The Issue of Morality
Spiritual Development in the Gymnasium

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ABSTRACT

Title: The issue of morality: spiritual development in the gymnasium.

This is minor field study conducted in Gavle, Sweden. The purpose of the field study is to find answers to questions related to morality and spirituality with the main concern of investigating the phenomena in the gymnasium. Aspects of this presentation focus on the role of religion in moral development, on whether spirituality necessarily evokes a sense of morality or they are entirely separate issues. This presentation also explains briefly what spirituality is, as well as expatiating on certain moral theories propounded by certain scholars and its relevance to the study. Since morality can sometimes be relative to persons in different places, I also did a brief comparative work by looking at the situation in Ghana and Sweden when it comes to morality. The phenomenological method was chosen in conducting this research. In line with this I interviewed two students in the gymnasium, I distributed questionnaires to twenty three other students and I interviewed a priest twice to gather some information which was resourceful in organising this study. In Ghana, morality is averagely a matter of social importance and mostly though not everyone, serves as a check to ensure that what are believed to be right actions are distinguished from wrong actions. Religion forms the core of spirituality for most Ghanaians. With 93.3% of the population claiming to be religious, this issue is not surprising. It is with much interest therefore that I conducted a fieldwork in Sweden to know the varied views in spirituality and morality. There are a lot of similarities to say, in terms of morality and spirituality in Sweden and in Ghana. However, the enormous differences cannot be left out.

Keywords: Morality, Spirituality, Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, Gymnasium, Ethics
“I am the owner of my own karma
I inherit my karma
I am born of my karma
I am related to my karma
I live supported by my karma
Whatever karma I create, whether good or evil, that I shall inherit.”

The Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya V.57 – Upajjhatthana Sutta
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SECTION 1

1.1 PERSONAL BACKGROUND

This section of my research is generally to talk about my personal background and the interest for choosing my research topic. I am Mary Koomson and I am twenty one years of age. I am a Ghanaian and come from the Central and Western region of Ghana. But with my ethnic group traditionally being Akan, I would say that I come from the Central region of Ghana since that identifies me with my mother’s ethnic group and that being the ideal of the Akan. I felt very happy when I was chosen to do a semester course in Sweden. The fact is, the knowledge of conducting a field work as well as its organization was not new to me. The problem was that I could not make up a topic of study for the research. It was therefore of much interest to me when the head of department, Jari Ristiniemi, suggested the topic of investigating spiritual development to me. Spirituality and morality therefore became topics of interest to me. However, I narrowed it down to investigating it in the gymnasium. Conducting the research was successful. What particularly was of interest to me was the brief comparisons with Ghana because I noticed that all other things being equal the morality and spirituality of the Ghanaian sense differed from the Swedish of morality and spirituality in many aspects. I find it particularly interesting to conduct this research.

1.2 INTRODUCTION AND DISPOSITION

Collective and individualistic cultures alike do have a lot of things they share in common. For instance, when it comes to non moral issues, that is, issues of right and wrong which does not affect the whole society. However, extinct differences arise when it comes to matters of moral concern and spiritual development. It is against this background that I am interested in knowing as well as investigating spiritual development in a gymnasium in Sweden. In Ghana, the secondary schools have similarities in terms of age range with the students in the gymnasium. Few comparative references will therefore be made to them for brief comparative purposes.

We all have some sort of vision in mind when it comes to the term spirituality but trying to define it exactly some challenges arise. For instance, is spirituality a part of religion or are they separate issues? According to Jolinda Cary, spirituality is the most basic sense of matter
pertaining to the spirit or the idea that something exists.¹ That is, spirituality is a goal in achieving an improved relationship with the sacred. According to Venerable K. Sri Dhammanada Maha Thera, without a spiritual background, man has no moral responsibility; man without responsibility poses danger to society.²

These ideas undoubtedly explain that spirituality is a necessary issue as far as one's development is concerned. There is actually not a specific age for the development of spirituality neither in Sweden nor in Ghana. In Sweden, as a means of spiritual development, Christianity was formally taught in schools. The church then had an impact in schools. However, the subject was changed to religious studies so as to be as neutral as possible. Religious studies taught in schools is not with the aim to indoctrinate them but to give them a fair idea of various religions.

The church as a spiritual body has been denied its former rights to help in spiritual development in schools. Religious studies is now taught in the gymnasium. The question is does it ensure an appreciable level of spiritual development in the gymnasium? Has it any impact on the moral standard of students?

The research work has been divided into five sections. Section one gives a general introduction to the research, it elaborates on the method and the material used in the research as well as giving a general background to spirituality and explaining the aims and research questions. In section two, I presented the previous research work which has been done, taking particular notice of its relation to the research questions. The focus will be on giving an account of moral theories and some moral issues across some religious traditions, to know whether religion has an impact as well as present a brief research work done in Ghana in relation to religion and morality. Section three will basically focus giving an account of the major findings based on the research conducted as well as an analysis of the findings.

The concentration of section four will be on discussing the findings on the entire research work where as section five will consist of conclusion to the work, list of references and an appendix.

1.3 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The ultimate aim of this research is to study and find out whether spiritual development has any impact on pupils in terms of their moral development. In essence, I intend to find answers to the following questions to reach the aim of the research;

- What does spirituality mean to the students in the gymnasium and what is its essence to them in terms of their moral development?
- When it comes to the issue of morality and spirituality, does religion play a role in moral development?
- What peculiar moral issues in Ghana differ considerably from that of Sweden?
- Does spirituality necessarily awaken a sense of morality?

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

“I would say that, there has been too much talk about phenomenology, and not enough phenomenological work. One does not always have to insist that what one is doing is phenomenology, but one ought to work phenomenologically, that is descriptively creative – intuitively, and in a concretizing manner. Instead of simply applying concepts to all sorts of things, concepts ought to come forward in movements of thoughts springing from the spirit of language and the power of intuition.” Hans–Georg Gadamer.3

In my work, I would employ the phenomenological method in the study. I would like to justify and give adequate explanations to the choice of the phenomenological method. I would also like to explain why the participants in the research were chosen and how relevant it is to my work.

Phenomenology per se, is a branch of philosophy owing its origin to the work of Husserl and later writers (e.g. Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau Ponty, who took the ideas into existentialism).4 Phenomenology seeks to study human phenomena without considering questions of their causes, their objective reality, or even their appearance.5 In fact “the knowledge of a man who acts and thinks within the world of his daily life is not

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5 http://informationr.net/tdw/publ/papers/schutz02.html accessed on 26th April, 2009.
homogeneous; it is (1) incoherent, (2) only partially clear, (3) not at all free from contradictions.” Schutz, A.6 I am therefore stepped out of my world to know about morality and spiritual development in Sweden.

Since I am a different person from a different country as well as a different continent, there is the need for me to study the issue at hand, pertaining to spirituality and morality from the participants’ own perspective. All forms of previous knowledge and pre-associated ideas must be discarded by me in order to present an objective and quality work devoid of bias.

The essential feature in phenomenology which I employed during the research is bracketing or epoche. Bracketing, also called epoche is a term derived from Edmund Husserl for the act of suspending judgement about the natural world that precedes phenomenological analysis.7 In order to achieve an objective work devoid of bias, there is the need to suspend all previous judgements and opinions about the object of study.

Considering the fact that I am doing a field study in Sweden in comparison to Ghana and the fact that I am a Ghanaian, I deem it well fit to be as objective as possible. If ethnocentrism, which is the belief that one particular race or ethnic group is superior to all others8 sets in then this work will be quite questionable based on the fact that subjectivity would give way to objectivity. The way of life of Ghanaians is qualitatively different from the way of life of Swedish citizens. Certain moral standards which are questionable in one culture or the other in the Ghanaian society, may not raise questions at all in Sweden. Likewise, an accepted norm in Sweden may not be accepted in Ghana, hence, the need to reject all manner of subjectivism in this work. For example, an issue of kissing in public raises moral questions in Ghana but it would be a different case when it comes to Sweden since such matters don’t raise moral questions at all. False assumptions will be discarded.

The choice of material used in this work is consistent with my topic of study. In this sense, documents and materials in relation to morality and spirituality has heavily been dependent upon.

