith* and the understanding that this faith is linked to positive actions (*Envisioned replacement self*) and the new stance against deviant behavior (New View of Deviant Behavior). Through the Identity Theory (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009) Hallet and McCoy (2015) talk about the fear of the consequences that stem from a delinquent identity and the rebirth of a new identity. Through the "Making Good" paradigm (Maruna, 2001), the researchers suggests that since the entrance into the delinquent world was due to difficult circumstances and a lack of belief in others, desistance is associated with restoring the individual's trust (Hallet and McCoy, 2015).

In another study, 30 inmates who participated in the Torah Study Program reported that they have gained a number of "spiritual" tools. Some of the tools that were mentioned are, "guidance from above and obligation to god", the perceptions of the good things that happen in the world as "miracles" and the more difficult things as "challenges" or "tests", the role of religion as a supervisory tool, the positive values that religion instills in its believers and the positive routine accomplished through religious rituals, symbols and practices (Morag and Teman, 2018).

Literature could certainly profit from qualitative studies conducted with the purpose of understanding the rationale behind the change undergone by participants in religious or spiritual programs, the programs' strengths and weaknesses, participants' spiritual processes and experiences, their motivations for joining those programs, and the characteristics shared by prisoners in the programs who are more successful or less so. Nevertheless, a gap in the literature that scholars should also be encouraged to fill using qualitative studies pertains to the views and

perceptions of the staff leading rehabilitation programs, and particularly Jewish religious ones. The purpose of the present study is, therefore, to examine the perceptions of rabbis heading Jewish religious rehabilitation programs in the Israeli Prison Service. It explores how, according to these rabbis, Judaism encourages and enables prisoners to undergo rehabilitative processes, as well as how these processes find expression in the programs.

Religious Rehabilitation in Israel

Our focus in this paper is on religious programming for Jewish prisoners (who comprise about 60 percent of the prison population). The Israel Prison Service (IPS) offers two levels of religious rehabilitation programs designed to match the various levels of religion found among Jewish prisoners, from those whose lifestyle is "traditional" (*Shomrei Masoret*), to ultraorthodox inmates from all denominations. The IPS also enables integration with other correction programs, such as educational and occupational ones aligned with the principles of religious rehabilitation as per prisoners' capabilities, and the facility in which they are incarcerated. The more intense is the *Torah rehabilitation program* (TRP), offered in Torani (religious) wings, and operating as a full-time religious therapeutic community every day of the week, 24/7. By contrast, the *Torah study program* (TSP) (*Midrashia*) is substantially less intense, and includes just four hours of Torah study each day. Below we will discuss the characteristics of the two religious' programs.

The Torah Rehabilitation Program (TRP)

This program within the Torah rehabilitation array consists of two wings (both are Torah-based) – the religious wing (*Agaf Dati* or *Egged*), and observant wing (*Leshormrei Masoret* or *Leshem*). The only difference between them is that the religious wing has television sets, whereas the observant wing does not. In these wings, of all Israeli prisons, as of 2018, there are approximately 450 inmates, who share similar level of religiosity. The aim of these programs is to provide a religious community life both in terms of observance, and with respect to a community life suitable for prisoners who have come from religious homes or repented. Acceptance to these programs is based on prisoners' willingness to embrace a fully religious lifestyle: wearing a skullcap, eating kosher food supervised more strictly (*Badatz* kosher authority), observing the Sabbath and other Jewish religious observance, attending services, and studying Torah

twice or three times each day. This schedule is considered by the program developers and staff to be demanding, as prisoners in these wings are obligated to participate in Torah groups, social therapy, and occupational integration as part of the Torah and Work (*Torah VaAvoda*) program. This program teaches participants some practical skills that could help them upon their release from prison, such as knitting *Tzitzit* (ritual tassels attached to Jewish prayer shawls), writing *Mezuzahs* (sacred parchment placed on a doorpost), obtaining a *Kosher* supervisor certificate, and more. The program is rooted in values of repentance and recognizing Judaism as a key component of correctional programming. The Israel Prison Service rabbi visits the Torah wings frequently, and in addition, a civil Torah instructor is employed there 160 hours each month³. The civil Torah instructor assists the rabbi in matters of discipline, personal issues, rehabilitation, monitoring, and so on. Besides, morning and afternoon teachers, and some volunteers give lectures or extracurricular classes, and also organize parties and social activities for the prisoners in those wings.

