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The Prohibition Against Making Images: Teaching
Art in the Orthodox Jewish Schools in Montreal.
The Context for this Problem and an Examination
of Art Teaching Practice in Two Orthodox Schools

Hedy Blank.

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art Education and Art Therapy

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for the Degree of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

The Prohibition Against Making Images: Teaching Art in the Orthodox Jewish Schools in Montreal. the Context for this Problem and an Examination of Art Teaching Practice in Two Orthodox Schools

Hedy Blank

This thesis will study the establishment of plastic arts programs in the orthodox Jewish day schools of Quebec. Such programs are problematic because of the rabbinical prohibitions concerning the making of graven images.

In the Torah, (bible) the believer is commanded not to produce graven images and this prohibition also pertains to the production of three-dimensional works. Hence, through the ages, the visual arts as practiced by believing Jews, have been limited.

Due to a history of persecution in Europe, many Jews settled Quebec in the late 1800's. Through proper legislation, they sought to establish their own schools and be granted the right to control what was taught and thereby to maintain their identity.

Due to Quebec government rules, the plastic art program became compulsory, therefore the Jewish schools had to implement such a program. This thesis examines the visual arts programs in two orthodox Jewish schools

- one Chassidic, one Talmudic. The guiding philosophy in each school is different and this difference affects the manner in which the art programs are conducted.

The author found that the Chassidic school provides a full range of art projects, both two and three dimensional while the Talmudic school keeps the art program very limited.

As a result of an informal questionnaire, the author found that 1) most students were ignorant of the specific rabbinical prohibitions against graven images; 2) student attitudes in both schools were consistent with the prevailing religious dogma.

DEDICATION.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
Mr. & Mrs. William Blank, my husband,
Mr. E. Rosseutscher and my two sons, Lionel P. David
and Charles Brandon. I would also like to express my
sincere gratitude to Dr. G. Rosine, Dr. D. Pariser and
Dr. E. Gottesman for their invaluable aid throughout this
study. May they all go "M'chol el Chol" (from strength
to strength).

INTRODUCTION

An Overview of the Thesis

The author of this thesis is an orthodox, believing Jew; as such, the author makes no claims to "objectivity" but instead wishes to present her insights into the teaching of art in the Jewish schools of Quebec.

The teaching of art in religious Jewish schools is problematic because strict prohibitions are contained in the Old Testament against the making and worshipping of certain images. The basic problem then, is how to reconcile the needs and requirements of a religious school with those of a secular government.

An examination of the history books will show that the Jews have frequently been hampered in their religious observance and in following the dictates of their faith by secular and non-Jewish institutions and governments.

Nations have risen against the Jews and have tried to force them to assimilate or have tried to annihilate them. The Jews have been deported, enslaved, burned and tortured, because of their tenacious desire to practice what they considered is their God-given mission in life. It is this inability to separate themselves from their

faith, that has both caused them their problems and has helped them survive as a people.

It is this history of persecution which should help to explain the perennial concern of the Jews with identity and with the need to safeguard their religious and cultural institutions. Idolatry, or the worship of images is seen as a continuing threat to orthodox Judaism. That is, there is fear that exposure to the worship of images may adversely affect the faith of the believing Jews. It is this fear of idolatry which lies at the root of the injunction against making images.

The Jewish concept of God does not endow God with any physical qualities and while certain qualities and characteristics are attributed to Him in the Torah, interpreters have explained that this was done in order to help the faithful achieve a clearer understanding of God, not because He really has these physical attributes.

In the Jewish faith, God's assuming any physical form, particularly that of man, or animal, is seen as a compromise of His spirituality. It is inconceivable to the orthodox Jew that God would reduce Himself to something finite and mortal. This attribute accounts in part for the interpretation of the prohibition against the representation of God in images, because it is believed that God is infinite and would not permit

Himself a physical manifestation. One belittles God by producing an image which claims to represent God. In the Bible, the sin of making the Golden Calf lay in insisting that a visual image could represent an infinite spiritual being.

An option open to those who do not follow the God of the Jews is the setting up of man as the object of belief. However, worshipping man or the worship of one man is seen by the orthodox Jews as an act of idolatry. Although it may be considered a thing of the past, idolatry takes many forms and is seen by orthodox Jews as a living threat to Judaism.

In order to understand the context which frames the Biblical injunction against the making of images this thesis will present information concerning two topics of relevance; one is the various scholarly and Rabbinical interpretations of the Biblical prohibitions about images which have been developed over the centuries and the other is a brief history of Jewish art and artists. This historical discussion will give the reader a sense of how believing Jewish artists at various times have been able to exercise their skills in accordance with religious doctrine.

Having established the wider context for the problem under investigation, we will turn to the issue of Jewish

schools and consider the struggle to found Jewish schools in Quebec. With the establishment of Jewish schools, the Jews in Quebec were confronted with the difficult task of trying to satisfy their own values and dogma while still complying with the requirements imposed by the Province.

In the concluding chapter we shall examine two programs which represent two solutions to the problem just posed, namely satisfying both the secular and the religious demands placed on the Jewish orthodox school system.

We shall examine programs and attitudes towards the visual arts which exist in two orthodox Jewish schools. Here we will be able to observe a divergence in attitude towards the arts, and towards the teaching of art. Both schools have succeeded in accommodating both the demands of their constituent communities and the requirements of the Provincial bureaucracy. We will look at some of the significant similarities and differences.

CHAPTER I

Rabbinical and Scholarly Interpretations of the Biblical
Injunction Against Making Certain Images

The Jewish orthodox attitudes and beliefs today with regard to art objects stem directly from the following verses in the Old Testament. "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I am the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Exodus 20:4 (Isaiah and Sharfman, 1949, p.215). Also, Deuteronomy 4:16-18 (Isaiah and Sharfman, 1949, p.47) particularizes the terms:

"The likeness of male or female,
the likeness of any beast that is on the earth,
the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the
heaven,
the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the
earth,
the likeness of any fish that is in the water under
the earth."

This is repeated again in Leviticus 19:4 where Rashi states that the images may not be made for oneself or for others to worship (Rashi, p.85). Exodus 20:3 also states that one may not even have them (idols) in one's possession (Isaiah and Sharfman, 1949, p.214).

Dr. A. Cohen (1970, p.463) explains that the verses repeating "any other purpose" (Exodus 20:20) refers to the making of gods of silver or gods of gold with which to worship God. The phrase "Ye shall not make" is repeated twice as a warning against both the belief in idols and their manufacture.

Rabbi Solomon Ganzfried (1963, p.53) points out that one is not permitted to make the pictures or objects referred to for a non-Jew, nor is one allowed to ask a non-Jew to make them for a Jew.

The commandment not to make a statue of anything associated with God, such as angels, etc., also extends to making replicas of articles used in the Holy Temple of the Jews, the Bet Hamikdosh in Israel (Kaplan, 1981, p.198);

These statements are the basis of the orthodox position which does not permit the production of figurative or representational objects for fear that the object itself may be thought of as an actual depiction of God and hence an idol.

There is much controversy as to what type of image is actually being referred to in the phrase in Exodus 20:4. Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac, known as the Rashi (1953, pp.125-126), explains that as 'man is made in God's image' (Genesis 1:27) hence, the reproduction of the human face is not allowed for God appears to man in the human form. The reproduction of the human image would then actually be the production of God's face and would thus be prohibited.

Rabbi Yaacov Ben Harosh Baal Haturim (1953, pp.125-126), known as the Baal Haturim, has explained that the numerical equivalent of the words 'image' and 'God' allows one to infer that the image not to be produced is that of the face of a person.

Rashi (1953, pp.125-126) explains that one is not allowed to hack out, cut out, or produce the image in molten forms. Dr. A. Cohen (1970, p.463) points out that a graven image refers only to anything that is chiselled out.

Perush L'Torat Elokim (1953, pp.125-126) explains that one is not allowed to make a picture hewn out of wood or other things. One is not permitted to make an image of those things that are in the heaven above or an image of things that are on the earth or under it, or in the water, if one's intention is to worship that image.

This thought is emphasized strongly in the Talmud as well. The Talmud states that any sort of replication is permissible as long as it is not to be worshipped, for if the owner's intention is to worship the item, then even the depiction of a worm is prohibited. The fact that the Talmud permitted replication was a signal for certain artists throughout the ages to produce art works depending upon the intention of the creator. However, to assure that no one would ever be influenced towards idol worship, it was considered better not to produce any objects.

