MORAL EDUCATION THROUGH MUSSAR

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Introduction

> One night, as he walked past the home of a shoemaker, Rabbi Salanter noticed that despite the late hour, the man was still working by the light of a dying candle. "Why are you still working," he asked. "It is very late and soon that candle will go out." The shoemaker replied, "As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend." Salanter spent that entire night excitedly pacing his room and repeating to himself: "As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend." [1]

Rabbi Israel Salanter (1809-1883) is widely known as the father Mussar. In this story he believed that until death takes you from your physical place in the world, you are always able to better yourself. This act of reflection and continual self-improvement is at the core of Mussar, the Jewish movement focused on moral conduct and discipline. For the followers of Rabbi Salanter —Orthodox Lithuanian Jews—the lesson of the story is found in Rabbi Salanter's repeating of this phrase in order to truly absorb its meaning into his soul. They focus on Salanter's repetition for this is critical in Salanter's teachings for how one learns and internalizes morals because mussar requires deep review and practice to internalize moral behavior.

The 1937 Columbus Platform of the CCAR, takes a strong position on moral action, writing: "As a child of God, [each person] is endowed with moral freedom and is charged with

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[1] Morinis, E. Alan. Climbing Jacob's Ladder: One Man's Rediscovery of a Jewish Spiritual Tradition. New York: Broadway, 2002.

the responsibility of overcoming evil and striving after ideal ends." This understanding of a person's relationship with God charges each of us to work towards perfecting the world by exercising our moral freedom. This principle assumes that humans are free to act according to their own personal moral compass, and that this morality is endowed by God. The zenith of morality, though, is not static. Just as Noah was "a righteous person in his time" morality can be dependent on time and place. Whether or not one believes that morality is more nature over nurture, it can surely be agreed that morality needs to be worked on, practiced, and refined. Indeed, acting morally is a mission we should practice every day of our lives. It is never stagnant. It continues to evolve through our interactions with others, our community, our religion, and our own experiences.

Generally speaking, moral behavior is tested and at least initially learned in one's own family. According to a study from Berkeley University[2], children, as young as one year old, are deeply influenced by their parent's ability to empathize. Children pick up on the subtle and not so subtle ways that their parents interact with others in their world. These small moments help to set the building blocks for later moral development.[3] The child forms a foundation for morality based on their parents' behavior. This is reflected in a cornerstone of Jewish tradition, the idea that one much "teach them diligently to your children" (Deut. 6:7). It is incumbent on parents to teach their children how to be good and productive members of society. Many people believe that part of the school's responsibility is to reinforce the morals that children begin to develop in

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[2] Suttie, By Jill. "How Parents Influence Early Moral Development." Greater Good. Berkeley University, 29 Sept. 2015. Web. 05 Nov. 2016.

[3] ibid.

their homes. This requires clear delineation of what those morals are and a presumption that there is alignment between the home and school. Yet, Carol Ingall notes that in many cases, Jewish schools are not reinforcing existing moral values that are first taught at home, but rather parents expect the religious school to teach Jewish moral values that have not been learned in the home. “Whereas in the past, Jewish schools reflected the moral values of the family and the community, today’s schools are supposed to create those values.”[4] Parents expect to teach their children universal morals and that the religious school will take care of the Jewish ones. This division of labor removes the parents from the expectation of taking an active role in their child’s Jewish moral education. Religious schools need to fill this gap by more explicitly teach Jewish morality, without the presumption of any grounding or understand of Jewish morality already within the learner.

One of the major thinkers in moral education is Nel Noddings. In her landmark book “Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education” Noddings, addresses an analogous problem to the one just discussed. Just as Jewish educators cannot assume that their students are receiving Jewish moral education at home, Noddings recognizes that not all children have parents who model moral behavior. Maybe the child does not have parents at home, maybe they work too much and cannot tend to their child, maybe teaching morality is just not their priority. Noddings rejects the idea that “the school trains intelligence, and the home and church train for morality and emotional well being.”[5] Rather, Noddings believes that the “primary aim of every

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[4] Ingall, Carol K. Transmission and Transformation: A Jewish Perspective on Moral Education. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1999. Pg 5.

[5] Noddings, Nel. Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education. Berkeley: U of California, 1984. Pg 172.

educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring."[6] Noddings believes that caring is the foundation for moral decisions. The ethic of care that all humans posses drives us to naturally respond to others in a moral way. But, listening to and exhibiting care must be a learned and practiced trait.

Prayer, study of Torah, and ritual do not explicitly teach Jewish morals. Yet, this is the curricular focus of most of our religious schools. These are arguably easier to teach; they are concrete and measurable skills. These have goals which can be measured: Hebrew proficiency can be tested, knowledge of Torah can be tested. Parents can see or hear the advancements that their children are making. Yet, measuring success in teaching morality is far more difficult. The inability to quantify learning and advancement in teaching morality should not hinder our willingness to do so.

In his essay, "Reflections on the Educated Jew from the Perspective of Reform Judaism", Michael A. Meyer identifies deep tensions that exist within the modern Jew. This modern educated Jew "stands within the multiple tensions of autonomy and obligation, integration and separation, peoplehood and religion, dispassionate knowledge and life-determining commitment."[7] To have informed choice means to decide where you stand on each of these dichotomies. But, it is up to the student to make this autonomous decision. "The task of the parent and teacher is to expound and analyze … from within the circle of their own

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[6] ibid.

[7] Meyer, Michael A. "Reflections on the Educated Jew from the Perspective of Reform Judaism." Visions of Jewish Education. By Seymour Fox, Israel Scheffler, and Daniel Marom. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003. Page 150.

commitment."[8] It is the responsibility of the educator to instill within the child what it means to live a committed Jewish life. Then, the child can make informed choices in responding to challenges and contradictions found within Judaism and within the world as a whole. By inducting the child into the circle of Judaism the child is able to make conscious decisions about moral and value challenges. They understand the full scope of Judaism and can use it as a resource in moral decision making. But, the source of this education is paramount. As Ingall notes, the school cannot trust that the parents are providing proper Jewish education. "When the home fails to educate by word and by example, then Jewish education is removed from the principal nexus of character formation and peripheralized." Whereas Ingall suggests that the religious school has a responsibility towards instilling Jewish moral education, Meyer agrees, but expands that this will only silo Judaism for the child. Rather, he argues that a concerted effort from all areas of the child's life needs to occur in order to instill a Judaism that enables the child to make informed moral choices.

I was once asked "If someone were to follow you for 24 hours, how would they know that you are Jewish?" For someone who does not keep kosher, kiss mezzuzot when available, or is seen in prayer during the day, how would one know they were Jewish? For the average Reform Jew, this can pose great difficulty. They might believe that they are living a profoundly Jewish life, but not necessarily an observant one. So, what exists in this space between observance and living "Jewishly"? Morality, and its foundation in Jewish teachings, can guide us to feel distinctly proud of our actions. These deeds, done each day, may not display as exclusively Jewish, but they were guided by a moral compass which is magnetized to Judaism. These daily

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[8] ibid. Page 154.

actions rely on personal proof texts. These actions are drawn from the texts one studies, from the lessons learned in Jewish settings, and from moral behavior modeled and internalized.

The above reasons inspire me to propose that a focus on Jewish moral education is necessary for our religious school students to develop an understanding of what it means to act morally as Jews. To enable students to internalize Jewish morals and thus, behave accordingly, should be a primary goal of supplementary religious schools. This goal can be achieved through an infusion of Mussar into the curriculum.

Mussar is the set of contemplative practices from Jewish tradition. Though a relatively new movement within Judaism's history, this 19th century movement has grown in popularity in recent times. Mussar engages its follower in personal practices which lead to an internalization of Jewish moral texts which are studied repetitively. By keeping a *Cheshbon Nefesh,* an ongoing personal accounting of oneself and one's actions, and by regular repetitive study of ethical texts, a follower of Mussar can "correct" their actions in their daily life. In addition to intentional study of Jewish texts, Mussar is an accompanying practice which helps the follower to live out the lessons learned. To study Mussar, one studies *middot*, literally a virtue or values. Examples of *middot* are humility, cleanliness, and generosity. Alan Morinis, one of the key people responsible for the resurgence of Mussar practice today, uses the term "soul-traits" to describe these *middot.* He writes that the purpose of Mussar is to strengthen these soul-traits to overcome "the sorts of obstacles that prevent you from realizing the potential of your soul."[9] This framework of practicing specific *middot* according to a specific format can be translated to the classroom to

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[9] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar. Trumpeter Books, Boston. Page 41.

serve as a foundation for moral education in a Jewish setting. A curriculum centered around *middot* from Mussar texts can give a needed framework to accomplish the task of teaching morality. Mussar can simultaneously provide the necessary moral education while also keeping these values steeped in Judaism.

This thesis will explore Mussar as a guide for moral education for students in middle school, from around ages 12 to 14. I have decided to focus on this age cohort because of their unique place in both Erik Erikson's and Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of development. Erikson created his theory of eight psychosocial stages of development in 1950. Though open to considerable critique, his theory still remains a foundational way of understanding human development. In what he describes as the fifth stage, the adolescent (12-18 years old) is in "the critical period for identity formation."[10] During this stage the adolescent is reconsidering the morals they were taught during earlier stages and explores what will become integral for him/her going forward. During this period adolescents may try explore what it might mean to live in a different identify in order to better develop new self-understandings. Kohlberg also believed that this stage of adolescence, under his title the 'conventional level', is "the key population to target for moral education."[11] This conventional level is characterized by critical thinking about what is 'fair' by shedding away ego-centrism and obtaining more sympathy for others. This time of great questions and searching proves to be an optimal time for instilling Jewish morality.

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[10] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 2008. Page 168.

[11] Bailey, Steve. Educating for Menschlichkeit, A Kohlbergian Model for Jewish Day Schools. Wisdom From All My Teachers. Atid / Urim, Jerusalem, 2003.

This thesis will explore how and why congregational religious schools could, and should, include in their curriculum a focus on teaching Jewish morality. Beginning with a review of the literature on moral education, this thesis will then move to a study of existing models for Jewish moral education. This study of Jewish sources will conclude with a study of Mussar, the Jewish model for character development. The final chapter of this study will be a model for Jewish moral education for children focusing on the teachings and practices of Mussar.

Chapter 1

A Survey of Moral Education in America

Moral education has been a concern for as long as we have documentation about education. Using stories, often from the bible, to teach how to live one's life, has been the mainstay of moral education. As opposed to developing technical skills that would help a student learn a trade or an ability, moral education is concerned with the student's ability to interact in a morally positive way with others. As Nel Noddings puts it:

> [Moral education] refers to education which is moral in the sense that those planning and conducting education will strive to meet all those involved morally; and it refers to an education that will enhance the ethical ideal of those being educated so that they will continue to meet others morally.[12]

Noddings is one of the major thinkers and scholars of moral education in contemporary American society. Yet, moral education had been a part of the American educational model since the Puritans reached Massachusetts. Moral education has taken many forms throughout American history, yet, for much of American history, moral education was almost exclusively bibliocentric. The drive to understand and teach morality can be traced back to our earliest philosophers who sought to understand what morality is are and then, how to instill these values in the young through education.

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[12] Noddings, Nel. Caring, A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education. Berkeley: U of California, 1986. Page 171.

In Western civilization, the first documented moral educators were the Greek philosophers Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. Aristotle began with the assumption that children were “wayward, uncivilized, and very much in need of discipline.”[13] Working with this assumption, he created what we now know as Aristotelian ethics. This refers to a way of thinking of ethics as a skill set that can be practiced and thus improved upon. Aristotle’s educational theory was predicated upon the ability to be self-aware of one’s actions and then to practice moral behavior in order to systematically change one’s actions. This practice, like the practice of a sport or technical skills, would improve one’s own ability to act morally.[14] This idea of self-awareness and practicing of good moral actions is a theme we will encounter again through Mussar.

Aristotle understood morality as a type of moderation. He sought to understand what makes a human excellent. Aristotle understood that because humans are rational beings, to be excellent, is to be excellent in rationality. “Living in conformity with reason denotes a life lived in moderation.”[15] Moderation, being the balance between that which is excessive and that which is inadequate, is learned through example. Aristotle understood moderation, the excellence of controlling one’s actions, as the moral virtue. To be moral, for Aristotle is to learn by self-

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[13] Hoff Sommers, Christina. "How Moral Education Is Finding Its Way Back into America’s Schools." (n.d.): n. pag. Hoover Press. Web. 6 Dec. 2016. <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/0817929622_23.pdf>.

[14] ibid.