The Torah Study Program (TSP or *Midrashia*)⁴

This nationwide program is attended by more than 1,200 prisoners. About 70% of them take part in the morning activities for a duration of four hours, and the rest participate in the afternoon program as part of a complementary framework for prisoners working in prison industries. The staff comprised 36 external rabbis and 6 prisoner-teachers, or teaching assistants. The teaching position requirement is 80 hours per month.⁵ Acceptance to the program requires participants to be Jewish and literate; who must have completed eight years of school. Prisoners who do not meet these criteria, but are interested in joining the Torah Study Program, are referred first to the educational program, and later admitted into the TSP. Upon acceptance to the program, prisoners must sign by laws binding them to respect it, and maintain proper personal and inter-personal conduct. Participants are not required to lead a religious lifestyle, such as observing the Sabbath.

³This job is only available on the Torah wings (TRP), not in the Torah Study Program (TSP).

⁴The daily schedule in the Torah Study Program includes waking up and getting ready at 7am, morning service (prayer) at 8am, breakfast at 08:30am, and two religious' classes until 12:30pm.

⁵At present, there is a total of three active teaching assistants: two in Rimonim prison, and one in Maasiyah prison. According to position requirements, they must be replaced every two years.

The prisoner officer, education officer, and IPS Chief Rabbi screens prisoners prior to acceptance to the program. Participants have typically been raised as religious or ultraorthodox, or else have become observant during their trial or incarceration; however, some are secular Jews who wish to broaden their spiritual horizons or keep themselves busy. Unlike the prison educational programs that are divided into different levels, the TSP caters to a heterogeneous population of prisoners whose cognitive abilities and prior level of Torah knowledge vary. The study program takes place in the synagogue located in the wing and managed by an educator-rabbi. In other cases, under prisons' physical limitations, the program operates at the education center, in the format of religious study classes.

METHOD

Participants and Tools

We base our analysis in this article on qualitative data we collected during 2017-2018 and on the review of the literature. Our data collection method was semi-structured interviews with seven rabbis who work in the Israeli Prison Service and lead the religious programs. Among the interviewees, the chief rabbi of the IPS and his deputy, central district rabbi and four rabbis' that are responsible for the religious wings. The interviewees were involved in the formulation and implementation of the religious correctional units.

Procedure

As this study is part of a larger evaluation research project, led by the Hebrew University and the Ashkelon Academic College⁶, Prior to begin the study, the research team met with the Israeli Prison Service research unit in order to understand what are the purposes of the research (as they see them) and coordinate expectations. In this study, the researchers sought to obtain a comprehensive picture of the variety of rabbinical positions in the Israeli Prison Service, starting with the Chief Rabbi, his deputies, the rabbis of the districts and the rabbis who operated the programs in practice. A call to participate was issued for all rabbinical positions, however, due to conditions set by the Israeli Prison Service only seven out of approximately 20 rabbis took part in the study. Going

⁶See also Hasisi, Shoham, Weisburd, Haviv and Zelig, 2016; Haviv and Hasisi, 2019; Shoham, Zelig, Hasisi, Weisburd and Haviv, 2018; Weisburd, Hasisi, Shoham, Aviv and Haviv, 2017.

forward, before conducting the interviews, a meeting was held with the chief rabbi and his deputy, in order to explain them the purpose of the study and to receive their approval. All interviews conducted between prison walls, inside the rabbinical offices and took about one and a half hour each. In addition, as part of the prison visit, a tour in the Torah wings was conducted including in the prison synagogue and classrooms.