About 400 years ago, in the middle 1500's, Rabbi Joseph Caro compiled the Shulchan Aruch, a book of laws for the Jewish people. Several chapters deal with idol worship and the type of image which one may neither create, possess nor worship (Caro, pp.126-128). The issue of graven images is dealt with extensively. One is not allowed to make pictures of the description of God. For example, four faces together as on the Chariot, (Ezekiel 1) or pictures of the Ministering Angels or pictures of man alone are not permitted. Rabbi Caro specifically states that one may not make them for beauty and if one who is an idol worshipper makes them, it is also forbidden to keep them. There are, however, certain conditions under which one may gain and have possession

of carved objects. If one has found an object and the owner's intent is not to worship it, then it is permissible to keep it. As well, if one is teaching others the laws of what constitutes a graven image, then one may keep any object of whatever subject. The teaching, however, must be done in a crowd where other learned people are gathered in order to ensure against worship of this object.

The subjects which were specifically denoted aside from one's concoction of God's face were the figures of angels, man's face, the sun and the moon. The Shulchan Aruch has several lengthy discussions on the specific type of sculpture which is forbidden. One is permitted to carve a relief of the aforementioned objects but not a 360° sculpture. If the object is concave, as those which are woven into a garment or carved into a wall, then they are permitted to be made. Pictures of the sun, moon and stars are forbidden, whether concave or convex, but as stated previously, if it is to teach and understand the law, then one is permitted even if the object is convex.

Rabbi Shabtai Ben Mayer HaCohen, known as the Shach (pp.126-128) explains that it would appear that all images which have been stated as being forbidden are not forbidden unless the image is complete. That is, a depiction of man would be forbidden if the complete body

were drawn, but if half of the image is drawn, then that image is permissible.

Due to the Shach's explanation, many orthodox artists have been given the permission they required to produce any manner of image, drawn or sculpted. However, they have always been careful, even until today, to remove some part of the objects head (if it is a human sculpture) in order that the object not be complete. Generally, it is a small part of the ear that would be removed and the same would be done in a painting of a human subject were it to be of the complete body.

In the Tz'enah Urenah (1983, pp.386-387), it is stated that based on the Bible (Ex.20:4) one should not think that because God said that "You shall not have" that He meant only that one should not worship idols, but that man may not make them. Man is cautioned not to create images even if he has no intention whatsoever of worshipping, for there is the inherent possibility that ultimately the thing will come to be worshipped as a God. One may think that possession is not sinful because it will lead to a greater understanding of God but in the Tz'enah Urenah it is warned that this kind of thinking is incorrect.

Essentially the law was made to prevent the masses from worshipping objects instead of God. The orthodox

sects in Judaism have kept this belief and several ultra-orthodox groups, including the Tasher and the Satmar, still do not permit the production of any type of sculpture or painted images, but permit only embroidery and needle-point works with floral subject matter. With the introduction of photography, certain orthodox groups accepted the idea that faces could be reproduced in a visual manner, and the painting of portraits became accepted. The acceptance of portrait paintings was permitted, though not outrightly condoned during the times of Rashi (late eleventh century). The extreme orthodox groups, as previously mentioned, do not permit any portraits, whether painted or photographed to adorn their homes or places of religious worship. Hence their attitude towards art has not changed since Biblical times (Roth 1961, pp.25-29).

CHAPTER II

A Brief Look at the History of Jews as Image-Makers

Although Jewish art has flourished at certain periods, the orthodox attitude to art has remained essentially unchanged. At times, more lenient attitudes prevailed which affected even the orthodox groups, thus leading to the embellishment of ritual objects and the decoration of manuscripts; however figurative and representational art was still considered taboo. Due to the sternness of the Biblical Commandments, the representation of the human form was almost completely proscribed through Jewish history. The Bible specifically uses the words "graven image" and it is natural that a strong inhibition towards the plastic arts developed. However, at various times and in various environments the inhibitions were ignored with the result that even some of the orthodox groups accepted and used objects which would previously have been prohibited (Kanof, p.13-27; Roth, 1961, p.17).

The politics of certain periods of history often affected the production of artistic objects. During the Middle Ages and Ghetto period, representational art, both plastic and pictorial, was tolerated in connection with

religious observance (Kanof, p.22) and with cult objects in the synagogue such as Seder plates and spice boxes (Gutmann, 1964, p.11). At the same time, however, identical objects were prohibited in different parts of Europe.

Any art objects produced by the Jews since earliest times have been for a religious purpose (Finkelstein, p.7). Examples include the vessels used in the Temples and at the Passover ceremonies. The art objects reflect the culture prevalent in whichever country the Jews found themselves.

There is a section of the Torah which deals with the exact measurements, colors and materials required to produce objects to be used in the Mishkan (the travelling synagogue used by the Jews following their Exodus from Egypt) (Isserlin, 1961, pp.75-77). Because the Torah comes from God, the objects were considered as having divine inspiration, and as such, were seen not as man's contribution, but as God's requirement. The Ark, the Menorah and the utensils were all crafted from precious materials including brass, gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. The clothing of the priests and the draperies used in the Mishkan and in both first and second Temples were all embellished with decorative bells and intricately woven with gold or silver threads. These

materials, though beautiful were seen as being Godly inspired and were created in order to serve Him properly.

After Alexander the Great's Invasion of Israel, Greek influences were evident in the architecture of the Jews. Because the Greeks set up decorative statues and images for adoration throughout the land, there was considerable Jewish opposition towards any form of representational art for several decades (Roth 1961, pp.19-20, p.45).

The Roman conquest brought about new tension for Herod the Jewish minister in charge. The emperor requested that his statue be placed in the Temple and that his face be placed on the coins. Revolts broke out and again the Jews forbade the creation of human faces on coins and also forbade the creation of representational statues (Cohen 1961, pp.150-154). Animal figures on the walls have been found in the ruins of Herod's temple (Roth, 1961, p.19) and it appears that although there were prohibitions against the production and handling of the images upon whatever they were printed or stamped, objects and art works were nevertheless being produced. Eventually even the orthodox Jews became used to seeing these items and their personal intolerance lessened (Cohen, 1961, p.150; Kanof, p.18; Roth, 1961, pp.19-21).

In the time following 135 C.E., the Rabbis began to discuss the laws concerning imagery and began interpreting the Biblical prohibitions as applying only towards imagery which was intended for worship (Kanof, p.18). The synagogue ruins from this era (synagogues at: Capernaum, Chorazin, Sardis, Beth Alpha, the Dura Europos) show decorative carvings and symbols with many animal forms, but generally, no human forms were found (Avi-Yonah, 1961, pp.168-170; Kanof, pp.18-19; Roth, 1961, p.96). Many conflicting orthodox rabbinical views were expressed during the fifth and sixth centuries forbidding the completion of mosaics whose subject matter consisted of Biblical scenes (examples include a scene of Noah's Ark at Gerasa and Daniel in the Lions Den at the Naaran Synagogue) or views of the sun or the zodiac such as at the Beth Alpha Synagogue (Kanof, p.20). Although there was much opposition voiced, many synagogues produced full mosaics with a variety of scenes and the remnants can still be seen in Israel today. (These synagogues include: Beth Shean, Beth Shearim, Beth Alpha, and synagogues at Nirim, Huldah, and Hamaan Lif). Many wall frescoes were also found, showing intricately painted Bible scenes (Avi-Yonah, 1961, pp.173-190; Kanof, p.19). At this time, many Biblical manuscripts were also lavishly embellished; however these scrolls were not

considered acceptable for use in the services for there were and still are very strict regulations dealing with the writing of a Torah (Roth, 1961, p.21).

At times, the prohibitions against the production of three-dimensional works was weakened as is evident in the findings of the catacombs in Bet She'arim. Burial coffins with low relief carving on them were found in the orthodox and less orthodox catacombs (Kanof, p.20).

During the late classical period in Europe, Jewish figurative art developed fully in spite of the rabbinical prohibitions. However, this emergence of images and figures was often subject to attack, and many synagogues had their mosaics and figures mutilated or totally destroyed by the orthodox Jews (Avi-Yonah, 1961, p.190; Roth, 1961, p.22).

In Jewish areas which were dominated by leaders spreading Islam, the prohibitions again became strong concerning the production of representational art and this lasted for several centuries (Kanof, p.20). The leaders of Islam were zealous in their protest against image-worship. As the Jews were the traditional leaders in this area, they could not allow the Islamites to become more fervent in this belief than they were themselves (Roth, 1961, p.22).

Much controversy took place in Spain and the orthodox leaders there were divided in their outlook on the subject. In the Sefer Hachinuch (14th C.) written by Aaron Halevi, the orthodox Jews expressed their opposition to the production of any likeness of the human form even for ornamentation. An equally reputable scholar, Maimonides (1135-1204), however, allowed the depiction of objects and animals but never the full relief of the human form in paintings and tapestries (Kanof, p.20; Roth, 1961, p.24). Both manuscript art and synagogue art flourished in Spain with intricately worked decorative features incorporating geometrical designs and all sizes of calligraphic characters. Many books had several pages consisting only of designs at the beginning and at the end of the volume. As there were no Biblical illustrations written in the text, it was accepted by the orthodoxy.

