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AUTHOR Lawrence C. Meyers

TITLE Teaching About God in the Religious School

TEACHING ABOUT GOD IN THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Lawrence Charles Meyers

Thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of requirements
for the Degree of Master of
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Referee, Professor Sylvan Schwartzman

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PREFACE

As editor of the National Association of Temple Educators Newsletter from 1956 through 1959, I was responsible for gathering articles which would be of interest to Educational Directors. The theme explored in the May 1, 1958 issue was, "Teaching About God in the Religious School". At the same time, I was deciding what topic to use for my Master's thesis. Having become vitally interested in the theme featured in the May, 1958 Newsletter, I chose it as the basis for my Master's thesis.

It is not my intention to innovate concepts, but rather to indicate current trends in liberal Jewish theology. Material was studied from a wide area of contemporary liberal Jewish writings. Though the research covered a great many books and articles, I have leaned heavily on the writings of Rabbi Milton Steinberg and Rabbi Eugene Borowitz for the material on theology as I believe they are representative of the best in concretizing liberal theological thought.

Rabbi Sylvan Schwartzman of the Hebrew Union College has been my friend and advisor through the years I have been in Jewish education. Rabbis Eugene Borowitz and Edward Zerin were kind enough to read this thesis in its near-completed form and offer their suggestions. My wife, with her usual devotion, has performed the necessary task of being the "devil's advocate" in forcing me to think through my ideas. Mr. Benjamin Shaw, a colleague from the Conservative Temple in Birmingham, Alabama was an invaluable aid in correcting grammatical and structural errors. His long hours of patient help were greatly appreciated.

I hope that this thesis will serve as food for thought and as a basis for further research. It is also my hope that this thesis can serve as a guide to teachers in their labors on behalf of religious education.

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Historically, theology has been of little significance to the Jewish people. There were only two types of Jews; those who believed that God gave the Torah to Moses at Mount Sinai, and the small minority who questioned this belief. No middle ground was available until recent times. Either the Jew believed, or he was an "epicouras," a heretic. Controversy within Judaism did not arise over definitions of God, but over the interpretation of the Torah:

> Not concepts of God, but the implications of Torah separated the ethically sensitive prophet from the ritually centered priest; the pioneering Pharisee from the reactionary Sadducee; the law-loving Gamaliel from the anti-nominan Paul; the evolutionary rabbinite from the reductionist Karaite.....[1]

Through most of Jewish history elements of theology existed, but no complete set of theological beliefs was ever formulated into a dogma. And since there was no disputation over theology as divorced from the legal elements of Torah, there was obviously no need for theologians.

Times have changed drastically for the Jew. With the breakdown of the Ghetto way of life in Western Europe after the French Revolution in 1789 and the emergence of the "enlightenment" movement in Eastern Europe in the 19th century, skepticism affected much of Jewish thought. Even the belief in the immutability of the Torah as a God

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1. Eugene Borowitz. "The Idea of God" (The Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, LXVIII). New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1957. p. 176.

given document was seriously questioned. This scepticism so permeated Jewish thinking, that, as a result, over half of the world's Jewish population no longer holds to "orthodox" theological beliefs today. In the United States, a minimum of 50% of the Jewish population holds "non-orthodox" beliefs. This is evidenced by the large numbers who are affiliated with the Reform and Conservative movements, as well as those who are nominally Orthodox and those who are unaffiliated.[2] There are no reliable statistics for the 2,500,000 Jews in the Soviet Union, but the amount of Jewish religious consciousness is certainly low. "According to recent reports, the younger generation knows virtually nothing about Judaism."[3] There are also no reliable statistics for Israel's 2,000,000 Jews, but orthodoxy certainly represents much less than 50% of the population.

If the traditional beliefs about Torah are no longer acceptable, then the traditional teachings of Jewish education are equally unacceptable. This is true whether the Torah is considered as simply the Five Books of Moses or as, "the accumulated literary and spiritual heritage of the Jewish people through the centuries."[4] A liberal Jewish religious group which rejects the concept of the Torah as God-given in favor of the Torah as "Divinely inspired," cannot teach the Torah as it is written without helping the students through a process of interpretation. The liberal religious school cannot utilize the stories spun from the heart of tradition without a specific philosophy of approach

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2. Simon Federbush. World Jewry Today. New York, Thomas Yoseloff, 1959. p 223.
3. Federbush. Ibid. p. 643.
4. Israel Chipkin. "A symposium on Jewish Education in the United States Mid-Century" (Religious Education, XLVIII) New York, September, 1953. p 338

which incorporates liberal theology, when congregants do not accept the tradition. Not surprisingly, Rabbi Zerin, in a study of 500 Jewish youth, mainly affiliated with Reform Congregations found that supernaturalism was overwhelmingly rejected by the respondents.[5]

Variations on the following situation arise in many congregations: The Rabbi delivers sermons which usually have a Biblical text as their base. In presenting these sermons, the Rabbi does not differentiate between those theological elements which are acceptable to the liberal mind and those which are unacceptable. This problem is not too important to most of the adult congregants, as they presumably are mature enough to understand the difference between the traditional and the modern approach. But the children are not able to draw the line between literal and figurative interpretation of the Bible, and might easily gain ideas which will confuse them as they grow.

The educational director of this hypothetical school is more interested in conveying the ethical aspects of our Jewish heritage than in helping his students draw theological generalizations. He uses all Jewish sources available to indicate ethical ideas from Jewish history. As often as not, this educational director will not differentiate between the modern and traditional approaches, as they have nothing to do with the ethical teachings per se.

The teachers in this hypothetical school shy away from approaching theology at all. Their own beliefs are not clear, a perfectly normal situation, and they are therefore unwilling to delve into the

5. Edward Zerin. Selected Theological and Educational Factors in the Personality Development of Jewish Youth. Los Angeles, University of Southern California doctoral dissertation, 1953.p.298

subject. These teachers avoid theology like the proverbial plague and hope that the student will somehow gain an intelligent God-concept from the surrounding atmosphere. In other words, the teachers teach the mitzvot, and hope that the mitzvot teach God.

Arnulf Pins expresses similar thoughts on the above matter:

> I would say that most teachers in our religious schools receive little or no help from us or their Rabbis in this area [teaching about God]. The teachers are very concerned about it, unsure of what to do and afraid to try. As a result, they either carefully avoid all mention of God, though the students notice this and interpret it, or they "teach about God" in a way probably contrary to what we, the Rabbi and the parents believe, and frequently teach what is inappropriate for the age level of the students.[6]

If the hypothetical school mentioned previously exists, and variations of it do exist, then it does not fulfil a primary objective. The graduates will, in all probability, be completely confused. They are exposed to theological ideas, but not led toward a mature God-concept. They will probably end their studies with a confused conception of God, and with no idea as to the intellectual process involved in formulating a conception.

Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, Director of the Commission on Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, states the problem clearly:

> Children sent to schools to learn about the Jewish religion, regardless of the branch involved, increasingly want to know what religion believes and affirms. Parents themselves facing the crucial issues of life, want to make certain their children are receiving a guidance they themselves need. And teachers and administrators as well will join them in asking the basic question of our day, "why?". To avoid that religious question is to doom Jewish education to failure and futility. To answer it is to speak theologically--and for this theology is necessary.

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6. Arnulf Pins. "Some Thoughts on Teaching About God" (National Association of Temple Educators Newsletter). New York, May, 1959, p. 5.

> Theology can also clarify the question of content and method as well. What must a Jew know to be acceptable to God? What kinds of knowledge or what else besides knowledge will help the Jew reach such a relationship? What are the limits of instruction in helping a Jew achieve this goal? What are its special contributions which it must make certain not to ignore. [7]

Summary and Purpose.

From the foregoing, it is evident that a problem exists. Traditional Judaism had its theology which it transmitted through the synagogue, school, and society. Liberal Judaism has not spelled out its precepts and cannot completely utilize the Orthodox tradition because of basic differences with it. But something must be taught about God in a Reform religious school, or it is not fulfiling its purpose. Therefore, the problem must be faced, or Reform Jewish education is doomed to failure.

In preparing this thesis, three hypothesis were projected:

1. There is a need for aiding students gain acceptable theological understanding.
2. There is a liberal Jewish theology which can be taught in Reform religious schools.
3. The theories of developmental education can be utilized in designing a program of theological study.

In order to explore these three hypotheses, the following questions served as the basis for research:

1. Is there a liberal Jewish theology that can be expounded?
2. Is theology now being taught in the religious schools, how is

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7. Eugene Borowitz. "Theology and Jewish education" (Religious Education). New York, September-October, 1958. p. 421.

it taught, and is it being taught successfully?

3. Is there a need for more direction in teaching theology?

4. Are current textbooks helpful in teaching theology?

5. What theological concepts should be taught to children?

6. What can be learned from the principles of developmental education?

7. How does the educator go about teaching theology?

Put in another way, this writer is attempting to offer direction toward "Teaching About God in the Religious School."

Chapter I — HOW THEOLOGY IS BEING TAUGHT

Information Obtained

In an attempt to gain a better idea of whether there is a conscious need for teaching theology in the religious school and what is being done about it, the following questionaire was sent to members of the National Association of Temple Educators during the summer of 1959 with the title, Questionaire on Teaching an Understanding of God:

1. Do you have specific courses?_____what grade(s)?_____ _____, texts?_____.
2. Do you feel that there is a need for specific courses?_____, texts?_____.
3. Are you satisfied with the present texts?_____
4. What texts are best?_____ _____
5. Do you devote teacher meetings to this subject?_____
6. Do you feel that your school is helping students achieve an understanding of God?_____
7. Comments_____ _____

This questionaire was on a pre-paid postcard, enclosed in a letter which requested the members' aid in studying this area for use in a projected paper. Of the two hundred mailings, forty-two answers were received, or a little over one-fifth.

Although the percentage of answers was relatively low, the validity of the sample seems adequate for the following reasons:

1. There was a definite pattern of answers on most cards which

fell into three categories. (This will be discussed later.) Presumably this pattern is typical of what would have been found in additional answers.

2. Those who signed their names, although it was not requested, are mostly full time Educational Directors, and/or are very active members of the National Association of Temple Educators. About half of the respondents signed their names.

There were several problems connected with the questionaire which prevent utilizing the answers for anything more than generalizations:

1. It was too short. A long questionaire would have discouraged busy educators from answering, and therefore would not bring in a representative enough sample.
2. No personal follow-up was used. The best technique would have been personal interviews, but this proved impossible, especially because of the writer's distance from other Educational Directors.
3. It was obvious that a "yes" answer on a particular question might have meant one thing to one respondent and an entirely different thing to another because of varying interpretations of the questions. This was especially true of the first and second questions. Still, the pattern of answers and the added comments clarified the respondents' thinking.

Following is a breakdown of the answers received to the questionaire. The interpretation which follows each set of statistics is interpolated from the raw statistics themselves, patterns, and comments:

1. Do you have specific courses?

Yes	22
No	20
Blank	0

According to the statistics along with the comments at the bottom of the card, most religious schools have courses, units or lectures that help the children achieve a God concept, whether they consider them a course or not. Some schools refrain completely from any direct method of helping the children achieve a God concept. This achievement is dependent on the atmosphere of the school and Temple, the teaching of mitzvot as Godly ways, and the use of prayers.

1. a. In what grades do you have theological courses:

All	1
2nd	3
3rd	3
4th	1
8th	1
9th	3
10th	11
12th	2
Blank	22

What may be considered explicit theological teaching is usually carried on in the ninth through twelfth grades, usually depending on which is the highest grade in the religious school. The course is most often taught by the Rabbi. There is also some teaching of theology in the primary department, usually in conjunction with the book, Let's Talk About God.

1. b. Do you use specific texts in teaching theology?

Yes	18
No	24
Blank	0

Those schools which have specific courses in theology use a text in all but four cases. The other four utilize lectures only. As mentioned previously, a certain number of schools lecture and/or use books for

teaching theology, but do not consider this teaching a course.

2. Do you feel that there is a need for specific courses?

Yes	24
No	18
Blank	0

Those who feel that there is a need for specific courses are in a slight majority, but most of the minority also feel there is a need for some material to be presented on the subject, though not as a formal course. The overriding conscious need of most educators was for a specific course for teachers so that they can convey theological understanding through the entire curriculum. These conclusions were also drawn from the statistics and the comments found at the bottom of the cards.

2. a. Is there a need for specific texts?

Yes	22
No	20
Blank	0

Both those who answered "yes" and those who answered "no" felt that the use of texts is only a means of achievement and not an end in itself.

3. Are you satisfied with the present texts?

Yes	11
No	14
Blank	17

Those who answered "yes" teach specific courses in theology and usually use Little Lower Than The Angels and/or Lets Talk About God. Those who answered "no" were generally people who believe in teaching specific courses, but found few or no texts that they really felt were helpful. Those who left the answer blank were invariably the ones who answered "no" on the need for specific texts.

4. What texts are best?

A. Little Lower Than The Angels (9th through 12th)..... 17
B. Let's Talk About God (2nd through 4th)..... 12
C. The Still Small Voice (9th through 12th)..... 3
D. Judaism for Today (9th through 12th)..... 1
E. In The House of the Lord (9th through 12th)..... 1
F. The God Around Us (Primary)..... 1
G. Adventures in Quest of Religious Truth (9th through 12th 1
H. Blank..... 21

Statistics easily show that only two texts in any way meet the need of most people who want to teach specific theological courses.

5. Do you devote teacher meetings to this subject?

Yes 33
No 7
Blank 2

Practically all Educational Directors devote some teacher meetings to theology in order to meet this great indicated need for teacher guidance in this area. There seems to be an underlying feeling that much more teacher direction is still needed.

6. Do you feel that your school is helping students achieve an understanding of God?

Yes 38
No 2
Blank 2

Although practically all respondents felt that their school was helping the children achieve an understanding of God, almost 50% expressed lack of assurance in their answer by qualifying it with "I think so," or "I hope so."

Patterns of Thinking

There were three main patterns of thinking which were brought out by the answers and comments to the questionaire. None of these patterns of thinking are at all mutually exclusive and actually merge into a

spectrum more than anything else.

1. Many respondents felt that specific courses in theology designed to help the child gain a personal God-concept would be helpful, though no one felt that such a course would be anything but a means to an end. Manuel Helzner writes:"An understanding of God cannot be miraculously achieved through a course or a textbook, but is an objective of the entire curriculum. However, a good textbook at an appropriate level would be very useful." Samuel Nemzoff writes: "There is a place, in my opinion, for direct teaching of God through a separate text or texts and for the indirect method through other subjects in the curriculum."