[15] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page 22.

awareness and repetition through examples to be moderate in one's actions. To learn morality is to improve oneself in order to have excellency in moderation.[16]

The Bible as the Moral Guide

In Colonial America, the moral influence of the Bible was used as a tool to help shape both those with impressionable minds and to re-form the morality of those gone astray. Until recent decades, the bible was the primary source for moral education in America. The moral influence of the bible has been used in all areas of moral development from schools to prisons in order to help shape both those with impressionable minds and to re-form the morality of those gone astray. Beginning in Massachusetts with the Puritans in colonial times and extending throughout the 19th (and early 20th) centuries, the Bible was mandated in American schools.[17]

The bible was used throughout our country's schools despite its sectarianism. Because belief in God was so entrenched in American society, the Bible was viewed as a primary tool for teaching piety.[18] Though non-sectarian within Christianity, in the 19th Century, teaching the Bible was taught almost exclusively from a Christian perspective excluding any other religious perspectives. We see this play out in 1870 in the case of *Minor v. Board of Education* in the Superior Court of Cincinnati. Judge Hagans writes that the Bible impresses on the

> children of the common schools, the principles and duties of morality and justice, and a sacred regard for truth, love of country, humanity, increased benevolence, sobriety,

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[16] ibid

[17] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page 43.

[18] ibid. Page XXV.

> industry, chastity, moderation, temperance and all other virtues, which are the ornaments of human society.[19]

This judge's words echo the ideas expressed by a prominent educational thinker of the 19th C, Horace Mann. Though Mann professed he was developing moral qualities from all religions, the bible still held a prominent role. Along with Aristotle's view that morality needed to be practiced and regularly reviewed, the bible provided a common story for all children to reflect upon as a guide for moral behavior.

Horace Mann

In early American society, Horace Mann was the first educator who attempted to formalize moral education. In 1838 in the Common School Journal, Mann wrote about his beliefs about the educational system. He promoted the belief that there should be universal public education and that such education would teach all children in a way that they would emerge as disciplined. This proposition would also be "profoundly moral in character [and] ….. free of sectarian religious influence.[20] Mann believed in a school that would bring together children from all social classes into a common school in order to learn from each other a common respect. This would inculcate a certain social harmony. He therefore believed that the school provided a perfect opportunity to bring people of different backgrounds together to raise the

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[19] Michaelson, Robert. Piety in the Public Schools. New York, NY, 1970. Page 32.

[20] Cremin, Lawrence A. "Horace Mann." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, 9 June 2006. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Horace-Mann>.

morality of all those involved. “Schooling, Mann believed, was to elevate morality, to bring about a needed revolution in character.”[21]

Up to this time moral education was in the domain of religious schools; it was the role of the church to instill moral behavior in their students. Looking to the church as a model, Mann sought to create a moral foundation upon which to base his educational program. He sought a religious basis, but one that was not partial to any specific religion. This was important to him because he believed that religion, in general, was the best source of morality. Therefore, he chose to accept “common principles” that every religion or creed could accept. He held that the school should teach these “universal” principles that were common among all religions. [22] Mann wrote:

> It shall be the duty of all instructors of youth, to exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth, committee to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice and a sacred regard for truth, love to their country, humanity and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornaments of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded.”[23]

God and religion were still the basis for Mann’s moral education, but he took the bible out of the equation and made the teachings more universal. Like Aristotle, we see that for Mann, morality was also based upon moderation. Sobriety, frugality, and chastity all relate to the next word,

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[21] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page XXII - XXIV.

[22] ibid.

[23] Mann, Horace, *First Annual report covering the Year 1873.* Boston, Dutton and Wentworth, State Printers, 1938. 55.

moderation. In addition to Aristotle's moderation as morality, Mann added the values of care, justice and love. Therefore morality is not just about how one treats oneself, but also applies to how one treats others. Many of the qualities about self-discipline and restraint that Mann spoke about can also be understood as benefitting the whole. The quality of "industry," a quality of working to improve the country, cues us to understand "frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance" as further moral qualities that aid the whole of society when the individual lives a moral life. For, if they do so, they contribute to society in a meaningful way. Therefore, living a moral life by treating others with justice and respect, and being a productive member of society positions morality as a quality which is necessary to collective success.

The Bible and the Law

From the *Minor v. Board of Education* ruling first mentioned, we can also tease out the major national contention at the time of writing, that of the temperance and prohibition. In the judge's argument we see three words used regularly in the Temperance movement: Sobriety, moderation, and temperance. This movement sought prohibition of alcohol based upon religious and moral imperatives. The movement was driven largely by religious Christians who opposed alcohol for a number of reasons. They felt the alcohol inebriated the American worker, making him less productive, and unable to control sexual urges. The judge alluded to these depravities in his use of the words "industry" and "chastity". The Temperance movement felt alcohol was tearing at the moral fabric of America. It was partially a response to immigrants from drinking cultures like Germany and Ireland, as well as growing jingoism, and anti-Catholicism. They

argued the morality from a Christian biblical perspective. Throughout this time the bible and the Christian perspective was at the forefront of the movements of morality.

Using the Bible in public schooling was not an issue in 19th Century American education. The Baltimore City Council in 1839 proclaimed that the "chief object in adopting the use of the sacred volume was, to endeavor, by every available means, to imbue the minds of the scholars with that moral influence which its inspired pages are so well calculated to impart." The city council strongly believed that the bible was the most important influence in imparting of morality to children. Yet, they also declared that they would "never support sectarianism."[24] Though, today, this position to violate the principle of separation of church and state, but this view was widely held to be compatible with the law and the teaching of bible, for it did not privilege the teaching of any one sect of Christianity over another.[25]

Support for the bible as the primary source of moral education declined towards the end of the 19th century. This began in major metropolitan areas experienced an increase in immigrants who were not Protestant. As religious diversity grew, the outcry against teaching bible by those who were not Protestant grew as well. In 1890 the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled regarding prayer and bible reading in public schools. The Edgerton Bible Case, as the case was commonly known was brought about by Roman Catholic families who believed that the King James Bible was not the authoritative translation; rather they should use Catholic Church's translation. The school board argued that the King James Bible was a "valid textbook for

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[24]Dinn, William Kailer, What Happened to Religious Education, Baltimore, MD, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958. Page 145.

[25] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page XXIV.

teaching a ‘universal’ moral code.”[26] Though the case was originally about which interpretation of the bible was acceptable to be taught in school, the justices concluded that reading the Bible reading in public schools was illegal because it represents the state sponsoring of religion. This represented the first major case against bible study and public prayer in public schools. In doing so, this also represented the first major shift from bible-based moral education to a moral education that was based on universal values that did not depend on religion or the bible. [27]

There was great backlash to this ruling, as it undid the way the morality had been taught since the Puritans landed in America. Protestants, especially, believed that this was to be the downfall of America. That without the bible the country would lose its moral foundations. They further believed that moral education would then be inadequate without the bible as the source.

It was not until 1962 that America would see the next major blow to bible-based moral education. The case was the School District of Abington Township v Schempp. This case arose because Schempp, a Unitarian, believed that his daughter should not partake in mandatory bible reading in school. The case was appealed up to the Supreme Court as a violation of a separation of church and state. It was argued in the case that "as a textbook of morals, the Bible is preeminent, and should have a prominent place in our schools, either as a reading book or as a source of appeal and instruction.”[28] The Supreme Court decided that the bible reading in schools

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[26] "State Ex Rel. Weiss v. City of Edgerton (Wis. 1890)." Encyclopedia of the First Amendment (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 17 Dec. 2016. <https://www.wicourts.gov/courts/supreme/docs/famouscases11.pdf>.

[27] ibid.

[28] "School District of Abington Township. v. Schempp 374 U.S. 203 (1963)." Justia Law. Justia.com, n.d. Web. 17 Dec. 2016. <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/374/203/case.html>.

violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." This was the most recent and most wide-reaching case to dissolve the use of the bible as a moral education tool in public schools. [29]

John Dewey

John Dewey was one of the most influential thinkers in the modern philosophy of education. His work on the teacher-student relationship speaks to the importance of the empathetic relationship which helps to instill morality into the learners through modeling. Dewey's first major work, *The School and Society*, published in 1899, laid the foundation for what we call experiential education today. Relating to moral education, Dewey believed that: "as moral thinkers we are involved participants rather than passive spectators of the world." [30] Dewey believed that the environment in which a student learns played a major factor in learning. Like Mann, he believed that the unique backgrounds of the students can contribute immensely to the classroom learning. He advocated for a greater relationship in the classroom between the educators and the pupils, that there should be a transformation of the "moral school atmosphere, in the relation of pupils and teacher…[and] the introduction of more active, expressive, and self-directing factors."[31] The teacher was to be the leader of this communal, social, and interactive

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[29] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page 44.

[30] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page 137.

[31] Dewey, John. Introduction. The School and Society. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1915. Page 27.

activity of learning. This fed into his ideal that the individual learns in a way related to the greater social context. In this way, the moral relationships developed in the classroom would be an educative experience that lends itself to adaptation in the greater world.

Dewey "looked to moral education to bring about harmony between community citizenship and individual rights."[32] This use of moral education to strike a balance between two poles is reminiscent of Plato and Aristotle, on whom Dewey draws in his books. They are all looking at how morality keeps a person in a state of moderation. Dewey's key concern was often a moderation between the needs of the individual versus the needs of the society, with morality informing that moderation.

Piaget and Kohlberg

Another key figure in moral development was Jean Piaget who was born in Switzerland in the early 20th Century. Piaget is most widely known for his work on the stages of child development and how children interact with their environment through these stages. Before his groundbreaking work on logical structures, Piaget worked on the stages of child morality. Piaget concluded that a child's moral development falls into two major stages: heteronomous and autonomous. The earlier stage, heteronomous, is "characterized by a strict adherence to rule and duties, and obedience to authority."[33] In this stage children are acting as moral beings because that is how they understand they are supposed to act in the world. They treat others with respect because they are abiding by the rules set up for them by authoritarian figures, parents, or

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[32] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Page XXXI.

[33] ibid. Page 336.

teachers. This is influenced by the natural authority in the relationship that children have with authority: they are powerless in the relationship. They are acting in a moral way, even if they are not giving critical thought to their decisions. For them morality is black and white, depending on what they are told to do and what they are told not to do. Young children are ego-centric and unable to understand the perspectives of others, this affects their rule following because of their inability to understand how rules affect others differently. This "moral realism," as Piaget put it, makes it so the child does not account for circumstances or any other considerations when understanding rules. The letter of the rule gains much higher importance over the spirit of the rule. [34]

Piaget's second stage of moral development is the autonomous stage. This stage appears when critical thinking develops about what is fair. In this stage the shift occurs because there is a greater understanding of the social interactions with peers. Therefore the strict adherence to rules might not affect one another the same way. This stage is dependent on the child moving away from ego-centrism to having sympathy for others. Children being to seek fair resolutions to problems and wish for rules to be fair for all involved. Heteronomous adherence to laws is dispelled with because it does not fit the new understanding of the needs of the others. They gain a new found respect for others because they can now understand the perspective of others. Piaget believed that moral education for young children should be centered about the relationship that the children have with authority. The power held by the authority is lessened and peer interactions are used to guide the rules of the classroom in order to allow for the space for a child to develop autonomous morality. Therefore the students, as a group, should be active in the

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[34] ibid. Pages 337.

classroom rules in order for them to discuss and evaluate how the rules work and how they affect everyone in the class. This, as Piaget writes, will encourage the development of autonomous morality. [35]

Lawrence Kohlberg, born in 1927, expanded upon Piaget's moral stages theory. Working with these stages of moral development, Kohlberg sought to assess the nuances in those states regarding the moral skills of the children. Piaget set up the idea of moving forward in stages, that children continually move forward, without skipping or regressing. Kohlberg identified these six stages that are grouped into three levels of cognitive development.[36]

The first level is the Preconventional level. This level, divided into two stages, in the first of which, children make decisions based almost purely on negative consequences. The stages were studied using a now famous example of the story of Mrs. Heinz, her desperate need of a cancer drug, and her husband's decision to steal the expensive drug because he cannot afford it. In their first stage the children are obedient to the rules because there is an authority which imposes them. Therefore, the children in this stage answer that Mr. Heinz should not have stolen the drug because that is illegal and the risk of punishment is the driving factor. The second stage in the first level, the Preconventional level, the children begin to understand why Mr. Heinz decided to steal the drug and why the drug store keeper would not be happy about it. Yet, their answer regarding whether Mr. Heinz should have stolen the drug remains steadfast; he should not have done so because it is illegal. The children are still basing their decisions on a

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[35] Ibid. Pages 336-338.

[36] The summary of Kohlberg's six stages that follows is drawn from class lectures by Jeffery Segal on Human Development

heteronomous morality in the way that they believe it should not be done simply because it is illegal and the rule was created by an authority.

The second level is the Conventional level. In this level the child has a "growing concern for approval from others and an increased interest in maintaining social order."[37] In this third stage, which is in the second level, the children begin to understand that Mr. Heinz's motives are good, whereas the motives of the drug store keeper are bad. They define the motives as good because they are based on positive values like love and concern for others. Kohlberg named this level "Conventional" because at this point the responses given by the children are conventional in that they would be shared by the whole community. In the fourth stage the children now understand a new moral reasoning which makes them motivated to make decisions based upon a sense of duty and social conventions. In this stage the children make the decision that Mr. Heinz should not steal the drugs because of the necessity to uphold the social/moral order. They still uphold that what Mr. Heinz did might be good, but in doing so he broke a law which takes precedence. It is no longer the individual approval of stage three that dictates their thinking, but rather the societal mores.