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6 http://informationr.net/tdw/publ/papers/schutz02.html accessed on 26th April, 2009.
8 Alfred Koduah (2008): Who is disturbing the nation? pg. 28
1.5 ETHICAL REFLECTIONS

“Except in minimal-risk research, the investigator establishes a clear and fair agreement with research participants, prior to their participation that clarifies the obligations and responsibilities of each. The investigator has the obligation to honour all promises and commitments included in that agreement. The investigator informs the participants all the aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate and explains all other aspects of the research about which the subjects inquire. Failure to make full disclosure prior to obtaining informed consent requires additional safeguards to protect the welfare and dignity of research participants. Research with children or with participants who have impairments that would limit understanding and/ or communication requires safeguarding procedures”. Ethical principles for human subjects research (APA, 1973), C.9

In conducting the research, I also employed the third principle of the ethical principles for human subjects research developed by the American psychology association in 1973. In relation to this, the participants in my research were given a fair idea of what the research was all about. There were no risks involved in the research. However, as a means to protect their identity, they were not made to include their names with regards to the research questions they answered. This was basically done to do with the fear that, one’s response may be used as a source of evidence to respond negatively about him or her. No special promises and commitments were made to the participants, however, they were free to ask me any question with regards to the research questions of which I responded to adequately in order for them to better understand what a particular word or sentence was all about. I introduced myself to them and told them where I came from so that they would know the reason for the brief comparative purposes in the research and so that they would not be coerced to participate in the research if they did not want to. In other to protect the welfare and dignity of my participants, I obtained informed consent from them as well as their teacher. There was no child or people with impairment however in this research so additional informed consent was not necessary.

The research conducted basically took place in a gymnasium in the middle part of Sweden. I was present to obtain the information from my participants. In all, twenty-three pupils

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participated in the research. Though their ages were not required in the research, upon inquiry, I was informed by their teacher that, they were between the ages of 18 and 22. A questionnaire was presented to each student. The students were required to answer eight questions by filling in their answers based on their perspectives. These were the open ended questions. They were also required to answer seven multiple choice questions. As indicated previously, the questions asked were basically on morality and spirituality.

I also had the opportunity to interview two other students. An interview was also conducted by me with a Swedish priest in the Church of Sweden. In short, these were the informants in this research.

A good quality work according to Sharan Merriam is to tolerate ambiguities.\textsuperscript{10} Therefore, ambiguities and inconsistencies have been noted and are discussed in the major findings objectively.

In the nutshell, the phenomenological method has been employed in this research focusing on the main feature of bracketing or performing epoché. Likewise, the materials involved have been stated in this section. The aim is to get an objective and qualitative work devoid of prejudices and dogmatism.

\textsuperscript{10} Olov Dahlin (2002); Zinworadza, Being a patient in the religious and medical plurality of mberengwa district, Zimbabwe, pg. 24
SECTION 2

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The essence of this section is to relate the research work to other research done by researchers in this field. This is being done to help find answers to the research questions which will be discussed in the discussion section.

Here I intend to find what makes an issue a moral issue, review some moral theories, present certain moral issues across different religious traditions, attempt to discuss whether religion in fact, has an effect on morality and discuss briefly a research work done in Ghana in relation to this.

2.1 WHAT MAKES AN ISSUE A MORAL ISSUE?

Decisions about whether to eat pasta or to eat salad, whether to get out of bed from the right side of the bed or the left side, whether to watch television or listen to radio, raise no moral issues. On the other hand, decisions about whether to drive intoxicated, beat up your wife or spouse, or indulge in hard drugs raises moral questions, hence a moral issue. An action becomes a moral issue when the outcome of such action affects the individual and others.

Moral issues arise mostly when the choices people make will affect the wellbeing of others, either by causing harm or benefiting the individual. Whether you eat pasta or salad does not affect the wellbeing of others. On the other hand, whether or not we sell hard drugs or beat our spouses represent choices that will affect the wellbeing of others. Therefore, they are moral issues. The wellbeing involved could be physical or psychological.

Although moral issues arise most often when a person is faced with choices that will affect the wellbeing of others, others also maintain that, moral issues arise only when the agent is affected. On this slightly broader issue of what makes something a moral issue, if anyone’s wellbeing is affected by an agent’s behaviour or anyone else, it becomes a moral issue.

When moral issues arise, we evaluate both the action and people from what we call a moral point of view. An action can therefore be rated as good or bad, right or wrong, morally acceptable or morally unacceptable, morally permitted, required or prohibited. For the most part, whether a person is good or bad depends on what he does or does not do. A good person does what is morally required and refrains from doing what is immoral. Moral evaluation
therefore depends on the moral evaluation of action. However, motivation is also important in morally evaluating people as good or bad. In reality, people do not make the same moral judgement or accept the same moral principles. For instance, it is not all of us that will agree on whether hard drugs should be sold or for even a criminal to pay for a death penalty when such judgement is passed on a criminal. One must however have good reasons to be able to take or maintain a particular stand or position. One essential feature of moral evaluation is that, moral evaluations require justifying reasons. However, sometimes we are faced with situations where several good arguments lead to contradictory conclusions.

2.2 SOME MORAL THEORIES

ACTION BASED THEORIES

a. Consequentialist theory: The consequentialist theory holds that, an action is right only if and only when the outcome of that action is favourable. In other words, the consequentialists assert that, the rightness or wrongness of human action is solely by reference to the outcome of the action. If the outcome is good, the action is right. The action is wrong, if the outcome is bad. The consequentialists as their name explain, look more at the consequences of an action. It sometimes however, looks at the values one holds. Consequentialism is distinct from deontology.\(^\text{11}\)

b. Deontological theory: These people however, deny what the consequentialists affirm, that is, the morality of an action is solely determined by its outcome. For some deontologists, consequences play no role at all in determining right or wrong actions or the morality of an action. For some others, consequences are only one of several factors considered in determining the morality of an action. For the deontologists, the morality of an action stems from the intrinsic nature of the action itself or from the action conformity with the principle of duty. An action is said to be morally right when it conforms to one’s principles. If one is a deontologist, he goes strictly by his values regardless of social situation or circumstance.

An example of a deontological theory is the divine command theory. This is a moral principle that, people should obey God’s law as the ultimate authority on what is morally permitted, required and prohibited. This theory, particularly the divine command theory, has a lot of criticisms. For instance, it is guilty of naturalistic fallacy.\(^\text{12}\) This is because, for instance, if I

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ask a question, why I should not steal, the divine command answer is, because God commands you not to. But I can then ask the question why I should do what God commands. If the answer is He created me, I can then ask the question why I should obey my creator and a lot more. “This is not a matter of motivation but of the explanation of the normativity of morality” (Wikipedia). Normative sentences actually do not describe how the world is but rather they prescribe how the world should be.

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG’S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT.

Lawrence Kohlberg focused on moral development and has proposed a moral stage of thinking. Kohlberg’s participants comprised of 72 boys, from middle and low class families in Chicago. They were ages 10, 13 and 16. He later added to his participants, younger children, delinquents, and boys and girls from other countries (1963, 1970).

Kohlberg presented a series of dilemmas such as that of the case of Heinz. He told his participants that, “In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman’s husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow money, but he could only get together about $1000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said “No, I discovered the drug and I’m going to make money from it”. So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man’s store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that?”

Kohlberg was not actually concerned with closed answers such as yes or no. He was interested in the moral reasoning behind their answers. He classified the various responses into six stages based on three levels, each level consisting of two stages.

LEVEL 1, PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL

Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation

To the Heinz dilemma, the child typically says that, Heinz was wrong to steal the drug because it is against the law and it is bad to steal. They are concerned with the consequences of an action. Punishment here is seen as the consequence of stealing.16

Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange

Children here are concerned with individual interests. To Heinz dilemma, they said Heinz was right to steal the drug because he wanted his wife to live. However, if he would find someone better looking than his wife, then he didn’t have to steal the drug.

LEVEL 2, CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

Stage 3. Good interpersonal Relationship

To the Heinz dilemma, they answered that, he was right to steal because he didn’t want his wife to die. A good husband should not sit back whiles his wife dies.

Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order

At this stage, the individual believes that, Heinz motives were good; however, they cannot condone theft. What will be of the world if we started breaking laws whenever we felt we had a good reason? This would result in a lawless and chaotic world.