2. A large minority of respondents felt that development of a God-concept within the curriculum should specifically be implicit and not explicit in the sense of having specific courses. Rabbi William Kramer writes:

> We do not teach about God in any special way at Temple Israel. Rather, God is implicit in our emphasis on prayer both in Hebrew and in English, as learned in the classroom and as made manifest in our weekly chapel for all students. We follow the old Jewish idea that you teach mitzvahs and let the mitzvahs teach God. To define God is to limit Him. To define God for a child is to present him with a God image which would remain childish even when he matures.

3. The smallest group expressed an inability to teach theology in the curriculum because of the vast differences among Reform Jewish leaders and layman. Heinz Warschauer says:

> The big question is, "which God concept do you teach?" This differs from Temple to Temple, from Rabbi to Rabbi, from a Rabbi today and the same Rabbi five years hence, and so on. God is the most nebulous thing today, and the personal God which many of us still feel as real, seems so far removed from

> Judaism that I had to agree at Oconomowoc with Rabbi Groner, a Hillel Rabbi, who commented that most students he meets have a deep yearning for God, but do not see any connection with Judaism, nor do they even look for an answer in Judaism, nor is it easy to supply the answer the students want, within the bulk of what we consider Jewish education.

Directions

In presently available curricula, both the implicit and the explicit approaches are explored and outlined.

The implicit approach is offered in An Outline of the Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School, published by the Commission on Jewish Education:

> Only when the subject matter of the Curriculum is seen as the channel through which we reach our aims is the Commission's approach to the teaching of religion clear. If the major elements of the Jewish religion may be considered under the traditional religious terms God, Torah, and Israel, it is quickly apparent that our Curriculum subject matter deals largely with Torah and Israel. There is no specific subject designation for teaching about God. That does not mean that God is not taught in this curriculum, but only that the Commission has made a curricular decision that He is not to be taught as a single subject among other subjects. Our aims clearly indicate that inspiring the child with a positive and abiding faith is our first concern. For both pedagogic and religious reasons, however, we believe that teaching about God is best done indirectly though with firm purpose, through the entire Curriculum.[1]

Rabbi Sylvan Schwartzman, in his monograph, Toward A New Curriculum For The One-Day-A-Week Reform Jewish Religious School, outlines a more explicit approach as to teaching theology within the curricular structure. In his proposed curriculum, Rabbi Schwartzman suggests that

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1. Eugene Borowitz, editor. An Outline Of The Curriculum For The Jewish Religious School. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959, p. 19.

each class should devote time to studying "Religious Living." The ideas are not especially new or different per se, but the curriculum is one of the few attempts to teach theology in any organized, grade by grade, manner. The following "Religious Living" outline is suggested for each grade:

Kindergarten — How we come to know God and the ways we worship Him.

Grade 1 — How we worship God through happy Jewish holidays.

Grade 2 — How we worship God through our more solemn Jewish Holidays.

Grade 3 — How we worship God through our American-Jewish holidays.

Grade 4 — How we worship God through the year in synagogue and home.

Grade 5 — How we worship God throughout our lifetime.

Grade 6 — The worship of God through prayer.

Grade 7 — The worship of God through ethical living.

Grade 8 — Judaism in personal living.

Grade 9 — Comparative religion.

Grade 10— Living our Judaism.[2]

A very explicit approach for teaching theology in the ninth or tenth grade was presented in a course outline by Rabbi Kenneth Stein when he served as assistant Rabbi in White Plains, New York. The following outline represents a lesson plan for the entire year:

A Course On God And Man's Relationship To God

I. The Concept of God

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2. Sylvan Schwartzman. Toward A New Curriculum For The One-Day-A-Week Reform Religious School. Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1955. pp. 14-17.

1. Varieties of God-ideas.
2. God as a mathematic mind.
3. God as the synthesis of all values.
4. God as the idea of perfection.
5. God as the First Cause, the unmoved Mover.
6. The argument for God on the assumption that there is purpose to the universe.
7. Varieties of religious experience, mystical and otherwise, in support of God.

II. The Oneness of God

8. How the concept of a scientific universe opposes polytheism.
9. The implications of belief in dualism and why not acceptable to Judaism.
10. How pantheism omits the ethical aspect of the Godhead.
11. How unitarianism goes beyond mere monotheism and why Judaism is unitarian.
12. The dangers of anthropomorphism or attributing human characteristics to God.
13. The mystery of God's essence and the revelation of God's will.

III. The Manifestations of God

14. God and the natural order of the universe.
15. God and the moral order of the universe.
16. Justice as balance in both nature and human society.
17. Mercy.

IV. Man and His Relationship to God

18. Creativity as a continuing process in nature and human society.
19. Man's role as a partner with God in social creativity.
20. The place of Justice in human society.
21. The place of mercy in human society.
22. How civilization connotes restraints.
23. The Jewish concept of social evil and the Jewish solution to the problem.
24. Physical suffering as the sign of Divine love and the trial of the righteous.

V. Judaism and Mythology

25. Mythology clothes the ideal in human form and brings that form to man's level.
26. Mythology brings heaven to earth; Judaism, earth ascends to heaven.
27. Mythology places the pivotal point of history in the past; Judaism builds toward the future.
28. In mythology man enacts a passive role and in Judaism man is

called upon to assume an active role and cannot pass his burden to God.

Summary and Implications

A survey was conducted in order to better understand how theology is being taught in Reform religious schools. Three general trends were noted: Many respondents indicated that explicit courses on theology should be part of the religious school curriculum, along with theology being implicit within the overall curriculum; a large minority of respondents indicated that theology should only be taught implicitly; and a few respondents felt that it is completely impossible to teach theology because of the differences found within Reform Judaism. There are curricula currently in use which exemplify one or the other of the above approaches to the teaching of theology in the religious school.

What is most apparent from the survey results is that there is confusion and a lack of direction among the Reform religious schools in America. Even those schools which are firmer in their principles that theology should be taught explicitly or implicitly, are often not really sure that they are accomplishing their goal.

This writer has no argument with those who support the explicit or the implicit philosophy of teaching theology, though he certainly disagrees with those who say it is impossible to teach it. What is important is that theology is in the curriculum, in every grade, in every possible way. Leaving theological learning to chance is pedagogically undesirable, haphazard and possibly boringly repetitive.

The Educational Director and/or Rabbi must see that theology is taught:

> If God is taught indirectly it must be conscious indirection. The teacher must be fully aware of what he is trying to get across even though he goes at it indirectly. We must never forget that it is mainly to achieve this goal that his curricular responsibility was assigned to him, even though he is to reach it indirectly.[3]

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3. Eugene Borowitz. "Teaching the Knowledge of God" (Jewish Teacher). New York, March, 1959. p. 22.

Chapter II - THEOLOGY IN REFORM JEWISH TEXTBOOKS

Purpose

The previous chapter outlined methods by which theology is actually taught in a number of religious schools, and also explored the possibilities inherent in some currently available curricula. The next area of exploration will deal with the question of how theology is presented in Jewish textbooks now in use.

Previous Research

A pioneer study of how the idea of God is taught through texts was made by Rabbi Edward Zerin for his Master's Degree thesis for the University of Southern California, School of Education. In the introduction, Rabbi Zerin says:

> To this writer's knowledge there has never been a study made, whether in Orthodox, Conservative or Reform circles, which sought to analyze the God-concept taught to Jewish children. Almost all scientific studies in Jewish education have concerned themselves with historical analysis of movements and trends. There is, therefore, no precedent in Jewish education for a survey similar to the one attempted in this study.[1]

Twenty-five textbooks, produced by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, were chosen for Zerin's study:

Pre-School Department

Holiday Series, by Jane Bearman
The Jewish Child Every Day, by Edith S. Covich
Now We Begin, by Marion J. and Efraim M. Rosenzweig

Primary Department

Primary Songs and Games, by Adeline R. Rosewater

1. Edward Zerin. A Survey of the Idea of God in Twenty-Five Jewish Religious School Textbooks. Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 1950. p. 4.

Hillel's Happy Holidays, by Mamie G. Gamoran
Bible Tales for Very Young Children, Books I and II, by Lenore Cohen
Down Holiday Lane, by Rose W. Golub
The Great March, Book I, by Rose G. Lurie

Elementary Department

The Great March, Book II, By Rose G. Lurie
Michael Turns the Globe, by Deborah Pessin
When the Jewish People Was Young, by Mordecai I. Soloff
Days and Ways, by Mamie G. Gamoran
The Story of Genesis, Bible Reader I, by Adele Bildersee
Out of the House of Bondage, Bible Reader II, by Adele Bildersee
How the Jewish People Grew Up, by Mordecai I. Soloff
Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life, by Michael Conovitz
Into the Promised Land, Bible Reader III by Rabbi Jacob D. Schwarz
Into the Land of Kings and Prophets, Bible Reader IV, by Rabbi Jacob D. Schwarz
The Stream of Jewish Life, by Dorothy Alofsin
How the Jewish People Lives Today, by Mordecai I. Soloff[2]

The purpose of the study was, "to analyze the God-concept as presented in a sampling of the textbooks published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations."[3] In pursuit of this goal, the books were analyzed with the aim of finding the following information: "Names of the Deity," "Where the Deity Dwelled," "Nature of the Deity," "Revelation of the Deity," "Worship of the Deity," and "Miscellaneous."[4]

It is worthwhile to examine what general trends Rabbi Zerin observes, after carefully studying the texts:

> Absence of Organization. In all the textbooks examined, there was no evidence of the systematic development of a God-concept as a primary objective either in individual volumes or in a series of works. Even wherein the teaching of the God-concept was approached indirectly, as a secondary part of the textual matter, there was no evidence of an over-all, consistent development of any particular concept of Deity.[5]

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2. Edward Zerin. Op. Cit. pp. 7-8.
3. Ibid. p.5.
4. Ibid. p. IV
5. Ibid. pp. 167-68.

> Limited Concern with Conceptual Development...First, in recognition that certain concepts were beyond the ken of the preschool and primary department students, the number of references to the Deity was circumscribed in some of the newer textbooks... The second trend, observable mainly in the older textbooks, represented a quantitative (more material) rather than a qualitative (more complex concepts) increase in textual content from one level of student development to the next....[6]
>
> Emphasis on the Historical God. The textbooks in general were designed to develop the concepts surrounding the historical God, with only a few isolated references to the place of God in contemporary situations....The entire religious school period covered by these volumes provided the student with only a very limited instruction in the meaning, the purpose which the Deity could lend to his life....[7]
>
> Explanation of Miracles...Many of the miracle stories and tales of the Deity's anthropomorphic nature were explained as legends or stories....
>
> While such a presentation took the Deity out of the realm of magic, nonetheless, the textbooks did not proceed to the presentation of factual concepts...The child, thus, was left with even less upon which to rely.[8]

Rabbi Zerin's study is quoted specifically because of this writer's complete agreement with his findings. Before examining the Zerin research, this author had analyzed many of the same books. His independent conclusions were basically the same as Rabbi Zerin's. In the above mentioned books, there is an absence of organization, there is a limited concern with conceptual development, there is an emphasis on the historical God (without seeing God's place in modern life), and there is poor explaination of the super-natural.

It is evident from looking at the curricula of many religious schools along with the curricular guides provided by the Commission on Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, that

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6. Edward Zerin. Op. Cit. pp. 168-69. The comments in parentheses are taken from the footnotes on page 168.
7. Ibid. pp. 171-72
8. Ibid. pp. 172-73

many of these same books are utilized extensively within the Reform religious schools today.

The dangers inherent in using these books are obvious. Though many of them are well written in their treatment of history, demography, folk-lore, and/or holidays; they are chaotic as far as offering any sort of coherent approach to theology. It is difficult to help the children achieve a personally meaningful theology when their textbooks are filled with inconsistencies.

Other Textbooks

This writer is satisfied that the newer non-theologically oriented textbooks are little different than those mentioned by Rabbi Zerin, in regard to theological understanding. Since there is no intention to just continue with the research where Rabbi Zerin left off in 1950, these more recent non-theological textbooks will not be discussed.

There are certain texts, however, which are not mentioned in the Zerin thesis which should be analyzed in relation to the criteria presented in this thesis. Most of these books, in one way or another deal with theology or ethics, and all, except the last two on the list, are recommended by the Commission on Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.[9]

Bible

Bible Tales for Little Children, Books I and II, by Betty Hollender

9. Eugene Borowitz, editor. An Outline of Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959.

Pathways Through the Bible, by Mortimer J. Cohen

Theology

The God Around Us, by Mira Brichto
In God's Way, by Hortense Hahn
This Wonderful Day, by Ilo Orleans
In the House of the Lord, by Solomon Freehof

Ethics

The Still Small Voice, by William Silverman
The Still Small Voice Today, by William Silverman
The Right Way, by Lillian Freehof

Theology and Ethics

Let's Talk About God, by Dorothy Kripke
Let's Talk About Right and Wrong, by Dorothy Kripke
Let's Talk About Judaism, by Dorothy Kripke
Little Lower Than the Angels by Roland Gittelsohn

Supplementary Material

Our Religion and Our Neighbors, by Gerald Miller and Sylvan Schwartzman.
Modern Jewish Problems, by Roland Gittelsohn
Meeting Your Life Problems, by David Hachen and Sylvan Schwartzman

In analyzing the aforementioned books, the following points were considered:

1. Is the book well written for the children it is intended for, and can they understand the concepts involved?
2. What is the nature of God?
3. Does God have relevance to our present day lives?
4. What is the concept of mitzvot as presented in the book?
5. How is the supernatural treated?

It is not the purpose of this thesis to bring Zerin's work up to date. This survey was undertaken to determine whether books currently used in many religious schools could be more creatively used for the teaching of theology. The analysis of each work will be in accordance with the criteria set out above.

Bible

A serious question arises when discussing the teaching of Biblical material, especially in the younger grades. By the nature of the narratives, God is inevitably conceptualized supernaturally and anthropomorphically. The primary grade children are unable to understand the difference between "truth" and "truth as it was understood by Jews in ancient times."

Despite this problem inherent in teaching Bible stories, to ignore this material would be a travesty committed against our Jewish tradition. Also, to ignore this material, would be to negate what could and should be one of our best means to teach about God in the religious school. The Bible is the base of Jewish learning and theological understanding. What is most important, is for the material to be handled carefully. Teachers should constantly be aware of the implications which can be drawn from the lessons and guard against inculcating ideas which must be unlearned at a later age.