As part of the interviews, we first tried to get a detailed description of the programs. Next, we asked the rabbis how, in their view, Judaism could serve as a platform for the rehabilitation of prisoners, both at the individual, social and spiritual levels according to the ideas offered by positive criminology and how it is implemented within the religious programs (Elisha, Iidis, and Ronel, 2012; Johnson, Lee, Pagano, and Post, 2016; Ronel, 2015; Ronel and Ben-Yair, 2017).

Then, through content analysis, we extracted the main themes that emerged from the interviews (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998). This analysis was conducted in two stages: First, each theme was formed as a general idea that repeated in all or most interviews. In the second stage, we focused on the themes and their meanings as well as on theoretical explanations. Determination of reliability and validity of the present study was made possible by showing full transparency in every stage of the study. In addition, the study was accompanied by quotes from the participants interviews, facilitating a subsequent discussion (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

FINDINGS

The present study qualitatively examines the perceptions of rabbis leading Jewish religious rehabilitation programs on participants' rehabilitative processes. The programs are offered by IPS to Jewish inmates interested in integrating religious aspects into their incarceration, whether as a complete lifestyle, or in the form of several hours of Jewish studies each day. The main focus of the study is on the rabbis' view of Jewish religion as rehabilitation-encouraging, and how this perception finds expression within the rehabilitative process.

The Theoretical Rationale – Religious Programs as a Rehabilitative Channel

Jewish religious rehabilitation programs are perceived as aiming to instill a religious, moral value system, the basic assumption being that religious and moral values intertwine. These help prisoners change

their delinquent lifestyles and improve their chances of desisting from crime. Moreover, religious rehabilitation programs provide religious knowledge and other tools that help prisoners reintegrate into society. Thus, by creating a holistic religious lifestyle, religion finds expression in almost every area of a released prisoner's life.

An opportunity for Forgiveness and Atonement – "Judaism Makes Room for Every Offender at Any Stage"

The opportunity for forgiveness and atonement offered by religion in general, and Judaism in particular, is one of the main themes that emerged from the interviews conducted. In addition to the many difficulties encountered by prisoners upon their release in areas such as employment, housing, and family issues, many of them are also negatively branded – being tagged as an offender makes it especially difficult to reintegrate into society. In this respect, Judaism provides comfort, as well as unconditional acceptance.

"We often liken it to a father accepting his son, no matter what he had done. Those offenders who often feel rejected by general society feel like they have been welcomed back, given an opportunity to repent, and allowed to have another chance".

Here are two stories told by the rabbis about the meaning of repentance in Judaism:

"It is no coincidence that the first sentence we say on Yom Kippur [the Day of Atonement] Eve, the holiest [day] for Jews, begins with the words "Anu matirin lehitpalel im ha'avaryanim" [Hebrew for "We give permission to pray with the transgressors"]...What a huge thing that is. We let offenders pray, atone for their actions, and do Teshuva [repent]".

"In Judaism, the word Teshuva has two meanings – it means "answer" and "return". When a person reconnects to religion, s/he returns with the answer. If s/he severs their ties with it, in Hebrew we say the equivalent of "s/he returns with a question". Those who have done Teshuva have a special place in Judaism, and the tractate of Berachot even states: 'The place which the penitent occupy, the

perfectly righteous are unable to occupy ; as it is said, "Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near" (Berachot 34:21-22). The idea behind this statement is that the perfectly righteous, who were born in advance in religious, observant homes, find it easier to be righteous compared to those who were born secular and under various difficult circumstances, so that their shift to full repentance is harder for them".

