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A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

by

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fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

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DIGEST

One of the greatest challenges facing the modern educator is the task of adapting the theoretical advances of educational psychologists and researchers to the practice of the classroom. For the religious educator, the work of such developmental psychologists as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, seems to have particular relevance if closely examined.

This thesis is an attempt to investigate the theories of these developmentalists and to apply their findings and theories to religious education, particularly to Reform Jewish Education.

Beginning with a brief examination of the proper goals of religious education, in terms of appropriateness and feasibility, the work then turns to an extensive examination of the proper methodology of religious education in the specific areas of theology and ethics in light of the research of developmental psychology.

The child's view of theology, as presented by Jean Piaget in several of his works, is studied with an emphasis on possible alternative approaches to presenting theological ideas and thinking to the pre-formal operational child.

Lawrence Kohlberg's division of children's moral thinking into six developmental stages serves as the basis of the next chapter. His conclusion, that each child must pass through each of the six moral stages, has obvious implications for the presentation of ethics in the religious school curriculum.

The penultimate chapter is devoted to specific recommendations for the religious educator derived from the theoretical groundwork that has preceded it. The difficulty of translating theory into practice is stressed.

The final chapter presents an examination of ten religious school text books currently in use in the Reform Jewish religious school in light of the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg. Some thoughts are offered on the appropriateness of content and methodology of each.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most important trend in modern education involves
the incorporation of the theories of developmental psychology into the
formulation of educational theory and practice. Foremost among these
developmental theories (and closely associated with the name of Jean
Piaget) is the idea that a child's accumulation of concepts and abstract
reasoning ability is a qualitative process, dictated not only by environ-
mental factors but also by the genetic-biologic structure inherent in
each human being. Piaget states that every child passes through several
stages of intellectual development each with its own tendencies and
limitations.

The implications for education are myriad. For the theories
of Piaget and other developmental psychologists dictate, in many cases,
the most suitable means to reach educational ends. Quite often these
means will be in contradistinction to "traditional" educational methodology.

For the religious educator these ideas are particularly relevant.
The inherent conceptual framework of religious ideas and beliefs deserves
close scrutiny in light of the research and theories of Piaget. Yet,
though religious education has responded to some of the innovations and
experimentations current in educational circles (most notably that of
"affective education"), it has failed to respond to the work of the
developmentalists.

One reason for this glaring oversight is that these theories,
if examined carefully, would necessitate a re-formulation of the goals

of religious education. Properly understood, the current research in learning and development would eliminate, as either impractical or impossible, the current stated goals of most religious educational institutions, assuming (very charitably, perhaps) that most of these institutions have definable goals. Certainly, those institutions or movements which have failed to state specifically their purposes would have great difficulty in incorporating any innovations or improvements.

The first task for the educator (as well as the first one in this essay) should be to clearly define the desired goals or behavioral objectives of a given educational process. This is in the realm of philosophy, and is certainly a matter of opinion, and not fact. The first chapter of this essay will be a discussion of what this writer thinks are the proper goals of religious education.

Given the list of the goals of religious education, the next process will involve the selection of those goals which relate to the intellectual development of the child. (Those goals unrelated to this development will be dealt with briefly, only with respect to their feasibility or lack of it.) The selected goals will be examined in light of the theories of Piaget, and specific recommendations will be made with regard to the methods best suited for achieving the ends. If, in any case, an examination indicates that the formulated goals would be impossible to achieve, then they would be eliminated from the list of goals.

Finally, the concluding chapter of this essay will examine some of the current textbooks, curricula, and programs of Reform Jewish education, in an attempt to analyze their validity and applicability

according to the conclusions drawn in the previous section. This will not be intended as a critique of existing materials and programs, rather it should be seen as an effort to delineate both the strong and weak points in each, in order to ascertain how each can best be employed.

THE GOALS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is difficult not to be an apologist when writing of the purposes of religion and religious education. From Marx' "opiate of the people" to Freud's "illusion" and beyond, religion and faith have been deeply challenged by the major currents of intellectual thought since the Enlightenment:

> A widespread opinion flourished in the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Aufklarung (or Enlightenment) - namely, that though religion as traditionally understood was outmoded and would eventually pass into the history of bygone ages, it did contain one element of value. That moral element it contained was, indeed, the essence of religion. The rest, being excrescence, was eminently expendable. If only popular religions could be shorn of the superstitious accretions that encumbered them, they would be found to contain a moral core that was worth preserving.
>
> That view continued to be widely represented in German, American, and English thought during the nineteenth century, alongside Hegel's view of religion as a sort of metaphysic for the kindergarten.[1]

From this challenge has arisen new defenders of religion. Realizing that the traditional reasons for adherence to a particular set of beliefs, dogmas, and rituals could no longer be advanced, they felt constrained to arrive at new justifications for the continuation of the institution of religion. For example, Moses Phillippson, one of the first "enlightened" Jews was described by his biographer:

> Here in this house, Philippson often told me, he quite clearly realized what a beneficial influence religion is able to exercise upon its adherents. When . . . Herr Wertheimer would come home from synagogue on the eve of the Sabbath or one of the other holidays and step into the brightly lighted room, his family would

gather lovingly about him and, in accordance with the
old Jewish custom, beg for his blessing. As he tendered
the blessing to them with a joyous heart, he seemed to
resemble more an angel of light than an earthly creature;
a heavenly joy radiated from his eyes and in those blissful
moments he would certainly not have exchanged his heaven-
ordained lot with the richest and greatest of men. Peace
and contentment reigned undisturbed in his heart and in
his house, and in every circumstance of life he found in
his faith the mightiest of supports. False, so-called
enlightenment has unfortunately driven this heavenly bliss
from many a family . . . .[2]

Though rejecting the tenets of Orthodox Judaism, men like

Philippson recognized that there was a value, perhaps esthetic, perhaps

spiritual, in some of the customs and rituals. As educators, these

early "reformers" faced the difficult task of combining the "best of

both worlds" into their educational philosophy. The tension and

ambiguity must have been great. Michael Meyer writes of these reformers:

Nor was the educative task of these men an easy one.
Because they advocated secular studies, they were denounced
as heretics by the strictly orthodox, while the out-and-out
assimilationists would have nothing to do with any institu-
tions furthering Jewish education. The educators, for their
part, waged continuous warfare on the remaining hadarim which
they felt hindered the process of emancipation and social
integration. Here they were aided by the various German
governments, which issued decrees eliminating these remnants
of the traditional Jewish education. At the same time the
educators complained bitterly of those parents who provided
their children with no Jewish education whatever. They claimed
that a child from such a home grows up alienated from the
Jewish community.[3]

Eventually religion would have its modern champions. Those

who would defend religion and faith as valid on its own grounds, who

would not view religion as a means for the propagation of morality, of

keeping order in the society, or as a nostalgic pleasantry. No, these

philosophers and psychologists recognized the inherent value of a well-

founded belief in the divine and the formalization of that belief into a religious framework. Erik Erikson, the noted psychologist, writes:

