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JUDAISM AND THE TWELVE STEPS
INDIVIDUAL POWERLESSNESS AND GOD'S POWER
AS IT RELATES TO RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

Brian K. Beal

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

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“My soul takes pleasure in three things, for they are beautiful to God and all humankind: harmony among family, friendship among neighbors, and a husband and wife well suited for each other.”

Ben Sira 25:1

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“Rabbi Ishmael said: He who learns in order to teach will be granted adequate means to learn and to teach; but he who learns in order to practice will be granted adequate means to learn and to teach, to observe and to practice.” [*Pirke Avot* 4:6]

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“If one read and reviewed his studies, but did not serve an apprenticeship to scholars, he remains unlearned.” [*Berachot* 47b]

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“May the parents rear their son to manhood imbued with love of *Torah*, the performance of good deeds, and may they be privileged to bring him to the wedding canopy.” [*Mi Sheberach* for a newborn son]

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“Who is rich? One who is happy with what he has!” [Avot 4:1]

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DIGEST

Only in recent years has the Jewish community become aware of the alarming number of Jews who are afflicted by addiction to alcohol, chemical substances, and other drugs of choice. Wide-spread denial has left the Jewish community well behind other religious and ethnic communities in providing needed resources to assist addicts and their significant others.

The Twelve Steps program is a proven treatment option for combating addiction. However, both misinformation and limited knowledge have led to the mistaken notion that the tenets expressed in the Twelve Steps doctrine are theologically incompatible with Judaism. This thesis examines specific rabbinic texts and Jewish liturgical passages that demonstrate the basic alignment of the Twelve Steps program with Judaism. Jewish addicts, therefore, can pursue recovery by participating in this treatment program without fear of theologically straying from their tradition.

The first chapter describes the problems of addiction and summarizes the conclusions drawn from research studies of chemical use and abuse among Jews. In this chapter and throughout the thesis, alcoholism is used as an example of addictive behavior. The provided information easily lends itself as a paradigm for other addictions.

The core principles and structure of the Twelve Steps program are outlined in Chapter Two. It presents the issues of human powerlessness and God's power, which are at the core of the Twelve Steps program, and discusses the current misperceptions concerning their compatibility with Judaism. The third chapter presents rabbinic texts drawn from the *Talmud* and *Midrash* that are related to the themes of individual powerlessness and God's power. Chapter Four follows suit by presenting related texts from *Psalms*, *Tachanun*, and *Selichot*, giving special attention to the manner in which they address these two themes.

Chapter Five offers a compilation of liturgical texts. It combines Gates of Prayer texts with supplemental liturgical passages in order to enhance the existing worship services by including readings related to God's power. The presented material is summarized in Chapter Six, and conclusions drawn from the research are supported by constructive suggestions for utilizing the findings of this investigation.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS¹

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

¹A Member's Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, rev. ed., 1970), 28.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS¹

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

¹A Member's Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, rev. ed., 1970), 28.

CHAPTER ONE

CHEMICAL ADDICTION AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Problem

Denial is universally recognized as one of the primary hallmarks of addiction. Among those who deny that a chemical dependency or other type of addiction really exists, apparently the Jews are no exception. However, only in recent years has addiction in the Jewish community begun to be seriously acknowledged and more widely addressed. Finally, Jews are confronting the fact that addiction crosses the borderlines of faith and ethnic background, and they are accepting the reality that anyone can be affected.

Drug abuse was among the first addictions which was acknowledged to afflict a significant number of Jews. The first conference on drug addiction in the Jewish community was sponsored by the Commission on Synagogue Relations of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York in 1964. The volume, Judaism and Drugs, later was published by the Commission in 1973. Soon thereafter, alcoholism was identified as a communal concern. In

1975, the Commission on Synagogue Relations established its Task Force on Alcoholism in the Jewish Community. In 1980, it published a series of essays entitled, Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, and subsequently founded Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons, and Significant Others (JACS), which became operational through the Commission's Task Force.¹

A number of theories have been posited concerning the fact that Jews appear to have become affected by addictions only in recent years. Some argue that assimilation has played the most significant role in the rise on addictions among Jews. Others suggest that the new-found acceptance that Jews enjoy in mixed society has released some of their fears that non-Jews would use the issue of addiction as a cause for acts of oppression.