Living in a Community – "Companionship or Death"

One of the main attributes of the more intense program, *Egged Leshem*, is its being operated as a 24/7 community with a religious lifestyle. Participating prisoners wake up at a fixed time, put on *Tefillin* in the morning, and pray together three times a day. Between services they sit and study Torah, Talmud, and books of faith together. They also have structured lessons during the day, given by rabbis or civilians employed by IPS. It is a non-judgmental community, for all its members are incarcerated for a crime committed. They encourage one another to continue with their repentance, and gradually become more observant.

"In the religious wings, Egged Leshem, is where you'll find the big change. Whoever is in those frameworks, the community ones, it's the framework that harnesses everyone through joint study processes, shared loving kindness, prayers held in a Minyan [a quorum of ten men], being considerate towards one another, reading the Torah, assuming various responsibilities in the synagogue, helping one another study. It leaves its mark".

"There is no judgmentalism here, everyone has made mistakes in the past, they are all paying for them now and are acknowledging their errors, but they are repenting. They push one another to behave well, to love Torah, and be close to God".

One of the rabbis told a story from the Babylonian Talmud in his interview that emphasized the importance of learning together, as well as Judaism's approach to repentance:

"There's a story in the Babylonian Talmud that tells the story of Reish Lakish [aka

Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish] who formerly headed a pack of thieves. One day Reish Lakish encountered a great rabbi, Rabbi Yochanan, who saw in Reish Lakish a man of tremendous potential for studying Torah and making huge Teshuva. So much so that he suggested Reish Lakish marry his beautiful sister. As time went by, Reish Lakish became Rabbi Yochanan's assistant, passing on the lessons taught by Rabbi Yochanan to his disciples. Reish Lakish became increasingly stronger in his observance, to the point that others deemed him of equal stature to Rabbi Yochanan. One day, Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish studied a problem in Halacha [Jewish Law] together pertaining to weapons, and disagreed with one another. When Rabbi Yochanan could not explain his view to Reish Lakish, he mockingly said that naturally Reish Lakish would be knowledgeable in weapons, having been a bandit. This insulting comment led to Reish Lakish falling ill, for while he was offended, his respect for his teacher prevented him from hurtfully retaliating. In the end, Reish Lakish died of his illness. Rabbi Yochanan became very sad, and regretted his actions to the point of insanity. He roamed the streets, shouting: 'Where are you, Reish Lakish?' until he, too, died of grief. The phrase 'O havruta o mituta' [companionship or death] is attributed to him, meaning that in the absence of a study partner, one dies".

Rituals, Symbols and Customs

As part of the Teshuva, or repentance process, believers undergo many spiritual processes alongside changes in practical aspects. Into their daily routines they begin to incorporate Mitzvot (religious duties), customs, and religious rituals. The Mitzvot are divided into positive ones (Dos) and negative ones (Don'ts), each of which may be either between Man and God, or between Man and his Fellow. In Jewish tradition, the Mitzvot originate in the written (Torah) and oral (Mishna and Talmud) scriptures, are mandatory, and amount to 613 (*Taryag* in gematria).

The Mitzvot are accompanied by many religious practices, or customs. Some are common in all Jewish communities, while others are only practiced by

communities originating from certain countries. There are customs that have been added to the Mitzvot and are considered mandatory, while others have remained a norm but not a duty. Maintaining a Jewish religious lifestyle therefore requires performing many actions that add meaning and spiritual content to believers' daily routines. Because believers are busy implementing positive practices, rituals, and Mitzvot during the day, they discard non-normative behaviors. Among such practices are putting on Tallit and Tefillin, praying, blessing, keeping the Sabbath, guarding one's eyes, having meals on Sabbath and Jewish holidays, studying Torah, observing Jewish holiday laws, and fasting on specific days. While learning about the various Mitzvot and practices, a profound understanding of their essence is gained, and program participants are instilled with the positive aspects of observance.