In Northern Europe, during the 12th and 13th centuries the Jewish community tolerated paintings, two and three dimensional works (although incomplete) and signet rings with human likenesses on them. Some orthodox rabbis were very vocal in their opposition to the production of these objects. In the book, the Sefer Hasidim, violent opposition is voiced concerning the

representation of animate beings in the synagogues (Roth 1961, p.24).

At the beginning of the 13th century, European styles and techniques could be found in manuscript decorations, using only birds or animal heads as representative figures. But all manner of representation was found by the close of the Middle Ages (Landsberger, 1961, pp.377-422; Roth, 1961, p.26). Not only were Jews working on their own books but they were engaged in works for non-Jews. This posed problems, for essentially the Jew was forbidden to produce such works according to the Halacha. The Christians for whom they were producing the objects (such as paintings of Jesus, crucifixes etc.) became incensed as well and passed religious laws in 1415 forbidding Jews from being employed in this type of work (Gutman, 1964, p.12). In Italy during the Renaissance, many Jews were employed in all manner of artistic production in the non-Jewish world and gained considerable prominence in their positions (Roth, 1961, pp.504-506).

With the coming of the Middle Ages, the religious Jews began to create varied ritual objects which they were to use to beautify their religious procedures. This evolved into the beautification of such objects as Seder plates, spice boxes, Torah finials and breast plates,

Sabbath and Hanukkah candelabras. Much importance was placed on the curtain which covers the front of the ark, the covers for the Torah scrolls, and the Haggadah, the book read at the Passover meal (Kanof, p.22; Roth, 1961, pp.309-350).

With the invention of the printing press, the illuminated manuscript became so popular that by the 17th century, nearly every household, whether orthodox or not, had an illuminated Megillah (Book of Esther). Ketubbot or marriage contracts were also heavily decorated with flower forms, and figurative representations and this form of pictorial representation on holy documents became widely accepted particularly in Germany, Italy and Spain (Kanof, p.22; Namenyi, 1961, pp.423-454). During the 17th and 18th centuries, in Central and Northern Europe, many book illustrations were created for books (prayer books, Haggadahs, books of blessings, Bibles, law books) which had a daily use in the Jewish home (Haberman, 1961, p.455-492).

As European art tended towards less religious subject matter, many talented Jewish artists began to appear. Many assimilated Jewish families had family portraits contracted (Roth 1961, p.28). This caused considerable concern for the orthodox Jews as this was becoming quite commonplace to find portraits in even

lower and middle class homes (Werner, 1961, pp.539-541). The tendency towards permissiveness was apparent even though the prohibitions were still in effect. At the same time, there emerged the Haskalah movement (enlightenment) which was in effect a form of reform Judaism. The orthodox sects were again highly antagonistic towards human representation for they feared assimilation. Although the 1700's and 1800's saw many Jewish artists at work, including M. Oppenheim, M. Gottlieb, and S. Solomon, few, if any, orthodox groups accepted this profession for its members (Namenyi, 1961, pp.577-638; Roth, 1961, p.31; Werner, 1961, pp.539-574).

Many prominent Jewish artists such as Modigliani, Soutine, Chagall, M. Katz, Pascin, Ben Shahn, Jacques Lipchitz and Antoine Pevsner rose in the world (Roditi, 1961, pp.797-860; Schwartz, 1961, pp.861-902).

While the 1700's and 1800's saw the flourishing of Jewish artists in Europe by the 1900's, there was opposition once again to Jewish artists based on virulent anti-semitic feelings. Much hatred was apparent in Germany in the late 1800's and the radical tendencies in art (i.e. those not conforming to German standards including certain Impressionist or Formalist works) were blamed on the Jews. The Nazis condemned Jewish art works

as degenerate, art which would undermine the German nation (Roditi, 1961, pp.811-813).

The Jewish artists in Germany lost their teaching posts, were not allowed to continue their membership in any artists associations and were only permitted to exhibit in the Juedischer Kulturbund headquarters. Those who did not leave the country were imprisoned in the concentration camps including O. Freundlich and R. Levy. Many painted in secret, recording camp life. While in the Theresienstadt Camp, the camp of the arts, Jewish artists were ordered by the S.S. to produce specific works. Not all work was for aesthetic purposes; certain works were done for secret military propaganda.

With the establishment of Israel, a new breed of orthodox artists emerged. The first Jewish school of the arts was the Bezalel School. It was established in Jerusalem in 1906 by B. Schatz (Kolb, 1961, pp.903-952). At first orthodox Jews were very vocal in expressing their opposition towards any type of artistic production but with the passing of time, they became more tolerant. Certain orthodox groups including Lubavitch and Agudah produced their own artists such as M. Muchnik, H. Lieberman, Menses and H. Kleinman, whose works have had universal acclaim. The subject matter is always of a Jewish religious nature and often includes portraits of

religious leaders and great events in Jewish history, using both representational and abstract methods. While certain sects do not accept any human or animal representation in any forms, such as the Satmar sect, other equally orthodox sects have come to accept this visual means of expression. Belz, Skver, Bobov, Lubavitch and Agudah are some of the more tolerant groups.

It is evident from the preceding that representational art was not always absolutely prohibited even in the strictest Jewish settlements. Environmental influences had their effect encouraging artistic production during certain eras. As well, certain orthodox groups forbade the production of items which other orthodox groups accepted. With modern inventions such as the printing press and the camera, a greater tolerance appeared even in the homes of the most orthodox, and many ritual objects were created and lavishly decorated (Roth, 1961, p.29). Two and three dimensional items with human and animal subject matter emerged and the orthodox groups allowed their production and even encouraged it in order to serve God and to beautify the means used for serving Him.

Although some orthodox groups do accept specific representational works, many do not, and they still cling

to the words of the Bible, insisting that this is the only guide to be followed.

Summary

Several issues have been examined in these chapters. To begin with, orthodox Jewish thinking was described. One must understand the connection the Jew has with his God, and that the Jew considers God's plan for the world as outlined in the Torah and presented in a ~~more~~ direct and practical way in Halacha (Jewish Law).

It was mentioned that the Jews have been persecuted throughout history. Although the Egyptian, Greek and Roman Empires tried in many ways to annihilate the Jews or to convert them, the Jews managed to survive and still cling tenaciously to the Torah.

The orthodox Jews still cling to the words of the Torah but different interpretations emerge to guide those who seek to express themselves in a visual manner. Their belief is that they are beautifying God's existence and are creating art which serves only to extoll God at a human level.

It is important to go to the ~~Biblical~~ sources to understand the pros and cons used by the orthodox groups in assessing whether one may or may not produce any art

works. Although some orthodox groups do tolerate two and three dimensional production with animal and human forms, others do not accept this under any circumstances, even given a favorable interpretation of the text.

Fear of idol worship is still a major concern for the orthodox groups and this concern reflects itself in their attitude toward certain subject matters in art. A major concern is that although one may not worship the statue or image one has created, others might see that as the artist's intention. Just as the Bible prohibits one from making something to be worshipped by another, it is considered better to desist rather than place oneself or another in a precarious position. This line of reasoning must be understood in order to see the ways in which the orthodox Jewish schools deal with the problem of the visual arts.

Finally, we have summarized the history of the visual arts among the Jews from Biblical times to the present. The orthodox Jews were constantly monitoring the production of images and were zealous in preventing the Jewish people from transgressing Biblical prohibitions. While at times, the production of recognizable human or animal images was absolutely forbidden, more lenient attitudes prevailed at other times. Certain historical periods either encouraged or

discouraged Jewish artistic production. The Middle Ages saw a proliferation of ritual objects and the Renaissance developed many great Jewish artists.

The orthodox sector of Jews, while allowing certain sculptural objects and paintings to be created, still did not do so wholeheartedly. With the Great Enlightenment (Haskala Movement) and assimilation of Jews during the 18th and 19th centuries, many Jewish artists left their orthodox background and delved into every artistic area. As a result, orthodox opposition was again vehemently expressed. Not until the 1900's did orthodox Jewish representational artists emerge.

CHAPTER III

The Establishment of Jewish Schools in Quebec

During the early 1800's many European Jews began settling in Canada and Quebec in particular. As the wounds of the European persecutions were not quite healed, the Jewish population was very concerned that political rights be granted to them in order to assure their survival as a people in the new country.

As education is one of the primary means for preserving identity, the Jews sought to secure their places within the existing educational systems. What they found was that they had no legal rights to any positions within the existing school systems nor their governing boards (Rabinovitch, 1926, p.5). Realizing that this must be changed, the Jewish population began to ask the provincial government for official recognition.

