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RABBI SAYS FAITHS ARE NOT RELATED

Urges Each to Recognize the 'Individuality' of Others

By IRVING SPIEGEL

A distinguished Talmudic scholar has emphasized that interreligious cooperation and understanding among the major faiths can flourish in a democratic society only when there is a recognition of one another's "distinctiveness and individuality" as a religious community.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of Boston, acknowledged intellectual and spiritual leader of Orthodoxy in America and known the world over in Orthodox communities, discusses the theological and philosophical foundations underlying Jewish-Christian relationships in a special essay.

The essay will appear within the next two weeks in "Tradition," the official organ of the Rabbinical Council of America, influential Orthodox rabbinic group. Dr. Soloveitchik, professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University, is chairman of the Council's Halakhah Commission (religious law body).

While stressing that the different faiths, including Judaism, have a mutual interest in social problems and must cooperate in recommending action, Dr. Soloveitchik asserts that "our joint engagement in this kind of enterprise must not dull our sense of identity as a faith community."

Explains Position

"There is no contradiction," the noted scholar writes, "between coordinating our cultural activities with all men and at the same time confronting them as members of another faith community. The great encounter between God and man is a wholly personal affair incomprehensible to the outsider."

Rabbi Soloveitchik asserts that in order to "safeguard the individuality" of the Jewish faith community, it must be recognized in any confrontation with the Christian world that Jews form a "totally independent faith community."

"We do not revolve," he adds, "as a satellite in any orbit. Nor are we related to any other faith community as 'brethren' even though 'separated.'"

Rabbi Soloveitchik terms as "legitimate" the existence of a Judeo-Hellenistic-Christian tra-



DEFINES FORMULA:
The Rev. Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Talmudic scholar who is leader of Orthodox Judaism in U. S. He set forth formula for cooperation and understanding among religions in U. S.

dition within the framework of Western civilization from a cultural point of view.

However, the Orthodox leader declares that "when we shift the focus from the dimension of culture to that of faith—where total unconditional commitment and involvement are necessary—the whole idea of a tradition of faiths and the continuum of revealed doctrines which are by their very nature incommensurate and related to different frames of reference is utterly absurd."

In stressing the individuality of the religious character of the major faiths, Rabbi Soloveitchik appealed to Jewish leaders to "refrain from suggesting" to the Christian community "changes in its ritual or emendations of its texts."

"If the genuinely liberal dignitaries of the faith community," he writes, "deem such changes advisable, they will act in accordance with their convictions without any prompting on our part. It is not within our purview to advise or solicit."

Rabbi Soloveitchik's objections to any pressure for changes in Christian doctrines dealing with Jews was an indirect reference to the actions of certain Jewish groups that have been outspoken on the possible statement on Roman Catholic-Jewish relations that might be adopted at the Ecumenical Council in Rome.