"First of all, the Mitzvot and actions give a person some framework. Secondly, it says that the observance of Mitzvot comes from the word Tzavta, in a group, , you're required to be in a community, normative within a community. You're forced to be together. The Mitzvot serve as a reminder throughout the day to always remember that 'the eye sees and the ear hears and all your actions are recorded in a book'. You are constantly faced with the reality of a force majeure, both when you fall and when you feel successful and intoxicated. Rabbi Nachman says, in this context, in [his book] Likutei Moharan, that a person 'needs to have two proficiencies, a proficiency in coming, and a proficiency in going' – even if I'm up and coming and successful, I must never think that I have reached God, there is always room for improvement, but by the same token, even if I were to hit rock bottom, the lowest of the low, I have someone there next to me, God will always be with me".

"The changes in style when speaking, from swearwords and dirty words to a gentler, cleaner way of talking, these changes, as well as the external ones, produce an internal change".

Religious and Moral Values Intertwine

Many of the rabbis interviewed reiterated how religion and morality intertwine. Many of the Mitzvot are

eternal, reflecting "moral conduct" in the purest sense of the word.

"For example, in the Ten Commandments, in addition to the Mitzvot between Man and God that revolve around worship, there are Mitzvot between Man and his Fellow, among them honouring one's parents, the prohibition against murder, the prohibition against adultery, the prohibition against stealing, the prohibition against perjury, and the prohibition against coveting. In the program, religion serves as the key to moral behavior. Repentance symbolizes the return to moral values, and steps taken in the direction of good and justice".

"Judaism intertwines with worldly good. 'Be sure not to become corrupt and corrupt my world' – when a person becomes corrupt, they ruin the world. Mitzvot instruct you to do good. God wants us to choose the good. The purpose is to have a genuine connection to the Creator and created, so the Creator will always give the created the feeling that giving is important. To focus less on personal good, but more on how to build a society, how to build a nation, and take care of the next generation".

Learning and working

Prisoners participating in Jewish religious rehabilitation programs also receive training in various areas of employment. These occupational programs are associated with religion either directly or indirectly. According to the approach known as Torah VaAvoda – learning and working – not all men are capable of being Torah scholars, some find it difficult to sit and learn from dusk until dawn. The combination of study and work is understood and necessary.

"Learning while working will not become null and void" – not everyone can learn, a Torah life does not only mean a Beit Midrash life, but a life of how to behave with one's wife, one's boss, society, neighbors. Torah learning does not begin and end at the Beit Midrash. We say 'Eternal life He implanted in our midst' when we make the blessing over the

Torah. Kashrut supervisor course, Sofer Stam [inscriber of Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzah scrolls] course, religious DJ for weddings, gardening according to Jewish Law – they took a garden, how to plant, how to grow, Shmita [special agricultural laws pertaining to the seventh year], tithes, cross-breeds".

Bible Stories as Life Stories

As part of this theme, connections are made between key characters in the Torah and bible and the complex life stories of program participants. This approach is closely associated with repentance and atonement, whereby all humans make mistakes. "Man is made of dirt, that's the material aspect, but he also has a divine aspect (having been created in God's image)".

"Judaism's heroes, found in the Torah, are not people free of errors, traits, angers – King David was angry, Moses erred, even King Solomon erred. The Torah did not attempt to conceal the human to make these people out as role models. The Torah wants to teach us that, even if you fall, it's part of the human in you, the trick is not to fall, but rather to get up and make amends. A person is forever at risk, we need to guard ourselves so that the range of our mistakes remains permissible, and know how to get back up, and return to a normative state after making mistakes".

Recognizing the Differences between Prisoners

A recurring theme in the interviews conducted was that each prisoner – be he a participant of the TSP or TRP – find out who they are and where they belong. The correct way must be found to convey content to each prisoner according to their capabilities, spiritual and intellectual level.

"The programs are divided – three to four levels – beginners, advanced, religious, and special Havruta. So that each person can find himself at the religious intellectual level suitable for him. [This way] he can both express himself and take in the values and insights suitable for his spiritual and religious level".