Bible Tales for Little Children. Books I and II [10]

Due to the skillful presentation of material and the beautiful illustrations, this is the best collection of Bible stories available for children in the second or third grade. Personal experience has shown that the books are delightful for children. The following is an example of some material from the book:

The Philistines were neighbors of the Hebrews.

10. Betty Hollender. Bible Tales for Little Children. Book I (1955) and Book II (1958). New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

The Philistines were not friendly.

They burned fields.

They stole sheep

They fought with the Hebrews all the time.[11]

These books are to be commended for the skillful way anthropomorphic material is modified in consonance with liberal Judaism, as is evident by the following:

God was with Moses, and Moses led us out of Egypt.

God was with us in the desert, and we received the Ten Commandments.

God is with us now, and we will cross the Jordan and make our homes in the Promised Land.[12]

Pathways Through the Bible[13]

Mortimer Cohen indicates that his book is intended as a, "preparatory volume to the reading of The Holy Scriptures.[14] It is an abridged version of the Jewish publication society authorized Bible, with some modification in language. Introductions are given to each section in order to prepare readers for what follows, and as a connective thread to the readings.

The purposes of the book are well served. Children in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades can gain excellent insights into the magnificence of the Jewish Bible.

At no time is there any indication of a critical analysis of the Bible on the part of the author. The material is handled from the

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11. Betty Hollender. Op. Cit. (Book II). p. 23.
12. Ibid. (Book II). p. 5.
13. Mortimer Cohen. Pathways Through the Bible. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946.
14. Ibid. p. XI.

traditional standpoint throughout.

Theology

All of the books in this catagory are worthwhile according to the criteria listed in this thesis. They are well written, have a relevance to the present day, and avoid the supernatural. Mitzvot are treated as a means of emulating God's creativity.

In God's Way [15]

This is an excellent selection of simple poems for children four to six years old, The illustrations are adequate, but not outstanding.

According to the poems, God is immanent (page 3), our protector, (page 4), our guide (page 13), and a lawgiver (page 18). Although we cannot see God, we know that He exists by observing His handiwork (pages 8 and 24).

The author does a good job of presenting basic theological ideas and still avoiding the anthropomorphic and supernatural concepts found in many other books for small children.

This Wonderful Day [16]

Essentially, this is the best available book of poems for little children. However, it does have one major shortcoming. Although this book was published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the poems were written for both Jewish and non-Jewish readers, and there is no specific Jewish content anywhere in the book.

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15. Hortense Hahn. In God's Way. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1951.
16. Ilo Orleans. This Wonderful Day. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958.

The major emphases are on nature in general (pages 4, 10, 11, 14, 37, and 43), thanking God for His creations (pages 3, 15, 21, 26, 27, 28, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 44), knowing about God through His creations (pages 5, 12, 13, 18, and 25), and that God blesses us and protects us (pages 45, 46, 47, 48, and 50). Afterlife is presented as a fact (page 29).

It is possible that one or two of the concepts presented in this book might be objectionable to the theology of some religious leaders. Specifically, God's direct protection of the individual is implied in some poems, and afterlife is presented on page 29. Still, neither of these concepts is foreign to The Union Prayer Book:

> Thou upholdest the falling and healest the sick; freest the captives and keepest faith with Thy children in death as in life. Who is like unto Thee, Almighty God, Author of life and death, Source of salvation? Praises be Thou, O Lord, who has implanted within us eternal life.[17]

The God Around Us [18]

This is a truly outstanding book from beginning to end. Both the illustrations and contents are excellent for the three to six year olds. The poems deal with God's creativity and emphasize the many things we should be thankful for. Each poem is followed by a traditional Jewish prayer, suitable for the idea presented, making prayer a very personal and meaningful experience.

> A mountain high, a falling star,
> These things to me a wonder are.
> The lightning sky, the desert sand,
> Let's praise the work of God's own hand.

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17. The Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship. Cincinnati, The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1947. p. 18.
18. Mira Brichto. The God Around Us. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959.

Blessed art Thou—Lord God our King,
Who has created the wondrous universe.

Boruch atoh adonoi elohenu melech ho-olom osea maase
v'reshis. [19]

In the House of the Lord [20]

This book is specifically intended to introduce upper grade children to the idea of prayer in general, and in particular with the contents of the Reform Jewish Prayerbook. As is always true with the writings of this distinguished leader of Reform Judaism, Rabbi Solomon Freehof, the task is carried out well in all respects.

Theological and ethical ideas are presented in a manner which is completely in accord with Reform Judaism:

> God is a Creator; therefore, we must create. We must build and not destroy. We must bring light and not darkness. We pray to the Creator with sincere words in order that we may worship Him with creative deeds. That is why we begin our prayers with homage to the Master of great and small, the Former of light and darkness. God is the Creator and only those who work can be His true worshipers.[21]

Ethics

The following three books are not directly concerned with theology. Rather, their major concern is with the implications of a belief in God. Each book stresses ethics, the part mitzvot should play in our lives today, The theological discussions which should result from the readings are well worth while.

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19. Mira Brichto. Op. Cit. p. 3.
20. Solomon Freehof. In The House of the Lord. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1956.
21. Ibid. p. 58.

The Still Small Voice, The Still Small Voice Today [22]

Potentially, these are the best books available for the teaching of ethics to eighth and ninth grade children. The questions posed and the source material used is outstanding. The topic outline from Jewish sources is excellent: Jewishness, understanding of God, Torah, Ten Commandments, Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, Pirke Aboth, Talmud and Midrash, and social action. [23]

Speaking very subjectively, this writer laments the fact that Rabbi Silverman falls far short of his goal because of insipid writing. A device is used by which "Rabbi Mayer" teaches a class and the reader is supposed to gain ideas from the "discussions" and the readings and questions that follow. The discussions presented are artificial and uninteresting:

> "Jonathan!" said the Rabbi....
>
> "Aren't these answers to the questions you thought I would ask, Jonathan?"
>
> "Yes, Rabbi. I'm sorry I cheated, but gosh — I'm not the only one. We've all been doing it for a long time. I just happened to get caught." [24]

Despite the serious drawback of poor presentation, the book can be extremely valuable. There is no better book available dealing with Jewish source literature and its ethical connotations.

The Right Way [25]

This book on ethics for teenagers stresses the analysis of specific

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22. William Silverman. The Still Small Voice (1955) and The Still Small Voice Today (1957). New York, Behrman House.
23. Ibid. (The Still Small Voice). A paraphrasing of the subject outline. The Still Small Voice Today deals with later Jewish material.
24. Ibid. (The Still Small Voice). p. 2.
25. Lillian Freehof. The Right Way. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1957.

situations. Students read about such problems as throwing a basketball game, prostituting professional capabilities, relationships with an employer, and similar ethical situations.[26] The ethical possibilities of each situation are explored and the solution to the ethical dilemmas are then discussed.

Of all the books under review, this book offers the most interesting approach to the study of ethics. Unfortunately, this book has one major defect. It is weak on Jewish source material, quoting only from The Ethics of the Fathers.

The Right Way can be useful in the classroom to stimulate worthwhile discussion, but teachers should be sure to utilize more material from Jewish sources.

Theology and Ethics

These four books are the only available textual material recommended by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which present both theology and its ethical implications. They are all excellent by the criteria listed in this thesis.

Let's Talk About God, Let's Talk About Right and Wrong, Let's Talk About Judaism[27]

These books have taken their rightful place as standard texts in many of America's religious schools. They are written for children in the second and third grades. The illustrations are artistically

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26. Lillian Freehof. Op. Cit. A paraphrasing of the contents of three chapters.
27. Dorothy Kripke. Let's Talk About God (1954), Let's Talk About Right and Wrong (1955), and Let's Talk About Judaism (1957). New York, Behrman House.

fine and illustrate the ideas presented. The stories are beautifully and clearly written throughout:

> Abraham said, "There is only one God. He is the God of all the world. But we cannot see God. God is the goodness that is in the world.[28]

> Only God can be everywhere all the time. Only God was, and is, and will be, everywhere. That is because God is so very wonderful. [29]

Little Lower Than The Angels [30]

This book by Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn is the most widely used text for teaching theology in Reform religious schools, according to the survey results cited in Chapter I. This is both because it is excellent, and because there is no other Reform text that covers the major areas of theology. It is unfortunate that Little Lower Than the Angels is all too often used in the ninth or tenth grades. The book is difficult at best even for children in the eleventh and twelfth grades.

The ideas presented in Little Lower Than the Angels would in no way conflict with Reform Jewish ideas. If anything, the contrary might be true. Some educators have complained that Gittelsohn's approach is so coldly scientific and amorphous, that there is no feeling of relationship to God. This author does not personally share the complaint. He feels that it is better to say too little and let the teacher fill in personal ideas, rather than say much more than would be desirable.

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28. Dorothy Kripke. Op. Cit. (Let's Talk About God) Lesson I.
29. Ibid. Lesson III.
30. Roland Gittelsohn, Little Lower Than the Angels. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1955.

From every aspect this is by far the best book available for older adolescents. The quotations are interesting and pertinent. The questions raised follow logically from the material presented. The class is constantly stimulated to engage in thought provoking discussions.

Material is presented in a positive manner. This is what Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn thinks, though he certainly offers the reader wide latitude for his personal beliefs. Since the students seek guidance, it is not only acceptable to offer opinions, but the opinions can serve as a framework for the evolution of a more personal theology. The writing is literate, lucid, and in a liberal Jewish tradition.

1. God is the force...which is responsible for the amazing order, harmony, purpose, design and plan which we discovered everywhere.....

2. God is the force or power which has been patiently working its way upward through the long course of evolution, helping life-forms to develop from the simplest invisible protozoan to the mind, the conscience and the creative genius of man.....

3. God is the Master-Ideal, the ethical goal, the pattern of perfection toward which we are evolving and for which we ought to strive throughout our lives.....

4. God is the power or force which strengthens and sustains us in our efforts to reach the goal of perfection. [31]

Supplementary Material

Two of the following books do not deal with Jewish theology or ethics directly and the third only touches the subjects indirectly. The books are mentioned in this thesis because of their value in stim-

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31. Roland Gittelsohn. Op. Cit. p. 141.

ulating discussions on Jewish theology and ethics.

Our Religion and Our Neighbors [32]

This valuable book deals with religion in general and the great religions of the world in particular. Excellent insights are offered to the intelligent teen-ager about religious beliefs and how they originated and evolved. The discussions can prove valuable in concretizing Jewish learning by contrast and comparison.

Modern Jewish Problems [33]

This book is not often used in Reform Religious Schools, after being popular for upper grade children for many years. Much of the material presented is outdated because of the great changes that have taken place in Jewish life since the date of publication in 1943. However, it is still a good reference book for teachers as the source material and quotations are excellent.

Such ideas as intermarriage, anti-semitism, and Zionism are handled intelligently.

Meeting Your Life Problems [34]

This book resembles Modern Jewish Problems in that it deals with living as a Jew in the present age. It differs from Rabbi Gittelsohn's book in being more child-directed, discussing practical problems that directly affect the reader -- school work, dating and mating, and

32. Milton Miller and Sylvan Schwartzman. Our Religion and Our Neighbors. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1957.
33. Roland Gittelsohn, Modern Jewish Problems. Cincinnati, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1943.
34. David Hachen and Sylvan Schwartzman. Meeting Your Life Problems. Cincinnati, Rocket to Mars Press, 1954.

problem solving. Broader problems are not ignored; intermarriage and anti-semitism, but only as they relate to the adolescent.

Summary and Implications

Most non-theologically oriented textbooks used in Reform religious schools are chaotic in terms of offering a coherent approach to theology. These books are theologically lacking in organization, conceptual development, relevance, and delineation of the differences between liberal and traditional ideas.

Theologically oriented textbooks have shown continual improvement, since Rabbi Zerin wrote his thesis in 1950. This improvement is usually found in the following ways:

1. Greater clarity has been achieved in the presentation of material.
2. God's nature is more clearly defined, within the limits imposed by a liberal and non-anthropomorphic theology.
3. God's relevance to our present day lives is more clearly shown.
4. Greater guidance is offered towards finding a liberal code of mitzvot.
5. Supernaturalism is usually eliminated or treated in a more naturalistic way.

Despite the marked improvement in theologically oriented textbooks, there is still much to be accomplished. The best books are for the youngest or oldest students, while the middle grades are overlooked. Rabbi Zerin's criticisms of theology in those books which are not theologically oriented are still valid. Likewise, Zerin's recommendations as to how textbooks can be improved in the realm of theology are also still valid. These recommendations are:

Systematic Presentation. Whether the God-concept is to be taught directly or indirectly, there is need for a systematic presentation of the subject in all textbooks.

Qualitative Development. The re-eveluation of the manner of presentation should give regard to the growth of concept development among students. This re-evaluation should give concern to qualitative, not merely to quantative, matters.

Relevance. The textbooks should give concern to situations in which the Deity is relevant to the present every-day life of the reader. [36]

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36. Edward Zerin. Op. Cit. p. 173

Chapter III - IS THERE A LIBERAL JEWISH THEOLOGY?

The Idea of God

When Reform Judaism began to formulate its positive and negative tenets, it was mainly concerned with reforming the Orthodox approaches to mitzvot and religious living which were not in consonance with the emerging modern age. According to Rabbi Sylvan Schwartzman, the following matters were first considered and changed by the earliest Reform leaders: (1) mode of Synagogue Worship, (2) belief in the Messiah, (3) the religious status of women, (4) Sabbath and holiday observance, and (5) Jewish marriage and divorce laws.[1]

Although theology per se was not initially the issue at stake between Orthodoxy and Reform, it was soon obvious that most members of the Reform movement could not literally accept the supernatural elements in traditional Judaism. Some modern Jews could not believe in a God who halted the sun, opened the sea, and who gave the Torah in its entirety at Mt. Sinai. Not desiring to sacrifice what was good in tradition while eliminating the supernatural, Reform and other liberal Jewish leaders have looked to tradition for eternal truths, while deleting the anthropomorphic and supernatural elements.

> The need to be ready to stand alone by pioneering convictions is the Reform concept of the Hebrew Bible. There are two possible points of view about the Bible. One is that it is the work of God. The other view maintains that it is the

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1. Sylvan Schwartzman. The Story of Reform Judaism. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1953. pp. 59-62

> record of man's quest for the word of God. A world of difference divides the two opinions. When we insist that the Bible is the word of God, we are thrown into a heap of confusion within ourselves, toward our children and toward the non-Jewish world in attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable magnificent portions of the Bible with the myths and legends, the crudities and cruelties to be found in it, Whereas, if we see the Bible as the record of man's quest for the word of God, the perspective is clear, with man one moment reaching to heights of eternal visions, the next moment bogged down by his human frailties, limitations and passions.[2]

In traditional and in Liberal Judaism, there is no inherent dogma, but there is definitely a circumscribed area of acceptable belief. If an individual goes beyond the circumscribed area or rejects a major portion of the beliefs within the area, it is difficult to think of this individual as a religious Jew.