In the third level, the Postconventional level, stage five is defined by a democratic process. Here, the children do not approve of breaking laws because it is against the social contract of their community. But they do start to consider the moral need of Mrs. Heinz. They recognize that there is a not only a moral imperative for Mr. Heinz not to steal, but also that there is a moral imperative for Mrs. Heinz to be taken care of and a right to life. Now that there are competing moral quandaries the children begin to discuss that there should be a democratic

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[37] ibid. Page 250.

process to tease out these nuances through compromise. It is not fair for Mrs. Heinz to not have access to the drug, but it is also not fair for Mr. Heinz to steal it, therefore compromise needs to be reached to do the greatest good in the society. In the sixth stage, the person is making decisions based on a universal morality. They view laws as acceptable only if they are just to everyone they oversee. With that they feel an obligation to disobey laws that they feel are unjust. [38]

Carol Gilligan

Carol Gilligan, born in 1936, worked as a research assistant for Lawrence Kohlberg. Yet it is her critique of Kohlberg's work which gained her renown. Her pioneering book, *In a Different Voice,* published in 1982, criticized Kohlberg's male-centric studies. She "specifically targeted the way in which Kohler's theory seemed to discredit the responses of young girls who had been interviewed in his research studies at Harvard."[39] Since Kohlberg's initial study used only used male participants, she was critical that the morality of women was not adequately addressed. Kohlberg claimed that female moral dilemmas were "weak" compared to males. Gilligan argued that the study was flawed, and rather, the questions asked did not address the way females demonstrate morality. Her book introduced a new psychology of women based on a caring ethic. She argued that this is because men and women approach relationships differently and relate to others differently. This difference affects how their moral reasoning manifests and thus Kohlberg's study was satisfactory, if it only pertains to males.

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[38] ibid. Pages 249-251

[39] ibid. Page 196

Gilligan reworked the theory of moral development, while retaining Kohlberg's three levels of Preconventional, Conventional, and Postconventional. Instead of basing her model of Piaget's cognitive development model, she used an adaptation of Freud's model of ego development. This meant that she was not studying how one moves from stage to stage by a change in cognition, but rather by a sense of caring and self. Kohlberg's model assumed a growth of cognition in order to move up the ladder and achieve a new level of awareness of moral justice in the world. Gilligan's model worked with the assumption that women "focus more on connections with others and building relationships among people."[40] Kohlberg found that females did not response as strongly as males in his study, he therefore assumed they were of lesser levels. Gilligan writes that about a student she interviewed on the Heinz scenario:

> [Claire focuses] not on the conflict of rights but on the failure of response. Claire believes that Heinz should steal the drug ("His wife's life was much more important than anything. He should have done anything to save her life"), but she counters the rights construction with her own interpretation. Although the druggist "had a right, I mean he had the legal right, I also think her had the moral obligation to show compassion in this case. I don't think he had the right to refuse." In tying the necessity for Heinz's action to the fact that "the wife needed him at this point to do it; she couldn't have done it, and its us to him to do for her what she needs,"… [Claire equates] responsibility with the need for response that arises from the recognition that others are counting on you and that you are in a position to help… Although Claire's judgement of Heinz's dilemma for the most

[40] ibid. Page 197.

do not fit the categories of Kohlberg's scale, her understanding of the law and her ability to articulate its function in a systematic way earn her a moral maturity score of stage four. Claire would have not scored as high on Kohlberg's scale as she did on Gilligan's revised scale. Gilligan notes that Claire is able to articulate the law and its function, a necessary marker for the fourth level. But Kohlberg's level four requires that Claire would have made the decision to obey the law based on the need to keep social order. Claire recognized the social order, but choose to say that Mr. Heinz is responsible for the care of his wife and the druggist is also responsible for her care, therefore she finds the druggist at fault for not providing the necessary care. This would not earn her level four for Kohlberg, but does for Gilligan's scale.

Gilligan's work allows males and females to be of equal morality, based on different criteria. Though she argued that there is equality in the moralities between males and females, her work was criticized because it pushed the notion that men and women were inherently different, with different moral voices. Gilligan pushed back saying that the female ethic of care and nurturance is just as valid and valuable as the ethic of justice which was more identified with males. Though there are more recent studies which disagree with Gilligan's assessment that women and men operate through different ethics, her work was crucial in speaking out against Kohlberg's male-centric findings that held women at a lower level of moral judgment.

Nel Noddings

Two years after Carol Gilligan's book *A Different Voice* was released, Nel Noddings published her work *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Along with Gilligan, her focus on care as a concept and phenomenon was counter to the justice narrative

previously played out by morality researchers. Noddings focused more on the activity of care than Gilligan did. Noddings viewed it as purely relational. Care, as she argued, exists in relationships that both the care-giver and the cared-for engage in to make a caring relationship. Noddings used the word “engrossment” to describe the quality one feels when giving care. That they, the care taker, is truly engrossed with all that the cared-for person is experiencing and feeling. She introduced the term “motivational displacement” alongside her repeated use of the need for engrossment. Motivational displacement is when the caregiver silos away their personal needs in order to give full care to the cared-for. It is not only incumbent upon the care giver to be open to the experience and emotions of the cared-for, but the cared-for needs to respond in a way that allows the care giver to understand that they are in a relationship and that the carer is acting for them.

Noddings responded to Kohlberg and Gilligan’s works on morality and women in saying:

> The fact that women seem often to be “stuck” at stage three might call the accuracy of the description into question. But perhaps the description is accurate within the domains of morality conceived as moral justification. It if is, we might well explore the possibility that feminine nonconformity to the Kohlberg model counts against the justification/judgement paradigm and not against women as moral thinkers.
>
> Women, perhaps the majority of women prefer to discuss moral problems in terms of concrete situations. They approach moral problems not as intellectual problems to be

> solved by abstract reasoning but as concrete human problems to be lived and to be solved in living.[41]

Gilligan argued that women define themselves through relationships and ability to care and this is why Kohlberg's study was flawed. But Noddings approached it in a different way. She argued that women do not naturally work in the hypothetical situation of Mr. and Mrs. Heinz. Rather, they work in concrete situations where women can assess all the possible cues. Women wish to see the whole picture, see the facial cues, the body language, speak to the participants and understand motivations. Women "give reasons for their acts, but the reasons point to feelings, needs, situational conditions, and their sense of personal ideal rather than universal principles and their application."[42] As opposed to men's natural attribution of personal ideals to universal principles, which is what Kohlberg tested, women are more inclined to view the whole picture in order to give their reasons for actions.

Noddings acknowledged later in her book, that she was not speaking for all women. She made sure to note that this is not a universal way of being for women, but rather that "both men and women may, then, draw upon strengths in general self-image to maintain themselves as ones-caring. But for many women, caring is central to their self-image."[43] Noddings acknowledged that there are differences between men and women, but as the book progresses, allows for great movement on the spectrum of gender. She allowed for women to not have the innate drive to have caring be their primary ethic, and for men to be able to arrive at caring

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[41]Noddings, Nel. Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education. Berkeley University of California, 1984. Page 96.

[42] ibid.

[43] ibid. Page 130.

before justice. Later in her book *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (1992) she revisits the question, writing: “The avalanche of response from women who recognized themselves in Gilligan’s description is an impressive phenomenon. ‘This is me,’ many women said. ‘Finally someone has articulated the way I come at moral problems.”[44] [45]

Character Education and Lickona

The 1980s and 1990s saw a development of interest in character education. Character education is a term that is often used interchangeably with moral education. But it has some distinct differences. “Moral education focuses on the development of justice reasoning, and… interpersonal care. Character education, because it takes a very broad approach, often blurs the line between moral concepts and other non-moral, but related concepts” such as perseverance, loyalty, and courage.”[46] These ‘foundational characteristics’ are labeled as such because they can be used for good or bad. Take loyalty, it would be a moral trait to be loyal to a person who is fighting for housing for the homeless, but it would be immoral to be loyal to a crime-boss (Though the distinction arises here with Thomas Lickona, we will see that Mussar texts do not adhere to such a difference, for there exist *middot* such as slander, falsehood, and worry.)

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[44] Noddings, Nel. The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education. New York: Teachers College, 1992. Page 21. Print.

[45] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Pages 55-56, 318-319. Print.

[46] Althof, Wolfgang, and Marvin W. Berkowitz. "Moral Education and Character Education: Their Relationship and Roles in Citizenship Education." Journal of Moral Education 35.4 (2006): Page 499. Web. 9 Jan. 2017. <https://characterandcitizenship.org/PDF/MoralEducationandCharacterEducationAlthofBerkowitz.pdf>.

The founding father of the modern character education model is Thomas Lickona (born 1943), a developmental psychologist. Lickona was influenced by Piaget's research and then worked with Kohlberg at Harvard University. His book, *Raising Good Children* (1983) took Kohlberg's stages of moral development and used them as a guide for parenting. He took the complex findings of Kohlberg and others and made them accessible to parents by introducing stories and practical strategies. In 1991 after the success of *Raising Good Children,* Lickona wrote *Educating for Character.* With teachers asking for a similar character education models as he made for parents, this book is for the teacher in the classroom.

> Within the classroom, Lickona's approach calls upping teachers to act as caregivers, models, and mentors; create a moral community; practice moral discipline; create a democratic classroom; teach values through the curriculum; use cooperative learning; develop the 'conscience of craft'; encourage moral reflection; and teach conflict resolution.[47]

The classroom becomes a space for community building, relationship building, and practicing what it means to care for one another. In addition, Lickona modeled a fully communal approach which included involving the greater community and parents to be in this work. Lickona openly acknowledged that he was Roman Catholic and that he advocated for a similar agenda to the Catholic Church. He argued that his stances and openness on this topics are "character based (not sectarian) issues with deep societal impact."[48] Like the earlier moral education thinkers who relied on the Bible as the foundation for morality, Lickona, too, advocated for not removing

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[47] ibid. Page 255.

[48] ibid.

religion from moral education. From this point, we cannot help but recall the words of Kohelet: "there is nothing new under the sun."[49]

Chapter 2

A Survey of the Mussar Movement

> "The test of whether Mussar is being studied properly," said Rabbi Yisroel [Salanter] "is whether it evokes a desire to continue learning Mussar.[50]

Mussar is a set of contemplative practices that guide the follower to a more active moral life. Mussar, as a movement was founded the 19th century Israel Salanter (1810-1883). However, the core components of mussar literature can be found in biblical sources onward. Mussar literature refers to any "prose literature that presents to a wide public views, ideas, and ways of life in order to shape the everyday behavior, thought, and beliefs of this public."[51] Therefore, when we read in Leviticus, "You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block

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[49] Ecclesistes 1:9

[50] Zaitchik, Chaim Ephraim. Sparks of Mussar. Fedlheim Publishers, Jerusalem. 1985. Page 14.

[51] Tihsby, Isaiah and Dan, Joseph. *Mivhar sifrut ha-mussar,* Neuman, Jerusalem, 1971, Page 12.

before the blind," we understand this as literature meant to mold everyday behavior. Examples of mussar literature can be found in Talmud, throughout Pirket Avot, the medieval writings of *Orchot Tzaddikim* and *Ma'alot HaMiddot* and modern works, such as Alan Morinis' book *Everyday Holiness.*

The word Mussar comes from Proverbs 1:2, מסר translated as disciple, instruction or moral conduct. Therefore, Jewish texts that teach moral conduct are understood to be Mussar Literature: from Tanakh and Talmud to modern literature on Mussar practice. But it was Salanter and his founding of mussar-based yeshivot who made the study of Mussar literature into a formal practice and then into a movement.

Mussar, as an idea, not yet a practice, can be traced back to Saadia Gaon (882/892 - 942) and his *Book of Beliefs and Opinions.* The book, which was completed in 993, ends with a chapter entitled *Concerning How it is Most Proper for Man to Conduct Himself in the World.*[52] Saadia rejects the belief that people should spend their entire existence concentrating upon one trait, to love that thing above all overs and to have a similar hatred for one thing above all others. He writes that "if that we so, God could have created man out of one element and of one piece."[53] Instead we are meant to find ourselves a valuable place on the spectrum between two poles of action. His values demonstrate an area that requires introspection and thought. It is not a list of maxims, but rather, one should avoid what should be avoided and do what is desirable in these areas. Saadia identifies the following thirteen traits that need to be navigated in order to

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52 As translated by Rosenblatt, Samuel. Saadia Gaon: The Book of Beliefs and Opinions. Yale University Press, 1948. Page 357.

53 ibid. Page 359.

achieve ideal human conduct: “Abstinence, eating and drinking, sexual intercourse, eroticism, the accumulation of money [the begetting of] children, the [material] development of the land, longevity, dominion, the nursing of revenge, [the acquisition of] wisdom, worship, and rest.”[54] His argument continues that for each of these traits, a certain harmonious blending needs to occur to keep one in a good place, not overly delving into either side of the spectrum.