A third group believes that addiction among Jews has existed for several generations. However, denial and a desire to keep alcoholism and drug abuse within the Jewish community has ultimately led to the general perception that such problems were non-existent. Still others believe that the rate of addiction among Jews remains extremely low and has not been on the rise during recent years.

Whatever the reason, the myth that Jews do not become addicts has resulted in relatively few treatment programs that are sensitive to the needs of Jews who are seeking recovery. The number of synagogues, Jewish Community Centers,

¹JACS is an organization which serves the needs of Jewish alcoholics, chemically dependent persons, and their significant others. JACS's mission and role in addressing addiction in the Jewish community will be described further in Chapter Six.

and other Jewish agencies, that have opened their doors to Twelve Step meetings remains minimal compared to Christian organizations and churches.² This is true for both substance abusers as well as their significant others, who also are affected by the tragedy of addiction.

Chemical use and abuse, with the exception of wine and other alcoholic beverages, is primarily absent from the Torah. Therefore, Rabbi Solomon Freehof, for one, states that any discussion about drugs must be made through analogy; and the analogous behavior for Jews is drunkenness.³ Taking Freehof's observation into account and recognizing that alcoholism was one of the first addictions among Jews to receive wide-spread attention, this thesis therefore will address addiction and its treatment in the Jewish community by focusing mainly on alcoholism. However, since addictive behaviors of any nature share many of the same characteristics, much of the material that is presented here can easily be applied to chemical dependency and *other drugs of choice*.⁴

²Abraham Twerski, "The Truth About Chemical Dependency and Jews" [unpublished article], Gateway Rehabilitation Center, Alquippa, Pennsylvania, n.d.

³Solomon B. Freehof, Current Reform Responsa (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1969), 247-50.

⁴The phrase *drug of choice* refers to the substance to which one is addicted.

Alcohol and Alcoholism

Ethyl alcohol, the core ingredient in alcoholic drinks, is a calorie-rich but nutrient-poor food. When it replaces other foods in the diet of long-term, heavy drinkers, ethyl alcohol can lead to malnutrition. Ethyl alcohol is a depressant drug as well as a food. It is categorized as similar in action to anesthetics and hypnotics (i. e., sleep-inducing medicines). Alcohol is both an irritant to tissue and in high concentration, a cause of cell death. Therefore, it can be characterized as a poison in addition to being a food and drug.⁵

Alcoholism is both mentally and physically destructive. Sustained, large quantities of alcohol are known to have a short-term impact, and possibly an irreversible, long-term negative effect on metabolism, the gastrointestinal tract, heart, other organ systems, the nervous system and the brain. Unfortunately, there is no simple diagnostic procedure for detecting alcoholism. Some of the factors taken into account when trying to diagnose an alcoholic person include:

1. *The quantity of alcohol consumed.* Quantity alone is an insufficient measure.
2. *The rate of consumption.* One pint of distilled spirits consumed during a 10-hour period causes different behavior than a pint consumed in one hour. Drunkenness depends on rate of consumption as well as quantity.

⁵Sheila B. Blume, "Alcohol and its Effects on the Body," in Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, ed. Allan Blaine (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1980), 47-49.

3. *Frequency of drinking episodes.* A person who gets drunk three or four times a year is less liable to be labeled alcoholic than someone who gets drunk every week. Frequency of drunkenness is one factor indicating alcoholism.

4. *The effect of drunkenness upon self and others.* A man who commits deviant sex acts or beats his wife while drunk is more likely to be labeled alcoholic than a man who quietly gets drunk and leaves others alone. That is, the effect of drunkenness on others and the reaction of others to the drunkenness, determines if and how the individual is labeled an alcoholic.

5. *Visibility to labeling agents.* The police, courts, school personnel, welfare workers, employers and, in some situations, family, friends, and helping agents--psychiatrists, physicians, lawyers--are the key sources of alcoholic labeling.