Rabbi Eugene Borowitz has done excellent exploratory work in the field of theology. In his paper on The Idea of God, Borowitz delves into the realm of theology for the liberal Jew. He begins by stating that traditionally, theology in Judaism has been secondary to Torah:

> What is the axis, the pivot, of the Jewish religion? I think we must respond, not an idea of God, but the life of Torah. The root religious experience of Judaism, it seems to me...is hearing God's commandment that we must serve Him, as a people and as single selves. It is the sense that God wants us to act in Godlike ways. It is the feeling of mitzvo. It is Torah.[3]

Further, Jewish philosophical and theological inquiries have been directed toward defining the mitzvot. The idea of God was part of a

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2. Joseph R. Narot. Excerpted from Union News Service for Congregational Bulletine. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Fall, 1959. p. 8.

3. Eugene Borowitz. "The Idea of God" (The Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook LXVII). New York, 1957. p. 176

self evident assumption that needed no exposition. It was rarely a point of dispute until recently:

> It is Torah; in this sense, to the never ending effort to make more precise the definition of how God would have us live, that the Jewish intelligence has dedicated itself. Until modern times it is almost impossible to find a Jewish book whose major purpose is to expound the idea of God. Even the works of medieval Jewish philosophy seem to deal with the idea of God rather as a prelude to their discussion of Torah, as a requirement for establishing the origin and authority of Torah, and in this way the truth of Judaism. [4]

Despite the fact that Jewish theology has never taught a set of dogmas and is more concerned with the mitzvot, it does not mean that Judaism is bereft of any theology: "Yet though Jewish theology is relatively free, it is not formless...it has a kind of cohesive inner structure." [5] There are implied concepts of God:

> A God whose relationship with man could be by way of Torah must be a God who cares for man, whose standards are ethical and whose nature is holiness. A God who could call a people to His service must be a God who trusts in man's powers, who is the Master of history because He is the Author. A God in whom man may confidentially trust must be as present as He is distant, as forgiving as He is just, as revealed to the eye of faith as He is hidden to the eye of reason. [6]

Even though there is a general God-concept in Jewish tradition, it does not have the force of law:

> Though our criterion implies a content for the Jewish idea of God, we must always remember it does not legislate one. The content itself is at issue only as it affects the

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4. Eugene Borowitz. Op. Cit. p. 176.
5. Ibid. p. 179.
6. Ibid. p. 181.

> way the Jew lives Torah. As long as it makes this possible, its elaboration may be naive or philosophic, simple or extensive. This is his private privilege. [7]

Rabbi Borowitz concludes that his purpose in writing The Idea of God was not to set forth a law on the God-concept, but rather to clarify the standards of judgment:

> Our purpose, however, was only to make the standards of judgment clear. Now let us each one refine the instrument that he may use it in his own search for the most adequate Jewish idea of God. To test further will lead us only to more or less acceptable Jewish ideas of God, not to "The" Jewish idea of God. [8]

Fundamentally, then, Rabbi Borowitz is saying that traditionally we have stressed Torah rather than a God-concept; we do not have dogmas, but we do have a delimited area of belief beyond which one cannot go and still remain within any sort of "mainstream" of Jewish thinking; we do have a series of conceptions about God which include a relationship with man and concern for man; a belief that God operates within the context of history; a belief that God has attributes which should be emulated; a belief that we can strive toward a knowledge of God, albeit a finite knowledge; and that these beliefs drawn from tradition should serve as a guide for us today.

Rabbi Milton Steinberg's Basic Judaism is another outstanding source of Jewish theological trends. In his chapter on God, he explores traditional approaches to a God-concept and also brings in modernist interpretations. The following excerpts indicate concepts which are acceptable to most Jews, regardless of their sectarian

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7. Eugene Borowitz. Op. Cit. p. 181.
8. Ibid. p. 186.

affiliation.

Steinberg states that the basic premise of Judaism is that God is One and Supreme throughout the universe. Conversely, God is not a plurality as the polytheist believes; a duality in the sense of the two great power forces found in Zorastorianism; a trinity that is "coeternal and coequal" as is believed by Christians, or non-existent, as the atheist believes. 9 Steinberg goes on to say:

> "Judaism says further concerning God:
>
> —That he is the creator of all things through all time....He continues to sustain and animate the universe, ever evoking new things and regenerating the old even as the prayer book asserts: 'He reneweth in his goodness every day continually, the work of creation.'
>
> —That He is Spirit, which is to say, that He is at one and the same time a Mind that contemplates and a Power to work. To put it in different words, that He is Reason and Purpose.
>
> —That He is a Lawgiver, and that in three senses.
>
> He is the Mind disclosed in revelation.
>
> He is the Guarantor of morality, the rectifier of disturbed balances, and the power that enforces the right.
>
> —That He is the Guide of history.
>
> To Judaism history is the unfolding of a design of which the denoument is to be man's ultimate fulfillment and redemption.
>
> —That He is man's Helper.
>
> ...God is forever helping man through the resources and dependability of the physical world.

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9. Milton Steinberg. Basic Judaism. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947. pp. 42-45.

He helps man further through man's own body, skilled, adaptable, resilient; through his mind, eager and ingenious; through his heart, life-loving, courageous, and aspiring.

He helps man through the medium of other men...through all the institutions, practices, and assistances which are rendered by individuals to one another and by society to all its members.

He helps man by the very thought of Himself, a clarifying, meaning-giving, hope-inspiring thought.

He helps men from Himself by the inflow of His spirit into their hearts, either in response to prayer or through mystical communion or in the course of the normal respiration of the soul.

—That He is the Liberator of men and their societies.

God is the Power working within individuals and peoples that will not permit them to acquiesce in servitude, their own or that of others. He is the spark that kindles them into rebellion and the iron that makes them stubborn for freedom's sake.

...Wherefore the Exodus is to Jews, as indeed to much of mankind, the classic insistance of liberation; a proof since God is, every bondage, political, economic, or spiritual can be and some day will be broken.

—That He is the Savior of souls.

Man may be enslaved not only from without but by inner blindness, weakness and perversity. External deliverance therefore does not suffice; there is need of salvation also.

Salvation is man's victory over his limitations: ignorance, for instance, or insensitivity; it is his conquest of sinfulness, or the evils resident within him, such as pride, selfishness, hate, lust, cynicism, the deliberate rejection of goodness and truth.

Against these and other perversions, God stands as Savior. The very awareness of Him is a saving power, helping to emancipate the human spirit from the restraints that frustrate it, from the wickedness that corrupt it from within.[10]

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10. Milton Steinberg. Op. Cit., pp. 46-49

Steinberg says in his own way, as does Borowitz, that these definitions are not absolutes, but deliminations of Jewish theology:

> Each of them (definitions) is elastic, amenable to diverse interpretation. They may be differently arranged. And every person makes his own selection of which to stress and elaborate, which to pass over lightly or leave bare. Thus it comes to pass that, proceeding from shared elements, each soul arrives at a very personal envisagement of God.[11]

In summary, Rabbi Steinberg indicates that tradition assigns to God the qualities of oneness, creativity, a lawgiver, a guide to history, a helper, a force for freedom, and a source for man's personal salvation.

Mitzvot

According to the tradition, the word mitzvah has a specific connotation; referring to the 613 positive and negative commandments which a Jew must observe to be a good Jew. These commandments range from the ethical to what many modern Jews consider the mundane. Liberal Jews ignore almost all of the non-ethical mitzvot. Rarely do liberal Jews observe the dietary laws, say a prayer before washing the hands, go to a mikvah, or observe most of the other traditional mitzvot.

Obviously, then, if liberal religious schools are to teach the idea of mitzvot, the term must be redefined. Educators are not really teaching mitzvot if they do not have a philosophy of approach to such teaching. Since the tradition is almost completely rejected in the area of mitzvot, it is well to ask as to what are set up as the criterion?

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11. Milton Steinberg. Op. Cit. pp. 46-49.

There are seemingly two areas of mitzvot which the liberal Jew is concerned with, namely, the religious and the ethical.

The area of religious observance has been dealt with in many books and articles. Two books, Reform Jewish Practice, and A Guide for Reform Jews are especially distinguished in their more specific approach to Reform halacha, law. In the case of Reform Jewish Practice, Rabbi Solomon Freehof says that his writings should not be interpreted as Reform halacha:

> It is not the purpose of this book to be even in the humblest way, a modern Shulhan Aruk. It does not aim to lay down the norm of practice, except in two or three disputed situations where some preference must be made. Its chief purpose is to describe present-day Reform Jewish practices and the traditional rabbinic laws from which they are derived. [12]

The authors of A Guide for Reform Jews are slightly stronger in their stress on a need for a Reform halacha:

> The authors do not intend, even if they could, to legislate conduct and observance, but rather to make available a guide for those who feel the need for it....
>
> It should be added, however, that once a Jew takes the assumptions and the discipline of this guide seriously, and seek to live by them, he thereby makes them authoritative in his life. Authority in Jewish life can no longer be binding without the consent of those involved; yet this does not absolve us from striving to find that way of religious living to which they may consent.[13]

Certainly, there are variations within the Liberal group which can be considered acceptable, but the outline of religious mitzvot exist for all to know and for educators to teahh.

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12. Solomon Freehof. Reform Jewish Practice. Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1944. p. 15.
13. Frederic Doppelt and David Polish. A Guide for Reform Jews. 1957. p. VII. (No city is given, published by the authors.)

Concerning ethical mitzvot, the following is found in "The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism" adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Columbus, Ohio in 1937:

> In Judaism religion and morality blend into an indissoluble unity. Seeking God means to strive after holiness, righteousness and goodness. The love of God is incomplete without the love of one's fellowmen. Judaism emphasizes the kinship of the human race, the sanctity and worth of human life and personality and the right of the individual to freedom and to pursuit of his chosen vocation. Justice to all, irrespective of race, sect or class is the inalienable right and the inescapable obligation of all ....[14]

The tenor of Liberal thought on ethical mitzvot is exemplified by two biblical selections. These two particular passages were chosen because they recur most often in writings concerning ethics, although there are certainly other scriptual verses which are just as applicable.

The first selection concerns why Jews follow ethical concepts: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." (Leviticus XIX:2)

This is the raison d'etre of a Jew's ethical outlook: "It is the duty of every man to emulate to the extent of his power, the holiness of God." [15]

The second selection concerns three specific virtues expected of an ethical being. "...the Lord doth require of thee: only to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah VI:8) In the practice of ethics in day to day life, Jews must learn to deal justly with their fellow men, always tempering justice with a sense of mercy and humility before God: "All three ethical virtues, each based upon a different emphasis of God's infinity — justice with

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14. Excerpted from Sylvan Schwartzman. Reform Judaism in the Making New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1951. pp.167-68
15. Solomon Freehof. Preface to Scripture. Cincinnati, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1950. Part II, p. 33.

If the above assumptions are true, then there is a base for liberal Jewish theology, no matter how amorphous it might appear to be at times. Certainly, each individual theology will have its own nuances, but there is a large area of agreement.

There can never be a definitive work on any aspect of theology. Theology grows and matures just as civilization grows and matures. Our God is also the God of our fathers, as is said in many traditional Jewish prayers. Still, our God is different in interpretation from the God of our fathers:

> Israelite religion did not, of course, spring fullblown into existence. Like every cultural phenomenon, it underwent an evolution in time. It arose in the wilderness, took on new forms in Canaan, and reached a climax in the middle of the eighth century with the rise of classical prophecy... This development was organic, like that of a living organism, all of whose stages are latent in the seed but appear only gradually, one by one. In the life of Israel the seed of a new religious idea was sown in antiquity; throughout the ages this idea continued to realize and embody in new forms the latent possibilities harbored. [19]

Since Jewish educators can never teach absolute truths, they can only hope to help individuals gain ever greater understanding of the supreme truth:

> Can we be content religiously with only the search and not the solution? We can, if we will remember that the search cannot be ended now, for history is not yet ended. Jewish theology will have the solution to all of its problems one day, the day Elijah comes preceding the Messiah, and answering all our questions. On that day, Israel's great aggadic search will cease, for on that day, and on that day alone, the Lord shall be One and His name shall be one.
>
> And until then?
>
> Until then, as best we can. [20]

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19. Yehezkel Kaufmann. "The Biblical Age" (Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People). New York, Random House, 1956. p. 14.
20. Eugene Borowitz. "The Idea of God" (The Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook LXVIII). New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1957. p. 186.

Chapter IV — BASIC THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

Purpose

Since Judaism does not have a set of dogmas, Jewish educators cannot teach what God is, in terms of a catechism. However, they can and they should help their students reach a personal understanding of God. By studying the many rich Jewish sources available to them, students can be helped to achieve a liberal Jewish conception of God. To facilitate this achievement, the teaching staff should offer a body of sources and beliefs from which to draw.

This chapter will discuss what the author believes to be basic theological concepts which can be taught in the religious school. How to impliment the teaching of these concepts is discussed in Chapter VI.

Proofs of God's Existence [1]

The first premise of Jewish theology is that God exists and is supreme. Therefore, teachers must indicate how this deduction is reached. The four basic means of proving God's existence and supremacy are the arguments on the basis of motion, first cause, design, and the mystery of the universe. These arguments are:

1. Motion. It is a physical law that matter cannot move without first being set in motion. Some power had to set the matter within the universe in motion.

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1. The material which is presented in the section on "Proofs of God's Existence" is found in many sources, usually written in a similar manner. The main source for this particular presentation is from Ben Zion Bokser. "How Shall A Modern Man Think About God?" (Jewish Heritage). Washington, D.C., Winter, 1959. p. 3.

2. First Cause. In refuting the atheist, who claims that the universe came about by chance and evolved to its present state, man must ask the atheist about the first cause. No matter how profoundly man theorizes about the evolutionary process, he is still left with a need for predicating a primal cause. And if God is accepted as this creative cause, then He must also be the Supreme Being.
3. Design. The design found within the universe is too strikingly perfect to be the result of an accident. It is even more difficult to disprove a creator than to prove one.
4. Mystery of the Universe. The last argument cannot be considered a proof, but more a basis for belief. When man reflects upon the vast mysteries of the universe, he will share with the ancient seer and the modern scientist a belief in a higher being than himself.