> The parental faith which supports the trust emerging in the newborn, has throughout history sought its institutional safeguard (and, on occasion, found its greatest enemy) in organized religion. Trust born of care is, in fact, the touchstone of the actuality of a given religion. All religions have in common the periodical childlike surrender to a Provider or providers who dispense earthly fortune as well as spiritual health; some demonstration of man's smallness by way of reduced posture and humble gesture; the admission in prayer and song of misdeeds, of misthoughts, and of evil intentions; fervent appeal for inner unification by divine guidance; and finally, the insight that individual trust must become a common faith, individual mistrust a commonly formulated evil, while the individual's restoration must become part of the ritual practice of many, and must become a sign of trustworthiness in the community. We have illustrated how tribes dealing with one segment of nature develop a collective magic which seems to treat the Supernatural Providers of food and fortune as if they were angry and must be appeased by prayer and self-torture. Primitive religions, the most primitive layer in all religions, and the religious layer in each individual, abound with efforts at atonement which try to make up for vague deeds against a maternal matrix and try to restore faith in the goodness of one's strivings and in the kindness of the powers of the universe.
>
> Each society and each age must find the institutionalized form of reverence which derives vitality from its world-image - from predestination to indeterminacy. The clinician can only observe that many are proud to be without religion whose children cannot afford their being without it. On the other hand, there are many who seem to derive a vital faith from social action or scientific pursuit. And again, there are many who profess faith, yet in practice breathe mistrust both of life and man.[4]

If Erikson's words are to be taken to heart, then the challenge is to ascertain what "world-image" is current and operates in the mind of a modern individual, and then to establish the "institutional form of reverence" that can accurately reflect that image. It is a difficult challenge.

William James, the great psychologist of religious experience, listed five characteristics that broadly delimited the religious experience:

> Summing up in the broadest possible way the character-istics of the religious life, as we have found them, it includes the following beliefs:
>
> 1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance;
>
> 2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end;
>
> 3. That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof - be that spirit "God" or "law" - is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and pro-duces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world.
>
> Religion includes also the following psychological characteristics:
>
> 4. A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism.
>
> 5. An assurance of safety and a temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections.[5]

The task is to ascertain which of these five areas of religious experience still have validity today; which additional areas that may be encompassed under the rubric of religion can be attached to this list; and finally which aspects of the religious can be successfully taught in a formal religious educational setting.

It is that third and final question which is the central pro-blem of this essay. Which of the valid components of religion and faith can be taught? The question is one of educational epistemology that is a perplexing one indeed. As stated previously, the work of Jean Piaget provides some interesting insights into the question "what can be taught?".

There is, however, a prior question, "what should be taught?".
It is beyond the preview of this essay, but it cannot be completely
ignored. Any educational process is in danger of becoming a mode of
indoctrination. Religious education is particularly open to that charge.
Ivan Illich, foremost among modern-day educational iconoclasts, puts it
bluntly:

> The claim that a liberal society can be founded on
> the modern school is paradoxical. The safeguards of individual
> freedom are all canceled in the dealings of a teacher with
> his pupil. When the schoolteacher fuses in his person the
> functions of judge, ideologue, and doctor, the fundamental
> style of society is perverted by the very process which should
> prepare for life. A teacher who combines these three powers
> contributes to the warping of the child much more than the
> laws which establish his legal or economic minority, or re-
> strict his right to free assembly or abode.
>
> Teachers are by no means the only professionals who
> offer therapy. Psychiatrists, guidance counselors, and job
> counselors, even lawyers, help their clients to decide to
> develop their personalities, and to learn. Yet common sense
> tells the client that such professionals should abstain from
> imposing their opinion of what is right or wrong, or from
> forcing anyone to follow their advice. Schoolteachers and
> ministers are the only professionals who feel entitled to
> pry into the private affairs of their clients at the same time
> as they preach to a captive audience.
>
> Children are protected by neither the First nor the
> Fifth Amendment when they stand before that secular priest,
> the teacher. The child must confront a man who wears an
> invisible triple crown, like the papal tiara, the symbol of
> triple authority combined in one person. For the child, the
> teacher pontificates as pastor, prophet, and priest - he is at
> once guide, teacher, and administrator of a sacred ritual.
> He combines the claims of medieval popes in a society constituted
> under the guarantee that these claims shall never be exercised
> together by one established and obligatory institution -
> church or state.[6]

Though Illich's anti-religious bias is apparent, his admonition
must be taken to heart both by religious and secular educators. If it

is the role of religion both to preach and to "counsel", as one might
argue, then it is incumbent upon the religious educator not to combine
the two. A more moderate, but equally telling, caution is echoed by
the psychiatrist, R. D. Laing:

> We must be very careful of our selective blindness.
> The Germans reared children to regard it as their duty to
> exterminate the Jews, adore their leader, kill and die for
> the Fatherland. The majority of my own generation did not
> or do not regard it as stark raving mad to feel it better to
> be dead than Red. None of us, I take it, has lost too many
> hours' sleep over the threat of imminent annihilation of the
> human race and our own responsibility for this state of
> affairs.[7]

The words of Laing and Illich should be the starting point for
any educational venture. They should not lead, however, to inertia and
despair.

Starting with a clear mind, what are the valid components of
religious education? For the purposes of this essay, four aspects of
religious education will be put forth:

I. Theological. This would include any aspect of religion that deals
with the world outside the empirical universe. It is almost totally
in the realm of speculation. It would include a belief in God, the
nature of an after-life, the efficacy of prayer, and many other questions
often associated with religion.

II. Moral. The valuation and evaluation of human action and interaction.
This has been, over the centuries, the sine qua non of religious education.
The idea of teaching an individual to act properly, presupposes that
proper action can be first defined and then transmitted. This is the
most challenging and perplexing area of religious education.

III. <u>Affective-Psychological</u>. No aspect of human life or learning is without an affective component. In religious education, the way an individual feels is of primary importance. A belief in God, or faith of any kind is in no small part a product of "feeling" and not "knowing" or "thinking". The crucial component of "religious identity" also falls within this realm.

IV. <u>Cognitive</u>. Those aspects of religious education that deal with facts, history, language, ritual, etc. are classified under the heading "cognitive" religious education. The teachability of this area is not in question - its relative importance in a religious curriculum may be. One important nuance of this area is the idea that every fact has an affective aspect. An individual will be much more inclined to learn something, if it has a positive affective concommitant, or if it has an aspect of familiarity.