LEVEL 3, POST CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

Stage 5. Social contract and Individual rights

In response to Heinz dilemma, the participant made it clear that, they do not favour the breaking of laws; however, the wife’s right to live is a moral right that must be protected.

Stage 6. Universal Principles

At this stage people are more concerned with the principles and values that make a good society and less concerned with maintaining society for its own sake. At stage 6, individuals define the principles by which agreement would be most just.

CRITICISMS LEVELLED AGAINST KOHLBERG’S THEORY.

Expanding on Piaget’s work, Kohlberg determined that the process of moral development was principally concerned with justice that is continued throughout the individual’s life time, a notion that spawned dialogue on philosophical implications of such research (Wikipedia). There have however been several critiques of the theory from several perspectives.

One criticisms of Kohlberg’s theory is that, it emphasizes justice to the exclusion of other values and so may not adequately address the arguments of those who value other moral aspects of actions.17

Gilligan argued that Kohlberg’s theory is androcentric in that he developed his empirical research using only male participants. Gilligan argues that, it does not adequately describe the concerns of women. Gilligan developed an alternate theory of moral reasoning based on ethics of caring.18

Kohlberg’s stages are also considered as not being neutral in terms of culture in that, individuals in different cultures seem to progress the stages at different rates.19

Kohlberg however responded to these criticisms by saying that, though different cultures inculcate different beliefs, his stages correspond to underlying modes of reasoning rather than those beliefs.

These and many other criticisms have been levelled against Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral reasoning. However, its relevance in other fields cannot be dispensed with. Secondly taking those criticisms into account, it is relevant to use his theory.

2.3 MORAL ISSUES ACROSS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Most religious traditions agree on the same things when it comes to moral issues. The underlying factor here stems from the fact that, when it comes to moral issues, most certain actions are so basic that, across religious traditions, they agree as to whether those

actions are right or wrong. Those moral issues can hence be said to be universally accepted among individuals and religious traditions as a whole. Mention can be made on such moral issues such as murder, lying, stealing and so on are universally prohibited. In general, murder, lying and stealing of any kind are bad in all these religious traditions that we have in the world. Regardless, many opinions have arisen in relation to this. However, not all may agree on the basis for such an action to be considered as good or bad. For instance, on the issue of murder in terms of capital punishment, not all of us will agree on the fact that capital punishment which is a form of murder is good or bad. Capital punishment enjoys both approval and disapproval from some societies and religious traditions at large. While advocates argue that capital punishment satisfy the demands of justices, opponents protest that it is barbaric, out of place in the modern world, cruel and inhumane punishment. In this sense, while most people agree on the generality morality of punishment for crime, they disagree on the goal of capital punishment.

Also, mention can be made of the issue of the abortion across religious traditions. In general, abortion which is the expulsion of a foetus before it develops into a fully fledged baby is considered as bad across religious traditions. For example, the Catholic Church opposes abortion. In Sweden though, abortion is accepted by the majority. However, based on the reasons for a particular case of abortion, some traditions may allow it. For example, in the case of pregnancy resulting from rape, incest, when the foetus is deemed to be severely damaged or in a situation when the life of the mother is in danger, abortion may be accepted.

Most religious traditions however agree on similar things when it comes to moral issues. “Mention can be made in the analects. Confucius says “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.” This saying expresses the notion of love which is advocated by numerous religious traditions. In Christian tradition for instance, Christians are taught to love the Lord God with all their heart mind and strength and to “love your neighbour as yourself”. In fact, the whole of 2nd Corinthians 13:4-13 talks about the fact that love is the greatest gift one could ever attain. In Mahayana Buddhism according to Wikipedia,

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20 Joseph Runzo and Nancy M. Martins (2001); Ethics in world religions, pg. 26
21 Joseph Runzo and Nancy M Martins (2001); Ethics in the world religions, pg. 26
22 Confucius, The analects (London:Penguin,1979) pg. 35
23 The Good News Bible; Mark 12:28-34.”Which commandment is the most important of all? Jesus replied,” the most important one is this: ”listen oh Israel, the Lord our God is the only God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and all your strength. The second most important is this; love your neighbour as yourself.......You are not far from the kingdom of God.
24 Good News Bible, fourth edition 1976
bodhisattva involves complete renunciation of oneself in order to take the burden of a suffering world. The strongest motivation one has in order to take the path of the bodhisattva is the idea of salvation within unselfish and altruistic love for all sentient beings. Advesa and maître are concepts in Buddhism which express love, an unconditional form of love and a form of unselfish interest in others welfare. In Hinduism, bhakti is a Sanskrit term meaning, “loving devotion to the supreme God”. Believers are encouraged to practice bhakti as well as love their fellow human beings. A person who practices bhakti is called bhakta.

In surah 11:90 and surah 85:14, there is a reference to God as the loving one. In the hadith which refers to the oral sayings of Mohammed, he is reported to have said that “No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.” Jewish tradition also has this concept of love. The torah of the Jews explicitly express, “love your neighbour like yourself” in Leviticus 19:18. Ahava is a term which is used to express both interpersonal love and the love of God.

In the nutshell, on the morality of love, all religious tradition agree that love for one another is very important and that it is necessary that it is expressed in the most truthful and sincere form. This is because, love treat each person as though he or she matters in any situation. On the whole therefore, when it comes to love, “such unrestricted love is not only remarkable (because we are accustomed to a world where love is selective with predefined limitations), it is persuasive”. Love is very important, “our human experience can become an experience of suffering to us because we engage in it self-centredly” John Hick. It is therefore important that, despite the inclination of one’s culture an expression of love is important.

The issue of the generality of a good moral may share a common view when it comes to deciding what is right in various religious traditions. The fact is, in deciding what is wrong or to even go to the extent of judging a morally wrong action as evil, a lot of traditions have their own views.

“Ordinary English reserves the term evil for what is morally sinister, but philosophers and theologians have for centuries lumped all of life’s “minuses” together under that rubric,
giving evil a very wide signification. They have distinguished moral evils such as wars and crimes and self-destructive vices and damage they cause in human life from natural evils such as diseases and the destructive effects of earthquakes and tornadoes. The inevitability of death itself is regarded by many as one of the greatest of natural evils. Anyone who reads or hears the news of the world knows of the existence of evils in this broad sense, and virtually all of us have or will have, some agonizing experience of them in our own lives.”31 The idea is that, evil is in existence and no matter the categories we put evil, be it natural, supernatural or moral, the fact is that, evil is in existence in the society. In respect to the sub topic under discussion, which is, moral issues across religion, I would like to consider what is morally wrong based on the views of the religious traditions discussed. The question here is that, do people differ in relation to what is morally wrong? Many cultures and traditions view what is wrong differently and this is what is going to be discussed in the subsequent writings in relation to the sub topic.

“The assault on commuter trains in Madrid, the world trade center attack in New York City, the release of nerve gas in subways in Tokyo – all these are incidents of terrorism and all them are linked with religion – not just Islam. A Christian terrorist, Timothy McVeigh, bombed the Oklahoma City federal building. A Jewish activist, Yigal Amir, assassinated Israel’s Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. A Buddhist prophet, Shoko Asahara, orchestrated the unleashing of nerve gas in the Tokyo subways near Japan parliament buildings. Hindu Sikh militants have targeted government building and political leaders in India. These and many other incidents force us to raise the question of whether religion leads to violence or peace.”32

The concept of love was reviewed in what is morally good. In respect to what is morally wrong, the concept of war or the use of force will be reviewed in the various religious traditions.

In the relation to Buddhism on the use of force, I would like to use the literature “Buddhist perspectives on the use of force by Midshipman Second-class Tyson B. Meadors (presented at ISME 2007)”

31 Marilyn McLord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (1990); The Problem of Evil, pg. 1, introduction
Tyson B. Meadors interviewed a monk on his views on the use of force. The relevant aspect of the interview is what will be discussed in this section. The monk will be represented with the letter M and Tyson, T.

“T; I have heard that many monks have been killed recently by PLA soldiers, is it true?  
M; Yes, they are trying to get rid of us.  
T; Well isn’t there anything you can do? I mean, can a monk run away or defend himself?  
M; No we can’t.  
T; But some of the monks at the other monastery told me some monks run away, some even throw rocks and resist, they said.  
M; Those are bad Buddhists.  
T; Those are bad Buddhists?  
M; Yes, a good Buddhist would accept the soldiers actions whether beaten or killed, it does not matter. They would not resist.  
T; So if all the Buddhists in Tibet were to be killed by the Chinese government, they should do nothing to stop from being killed?  
M; Yes. It is never right to intentionally harm another. This is one of the most fundamental things to a Buddhist.”