The Nature of God

Starting with the belief in God's existence, the student must then strive to understand at least a measure of the nature of God. But, at best, definitions of God are difficult and hazardous. Indicative of the Jewish reluctance to define God in human terms is a statement in Rabbi Joshua Haberman's paper on "The God-Concept For the 20th Century Jew," presented at the 44th General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

> No definition of God is possible in Judaism. He Who is without name is not only One, but unique and incomparable. Therefore no adjective applies to Him. The qualities ascribed to Him in the Bible and Prayerbook do not define His nature. They are attributes, qualities which we human beings attribute to Him as a result of the impression His work makes on us.[2]

Man can more definitely say what God is not. He is not a person, nor is He to be conceived anthropomorphically.

Whatever man attempts to say about God is only a feeble attempt at representing the infinite. Still man can attempt to achieve an understanding of God.

> Yet our ignorance of God, though stupendous and irremedial, should not be exaggerated. It is not total. If the knowledge we have of Him is not equal to our curiosity it is adequate for our needs. We know enough to have some insight into the scheme of things and a considerable idea of how we ought to comport ourselves. [3]

The first point of reference in understanding God and His laws is the universe. By studying natural law, which is God's creation, man can better understand how to seek harmony in human relations just as there is harmony in the universe:

> Judaism finds Him in the seasons. At winter the ground is hard and cold. Is it believable that this will yet bring forth life? Is it possible that the cold grave of winter will become the warm cradle of spring? Why does this happen? Why may it be counted upon?... The Jew who celebrates the first fruits at Shovous time is not surprised that the fig tree brought forth figs and not can openers, the rose bush bloomed as roses and not as napkins. And the Jew who stands in the suko is grateful that spring's hope and summer's promise were realized. The fruits did not just grow, they ripened, they became their accustomed selves. With this lulov and esrog the Jew saluted God and our children can find Him here just as well. [4]

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2. Excerpted from a printed paper of the talk by Rabbi Joshua Haberman, available through the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York. p. 3.
3. Milton Steinberg. Basic Judaism. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947. p. 41.
4. Eugene Borowitz. "Teaching the Knowledge of God" (Jewish Teacher). New York, March, 1959. p. 24.

If man contemplates the natural law with an eye toward understanding God and Godliness, certain conclusions appear to be valid. Concepts of unity, creativity, and law are inherent in natural law. Further, in following the thinking of Rabbis Borowitz and Steinberg as discussed in Chapter III, the qualities of mercy, love, justice, and personal salvation (as previously defined by Steinberg), are also inherent in the structure of the universe. Certainly this approach to the nature of the universe is a rewarding starting point for further inquiry at every level of understanding.

While man strives to understand God, he cannot but bear in mind the findings of science. Liberal Judaism does not depend on specific dogma. If science offers conclusions which are valid, and they conflict with one of Judaism's traditional ideas, then the traditional beliefs must be modified in the light of the newer findings. Religious man will fear science only if he refuses to grow in religious outlook.

Trying to Find God

There are many ways of trying to find God in personal experiences. Each should be explored with the child according to his particular stage of development.

1. Prayer is the most basic method in an attempt to find God. Prayer, by stimulating meditation and inspiring the exaltation of God brings the individual closer to the Divine. Rabbi Milton Steinberg lists various types of prayers:

—The prayer of contemplation, in which man meditates on God and His will;

—The prayer of adoration, in which the greatness and mystery of God are considered;

—The prayer of thanksgiving, in which...man puts into words his gratitude and indebtedness;

—The prayer of affirmation, which crystallizes the faith of the believer and his aspirations;

—The prayer of resignation, in which, his own devices and strength exhausted, man casts his burdens on the Lord;

—The prayer of penitence, wherein the guilty conscience confesses its guilt and appeals for purification from it;

—The prayer of protest, the pouring forth of human indignation against the injustices of the world...;

—The prayer of quest, in which...man gropes for light and direction...;

—The prayer of petition, in which the heart's desires are asked for...;[5]

2. Judaism feels that revelation has and is and will take place throughout history, the Bible being one magnificant example. Through the writings of Divinely inspired men, man gains more sensitive insights into the workings of the Divine. Typical of Judaism's belief in continued revelation is a passage from the Union Prayer Book:

> O Lord, open our eyes that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelation or reaching us through the seers of our own time; for Thou hidest not Thy light from any generation of Thy children that yearn for Thee and seek Thy guidance. [6]

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5. Milton Steinberg. Op. Cit. pp. 116-17.
6. The Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship. Cincinnati, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1947. p. 34.

3. Judaism has always considered ethical mitzvot as an essential method of approaching God and Godliness. This is a system whereby man tries to emulate God through practicing His teachings in his dealings with fellow men. "Judaism is not merely ethical, but ethics constitutes its.....essence." [7] In attempting to appreciate and practice the mitzvot, the student comes closer to finding God.

4. Ritual is an essential aspect of the Jewish approach. Through the educational and spiritual effects resulting from the practices of customs and ceremonies, man can gain greater understanding:

> The foundation of Jewish religious life is Jewish practice upon which are built habits of mind and attitudes to the universe. It is a case of: "we will do and then we will hear." First we obey God's commandments and then we learn to understand God's nature. We do not begin with theology, we arrive at theology. This is the historic Jewish way. [8]

5. Without Faith man cannot attain religious attitudes. Although proofs of God's existence were listed, these can be refuted by the non-believer to his satisfaction. Rabbi Akiba demonstrated his own faith when a skeptic asked him to prove the existence of God. Akiba, instead of answering, asked the skeptic, "Who made your suit of clothes?" When the skeptic answered, "Why, the tailor, of course," Akiba asked him to prove it. The answer was that no proof is necessary since the suit obviously could not have made itself. Then Akiba pointed out to this unbeliever that the universe could not have been created by itself any more than a suit of clothes.

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7. Leo Baeck: Essence of Judaism. New York, Schocken Books, 1948. p. 52.
8. Solomon Freehof. Reform Jewish Practices. Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1944. p. 4.

6. Intellect must always be included in the religious process. Faith without reason is as fallible as reason without faith. This idea, put in a somewhat different way was expressed by Albert Einstein: "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." 9

7. History can serve as an excellent source of religious understanding. Since, according to a statement quoted from Basic Judaism in chapter III, God is felt to be a redemptive power working within the historical process, man must study the historical process in order to find this power.

8. Biography is another means of attaining religious understanding. Judaism feels that those men who are Godly in their lives are a reflection of the Divine:

> Judaism found Him everywhere, and Judaism is our guide in finding Him today. Judaism saw Him through the lives of religious men, and so it remembered them and told their story. The Abrahams and the Moses' who have made God real by their presence and their acts in the past are part of a tradition coming down to the Rosenzweigs and Baecks of our own day. That is why we study the Bible heroes and those who followed them. These men met God and their lives were changed because of it. We teach them not as a simple history but as a way to arouse a response to God in our students. 10

9. By observing Nature, in its manifold glory, students can come closer to a personal communion with God:

> Children are enamored of beauty and religion makes its highest appeal to the child in its emphasis upon beauty in service, in nature, and in human life... The teacher can foster an appreciation for the wonder and beauty of the world and fuse it with the religious emphasis... A child quietly observing the setting sun on a mountain side, can appreciate the rich imagery of the 121st Psalm. The child can visualize the tired shepherds at the end

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9. Albert Einstein. Out of My Later Years. New York, Philosophical Library, 1950. p. 26.
10. Eugene Borowitz. Op. Cit. p. 24.

of the day, looking at the hills and getting strength from them. The words of the poem take on meaning. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence shall my help come? My help cometh from God who made heaven and earth. 11

Good and Evil

It is obviously impossible to answer the profoundly disturbing problem posed in the Book of Job, "why do the righteous suffer?" Judaism does not even really try. Rather, it just bows to God's inscrutable will. Nevertheless, Judaism does offer the student an approach to the understanding of good and evil:

> Our Rabbis in the Midrash called attention to the fact that gold becomes purified when heated in fire while baser metals are melted. One of them also said, "The flax worker does not beat the hard flax much, because it would split; but the good flax, the more he beats it, the better it grows." In much the same way, genuine human character is strengthened by suffering. This is another of the important choices we face as human beings. We can use our misfortunes or be used by them.[12]

This quotation does not really deal with the more striking tragedies of life; the illnesses and deaths in childhood and at the creative height of maturity. Religion cannot answer; each individual does his best to understand. And as Jews recite the Kaddish prayer, they reaffirm their faith in God: "Extolled and hallowed be the name of God throughout the world...". The following, found in the Union Prayerbook, before the recitation of the Kaddish, is typical of the Jew's deep faith and trust in God in spite of life's greates sorrow:

> In nature's ebb and flow, God's eternal law abides. When tears dim our vision and grief clouds our understanding, we often lose sight of His eternal plan. Yet we know that growth and decay, life and death all reveal His purpose. He who is our support in the struggles of life is also our hope in death

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11. Eric Friedland. "Teaching God to Children in Elementary Grades" (National Association of Temple Educators Newsletter). New York, May, 1958. pp. 3-4.
12. Roland Gittelsohn. Little Lower Than the Angels. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1955. pp. 293-94.

> We have set Him before us and shall not despair. In His hands are the souls of all the living and the spirits of all flesh. Under His protection we abide and by His love we are comforted. O Life of our life, Soul of our soul, cause Thy light to shine into our hearts, and fill our spirit with abiding trust in Thee. [13]

Judaism is intrinsically a religion of deed rather than creed. Innumerable approaches to a religious way of life are possible within the area of acceptable beliefs, as long as man observes the mitzvot. Sin is the failure to perform the mitzvot. The following is one set of definitions of sin:

1. Failing to use all our potential ability to its utmost.
2. Living our lives so that we contribute nothing to the further development of evolution beyond the point it had reached when we were born.
3. Failing to come close to the goal of ethical perfection.
4. Permitting others to do evil, without trying to stop them. [14]

As life progresses, every human cannot help but stray from the path of righteousness at least occasionally. According to the Midrash, even the most magnificent of Jewish leaders, Moses, disobeyed God when he struck the rock against His wish. The way to expiate sins is through a more intense effort to perform the mitzvot. Still, man must first understand and acknowledge his transgressions. The Yom Kippur services are a prime example of the confession of sin, the request for forgiveness, and the prayer for guidance in the future. Expressing these ideas, the following prayer is recited by

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13. The Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship., Op. Cit., p. 73.
14. Roland Gittelsohn., Op. Cit. pp. 206-7.

the Rabbi in front of the ark, before his congregation on Yom Kippur Eve:

> Father of mercies, in awe and deep humility, I stand before Thee on this Atonement Eve. In the midst of Thy people who look to me to lead them I approach the holy Ark. I have erred and sinned. Forgive me, I pray Thee. May my people not be put to shame because of me nor I because of them.
>
> In this solemn moment, O God, I lift up mine eyes unto Thee. Help me in the great task to which I have dedicated my life. Show me Thy way, and teach me to lead Thy children nearer to Thee. Help me to find the way to their hearts that I may win them for Thy service.
>
> Heavenly Father, let me hear Thy voice saying: Be strong and of good courage. Give me strength, give me understanding, give me faith, for Thou alone art my hope, O God, my Rock and my Redeemer. [15]

Judaism is reluctant to offer facile answers to the question of reward or punishment to be meted out for a good or evil life. There are various beliefs held, but these are not stressed by Judaism as a whole. This world is the most important world to Judaism and the reward for a good life is in leading a good life.

> They [modern Jews] retain faith in the deathlessness of man's spirit not only in its naturalistic connotations but in its beyond-this-life significance as well. They are sparing of guesses as to what the state of immortality may be like but firm in the conviction that in some fashion the human personality outlives its corporeal housing.
>
> Similarly they hold to the belief in Recompense, the trust that those who do the good somehow have good conferred on them, whereas those who devise evil, no matter what its form or object, work it also against themselves. [16]

Can one be ethical and not religious? From the long range standpoint, the answer would probably be "no." The wellspring of

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15. The Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship, Part II. Cincinnati, The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1945. p. 126.
16. Milton Steinberg. Op. Cit. p. 163.

morality is religion. One can embrace the moral concepts of religion without believing in religion, but these concepts will not survive the inevitable vicissitudes of life which future generations will experience without the regenerative effect of religion. Without the stamp of a Godly commandment, morality can be more easily perverted and/or lost in a time of conflict of interests.

Summary and Implications

This chapter dealt with four areas which are central to the religious growth of children. If children can be helped toward understanding these essential aspects of theology, then they will be better equipped to begin formulating their own God-concept.

There are four main arguments concerning the proof of God. These arguments are based on the need for predicating a power that set our universe in motion, the need for predicating a first cause of creation, the obvious design in the universe which indicates a designer, and the mystery that man feels that man feels within this vast universe.

Although it is difficult to describe God, attempts can be made. Man can better understand God's manifestations by studying natural law. Certain laws of Godliness seem to be self-evident within natural law, including: unity, creativity, law, mercy, love, justice, and personal salvation.

There are many ways of trying to find God in personal experiences. These ways include: prayer, revelation, ethical mitzvot, ritual, faith, intellect, historical study, biographical study, and observation of nature.

Judaism has only partial answers to the questions which arise in regard to why good and evil occur in specific situations. Rather, Jews are taught to bow to God's inscrutable will and lead a worthy life.

It is true that many of the beliefs held in later years are a result of that which he has learned and experienced as a child. Therefore, it is necessary that the theological concepts taught to the child are intellectually meaningful and emotionally significant. The child's God-concept will grow and change as he grows and changes, but it will probably remain essentially true to those common Jewish beliefs outlined in this chapter.

Chapter V — THE DEVELOPING CHILD

Purpose

Innumerable volumes of material have been published in the field of child development. Much of what has been produced is of great value to the Educational Director and religious school teacher. The material presented in this chapter is mainly drawn from the writings of Arnold Gessell and Frances Ilg,[1] although other books on child development cited in the bibliography were also utilized. The material is arranged in order to best meet the needs of this specific thesis, without attempting an exhaustive examination of the vast literature which is readily available.

The main groupings which are discussed are: the child in the primary grades, five to seven years old; the child in the intermediate grades, eight to twelve years old; the child in the confirmation department, thirteen through fifteen years old. This outline will also present an overall view of developmental trends. Growth patterns are indicated within each specific group as they affect the intellect, emotions, and religious and ethical development of the child.

Obviously, any discussion on child development, no matter how detailed, is only an approach to understanding the particular child and his grade. However, it can be a helpful guide for the teacher who is attempting to meet the needs and interests of children in a particular age group.