The Jewish community well understood the fact that the schooling being offered to the general community included certain religious ceremonies which were obligatory for the students. The Catholic schools, being essentially religious by nature, obliged every student to participate in Catholic religious rites and formalities; the Protestants only required all students to participate

in prayers at the beginning of each day. Both Catholic and Protestant schools forbade the wearing of religious head coverings which is compulsory for all orthodox Jewish males.

Since the study of evolution is contrary to the way in which the orthodox Jewish religion explains the creation of the world, it is proscribed from the orthodox Jew's education. As well, the idea of representation in art was an issue which had to be carefully supervised in order to avoid breaking any prohibitions. Therefore, the Jewish leaders were eager to 1) acquire legal permission to establish their own schools and 2) receive proper legal rights to educate their children in the provincial schools. In order to prevent any misunderstanding with regard to Jewish customs and holidays they also sought legislation which would permit Jewish members to sit on the educational governing boards.

Legislation was passed in 1832 granting full rights and privileges to the Jews who were naturally born British subjects but this legislation did not give the same rights to any future immigrants due to the wording (Rabinovitch I., 1926, p.2). Amendments were made by the Act of 1841 to grant rights to any future settlers.

The situation ran smoothly until the year 1903 when a Jewish student was denied a scholarship as his father

was not a landowner and hence, was not paying taxes to the Protestant Panel. Much heated controversy arose between the Protestant Board of School Commissioners and the representatives of the Jewish community. In order to find an appropriate solution, the Provincial Government appointed a commission to study the events and to prepare recommendations to the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of Canada (Rabinovitch, 1926, p.5).

As the cultural values and language used in the Protestant schools more closely resembled the standards of the Jewish population, the Jews sent their children to the Protestant schools and directed their taxes to the Protestant Panel. As well, the Protestant system was less overtly religious in its teachings and did not require attendance at mass. Jewish children were welcome in the Catholic schools but they were required to comply with the regulations of the Catholic Board which included participation in Holy Communion, Baptism and regular attendance at religious functions (Reich, 1929, pp.539-545).

This latter situation was unacceptable to most Jewish parents as they felt that the regulations were meant to proselytize their children. Many felt that religious faith was such an intense and emotional part of their children's lives that contradictory emphasis in the

school would be unsettling and destructive (Swomley, 1968, p.85). The observance of Christian doctrine by Jewish children while at school was greatly feared since it would serve on the one hand to separate the child from his classmates while on the other hand it would be betraying Jewish family tradition.

The Jewish population acted as cohesively as possible in order to safeguard their rights within the schools. At the same time, they were hoping to be able to be granted official recognition to establish their own schools and receive government funding. The rabbinical leaders believed that only in their own schools would they be able to completely control the manner in which the secular subjects would be taught. Because all of the secular curriculum must be taught in accordance with the Halacha, the elders believed that the establishment of Jewish schools was the only solution. As early as 1912 the Jewish population sought provisions to set up Jewish Boards, but did not succeed. As well, they did not have equal rights of dissent in order to form their own school boards.

A committee comprised of three Protestants, three Catholics and three Jews was appointed again in 1924 by the Lieutenant Governor to study the Jewish situation. Their ultimate decisions resulted in Jews being granted

the right to attend existing Protestant schools but not the right to be appointed to the Provincial Board of School Commissioners.

Premier Taschereau, with Henri Bourrassa as an ally, developed a solution for all sectors, saying that the only solution which would protect the Jewish, Protestant and Catholic interests would be the provision for a separate Jewish Panel. This would result, however, in all Jewish pupils, as well as taxes and political action being entirely separate from the Protestant system.

The Bill was passed March 13, 1930 and then violently rejected and publicly denounced by the hierarchy of the churches, their spokesman being Bishop Georges Gauthier (Canadian Jewish Congress, 1930).

The Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction was concerned, as were the Protestants, that the Jewish issue might affect the basic constitutional structure of Quebec's education, the confessional system and the authority of the Catholic community and its hierarchy. In their discussions, they began to stress that the Canadian constitution was Christian, that confessional and Christian rights are imbedded in the constitution and should be confirmed in law, and that residents who are not Catholic do not in law have the status or the rights of Catholics, either as citizens or

in groups. This was prevalent in the writings in the Devoir and in the Revue (Rome, 1976). Once more, the Jewish community saw this as a resurgence of the inimical philosophy which they had just encountered in Europe and which they now had to deal with in Canada in order to find an immediate and peaceful solution.

The Church was very anxious to have the Jewish schools placed under the eye of the Christian Committee of the Board of Public Instruction, and not only under the Superintendent of Education. In this way, the Church would be sure that no anti-Catholic doctrines would be taught, that the teachers themselves would have no anti-Catholic prejudices and that revolutionary ideas against the country and the established social order would not be spread (Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 1931). Essentially, the principles of the Church disallowed the teaching of Judaism. Canada as a country was created as a Christian country and Jewish schools, by their very nature, are non-Christian. Hence, the establishment of Jewish schools ran against the character of the country. This view was reiterated when the Quebec Court of Appeals ruled that Jewish schools could not be established by virtue of their non-Christian principles. This opinion was not adopted by the Supreme Court nor the Privy

Council, but strongly supported for the next thirty years by the clergy. (Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 1930).

The Catholic Church appeared before the Judicial Instances in Canada and the Privy Council in England and pleaded the case against Jewish Separate Schools on the ground that Article 94 of the BNA Act contemplated only Christian Schools. The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Province of Quebec's Legislating Chambers have the right to establish Jewish Schools (Caiserman, 1930, pp.635-636).

The Mayor of Montreal, the leader of the Provincial Conservative Party, leaders of the Catholic Church and several anti-semitic French journals all publicly demanded the repeal of the Jewish School Law. The journals raised the cry of the French public against Jews, informing them erroneously that the Jews were receiving special privileges (Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 1926).

The resentment for the Jewish situation was latent in Quebec throughout the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's and often was vehemently vented by members of the Jeunes Canada and the Monsignor C. Groulx. The creation of the journals Action Catholique, and the Quebec City Daily represented Rome and was used by the Quebec Church in the so-called war against the Jewish question. A second

newspaper used to attack the Jewish question was the Adrian Arcand, Joseph Minard Press. Mr. Minard explained that it was the Archbishop who asked him to discuss the Jewish situation.

In order to cool the violence which was brewing and to prevent political disaster, Taschereau pressed the Jews into finding an acceptable settlement with the Protestants. Finally, the government withdrew the authority it had enacted in allowing the Jewish Commission to create its own panel (Neamtan, 1940).

During its short life span, the Jewish Board of Commissioners arrived at the following clauses in agreement with the School Boards of Montreal and Outremont. The clauses were renewable every 15 years and were to be allowed to continue indefinitely (beginning July 1, 1930), providing notice by either side was not given within the last two years prior to the end of the fifteen year period. The clauses, briefly, 1) granted Jewish children rights to attend the Protestant School Board's schools, 2) exempted Jewish children without penalty from their schools on major Jewish holidays and 3) exempted Jewish children from religious studies if such requests were made by their parents. Essentially the position of the Jewish children was not based on law.

Several years later, Jewish teachers were legally allowed to teach in the Protestant schools and only as recently as 1965 were Jews granted rights to become representatives on the Protestant Board of Montreal (Quebec Legislative Assembly Bill 190, 1965). In the early 1970's, Jews were granted the right to sit on the Board in the City of Westmount.

The United Talmud Torah was the first Jewish School established in Montreal in 1906 (Levinson, 1926, p.187). Several small afternoon schools were founded at this time whose sole purpose was the teaching of Jewish subjects. The Jewish Peoples and Peretz School was the next major school established in 1914 (Wiseman, 1926, p.189). These schools experienced considerable financial difficulty as they were funded privately, most of the funds coming from a small segment of the community.

Following the Second World War, and the great influx of immigrants, a large number of new schools were created. During the 1950's, nearly ten new Jewish schools were established and were all privately funded. It is only since the early 1970's that Jewish schools have received government funding; the maximum funding available being 80%. During this time, Jews were also appointed to all school boards and commissions. In order to receive funding as associate schools of the Protestant

School Board, the Jewish schools, had to incorporate a complete secular curriculum as established by the government. Language of instruction and time allotted to each subject had to be strictly respected.

Summary

Upon immigrating to Quebec, the Jewish population was faced with a problem which they felt threatened their existence as a religious people and as citizens. They had no legal claims to places within the existing schools or to establishing their own schools. They sought to rectify this by going through the proper legislative channels.

As Canadian and Quebec citizens, the Jews were ultimately granted the rights to the kind of education which would safeguard their religious beliefs.

CHAPTER IV

A Look At Two Orthodox Schools in Montreal:
Chassidic and Talmudic Traditionsa) Chassidic vs. Talmudic Belief and Practice

The onset of the Jewish Reform Movement in the 1700's (known as Haskala) brought about a new approach to the study of Judaism. This was the Chassidic view which began in Poland in 1734. It spread rapidly, for the movement stressed the values of piety, spiritual exaltation and the joy of worshipping God, as opposed to religious formalism and rabbinic intellectualism. The massive pogroms and persecutions of the period were another factor in engendering the Chassidic movement.