Reb Israel Salanter

Though there are many Jewish sources on ethical behavior that predate the 19th Century, it was not until Salanter created a process to study Mussar that it became the movement and practice that we know today. In the 1800s “Lithuanian Jewry was in the throes of a profound religious upheaval: the spiritual wellsprings of Jewish life threatened to run dry.”[55] As an outcome of the Haskalah, Lithuanian Jewry began to tear apart at the seams. Those taken with Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, were questioning the traditional Jewish life. Leaders of traditional Judaism began to note that Judaism was becoming a way of habit and blind-action without spirituality or meaning. One response was the Mussar movement that,

> hastened to assume the responsibilities of once again raising the standards of learning, morality, and the observance of the laws of Torah. It called for a spiritual and moral rebirth, a revitalization of the soul, an uprooting of distorted values and the changing of the paths of life.[56]

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[54] ibid. Page 364.

[55] Eckman, Lester Samuel. The History of the Musar Movement 1840-1945. Shengold Publishers, New York City. Page 7.

[56] ibid.

The Mussar movement provided a new outlet for traditional Judaism which would allow the followers to be active participants and contributors. Most importantly, the movement was concerned with a lack of morality. In Salanter's view, traditional Lithuanian Jews were on the verge of becoming lax in following Jewish laws in addition to disregarding common morals. He writes:

> An example is: a large portion of our brethren will not eat without washing the hands… However, in the case of slander, a grave sin, they will trespass easily… Even the learned and almost the God-fearing, too, are lax in keeping the moral precepts of the Torah, which when they are transgressed the Day of Atonement and also death will not expiate them.[57]

These were the conditions that led to the emergence of the Mussar Movement.

The movement was concerned with three central ideas: perfection of Torah, perfection of deeds, and the wholeness of man.[58] Regarding Torah, Mussar called for a strengthening of the commands between God and human, and between human and human. It stressed that the commandment to love thy neighbor is just as important as the commandment to keep Shabbat. The perfection of Torah should lead to the perfection of deeds: a thoughtful and meaningful devotion to prayer. The perfection of Torah and deeds would then lead to the wholeness of man. Observing the commandments and praying with sincerity would lead to a good character, noble thoughts, and ethically conscious actions.

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[57] Rabbi Salanter. "Igeret ha-Musar" in *Or Israel*, edited by Isaac Blazer. Vilna, 1900. Page 106.

[58] Eckman, Lester Samuel. The History of the Musar Movement 1840-1945. Shengold Publishers, New York City. Page 18.

Salanter was born on November 30, 1810 in Zhagory, Lithuania. His father, a Rabbi, sent him to study with Rabbis Hirsch Braude and Joseph Zundel. From studying with Braude, Salanter learned how to use logic in studying Talmud, specifically, not to use "the hairsplitting type of logical so popular at the time."[59] From Rabbi Zundel, Salanter learned to study morality, live humbly, and lead an ethical life. Salanter dismissed the idea of Talmudic scholars who stayed shut in their rooms studying, for this would solely help sustain the studier, not the community as a whole. He recognized that the yeshivot spent considerably more time studying the laws concerning God and man, but did little to study the morals between man and man. He wanted to shift the focus of study towards one that improved the way in which one lives, not just what one does.

In 1840 Salanter became dean of a seminary in Vilna. There he gained the influence he needed to spread his ideas. Determined to spread morality he began by teaching Rabbinical students the art of sermon delivery so that they might pull on the heartstrings of their congregants to live in a more morally valuable way. Taking up other positions in the following years, Salanter grew his influence with each new position. In 1849 he founded his own seminary in Kovna. There, he worked primarily with young people, training them to teach morality to children, thereby growing a new generation of Jews steeped in Mussar. In 1858 Salanter went to Germany in order to revive the practices of traditional Judaism. By this time, Reform Judaism and assimilation were prevalent throughout Germany and Salanter tried to show that Enlightenment thought can lead one back into an observant Judaism with a focus on morality. In 1880, at the age of seventy, Salanter died in Koenisberg, believing he had failed in his mission of spreading

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[59] Ibid. Page 19.

morality. But he did not know that his seminary in Kovna would be the first of many seminaries and yeshivot spreading the study of Mussar worldwide.

Reb Israel Salanter's Mussar

In his history of the Mussar movement, Dov Katz notes that: "Although the essential outlook of the moment [and of Judaism] contains nothing novel, it did, however develop new methods of approach in achieving human perfection."[60] For Salanter, the purpose of Mussar as a discipline was to understand what it means to fear God. It takes a great wisdom to even understand what it means to fear God. A whole fear of God is his ultimate goal which is was constantly trying to achieve. The goal of fear, Salanter wrote, would be a tough daily struggle, but its product is living a good life that God wishes you to live. It involves the whole human self. It takes great scientific study and research to understand the approach. Then it becomes an artful skill requiring spiritual and physical effort to achieve. Again as Katz notes: "This sums up R. Israel [Salanter]'s entire Musar doctrine. The rest is commentary."[61]

Rabbi Salanter, being engrossed in traditional Lithuanian Judaism, put textual knowledge at the forefront. Before any study or practice of morals, one must understand the Jewish cannon. He believed that there were three skills must be developed to consider oneself learned about a text:

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[60] Katz, Dov. The Musar Movement: Its History, Leading Personalities and Doctrines. Vol 1 Part 2. Orly Press, Tel Aviv. Page 12.

[61] ibid. Page 13.

> To master the primary subjects (i.e. Talmud and Codes); proper comprehension based on keen and balanced intellectual judgment which would allow the construction of irrefutable conclusions; and the ability after thorough study and intense investigation of all the aspects [involved], to arrive at the truth.[62]

These three requirements of deep study allowed for the pupil to understand the argument presented in the text from all sides and to be able to apply its teaching to people in real life situations.

Salanter believed that study and knowledge acquisition alone were not sufficient to change human behavior. There is a "vast chasm" between studying and understanding the actions that one ought to do and actually doing those actions. He blamed this inaction on the distance between the conscious and the subconscious mind. The human inclination towards doing what is beneficial now, is the subconscious mind allowing our evil inclinations to win. "The powerful drive towards the presently pleasurable without giving thought to the future which will be painful in the end."[63] Salanter gave a striking example to illustrate his point:

> Suppose someone had a pupil, whom he loved, who was as dear to him as the apple of his eye, whom he always favored. He also has a son. But he hated that son very much, and openly displayed his hatred. Once, the person fell asleep, and both the house of his son and the house of his pupil caught fire. The lives of the two were in danger. Were we to wake that person and urge him to hurry and save the loves of the son and the pupil, he

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[62] HaTenuvah, Introduction. Or Yisrael. Page 78. (original). Parenthetical additions from Dov Katz: Page 15.

[63] Katz, Dov. The Musar Movement: Its History, Leading Personalities and Doctrines. Vol 1 Part 2. Orly Press, Tel Aviv. Page 20. Originally: Iggeret Hamusar, The Beginning.

> would almost certainly rush to resume his son first. Why? Because the love for the son he outwardly hates has been more deeply ingrained within the recesses of his nature than the acquired love for his pupil, infused by outward forces. So, we wake him from his sleep, when his external drives are asleep as well, the inner drives immediately assert themselves, become conscious, and overpower the external. And so the father will hurry to save his son first.[64]

Using the immediate waking from sleep as an example, Salanter showed how people act when only their subconscious influences their thought. He assumed that the father saves his son only because of his subconscious acted on him before he had time to think. He arrived at this subconscious argument years before psychoanalysis.[65] He believed that if we want our inner, subconscious, selves to make the morally right decisions, we must transform our conscious drives into subconscious drives. Through repetition of studied material, the desired changed begin to make an impression on the subconscious. If one practices enough, these minute impressions made on the subconscious mind begin to accumulate.

He added a nuance, that it is impossible to see the change in oneself or another, after first impressions. That it takes a great deal of practice and repetition to even begin to see change. He used the Aggadic story of Rabbi Akiva seeing a worn away stone at the mouth of a well.

> [Akiva] said: what wore away at the stone? They said to him: The water that falls on it constantly day after day. They said to him: Akiva, have you not read (the verse): 'The

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[64] Salanter, Israel. Etz Peri. 1880.

[65] Morinis, Alan. The Revival of Musar: A Modern Movement. Jewish Action Magazine. Winter 2003. Web. 22 Dec. 2016.

> waters wear away the stone'?[66] Immediately, R. Akiva applied this a fortiori [argument] to his own situation: If the soft can mold the hard — then the words of Torah which are as hard as iron can all the more engrave themselves on my heart which is flesh and blood. Immediately he went back to study Torah.[67]

Like the stone that is molded by drips of water, Salanter saw that repetitive study and action can change the way someone acts all the time.

Repetition is the basis of Salanter's methodology that remain core to the Mussar practice of today. He worked to create a technique which would aid in influencing the subconscious. This was critical because the study needed to make an impression. Thus, like the stone carved away by drops of water, Salanter's methodology centered around repetitive reading of a text which would eventually leave a noticeable impression upon the one practicing. "Special affective Scriptural of Rabbinic passages were to be chosen and constantly repeated to oneself. Such continuous reiteration would strike root in the human personality and influence it."[68] As these passages were studied over and over, they would become reinforced and ingrained in the subconscious. As we know from the above story of the child and student whose houses are on fire, this impression on the subconscious was Salanter's goal, so that a person's conscious mind would be incapable of overpowering the ingrained subconscious moral drive.

Soon, Salanter found that repetition of words of morality was not enough to change the ways of those who are not even stirred by the shofar blast on the Day of Atonement. If one could

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[66] Job Chapter 14.

[67] Avot d'Rabbi Nathan.

[68] Katz, Dov. The Musar Movement: Its History, Leading Personalities and Doctrines. Vol 1 Part 2. Orly Press, Tel Aviv. Page 26.

not be deterred from evil ways by the "day of death" then what good would simple repetition do? Salanter's answer was to add another layer to the repetition. He found it necessary to incite the emotions to "combat the subconscious drives."[69] One needed to first study a text to which he could relate and imagine in his mind's eye. Then to study with "lips aflame… by picturing everything broadly…till the hear becomes fired to a lesser or greater degree and capable of exerting its power to control the limbs and of performing every good deed for its own sake, whether willingly or by coercion."[70] Using whatever means that work best for the individual, he was to make sure that the words touched his heart. As we have seen above, the fear of God was a driving factor in a great deal of Salanter's work. If one could truly feel the fear of God—and fear of divine punishment—as he worked through the scriptural repetitions, this might be his best chance of changing his ways. But, to prevent constant anxiety, Salanter also focused on divine reward. If one studies with the idea of his heavenly reward, this good and positive outlook will overcome any anxiety and lead to a good countenance that is not brought down by small infractions against the way the person is working to be.

Salanter viewed Mussar as the choice weapon against a war of atrophy of the heart. It is so easy for a person to sin that Mussar needs to be the well-practiced defense of performing wicked actions. He also acknowledged that Mussar is a study for all people, without exception. "Women are exempt from Torah study; exemption can also be found for the depressed and distraught, God forbid. But this [Mussar study] is otherwise [mandatory for all]."[71] All of

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[69] ibid. Page 35.

[70] Salanter, Israel. Edited by Yitzchak Blazer. Or Yisrael. Letter Number 2. Page 43.

[71] ibid. Page 44.

humanity sins with ease and Mussar was to be the hard-fought cure for combatting humans' innate drive to sin.

To prepare for this 'war against sin', Salanter set up Mussar Houses where one could go to spend moments or hours. The houses would have a multitude of different Mussar sources for visitors to study. These Mussar houses were critical to Salanter's plan. They provided a place to study just Mussar texts. Ideally, one would spend time at the Yeshiva, studying *halacha* — Jewish law — they would then go to the Mussar house to study how to be moral agents of God. Salanter's plan for studying Mussar grew and evolved as he understood different areas of need. His methodology was responsive, but eventually it became a cohesive practice.

Dov Katz summarizes Salanter's methodology with the follow list of resolutions ascribed:

> 1. Everyone should, in accordance with his ability, spend until the very last minute of Yom Kippur in devising some plan for such matters to which he is particularly prone, so that it be good for him in the end.
>
> 2. To study with fervor, so that one's emotions become changed.
>
> 3. To make an alphabetical index of references to Rabbinic dicta which are emotionally moving to him and which impresses his spirit.
>
> 4. To become fluent in Rabbinic dicta which have struck root within him.
>
> 5. To study a tractate of the Gemara and, even better, to translate and repeat it well in the vernacular, in the language we speak.
>
> 6. To reserve a fixed study period for *Choshen Misphat,* just as with *Orach Chaim,* but essentially to study it for its own sake and for practical purposes.

> 7. To have proper *kavannah* when mentioning the Divine Names at least in the Maariv service.
>
> 8. Before beginning one's regular study in the morning, to spend some half-an-hour in gaining proper concentration in study and in removing all distractions that threaten to interfere with one's concentration.
>
> 9. To train oneself to recite the first two *berachot* of the Grace after Meals with *kavannah*
>
> 10. To pay attention at least twice a week — on Wednesdays and Saturdays — not to recite any blessing mechanically
>
> 11. To endeavor, two days a week, critically to review the past.
>
> 12. Each one is to seek to have nine others assigned with him to arrange to conduct proper prayer services, for, on account of our manifold iniquities, we sense, palpably, that a barrier interposes between us and our Father in heaven. This is none other than sin, that stope up the human heart — and prayer, as has been tried and proven, is the effective [anecdote] to this. And the laws pertaining to prayer in the *Orach Chaim* and Codes should be studied intensively.[72]

Salanter saw his approach as additional to, not instead of the traditional study of Gemara and Codes, which he still believed was of utmost importance. He hoped that one would spend time in both the Yeshiva and the Mussar house. He saw Mussar as to be an additional layer beyond traditional Jewish study. As the above methodology described, he presumed that followers of Mussar would be actively involved in Judaism, study, and practice. Most of all, he believed that

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[72] Katz, Dov. The Musar Movement: Its History, Leading Personalities and Doctrines. Vol 1 Part 2. Orly Press, Tel Aviv. Page 57-58.

they should do it with intention, spending time before study in gaining proper concentration. Salanter worked to rid Judaism of its mechanical practice and create an intentional Judaism which would better inform the whole life of the follower.