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1. Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg. Youth — The Years from Ten to Sixteen. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1956. Also The Child from Five to Ten. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1946.

The Child in the Primary Grades — Ages Five, Six and Seven

These children are no longer babies, but still exhibit many babyish tendencies. For the first time they are exposed to formalized learning situations. Because of the pliability of this age group, the attitudes created during their first exposure to school do much to shape their response to future learning situations.

1. Intellectual Development
   - A. Move from little conception of time and space to threshhold of understanding their own home, neighborhood, and school. They gradually can compartmentalize areas and periods of time to a slight degree.
   - B. Active imagination, sometimes blending fantasy and reality without distinction. Can differentiate by age of seven.
   - C. Cannot conceptualize.
   - D. Love to explore and experiment.
   - E. Enjoy dramatic play.
   - F. Short period of attention, up to thirty minutes by second grade.
   - G. Can enjoy an interesting story many times over.
   - H. Working toward ability to generalize.
   - I. Little oral or written ability, which improves by second grade.
   - J. Interest in nature.
   - K. Learn by doing.
   - L. Constantly ask questions.
2. Emotional Development
   - A. Very individualistic
   - B. Want responsibility.

C. Need and strive for praise and affection.

D. Move toward wanting freedom, but with parents standing right behind "just in case."

E. Starting to understand social relationships.

F. Very moody. Can be "angel or devil" depending on particular events in the recent past.

G. Tending toward more calmness and thoughtfulness.

H. Want social approval.

3. Religious and Ethical Development

A. Generally truthful.

B. Understand right and wrong in more elemental forms.

C. Along with increase in understanding of time and space, become interested in past and future.

D. Feel prayer can work wonders.

E. Can understand God as a creator and will easily accept God as a "miracle man" if taught that way.

F. In wanting social approval and approbation of adults, children will accept religious concepts taught by parents and teachers.

G. Want to be good.

H. Want to know more about God.

I. Gradually start to understand death and some of its causes.

J. Develop skepticism in small doses by the second grade.

The Child in the Intermediate Grades — Ages Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve

This in-between department offers wide and varied educational opportunities for a creative teacher. These children are old enough

to understand the lessons and work together with older students and teachers, while at the same time they have not yet reached the state of "knowing more" than the adults.

1. Intellectual Development
   A. Gaining good conception of time and space. Can think in terms of historical development.
   B. Interested in natural phenomenon.
   C. Able to compare and contrast.
   D. Can generalize to limited extent.
   E. One-half hour to forty-five minutes attention span limit.
   F. Beginning to express self will.
   G. Take ideas from adults and peer group, but usually depend on the adults for authoritative opinions.
   H. Like reading, especially history and biography.
   I. Can see themselves in relation to others.
   J. Are "liberal" in attitudes about other people.
2. Emotional Development
   A. Enjoy being with same age and sex.
   B. Respectful to adults and generally dependable, also can be moody.
   C. Tend toward hero worship.
   D. Want more independence.
3. Religious and Ethical Development
   A. Will follow the lead of parents, but can notice hypocrisy easily.
   B. Also influenced by attitudes of peers.
   C. Can differentiate between right and wrong on elemental level and will try to do right. Great sense of fairness.
   D. Are tolerant.

E. Will accept religion easily if it is understandable.

F. Have certain amount of skepticism, but they are not negative.

G. Will reject religious ideas if they are completely unsophisticated.

The Child in the Confirmation Department — Ages Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen

These children are probably the most interesting and certainly the most challenging of any group in the religious school. Their reactions and emotions are always at a high pitch of intensity. They react to everything, usually in a quite unpredictable manner, which is about the only thing that can be predicted about this age group. Above all, it is a crucial turning point in the formation of the adult personality.

1. Intellectual Development

A. Girls are usually more advanced than boys. Although this is true at all ages of childhood, it becomes especially pronounced during the first part of teen-age life.

B. Well oriented to time and space.

C. Well able to compare, contrast, generalize, and see causal relationships.

D. Can memorize well.

E. Good attention span if interested, but difficult and often impudent if not interested.

F. Good oral and written expression.

G. Environment is vital to mode of development.

H. Physiological changes affect learning ability. Children in the pubescent period often cannot concentrate due to phychological insecurity and real physical problems.

2. Emotional Development

   A. Go from one fad to the next.

   B. Learning social niceties.

   C. Great self-consciousness. Want to be accepted and liked.

   D. Strong desire for group identification.

   E. Resistance to adult authority, while needing adult to "back up."

   F. Desire adult status and privileges.

   G. Almost manic-depressive in moods.

   H. Often upset over seemingly minor causes.

   I. Freakish nature of growth is upsetting.

   J. Very interested in all aspects of sex.

   K. Often self-centered in outlook toward the world.

   L. Tend to exaggerate.

   M. Usually much better in public than at home.

   N. Start dating before they are really interested, but social pressure forces it.

   O. Will be very cooperative if motivated.

3. Religious and Ethical Development

   A. Become conscious of group service and will do good works without thought of reward. Can be very idealistic.

   B. Developing a sense of values, a moral code.

   C. Can understand feelings of others.

   D. Can see ethical shadings between black and white. Gradually comprehend that rules are changeable and the "spirit" of the rule is of most importance.

   E. Disillusioned by double standards of adults.

F. Having difficulty adjusting to rapidly changing ideas and ideals of modern society.

G. Attitude toward their religion can be affected by the religion's attitude toward sex.

H. Cannot be given glib answers, as they can easily detect sham.

I. Generally bored with religious services as found in Temples.

J. Taboos of religion usually turn children away; they need positive values.

Developmental Trends -- An Overall View

Religious educators must understand normative trends of development in order to better approach teaching an understanding of God. For as children grow in their ability to understand, they can grow, along with adults, in their idea of God. The following outline represents a summary of child development trends from age five through age fifteen.

1. Intellectual Development

A. Little children have no conception of time and space, but they achieve an almost complete mastery of the concepts involved by the time they are fifteen.

B. They move from an inability to conceptualize to a mastery of the process, if the concepts presented are of interest. Likewise, children move toward the ability to generalize.

C. They are always interested in learning and exploring new areas.

D. Their oral and written ability moves from near to nothing to a high level.

E. They move from only learning by doing to a point where learning by doing is just one of many learning methods.

F. Children are always interested in nature, although this interest

is more pronounced before the teen age years.

G. They grow from taking ideas almost exclusively from parents to a point where they reflect many of the ideas and attitudes of their peer group.

H. Children are basically liberal and their desire for the improvement of society usually increases with age.

I. Girls are more advanced than boys at every stage from five to fifteen years old.

J. Physiological changes always have an influence on children. This is especially true during the pubescent years.

2. Emotional Development

A. Young children are extreme individualists, but they grow in their ability to work in groups as they grow older.

B. They grow from an inability to handle anything but the slightest responsibility to an almost adult ability.

C. Children progress from the need for praise and affection at every turn to being reasonably independent of that need.

D. They need more and more freedom of action and are gradually able to utilize this freedom.

E. Their moods are constantly variable. Emotional situations are important to the creation of attitudes.

3. Religious and Ethical Development

A. Children develop from a bare understanding of right and wrong to potentially comprehending morality with its ethical shadings.

B. They move from a complete acceptance of any theology offered by sincere adults to skepticism.

C. Children change from having an anthropomorphic conception of God to various conceptions, but on a more sophisticated level.

D. All children inherently want to be good and find the ethical approach. The differences in age just bring about different methods.

Summary and Implications

Developmental trends of children in the primary, intermediate, and confirmation departments were discussed in outline form, in order to see their basic patterns of growth in the areas of intellectual, emotional, religious and ethical development. These specific developmental areas must be understood by the educator who is trying to teach theological ideas, just as the understanding of developmental concepts is vital in all areas of education.

> No body of content is pedagogically well organized unless it is organized in terms of mental growth. People grow into such powers and abilities as they are ever going to have. This simply has to be recognized in pedagogical practice if the curriculum is to live in the lives of human beings.[2]

Unfortunately, the logic of developmental education has not always permeated religious schools. Religious schools have often taught the right subject at the wrong time, when it comes to theology. If Jewish educators would take advantage of current knowledge of normative trends in child development, they could better evolve techniques of teaching an understanding of God. For as children grow in ability, they can grow in their idea of God:

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2. James Mursell. Developmental Education. New York, McGray-Hill Book Company, 1949. pp. VII-VIII.

> The God idea [for children] is in essence the same as for adults. It differs only in degree, not in kind. Instead of starting with theological concepts, we would start with human nature, with the child himself. Unconsciously and indirectly he would move from his fascination for nature's beauty and its laws to the wonder of social organization and its laws. As the child develops, he should be made to feel the urge to progress which manifests itself in nature and in humankind. He would come to think of God as that force in life which makes it purposeful, worthy, holy, When he moves to a place where he can grasp the unity of nature and see the rhythm working through and in life, he may understand the God idea in all of its nature implications with no feeling of contradiction between his early or later beliefs.[3]

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3. Eric Friedland. "Teaching God to Children in Elementary Grades" (National Association of Temple Educators Newsletter). New York, May 1, 1958. p. 4.

Chapter VI — THEOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM

Purpose

Chapters III and IV promulgated the assumptions that there is a liberal theology which can be taught to students and that the liberal view of mitzvot differs from the traditional one in content, but not in spirit. The next logical assumption is that educators can and should incorporate both theology and mitzvot within the curriculum. Since this approach is sophisticated and must be carefully graded according to comprehensibility, this chapter will discuss some means of incorporating theology into the curriculum.

First Rules

In attempting to create a curriculum which includes theology, three factors must be given close attention:

1. Understandability

Jewish theology is essentially sophisticated and cannot be taught to children as it was presented in Basic Judaism, which was written for adults. The first task is therefore to surmount the differences in conceptuability and reach the children in terms of their ability to grasp these ideas. Religious school teachers must be sensitive in their ability to distinguish between those ideas which can be grasped at each age level.

The teacher should introduce material by proceeding from the known to the unknown. Understanding can only be obtained if this basic rule of educational motivation is followed. Helping children to compare and contrast the unknown with the known

facilitates their comprehension and retention of new ideas.

Further, the creative teacher will, by his method of presentation, make the child feel that what he is learning is really worth learning. Without the feeling that the material is important, there will be little interest or comprehension.

2. Integrity

Teaching any sort of catechism to Jewish children is quite impractical. Educators might be able to indoctrinate any number of ideas into the minds of five and six year olds, but these ideas must eventually face the abrasive forces of the outside world.

More atheists have been created by institutions of higher learning than by any other group or institution. The reason is simple. Children are taught "orthodox" ideas, without interpretation and usually without later reinterpretation, i.e., "The Jews walked across the Red Sea," "Jesus was born of a Virgin," ect. When these ideas are exposed to the harsh light of impartial scientific analysis, which is encouraged in good universities, they cannot stand up. When some theological conceptions are doubted, then the remaining conceptions are cast into the realm of serious doubt.

Why even try to teach ideas which are not personally believed? Of what use is it to tell stories, implying that they are true by not stating otherwise, and then have to help the student unlearn them later, either in the religious school or outside of it?

It is quite obvious what harm can be done by sham. Besides, children can usually sense a lack of integrity and will rebel, even if not consciously.

3. Intellectual and Emotional Involvement

In our quest for rationality in religion, we must be cautious about creating too intellectual an atmosphere and forgetting about the emotional environment which is essential to creating religious feelings. Religion can never be only intellectual, or there would be no need for organized religion.

On the other hand, we must never forget that the intellect must be included in our studies and religious services. If this is forgotton, we cannot hope to retain the allegiance and devotion to Judaism of students who reach "the age of reasoning."

Curricular Approaches

Before deciding which specific ideas should be taught in each class, Reform religious educators must first think in terms of which general areas should be covered by the teacher in the classroom. In other words, what is the individual teacher trying to accomplish in the classroom which will help the child evolve a personal theology?

1. Teach a Living Faith

Religious Schools are not operating for the sake of operating, and likewise, the children are not learning just for the thrill of learning. The religious school has a point of view. There are many reasons why the child comes, but there is only one reason for furnishing the instruction. Jewish teachers are specifically

attempting to transmit Jewish values and beliefs, as distinct from other values or beliefs. The religious school should never degenerate into becoming a debating society which dabbles in every possible area of understanding.

A major stress on Jewish values and beliefs does not preclude inquiry into varying directions. Still, the religious school's aim in creating vast opportunities for examination of ideas is to gradually bring the child to a point where he will be "confirmed" into Judaism. If the statements concerning liberal Jewish beliefs found in the third chapter of this thesis are valid, then they should be incorporated in liberal religious school curricula.

> Our immediate and fundamental aim should be to develop a Confirmand who is deeply committed to Reform Judaism as his way of life and who possesses the necessary Jewish religious skills, feelings and understandings to enable him to appreciate the worthwhileness of his Judaism and to implement it in day-to-day living. [1]

The Jewish faith is not purely academic, although great stress is placed on academic achievement. One can be the finest Jewish scholar and also an atheist, a non-Jew or an apostate. In order to have a Jewry which is practicing and observant as well as learned, Jews must feel Judaism has meaning for them in their lives. Prayer and personal involvement are vital elements of a living faith.

Reform Judaism is laboring under one major handicap. In re-

1. Sylvan Schwartzman. Toward a New Curriculum For The One-Day-A-Week Reform Jewish Religious School. Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1955. pp. 9-10.

moving the non-ethical mitzvot from Reform practice, the most tangible involvement in the Jewish religion has been removed. Wearing a yarmulke, observing the dietary laws, following the Sabbath commandments, and the like are constant reminders of one's Judaism. Certainly, observing the mitzvot does not guarantee a mental Jewish belief as differentiated from a physical Jewish observance, but there is little doubt that it helps.

Reform Temples are increasingly stressing ritual as part of belief. Reform now actively stresses candle lighting, Seders, blessings before meals, and Confirmation and Bar Mitzvah programs which involve commitment. A living Judaism encompasses practice as part of the identification process. Typical of this newer thinking is the following resolution adopted at the 1937 Biennial Convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

> "Whereas, Reform Jewish Worship has allowed many symbols, customs, etc., of traditional Jewish Worship to fall into disuse; and,
>
> "Whereas, It is the sense of this Convention that many of these forms should be re-introduced:
>
> "Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, That this Convention recommend to its constituent Congregations, and to all Reform Jewish Congregations, that into its Sabbath Services be put, and made a part thereof, traditional symbols, ceremonies, and customs,..." 2

Liberal Judaism, be it of the Conservative or Reform variety, strives to create a generation of well rounded Jews: those who are Jewish intellectually, spiritually, and physically. "Coronary"

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2. Excerpted from Frederic Doppelt and David Polish. A Guide for Reform Jews. 1957. p. 5. (No city is given, published by the authors.)