6. *The social class of the person.* There are different standards set by each class and status group in our society. How one does or does not conform to the standards of one's own group will determine whether a person will be labeled an alcoholic and, therefore, be reacted to as an alcoholic.⁶

The 1996 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), which was conducted by the Federal Government, is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey sample included 18,269 persons. The results of the survey, when applied to the United States population, found approximately 109 million persons age twelve and over who were *alcohol users*,⁷ which was about fifty-one percent of the total population in this bracket. About 32 million persons (15.5 percent) engaged in

⁶New York State Bureau of Drug Addiction, "All About Alcohol," in Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, ed. Allan Blaine (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1980), 39-40.

⁷*Alcohol user* was defined in the study as one who had at least one drink in the previous month.

binge drinking,⁸ and approximately 11 million Americans (5.4 percent of the population) were *heavy drinkers*.⁹ The level of alcohol use correlated with illicit drug use, according to this study.¹⁰

Often those who suffer from excessive drinking or other substance abuse fail to recognize the problem because they are in a state of denial. When having a conversation with an alleged alcoholic, the intervener may use the 'C.A.G.E. questionnaire.' C.A.G.E. is an acronym for four questions that can help guide the intervener in conversation with an alleged alcoholic:

1. Have you tried to Cut down on your drinking?
2. Has anyone been Annoyed by your drinking?
3. Guilt producing question--Does your drinking bother you?
4. Eye-opening question--Do you need to take a drink to get going in the morning?¹¹

The goal of using these questions would be to determine if the individual is, in fact, an alcoholic, and also to find a means for addressing denial. C.A.G.E. is

⁸*Binge drinking* was defined in the study as one who had five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the previous month.

⁹*Heavy drinker* was defined in the study as one who had five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least five different days in the previous month.

¹⁰National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), information and statistics on drug and alcohol use, <<http://www.health.org/pubs/~hsda/96hhs/rtst1012.htm>>, 1996.

¹¹Anne Geller, "The Biology of Alcoholism," presentation at the workshop "Understanding Addiction: A Certificate Program for Clergy in Chemical Dependency & Spiritual Counseling," presented by JACS, 2 June 1997, New York.

meant as a tool to guide questioning and not as a means of determining a firm diagnosis.

Alcoholism and the Community

Although alcoholism is usually addressed as an individual concern, it also can be defined in terms relative to a particular group of people or community. For example, 'Jewish alcoholism' can be defined as "regular drinking which, at times, leads to intoxication, other than to observe Jewish holidays or rituals (i. e., a Jew who gets drunk on non-Jewish occasions)." According to this definition, the Jew who regularly gets drunk only on Purim would not be considered an alcoholic because this is seen as consistent with Jewish normative practice. This definition will allow us to look at the problem of alcoholism in terms of how it impacts an individual Jew, a Jewish family, and the Jewish community as a whole.

Often alcoholism is linked to other addictive behaviors. A study conducted by JACS involving persons who attended weekend retreats sponsored by the organization provided the following information regarding the rate of addiction to more than one substance among this particular group, as well as the pattern of addiction within their families:

1. The incidents of familial alcoholism among retreat participants [all were Jewish] was the same as among Gentiles. Sixty-eight percent of the retreat participants had relatives who were chemically dependent.

2. Eighty-eight percent of the women attending the retreats had mothers and/or fathers who were chemically dependent; only thirty-one percent of the men shared this same background.

3. In Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) only twenty percent of the men and thirty-four percent of the women were dually addicted. Among retreat participants, sixty-one percent of the men and seventy-eight percent of the women were dually addicted.¹²

This study did not employ accepted research methodology and therefore cannot be used to draw absolute conclusions based on evidence. However, certain assumptions can be drawn regarding Jews or their significant others who are self-identified alcoholics, chemically dependent persons, or their significant others, and who are willing to identify themselves as such and seek help through JACS or other means. The high rate of self-selected Jews who reported multiple addictions suggests that we may be able to build models for working with chemically dependent persons and those who suffer from other addictions. By focusing on one of the many drugs of choice, namely alcohol, we can learn more about the addictive personality, and then adapt this knowledge to other addictions. It is the intention of this thesis to draw upon this inference in order to discuss addictive behavior in general and then specifically, in the Jewish community.