Modern Mussar

One of the best known figures in the contemporary Mussar movement is Alan Morinis, head and founder of the Mussar Institute, an organization promoting the study and practice of Mussar. Morinis wrote about his own Mussar journey in his book *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* (Broadway 2002) and wrote his own guide to Mussar practice in *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar,* published in 2007. This section will compare Morinis' books to Salanter's Mussar of the 19th century.

There are both similarities and differences between contemporary Mussar practice, as popularized by Morinis and that of Salanter. In his introduction, Morinis writes "Learning Mussar often starts with the study of a passage of Talmudic thought, that, when penetrated deeply and allowed to penetrate you deeply, yields surprise, insight, and enlightenment."[73] This understanding of Mussar practice is fundamentally in line with Salanter: it is critical to open yourself up to Mussar texts and if you do you may experience profound change. But, a major difference in approach is the lack of a "prerequisite" for Morinis. Salanter believed strongly that the study of Jewish texts, namely Gemara and Codes, take precedence over the study of Mussar.

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[73] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar. Trumpeter Books, Boston. Page 7.

For Morinis, however, Mussar not only does not require Jewish textual knowledge, it can even stand on its own without Judaism. As he wrote:

> Though developed in the Jewish world, and with roots that are inseparable from the laws, commandments, and traditions of the most traditional segment of the Jewish community, Mussar's ancient vault contains universal spiritual wisdom. Because Mussar's purpose is to provide guidance on how to live, and because it addresses the fundamental ways human beings are put together and function, its teachings have universal application. The fact is that you don't have to be Jewish to benefit from Mussar. Its acutely accurate and insightful teachings are applicable to all souls — men and women, young and old, Jew and non-Jew — without exception. [74]

Salanter wrote that Mussar was for all people, regardless of class, ability or meant all Jewish people, without exception. It was the only world in which he functioned. Morinis believes Mussar is applicable to all people, without exception. Whereas Salanter made an ideological statement in keeping Mussar as an additional tool to the regular study and practice of traditional Judaism, Morinis is making an ideological statement that Mussar is universally applicable. He is promoting a movement of study and practice which he does not see as exclusively for the Jewish people. This way his message spreads further, but in doing so, one must consider how much Morinis is divorcing Mussar from Judaism. Is his book meant to be in the self-help section of a library or the Judaism section?

Whereas Salanter was more interested in the mode of study than particularly what to study, Morinis is more concerned with Middot. The course of study still follows Salanter's core

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[74] Ibid. Page 11.

methodology; it should be done repetitively and with emotion. Morinis writes: “The message is that each of us is endowed at birth with every one of the full range of the human traits, and that what sets one person apart from another is not whether we have certain traits while someone else has different ones, but rather the degree, or measure, of the traits that live in each of our souls.”[75] For example, the most humble person and the most arrogant person both have the trait of humility. Yet, they exist on a spectrum that allows for the most humble person to have a hint of arrogance and the most arrogant person to have a hint of humility. Each has its role in life, but it is the correct balance which Mussar is aiming to correct.

Salanter was concerned with the subconscious, the human drive that is not based in logical thinking. Morinis re-terms this drive as the soul. He uses the Hebrew words *neshama, ruach,* and *nefesh,* to describe what drives us. According to Morinis, the *neshama* is the holy and pure part of the soul which is forever pure as we are told in liturgy “God, the *neshama* you have given me is pure.”[76] The *ruach* is the “spirit of life” which brings about excitement and energy to the person. The *nefesh* is the “most visible and accessible to us” and is responsible for the familiar human traits like “anger and love, trust and worry, generosity and stinginess, pride and humility, responsibility and laziness, loving-kindness and judgement, and so on.”[77] Mornins writes that it is the “Awareness of your inner [soul] imbalances pinpoints the work you can do to transform those challenging inner qualities.”[78] Salanter was also concerned with awareness of

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[75] ibid. Page 19.

[76] The Elohai Neshama prayer.

[77] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar. Trumpeter Books, Boston. Page 19.

[78] ibid. Page 21.

yourself and your subconscious, but the divisions in your soul, or your subconscious were not the reasons to do Mussar. For him Mussar was a practice to lead one in becoming a better person by subduing evil inclinations. They are using similar language, but Salanter assumed a negative force driving you to be selfish and do evil deeds, whereas Morinis assumes a purity that is not in line with the other parts of the soul. This shows in the way that the two use a common Mussar phrase. Salanter wrote about *tikkun middot* as "uprooting such negative qualities as anger, severity, and pride, and by developing such good qualities as patience and modesty."[79] Morinis, on the other hand, writes about *tikkun middot ha'nefesh* the turning, or correcting, of the traits of the soul. The adding of the word *nefesh* to the phrase makes the emphasis more on the soul and its rectification, whereas for Salanter Mussar is more about correcting the negative impulses.

Meditation is also an area where Salanter and Morinis disagree. Salanter never wrote about meditation in the way we see today, that of silent contemplative time of transcendence and connection with God. When Salanter teaches about the advantages of meditation, it is about the advantages of meditating on a text, or meditating about a phrase. Salanter writes "A man should devote himself to the duty of uplifting others, of arousing them to meditate on devotion and musar."[80] Morinis and contemporary Mussar practice has meditation as a central component. But, this meditation practice borrows from eastern spiritual practices which use meditation as a way to gain transcendence. In addition, Morinis advocates for keeping a *cheshbon nefesh*, an 'accounting of the soul' diary. A student of Salanter's Rabbi Shalom Wolbe (1914-2005) also

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[79] Etkes, I. Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement: Seeking the Torah of Truth. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993. Page 290

[80] Salanter, Israel. Igeret Ha-Musar, in *Or Israel,* edited by Isac Blazer. Vilna 1900. Page 108.

recommended keeping a journal with a list of traits that arise situationally through one's day. With this journal, one can tell which traits are displayed more often. This practice allows for someone to become "aware of the habits, patterns and tendencies that are revealed in the hundreds of choices you make every day, especially in the areas that have the ripest potential for growth, you will know where to put your efforts, without waiting to learn those lessons from a massive earthquake."[81] Therefore, you can learn from the tiniest of interactions, instead of discovering about yourself from the monumental moments that are more sparse and require greater energy.

The most important similarity between Morinis' contemporary Mussar practice and Salanter's of the 1800's is the necessity for daily practice. For Salanter this meant visiting the house of study every day to meditate on mussar texts. It was critical to study these texts repetitively every day to ingrain them within one's subconscious. Salanter believed that regardless of what you study, it will have an impact on everything else; study humility and you will also gain patience. For Morinis, the daily practice is different. Mornins writes that you need to have a daily phrase that relates to the trait that you are working on. "Each morning read over the phrase of the week slowly and with full concentration. Read it aloud. Read it several times. Or chant it to yourself."[82] Later in the day you are to meditate, not on a text, as Salanter would suggest, but to meditate in silence, clearing the mind from the world which calls its attention. Finally, at bedtime, one is to do the practice of *cheshbon nefesh* by identifying the moments of

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[81] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar. Trumpeter Books, Boston. Page 263-264.

[82] ibid. Page 269.

the day which reveal the trait you are working on. Therefore, as opposed to Salanter, you concentrate on one *middah,* or trait, for about a week or so and then move on to the next *middah*. The daily work is critical to Mussar practice, but how you do so, is distinctly different. For Salanter it was an inherently Jewish practice, you studied Jewish texts and further textual study outside of Mussar was critical. For Morinis, this is a universal practice which anyone can do. It happens to be centered in Jewish texts, but you can use any text you please. Its work is done at times in our busy days which make sense for the modern person and has a calendar feel to it. You work on different *middot* each week and then move on. Salanter has a much more open-ended instruction to just keep studying and practicing. Each of these practices, though, through daily work and practice, will lead to a person improving their thoughts and actions in this world.

A comparative list of *Middot* from various Mussar sources:				
Duities of the Heart by Bachya ben Joseph ibn Pakuda (11th C.)	**Orchot Tzaddikim (15th C.)**	**Mesilat Yesharim by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto 1738**	**Cheshbon HaNefesh by Rabbi Mendel of Satanov 1809**	**Everyday Holiness by Alan Mornis (2007)**
Unity of God	Pride	Vigilance	Equanimity	Humility
Reflection	humility	Alacrity	Patience	Patience
Serving God	Shame	Cleanliness	Order	Gratitude
Trusting God	Arrogance	Abstinence	Decisiveness	Compassion
Wholehearted Devotion	Love	Purity	Cleanliness	Order
Humility	Hatred	Piety	Humility	Equinamity
Repentance	Mercy	Humility	Righteousness	Honor
Self-Accounting	Cruelty	Fear of Sin	Frugality	Simplicity
Abstinance	Joy	Holiness	Diligence/Zeal	Enthusiasm
Love of God	Worry		Silence	Silence
	Regret		Calmness	Generosity
	Anger		Truth	Truth
	Willingness		Separation	Moderation
	Envy		Temperance	Loving-Kindness
	Zeal		Deliberation	Responsibility
	Laziness		Modesty	Trust
	Magnamity		Trust	Faith
	Miserliness		Generosity	*Yirah*
	Remembrance			
	Forgetfulness			
	Silence			
	Falsehood			
	Truth			

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	Flattery			
	Slander			
	Repentance			
	Torah			
	Fear of Heaven			

Chapter 3

The Middah of Humility

> The Holy One Blessed be He said to them [to Israel]: 'My sons, I desire you, for even when I imbue you with greatness you diminish yourselves before Me. I bestowed greatness upon Avraham; he said, 'I am dust and ashes' (Genesis 18:27). I bestowed greatness upon Moshe and Aharon; They said, 'And what are we' (Exodus 16:7). I bestowed greatness upon David; he said, 'but I am a worm, and not a man' (Psalms 22:7)
> -Chullin 89a[83]

Every core text of Mussar literature includes the *middah* of humility. As we have seen in the table in the previous chapter, there are few *middot* that are written about in each text. In Morinis' book, the first value (he does not refer to them as *middot*) that he writes about is humility. Also, in The Ways of the Tzaddikim, humility is the second 'gate'. Pride sits as the first gate as the antithesis of humility, something to actively avoid. Thereby saying once you avoid pride, you can get to a place where you can then work on the *middah* of humility.

Study of *Anavah* - Humility

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[83] As translated in *Mesillat Yesharim* - The Path of the Just by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto translated by Rabbi Yosef Leiber.

This chapter on humility, explores three Mussar texts: *Orchot Tzaddikim -The Ways of the Tzaddikim*[84], *Mesillat Yesharim -The Path of the Just*[85], and *Everyday Holiness*[86]. Each provides a slightly different take on humility, its importance and how to achieve it.

Orchot Tzaddikim

Orchot Tzaddikim, The Ways of the Tzaddikim, was written after the 15th century by an anonymous author. It was written to be consumed by the public as it "was designed to be a very popular code of ethics."[87] Humility is the second 'gate' or chapter in the book following the Gate of Pride. Pride appears first because, controlling it is a key step to achieving humility. Thus, before you can internalize the *middah* of humility, you must first rid yourself of pride. Within the chapter, the author lists six ways in which humility can be manifest.

(1) If one is shamed and has the opportunity to take revenge, but does not and forgives the other person.

(2) If one suffered great personal loss due to the death of a loved one, yet forgives God, and accepts God's judgment.

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[84] Anonymous. Orchot tzaddikim, The Ways of the Tzaddikim, Edited by Gabriel Zaloshinsky. Translated by Shraga Silverstein. Feldheim Publishers, New York. 1995.

[85] Luzzatto, Moshe Chaim. Mesillat Yesharim, The Path of the Just. Translated by Yosef Leibler. Feldheim Publishers, New York. 2009.

[86] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness. Trumpeter Books. Boston, MA. 2007.

[87] Adler, Cyrus. The Jewish Encyclopedia. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906. Page 433.

(3) If one hears great words being said about him/her, instead of rejoicing in the compliments, s/he "reflect[s] that his good deeds are very insignificant relative to what he ought to do, being like a drop in the great ocean."

(4) If one is graced with wealth of money or wisdom, s/he does not boast about it, performs charity, and uses their blessing to help others.

(5) If one harms another, by word or deed and "asks for forgiveness, humbling himself before him, undoing the wrong, and speaking ingratiatingly."

