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9-14-2007

September 17, 2007: Hallowed Secularism and the Family

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Date: 2007-09-17T13:19:00.000-04:00

9/17/2007--How can secularists transmit religious knowledge, that is, knowledge of the transcendent side of life, to their children? Perhaps by sending their kids to religious schools to hear messages the parents reject. The issues there are obvious. Training the child yourself is beyond the capability of most people and I imagine the results will be mixed for others, as it was for me. Public school is one possibility. This suggestion assumes that secularists get over their hostility to all things religious. A serious comparative religion course could only be taught by serious religious people. Such a course never communicates properly unless the people teaching are sympathetic to the subject matter. This is a question of tone and it is perfectly obvious to the students when the teacher finds religion outdated or otherwise false. There would be religious converts from such a course and this would bother both atheists and religious families who lose a child to some other tradition. But at least this sort of structure is imaginable. If the political and legal opposition to using the public schools is too great, my other suggestion is to set up part-time programs after school, as my small synagogue did in creating our own Hebrew School. The tricky part, if this is to be done, is to set up the curriculum. Obviously, the school could teach comparative religion, as I suggested for the public schools. But I think the best course would be to teach the religion of the family the child comes from. In my case, for example, the curriculum would be Jewish. I do not mean a celebration of Jewish culture, or Christian culture, as in the online magazine, *Secular Culture and Ideas*, which celebrates secularism in Judaism. There was a story recently in this magazine about Ira Glass, the NPR radio host, who was asked, "Do you still go to synagogue?" He responded, "I don't believe in God, and so I feel like a fraud when I'm in a synagogue. I feel like somebody who is in a theme park of my own childhood. I know all the songs, and it makes me feel really warm and nostalgic, and it's incredibly comforting. But then I think that I don't believe anything that's being said here. And so, I have no business here." I am trying to describe a school in which the themes of God, revelation, history, ritual and prayer are vital and real, but without traditional content. In other words, you teach Judaism as if you believed it, but being candid with the students about belief and non-belief. Will all this work? I haven't even described a clear idea, so it is impossible to say. The goal is clear, however. Atheism is very likely in the long run to lead to hopelessness and despair. The hope here is to engender meaning in the young. To the criticism that it will not work, I can only respond that most of these children are going to be secular one way or the other, so something had better work.