Jews, the ones who cleave to their Jewishness only in their hearts, but not in their practices, are usually ephemeral at best. Ideally, the equation should be: Judaism is logical - plus the Jewish religion affects my life — plus Judaism is practiced in my everyday life — equalling the term Jew.

2. Teach From a Reform Jewish Standpoint

All too often, Reform Judaism is described in negative terms. "It does not observe two days of Rosh Hashanah." "Their members do not wear yarmulkes." "They do not keep kosher." Non-Reform Jews are not the only ones guilty of thinking about Reform in this manner. Many members of Reform Temples think more about what is not believed or practiced than about any positive tenets of Reform Judaism. Also, many Reform Jews are hardly aware of any basic difference between Conservative Judaism and the American Council for Judaism "universalism", and Reform Judaism.

The Reform movement does have specific, positive ideals and practices. Reform originated with the attempt to take the best from the Jewish tradition and thereby create a Judaism that is understandable and acceptable to modern man. Although Reform Judaism does not always look to the tradition for its practices, much is based on tradition. Reform Jewish Practices by Rabbi Solomon Freehof, offers excellent material on this subject.[3]

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3. Solomon Freehof. Reform Jewish Practices. Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1944.

Vitally important for every teacher in the Reform religious school is to study the history, development and raison d'etre of Reform Judaism. Especially useful would be Reform Judaism in the Making.[4] This study is necessary so that the teacher will not be as easily confused concerning what emphases and nuances should be given in the lessons.

3. Help the Child Build Up a Storehouse of Religious Experiences

The religious service in the Temple is one of many means by which a child might experience God. The classroom teacher and the religious school atmosphere can help to broaden these experiences. There are four general areas which are especially fruitful when investigated.

A. The Phenomenon of Nature

Nature offers a rich source for religious feelings. Who can help but feel a deep sense of religious communion when approaching nature? And who can view nature without a sense of reverence and awe? The teacher can stimulate this sense of reverence and awe in his pupil.

B. The Recurrent Aspects of Life

Life is continually renewed throughout the universe. Children are born and eventually have their own children. Vegetation dies in the winter and is reborn in the spring. Planets orbit the sun with astonishing regularity. Life ever continues in an endless pattern. Life's way is not

4. Sylvan Schwartzmen. Reform Judaism In the Making. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1951.

haphazard, it is logical.

C. Man In Society

Through observing and participating in everyday living in society, children can learn the all important ethical principle involved in the love of their fellow men. What have outstanding individuals accomplished in the service of humanity? How do people best work together? What can individuals hope to offer to society? How does religion affect man's actions in society? These are vital questions which should be investigated at every stage of a child's development.

D. Understanding the Unseeable

The invisibility of God creates real problems in comprehension. How can the child understand a power that is not seeable, or hearable, or feelable?

Probably the most commonly used simile in teaching about an invisible God is the comparison between God and electricity. Although no man can see electricity, man does know how electricity operates and therefore can work with it for his good. So it is with God. Although man cannot demonstrate God, he can strive toward a measure of the understanding of God and utilize this knowledge for the good of all.

Another good simile concerns the mental system:

> The child becomes conscious of dreaming during these early years. The distinction between the world of reality and the world of fancy is not easy for him to make. When he begins to sense the difference he is better able to

> cope with his fears. It must be a time of awakening when a child is first aware that his thoughts can travel unseen and that in fancy he can go beyond the nboundaries marked by his hands and feet, or his ears and eyes. There is something thrilling in the thought that our greatest powers are invisible — our power to think, to imagine, and to feel. How can a child really catch the significance of the invisibility of God until he has first realized the invisibility of his own psyche? [5]

4. Help The Child Grow In Self Awareness

An infant has no conception of anything but "self." All outside forces are seemingly operating in relation to the child's needs and desires. Gradually, the child learns about interacting with the ever-expanding horizon of society that is surrounding him. A growing child slowly takes a more active part in the world that is about him. Socialization proceeds from self, to family, to playmates, to classmates, on to all the varied worlds which the school child inhabits during the year.

The religious school is attempting to create an atmosphere in which the child will learn to relate to God spiritually and to his fellow man ethically. These relationships can only evolve as the growing child evolves in his understanding of working with others in society. Therefore, the religious school should aid the student to understand himself first and then to understand himself within whatever small or large society he lives in.

5. Stimulate Thinking, Analysis and Criticism

The teacher should act as a guide to thinking, but not as "the

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5. Sophia Fahs. Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage. Boston, Beacon Press, 1952. p. 55.

source of all knowledge". Each child should be helped to think through the ideas presented to him in order to assimilate knowledge. Textbooks, lesson plans, and workbooks are only of use when they serve as a force for stimulating religious thoughts and feelings.

Doubt is a stage of development. All ideas must be mercilessly subjected to every possible criticism. By wrestling with problems, the individual gains convictions. Those ideas which are not thought through, not analyzed and criticized, cannot withstand logical attack.

Each idea or study area presented in class must be worthy of thinking about. If units of study are presented as problems which are worthy of solution and they can grasp the imagination of the students, then the students will feel that the time expended in class is time well spent. Inattentiveness is often caused by a lack of direction and purpose.

Even though the teacher should act as an intellectual guide rather than an educational arbiter, it does not mean that classes are non-directive. The teacher, as a representative of a particular Temple, has certain opinions. Likewise, the books utilized and the lessons planned have a particular goal or set of goals in mind. Therefore, the area of thinking which is possible is limited by the material utilized and the presentation made.

Granted the basic circumscription by administrative choice of content, intellectual liberty must be encouraged. Children should

be helped at every opportunity to wander along varying roads of possibility, to play with ideas, to compare and to contrast.

> When it comes to teaching religion, we appear to be apprehensive of using the same problem approach which we apply so successfully to other fields. We shouldn't be. Religion is a system of attempted solutions to some vexing problems. The God idea must be in accord with the known facts of nature and history. It dare not be static but a dynamic, growing and developing idea. It must evolve from the child's experience after grappling with the problem. It does not mean we leave all of this development to the child. Teacher direction and guidance must serve unobtrusively. But the discussion should be conducted in the spirit of candor and open-mindedness. The teacher should be willing to confess that he does not know all the answers; that frequently he too is disturbed by perplexing and difficult questions. We must again regard our religion as something in the nature of a perpetual quest rather than a finished system of answers. [6]

Curricular Guidelines

Following from ideas presented in the previous chapters of this thesis, the author feels that general developmental guidelines can be offered to Educational Directors and teachers who want to bring a meaningful theology into the classroom.

1. The Child in the Primary Grades — Ages Five, Six and Seven

   A. This is the age when teachers can, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6). Primary age children accept many ideas readily. If the ideas accepted prove to be a worthwhile source of reference in future years, then the children will not

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6. Eric Friedland. "Teaching God To Children in Elementary Grades" (National Association of Temple Educators Newsletter). New York May, 1958. p. 3.

depart from them, despite the challenge of new ideas.

B. The children are eager to learn as much as possible about God. If this eagerness is encouraged on an experiential level, they will be prepared for studies of a more advanced nature in later grades.

C. While this age offers the richest opportunity for the inculcation of theological concepts, it is also the most dangerous age for misunderstanding theological concepts. Teachers must be extremely cautious about making sure that anthropomorphic ideas are avoided or properly presented.

D. The children are fascinated by nature. They should be introduced to the wonders that surround them: flowers, trees, the moon, the sun, and the stars. They should learn to notice the creativity of nature. Elemental forms of collecting and classifying help concretize lessons.

E. The children identify themselves with the people in their immediate surroundings — parents, teachers, friends, the postman, the milkman, etc. They should learn to feel how everyone works together for the good of all, which is the way our world operates. Only through cooperation are people able to live in this world. This learning helps the child build ethical values through the process of identification and helps his growth as a member of society.

F. Along with teaching children the importance of interaction within society through identification with positive aspects of adult life, the children should learn the importance of co-

operation within their peer group. They should be helped to learn that more can be accomplished through co-operation even from the standpoint of self-interest, than through self-indulgence. Learning to cooperate at this age will help the child build higher ethical concepts at a later age.

G. The children have elemental ethical concepts. They feel the difference in many cases between "good and bad," "right and wrong." Since each child wants to be appreciated and loved, the ethical concepts can be emphasized by showing how being right and good can produce the desired result from peers and adults.

One qualification should be added to the above remarks. Teachers must be wary of committing the grave error of withholding love for lack of good behavior. Discipline is always needed in any class, but withholding love should not be considered part of discipline. Receiving love is the inalienable right of every child and should be given without any conditions being postulated. In fact, the basic ethical lesson to be taught in the primary grades is to love and respect one another. Love and respect for fellow-men is one of the fundamental teachings of all religions and especially Judaism.

H. Children need self-expression. Creative prayer is a means for reaching toward God in an individual way. Each child, in his own way, according to his individual capacity, can express his maturing conception of God and the meaning of prayer, through prayer.

I. Children learn by doing. They are eager for challenges on their own level. Why not offer religious challenges as we so frequently offer other challenges? Through creativity in art, games, stories, dramatic play, audio-visual aids, and other pedagogic media, the child can be given the opportunity for gaining new insights, leadership experience, and self expression. These devices are utilized within every good Religious school throughout the world.

An example of how various pedagogic media can be utilized to promote theological understanding, the teacher could devote one session to the study of prayer. [7]

(1) The teacher would teach a prayer.

(2) The class would discuss the meaning of the prayer.

(3) The teacher would ask the children what prayers they know: night prayers, meal prayers, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers seeking guidance, etc.

(4) The teacher would tell a story of how a boy learned to pray or some variation on this idea.

(5) The children would discuss when and where one can pray and why one prays.

(6) The children would be assigned roles and act out a service at the Temple; one of them acting as a

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7. The particular outline utilized here is part of the teacher training program given at Temple Emanu-El in Birmingham, Alabama, where the writer is employed. For an excellent program on teaching Grade Two about "God's Wonders All About Us," See chapter IV of Rae Bragman's book, A Year's Program of Audio-Visual Units and Projects. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1959.

Rabbi, others would be members of a choir, several readers, a congregation, and even ushers and perhaps the make-believe president of the Temple sitting with the Rabbi on the pulpit. Pageantry always facinates children. They love to watch or re-enact vivid performances.

(7) The teacher would show the movie, "God's Wonders in Our Own Backyard," 8

(8) Children would discuss the movie.

(9) Children would be given the assignment of writing a prayer on "God's Wonders."

(10) Each child would then draw a picture embodying the theme of his prayer. This picture would be simple or complex, according to the insight and ability of the child.

(11) The children would go on a field trip to gather specimens from nature.

J. Since the children have a crude idea of the world outside of their immediate surroundings, lessons should be limited to understandable areas of knowledge. When the teacher stops outside of these areas, as in relating Bible stories, he should proceed carefully from known ideas to the historical stories. King David should in some way relate to father, or the president, or the principal, or any person or persons that

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8. The movie, "God's Wonders In Our Own Backyard," along with "God's Wonders in a Woodland Brook," and "God's Wonders in Flowers," are available through Contemporary Films, Incorporated, New York.

share some of King David's characteristics. Noah and the flood could be compared to a rainstorm that the children have experienced.

K. Because the children have healthy imaginations, they are ready for understanding the idea of an invisible God. They can understand that something exists without being obviously visible to their eyes. Still, on this primary level of understanding, basic theology and fairy tales may be confused. Nevertheless, the idea of an invisible God can be taught, pointing toward achieving a more intelligent understanding in later years.

2. The Child in the Intermediate Grades—Ages Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve

A. These children are becoming fascinated by science and logical procedure. It is a good time to bring forth basic scientific approaches to religion. Critical discussion of the proofs of God are in order. They can also discuss the various means of attempting to find God.

B. They are in the "scouting stage," when nature is something to be investigated and classified. This should be encouraged, as it will help the children become more aware of God's wonders and design in the universe.

C. The children can understand historical development, and are ready for systematic inquiries into the past. Along with Jewish history, there should be a side by side study of the

development of the idea of God and religious practices. This would be on a simplified level. How did the Jewish people think God acted and reacted during the time of Moses? How important was ritual during the time of Amos? Do you think people in Biblical times thought of God as having a shape (anthropomorphic) etc.?

D. At this age, children tend to identify with others. They might collect pictures of baseball players, or read extensively about Abraham Lincoln, or start a Perry Como fan club. Most children have many areas of identification and are always willing to add another hero to the galaxy. The teacher should widen the children's horizon by introducing men and women, past and present, who are worthy of being considered herees and are also righteous and religious. Certainly the military achievements of Judah the Maccabee or Bar Kochba can be fascinating to the children, while at the same time, the religious devotion of these two men can be inspiring and serve as an important lesson. Just as logically, men like Jonas Salk, Eddie Cantor, and Louis Brandeis, are good examples of how individuals have utilized a Jewish heritage in every day life in order to achieve admirable goals.

E. Potentially, the children are very idealistic. They can be stirred to working for any important cause that appeals to their imagination. If projects are offered which channel this idealism in directions which are worthwhile for a soon-to-be adult, and at the same time can teach important ethical lessons.

then, the student's horizon becomes vastly enlarged. The National Federation of Temple Youth has adopted a large variety of many-faceted learning and work projects, helping to teach the children what the Lord requires of them.

F. Children desire to be good. They want to gain adult good-will. Also, they can understand broad ethical concepts, though shadings of good or bad are often confusing. It is a good time to start with socio-dramas in discussing more elementary ethical situations which could occur in real life. It is also the time to indicate what the adult community expects and respects in the way of ethical behavior.

G. Pre-adolescents are becoming engrossed in their bodily functions. Along with growth spurts, they usually attain a certain amount of sex-education by the age of eleven and twelve. This is another opportunity for a healthy religious attitude to be fostered, and another aspect of God's wonders.

H. Creative prayer is equally valuable at this age.

I. These children also learn by doing, The suggested ideas in point I of the section on primary children are equally valuable, though on a higher level. A well-rounded program of crafts, music and drama are not educational frills, but an essential part of every creative school.

3. The Child in the Confirmation Department--Ages Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen.

A. This is the time to critically examine theology. What have others said? What do you think of what was said? How has religion changed in keeping with the changing world? What agreement is there between religion and science? Is there a conflict between religion and science?