(6) If one is soft with their words, they do not draw attention to themselves through their speech or by their clothing. [88]

These six manifestations of humility are said not to be the only ways that humility can be manifest, but are offered as examples. Almost all of the writing on the subject in *Orchot Tzaddikim* is aimed at being humble because this is pleasing to God. There are numerous biblical and rabbinic examples through the text of why being humble is what God wants. The reason to have humility is because "To the humble He gives favor."[89] There is but one section of the chapter which speaks to humility as a trait which can be good for the person and the world. "The humble man is patient, and patience leads to peace. For by means of humility one stills the wrath of the one who is angry with him."[90] This passage and its following paragraph stands out because God does not have an active role in this argument for humility. This argument would flow like

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[88] Orchot Hatzaddikim, The Ways of the Tzaddikim, Edited by Gabriel Zaloshinsky. Translated by Shraga Silverstein. Feldheim Publishers, New York. Pages 63 - 71.

[89] *Mishlei* 3:34, as translated in Ways of the Tzaddikim.

[90] Orchot Hatzaddikim, The Ways of the Tzaddikim, Edited by Gabriel Zaloshinsky. Translated by Shraga Silverstein. Feldheim Publishers, New York. Page 73.

the rest of the arguments if it read: “For by means of humility one stills the wrath of The One who is angry with him.” A great deal of this chapter suggests that acting humbly is a way to quell God’s anger. But, rather this reason to be humble is that action will bring about a change on earth, in one’s own community. An astute reader can surely pull out samples of worldly products of humility, but they are not nearly as explicit. The text presents few tangible rewards in the material world for humility discussed, therefore planting humility in the realm of God and divine reward seems like an obvious fit for the author.

Mesillat Yesharim

In *Mesillat Yesharim, The Path of the Just* by Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, written in 1738, the chapter on ‘The Virtue of Humility’ is found in the back third of the book. While *Orchot Tzaddikim* defines humility as “self-effacement and lowliness of spirit, regarding oneself as naught,”[91] Luzzato writes: “A person should regard himself as unimportant in all circumstances.”[92] The difference lies in how the person views themselves. For *Orchot Tzaddikim* the humble person seems to actively tear oneself down, regarding oneself as nothing. But *Mesillat Yesharim* gives a more positive recommendation. Just because one is not important in any sitaution, does not mean they are worthless, it is just not their place to be special, to speak up, or be in the spotlight. This gives room for the person to understand that they themselves are inherently important as a human being, but in any given situation, they are unimportant.Thought

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[91] ibid. Page 59.

[92] Luzzatto, Moshe Chaim. Mesillat Yesharim, The Path of the Just. Translated by Yosef Leibler. Feldheim Publishers, New York. 2009. Page 152.

Orchot Tzaddikim was written for the general public, *Mesillat Yesharim*'s language is much clearer. Here we are to understand humility, especially in reference to those blessings that one has in wealth, wisdom or virtues, to have come from God. Therefore, we cannot take any credit for our own accomplishments because anything that one "acquires is nothing less than a Divine act of benevolence."[93] Like *Orchot Tzaddikim*, *Mesillat Yesharim* lists ways in which a person can act with humility:

(1) "Conducting oneself in a lowly manner — related to one's manner of speech, physical bearing, his place within the community and all of his movements."

(2) One's deeds: not responding in anger to those who speak ill about you, or commit sin against you.

(3) Be averse to positions of authority and flee from honor: With authority comes a very critical responsibility to one's community, which if the community falters, the responsibility is on you. Relating to honor, it is a vanity, which leads one away from their vanity.

(4) Respect all people: "Who is respected? One who respects other people." (Pirket Avot 4:1). Greet people before they greet you, and respect all peoples.[94]

The two lists from the two books are similar in their examples. Each covers being honored, not responding to disrespect with disrespect, and conducting oneself lowly in action and appearance. *Orchot Tzaddikim* differs in the addition of not faulting God and God's plan for the death of a loved one and *Mesillat Yesharim* adds the respect of all people. *Orchot Tzaddikim* calls upon a

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[93] ibid. Page 155.

[94] ibid. Pages 156-160

person to humble “oneself to those beneath him, such as… poor people”[95] but does not make this virtue as broad as ‘respect all people’. *Mesillat Yesharim* also uses far less scriptural proof and more logical proof for why one should be humble. This can be seen in the writing on the benefits of humility:

> It is certain that humility removes many obstacles from man’s path and draws him closer to many good things, for a person who possesses humility will have minimal concern for this world and will [thereby] not be envious of its vanities. Furthermore, his company is very pleasant and people approve of him. It is obvious that such a person will be brought neither to anger nor argument.[96]

Mesillat Yesharim is far more pragmatic in its reasons to be humble. Divine reward is still a primary driver, but is not the only reason to be humble. *Mesillat Yesharim* also uses stories to convey its message. These stories are about great Rabbis like Yochanan ben Zakkai, Rabbi Akiva Hillel and Rabbi Abahu, who seem to be more relatable than the biblical stories which speak from a very different time. These stories are relatable, like Midrash, one see their own story in the story they are reading. To use a biblical quote gives it gravitas and recalls divine reward and punishment, but the relatable stories strike deeper in the soul.

Finally, after the chapter on the Virtue of Humility, the next short chapter in *Mesillat Yesharim* is titled “Acquiring Humility.” It begins in the clearest terms: “There are two factors that accustom one to humility: habit and contemplation.”[97] A theme to contemplate in this section

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[95] Orchot Hatzaddikim, The Ways of the Tzaddikim, Edited by Gabriel Zaloshinsky. Translated by Shraga Silverstein. Feldheim Publishers, New York. Page 73.

[96] Mesillat Yesharim, Page 161.

[97] ibid. Page 163.

is about the temporary and fragile nature of human life. The concept of 'dust to dust' is said to subdue pride and haughtiness, for everyone is but dust and ashes. It goes on to pursue a line of thinking that feels quite modern. It, in fact, begins by noting the "changing times" that this book is written in. In circumstances of changing times, whether it be the 18th century or today, "A wealthy person can easily become poor, a ruler can turn into a slave, and an honored person can fall into disgrace. Thus, if one can so quickly be reduced to a state that he finds shameful today, how can he be prideful when his own situation is at risk?"[98] This beautiful passage is a powerful reminder that we should respect all those around us, for the fragility of life can change our circumstances in an instant. The chapter on developing humility ends with a simple step that can influence everything, that one must take care in choosing whom they surround themselves with because unlike food and drink which can physically ail you, friends and associates can corrupt "his soul, his strengths, and his honor."[99]

Everyday Holiness

The most recent text of the three is in Alan Morinis' *Everyday Holiness,* published in 2007. His book reads quite differently than the other two. The two older Mussar literature books are not personal, are filled with textual quotes, and are deeply rooted in Jewish sources and contexts. Morinis' book is far more general. The chapter on the *middah* of humility is the first *middah* covered, like in *Orchot Tzaddikim*. Morinis focuses on the space that we leave for others. His examples range from the literal space we leave when we sit on a park bench to the space we

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[98] ibid. Page 165.

[99] ibid. Page 167.

leave for others to share their emotions. Unlike the earlier two books, the narrative stories which illustrate humility are not stories of great rabbinic masters, but are either from Morinis' own experience or from his students of Mussar. His examples implicitly show both humility and its opposite, pride. The Rabbi's, by the strokes of Morinis' pen, are made humble by letting the stories of ordinary people rise above their own stories. Yet, Morinis tells that he has followers, which could be considered a prideful act. Morinis might have demonstrated greater humiity byusing the stories of the Rabbis, rather than telling his own story and accomplishments. Likewise, God plays far less of a role in this book, for nowhere does he that we should be humble because God wishes us to be. The only place Morinis mentions God as a role model for humility, not an enforcer of it. Morinis cites Rashi's comment, that God is manifesting humility when God said: "let us make man in Our image, as Our likeness". God is consulting the angels, an act of humility, as the more powerful one consults the lesser one. This example is a powerful one to show that humility can be found in to whom we speak and from whom we ask advice.

To step back, to take up less space, takes a certain amount of self-esteem that you will be able to still hold yourself up high despite doing actions which might be viewed by society as being self-debasing. To sit down next to a homeless man and speak with him is an action which is incredibly humble, but takes self-esteem because there are surely others walking by passing judgment on you sitting on a blanket on the sidewalk. Especially for Morinis the balance between humility and pride falls between the two extremes of self-debasement and arrogance. He is very careful to make sure that his readers are not too humble. As opposed to *Orchot Tzaddikim* which says: "humility is… regarding oneself as naught"[100] Morinis writes: "being humble

[100] Orchot Tzaddikim. Page 59

doesn't mean being a nobody, it just means being no more of a somebody than you ought to be."[101] For Morinis it is important that humility does not get confused with humiliation. Whereas *Orchot Tzaddikim* and *Mesillat Yesharim* continually warns about getting to close to arrogance and pride, it is Morinis who warns about being self-deprecating. As noted earlier in this thesis, Morinis' book is part Mussar literature and part self-help. Therefore, Morinis seems to want his readers to practice humility, and also to also feel a sense of pride about themselves. You are not mean to be less than yourself, but rather, to be exactly where you are meant to be, "having the right relationship to self, giving self neither too big nor too small a role in your life."[102]

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[101] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness. Trumpeter Books. Boston, MA. Page 47.

[102] ibid. Page 53.

Chapter 4

Mussar and Moral Education Today

The recent rise in popularity of Mussar has had an impact in the world of Jewish education, particularly with the study of middot. This chapter will focus on teaching middot and Mussar as a model of moral education in Jewish congregational schools. Several communities that use middot-based curriculum will be explored, supplementary programs will be assessed, and pedagogic recommendations will be offered.

Middot in Current Curricula

Through a Facebook group called JEDLAB, a group for Jewish Educators, I was able to reach out and identify many Jewish educators across the country who have integrated middot into their school's curriculum. These connections resulted in a range of interviews, including with creators of middot curricula, from schools that created their own middot curricula, to a company which produces a values-based curriculum, and schools that use this curriculum.

Middot-Based Education at East Brunswick Jewish Center

Julie Schwartzwald is the Education and Youth Director at East Brunswick Jewish Center (further known as EBJC). EBJC has been using a middah-based curriculum for about two and a half years. This program is named it Kesher because the goal is to create a meaningful kesher, or connection, to Judaism. The road to creating Kesher was a complicated one for Julie. Passionate

about an involved, interactive, caring, and impactful Jewish education, Julie found her greatest barriers involved the place where she works. EBJC is a traditional Conservative synagogue which features non-egalitarian services and strict rules about what work can be done on Shabbat. Shabbat worship attendance by the students was very low. In response, once a month school would be held on Saturday, for what is commonly known as Shabbat School. But this posed a challenge in terms of learning modalities. As a traditional Conservative synagogue, EBJC did not allow writing or any act of creation on Shabbat. This even included forgoing one of the more common ways to get around writing, by placing stickers on paper, but this too was deemed 'creating'. Therefore, Julie decided to take a different approach, saying: "It didn't make sense to try and continue with the regular curriculum because you can't write and you are limited to what you can do and how you can present it."[103] Julie decided that studying middot would be both critical in creating a meaningful connection to Judaism and fitting with the spirit of Shabbat. A middah based curriculum would work for Shabbat because the lessons would involve role playing, dramatic interpretations and discussions to learn about the middah, none of which involved writing or creating in anyway.

Each month the class focuses on a new middah. These middot are chosen to correspond with what else is going on in the school, the Jewish calendar or the greater community. For example, there were two major things helped inform the curriculum earlier fall. The school had a surprising number of new students this year. Therefore, the Kesher meeting during Sukkot, each

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[103] Schwarzwald, Julie, Education and Youth Director at East Brunswick Jewish Center, Interview from 1/6/2017

class focused on the value of *hachnasat orchim*—welcoming the stranger. This is a value both associated with Sukkot, and connected with the real need to welcome new students into the school. Additionally, some of the new students had special needs, therefore it was critical for Julie that the value of being welcoming was focused on early in the school year.

Julie's guidance for her teachers was relatively open-ended. She said she gives them plenty of resources for how to create and run a lesson on each particular middah. Each class was to be active and experiential, both because she understood this to be a well-researched way to learn values and worked within the boundaries of the synagogue's Shabbat practice. According to Julie, this approach to a middah-based curriculum is on its way to becoming fully successful.

Values-Based Curriculum from Shalom Learning

Alison Zimbalist is the Director of Early Childhood Education for the Center of Jewish Education of Baltimore. Alison was deeply involved in Jewish education for many years, before she was approached by her small conservative synagogue, Bet Chaverim in Ellicott City, MD, to help create their religious school. She already worked at CJE of Baltimore, founded a congregational preschool in New York, and served as a curriculum consultant for secular and Jewish organizations. Alison recounted to me how she felt it was important that the group tasked with overseeing the creation of this new congregational school went about this very intentionally. She made sure that it was a "goal driven, pedagogically sound, and in line with the congregation's values." As Alison recalled, in the first meeting eight people sat in her living room brainstorming what the goals of the school were to be. The first few were about readiness for Bar Mitzvah, ability to participate in services, and having Jewish friends. "Then there was a

pause and real stuff started coming out. We wanted them to feel connected to Israel, we wanted them to feel connected to a community locally and globally, we wanted them to feel like they were valuable participants in Jewish life, even as kids. The crux of what came out of it was… for them to become children who wanted to become engaged Jewish adults."[104] This became their core goal for their school, to engage the students as life-long learners. They realized fairly quickly that this learning goal was would be best accomplished through experiential and meaningful learning. Though Alison did not put this in terms of moral education, this was a critical moment for making the learning goals fit with their mode of teaching. If the students learned core values through role playing, modeling, and reflection, they would be much more likely to embrace and internalize them.