Chassidus aims at the perfection of the soul of every individual and offers a personal, spiritual fulfillment through an enthusiastic relationship with God. Through the study of the work of Rabbi Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidus, one may invigorate one's soul and seek to make prayer and the study of Torah more experiential and meaningful. Not that Jews had not served God through joy previous to this, but the door was opened to the poor and the uneducated in a manner never done before.

Until 1734, the common man was virtually alienated from the core group of Torah intellectuals. With the value of the common man's soul gaining acceptance many were welcomed into the Chassidic fold. Every Jew had to understand that he must have pride in his heritage, for each and every man has a share of Godliness and is important to God.

An important feature of Chassidus is the spontaneous expression of joy through song, dance and especially through prayer. The simple Jew was able to develop his feelings for God without a sense of inferiority.

As opposed to the Talmudic system of the time, a central figure, the Rebbeh (Spiritual leader) was chosen and he was seen as one who has a closer link to God than the average man. He acts as a counsellor for the people and he expounds the Torah for all.

Because Chassidus encouraged emotionalism, violent conflicts broke out with the established Talmudical academies who opposed the manner in which Chassidus opened up the doors of Torah to uneducated people. The Talmudists believed that Talmudic study must be restricted to those whose minds can delve as deeply as possible into the hidden secrets of the Torah. The Talmudists believed that formalism was the only method of study and expression proper for Torah study. Because the

Chassidim changed many of the laws with regard to time and expression of prayer, the Talmudists feared that they were trying to reform the orthodoxy and were actually an offshoot of the Haskalah Movement. Due to numerous conflicts, the Chassidim sought to create their own communities and this division has lasted until the present time. The resentment is still present in the 20th century, but generally without the physical conflicts and the incarcerations which took place during the late 1700's and early 1800's.

In order to see how these two streams of orthodox Judaism have coped with the modern curriculum, this author conducted an informal survey of two schools, one Chassidic and the other Talmudic. The intent was to see how each school dealt with the teaching of the visual arts.

b) The Chassidic and Talmudic Schools

Each of the two orthodox schools to be studied in this thesis can trace its origin to the period of the 1700's and the rise of Chassidus in Poland.

Both the orthodox schools under study are located in Montreal and are between twenty-five and thirty years old. Each has a student population of 300. They are

Canadian extensions of schools which started in Europe over two hundred years ago and which were relocated in Canada after the second World War. Both schools have branches in New York State, Israel and France. As they are orthodox, the student population we are examining is entirely female; the boys having totally separate schools. The Chassidic school caters to girls from all levels of religious observance while the Talmudic school enrolls only children from observant homes. Hence the backgrounds of the students differ considerably. The Chassidic school has two principals, one for Judaic studies and one for secular studies, while the Talmudic school has only one principal who is in charge of both areas of study. The Chassidic school's approach to study is one that accepts change as long as it is change whose path is embraced with the true love of God. The Talmudic School advocates a strict, formal approach towards learning and this carries over in the secular courses as well.

At the Talmudic School, the essence of education is the study of Torah. Secular courses are given and the Quebec guidelines are followed, but courses which are seen as meaningless forms of expression and whose content may be questionable in view of Jewish law are given only the minimum time allowed and are approached with a stern,

forbidding attitude. The implicit message of this attitude is clearly understood by students in secondary school and the students accept it unquestioningly.

c) The Secular Curriculum

The secular curriculum is standard for all of the Jewish orthodox day schools. The subjects and course material are outlined by the provincial government and each school must follow the same rules and regulations as do the Protestant and Catholic schools of Quebec. Of course, due to the double curriculum, the hours of the Jewish school are longer and certain courses are held on Sundays.

The religious program takes place in the morning between the hours of 8:30 and 12:30. The secular program begins at 1:00 in the afternoon and extends to 5:00 or 6:00. The courses in the secular curriculum are specified by the government, and are the same in both schools. In the two schools studied in this paper, there was difference noted in the number of times Art, Computer Programming, Biology and Physics were held. The Chassidic School, being a French Immersion school, has fewer French courses because the language of instruction is French.

The secular high school curriculum at the Chassidic School consists of the following courses: English Literature, English Composition, Canadian and Quebec History, French Oral, French Written, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Ecology, Chemistry, Physics), Physical Education, Art, Career Choice, Moral and Religious Instruction. The number of times per week each course is given depends on the grade level.

The Talmudic School lists the same courses but in addition provides ~~Music~~ and Typing at the grade seven level and Sewing in grade eight. The only subject taught in French, other than French Literature is Geography.

The core curriculum in both schools consists of the study of the Old Testament and its commentaries, Jewish Law, the Hebrew Language, Prayers, Jewish History and the Prophets, and Jewish Ethics and Morals. The Chassidic school incorporates the study of Chassidic philosophy into the curriculum and integrates its methodology into the teachings of the other courses, including the teaching of the plastic arts. In both schools the thoughts and meditations of certain rabbinical leaders are studied and the students incorporate the teachings into their daily lives. The rabbinical teachings are practiced at home and as such, the school strengthens the home teachings and vice versa. In this manner, the

students are carefully guided and encouraged to continue their religious training in every area of their lives. Therefore, every secular teacher is also encouraged to be guided by rabbinical thought in their courses so that the study of secular subjects will have more meaning for the students and the students, will relate more easily to it. Because the subject matter of the art course is flexible, the subject lends itself beautifully to the schools' philosophy.

The governmental guidelines provide the art teacher with five basic categories which must be covered throughout the course. The actual projects can be directed as the teacher sees fit, incorporating religious subject matter into the five areas. With this integration, both schools are able to provide an acceptable program from both rabbinical and governmental points of view.

d) The Chassidic School - Projects and Space for The Plastic Arts

This School has had a licensed Art Specialist since 1975 who teaches the plastic arts to the high school grades and prepares the students for the Quebec High School Leaving Examinations. The elementary classes have art lessons with their classroom teachers. In addition

to their art classes, both secular and Judaic studies teachers consult with the art teacher for their projects.

Between 1975 and 1985 there was no room which could be designated as the Art room, but in the 1985-86 school term, the principal assigned one room to be used only for art classes and projects.

Students work in a variety of media with increasing degrees of complexity as they progress from grade to grade. Still life set ups are drawn in charcoal, colored pens, inks and paint. The subject matter is varied, ranging from bottles and fruit to clothing, furniture and houses.

Each class draws for several lessons and then delves into painting. Secondary four and five will use student models and as such, the students are permitted to draw the human form. The students learn to translate flat images into three-dimensional works in the higher grades and often refer back to their earlier drawings as reference material for their creations. Line drawings are often made into small sculptures with the themes often being non-representational.

Following the drawing and painting classes, the students study and work in varied sculptural methods. The junior classes work with simple forms and subjects including fruits and shoes while the senior students will

deal with the human form. They sculpt heads in clay, sand, and plaster employing both additive and subtractive methods. The works are generally done in relief and are not life size, but life-size papier mâché projects have been done of the human figure. Because the images formed in papier mâché are so imperfect, the students' works do not conflict with the orthodox rules even though the subject matter is human.

Batik, tye-die and cold dye methods are used in material works. The subject matter usually deals with buildings, cut vegetables or florals at the junior level, while the seniors may choose their own subjects. Often, portraits of religious leaders or drawings of the Wailing Wall of Israel or other Jewish monuments fill the works, as well as traditional symbols including the Star of David, the Passover Plate, prayer books and shawls. Hebrew letters lend themselves quite beautifully to severe distortions without losing their identity and are often found in the batiks and drawings of all the students.

All the students take pottery lessons but only secondary four and five work on a potter's wheel. They hand-build pieces and when they complete the pottery lessons they are encouraged to decorate their pieces with additional clay and different glazes. The students often

draw faces, carve or sculpt figures into their pottery pieces.

Printmaking at the junior level is done using plaster molds while the seniors will work in lino-cutting followed by printing in the silk-screen process. Flowers and abstract line creations dominate the subject matter in secondary one, two and three while secondary four and five concentrate on the human figure within a setting familiar to the students. Often, several drawings are combined to form a totally new habitat in which the students place their drawn-figures and the plate is then created.

In macramé, secondary one and two work on samplers of the knots. Once they have mastered the knots, the samplers are worked together into a three-dimensional wall hanging or sculptural work incorporating other materials or found objects such as feathers, sticks, weeds, shells or stones. The older classes, having mastered the knots, create shaped wall murals or hanging sculptures using different cords and threads. The theme is open and it is possible to find letters or figures knotted into the pieces.