B. The children are capable of understanding many adult concepts, assuming that some of the concepts must be simplified. Ideas concerning God, on an adult level, can be discussed.

C. These children are trying to understand themselves in terms of the adult world. It is an opportunity for showing them how their religion can be of help in dealing with the problems of maturation. The teacher can also show how Judaism accepts a normal interest in sex and seeks to place sex in its proper perspective. The correlation between logic and Godliness can be shown.

D. Natural surroundings can be conducive to prayer. Teen-agers, taken into a beautiful area, can gain a deeper sense of meaning from their religious strivings. [9]

E. Group pressure is very important to the teen-age child. If the religious educator can create an atmosphere in which the Temple's goals are also "the thing to do," then much has been accomplished. Wise Temple in Cincinnati has made post-confir-

9. An excellent movie, correlating prayerfulness and nature is "Reverence From the Book of Psalms," available through the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

mation classes and the National Federation of Temple Youth "the thing to do," with excellent results.

Enormous energies spill out in every direction. These energies can create positive as well as negative fads. Group music sessions, conducting of religious services, worthwhile projects, and activities of this nature can be just as exciting, granted good leadership, as any other possible activity. It is the best age for giving directions as to what the Lord requires of them.

F. The children resent authoritarian leadership in the classroom. They want to be able to discuss ideas without being forced to accept rigid conclusions. Therefore, theological ideas must be presented undogmatically.

G. Finer ethical shadings can be understood at this age. There is an understanding that black and white situations rarely occur. This is the time to discuss situations which involve ethics, but which have manifold implications, such as: What if you are undercharged on an item at the department store?, would you consider fraternities and sororities as ethically wrong?, What should you do if you do not like a boy and he keeps asking for dates?

H. Teen-age children are skeptical about most everything, including religion. The teacher should allow skepticism to gain a full hearing without attempting to stifle it. By stifling doubt, it will only come out in more virulent forms in later years.

I. It has been shown that most teen-agers profit more from a creative service than by participating in the regular ritual of the Temple. They should be encouraged to create their own forms of religious observances within the framework of Jewish ritual, thereby becoming more personally involved.

J. Teen-agers in a Reform Temple should have a good course in intrafaith. They should learn the whys and hows of traditional theology and practices. At the same time, they should know why and how Reform beliefs emerged from the tradition.

K. A study of other religions helps the Jewish child prepare for confirmation in his own religion. With the help of a good teacher, the child can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of other religious groups and will usually find the logic of Judaism best for his needs.

The Protestant Religious School

Since American Jews live in a predominantly Christian culture, it is important that teachers have some basic knowledge of what is being taught in Christian schools. It would be worthwhile in the classroom to compare and contrast Christianity's teaching methods with those of Judaism and thus prepare children for the world they live in.

The knowledge of God, in Christian schools, is taught by teaching about Jesus. Jesus was sent as God incarnate in order to show the people of the earth the nature of God.

> Phillip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet has thou not known Me, Phillip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. (John XIV:8-9)

Since the knowledge of God is gained through Jesus, the Christian gains his ethical insights by studying the life and teachings of Jesus. The Christian child is taught to predicate his actions on whether they would presumably be approved by Jesus.

An average Protestant religious school meets for thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, or possibly an hour at the most. [10] The remainder of Sunday morning is spent in church. The material presented is necessarily circumscribed by the limitations of time, however, the time alloted is at least partially dictated by the limited goals of the Protestant schools. Protestants are teaching in their schools what they consider to be the only road to salvation. The road to salvation is found in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. By learning about God and Godly commandments through understanding the message of Jesus the Christ, the child achieves the desired learning. In terms of curriculum, this means that the children spend their time in studying various aspects of the two Bibles, along with church ceremonials. Historical study begins with Adam and Eve and continues through the time of the Apostles, with a small amount of further time being alloted to the growth of Christianity with special reference to the particular denomination of the Church. Post-Biblical revelation is usually taught in terms of these individuals who have experienced the truth of Jesus. Mitzvot, per se, are negated.

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10. According to Mrs. F.F. Ballard, Director of Children's Work for the Birmingham Sunday School Council.

According to Mrs. F.F. Ballard, Directior of Children's Work for the Birmingham Sunday School Council, "The curricula of most Protestant Sunday schools are very similar because the National Council of Churches works out lesson plans for those who are affiliated, which is the vast majority." Therefore, a look at the Methodist curriculum ought to show the general trend of Church teaching, granting denominational differences.

A Manual on Goals and Materials for Christian Teaching in Methodist Church Schools outlines the Methodist educational goals.

> Age 2 and 3. Nursery -- Beginnings of ability to recognize the word God, and dawning wonder that may reach out toward Him at any time. Recognition of the word Jesus and a few ideas about Him. Recognition of the Bible as a special book. Consciousness of always having been "in" the Church and a sence of security there. Beginnings of the joys of fellowship with others.
>
> Age 4 and 5. Kindergarten — Ideas of God, who loves and cares through people; realization that one can talk to God anytime, anywhere. Ideas of Jesus, as the special person who really lived, was friendly to children, helped people. Discovery of the Bible as the special Book which tells about God and Jesus. Joy and satisfaction in the Church, a place where people work, worship, play. Habits of Christian living; awareness of right and wrong; beginning of appreciation on contributions of others; a desire to help.
>
> Age 6, 7, and 8. Primary — A growing response to God as Creator, who works through natural laws; learning that God is the father of all people. Appreciation of Jesus as friend and helper who taught what God is like. A growing understanding of the Bible as the Book containing stories of Jesus and of other people who felt God's nearness; a guide for living today. A sense of being a part of the Church fellowship. A concern for the welfare of others at home and around the world.
>
> Age 9, 10, and 11. Junior — Understanding of God as Father, Creator, and dependable power in the Universe. Appreciation of the kind of person Jesus was, leading to commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Skill in using the Bible in study, worship and everyday living. Increasing appreciation of the Church, its history, organization, and function. Ability to make decisions in accordance with the life and teachings of Jesus. Sensing the meaning of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

> Age 12, 13, and 14. Intermediate. -- Understanding of and sense of fellowship with God the Father. Growing understanding of and commitment to Jesus Christ. Increased knowledge of the Bible. Understanding of the story of the Church and becoming active in Church membership. Achievement of Christian attitudes and relations at home, in the community, and in boy-girl relationships. Understanding of the missionary enterprize. Understanding of Christian beliefs. [11]

There is a debate raging among churchmen as to whether Biblical criticism should be incorporated into the curricula and thus changing the approach to many lessons. For the most part, seminaries accept much of Biblical criticism, but Sunday school teaching usually remains traditional. This problem is pointed out sharply in Dr. Randolph Crump Miller's book Biblical Theology and Christian Education:

> There is a great gap, however, between what the Biblical scholars believe and teach and what the layman and Church school teachers know about the Bible. This may be discovered in almost any adult Bible class, in most preaching, and in almost all lesson materials for Church schools, It is almost as if all the discoveries of more than a century are the private property of the scholars. This ignorance is found at its worst among those who protest the translation of a passage in Isaiah because it is inconsistant with their theory of prophecy. But the intelligent layman who is proud of his knowledge of the Bible often believes that Moses wrote the Pentateuch or that there is no difference in the historical value of the Snyoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. Some of this ignorance is due to an unwritten conspiracy of silence on the part of the clergy who should know better, but who are afraid or find it expedient not to upset the settled beliefs of their congregations. [12]

In reading through various books on Protestant education and in talking with the leaders of various denominations, this writer found that church schools face the same basic problem as is faced by Jewish schools -- "How do we get most of the parents to follow through in making

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11. A Manual on Goals and Materials for Christian Teaching in Methodist Church Schools, Nashville, (Methodist) General Board of Education, 1958. pp. 28-29.
12. Randolph Crump Miller, Biblical Theology and Christian Education, New York, Charles Scribner and Sons, 1958. p. 191.

the children feel that Sunday school is important." In fact, it is interesting to note that many Christians feel that the Jewish educational system, in addition to the home celebrations and the interest shown by the parents, is more successful in inculcating religion than the Christian groups. Robbie Trent, in Your Child and God, makes the following statement:

> It is a recognized fact that the Jewish people, as a group, have been very successful in training their children religiously. A look at some of their methods may be suggestive. Note the activeness of the prayer life. It includes celebrations of feast days and thanksgiving services, candlelighting in which the child joins in the eating of the unleavened bread in which he is a part. 13

Summary and Implications

This chapter was concerned with the means of incorporating theological studies in the curriculum. It offers suggestions as to how material should be graded and taught in order to aid comprehension.

All material presented in the realm of theology should be understandable, have integrity, and involve both the intellect and emotions, Without these three elements, theology can never be meaningful, Further, the goals of theological education should always be consciously present in the mind of the educator. This thesis suggests five general goals for the educator in a Reform religious school: help the child build up a storehouse of religious experiences, teach a living faith, teach from a Reform Jewish standpoint, help the child grow in self awareness, stimulate thinking, analysis and criticism.

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13. Robbie Trent. Your Child and God. New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941. p. 96.

Following from the material presented throughout the thesis on liberal Jewish theology and developmental education, curricular guidelines are offered toward the teaching of theology on the primary, intermediate, and confirmation department levels. Some examples of Christian education were also mentioned as a means of contrast and comparison to Jewish education.

No two educators think exactly the same manner. Even disciples of the finest teachers add their own nuances to ideas which they learn. The suggestions embodied in this chapter are limited in their scope. There are intended to stimulate the individual educator to think theologically in reference to the curriculum. It is not expected that any or all of the ideas will be accepted in their entirely. It is hoped that the ideas will facilitate thought and discussion and lead educators in positively oriented directions.

What is the absolute concern of this chapter is the stress on direction. This author believes that theology can be included in the religious school curriculum in many ways, be it explicitly or implicitly. There are ideas which children can understand about a liberal theology. And finally, theological concepts should be graded and taught in children according to the conceptual ability of the particular age level.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This thesis was based on the premise that theological concepts should be taught in the liberal Jewish religious school. Since liberal Jewish theology often differs in basic beliefs from the tradition, liberal Judaism must formulate its own theological concepts and teach them. In accordance with this thinking, three hypothesis were projected concerning "Teaching the Idea of God in the Religious School": there is a need for aiding students gain theological understanding, there is a liberal Jewish theology which can be taught in the religious schools, and the ideas of developmental education can be utilized in designing a program of theological study.

In order to explore the above hypotheses, the following areas were investigated: how theology is currently being taught in Reform religious schools, the strengths and weaknesses of currently used textual material, trends in liberal Jewish theological thought, basic theological ideas which should be taught to children, those areas of developmental education which should be of interest to religious educators, and means of incorporating theology in the curriculum.

It was found that theology is being taught in most Reform religious schools through the use of specific courses or units and texts. According to the results of the survey discussed in Chapter I, educators feel that they have had only limited success in helping the children achieve a personally meaningful theology. Greater direction is desired and needed from the Educational Director and Rabbi.

Theologically oriented textbooks are constantly improving. They are offering consistant quantitative and qualitative development, along with better illustrations and more interesting reading material. Non-theologically oriented textbooks which refer to theological concepts are often inconsistant and have little qualitative development.

In exploring the idea of a liberal Jewish theology, this thesis concludes that there is a definite area of liberal Jewish beliefs. Therefore, theology can be taught. Further, there are certain theological concepts that can and should be taught to children in the religious school.

Some principles of developmental education were discussed as they can serve as invaluable tools for the creative educator. Curriculum development must be based on the developing abilities of children.

Before incorporating theology in the curriculum, educators must understand basic pedagogical principles and theological goals. They can then proceed to correlate the conceptual ability of children with their desired goals.

Implications

Religion is by definition, "An awareness or conviction of the existence of a supreme being, arousing reverence, love, gratitude, the will to obey and serve..." [1] By its very nature, a religion must maintain certain beliefs, whether broad or narrow in scope. A religion must have an attitude toward the Deity and principles by which a person is expected to live.

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1. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, G. & C. Merriam Company, 1956. p. 715.

Judaism is a religion. Liberal Judaism has the problem of making specific its beliefs and goals. Otherwise, a tradition cannot be taught, because a tradition does not exist.

Liberal Judaism definitely wants to pass on a tradition, as exemplified by the following statement of the 1924 Commission on Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

> The aim of Jewish Education is to enable the young to participate fully and loyally in Jewish life by bringing to them the feeling of the presence of God in their lives, in nature, and in history. It is to make them understand that God demands as His service, the sanctification of life...In short, to teach them the life which Judaism inculcates.[2]

Liberal Jewish educators have the duty to teach a liberal Jewish tradition. In order to teach this liberal Jewish tradition, specific goals must be established and then followed in curricular planning.

Liberal Jewish beliefs should be taught. The children should be instructed in a manner that is in consonance with the ideals of liberal Judaism.

Better teacher training programs are needed. The teachers need greater guidance in liberal Judaism and pedagogy.

More and better textbooks are needed. There are not enough worthwhile theologically oriented textbooks and most of the non-theologically oriented textbooks need revision in those areas which touch on theology.

Educators must be aware of the developmental pattern of children. Only those conceptions which are presented in an understandable manner and on the specific level of conceptual ability should be taught.

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2. Excerpted from Richard Hertz. The Education of the Jewish Child. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1953. p. 21.

Curricula should be designed to develop quantitatively and qualitatively.

Children should be taught to think theologically. They can be helped to achieve a personally meaningful theology if they are offered basic theological ideas and helped to think through these ideas.

But this thesis is only a hesitant beginning in an almost unexplored area. No road to salvation is offered to the Jewish educator, but accomplishable goals are indicated. It is not easy to be a teacher in a liberal religion. Dogmatism is the path of least resistance. Still, for those who sincerely believe that liberalism in the Jewish religion can be viable and understandable must exert every effort in teaching these ideals to every new generation. In order to further the work of liberal Jewish education, there are three areas of research which need special attention in future studies:

1. Investigation of the best means of teacher training.
2. Continued and increasing study of liberal theology with special emphasis on its meaning for man in a constantly changing society.
3. Investigation into the means of enlisting parent aid and interest.

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THESIS DIGEST

This thesis was based on the premise that theological concepts should be taught in the liberal Jewish religious school. Since liberal Jewish theology differs in basic beliefs from the tradition, liberal Judaism must formulate its own theological concepts and teach them. In accordance with this thinking, three hypotheses were projected concerning "Teaching the Idea of God in the Religious School": there is a need for aiding students gain theological understanding, there is a liberal Jewish theology which can be taught in the religious school, and the ideas of developmental education can be utilized in designing a program of theological study.

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