She was introduced to the curriculum from Shalom Learning through the JEDLAB group on Facebook. "Their curriculum was perfect for us."[105] The Shalom Learning curriculum is centered on a set of values "to encompass all types of Jewish learning in a way that is meaningful for the students"[106] says Liana Mitman, Shalom Learning's Director of Program Management. The same values are covered by the whole school, but through the lens of each grade's curricular focus. In the chart below, as an example, if *teshuvah* is the value of September and October, the third grade class would cover "connections between teshuvah, forgiveness, and making

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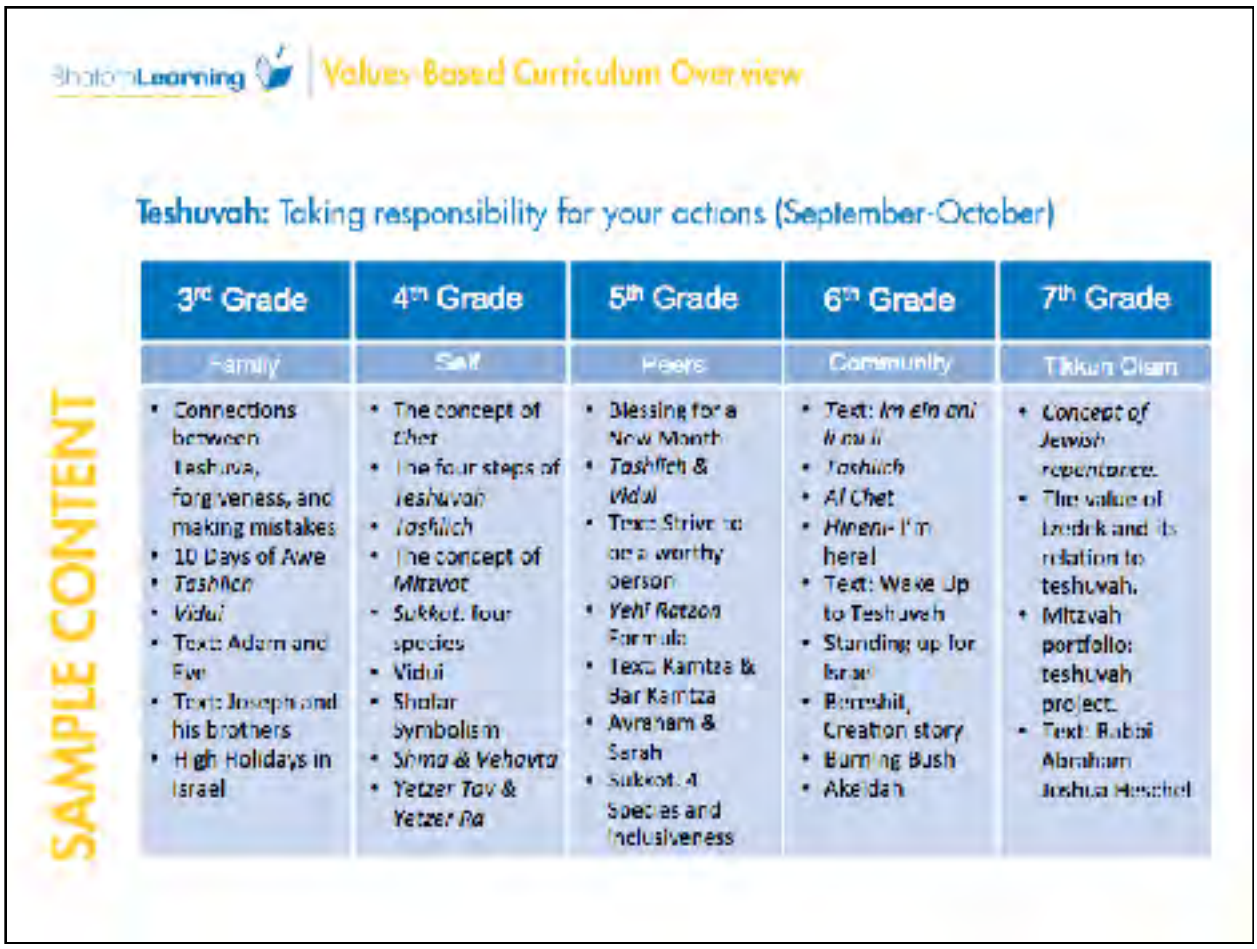
[104] Zimbalist, Alison, Education Director at Bet Chaverim in Ellicott City, MD. Interview from 1/10/2017

[105] ibid.

[106] Mitman, Liana. Director of Program Management at Shalom Learning. Interview from 1/10/2017

mistakes" in relation to their family. The next school year, then students would again focus on *teshuvah*, but with a new focus on the self, the next year on peer relationships and so on.



(Sample Curriculum From shalomlearning.com)

Alison's congregational school takes this curriculum and adds a broader connection to it. At the beginning of each value, which is usually one month long, they bring the family in to the learning. The whole family learns about the value of the month together. At the end of each month, the whole school (about 15 kids) take a field trip to a place that is providing to the

community the value they just learned about. For example, after learning about *gevurah*—inner and outer strength—the school visited the local firehouse to meet firefighters who use *gevurah* every day to aid the community. After the learning about the value of *achrayut,* responsibility, the school volunteered with the organization Food on the 15th, which provides food to low-income seniors through volunteers who help distribute the food. The families, together, learned about what *achrayut* means for them, the students studied *achrayut* as a concept for their community the world through Tu Bishvat, and then they act with *achrayut* for their community.

The Shalom Learning curriculum goes beyond integrating the family and the greater community into the learning. The arrangement of the values is integrated with the Jewish calendar. Therefore, around the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the value covered is *teshuvah.* During Chanukah, the value is *gevurah* to relate to the strength recounted in the story of the Maccabees. I asked Alison Zimbalist how she balanced the need for the old standards of Hebrew school (i.e., Hebrew, Judaics, and holidays) with the new curriculum of values. She responded that it is precisely this integration of the holidays and other happenings into the values curriculum that makes it all work in one seamless unity. She told me "you don't need to have a balance because all of these things are incorporated into the teaching of the middot. You don't need to separate time to talk about Rosh Hashanah because you are already talking about *teshuvah*."[107] Furthermore, this models for the students what it means to be an engaged Jew—their main educational goal. The curriculum integrates everything within Jewish values lessons, just as they are hoping to instill within their students that Jewish values do not have limits of applicability. The curriculum models what it means to be a Jew whose core is Jewish values.

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[107] Zimbalist, Alison, Interview.

They celebrate holidays, do acts of social justice, and learn because those actions are inextricably linked to the values at their core.

Temple Beth Shalom - Mayim

Rabbi Jordi Schuster Battis is the Director of K-12 Curriculum at Temple Beth Shalom. She oversees their Mayim program for Kindergarten through fifth grades and the Etzim program for sixth through twelfth grades. Rabbi Battis was not working at Temple Beth Shalom when the curriculum was decided upon but was brought on board shortly after to see the implementation through to its full capacity. Whereas the other interviewees had little to say about the pedagogic backgrounds to their values-based curricula, Rabbi Battis referenced a number of influences. The curriculum is based on a social-emotional learning model. Moral education and social-emotional learning are two related approaches to guiding moral behavior in students.

> Moral education has focused more on the power of "right thinking" and "knowing the good," and social-emotional learning has focused more on the power of problem solving… Now that research has caught up with this observational and intuitive understanding, both approaches are converging toward a central pedagogy involving the coordination of affect, behavior, and cognition and the role of the ecological developmental context.[108]

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[108] Elias, Maurice J., Sarah J. Parker, V. Megan Kash, Roger P. Weissberg, and Mary Utne O'Brien. Social and Emotional Learning, Moral Education, and Character Education: A Comparative Analysis and a View Toward Convergence (n.d.): 248-49. Web. 17 Jan. 2017. <https://www3.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/documents/Elias.pdf>.

Their social-emotional learning model is a sister pedagogy to the moral education model. Like moral education, emotions, empathy and relationships have a central role. Rabbi Battis was proud to describe the implementation of the ‘Mifgash Meeting’, modeled off of the ‘Morning Meeting’ that is part of the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching, based on a social-emotional learning model. The Responsive Classroom’s Morning Meeting model is meant to foster relationships at the beginning of the class day. This model is also used in the public schools that most Temple Beth Shalom students attend. The morning meetings, or Mifgash meetings, as they are called at Temple Beth Shalom, give an opportunity to the students to interact directly with others in the class. The Mifgash covers four basic activities: Greeting each other, sharing about their lives, a group activity, and a morning message from the teacher to frame the day. This helps the students to develop empathy skills and gives the teacher the place to model moral behaviors that the students can then practice with each other. Rabbi Battis further explained that this model specifically uses Dewey’s writings on the importance of students having a stake in the learning as citizens of the classroom. The Responsive Classroom and Morning Meetings are deeply intertwined with Nel Noddings’ educational theories. The classroom becomes a caring place. Each student shares about their lives and the others students listen intently as a caring community. Though, not touched upon in the earlier chapter on Moral Education, Noddings also wrote a book titled “Educating for Intelligent Belief or Unbelief.” At Temple Beth Shalom, the ‘guides’ are eager to work with “students who come in with their challenges…and say: ’isn’t this all made up?’ This is the most delicious opportunity for a

conversation and exploration of what different views are in the classroom, as opposed to 'no, this is what we believe.'"[109]

Each grade level at Temple Beth Shalom is paired with another as they move through a two-year curriculum. One year of the curriculum is explicitly centered on *middot* and the other around Torah. Middot and Torah are woven into the whole curriculum. I can imagine Israel Salanter would be quite proud of this beautiful balance between study of texts and study of morals and actions.

(From Temple Beth Shalom's Mayim Curriculum Guide for 5777 / 2016-2017)

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[109] ibid.

The crucial role of the teachers in moral education is recognized and elevated at Temple Beth Shalom. Rabbi Battis spoke about the faculty with genuine pride. The teachers are called Jewish Learning Guides and "their role is not to impart knowledge, but to be guides along the path of Jewish learning."[110] The Jewish Learning Guides are there to facilitate conversations, challenge the students, and "make known Jewish teachable moments."[111] These 'Guides' are meant to serve as role models for the students, exemplifying what it means to act morally within and without the classroom. The caring relationships that the 'Guides' have with their students are to be models for the student's own relationships.

Recommendations

Drawing from moral educational theory, Mussar literature, and curricula being used currently in the field there are a few recommendations I would make in creating a middah-based curriculum.

In its most basic level, the program should be called "middah-based". Shalom Learning, the leader in values-based curricula for religious schools does not use the word middah. Liana Mitman at Shalom Learning informed me that they do not use the word *middah* because "there are children from so many different Jewish backgrounds, but we do use the Hebrew names of the values." There are a great deal of Jewish insider words that any participant in Jewish life needs to grasp. I do not believe that this one, calling values *middot,* is going to tip the scales. What calling

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[110] Battis, Jordi Schuster. Director of K-12 Curriculum at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, MA. Interview conducted on January 12, 2016

[111] ibid.

values *middot* does do is to continually frame the learning in a Jewish context. We are humble because our tradition has treasured this value, we practice teshuvah because our tradition implores us to yearly account for ourselves and repent in order to do better the next year. Like naming buildings at camp or objects in a religious school classroom with Hebrew names the constant interaction with Hebrew reinforces that the learning that occurs here is different. A common learning style in religious schools is "chevruta learning." There is pedagogic reason for the usefulness of this style of learning. But if it is called it chevruta, it is steeped it in the tradition of how our ancestors have studied for generations. Not only is what is being learned 'Jewish' but so is the style of learning. This same importance of label exists in relation to calling values by their Hebrew and Mussar-based name: *Middot.*

The middot-based curriculum should interact with the outside world. Like the congregational school at Beth Chaverim, under the direction of Alison Zimbalist, the learning needs to be integrated into the world beyond the temple. When the class finishes studying *gevurah*—strength, and the students visited the firehouse, they understood that the fire fighters they met not only had physical strength, but had *gevurah.* This approach shows the students that these lessons are universal. They may have Hebrew names and Jewish roots, but the values can be practiced anywhere and by anyone. As noted in chapter 2, reflection and role playing are great ways to internalize the *middah* being studied. The scenarios should be about the real struggles that the students encounter every day. "A school's moral education program can and should involve the real business of school life for children… In so doing it can touch the children's lives

where they believe it really counts."[112] This connection to the outside world of the students is another way to show that these *middot* apply universally. Teachers should be encouraged to use texts and videos from the secular world as examples of the values they are covering. From the Mifgash Meeting, model we see another way to bring the outside world into the classroom: by having the students share about their life. This further allows for space for the teacher and/or the students to show empathy with their classmate's story. When these positive interactions are modeled by people who are trusted, that value is better internalized. Many people I spoke to pointed me to *www.letitripple.org/character-day/education-hub* . This site provides "5000+ curated resources to help develop character year-round."[113] Bringing in these videos, stories, games and apps from the secular world and looking at them through the lens of *middot* shows the students, once again, that these Jewish values, and Judaism in general, are applicable universally.