The information provided by the JACS study is reinforced by Spiegel's research, which also suggests that [Jewish] alcoholics often display multiple

¹²Isaac N. Trainin, "Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 22.

addictions. Of the sixteen alcoholic Jews in her sample, one also was a gambler, four were drug addicts, two were addicted to caffeine, and nine were chain smokers. All of the men were workaholics and four participants were over-eaters.¹³

Models of Addiction and Approaches to Treatment

Moral Model

Moral, psychosocial, and medical models of alcoholism have been advanced by researchers and theorists. The Moral Model sees addicts as sinners who choose to abuse substances of their own free will. Addicts are considered personally responsible for their vice. The feelings which result from the ideas associated with this model frequently keep addicts from seeking help.¹⁴ Although the Moral Model may have a profound effect on the addicts themselves, as well as those who interact with them, it does not suggest a viable, long-term program for intervention and recovery. Most professionals in the field of addiction counseling therefore predicate their choice of preferred treatment programs on whether they subscribe more readily to the Psychosocial Model or Disease Model of addiction.

¹³Marcia Cohn Spiegel, "The Heritage of Noah: Alcoholism in the Jewish Community Today" (master of arts thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, California School, 1979), 104.

¹⁴Ibid., 57.

Psychosocial Model

The Psychosocial Model takes into account those psychological characteristics which lead an individual to act in a particular way. This construct understands addiction and its indicated treatment in terms of a person's actions and subsequent behavior modification. It advocates a need for certain personal skills to be learned, and for recovering addicts to surround themselves with positive role models (i. e., those who are neither addicts nor recovering addicts). Those who subscribe to the Psychosocial Model most often believe that addiction can be alleviated altogether by an effective plan to alter behavior.

The Life Process Program takes into consideration psychosocial factors regarding addiction. Changes of specific behavior are deemed essential, moving from those perceived as fostering the addictive behavior to other behaviors which are seen as normalized or mainstream. This includes socializing with non-addicts, associating with a 'normal range of people', and developing one's own power to get better.¹⁵

Medical Model

The Medical Model of addiction takes on various forms. A number of studies indicate that there may be genetic factors which play a part in the onset of

¹⁵The Life Process Program is summarized on a chart found in Appendix A.

alcoholism.¹⁶ Other medical links and psychodynamic theories also have been used to explain alcoholism.¹⁷ However, the 'disease concept' dominates the literature among the medical models related to addiction and treatment.

The Disease Model was first proposed by E. M. Jellinek in The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (1960). The Disease Model¹⁸ holds that addiction is an inbred and incurable ailment which, at best, can be brought into remission. The addiction is treated as a chronic illness. Addicts are believed to gravitate towards denial, and therefore they must constantly be confronted by the chronic nature of their disease throughout a life-long program of treatment. In order to maintain 'treatment', this paradigm for addiction holds that only those who are afflicted with the disease can fully understand the addicts' situation, and therefore they must associate mainly with other recovering addicts.

According to Peele, Brodsky, and Arnold, the critical difference between the Life Process Program and the Disease Model is the issue of self-efficacy upon which the former is focused, versus powerlessness, which is central to the latter.¹⁹ The Twelve Steps doctrine upon which the treatment program offered in

¹⁶Studies which indicate that genetic factors may play an instrumental role in determining alcoholism are cited in Spiegel, 58.

¹⁷Specific medical links and psychodynamic theories used to explain alcoholism are described in Spiegel, 59-62.

¹⁸The Disease Model is summarized on a chart found in Appendix A.

¹⁹Stanton Peele, Archie Brodsky, and Mary Arnold, The Truth About Addiction and Recovery (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 381.

Alcoholics Anonymous is based, is predicated on the Disease Model of addiction. In recent years, the Twelve Steps recovery program has become the paradigm for others, such as: Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), Gamblers Anonymous (G.A.), Codependents Anonymous (CODA), Incest Survivors Anonymous (I.S.A.), etc. According to the Disease Model and those who advocate the Twelve Steps program as an effective means for moving towards recovery, addiction is a disease, whereas alcohol, cocaine, and food are among some of the drugs of choice that are abused by addicts. This approach to recovery calls for a spiritual treatment to lift the obsession.