It is impossible to draw well-defined lines between these four areas. There are shared elements in each. For example, the crucial religious attitude and view on death and the after-life illustrates the flexibility of the categories. Primarily the response to death would no doubt be a psychological or affective response. There also is a theological response, i.e. what does death mean in the context of a supernatural phenomenon. There is an element of the moral insofar as an individual must decide what is the proper response to death, in terms of human action. Of course, there are the purely cognitive components of death, as well. Rabbi Leonard Troupp astutely pointed out the difference between a child's and an adult's attitude and perception of death:

> We will point out that as a person progresses in
> chronological and intellectual age, he will also go

through many different concepts or attitudes about death.
Thus a four-year-old's concept of death and dying will be
as different from a nin-year-old's concept as will the
adult's concept. Each age, then, will have its own psycholo-
gical attitude or concept of death and dying.[8]

Troupp presents the differences in perception of, and response
to, death as a "given". He then goes on to examine the proper ways
to respond to that set of givens when death arises. The thrust of this
essay will be to begin with the same set of givens (i.e. the child's
perception of the world) and attempt to examine how to employ those
conditions in an educational context.

The central problem of this essay will be to ascertain which
aspects of the above four components of religion can actually be taught,
in a meaningful way. The first step is to recognize that a child has
a different perception of the world. This is the great theoretical
insight of Piaget. The question remains, "what can be taught?"

THE METHODOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Having delineated the four components of religious education, the task remains to assess each for the feasibility of presentation, and to recommend a possible methodology for presentation, based on current research. As for the former question, one could simply let it go by quoting Bruner's famous epigram:

> We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. It is a bold hypothesis and an essential one in thinking about the nature of a curriculum. No evidence exists to contradict it; considerable evidence is being amassed that supports it.[9]

It would be unfair to Bruner, however, to let it stand thus; he adds a cautionary word:

> Research on the intellectual development of the child highlights the fact that at each stage of development the child has a characteristic way of viewing the world and explaining it to himself. The task of teaching a subject to a child at any particular age is one of representing the structure of that subject in terms of the child's way of viewing things. The task can be thought of as one of translation.[10]

In this case, Bruner is simply stating that a subject matter can be taught at any age, not that it should be. It is probably safe to state that within the four broad areas of religious education, there is appropriate material for teaching and learning. The feasibility of any specific idea or aspect of these areas has to be examined in its own context. To return to the original example of death, one might say that the theological aspects of death could be taught to a primary youngster. One may doubt the wisdom of such a curriculum, not only

from a psychological standpoint (i.e. that such a lesson might be traumatic), but also from a purely pedagogic one.

For the purposes of this essay the question will be examined regarding two of the four areas. The cognitive realm, one must assume, is eminently teachable. The best methods for presenting a particular set of facts may be in question, but a sufficient amount has been written on the subject to warrant its exclusion here. Insofar as the higher, and more abstract cognitive areas are in question, that will be covered under the category of theological components of religious education, as well as the moral component. The cognitive abstractions outside those two areas (i.e. mathematics, physics, etc.) are covered in the secular school system.

The affective-psychologic component of religious education, while highly relevant and important, cannot be covered adequately in this essay. Every aspect of education, religious or secular, has vast implication for the psyche of the individual. Religious education is in great part involved with personality and integration of identity. The attempt of this essay to discuss religious education, outside of that context is highly artificial. It is a necessary artificiality in that a given discipline must be examined first purely on its own ground. Ultimately the incorporation of the recommendations of this study into the practical religious school curriculum, must be done in concert with the insights of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. The child studied in this essay is one without anxiety, Oedipus, and sibling rivalry. It is the pure mind of the child.

The two realms that will be explored are, then, the theological and moral. There are some common points between them. Research indicates that the development in both realms is qualitative and step-wise. The basic starting point for an understanding of how the child views these areas, and others of like complexity, must be the realization that a child's perception of reality is qualitatively different than an adult's. This is in direct contradistinction to the ideas held quite recently by educators and philosophers. Slightly over ten years ago, another student at the Hebrew Union College, Lawrence Meyers, could conclude a chapter in his Master's thesis with the quote:

> The God idea (for children) is in essence the same as for adults. It differs only in degree, not in kind.[11]

It can be demonstrated that this is not the case. Therefore, teaching about God, or creation, or evil can only be done once one discovers how the child is inclined to view the particular subject, depending on the age and developmental level of the child.

The essay turns now to an in-depth examination of the theological and moral components of religious education.

THE CHILD'S VIEW OF THEOLOGY

It is necessary to reiterate at the outset that the discussion
of a child's concept of God, the world, or morality does not operate in
a vaccum. The components involved in the thinking process of a child
(or any individual) are myriad and complex. David Russell's discussion
of children's thinking is extremely relevant:

> Thinking can never be considered a purely intellectual
> process; emotional, personal factors are a part of all thinking
> processes. The immediate stimulus to thought may arise as
> part of an emotional situation. The percept associated with
> the stimulus is usually influenced by autistic factors.
> The child hears what he wants to hear, reads what he wants
> or needs to read. Even in more objective situations, feelings,
> habits, and personality characteristics may all influence
> the direction of the train of thought, the goal or solution,
> striven for or reached. A child may react conservatively
> to a problem because of his desire for security. Children
> think about a problem not only because they are curious,
> but because of their desires or fears or ambitions. The
> child or adult is often unaware that his thinking is thus
> restricted by the influence of habit, stereotype, or emotion.[12]

With that statement clearly out in front, it is important to
keep in mind, that in spite of Russell's appraisal, it is the design of
this essay (and also that of Piaget's research) to consider children's
thinking as a "purely intellectual process". After it can be discovered
what the limitations and implications of this intellectual process are,
that the research is combined in a study of the whole child.

Piaget's conception of thinking and learning is not the classical
stimulus-response approach. He formulates what he refers to as a
"genetic epistemology", very much in concert with Cartesian philosophy:

> Classically, learning is based on the stimulus-response
> schema. I think the stimulus-response schema, while I won't

> say it is false, is in any case entirely incapable of
> explaining cognitive learning. Why? Because when you
> think of a stimulus-response schema, you think usually
> that first of all there is a stimulus and then a response
> is set off by this stimulus. . . . I am convinced that the
> response was there first. . . . A stimulus is a stimulus
> only to the extent that it is significant and it becomes
> significant only to the extent that there is a structure
> which permits its assimilation, a structure which can integrate
> this stimulus but which at the same time sets off the response. . . .
> The stimulus is really a stimulus only when it is assimilated
> into a structure and it is this structure which sets off the
> response. Consequently, it is not an exaggeration to say that
> the response is there first. . . . Once there is a structure
> the stimulus will set off a response, but only by the inter-
> mediary of this structure.[13]

The mind then is not the "tabula rasa" of the empiricists. However,

Piaget readily admits that the exact process of intellectual creation

is still somewhat a mystery. Piaget equates the process of discovery

and thinking in the child with the creative novelties of a Kant or a

Freud. The nature of these discoveries and their relationship to the

mind, and to reality are important epistemological questions, that are

prior to any theory of development.