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Much has been written about the link between religion and crime, and the widespread assumption is that religiosity may decrease or prevent criminality, while strengthening pro-social behaviors (Dodson et al., 2011; Harris et al., 2017; Sturgis and Baller, 2012; Yun and Lee, 2016). Overall, the religious framework may provide released prisoners with social support systems, help them to reenter society and renew their social ties, and assist them in finding a job, home, and so on (Stansfield et al., 2017b). Religion may also have a positive effect on prisoners' cognitive level, as the transition to a new society and culture, coupled with repentance, could create a more positive self-image, and help promote rehabilitation (MacKenzie, 2006). Religious rehabilitation programs provide prisoners with a range of spiritual, psychological, and practical tools (Morag and Teman, 2018), based on the rationale that repentance may help the rehabilitative effort. Thus, religious rehabilitation programs seek to change a person's spirituality and personal views in an attempt to steer them toward a normative path of life (Dodson et al., 2011).

Although religious rehabilitation programs are relatively common within prisons, only a handful of qualitative studies have been conducted in this area, and none have examined the perceptions of the spiritual and religious program leaders (Clear et al., 2000; Dammer, 2002; Hallet and McCoy, 2015; Kenneth et al., 2002; Maruna et al., 2006; Morag and Teman, 2018; Teman and Morag, 2018; Teman and Morag, 2020). The purpose of the present study was to examine the perceptions of rabbis heading Jewish religious rehabilitation programs at the Israel Prison Service to try and understand how Judaism provides opportunities for prisoner rehabilitation. It also explored the religious motifs that enable and encourage prisoner rehabilitation, and their practical demonstrability within the programs themselves.

Several themes have emerged from the in-depth interviews conducted with the rabbis, among them: the importance of forgiveness and atonement in Judaism; the role played by the community; the importance of symbols, Mitzvot, and customs; religious and moral values intertwining; the combination of learning and working; biblical characters as reflected in complex life stories; and recognizing that people are different.

The positive criminology approach suggests that part of the attempt to reintegrate law-breakers into

society should be shifting from focusing on the negative elements that led the individual to commit a crime to focusing on positive elements. Positive criminology seeks to minimize the risk of reoffending while acquiring strengths and skills, as well as underscoring the potential for spiritual evolution.

Metaphorically, positive criminology strives to open the gate that every person has onto a world of giving, generosity, caring for others, kindness, introspection, and self-restraint. Within the process, emphasis is placed on holistically combining the personal, social, and spiritual levels through positive experiences, positive psychological progress, and a sense of growth. Therefore, as part of this process, it is essential that prisoners believe that the positive path and experience they have chosen will help them desist from crime (Kovalsky, Hasisi, Haviv and Elisha, 2020; Ronel, 2015; Ronel and Segev, 2014; Ronel and Toren, 2012). And, indeed, among the main themes that emerged from the interviews is a holistic combination between all three levels – the personal, social, and spiritual. Judaism allows every person to repent. It welcomes repents back with open arms, so that even offenders seeking to leave their bad choices behind, get a second chance. Every program participant thus feels equal to the others, understanding that socially, much like his fellow inmates within the program, he too has a past that he is trying to amend within Judaism's spiritual framework. Accepting others, giving, the opportunity to atone, perform acts of lovingkindness and charity, are an integral part of all that Judaism (and positive criminology) has to offer to program participants. In this context, building a new identity helps repenting individuals cast off their former negative branding.

The community theme also suggests that individuals (personal level) need company (social level) as part of their Jewishness (spiritual level) and because they are human. Some of the Mitzvot described in the Findings section cannot be performed by individuals alone and require a congregation within which to observe them. For instance, some parts of the prayer must only be uttered in a Minyan – a quorum of at least ten men. One such passage is *Kadish Yatom* – the mourner's prayer, uttered by anyone whose parent had passed away within the last 12 months. Thus, Judaism views the individual as a part of a social frame, or, as Durkheim suggested, society is greater than the sum of its parts (Durkheim, 1933).