This conversation is an interesting one. In fact, in Buddhism, to become a practicing Buddhist, one has to affirm this commitment to non-violence. The idea of non violence is consistent with the idea of pacifism. Pacifists basically hold that, participation in any war is never justifiable particularly for religious people. “Pacifism covers a spectrum of views ranging from the belief that, international disputes can and should be peacefully resolved without resorting to the use of violence or even force in any circumstance.” In the view of the Buddhist therefore, there is no moral justification for war and violence. At anytime, it is wrong.

Does the Christian share a similar view? Yes, Christian tradition shares a similar view. That is, violence at any point in time is wrong. However, the Christian would generally look at an action as being wrong from the point of view of the bible. In other, “words what will Jesus do”? In Matthew 26:52, “Jesus said to Peter “to put your sword back in its place, all who take

33 http://www.usafa.edu/isme/ISME07/Meadors07.html accessed on 23rd April, 2009.  
34 http://www.123exp-culture.com/u03604074586 accessed on the 26th of March, 2009
the sword will die by the sword." Christians do not advocate the good of war; this is because Jesus commands it. In reality however, a lot of Christians join the army and engage in acts of violence whether it is for good reasons or not. In this sense, the Christian view differs from the Buddhist view. Defending oneself is not thought of as wrong in certain cases where the action is morally justifiable in the Christian tradition.

2.4 RELIGION AND MORALITY: DOES RELIGION HAVE AN EFFECT ON MORALITY?

Religion is a broad topic which has not been subscribed under a single definition. Different scholars have given several definitions based mostly on their respective area of study. In this context, the definition used by Joseph Runzu will be used.

According to Joseph Runzu, “A religion or religious tradition consists of a complex set of social elements-symbols and rituals, myths and stories, concepts and truth claims-which a community believes gives ultimate meaning to life by connecting the religious adherent to a transcendent: Allah or Brahman or Nirvana or the Dao or God or Akal Purakh, and so on.”

Morality comes from the Latin word “mores” or “mos” meaning manner or customs. Morality has to do with issues of bad, good, wrong and right. Moral meaning is an inextricable part of any religious meaning of life and moral structures are a critical part of religious conception of the structure of reality. Hence, following a religious life partly means to follow a religious life. Even to the scholar Idowu “without morality, there can be no religion.” This is because he believes that God created man and planted the seed of evil and good in man, therefore to separate religion from morality would lead to distortions.

There has been a lot of debate among scholars on the issue of whether religion determines morality. In fact, some think that religion determines morality. Others are of the view that, religion has nothing to do with morality, whilst, others are of the view that, religious and non-religious factors determine the moral life of people. A majority from the African thought

35 The word study bible (1990); King James Version.
36 Ethics in world religion; Joseph Runzu and Nancy M. Martin (2001). (Being religious and doing ethics in a global world) pg. 19
37 Ethics in world religion; Joseph Runzu and Nancy M. Martin (2001) pg. 19
believe that religion and morality are two broad topics which have been closely intertwined. On this part of the issue of morality, the concentration will be on the view of African scholars when it comes to morality.

Some African scholars such as J. B. Danquah, Idowu, Mbiti, and Rev. Kwasi Sarpong are of the view that, religion determines morality. They base this on two particular assumptions. Firstly, that religion is very pervasive and it is found everywhere. Secondly, that in relation to Africans, they are very religious, hence they derive their sense of morality from religion. Thus, according to Mbiti, “the African is notoriously religious”. Dr. J. B. Danquah believes that, “everything has value only in its relation to the ideal of the great ancestors”. Therefore to him, when God says something is right, then it is right and if He disapproves of it then it is wrong. God here becomes the sole determinant of morality. Asare Opoku on the other hand sees religion as a general morality originating from religious consecrations and it is so pervasive. In effect, to the question of whether religion determines morality, some scholars and in fact, other people believe that religion determines morality.

However, there are still a lot more who believe that religion has nothing to do with morality. Mention can be made of professor Dzobo and professor Gyekye. Professor Dzobo coined the term “logical demonomy” meaning people reasoning together. He used three reasons to illustrate how morality originated and has nothing to do with religion. He came up with the term joint reflective thinking, practical experience and individual consciousness. Professor Gyekye on the other hand based his ideas on the foundation of morality among Akans. To him, in relation to the Akans, the Akan religion is non-revealed. Also to him, there is no reference to God by his ancestors. He concluded by saying that, humanistic feeling or values determine morality in African culture and not religion.

Professor Kudajie proposed that, customs and traditions, interrelating with beliefs, both determine the moral life of people. Therefore to him, both religious and non-religious factors determine morality. That is, religion determines the moral life of people as well as non-religious factors when it comes to the issue of morality in African culture. From the catholic

perspective however, we have certain innate natural laws which help us to distinguish good from evil.

Sweden is a secular state. It disestablished its state religion way back in 2000. A secular state is defined as protecting freedom of religion. Religion is pervasive in Sweden and the state protects the right for individuals to have their own religion. General Christian values are still needed and taught to them. For instance, in school, students are taught about the foundations of values. Morals are created by and define society. On the issue of whether religion determines morality in Sweden, the issue cannot be generalised in specificity. In that, though in my view religion is quite prominent in this society, it is somehow separated from morality. The question then arises as to what I consider moral? As an African who is even religious by birth, I can say that, my moral considerations are different from the people of Sweden. For example, an issue of kissing publicly will raise a lot of moral concerns in Africa not that kissing is in itself bad but publicly it is an issue which will look rather immoral. On campus, At the University of Ghana, there is a ritual between some roommates where one has to excuse the other when the other’s boyfriend comes in. In this situation, in order not to observe what will be going on even in terms of kissing one has to leave the room. Sometimes such issues are rather “public morality” in that it is considered as an issue of morality by the society and so it is publicly avoided but done secretly. In Sweden however, you do not see people kissing everywhere but kissing in public is not to raise moral concerns at all. It is in fact, a matter of choice. That is not to say that the people of Sweden are not moral beings. They are moral beings as a lot can be distinguished between right and wrong and that being the main definition of morality. Religion is however separated from morality in my view. The idea of morality is based on individual persuasion. That is, apart from general laws that one has to obey as a citizen, my observation is that, based on personal convictions and persuasions, one can choose to do what is right or wrong which is quite apart from religion. In respect to say, this is quite different from the case of Ghana and Akans in particular. This is because they are notoriously religious as Mbiti addresses. Religion is very pervasive and determines morality in the majority.

During the nineteenth century, the point was emphasized by scientific rationalists and positivists that, religion and morality are independent, so that religion would have no effect

43 Wikipedia, accessed on the 26th of March.
on morality. They based their argument on the fact that since belief in God is illusory; it can never serve as a real foundation for morality.44

Some scholars also look at morality differently. Here, the idea is exclusively on the bible as the determinant of morality. The focus here is, “what would Jesus do” when it comes to deciding whether an issue is right or wrong. “In their new documents, The Bible and Morality, the scholars on the pontifical Bible commission said that biblical morality is not so much on a set of do’s and don’ts as it is a set of principles meant to help Christians grow in perfection and contribute to establishing God’s kingdom on earth.”45 The idea here is that, for Christians, organising their life according to spiritual morality is part of their spirituality. Hence, the idea of morality and spirituality is part of their spiritual quest and therefore make them organize their life according to biblical morality.

For these scholars, part of the striving is a key point in biblical morality. “Just as God revealed himself and his plans for salvation over time, the human response is something that naturally occurs in stages and includes failures, forgiveness and starting again”.46 It is also believed that, the Eucharist serves as nourishment to strengthen the believers. The essence of biblical morality in totality is to demonstrate the fact that, matters of good and bad are derived from biblical considerations. In effect, what the bible says is right, is right and what the bible says is wrong, is wrong. In weighing biblical morality therefore, one would have to consider the question of whether it conforms to what Jesus would do. In relation to the example of kissing publicly, most Africans would consider it as immoral, Swedish society would not consider it as an issue of moral concern whereas biblical morality would very much consider the question of “does it conform to what Jesus would do?”