At the end of each major project, each student is required to create a poster in which the subject they have just studied is clearly demonstrated and explained

for others to understand. Instructions, samples, and historical notes are included in the poster and the poster itself goes on display in the school halls.

Clearly the students at the Chassidic school have a wide variety of media and subject matter open to them and they actively participate in the various projects. Much of the work is inspired by religious topics but this is not the only area which is open to the students. Three times per year the High School is taken on trips to different art museums and galleries. The students are encouraged to find out about current trends in the art world as well as to become familiar with the old, established masters.

It appears that the students at the Chassidic school are not prevented from having a rich art education due to religious prohibitions. The students work in all the major areas and deal with subjects which are permissible and controllable. When the human form is approached, it is done within the permissible guidelines as is explained in the Talmud and therefore there are no areas of conflict within the curriculum at the Chassidic school.

The foyer of the school is filled with art projects. Paintings and sculptures, some of which are five to ten feet in width and length respectively, line the walls. The school halls and lunchroom are also lined

with student projects. Certain material collages in the lunchroom are part of a permanent exhibit while the hall pieces are changed frequently. Both the secular and the Jewish studies principals have student art works in their offices as well as in the main office of the school.

Each classroom has a full wall size bulletin board of which half is usually filled with general studies assignments and the other half with student art works.

Due to the considerable wall space devoted to art projects, as well as the assignment of a room to be used only for the art course, it may be understood that the Chassidic school ranks art as an important subject and one which should be visibly seen and appreciated.

e) The Talmudic School - Projects and Space For The Plastic Arts

The Talmudic school has offered art as an option since 1976. While it must be part of the core curriculum, it is still seen as a non-essential subject and is placed in the category of extra-curricular options.

The subject matter is very limited and the students do not have any choices open to them. Florals and Biblical scenes (Noah's ark, Rachel's tomb, Crossing the Red Sea) dominate the works with a rare abstract drawing

surfacing once a semester. The human face or figure are never studied in any media nor are animal shapes incorporated into any works.

The girls begin the year in drawing and printing and each one is done over a one and a half month period. The subjects covered are still life arrangements using bottles, flowers or classroom objects. Following this, several lessons on carving are given with the subject being the Tomb of Rachel in Israel. All of the students carve the same scene in wood. The actual scene may change from year to year but the carving is always of a Biblical nature and one free of human beings. Mosaics will be the next topic and the creation must be something useful in the home or synagogue such as a prayer stand, books on a book-case, or utensils used for preparing various Jewish objects such as matzos or phylacteries. The students must always incorporate a traditional symbol or Biblical scene into some part of their work. The materials used in this project include tiles, grout and a wooden base. The final major project is done in ceramics, each student producing a hand-built piece. The work again must be a useful one and not merely a clay creation.

The human form is never dealt with in any project and the students are encouraged to deal only with

7 religious topics. Although the area of subject matter is very narrow, the students can complete their program within the governmental guidelines for they do cover the three outlined areas of drawings, sculptures (carvings) and prints.

The visual space given to the subject within the school itself is indicative of the interest given the subject in the curriculum. Aside from one bulletin board at the entrance to the school and one near the classroom where art is taught, the school is devoid of art projects. There is only one exception to this which takes place at the mid-year break when the school hosts visitors from sister-schools outside of Canada. At this time, banners are made which are hung throughout the school halls, lunchroom and gymnasium. The banners and posters, however, consist only of Hebrew sentences written in beautifully decorated script.

Clearly the Talmudic school does not wish to antagonize the elders of the community which it serves and therefore the art program is kept to a minimum. Although the students may be lacking in their art education, the school spirit is of strong influence and the girls feel that what they are doing is proper; thus any feelings of inadequacy are avoided.

f) Summary

In this chapter, the differences in philosophy which each school maintains today is explained in relation to the Chassidic and Talmudic philosophies present during the middle 1700's. Each school strongly identifies with either the Talmudic stream or the Chassidic stream of thought and incorporates these beliefs in both the Judaic and secular sectors.

Because the ideology of the Chassidic School developed as a departure from the norms of the times, change guided by Torah is seen as welcome in the school. If new ways of serving God can be found which comply with the basic precepts of Torah, then an art program which complies with the rabbinical authorities was permitted and accepted. The Talmudic School, however, stems from a background which calls for a stricter adherence to the formal approach to learning and changes are not always seen as positive. As well, time away from the study of Torah is seen as wasted time and hence any subject which may alienate the student from the Torah or cause any transgressions to occur must not be part of the curriculum. If those subjects become obligatory according to governmental requirements, then acceptable parts of the course must be found and taught but it must

be done as prudently as is possible and without any seeming importance attached to the subject.

Both students and principals of each school adhere to the philosophy of their school. The amount of importance each school allocates to the study of art can be seen through the number of projects, space and place allotted to the subject.

CHAPTER V

Discussions of Findings of Questionnaires And Interviews in the Chassidic and Talmudic Schools

a) Methodology and Administration of Questionnaire

Two schools, one Chassidic and one Talmudic were chosen for this study. These particular Jewish schools were chosen because they have the population in Quebec. Each of the schools represents a different type of Jewish religious practice and therefore handles its art program differently. The author hoped to see if there were any differences in the attitude of the students and staff at the two schools in view of the different religious practices.

The methodology used for the application of the questionnaire was the same in each of the two schools. Each grade, from secondary one through five was given the same presentation during the art class. Students were told that following an informal discussion of the art program they would be asked to respond in writing to a list of questions which would then be collected. The questions were then asked, one by one, and each question was briefly discussed. The verbal discussion lasted 20

minutes and the time left (25 minutes) was used by the students to write down the responses.

The following week, the students were asked if they had any comments concerning the questionnaire. It was then noted that 92% of the senior Chassidic students had researched the question concerning the prohibitions dealing with the representation of images while none of the Talmudic students had done any research in the area.

The following is the actual list of questions used. It should be noted that certain questions (1, 2, 4, 10) were included in the students' list in order to round-out the questionnaire and lead the students up to the more important questions (which are questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

The following list of questions was used to question the principals.

1. How long has your school had an Art Education program? Why did it not have one prior to this date?
2. Does your program comply with the guidelines as set forth by the Ministry of Education?
3. Would you consider allotting more time to art?

4. Are there certain subjects, projects, or needs which are not met in the program used in your school?
5. How would you consider changing the program?
6. What is your personal view of art according to religious principles?
7. What do you think about the teaching of sculpture?
8. What is your opinion about the importance of abstract, ultra-modern non-depictive works of art?
9. Do you think that the art program is essential to the students development? In which ways is it important?
10. Do you agree that art should be a compulsory subject in grades 7 and 8?
11. Do you believe that the program itself is important to the school's curriculum?
Please explain.

Questions posed to the students:

1. Have you ever studied art before this high school program?

2. Do you take art courses outside the school? Please describe.
3. Do you enjoy the art program?
4. What would you change about your art program? What projects would you like to have more of during the year?
5. Would you like to study more theory?
6. What do you think about the artists who create the 'modern' works....do you think their work has much importance of, meaning?
7. According to the Bible, Jews are not supposed to create graven images. How do you feel about this. Do you think that something is missing from your art program due to this?
8. Do you think that it is important to study art in order to round out one's development, i.e., other than the fact that art is fun to do, does it have any other significance and can it help you in any other way? Please explain.
9. Do you think that it is important to study art in school?
10. Why do you think that art is compulsory in grades 7 and 8?

b) The Views of the Judaic Studies Principal - Chassidic School

- What follows is a paraphrase of what the principal told this author during the interview.

The high school classes are organized and supervised according to the curriculum as taught in the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and their time periods are almost identical; hence there is no need to consider allotting more time for art. However, at certain times in the year, certain students are excused from classes and are allowed to participate in art projects which may take two to three full days to complete.

Since certain subjects may appear on the matriculation examinations, students are permitted to view certain subjects which are considered taboo in orthodox Judaism. Examples would include pictures of Mary, Catholic tryptychs, images such as crosses carved into pieces of early Quebec furniture, and learning about other religions and religious beliefs, including Indian or Inuit. As such, when the situation arises where these 'forbidden' subjects must be taught, it must be taught in a prudent manner, not offensive to the students or their parents. Subjects should not be omitted from the

curriculum because the students are very likely to encounter the proscribed art outside of school.

Students should be made aware of the works whose subject matter would be considered unacceptable or 'non-kosher' in order to help these students deal with the works and the world at large.

The students must understand that there are many ways open to the artist and that as humans, each individual makes his choice. If the artist chooses to work in a method or with subjects that would be unacceptable to one group, it must still be understood that the artist has freedom of expression and his work is still a product inspired by God at some level. The students must recognize that God's work is in everything and that the areas of good and evil extend to every area of creation and one must be able to categorize what is seen and deal with it accordingly.