Moreover, the community framework within the correction facility helps individuals push one another to

a positive place. Each individual's commitment towards the others, and the community as a whole, creates a framework characterized by a high level of mechanical solidarity (Durkheim, 1951), in which the division of labor, as well as the belief system and definitions of right and wrong, become norms expressing a consensus (Shoham, 2006). The community also serves as a supervisory tool as defined by Hirschi's theory on social control (Hirschi, 1969). It oversees the *belief system* it shares, individuals' *involvement* and role assumption within it, individuals' *commitment* to it, and their *attachment* to positive role models – the rabbis heading the programs, as well as other repentant community members.

According to the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1947), criminal behavior is learned and acquired by interactions with other criminal elements. Sutherland argues that a person becomes delinquent because of excess of negative "definitions" that encourage negative behaviors and criminal activities, and also because of lack of positive "definitions" that encourage the person to obey the law and avoid criminal acts. Differential association can change depending on:

1. Frequency: The more a person has contacts and relations with criminal figures and environment, the more the person himself will behave as a criminal.
2. Duration: As the contact of the person with criminal environment or with criminal figures are longer, that person will more likely to become delinquent.
3. Priority: The negative "definitions" will affect the person more when the one acting them is closer to him or has an impact on him.
4. Intensity: refers to the strength or the severity of the negative definitions. As the more a person is exposed to a more severe or negative definition, the greater the chances he will become delinquent.

The Jewish religious community – its members as well as leading staff – enable interactions with "positive definitions" and minimizes encounters with "negative" ones, i.e. prisoners who do not belong to the community. The "positive definitions" are embedded in values, joint learning, prayers, Sabbath keeping, good behavior, and interpersonal relations (interactions between Man and his Fellow). The excess of positive

definitions within the Jewish religious community helps to promote processes of Teshuva (repentance) and rehabilitation.

The theme on symbols and customs could be associated with several theories. First, it too is directly related to positive criminology. The individual, or believer, observes Mitzvot and religious practices from the moment he wakes up in the morning until the moment he falls asleep at night. Second, as previously mentioned, often these Mitzvot must be performed together with others, BeTzavta, which is the social level: as one of the rabbis leading the program noted, the word 'command' – Tzivuy, Mitzvah – shares its root with the word 'Tzavta' – together. All Mitzvot, symbols, and customs are performed within the religious context, and accompany believers spiritually throughout the day, all year round.

The fact that the Mizvot accompany believers throughout the day also entails supervision – social and divine control. In the community context, the community itself may serve as a form of social control mechanism for individuals. In addition, the Mitzvot accompanying believers throughout their day, including those performed on one's own, remind one that God watches and listens. Engaging in religious practices throughout the day reduces the time left available for antisocial conduct considerably.

Moreover, observing Mitzvot, customs, keeping the Sabbath and holidays, are all part of the Jewish symbols to which Jewish religion and society have added layers of interpretation. The latter are often shared by all Jews, more notably so among the Orthodox. Through those symbols, customs, and rituals, a positive atmosphere of Torah learning, loving others, and loving God, is constructed and preserved. This process is similar to the symbolic interaction paradigm, whereby community members' reality is constructed as part of the interpretation that accompanies daily interactions (West and Turner, 2018). The theme suggesting that religious and moral values are intertwined is also closely tied with the interpretation given to Judaism. As the rabbi quoted in the Findings section suggests, religious and moral values are one and the same. In other words, in this context, Judaism represents all that is good and just, instructing believers to do good and choose right. Every person was created in God's image, with the aim of adding good to the world. Any corruption in man, corrupts the world. This idea correlates with spiritual criminology, which evolved from positive criminology

and suggests that programs with spiritual orientations help individuals find their place within the faith, develop positive relations with their peers, as well as strengthen their moral and humane values within the fabric of society.