In considering whether an issue is right or wrong, it is important to develop right attitudes. According to Sir Winston Churchill, attitude is the little thing that makes a big difference. New Webster’s dictionary defines attitude as “the posture of a person’s mental or moral disposition”.47

44 Brian Davies OP (1998); Philosophy, a guide to the subject of religion, pg. 254.
47 Alfred Koduah (2008): Who is disturbing the nation, pg. 51
In the nutshell therefore, in matters of religion and morality, I think that, regardless of whether one belongs to the African culture, the Swedish culture or whether religion determines morality in a particular society or not, developing the right attitudes in a society is also important in developing one’s moral life and help in nation building as a whole.

In addition, on the issue whether religion determines morality, it can also be said that, based on the country from which one comes from, personal convictions, on societal laws or even the motivation behind a particular deed, religion could be distinctively separated from morality, religion could influence morality or both religious and non-religious factors could influence an individual’s moral life.

2.5 A BRIEF COMPARATIVE RESEARCH DONE IN GHANA ON RELIGION ON WHETHER RELIGION HAS AN EFFECT ON MORALITY

A research work was done by university of Ghana level 400 students in 2008 recently by the first group of the religion and society class during the first semester to find out whether in fact religion, non-religious factors as well as affect the students moral decision when they are on campus as that means they are out of their parents protection. A sample of 50 students participated, 32 of which were females and 18 males were interviewed on the subject matter. They were from different religious backgrounds - Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, etc. 13 students said that religion influences their moral choices and in fact is the sole determinant of their morality. While 13 of them agreed that religion is the determinant of religion, 30 of the students in fact agreed that religion was not, 2 students did not want to make any comment. 5 students agreed that, it was a combination of both factors that influenced their moral choices.

Those who agreed to the fact that religion influences their morality claimed that, the way they even dress, behave and even relate to others is exactly in conformity to what their religion has taught them and going contrary to that would be a sin. On the other hand, those students who agreed that religion has nothing to do with morality also gave their reasons to support their stand. Some said that, one does not need to be religious to do the right thing. To them, one’s social network and independent conscience serve as a guide to what is right or wrong.

Others also strongly claimed that, their family tribe determine their morality. To Enyonam and Peace for example, they claimed that, their tribe forbid them from stealing, drinking, theft and engaging in premarital sex as it is a taboo for young persons in their tribe to indulge in such shameful acts which will drag the name of their family into mud. Their claim basically
was connected to their saying “as for our family we do not entertain these habits”. Some Akans among those interviewed said that, it is a taboo for an Akan to be disgraced in public so activities that would bring disgrace to the Akan child are prohibited.

Here with regards to this research organized by the religion and society class, the view of those who said that religion has nothing to do with religion was consistent to that of professor Gyekye and professor Dzobo view on the fact that religion has nothing to do with religion. Those who believed that religion is the determinant of morality had their views consistent with that of Asare Opoku, J.B Danquah, Idowu, Mbiti and Rev. Kwasi Sarpong’s view that religion is the sole determinant of morality. The 5 percent who agreed that it was a combination of religious and non – religious factors had their views consistent with that of Professor Kudajie.

In the nutshell, on the issue of whether religion has an effect on morality researched on the university of Ghana campus, conclusions where that, factors other than religion determine the morality of people. This is however is not consistent with the majority of African’s view of morality because religion in fact, permeates through every activity of most Africans of which morality is not excluded. The reason for this conclusion derived from this research I believe could have arisen because the population of students investigated were on campus and so had the maximum liberty to choose what they wanted which they may not have been the case if they were at home under their parents guidance. Also the sample used in the research were rather too small for investigation and therefore does not present the opinion of the majority but rather that of the minority considering the fact that the population of students on campus are more than two thousand. Though random sampling was used, this rather represents the opinion of the minority.
SECTION 3

3. MAJOR FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A primary goal of this section is to better appreciate the research findings conducted and convey a fair idea on spirituality and morality as well as its development in the gymnasium. This is not indicative of the fact that, the research findings are absolute or basically the conditions everywhere. However, the aim here is to better understand what spirituality and morality is fairly about in relation to the research work conducted in the gymnasium. In fact various answers were given by the students some of which were similar on their views on spirituality and morality based on the questions asked.

On the issue of what they understood by the term spirituality, 91% of the students had a fair idea of what the term spirituality is about. Most of these students answered that spirituality has to do with something that is not natural, things that has got to do with supernatural powers. Others answered that, spirituality refers to something you believe in. Others also answered that spirituality had something to do with religion. The answers by some of the pupils in relation to what spirituality is, was ghosts, however, this could be a misunderstanding of the term spirituality. The idea of spirits sometimes brings the notion of ghost to mind. In relation to the second question which involved answers to what their spiritual beliefs were, a lot more agreed that their spiritual beliefs were about ghosts. Eight of the pupils however said that they do not have any spiritual beliefs. One student said he has spiritual beliefs in emergencies and not in daily life and two other students said that they believe in the afterlife.

The answers given to the third question were in three groups. The majority did not have any spiritual leaders. Eighteen of the twenty-three students answered that they do not any spiritual leaders. In the second group, they answered that God is their spiritual leader; however one student said that, he does not have any spiritual leader but occasionally he prayed to God. The last group which comprised of only one person said that she believed in the Buddha.

Twenty students answered that, they do not have their spiritual beliefs affecting their choices. One said she has but cannot tell and another said she believes she has a bad karma because she believes she has done something wrong in the past. Another student said that, she
believes that her dead relatives are protecting her and therefore feels ashamed for doing something wrong because she believes that they would see it.

Four of the students answered that they plan to live outside their beliefs in relation to question five. Two answered that they did not know, one answered that she would live as she wants to. Sixteen of the pupils however answered that they do not plan to live outside their beliefs.

With regards to the multiple choice questions, 65.2% of the pupils agreed that spirituality is part of religion, 17.4% answered that they disagreed on the issue of religion being a part of spirituality and 17.4% also answered that they did not know.

21.7%, 43.5% and 34.8% of the pupils answered I agree, I disagree and I don’t know respectively to the question of whether spirituality should influence their moral choices.

The graphs below illustrates the number of students who agreed and disagreed that smoking, kissing in public, abortion, murder and capital punishment raise moral questions respectively;

--- Agreement scale ---
The answer “No” was in the majority in relation to the question of whether, religious studies has shaped their moral choice. In fact, 91.3% of the students answered “no”, while 8.7% answered that, religious studies has in fact shaped their moral choices.

The interview with the two students took the form of a group interview. Basically, I inquired from them matters pertaining to what they were taught in religious studies, the essence of confirmation which they receive in church, issues on the morality of murder, abortion and smoking.

In mutual conclusion by the two students, they informed me that, with regards to confirmation in church, they are informed about God through the readings in the bible. They are generally informed about the bible but one does not necessarily have to believe in it before one is confirmed after the exercise of the whole confirmation classes. They believed however that presently, people engage actually participate in the confirmation classes as well as the confirmation process due to the gifts they received afterwards. Nowadays however, there has been a decline in the number of participating in confirmation. Twenty years ago about eighty percent of people were participating but now the number of people participating is not more than thirty-five percent. Pertaining to the questions of life which they are taught in the gymnasium, they both said that matters such as faithfulness to one’s boyfriend and girlfriend among other things are taught. They are also given a fair idea of what religion is
about. Knowledge in major religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islamic studies are taught. Christianity is however the mainly concentrated on.

The students informed me that, some of the questions I asked raised no moral questions at all in Sweden. Questions like kissing in public, smoking as well as abortion to them is a matter of choice. You do what you deem suitable with regards to decisions pertaining to such issues. When a pregnant woman smokes however, the society may frown on it. However, not many people are smoking and intoxication is also prohibited. Drunk driving is strongly prohibited in Sweden. Issues of smoking may also be generally related to health and smoking indoors is also prohibited.

Apart from the law the general laws which they are obliged to obey as citizens in order to avoid being punished, they informed me that their parents also affect the decisions which they make. They are informed by their parents, however, on the greater part; they told me that, the friends they move with really is what influence their moral decisions. The fact is that, bad friends as well as good friends can influence their decisions negatively or positively respectively.