The principal feels that art as a subject is very important, for it adds a fullness and sympathy to the students' personalities. Art adds to the students lives and gives them the idea that there are many ways to appreciate God other than through books. Art should make the students aware of their surroundings and they should visit the museums in order to see as many different methods of expression as there are commentaries on the

Bible. Just as there are levels of interpretations on the Bible which are more esoteric than others, so are there artists whose methods of expression are less easy to decipher. This does not mean that their work should be dismissed. Art means different things to different people and art works need not always be explained.

Through the various channels that the artists explore comes an understanding of mankind which children must be exposed to in order to develop a richer appreciation of life.

One can learn to appreciate other people and develop feelings for others through exposure to art. As emotions play a great part in the creation of art works, the principal drew another parallel between the world of art and the world of religion which itself deals strongly with emotions. It was cautioned that the emotions must be carefully controlled in both art and religion to prevent too great a simplification of knowledge and that one must carefully incorporate deeper levels of understanding in a step-like manner in order to be able to simplify the complexities involved in both areas of study.

The students should express themselves in as many different media as are available to them but they should involve themselves only with subjects which are permitted

according to orthodox laws. If the students are working in sculpture, they must be careful when they deal with complete human forms to incorporate some blemish into the subject. As well, the subject matter must include kosher subjects as prescribed in the First Testament. The students, while being allowed complete self-expression, should begin their program in non-abstract methods and should only deal with abstractions in secondary four and five. They may be allowed to view non-representational work but should not work in it until later on in high school when they become more capable of dealing with abstractions, both mentally and physically (i.e. being able to produce and appreciate a meaningful abstract work). This completes the views and opinions of the Chassidic Principal.

c) The Views of the Secular Principal - Chassidic School

The secular principal believes that the program offered is in accordance with the Ministry of Education of Quebec and since the students are tackling a double curriculum, should not be given any more time in the plastic arts than required by the Ministry of Education. If the program were to be changed, then it would only be

to have the Art Specialist teach the elementary classes: There would not be any curricular or time changes.

Prior to 1984, the subject was not compulsory at any grade level but only offered as an option in most high schools, including the Chassidic School. The years before 1975 saw the art course being handled by the classroom teachers at the elementary level and almost non-existent in high school. This was due to the lack of time and space for the course. As the school has grown in size and acquired a new building with larger classrooms, art was incorporated into the secondary curriculum, but only as an option.

The course itself is considered essential to the students' development; it is hoped that art will awaken and encourage the creativity which is latent within the girls. The subject exposes the students to life in a way that mathematics or history cannot. Whereas those subjects involve cognitive learning, art draws upon the mental, emotional and physical strengths within the individual. Not only do the students produce works but they learn to appreciate beauty in all its aspects. The secular principal believes that an emphasis must be established on the appreciation of different periods of history and modes of expression. The students must realize that even if they don't like art, and consider

the work they are doing silly or a waste of time, they must involve themselves, for the subject of the plastic arts develops a different aspect of their characters.

The course itself must not conflict with any religious views. Although the secular principal enjoys non-representational works, she would rather the students work in more realistic subjects--works which can be easily understood by the parents who will thus view the subject of art more positively.

d) The Views of the Principal at the Talmudic School.

The attitude towards art is quite different at the Talmudic School. The subject is seen as one which may cause considerable havoc with certain families who strictly believe in the Biblical prohibitions. Hence, the subject is given minimal time at the high school level. Because grades seven and eight must take art, they are offered the course, but the subject is put into a time slot at the end of the day and is actually given after hours, along with other extra-curricular activities such as sewing or embroidery. In this way, the course is still part of the curriculum, but should the parents complain, the subject is presented as an option and not an essential component of the curriculum.

The students are not taken on an museum trips, nor are they exposed to the works of any artists either through films, books, or film strips.

It is therefore understood that at the Talmudic school, art is not considered important either to the students' personal development or essential to the school curriculum. While the principal would wish to place greater emphasis on the subject, the community politics does not allow for any change in this area.

e) Discussion of Principals' Views

In reviewing the views expressed by the two principals, the following ideas become clear:

- 1) Although the Chassidic principal encourages the art program, there is evidence of the underlying fear that the content involved is questionable from the rabbinical point of view and that therefore the projects may also be 'questionable'. The actual fear has been somewhat overcome since the inception of the program because there has always been

careful supervision throughout the art program.

- 2) An interesting problem can be noted from the views of the Talmudic principal. Even though he does acknowledge the positive side of Art as an enriching source of knowledge, he does not go against the majority view in his community which is that art is fundamentally suspect and at the very least, a waste of time.

f) Results of the Questionnaire - 125 Secondary Students at the Chassidic School.

In response to the questions asking the students whether they had studied art before this high school program and whether they were taking art courses outside of school, the following was found:

Out of the 125 students interviewed, only 12 had ever taken any other art courses and these had been taken in the schools they attended prior to immigrating to Canada. None of the students are taking any classes outside of the school but several expressed a desire to do so.

In response to the questions asking the students whether they enjoyed the art program, and if they thought art should be compulsory in grades 7 and 8, the following was found:

Thirty-two percent of the Chassidic students felt that art should never be compulsory at any level for it is a subject which is based not only on academic achievement but on a physical production as well. Ninety percent of the students expressed enjoyment of the art course. The students believe that if one does not have any talent or interest, they will never do well and will only like or dislike the subject proportionally to how well or how poorly they are doing in the course. Unlike other subjects which do not call for any personal involvement, art seeks the person and the students feel that if one does not hear the 'call' then no matter how hard one tries, the work will visibly be devoid of feelings and lack a sense of involvement.

In response to the question asking the students whether art was an important area of study in order to round out their development, the following was found:

Seventy-six percent of the Chassidic students felt that art was beneficial not only for academic development but also for their personal development. Due to the study of color, they would be better able to choose their clothing with good taste, they would be better armed when the time will come to decorate their homes, and almost every student expressed a greater ability to properly match the colors in their make-up collections. With regard to personal development, many expressed their happiness with the plastic arts because the subject allowed them to do something that was uniquely their own, without too much teacher intervention. They enjoyed being original and creative and as one student expressed it, "Allowing my hands to move and sweep over the paper with MY lines and MY colors."

In response to the questions asking the students whether they wanted to study more theory and what they thought about the artists who created 'modern' works, the following was found:

Forty-two percent of the Chassidic students wished to study more theory for they hoped that it would help them understand in greater detail the works they had seen. They were not satisfied with merely looking at the

modern works but wished to understand why certain artists painted as they did. They do not believe that the artist paints without thought, and hoped that learning more theory would help them decipher the fine print inherent within certain works. Fifty-eight percent were opposed to learning theory and quite verbosely expressed their opinions that there should be more action in art class and less verbal theorization. Art should allow the students greater physical freedom (i.e., they should not sit at their desks but should be able to stand and paint or work with clay). Essentially, they summed up their thoughts on this by saying, "Art must be done, not talked!"

In response to the question dealing with the laws concerning the creation of graven images according to the Bible, the following was found:

Only 28% of the students were familiar with the laws governing the making of graven images. None of them believed that it created any difficulties for they did not believe that any of them were creating perfect three dimensional sculptures in any course, and if they did, they would simply cause it to have some minor blemish (i.e., a chipped ear or nose). As well, none of them felt

that they would ever have any desire to worship the objects they were producing and that this idea never entered their minds while they were working. If graven images are forbidden, they said they would make something else. Several explained that the image referred to making pictures of people of whose appearance we have no true record; hence it is forbidden to make a picture and say that this is the actual visual likeness of Moses or Adam. Therefore, they agreed that they could sculpt or draw whatever they wished, providing their intentions were acceptable.

The rest of the students merely said that if something was forbidden, they would not do it because they would not defy any prohibitions and instead would occupy themselves with an area which is permitted.

g) Results of the Questionnaire - 150 Secondary Students at the Talmudic School

In response to the questions asking the students whether they had studied art before the high school program and whether they were taking art courses outside of school, the following was found:

Other than 3% of the students who had learned the art of embroidery in a Sunday afternoon free-activity

program at the school, none of the students were taking or had ever taken any art courses outside of the school.

In response to the questions asking the students whether they enjoyed the art program and if they thought art should be compulsory in grades 7 and 8, the following was found:

Thirty-eight percent of the students admitted to actually enjoying their program, for otherwise they would never have the opportunity to express themselves visually. Twelve percent of the graduating class voiced the same opinion but actually were fearful that their expression might be misinterpreted by someone and hastened to add that they thought the subject should only be compulsory in the lower grades.

None of the students believed that art should be compulsory at any grade level and that it should always be presented as an option.

In response to the question asking the students whether art was an important area of study in order to round out their development, the following was found:

None of the students thought that art was an important area to study. They did not believe that it had any real significance either as a subject or for any other area of their development.