The theme pertaining to "learning and working" assumes that not everyone is capable of sitting all day and making learning their sole occupation. There are some who are capable of sitting from dawn until dusk to learn Torah, but they are few and far between. Most believers cannot do so, and the idea of Torah study alongside employment enables that. Moreover, as one of the rabbis noted, Torah does not become null and void alongside work, the opposite is true. The idea of Torah VaAvoda – learning and working – is infused with deeper meaning within prison and rehabilitation programs.

Indeed, employment has long been recognized by social control theories, as well as other major criminological theories, as a protective factor against crime (Duwe, 2015; Hirschi, 1969; Sampson and Laub, 1993). It is also considered a critical turning point in criminal trajectories (Davis, Bahr and Ward, 2012; Gillis and Nafekh, 2005; Uggen, 2000), and has therefore become a major target for interventions and programs, including the Jewish religious programs examined.

Such interventions and programs aim to mitigate the prison phenomenon known as the 'revolving door' by placing pronounced emphasis on providing inmates with employment skills and professional training that can increase their chances of obtaining and maintaining normative employment in the community post-release, thereby reducing recidivism (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith, 2006; Apel, 2011).

The theme entitled 'Bible stories as life stories' depicts all members of society, including the perfectly righteous, as humans who may err. Mistakes lead to repentance. This is certainly true for the righteous, but it is equally relevant to those who are evil through and through, for repentance and atonement are available to all. Positive criminology suggests that individuals can find role models like whom they can seek to become. At the same time, they realize that, if those who are thoroughly evil are welcomed back to Judaism following their repentance, they too can be once they change their ways. This idea gives hope, motivates, and evokes the genuine desire to become a better person.

The final theme that emerged from the interviews conducted is recognizing that every prisoner is different. It focuses on the difference between them in terms of their intellectual abilities, the content conveyed to each, the extent to which each prisoner is interested in the content conveyed, and how Judaism is taught, and its practices implemented. The programs therefore attempt to match each prisoner with the content most suitable for them. They divide participants by their intellectual level, try to discern who finds what content interesting, which practices each prisoner is more passionate about, and how best to convey messages to each participant. Thus, the rehabilitation process is customized to the prisoners' individual characteristics. This idea relates to the one suggested by the Risk-Need-Responsivity model (Andrews, Bonta and Hoge, 1990), whereby programs must be matched to prisoners' characteristics, while placing an emphasis on their risk level and criminogenic needs. The model further seeks to find the most suitable way for conveying content to each prisoner, and offering them a customized rehabilitation process.

To conclude, this paper presented rabbis' perceptions on Judaism's correlation with rehabilitative ideas, primarily that of repentance as a value. It seems that rabbis leading rehabilitation programs have been able to identify and implement typical rehabilitative ideas. The emerging themes correspond well with theoretical ideas found in the field of criminology in general, and rehabilitation in particular, among them: the implementation of moral aspects; giving prisoners a second chance; providing opportunities for repentance and atonement while minimizing the effects of branding; supervision; placing an emphasis on normative lives as individuals belonging and committed to a community; placing an emphasis on the value of working alongside Torah learning and good behavior; and providing a unique response to each individual according to their characteristics and needs. Most qualitative studies in this area center on the reports of prisoners participating in such rehabilitation programs as TSP and TRP. While it is indeed important and appropriate for their voices to be heard, the need for qualitative studies that examine the perceptions of the religious and spiritual leaders heading religious rehabilitation programs has arisen. Such studies would do well to shed more light on areas such as program leaders' views on religious rehabilitative processes, particularly the attempt to understand how religious (Christian, Muslim and other) ideas are integrated into them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was supported by a grant from the Israel Prison Service to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Ashkelon Academic College. We would like to thank Dror Wolk, Katerine Ben Zvi and Tomer Carmel, from the Research Unit at the IPS and to thank the interviewees of the current research.

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Received on 10-04-2020

Accepted on 22-04-2020

Published on 26-04-2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.14>

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