An interview with one of the religious studies teachers in the same gymnasium gave me an idea of what the local course plan in relation to religious studies, which is a medium through which the students are given a fair idea of other religions, is about. The goal of the study in religion is to give the students a possibility to reflect and discuss existential and moral issues. After the course, the students are expected to be able to work with their own moral and existential issues as well as work with their own spiritual beliefs. They are expected to have some knowledge in Christianity and different world religion, to discuss ethics as well as have respect for others opinion.

The priest I interviewed also informed me that, there are separations between the church and schools. He explained that it was quite a hostile separation. This was because, the church formerly had an impact in schools and Christianity was studied but it was changed to religious education. But this was done to make studies in religion as neutral as possible. He explained that on occasions however, they are invited to give a talk in schools. To him, this has not really changed the society in terms of morality. He explained that moral issues are discussed in church and are taught during confirmation classes. During such gatherings they
teach people what is good, bad, how to relate to life and how to be a better person. They talk to young people about life and their contribution to welfare system.

These are the major findings discovered in the research process. I have briefly analysed it in presenting them. However, the discussion aspect will bring into full view the observations made as well as basically find answers to the research questions while relating it to the theories developed based on previous research and other general issues.
SECTION 4

4. DISCUSSION

Spiritual development means different things to different people. For many people however, the concept of spirituality brings the notion of spirits into mind. The idea that something unnatural or supernatural exists. To some people spirituality is about meaning, inspiration and wisdom. It is about a deeper sense of purpose and place. It is about the connectedness and the aspirations of human spirits. Spirituality is central to the daily decision some people make with regards to their moral life. Though some would argue that spirituality is quite apart from religiousness, it is sometimes intertwined as some people derive their basic sense of spirituality from their various religions. Many of the pupil’s answers about what spirituality is actually agree with what Wikipedia defines as spirituality. That is, “spirituality in a narrow sense, concerns itself with matters of the spirit, a concept closely tied to religious belief and faith, a transcendent reality or one or more deities”. Some of the pupils assumed the position that spirituality refers to the belief in ghosts. Ghosts are perceived as spirits. However, this may have been a misunderstanding of the term spirituality; the idea of spirits brought the notion of ghosts to their mind.

Important early philosophers who studied the phenomenon of spirituality include William James’ *The varieties of spiritual experiences* (1902) and Rudolph Ottos *The idea of the holy* (1917). They both agreed that on the issue of spirituality, it is especially important to those who experience them.

Moral issues are peculiar to a group of people in a particular society at a particular time. The fact is that there is no one central, ideal morality that people are supposed to abide by. Spirituality and morality are however issues of concern in that, spiritual people are believed to organise their lives in a peculiar way different from those who do not have any sense of spirituality. In a lecture by Charlie Lutes, he highlighted that, “certainly, the moral and the spiritual are not the same. The spiritual is not an extension of the moral aspect of life. An extension of the moral does not bring one closer to the spiritual. There is a qualitative difference between the two. Morality is concerned with the modes of behaviour, with the

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continuity of life and modification of life styles, while spirituality is concerned with a breaking off pattern of continuity. This view is comparative to the view of the pupils in the gymnasium who agree to the fact that, their spiritual beliefs do not affect their choices as spirituality and morality are two different issues to them. However, to a religious person, spirituality and morality may be intertwined. His moral perception may be derived from his sense of spirituality.

A majority of the answers given by the students in the gymnasium connected to the fact that they do not have their spiritual beliefs affecting their choices. This does not mean that they do not have moral responsibilities even if they did not have spiritual beliefs. The questions on abortion, kissing, in public and smoking which were among the question answered, illustrated that on the average, these are matters of choice rather than moral issues in Sweden. This may however be of moral concern in certain communities and countries. For instance in Ghana, based on parental and societal restrictions, abortion, smoking, kissing in public, may not be a matter of choice but of moral concern. But, what indicates that such issues would have been matters of moral concern if they had lived in a more individualistic culture? The story may have been the same. “If my choosing is part of what makes my life plan good, then imposing on me a plan of life – even one that is, in other respects, an enviable one – is depriving me of a certain kind of good”. 51 For a person of a liberal position, deciding life choices are up to him or her. The same cannot however be said of collective cultures as the idea of liberal position is sometimes limited due to the fact that, parents, teachers, church leaders and the society at large serve as a check in every step of the way to see to it that one does not do one thing or the other.

Quite apart from the religious and moral education taught in schools in Ghana, a lot of social groups are found in most schools and the students who are members though not under compulsion are expected to live by the moral standards of the group. Mention can be made of the scripture union which is abbreviated S.U. Scripture unions are found mostly in secondary schools and they are a group or association who meet to pray, learn and discuss the bible. S.U helps in the spiritual and moral development of the students. At the end of 2006, there were 532 SU groups in senior secondary schools out of 569 senior secondary schools, which represent the work of SU in 93% of all senior secondary schools in Ghana. 52 Members are

51 Kwame Anthony Appiah (2005) – the ethics of identity, pg. 14
therefore expected to live according to such codes. Mention again can be made of “the true love waits” club which is found in certain schools, for instance Archbishop Porter girls’ secondary school. Students are taught during club meetings on the dangers associated with dating a boyfriend which is quite different from the discussion of being faithful to one’s boyfriend discussed in the questions of life which is taught in the gymnasium in Sweden. Though such teachings in the secondary schools help develop students morally, the fact is that, it does not necessarily make the people in the secondary schools pious or very moral beings than their gymnasium counterparts. In fact people are exactly capable of making their own character, if they will, as others are making them as indicated by Mill. Religious groups however do not exist in the gymnasiums.

Spirituality could be part of religion or independent of it, I would like to look at it from two different perspectives. The first is that, to a religious person, his sense of spirituality may be developed from his religion in that the teachings of the religion become his primary source of spirituality. This notwithstanding, others may combine both religious and non religious factors in their spiritual lives. In this case therefore, spirituality becomes a part of religion to such a person. The second is that, for a person with no religious background, his sense of spirituality may be derived elsewhere and hence religion does not form a basis for his spirituality. The two therefore become two separate issues.

One of the research questions was to find out what spirituality and morality mean to the students in the gymnasium and what the essence of it was to them in terms of their moral development. From the presentation of the major findings based on the research conducted, it is evident that the majority of the students understand what it means to be spiritual as well as moral. Though not many of them are having some form of spiritual beliefs, they have certain moral ideals which they believe in and they are able to distinguish between right and wrong actions. The issue however was that, majority of the questions asked during the research were mainly questions which to them do not raise moral questions at all. They were rather issues of individual choice. On issues of murder and capital punishment however, the majority of the students asserted that, it raised moral concerns.

53 Mill, system of logic, CWM 8:942
When it comes to the issue of morality and spirituality, does religion have a role to play? To the religious person, in the majority, the answer will be yes. However to the non religious person for instance the atheist, morality would not be a matter of religion but maybe a matter of one’s conscience. Varied views may be given by the non religious and non spiritual person for why he chooses to be moral which will not be consistent with religious convictions.

Moral issues in Ghana which differ from that from Sweden will include kissing in public for instance. This is because in Ghana, despite the fact that kissing in public is not punishable by law, it becomes quite inappropriate when it is done. Some people may even frown on it. Though not many people are found kissing in public in Sweden, when people do kiss outside, it is not frowned upon. Issues on murder however will raise moral questions in both Ghana and Sweden and it is punishable by law in both countries. Abortion will be a matter of moral concern in Ghana in some societies for instance if the pregnancy resulted from pre – marital affiliations. The society will therefore frown on it if the individual goes for an abortion. However, in a situation when the life of the mother or the foetus is in danger or as a result of medical advice, it may not raise moral questions. This will however be different in Sweden because, abortion on the whole will be a matter of individual choice or the parties involved. It is not a matter which is subject to be discussed by society or even frowned upon regardless of the reason for the abortion.

Religion does awaken a sense of morality. In this case I can agree that, based on the research so far, religion in fact awakens a sense of morality. Most religious traditions have certain codes and ethical principles by which their members are expected to live by. Religious leaders inform their members on the way they can live a better life. Religion therefore awakens a sense of morality in individuals who follow such religions. For instance in Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islamic religions members are expected to live by certain moral standards as explained.