These few examples may clarify why I consider the main problem

of genetic epistemology to be the explanation of the construction of

novelties in the development of knowledge. From the empiricist point

of view, a "discovery" is new for the person who makes it, but what is

discovered was already in existence in external reality and there is

therefore no construction of new realities. The nativist or apriorist

maintains that the forms of knowledge are predetermined inside the

subject and thus again, strictly speaking, there can be no novelty.

By contrast, for the genetic epistemologist, knowledge results from

continuous construction, since in each act of understanding, some degree

of invention is involved; in development, the passage from one stage to the next is always characterized by the formation of new structures which did not exist before, either in the external world or in the subject's mind. The central problem of genetic epistemology concerns the mechanism of this construction of novelties which creates the need for the explanatory factors which we call reflexive abstraction and self-regulation. However, these factors have furnished only global explanations. A great deal of work remains to be done in order to clarify this fundamental process of intellectual creation, which is found at all the levels of cognition, from those of earliest childhood to those culminating in the most remarkable of scientific inventions.

Rejecting the notion that the idea of God implies the necessity of a God who instilled that idea, the modern psychologist attempts to ascertain how ideas about God and the world originate in the child's mind. Piaget will argue that a child's thinking is only in part shaped by experience and by stimuli.

For example, one tendency Piaget discovered in the young child was that of "artificialism". This concept will be discussed at length presently. Note will be taken, at this point, merely of Piaget's conclusion about its origins:

> In conclusion, it does not seem possible to explain the generality and tenacity of child artificialism solely by the pressure of education. We are, on the contrary, faced by an original tendency, characteristic of child mentality, and penetrating, as we shall attempt to show, deep into the emotional and intellectual life of the child.[15]

Similarly, with each of the tendencies in children's thinking, only some aspects can be explained by way of education and environment.

At the outset, it is necessary to review somewhat briefly the classification of child development as presented by Piaget. In each succeeding level the child is able to think more abstractly. The tendencies discussed here regarding the theological aspects in the thought of children apply to each stage, to a lessening estent. It is important to keep in mind that a higher level of abstraction does not necessarily replace a lower one, and may only add to it. The logical inconsistencies do not necessarily provide a mutual exclusivism. A child may, at one and the same time, hold that God cannot be seen, and yet believe that God is a "man", for example.

The stages of development, as summarized by Sullivan, are as follows:

1. Sensorimotor stage (0 to 2 years)

2. Preoperational stage (2 to 7 years)

   a) preconceptual thought (2 to 4 years)
   b) intuitive thought (4 to 7 years)

3. Operational stage (7 to 16 years)

   a) concrete operational thought (7 to 11 years)
   b) formal operational thought (11 to 16 years)

Sensorimotor thought (birth to about 2 years) refers to those behaviors which are preverbal and are not mediated by signs or symbols. At birth the child mediates with the world with inborn reflex schemas and has no conception of object permanence. During this period the child is concerned with objects as objects. Thus, when a toy is hidden from his view, he shows no searching movements, since he has no internal representation of the objective world (i.e., object schemas) when not perceiving it. Gradually object permanence develops through repeated experiences with the world. As the child constructs object permanence through experience, primitive concepts of space, time, causality, and intentionality, which were not present at birth, develop and are incorporated into present patterns of behavior.

The second of Piaget's stages is preoperational thought (about age 2 to 7 years). This stage is further divided into two sub-stages: preconceptual thought (transductive), which extends from age 2 to about 4, and intuitive thought, which extends from about age 4 to 7.

a) The substage of preconceptual thought marks the beginning of what Piaget (1960) calls conceptual intelligence. In contrast to sensorimotor intelligence, adaptations are not beginning to be mediated by signs and symbols, particularly words and images. During this period, the child develops what Piaget calls the "symbolic function," or imagery. The main concern during this period will be with such activities as imitation, play, and the preconcepts shown in language behavior.

b) The substage of intuitive thought appears at approximately age 4 and marks the halfway house between preconceptual thought and the more advanced stage of concrete operations. The thought exemplified in this stage is illustrated in the following problem. The child is presented with two small glasses, A1 and A2, which are identically the same in height and width dimensions. The child places one bead in each glass alternately until both are filled. Glass A2 is emptied into a taller but thinner glass B. The child in the preconceptual stage thinks that the amount of beads has changed in the process, even though he says no beads were removed or added. The child says that there are more beads in B, since it is taller than A, or that there are more beads in A1, since it is wider than B. The child is centered on one aspect of the situation, "height" or "width". Because the child cannot hold the centerings simultaneously, he is unable to solve the conservation problem. The child in the intuitive stage still remains prelogical, but decenterings occur where previous centerings led to absurd conclusions. Thus the child who estimated that there are more beads in the taller glass because the level has been raised centers his attention on height and ignores width. If the experimenter continues to empty the beads into the thinner and taller glass, there will be a time when the child replies that there are fewer beads in the taller glass, since it is too narrow.

The stage of operational thought marks the advent of rational activity in the child. Up to this time the child demonstrates a logic (transductive) which is quite different from that of the adult members of his species (i.e., inductive and deductive).

a) Concrete operational thought. The first substage of operational thought is labelled "concrete operations". Piaget (1960) defines an operation as an internalized action which can return to its starting point, and which can be integrated with other actions also possessing this feature of reversibility.

Operations are "mental acts" which were formerly actions with reversible properties. Piaget calls the operational structures between the ages of 7 and 11 years "concrete" because their starting point is always some real system of objects and relations that the child perceives; that is, the operations are carried out on concrete objects. The emergence of concrete operations is often a sudden phenomenon in development. Piaget (1960) attributes their emergence to a sudden thawing of intuitive structures which were up to now more rigid, despite their progressive articulation.

     b) Formal operational thought. The substage of formal operations (11 to 16 years) marks the emergence of vertical decalages, that is, the ability to make vertical separations by solving problems at a level which transcends concrete experience (the area of horizontal decalages). Formal thinking marks the completion of the child's emancipation from reliance on direct perception and action. In contrast to the concrete action-oriented thought of the child, the adolescent thinker goes beyond the present and forms theories about everything. This thought is considered "reflective" since the adolescent reasons on the basis of purely formal assumptions. He can consider hypotheses as either true or false and work out inferences which would follow if the hypotheses were true.[16]

Having presented the theoretical framework for Piaget's general developmental scheme, one can see that it lends itself most readily to the child's perception of physical reality. There is a certain amount of extrapolation necessary in ascertaining a child's thinking vis-a-vis non-concrete ideas, and, of course, the equally difficult problem of translating his theories into pedagogical directives.

In his work, The Child's Conception of the World, Piaget presents three specific tendencies of children who have not yet reached the level of formal operations. He also presents, in the introduction, a clear exposition of his methodology, in arriving at his conclusions. Piaget states at the outset that his tact will be that of pure observation. He states:

     Observation must be at once the starting point of all research dealing with child thought and also the final control on the experiment it has inspired.[17]

Piaget also attempts to impose nothing of the adult world upon the children being observed. For example, in an interview situation, he would employ questions that are typical of the kind that age child would normally ask:

> We may thus state the first rule of our method. When a particular group of explanations by children is to be investigated, the questions we shall ask them will be determined in matter and in form, by the spontaneous questions actually asked by children of the same age or younger.[17]

This methodology has been maintained by Piaget throughout his studies. The results of his studies, therefore, should indicate the natural propensities of a child's thought.