In each of the interviews I conducted with an education director, they made sure to tell me that they hire only "real teachers." This might seem like an obvious choice, but considering religious school budgets and the limited availability of qualified teachers, this can be a tough task. Implementing a curriculum where the teacher is expected to be a guide, role model, and intentional lesson planner, requires qualified professionals. The teacher needs to completely buy in to the program. This is because they are going far beyond transmitting information, they are modeling what it means to be caring. If they are caring—recalling Nel Noddings' work—then the classroom becomes an environment which can accept and instill values. Recalling the curriculum

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[112] Feuerman, Chaim. "Moral Education in the Guise of a Physical Education Program." Moral Education in the Guise of a Physical Education Program. N.p., 1 May 1990. Web. 17 Jan. 2017. <http://www.lookstein.org/articles/phys_ed.htm>.

[113] Let It Ripple. http://www.letitripple.org/character-day/education-hub/

of Rabbi Battis at Temple Beth Shalom, the teachers need to be constantly looking out for moments that be intentionally named as a Jewish moral moment. Finally, they need to be quality facilitators of conversation. The lessons require the involvement of the whole classroom community to be successful. The teacher needs to adequately involve the quieter kids, while guiding the conversation towards an area of learning, while being able to identify and extract nuggets of learning that the students say in the conversation.

The expectations of the parents do not need to change to implement a middot-based curriculum. Each interviewee dismissed the idea that you have to give something up when implementing this curriculum. The rest of the learning is integrated into the lessons on the middah. Like at Bet Chaverim where *gevurah* is studied during Chanukah and *teshuvah* is studied during the High Holy Days, the approach changes, but the learning does not. *Tikkun Olam* is studied during the month that includes Tu Bishvat and HaKarat HaTov—being thankful—is studied during Passover when we are thankful for freedom and we sing Dayeinu—it would have been enough.

Lessons and curricula need to be sensitive to the abilities of their students. The lesson needs to fit with the students' developmental stage. If you have students who are in Kohlberg's Postconventional stage then a lesson about the *middah* that appeals to the social contract of the community would be appropriate. If, say, you are working with 3rd grade students about the value of teshuvah, it would not be about one's responsibility to the global community, but rather to their family.

Middot-based curriculum should include actions outside of the classroom. To learn and talk about the *middot* is the first major step to the students internalizing the *middah.* But action is

a critical component as well, to show the students how this value manifests in the world. From the perspective of mitzvot without *middot,* Steven Bayar writes: “Teaching mitzvot and values without middot render the exercise without reinforcement”[114] This goes the other way as well, teaching *middot* without the *mitzvah*—or the action—causes the lesson to be hollow and keeps the lesson trapped within the classroom. Like the Mussar masters wrote, one needs to practice the *middah* in order to make it work and to keep practicing to keep it instilled in the personality. Alison Zimbalist at Congregation Bet Chaverim made sure that after every month’s study of the value, they would use the value to better their world outside of the classroom. nice

Finally, children need to understand their own feeling and actions to then move forward in transforming them. The classroom needs to be a caring and accepting place where the students are valued. If the students feel that their teachers and classmates care about what they are sharing, then they can delve more deeply into their feelings. But, learning from the Mussar movement, reflection is a critical piece. Meaningful class discussion, require ample time for every student to reflect on this value and how it relates to their self. This can be done using quiet time to meditate on one’s actions and thoughts or through journaling. Either way, this personal reflective time is critical to the students the best opportunity to speak about themselves because they better understand themselves.

This is surely not an exhaustive list of all the ways that Mussar and moral education can positively influence curricula. But, if these are implemented, as we have seen already in the

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[114] Bayar, Steven. Teaching Mitzvot, Values and Middot. The Ultimate Jewish Teacher’s Handbook edited by Nachama Skolnik Moskovitz. ARE Publishing, Denver. 2003. Page 453.

above curricula, students may come away with a better understanding of themselves, what they value, why those values are Jewish, and how those values can be manifest in their world.

A Model Lesson About Humility

What follows is a model lesson that teaches the middah of humility, by drawing on all three texts: *Orchot Tzaddikim, Mesillat Yesharim,* and *Everyday Holiness*. The lesson is designed for middle-school age students and guided by the works of the Erik Erikson and Lawrence Kohlberg. Erikson's theory of eight psychological stages of development describes the adolescent stage, the fifth stage, as the "critical period of identity formation."[115] It is during this stage that the adolescent is solidifying her/his personal value system. This stage is characterized by experimentation with different ways of being and with different values in order to understand what best fits. Kohlberg described this life stage as the 'conventional level.' Steve Bailey, in his writing on using a Kohlberg model in Jewish Day school writes that: "Kohlberg viewed the work with adolescents, typically at the "conventional level" of moral development, as the key population to target for moral education."[116] This lesson is intended to be one of the earlier lessons in the curriculum involving a middah, but assumes that students have already learned and understand what a middah is.

From *Everyday Holiness* the lesson will use the concept of having sufficient self-esteem to be humble (scenario 1). From *Mesillat Yesharim,* we will concentrate on the virtue of not

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[115] Power, F. Clark. Moral Education: A Handbook. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 2008. Page 168.

[116] Bailey, Steve. Educating for Menschlichkeit, A Kohlbergian Model for Jewish Day Schools. Wisdom From All My Teachers. Atid / Urim, Jerusalem, 2003.

responding in anger to those who speak ill about you, or commit a sin against you (scenario 2). From *Orchot Tzaddikim* the lesson will focus on how to act without bringing attention to oneself (scenario 3).

- **Target Audience:** A middle-school age congregational school class.
- **Teacher Background:** The teacher should be familiar with the Mussar literature on humility.
- **Assumptions About the Pupils:**
  - Students have experience in role-playing lessons
  - Students have a basic understanding of Mussar and what a Middah is.
- **Goals:**
  - To learn about humility.
  - To practice humility using drama.
  - To reflect on one's own humility.
  - To engage students in learning through role play.
- **Objectives**
  - Students will understand how humility is practiced daily.
  - Students can identify why they should be humble.
  - Students will reflect on their own ease of acting humbly.
  - Students will be able to give their own definition of humility.
- **Set Induction**

- “We have opportunities to practice humility every day. But acting humbly has its advantages and its disadvantage. Today we are going to role-play some scenarios to see what being humble is about.”

- **Text Studies on Humility:**

Numbers 12:1-9: (1) Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married: “He married a Cushite woman!” (2) They said, “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?” The LORD heard it. (3) Now Moses was a very **humble** man, more so than any other man on earth. (4) Suddenly the LORD called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting.” So the three of them went out. (5) The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, stopped at the entrance of the Tent, and called out, “Aaron and Miriam!” The two of them came forward; (6) and He said, “Hear these My words: When a prophet of the LORD arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. (7) Not so with My servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. (8) With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the LORD. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!” (9) Still incensed with them, the LORD departed.

- What is taking place in this situation?
- What does it mean here that Moses is humble?
- Why was it important to know that Moses is humble? What does it add to the story?
- What might have happened if Moses was not humble?
- Was God being humble?

“Being humble doesn’t mean being a nobody, it just means being no more of a somebody than you ought to be.” [117](Everyday Holiness)

- In this passage, what does it mean to be humble?
- Can someone give an example of someone being “more of a somebody” than they ought to be?
- What is the author here afraid of when he writes that being humble doesn't mean being a nobody?
- What happens when someone is too humble and they see themselves as a nobody?

“A wealthy person can easily become poor, a ruler can turn into a slave, and an honored person can fall from disgrace. Thus, if one can so quickly be reduced to a state that he finds so shameful today, how can he be prideful when his own situation is at risk? So many different diseases can, Heaven forbid, befall a person and make him personally plead for someone to help hum assist him, and ease his plight a little… And we see these things day in and day out. That should surely be sufficient to remove a person’s haughtiness from his heart and to clothe him in humility and lowliness.” (Mesillat Yesharim)[118]

- In this passage, what does it mean to be humble?
- What does it mean when it asks how can a person “be prideful when his own situation is at risk?”
- Why should these tough situations affect someone’s humility if they are healthy, wealthy, and happy right now?

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[117] Morinis, Alan. Everyday Holiness. Page 47.

[118] Luzzatto, Moshe Chaim. Mesillat Yesharim. Page 164-165

- Does anyone have a moment in their life when someone tough happened and it made you humble?

- How is humility different in the case of Moses, being who you ought to be, and in remembering that life circumstances can change quickly?
- Which aspect of humility do you think you are better at?
- Which aspect of humility do you think you need to work on?
- Can you think of another aspect of humility not covered by these three passages?

- **Activity in three scenarios**

Scenario #1a: (3-4 participants) You are on the soccer field and this practice game is to determine who will make it on to the middle school team. [The person identified] just scored an incredible overhead kick to win the game. S/he celebrates her/his own victory screaming “I did it! Did you see that! I won the game!” S/he goes on for, what seems like, too long. Other players react quietly and negatively to the exuberance.

Scenario #1b: You are on the soccer field and this practice game is to determine who will make it on to the middle school team. [The person identified] just scored an incredible overhead kick to win the game. S/he runs over to the person who kicked the ball and celebrates the great pass. S/he celebrates the teams victory screaming “we did it! Great job everyone!” Other players react to the celebration.

Discussion questions:

- For the team members:
  - What did it feel like when your teammate yelled “I won the game!”
  - What did it feel like when s/he included you in the winning?
- For the one celebrating:
  - What did it feel like to gloat about the goal you made? How about when you included your team?
- For the rest of the class:
  - What did it feel like to watch these two scenarios?
  - Which response are you more likely to have after scoring a game-winning goal?
- For the class:
  - What does one gain by not being humble and by shouting “I won!”
  - What advantage is there to being humble?
  - What disadvantage is there to being humble?
- How would you feel if you were the one to score the goal, but since you gave the credit to the person who passed you the ball, the coach picked that person for the team and not you?
- Which are you more likely to do?

Scenario 2: (3 participants) [the designated person] arrives at her/his locker between classes to retrieve a book. S/he opens her/his locker to find that someone has sprayed some kind of body spray through the vents of the locker, coating your stuff in a pungent smell. S/he looks around

and sees two people on the other side of the hallway laughing with a bottle of body spray at their feet

2a: S/he takes out the book, closes the locker, smells the book and smiles at the two laughing.

2b: S/he takes out the book, walks calmly over the 2 laughing, quickly picks up the spray and sprays it all over those laughing and their belongings.

Discussion questions:

- Why would someone choose scenario B over A and respond with anger?
- Why would someone choose to not respond?
- What advantage does not responding have?
- What do you think will happen next in each scenario?
- Which scenario would a humble person do? Why?
- What's the connection between the person being confident and being humble?
- Does having more self-esteem make it easier or harder to just walk away?
- Which are you more likely to do?

Scenario 3a: (2 participants) You spent all weekend doing nothing but studying for Monday's math test. You are well prepared and feel very confident that you will do well on the test. You get to class on Monday before the teacher does. Everyone is waiting outside of the classroom talking about how nervous they are about the test. You stay quiet. The class enters, sits down and begins taking the test. You breeze through the test with relative ease. As quietly as possible, you

close your test, quietly place your pencil on the table and wait. After class ends, everyone joins in the hallways talking about the test, saying how hard it was. You stay quiet. A friend asks if you found it difficult too. You nod and say that you agree.

Scenario 3b: (2 participants) You spent all weekend doing nothing but studying for Monday's math test. You are well prepared and feel very confident that you will do well on the test. You get to class on Monday before the teacher does. Everyone is waiting outside of the classroom talking about how nervous they are about the test. You tell everyone that you know all about the subject and are ready for the test. The class enters, sits down and begins taking the test. You breeze through the test with relative ease. You loudly slam your pencil down on the table, in a way that announces "I'm done!" You then raise your hand, when called on you say: "What do we do when we are done?" After class ends, everyone joins in the hallways talking about the test, saying how hard it was. You say: "It was easy!" and walk away.

Discussion questions:

- Why would someone choose to act like scenario B and show how quickly they got through the test?
- Why would someone choose to act like scenario A and not bring attention to themselves?
- If you worked so hard to prepare for the test, why would you not show everyone, including the teacher, how prepared you were?
- What was does one gain or lose when they act humbly in scenario A?
- Which are you more likely to do?

Wrap-up: “Now that we have explored some scenarios about humility, let’s see if we can try to define it. We are going to Think-Pair-Share. First we will take a few moments to just think about what we think humility means. Then we will take some time to pair with one person, and discuss as *chevruta* what each of use thinks humility means and we will come up with a definition as a *chevruta.* Then we will share as a class what each of our *chevrutas* came up with as a definition for humility and we will write them on the board.”

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