“Kohlberg’s theory of moral reasoning is a stage theory. In other words, everyone goes through the stages sequentially without skipping any stages.”54 He further maintains that, the stages emerge from our own thinking about moral problems.55 To Kohlberg, these stages are

universal; it is the same in every culture.\textsuperscript{56} Most of the pupils are at the third and fourth stage of moral development. In the first and second stages of his theory, children see rules as fixed and absolute, obeying the rules is important because it is a means to avoid punishment. What about when individuals have passed this stage to the third and fourth stage? The pupils reasoning level are at the third and fourth stage because at this stage, individuals are capable of making moral decisions themselves. The individual is capable of distinguishing perceived right actions from actions as well as maintaining the social order in the society. The majority of the pupils for instance regarded murder as an issue which raises moral concern and this is indicative of necessity to have a social order which is undistorted. The universality of the stages however is not the case in all situations. This is because different cultures socialize their children differently, teaching them different moral beliefs.\textsuperscript{57} This is evident from the answers given by the pupils in the questionnaires in that, based on their socialization they expressed their notions on what actions they considered as raising moral issues and those that to them do not raise moral issues. Distinguishably, this may have been different in another culture. Certain social experiences which may stimulate our mental processes on certain issues as moral may not be the same in other cultures based on different moral beliefs. In the research work done in Ghana for instance, the reasons considered by the students as accounting for their actions also stemmed from varied considerations some of which were due religious considerations and others of which were based on their own intuitive inclination on what they considered as right and wrong.

Most moral actions assume a relative position by some people in that what may be considered as right by one person may be wrong to the other. The answers given by most of the pupils assumed a rather more of a general deontological position rather than a consequentiality position in that, the actions they agreed to as raising morals stemmed from the intrinsic nature of their values. For instance, the issue of abortion, kissing in public and smoking to the deontologist will only be wrong if only it wrong based on the values of the person and in this situation, most of the pupils disagreed on the fact that these issue raise moral questions based on their social values and their socialization hence to them it is not wrong.

\textsuperscript{56} http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm accessed on 9\textsuperscript{th} May, 2009. \\
\textsuperscript{57} http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm accessed on 9\textsuperscript{th} May, 2009.
Consequentialism, may however take a strong position when it comes to the issue of smoking in that, smoking may result in related health problem hence making it wrong to smoke to the consequentialist since the outcome of it is bad.

In summary, it can be said that, this is not conclusive of which moral actions to consider as good or evil and even in the case where there are similar views. Some ideas may vary in relation to the basis of such considerations of matters as good or evil, wrong or right. However, “moral actions always have an effect on certain people or things, the consequences.”

SECTION 5
CONCLUSION

Spirituality development means different things to different people. For many however, it brings the idea that something unnatural or supernatural exists. Spirituality could be closely tied to religious belief and faith. Moral issues are issues that have to do with right and wrong actions. Moral issues are peculiar to a group of people in a particular society at a particular time. Morality and spirituality are viewed as entirely separate entities by some scholars whereas others believe that the two are necessarily tied together. To some, to be moral and spiritual actually is a matter of choice based on an individual decision.

From the analysis and discussion of the research work, it has given a reflection on the research questions. The students in the gymnasium gave me an idea of what they considered spirituality to mean. They expressed their ideas fairly well explaining their spiritual beliefs as well as bringing to light what issues they considered to be moral and those that do not raise moral questions at all. Examples given in Ghana with respect to secondary schools have shed some light on the fact that, certain issues that are not considered to raise moral questions in Sweden do in fact raise moral questions in Ghana. However, certain moral issues are standard are accepted in both Ghana and Sweden moral questions. The questionnaires and the responds from the students in the gymnasium have been added to the appendix for review.

In summary, the first research question was to find out what spirituality means to the students in the gymnasium and its essence to them in terms of their moral development. The findings were that the majority of the pupils had a fair idea in what spirituality is and in terms of their moral development, not all of them have their spiritual background affecting their moral choices. That is, to the majority of the pupils, morality and spirituality are two different issues. The second research question was to find out whether when it comes to the issue spirituality and morality religion has a role to play. The findings were that, to the religious person, spirituality even forms the basis of his religion. Certain ethical values are also expected of members who belong to such religious groups hence, their moral conduct are also in accordance with their spirituality. However, the same cannot be said of the non-religious person. He may be moral because it is right and not because of spiritual or religious inclinations as he belongs to no religious or spiritual group. The third research question was also to find out what peculiar moral issues differ considerably in Sweden and in Ghana. This
research concentrated on some issues such as kissing in public and abortion. The findings were that, in Ghana, despite the fact that kissing in public is not punishable by law, it becomes quite inappropriate when it is done and even raise issues of moral concern. The majority in Ghana will also frown upon an individual goes for an abortion willingly when neither the life of the mother nor the foetus is in danger. These issues raise no moral questions in Sweden. It is basically a matter of choice of the individual. The final research question was to find out whether spirituality necessarily awakens a sense of morality. From the findings of the research, it was discovered that spirituality does in fact awaken a sense of morality and especially to the religious persons. For instance, looking at the ethical values such as reviewed in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islamic religion, it shows that religious traditions inculcate some moral values in their members and that in fact awaken a sense of morality.

I am grateful for this opportunity given to me by all my informants to make this work possible. The students in the gymnasium, the priest of the church I interviewed twice and the two other students I interviewed including the teacher who teaches in religious education whom I interviewed. It has helped me to bring to light certain moral issues as well as helping most importantly to have the answers to the research questions.
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Appendix

This was the format of the questionnaire.

This is the format by which the open ended questions took;

1. What do you understand by the term spirituality?

2. Do you have any spiritual beliefs?

3. Who are your spiritual leaders?

4. Have your spiritual beliefs affected your choices? If so how?

5. Do you plan to live outside your beliefs?

The students were required to choose the answers either, a) I agree b) I disagree c) I don’t know, with regards to these questions;

1. Spirituality is a part of religion.

2. Spirituality should influence my moral choices.

The third part required the students to choose the answer a) I agree or b) I disagree to the question; The following raise moral questions,

Smoking

Kissing in public

Abortion

Murder

Capital punishment

The final open questions asked were;

1. Do you belong to any religious group? If yes, which religious group do you belong to?

2. Has religious studies shaped your choices? If yes, how?

3. Is there anything you would like to address concerning spirituality?

In all eleven (11) major questions were asked. I would present the answers given by the students in the order of the questions. I would label the student, pupil one (1), pupil two (2), … to the final pupil twenty three (23) and the answers given will correspond to pupil’s answer. That pupil one in all cases will represent one particular student in all cases, pupil two would represent another student’s answer … pupil twenty three would represent another student’s in all cases of the questions asked.
ANSWERS PROVIDED TO THE QUESTIONS;

Question One; What do you understand by the term spirituality?

Pupil 1; It’s something you believe in.
Pupil 2; ……………… (no answer was given)
Pupil 3; Something unnatural that you can’t see.
Pupil 4; I think of ghosts and spirits and I think it is quite exciting.
Pupil 5; I think of ghosts and demons.
Pupil 6; When I hear the term spirituality, I think of over natural things.
Pupil 7; It has something to do with your religious beliefs.
Pupil 8; very much
Pupil 9; very much
Pupil 10; that is outside the things we can see?
Pupil 11; ghost
Pupil 12; something you can’t touch, something unnatural, something fascinating
Pupil 13; it is everything that’s unnatural.
Pupil 14; spirituality means something that’s above our powers. It’s something that you can’t control.
Pupil 15; something unnatural
Pupil 16; something unnatural
Pupil 17; that you can believe in something higher but it doesn’t have to be a god.
Pupil 18; not much
Pupil 19; I know quite a lot but I’m not a spiritual person.
Pupil 20; spirituality to me is partly on other world, spirits and a believe. Karma and this Buddhism is cool.
Pupil 21; that is, something about religion.
Pupil 22; not so much, it doesn’t mean anything special for me.
Pupil 23; For me, spirituality is something you can choose to believe in. Some people do, and others think it’s nonsense.

Question Two; Do you have any spiritual beliefs?