The three tendencies of children outlined in The Child's Conception of the World are what Piaget refers to as "realism", "animism", and "artificialism". Students of anthropology will recognize these terms as ones often applied to the thinking of "primitive" peoples. The interrelationship of the child's conceptual development with that of the historical continuum of civilization is an interesting addendum to Piaget's theories, and one he, himself, has touched upon. It is quite beyond the scope of this essay, however.

These three aspects of children's thinking represent a qualitative differentiation from the adult thinking process. It is important to keep in mind that the actual thought or belief in the child or adult may not differ at all - it is rather the logical framework that surrounds that thought.

An example of the coincidence of child and adult thinking comes with regard to the category of "artificialism". Traditional religious beliefs contain a good deal of what Piaget calls "artificialism".

Piaget himself cites the creation epic in Genesis as a prime example of
"artificialism". That does _not_ mean that an adult who accepts the
literal meaning of the Bible, is thinking like a child. The child would
accept the "artificial" origin of the universe even without knowledge
of the story. It would be an idea that would literally spring from the
child's mind. Piaget refutes that artificialism is a product of "re-
ligious education", as some of his critics maintain:

> To regard this artificialist interest as entirely due
> to religious education is a hypothesis that cannot be borne
> out by analysis. A very pronounced artificialism may, in fact,
> be found among deaf-mutes or with children who are too young
> to have understood or generalized the religious teaching that
> they may have received. The ideas of the deaf-mute d'Estrella
> on the origin of the stars (Chapter VIII, Introduction) and
> his ideas of meteorology (Chapter IX) have, in fact, been
> given. Another deaf-mute, Ballard, also quoted by James (loc.
> cit.), imagined that thunder was caused by a great giant, etc.
> Also there are the questions of children as young as the ages
> of 2 or 3 asking "who made the world?", "who puts the stars
> in the sky at night?", etc. Such questions have obviously
> preceded any religious teaching. But, even supposing - what is
> far from proved - that all the children between the ages of
> 4 and 12 examined had been directly influenced by the theology
> of the Book of Genesis, there remain three reasons for main-
> taining that the artificialist tendency we have noted is in
> part at least spontaneous.
>
> In the first place, we have been struck by the fact that
> the majority of children only bring in God against their will
> as it were, and not until they can find nothing else to bring
> forward. The religious instruction imparted to children between
> the ages of 4 and 7 often appears as something foreign to the
> child's natural thought, and the conceptions evoked by this
> teaching lack both the subtlety and the intricacy of convictions
> that make no appeal to a divine activity.
>
> Secondly, even if we admit that the child's artificialism
> is an extension of the theological artificialism imposed by
> education, it remains to be explained why the child, as has
> been shown, thus extends to everything conceptions wherein the
> religious significance remains so vague, and still more why
> this extension obeys laws instead of differing from child to
> child. Thus why do all the youngest children think that

Geneva is older than the lake? And how shall we explain such a general tendency as that which regards the night as made of black smoke, the sun as a fire produced by the smoke from the roofs, etc. If there was here nothing more than a simple extension of a type of explanation they had been given, it would seem that these conceptions ought to vary from child to child. But such is not the case.

Thirdly, and this is the most important objection to be opposed to the theory under discussion, the child's real religion, at any rate during the first years, is quite definitely anything but the over-elaborated religion with which he is plied. As will be shown in the course of this chapter, our results entirely support the thesis of M. Bovet according to which the child spontaneously attributes to his parents the perfections and attributes which he will later transfer to God if his religious education gives him the opportunity. In the problem that concerns us now, it is, therefore, man who is thought to be omniscient and all-powerful, and it is he who has created all things. As we have seen, even the sun and moon and the sky are attributed to the activity of man and not of God, in at least half the cases. Moreover, when the child speaks of God (or "des Bons Dieux", as several boys said) it is a man they picture. God is "a man who works for his master" (Don), "a man who works to earn his living", a workman "who digs", etc. In short, God is either a man like other men, or else the child is always romancing when he speaks of him, in the same way that he speaks of Father Christmas and the fairies.[18]

It is Piaget's third point that is most telling for religious education. The pre-operation child, despite any religious training or education, will attribute many of the aspects of God to man. Piaget also endorses the efficacy of religious training in the transfering of these attributes from man to God at a later stage.

Though the practical implications of this thesis will be discussed further on, it is important at this point to speculate upon one or two of the truisms that have become associated with education, and particularly religious education. First there is the statement, "Never teach something that will have to be contradicted later on in the child's education." Secondly, Bruner's statement quoted previously that any

subject can be taught to any age children in some intellectually honest form. These two statements, as well as others like them, must be re-examined in light of the discoveries of Jean Piaget, particularly with regard to the "theological aspects" of religious education.

THE CHILD'S VIEW OF MORALITY

What is the basic nature of man? This is among the most ancient and controversial of all philosophical questions. In recent centuries the tendency has been to assign the behavior of the individual to the particular set of environmental circumstances that surround him. It has become increasingly obvious to social scientists and educators that this explanation falls somewhat short.

Piaget was among the first to recognize that "moral" behavior followed a developmental sequence, similar to the logical nexus. That parallelism does not, in and of itself, address itself to the question of the origin of sucha sequence. Nor does it address itself to the problem of the individual who, for whatever reason, does not develop an "adult" moral conscience. In The Moral Judgment of the Child, Piaget offers the following discussion:

> This concordance of our results with those of historico-critical or logico-sociological analysis brings us to a second point: the parallelism existing between moral and intellectual development. Everyone is aware of the kinship between logical and ethical norms. Logic is the morality of thought just as morality is the logic of action. Nearly all contemporary theories agree in recognizing the existence of this parallelism - from the a priori view which regards pure reason as the arbiter both of theoretical reflection and daily practice, to the sociological theories of knowledge and of ethical values. It is therefore in no way surprising that the analysis of child thought should bring to the fore certain particular aspects of this general phenomenon.