In response to the questions asking the students whether they wanted to study more theory and what they thought about the artists who created 'modern' works, the following was found:

Eighty-six percent of the Talmudic students were quite satisfied with the few projects that they were doing and did not express any interest in furthering their knowledge of art in either actual practice or theory. They were totally ignorant of the major works of any major artists and none of them considered the works of any major artists and none of them considered the works important. (They were shown several works by Picasso, Mondrian, Chagall, Bracque and Modigliani. This was not done at the Chassidic school for the students had seen the works during their course.) It was agreed that the works had a decorative effect but the disfiguration apparent in several pieces was considered ugly. They questioned the artist's motive in rearranging the human form and they felt that this was an ungodly act in that

God did not intend man to be so unkindly rearranged, and as well, one should not try to improve upon God's creations or mock them. Concerning totally non-representational abstract works, the girls believed that although one could imagine that they result from the release of inner tensions and emotions, they really had no subtle messages nor did they contain any ideas. As such, they believe that anyone working in this area does not create anything which ultimately brings about a greater good in the world, and hence 'art' truly is a waste of time and energy.

In response to the question dealing with the laws concerning the creation of graven images according to the Bible, the following was found:

Fewer than 20% of the students were familiar with the actual Biblical prohibitions concerning graven images. All of the girls were adamant that it should not be done in any form whatsoever, even in the permitted forms. Their reasoning was twofold. Of major importance was the prohibition from God. Secondly, concern was expressed that even if one worked with permissible forms, it could possible develop into a forbidden form and thus transgress the laws. Therefore, it was better not to

become involved at all in order to prevent any violations. A second view was expressed by 3% of the secondary four and fives who stated that art is an area which can remove one from religion. Because the subject is not an important one, the time spent engaged in the art project is time that could have been used for studying some aspect of the Bible.

h) Summary

The orthodox Jews as well as the Reform and Conservative Jews in Quebec, put much effort into establishing their own system of schooling. It was natural that they should continuously supervise the course content in order to safeguard their culture, especially since the factor of assimilation was a constant threat. In addition, the rabbinical leaders of the community and of the schools, believed that the art program must be continuously supervised in order not to transgress the biblical prohibitions. Some leaders of the community saw the study of art as another step on the road to assimilation. The Talmudists believe this very strongly and the Chassidic followers are also aware of this problem. Therefore, although the Chassidic school seems to be quite permissive in its attitude towards the

arts, there is continuous supervision of the art projects.

The Talmudic school, permitting very little deviation from its Torah studies, has cut the art program to a minimum. The school's philosophy does not leave any room for the students to investigate the arts and has infused the students with the belief that their approach and interaction with the arts must be minimal. The students do not really question this and by the time they reach grade ten or eleven, they are strongly indoctrinated with this attitude.

Only a quarter of the Talmudic girls expressed any enjoyment in the art program whereas almost all of the Chassidic girls expressed happiness with it. This may be due to the basic reason that the Talmudic girls were actually hesitant to express their enjoyment of a basically 'forbidden' subject.

Many of the girls at the Chassidic school are not observant and do not come from religious homes; hence they are more open to the art world. As the school integrates religious and less-religious girls into one stream, each sector opens its doors to the other. The Chassidic girls relate more easily to the non-religious students than do the Talmudic girls, and are therefore more familiar with the secular world. As the Chassidic

school is guided by a philosophy that accepts some change, so too are the girls open to new and changing ideas. They are not fearful of expressing their opinions for they believe that one does not deal with the changing times by either backing off or pretending that the world does not exist. They realize that they must be able to deal with the 'problems' of the art course and must find solutions through the Torah.

An interesting point is that while half of the Chassidic girls believed that the artists work is meaningful, only 2% of the Talmudic girls agreed. This could be due to the lack of an art background on the part of the Talmudic girls and also to the 'subliminal' messages put forth by their administration and teachers.

At the Talmudic school the girls did not believe that there were any widespread benefits to be had from the study of art. Hence all of the girls answered that art was not important in any way. Over half of the Chassidic girls saw art as helpful in other areas of their lives such as interior decoration, make-up and fashion design. They therefore saw some significance in the art course.

Interestingly, both groups of girls were not really aware of the Biblical prohibitions against images. A few in each school had heard something concerning the

creation of complete statues and most knew that those statues would have to be slightly damaged in order to be considered acceptable by the orthodox Jewish standards. Following the interview, however, 92% of the Chassidic girls researched the questions and came back to class with a fairly good understanding of the problems involved in the representation of images. There was no follow-up done at the Talmudic school by any of the students.

75

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

We have examined the historical and religious contexts which frame the very strong concerns of the Jewish community with being submerged either forcibly or through attrition into the cultural mainstream. Historically, the Jews have been isolated through their own tenacious desire for preserving their way of life. The positive side of this isolation has been a strong sense of cultural identity, the negative side has been that they have remained an easily-identified minority one which could be conveniently blamed for social problems not of their making. European Jews with fresh memories of pogroms and other forms of persecution came to Quebec with the full intention of continuing their traditions. In order to do so, and after running the familiar gauntlet of antisemitism they established schools and ensured themselves of some autonomy in matters of curriculum. One of the thorny issues which remained for the orthodox schools was how to accommodate to the provincial requirement that certain subjects be taught--one problem subject was the visual arts.

As was explained, a long-standing Biblical injunction exists against the making of certain kinds of two and three-dimensional images. We have seen that this injunction has been interpreted differently during various historical periods so much so that Jewish artisans and artists of considerable proficiency have existed at many times and in many places throughout Europe and the Middle East. The historical diversity of Jewish artistic activity demonstrates that the Biblical prohibition has been interpreted in a number of ways by scholars, and that Jewish law has been able to mediate affectively between the requirements of the religion and the changing demands of the secular and non-Jewish world.

We found the same diversity in approaches to the problems when we studied the two Jewish orthodox schools both of which offered art in the curriculum. Both schools claim standing as pious, religious institutions, but as we noted there are significant differences between the two schools in terms of curriculum and in terms of the attitudes of the students towards the visual arts. The Talmudic school, arising as it does from a tradition which emphasizes arduous study and intellectual discipline, has little use for the study of the arts. On the other hand, the Chassidic school being steeped in a more ecstatic tradition has less suspicion of the

'frivolities' of art. The same difference in attitude was observed in the questionnaire responses of the two student bodies. Interestingly enough, neither of the two groups of students was aware of the specific Biblical interdictions against image-making. The results of the questionnaire suggest that there are a number of gaps in the students' knowledge about Jewish art and artists. Because of this finding the author suggests a course in Jewish art which should consist of the following topics:

1. The Distinction between Art by Jews and Art for Jews;
2. Biblical References dealing with the Representation of Images and Rabbinical Interpretations;
3. Applications of the Prohibitions throughout History and in the Modern Times;
4. Synagogue Art;
5. Ritual Art;
6. Famous (and not so famous) Jewish Painters, Sculptors, Architects;
7. Art in Israel--specifically the Bezalel School of Art;
8. Contemporary Orthodox Jewish Artists.

It is essential for the students to understand the differences between 'Art by Jews' and 'Art for Jews'. Art by Jews refers to works created by Jews but devoid of Jewish content. Art for Jews, is the term for objects created by Jews for Jews and would only include religious items such as: wine cups, spice boxes, menorahs, bread covers, ark curtains, Torah finials, pointers, etc.

It is very important for the student to understand the Biblical passages. A reference to Biblical prohibitions and the various ways the prohibition has been interpreted might persuade some administrators and parents of the value of an art program. It would be important to tell students that certain respected and renowned scholars including Rashi and Maimonides condoned the making of art. The opinion of these scholars is important to all members of the Jewish community.

The next two topics covered by the suggested course--Synagogue Art and Ritual Art could be combined or dealt with separately. As the synagogue is an important part of the students life, it is both interesting and important for them to realize that the embellishment of ritual objects and architecture is not merely an incidental part of their creation. The actual features of decoration will be looked at in view of a) external

influences (Greek, Roman, etc.) and b) internal influences (Torah interpretations).

A history of Jewish painters and their works might be presented to the students for this would complete their growing artistic vocabulary.

The Bezalel School of Art is one of the foremost schools of training for Jewish artists in Israel and the Diaspora and therefore this school should be included in the program. Reference would also be made to the other schools of the arts which have many Jewish students.

Finally, the course would end with a section on contemporary Orthodox Jewish artists. Artists would be chosen from each sect, including Lubavitch, Agudah, etc. and their lives and works would be studied.

Hopefully, since the artists chosen will be members of orthodox sects, the students will be able to identify with him/her as a co-religionist and as an artist. If the students can relate to the artist as one "of their own", then perhaps they will approach the wider world of the arts with more understanding and less fear.

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