Pupil 1; no I don’t
Pupil 2; yes
Pupil 3; yes, I believe that my dead relatives protect me from above.
Pupil 4; yes, I had some spiritual experiences and I believe in ghosts.
Pupil 5; I believe in ghosts a little, but I have never seen a ghost, but I have heard so much about them, it’s hard not to believe in them.
Pupil 6; I don’t think so. But sometimes when I listen to music I can be thrown away in my thoughts and maybe feel a bit of spirituality.
Pupil 7; not really, no.
Pupil 8; yes, I have.
Pupil 9; yes I have but I don’t tell them.
Pupil 10; no, but I think that there are things we don’t see or understand.
Pupil 11; no
Pupil 12; not really. I’m really sceptical.
Pupil 13; yes, I have.
Pupil 14; I believe in a higher power, though I don’t believe in god. But there is something else.
Pupil 15; ghosts
Pupil 16; ghosts
Pupil 17; kind of, in emergency cases when I need to believe not in everyday life.
Pupil 18; I am kind of a Buddhist, it is the one which makes the most sense. I also believe in
ghost.
Pupil 19; I kind of believe in the afterlife.
Pupil 20; yes, absolutely. I want to believe. I believe there is life after death.
Pupil 21; no I don’t but I would like to.
Pupil 22; no
Pupil 23; I want to believe in something bigger, but at the moment I’m not convinced.

Question Three; Who are your spiritual leaders?

Pupil 1; no I don’t believe in that.
Pupil 2; no one.
Pupil 3; no one.
Pupil 4; I have no spiritual leaders although occasionally I pray to God.
Pupil 5; ............
Pupil 6; no one, I don’t have any spiritual leaders.
Pupil 7; no one.
Pupil 8; the ghost
Pupil 9; the ghost.
Pupil 10; I don’t have anyone.
Pupil 11; God
Pupil 12; no one.
Pupil 13; no one, maybe my dead father.
Pupil 14; I don’t really have any.
Pupil 15; I don’t have any
Pupil 16; I don’t have any.
Pupil 17; don’t have any
Pupil 18; don’t have any
Pupil 19; (Buddha), no one.
Pupil 20; no one, I don’t have one.
Pupil 21; no one particular.
Pupil 22; I don’t have any
Pupil 23; I don’t have any spiritual leaders.

Question Four; Have your spiritual beliefs affected your choices?

Pupil 1; no
Pupil 2; no
Pupil 3; yes, sometimes I feel ashamed of things I have done because I thought they saw it.
Pupil 4; Yes, but its kind of hard to explain. I blame myself for having bad karma, because I
have done wrong in the past.
Pupil 5; now, I don’t think so.
Pupil 6; I haven’t really thought about that so much so I don’t know.
Pupil 7; no, because I don’t have any spiritual beliefs.
Pupil 8; I don’t understand
Pupil 9; I don’t understand.
Pupil 10; no, not as I can remember.
Pupil 11; no
Pupil 12; 
Pupil 13; no they have not but I have asked for some help sometimes.
Pupil 14; no, they haven’t really made any differences.
Pupil 15; I don’t think so.
Pupil 16; no
Pupil 17; I am sure they have but I can tell any special moment.
Pupil 18; no
Pupil 19; no
Pupil 20; no, not really, but my attitude to some things are based on my spirituality.
Pupil 21; no, it hasn’t
Pupil 22; no, I don’t think so, maybe but I have not noticed that.
Pupil 23; no, they haven’t.

Question Five; Do you plan to live outside your beliefs?

Pupil 1; yes
Pupil 2; yes
Pupil 3; I don’t know
Pupil 4; no, I don’t really plan anything. What happen, happens.
Pupil 5; no
Pupil 6; I’m planning to live by my own beliefs and not by someone else, so no.
Pupil 7; It’s hard to answer this question because I don’t have any spiritual beliefs
Pupil 8; no, I don’t think so
Pupil 9; no I don’t, that’s the plan
Pupil 10; no
Pupil 11; no
Pupil 12; no
Pupil 13; no, I don’t.
Pupil 14; no, I don’t.
Pupil 15; no
Pupil 16; no
Pupil 17; maybe yes, I think.
Pupil 18; I don’t now.
Pupil 19; yes, I do all the time.
Pupil 20; I live how I want to live
Pupil 21; no, I don’t.
Pupil 22; it’s hard to say today
Pupil 23; no.

Please circle the answer you deem most suitable to you
1. Spirituality is a part of religion
a) I agree b) I disagree c) I don’t know.

Pupil 1; agree
Pupil 2; disagree
Pupil 3; agree
Pupil 4; I don’t know
Pupil 5; agree
Pupil 6; agree
2. Spirituality should influence my moral choices
   a) I agree b) I disagree c) I don’t know.

Pupil 1; I don’t know
Pupil 2; disagree
Pupil 3; I don’t know
Pupil 4; I don’t know
Pupil 5; disagree
Pupil 6; I don’t know
Pupil 7; I don’t know
Pupil 8; disagree
Pupil 9; disagree
Pupil 10; agree
Pupil 11; agree
Pupil 12; I don’t know
Pupil 13; disagree
Pupil 14; disagree
Pupil 15; I don’t know
Pupil 16; I don’t know
Pupil 17; agree
Pupil 18; disagrees
Pupil 19; agree
Pupil 20; agree
Pupil 21; disagree
Pupil 22; agree
Pupil 23; agree

3. The following raise moral questions;
   Smoking   a) agree       b) disagree
   Kissing in public   a) agree       b) disagree
   Abortion   a) agree       b) disagree
   Murder      a) agree       b) disagree
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Pupil 9; Smoking  
  Kissing in public agree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder disagree  
  Capital punishment disagree

Pupil 10; Smoking agree  
  Kissing in public agree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder disagree  
  Capital punishment disagree

Pupil 11; Smoking agree  
  Kissing in public agree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder disagree  
  Capital punishment disagree

Pupil 12; Smoking agree  
  Kissing in public disagree  
  Abortion disagree  
  Murder agree  
  Capital punishment disagree

Pupil 13; Smoking disagree  
  Kissing in public disagree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder agree  
  Capital punishment disagree

Pupil 14; Smoking disagree  
  Kissing in public disagree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder agree  
  Capital punishment agree

Pupil 15; Smoking disagree  
  Kissing in public disagree  
  Abortion agree  
  Murder agree  
  Capital punishment agree

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**Question Four; Do you belong to any religious group? If yes, which group do u belong to?**

- Pupil 1; no
- Pupil 2; no
- Pupil 3; no, my family isn’t religious
- Pupil 4; I go to church occasionally
- Pupil 5; no, I don’t believe in my religion so much
- Pupil 6; none
- Pupil 7; no
- Pupil 8; no, I don’t.
Question Five; Has religious studies shaped your choices? If yes, how?

Pupil 1; no it hasn’t
Pupil 2; ………
Pupil 3; no, but I have opened my eyes to other, not religions in Sweden
Pupil 4; no
Pupil 5; no
Pupil 6; no, I have not really studied religion so much
Pupil 7; no
Pupil 8; no
Pupil 9; no, not very much
Pupil 10; no
Pupil 11; no
Pupil 12; no, it has not, I am not interested in religion
Pupil 13; no
Pupil 14; no
Pupil 15; no
Pupil 16; no
Pupil 17; I think they have even if I don’t want to
Pupil 18; kind of. I have learned about a few religions and I didn’t believe in God and I liked the Buddhist way.
Pupil 19; I wish I would have lived like the Buddhist when last after I studied Buddhism but it doesn’t change my way of living.
Pupil 20; not really. But the religion that Sweden has taught as the main religion has probably shaped our country’s rules.
Pupil 21; no
Pupil 22; no
Pupil 23; no, they are the same as before.

Question Six; Is there anything you would like to address concerning spirituality?

Pupil 1; no
Pupil 2; ………
Pupil 3; ………
Pupil 4; no
Pupil 5; no
Pupil 6; Everyone should believe what they want.
Pupil 7; Even though I don’t have any spirituality beliefs, I don’t care if someone else has it.
Pupil 8; no
Pupil 9; I believed in spirituality
Pupil 10; no
Pupil 11; no
Pupil 12; I think people should have their own philosophy in life, in a religion, you will get stacked.
Pupil 13; no
Pupil 14; I think spirituality has to take place in people’s lives, more or less.
Pupil 15; no
Pupil 16; no
Pupil 17; Religion is no good but to believe in spirituality is good.
Pupil 18; no
Pupil 19; ……
Pupil 20; no
Pupil 21; no, thank you.
Pupil 22; ……
Pupil 23; ……