> One may say, to begin with, that in a certain sense neither logical nor moral norms are innate in the individual mind. We can find, no doubt, even before language, all the elements of rationality and morality. Thus sensori-motor intelligence gives rise to operations of assimilation and construction, in which it is not hard to see the functional

equivalent of the logic of classes and of relations.
Similarly the child's behavior towards persons shows signs
from the first of those sympathetic tendencies and affective
reactions in which one can easily see the raw material of all
subsequent moral behavior. But an intelligent act can only
be called logical and a good-hearted impulse moral from the
moment that certain norms impress a given structure and rules
of equilibrium upon this material. Logic is not co-extensive
with intelligence, but consists of the sum-total of rules of
control which intelligence makes use of for its own direction.
Morality plays a similar part with regard to the affective
life. Now there is nothing that allows us to affirm the
existence of such norms in the pre-social behavior occurring
before the appearance of language. The control characteristic
of sensori-motor intelligence is of external origin: it is
things themselves that constrain the organism to select which
steps it will take; the initial intellectual activity does
actively seek for truth. Similarly, it is persons external
to him who canalize the child's elementary feelings, those
feelings do not tend to regulate themselves from within.[20]

Given the extreme importance of external events upon the de-

velopment of morality in the child, one might be inclined to imagine

that it would be fairly easy to inculcate a certain moral feeling in

a child. Research has shown that not to be the case. Lawrence Kohlberg

has worked extensively with children in an attempt to discover exactly

how they respond to moral dilemmas, and the reasons for their responses.

Like Piaget he found evidence of a developmental sequence in children,

and he inferred from his research:

> Such evidence of developmental sequence in moral attitudes
> and concepts is believed to be of great importance for
> conceptions of the process of moralization. It indi-
> cates the inadequacy of conceptions of moralization as
> a process of simple internalization of external cultural
> rules, through verbal teaching, punishment, or identifi-
> cation. In contrast, the evidence suggests the existence
> of a series of internally patterned or organized trans-
> formations of social concepts and attitudes, transformations
> which constitute a developmental process.[21]

Like the child's view of God and the world, the child approaches

morality from a set orientation, which can perhaps be modified, but

it can never be changed from a child's view to an adult's view without the concommitant developmental steps.

The problem of developing a set of morals extends far beyond the laboratories of the clinicians. The difficulties of developing a moral consciousness are complicated, no doubt, by the exigencies of modern life. Psychologist Robert J. Havighurst comments:

> Modern man and modern education are faced with the task of developing or discovering a set of values which are in harmony with modern knowledge of the nature of the world and of man. At present a large part of modern society lives in a state of moral anarchy, half-heartedly obeying traditional moral principles which people are afraid to analyze because they feel certain the old principles cannot stand the scrutiny of modern eyes. And so modern man recognizes no divine moral law, but bows to elaborate necessity, economic and political.
>
> Modern society divorces its world-view from its value-system. This is not deliberate, and no one is happy about it. The result is bewildering to a young person. He seems to be alone with the task of formulating his own goals and aspirations in the light of his scientific knowledge of the nature of man and the universe. Too often, his teachers and his parents do not or cannot help.[22]

The question is "is it a matter of 'cannot' or 'do not'?" Can a teacher or parent actually take steps to increase the degree of moral awareness in a child? William James gave his prognosis on the way to improve "moral training" in the schools in 1908. It sounds surprisingly in tune with the modern view of moral development:

> I should increase enormously the amount of manual or "motor" training relatively to the book-work, and not let the latter preponderate till the age of 15 or 16.[23]

James recognized, as do Piaget and Kohlberg, that moral development is related to the child's overall world-view. Although there are a great number of mitigating factors and intangibles, moral development can be delineated by a careful examination of children at various

stages in their intellectual development. Piaget attempted this in
The Moral Judgment of the Child; more recently, Kohlberg, expanding on
the work of Piaget, postulated the following six levels of moral de-
velopment:

> Level I. Pre-Moral Level -
>   Type 1. Punishment and obedience orientation.
>   Type 2. Naive instrumental hedonism.
>
> Level II. Morality of Conventional Role-Conformity -
>   Type 3. Good-boy morality of maintaining good relations,
>   approval of others.
>   Type 4. Authority maintaining morality.
>
> Level III. Morality of Self-Accepted Moral Principles -
>   Type 5. Morality of contract and of democratically
>   accepted law.
>   Type 6. Morality of individual principles of conscience.[24]

More concretely, here is an example of each of the six stages
of morality as expressed by children at each level, concerning the
"worth of human life". The stories posed to the children by Kohlberg
involve the "morality" of stealing drugs to save a life, and the mercy-
killing of a terminally-ill patient:

> Stage 1 - The value of a human life is confused with the
> value of physical objects and is based on the social status or
> physical attributes of its possessor. Tommy, age ten: (Why
> should the druggist give the drug to the dying woman when her
> husband couldn't pay for it?) "If someone important is in a
> plane and is allergic to heights and the stewardess won't give him
> medicine because she's only got enough for one and she's got
> a sick one, a friend, in back, they'd probably put the stewardess
> in a lady's jail because she didn't help the important one."
>
> (Is it better to save the life of one important person
> or a lot of unimportant people?) "All the people that aren't
> important because one man just has one house, maybe a lot of
> furniture, but a whole bunch of people have an awful lot of
> furniture and some of these poor people might have a lot of
> money and it doesn't look it."
>
> Stage 2 - The value of a human life is seen as instru-
> mental to the satisfaction of the needs of its possessor or of

other persons. Tommy, age thirteen: (Should the doctor "mercy kill" a fatally ill woman requesting death because of her pain?) "Maybe it would be good to put her out of her pain, she'd be better off that way. But the husband wouldn't want it, it's not like an animal. If a pet dies you can get along without it - it isn't something you really need. Well, you can get a new wife, but it's not really the same."

Stage 3 - The value of a human life is based on the empathy and affection of family members and others toward its possessor. Andy, age sixteen: (Should the doctor "mercy kill" a fatally ill woman requesting death because of her pain?) "No, he shouldn't. The husband loves her and wants to see her. He wouldn't want her to die sooner, he loved her too much."

Stage 4 - Life is conceived as sacred in terms of its place in a categorical moral or religious order of rights and duties. John, age sixteen: (Should the doctor "mercy kill" the woman?) "The doctor wouldn't have the right to take a life, no human has the right. He can't create life, he shouldn't destroy it."

Stage 5 - Life is valued both in terms of its relation to community welfare and in terms of life being a universal human right.

Stage 6 - Belief in the sacredness of human life as representing a universal human value of respect for the individual. Steve, age sixteen: (Should the husband steal the expensive drug to save his wife?) "By the law of society he was wrong but by the law of nature or of God the druggist was wrong and the husband was justified. Human life is above financial gain. Regardless of who was dying, if it was a total stranger, man has a duty to save him from dying.[25]

The child's moral development is an orderly process. It also must be noted that, just as in the theological realm, the stated ideas and beliefs are not classified in a developmental sequence, it is rather the reasons and motivations leading to a certain idea or belief. Just as either a five-year old child or a mature adult can appropriately believe in the authenticity of the "creation epic", so may a child or an adult appropriately favor mercy-killing in a given instance, only the reasoning process will be different.

