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Opinion | When Schools Don't Educate Their Students - The New York Times

To the Editor:

Despair washed over me after reading your investigative report.

As an elementary school yeshiva student back in the 1960s, I recall being ridiculed by the teacher, and then by her minions of students, because I asked a question in English class.

The teacher had introduced the topic of geography, and she mentioned that Mount Everest was the tallest mountain in the world. Trying to get a sense of how tall the mountain was, I raised my hand and asked, "How many feet high is Mount Everest?"

Condescendingly she retorted, "Amy, why don't you go take a ruler and measure it?" The class broke into peals of laughter, and the students continued to pillory me thereafter.

The irony is that I had been taught to be inquisitive about my Hebrew subjects, and if I had asked a question about a Talmudic concept, I would not have been reprovved at all. Disdain for secular curriculums should not be tolerated any longer, because Orthodox community members like me deserve better.

Amy Neustein

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The writer is the editor of the book "Tempest in the Temple: Jewish Communities and Child-Sex Scandals."