The implications of the findings of Piaget and Kohlberg for religious education will be discussed in the next chapter. It is crucial to remember at this point that in both the moral, intellectual, and theological realms of thinking, each of the stages must be successfully passed through in order to arrive at the next. John Wilson, in discussing the moral development of the child, emphasizes this very point:

> The child's development is, in this sphere as in any other, to be viewed as a continuous growth-process, in which the earliest phases are relevant and necessary to the final outcome. It is a process which is essentially an orderly one. Anyone who has lived with young children will doubtless find the word "orderly" a strange term to apply to a child growing up: it refers not to his behavior, but to the succession of stages in relation to each other. There may be considerable variation in the ages at which different children attain various stages of development, but the order of the stages themselves is invariable. Each one is characterized by its own needs, or developmental goals; and it is necessary for the needs of each period to be satisfied, for the foals to be accomplished, before the child can move on successfully to the next.[26]

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE METHODOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The modern educator has to examine the overall mental develop-

ment of the child in order to ascertain in what ways the child can be

successfully led to progressive states of knowledge. It is generally

accepted that modern education differs from traditional or classical

education not so much in ultimate goals ("to develop the mind of the

child"), but in the methodologies appropriate to that goal. As John

Renner, leading science educator, so aptly puts it:

> Before the actual position of many contemporary edu-
> cators on mental development can be fully understood, their
> most basic disagreement with the classicists must be examined.
> Because the traditionalist believes that the human mind is an
> object that can be sharpened, he accepts that it is, as Whitehead
> expressed it, a "dead instrument". This position is not
> acceptable to most contemporary thinkers in education; in fact,
> some denounce it vigorously. For example, "I have no hesitation
> in denouncing it (the position that the mind is a dead instrument)
> as one of the most fatal, erroneous, and dangerous conceptions
> ever introduced into the theory of education." Whitehead,
> however, did not only denounce the classical view; he firmly
> stated what he believed the mind to be when he said, "The mind
> is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, recep-
> tive, responsive to stimulus. You cannot postpone its life
> until you sharpen it."
>
> The position of most contemporary educators, then, has its
> roots in the thesis that the human intellect is active and
> receptive and, if it is to be developed, such development
> must be accomplished through direct, active involvement in
> those experiences which result in intellectual growth. The
> types of activities which can be used to produce mental de-
> velopment depend upon the age of the learner and the level
> of development he occupies. Regardless of his age or level,
> if development is to take place, the learner must have exper-
> iences that engage his active, receptive mind. The fact
> that experience is a prominent factor in developing the intellect
> was expressed by Locke in the seventeenth century and Jean
> Piaget and John Dewey in the twentieth century.[27]

What, then, are the specific recommendations that can be inferred from the work of Piaget and Kohlberg that apply to religious education? It is important to realize that the work of these individuals and other developmentalists does not often take a practical orientation. They are concerned with description and only incidentally prescription. It is the role of the religious educator to extrapolate from the research, while keeping firmly in mind that the process of education is measured by one criterion alone - success. Irrespective of the theoretical groundwork, if a child truly learns, the means need little justification.

Four tentative conclusions may be offered as the implications for the methodology of religious education that may be drawn indirectly from the previous discussion in this essay:

I. At each age of development the child's view of the world is qualitatively different from the next. All teaching must be geared to the level of understanding of the listeners. Occasionally this will indicate that a particular area or content can have no possible meaning for a given class. It must then be put aside. The emphasis cannot be on Bruner's "intellectual honesty", but rather on comprehensibility. Occasionally something may have to be re-taught in a substantively different way, Edwin Cox writes:

> However careful their previous education both in content and presentation, there is a period of transition at the age when children begin to think abstractly. They begin to be capable of understanding their previous religious learning at greater depth, and they need to be helped systematically to rethink their religious ideas at this stage. Unless this is done there arises a conflict between what they have been taught about the nature of the world in the religious instruction lesson and what they are told in their scientific studies.

> If they can be shown that the religious view and the scientific
> view of reality are not two alternative and mutually exclusive
> explanations, but two different ways of looking at the same
> thing, each valid and useful in its proper context, they are
> not likely to reject religious thoughts for good.[28]

The religious educator has to establish the fine line between responsi-

bility to a philosophy or content area and the responsibility to the

learning of the child. These two responsibilities will not always

coincide.

II. In the area of moral training and ethics, the religious educator

must not set unrealistic goals. The vast bulk of the available evidence

indicates that education has little effect upon actual "ethical" behavior.

The religious educator helps the child in this realm if he allows a

free and unfettered discussion of experiences and hypothetical situations

without imposing a preconceived notion of what actions are appropriate.

Until the age of eleven or twelve, a child will not act "ethically"

for the "correct" adult reasons. An educator, realizing that fact,

will be careful not to stress the behavioral aspects of ethics, but

rather the reasoning processes of the mind and the development of a

child's imagination. Selma H. Fraiberg writes in The Magic Years:

> But it is worth mentioning in this context because
> moral growth is also dependent upon the imagination. When a
> child's story world provides him with limitless possibilities
> of experience through the imagination, allows him to keepen
> his understanding of human nature and the human situation, his
> moral sense is deepened also.[29]

It is the deepening of a moral sense that should be the goal of religious

education, not the appropriate moral behavior, which all too often is

stressed.

educator can contribute to those in his realm, is the openness and freedom to fully explore and discover, each at his own level, the meaning of the world and of life. The religious educator must turn his student back to himself, to begin with that which is already part of him. In doing so, the religious educator can be true both to himself and to the ideals to which he is committed. Martin Buber concludes the chapter "The Education of Character" in Between Man and Man:

> The educator who helps to bring man back to his own unity will help to put him again face to face with God.[31]

AN EXAMINATION OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TEXTS

The following discussion will attempt to evaluate text books commonly in use in the Reform Jewish religious school in light of the previous conclusions and criteria presented in this essay. Five books discussed are in the "theological" realm, five are concerned primarily with ethics. The merits of each will only be evaluated according to the principles set out here: writing style, illustrations, and other aesthetic considerations are left to the judgment of other readers.

The God Around Us. Mira Brichto presents her book of children's prayers as an experiential phenomenon. As an introduction to traditional Hebrew prayers or as a group of poems to be memorized, for their own sake, this volume can be highly pleasing. There is no attempt made to present any of the concepts in the language or framework of the primary student. Prayer is a difficult concept for a young child to grasp, and perhaps a volume such as this avoids a subject that the child is not prepared for. The poetry that precedes each Hebrew prayer is not in prayer form, but rather is explanatory of the world. The strength of the book is that it avoids didacticism, in tone, if not in content. Unfortunately, its language opts for aesthetism rather than for the comprehension of the child.

God's Wonderful World. Morris and Lenore Kipper attempt to frame theological discussions in the language of the children who would be reading their text book. The book is directed to students in the second or third grades. In many ways, the story-book approach to teaching about God is quite good. The characters in this book pose questions

that are typical of the sevel-year old orientation. Unfortunately,
in the stories, the answers are provided by adults, in adult language
and framework. The children in the story seem to understand:

> 'That's wonderful,' said Debbie. 'I can't see God, but
> I know God is here, there and everywhere, because I can see
> what God does, and sometimes I think I can feel God, when
> I've done something very good.'32

It is safe to predict that this is not a typical seven-year old's response.
This text makes no attempt to answer the legitimate questions of the
characters, and therefore will not satisfy the reader either. The form
(i.e. a story) would be appropriate if all the characters were true-to-
life children speaking as children do. The approach presented is simply
too rational and logical to address itself to the students in the second
grade.

The Living Bible. Schwartzman and Spiro attempt to present theological
concepts to the eighth and ninth grade student in the light of Biblical
literature. The primary purpose of the text is to present the Bible in
a meaningful way, as opposed to the story-personality approach of the
primary grades. The problem with this approach is that the religious
and theological outlook of the Old Testament limits a thorough explora-
tion of the concepts, themselves. For example, in the chapter entitled
"Who is Religious" the authors make the claim that the Biblical view of
"who is religious" is not substantively different that the modern view.
One may infer that either the Biblical view is being misrepresented
or that the authors fail to explore the various aspects of modern re-
ligious identity. In this case, and the others in this book, it is the
latter. Although the attempt to make the Bible relevant is to be admired,

the limitation this orientation puts on an open and complete discussion
of the concerns of the student is a major draw-back. The concerns of
the Biblical authors and those of a contemporary fourteen-year old
are not identical; neither are their thought processes or conceptual
frameworks. By combining the study of the Bible and theological pro-
blems, both are bound to suffer.

Let's Talk About Right and Wrong. In its expository style this text
probably won't appeal to the primary child. Mrs. Kripke expressly
intends to present a traditional system of ethics. She succeeds, but
in the process ends up with a lengthy sermon instead of a text book.
What is most striking is the total unambiguity that is attributed to
ethical situations. The ethical system presented is beyond the intended
audience; the presentation of reality is too simplistic even for a six-
year old. Piaget suggests that the child wants a neatly-ordered universe.
The adult as teacher must attempt to present the world as it tends to
be, within that context. The ideas found in this text are quite profound
and insightful, the method of presentation will prevent its transmission
to the average primary child.

The Right Way. This is probably the best text for the teaching of
ethics in the Reform Jewish setting. Directed to the young adolescent,
it presents ethics in terms of specific situations and dilemma, most of
which will engage the interest of the reader. At the end of each story
are questions and also an appropriate quotation, usually from a Jewish
source. Several of the stories have open-ended conclusions which allow
the students to finish the stories. Mrs. Freehof understood that ethics
cannot be taught to youngsters in the context of theology or religion,

per se. The only question may be one of "pedagogy". The text ignores any real methodology for examining real-life situations in terms of ethics. Perhaps, as Kohlberg night suggest, this would not be feasible. In any case, this is an excellent book for the presentation of ethics, particularly in light of the research of Kohlberg.

The Still Small Voice. Silverman attempts to combine the study of ethics with the study of Judaism and theology - in a sense, to cover the entire gamut of Judaism with an emphasis on ethics. He succeeds to the extent that he does not try to be overly systematic. As a source book, his book can be useful, it probably would not make a good text, even for ninth graders. At the age of fourteen, the average student will not be able to handle the abstraction that is inherent in this approach. Also, in choosing the selection of incidents, Silverman does not seem to be in tune with the concerns of his audience. (Though to be fair this book was published in 1955.) In general, the strength of this text lies in its emphasis on situations and experiences, and also the pithy quotations found throughout that may serve as a springboard for discussion.

The Still Small Voice Today. Silverman's sequel to the preceding volume is directly concerned with ethics. Directed towards the confirmation age youngster, it gives an historical orientation to Jewish morals. According to Kohlberg the average ninth-grader could very well handle some of the problems discussed by Silverman, though with a tendency towards absolutism. Silverman provides open-ended problems for the students to discuss. In many respects, Kohlberg would find much to commend in this volume. The question would remain in his mind, as it

should in the mind of the religious educator: "should morality be directly explored, even at this age?".

Consecrated Unto Me. Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn addresses himself to the high school student in this important text book. Though neither directly concerned with theology nor ethics, the tone of the book is instructive to the teaching of both, regarding what to do and what not to do. Gittelsohn does allow for open discussion and provides occasions for the students to explore, in depth, their feelings about various important and difficult experiences. This Kohlberg would, no doubt, find gratifying. Gittelsohn does, however, draw his own conclusions, which are spelled out quite specifically. For example, in the chapter entitled "Why Wait?", he gives several arguments against the practice of pre-marital sexual relationships, and continues the threads of his argument throughout the next chapter, as well. Assuming that as a rabbi, Gittelsohn feels obligated to include this message in his book, the question becomes: how effective will this argument be, directed as it is to a high school student? Again, Kohlberg, as well as others, would indicate that whether Gittelsohn's concern is to reduce the incidence of pre-parital sex or to increase the moral understanding of his readers, he probably has failed. As indicated previously, the tension between obligation to a concept and that to pedagogical theory must be decided in favor of the latter if education is to be the goal.

Challenge to Confirmands. This book, primarily, is a discussion of Jewish theology, and is the classic example of a text book that appeals to the teacher but not to the student. Since it is usually the teacher (or rabbi or administrator) who decides which text book is to be used,

perhaps Rabbi Wolf is a successful author, from the publisher's point of view; he probably would not receive similar accolades from the students who are familiar with him through Challenge to Confirmands. Wolf speaks in very "adult" ways about God and the universe. It is interesting to note that Wolf employs many stories and parables. This is not an indication that a ninth-grader will be able to understand the basic flow of reasoning. Wolf has obviously assumed, as many educators did in 1963, that the thinking of a fourteen-year-old was identical to that of an adult. A hint of Wolf's misconception can be found in his sub-title, "An Introduction to Jewish Thinking." Jewish thinking, for the most part, is not and has not been on the level of an adolescent. Since Wolf makes little attempt at "translation", one would suspect that much of his message is lost. The book is simply too abstract, despite the attempts to lighten it with Chasidic parables.

Paths to Jewish Beliefs. Emil L. Fackenheim, perhaps due to insight into the mind of the tenth-grader perhaps due to his personal style of philosophizing, has written a highly understandable introduction to Jewish theology to which he correctly assigns the sub-title "A Systematic Introduction". Though he presents his subject didactically and with little room for divergence on the part of the reader, he makes a good attempt to go step-by-step over his arguments and to specify his points in a clear and concise way. Like Wolf's volume, this book presents some highly complex reasoning and thinking. Fackenheim, however, seems to understand the inherent limitations of the student's ability to think abstractly, and he therefore makes some concessions in terms of style and specificity. Whether Piaget would feel that either

volume would be successful in its avowed purpose is difficult to say. It is almost certain, however, that he would prefer Fackenheim's book in terms of language and understandability. As a theologian, one may feel alienated from Fackenheim's dependence upon the rational faculties; as an educator one must appreciate his ability to communicate with his audience.

FOOTNOTES

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