Jews and Addiction: An Historical Review

The presence of alcoholism and drug abuse in Jewish tradition is first recorded in the *Tanach*. The incestuous behavior of Lot, the tragic death of the two sons of Aaron, and Amnon's rape of his half-sister Tamar, are all ascribed to the excessive drinking of wine. There are also frequent references in *Proverbs* and in other books of Jewish Wisdom literature deploring drunkenness. For example, "Wine is a scorner, strong drink is riotous, and one who is muddled by them does not grow wise (*Proverbs* 20:1)." There is a warning issued by the writer that alcohol can cause people to scorn and scoff. One who drinks strong drink is more likely to speak without thinking and create conflict or ill feelings, and thereby sin. Alcohol also is identified here as an obstacle to acquiring wisdom, seen as the

highest ideal in this literature. This verse does not differentiate between regular or repeated drinking and occasionally becoming drunk. The warning regarding the potential ill effects of alcohol is general and far-reaching.

Later on in the Book of Proverbs there is a longer passage centered on the ills of regular alcohol abuse:

Who cries: "Woe"? Who: "Alas"? Who has quarrels? Who has raving talk? Who has wounds without cause? Who redness of the eyes? They who linger over the wine; they who come to seek mixed wine. Do not look upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup (when one sets his eye upon the cup), he walks straight. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse words. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies upon the top of the mast. They struck me, and I did not hurt; they have beaten me, and I did not know it. When will I awake? I will continue, seek yet again."

[Proverbs 23:29-35]

The sage chastises one who drinks to the point of having red eyes; who lingers over wine. This appears to be directed at the alcoholic, who seeks out drink at every opportunity. There is a warning against the lure of the beverage itself; an expressed recognition that wine or other alcoholic beverages can seduce some into abuse. Behavior modification is suggested; avoid looking at alcohol and you will not be tempted!

An analogy is drawn between alcoholic beverages and a serpent. The reference to the *Genesis* story is unmistakable. Just as a serpent led to the sin committed by Adam and Eve, thus alcohol can lead those who drink to a path of evil. The effects of alcohol also are likened to sea sickness. Finally, the sage

warns that those who abuse alcohol regularly will become numb to the pain and continue their behavior, regardless of the cost.

The issue of alcohol use and abuse is raised in the Rabbinic Period as well. According to the *Talmud*, the members of the *Sanhedrin* were forbidden to drink intoxicating beverages during the entire session when a capital case was being heard.²⁰ Also, the same *tractate* tells us that the priests were forbidden to drink at all times, both during the times of the sacrifices in the latter Second Temple period, as well as in the post-Temple age, lest the Temple be rebuilt and their immediate service become necessary.²¹

The Rabbis and commentators recognized that beyond isolated instances of abuse, there was a possibility that a Jew could become addicted to substances such as drugs and alcohol, and that the ramifications of addiction were significant:

Talmud: Rav said to Hiah, "Do not drink medications" (Potions).

Rashbam's commentary: Do not take medicines because you will develop a habit and your heart will draw you to them, and you will come to lose a great deal of money. That is, even as a remedy, you should not take medications if there is any other way to be healed.²²

²⁰*Sanhedrin* 22b.

²¹ *Sanhedrin* 40a.

²²Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), "*Perush on B. Pesachim* 113a [text in the original Hebrew], in *Mesechet Pesachim Min Talmud Bavli* (New York: Otzar Hasefarim, Inc., 1957), 225.

The Community Dynamic and Its Effect on the Rate of Alcoholism

Historically, alcoholism and drug abuse have not been perceived as Jewish problems. Between 1772 and 1796, Immanuel Kant gave a course in anthropology, during which he explained the widespread temperate behavior of Jews:

Women, ministers and Jews do not get drunk, as a rule, at least they carefully avoid all appearance of it because their civic position is weak and they need to be reserved. Their outward worth is based merely on the belief of others in their chastity, piousness and separatist lore. All separatists, that is, those who subject themselves not only to the general law of the country but also to a special sectarian law, are exposed through their eccentricity and alleged closeness to the attention and criticism of the community, and thus cannot relax in their self-control, for intoxication, which deprives one of cautiousness, would be a scandal for them.²³

In other words, Kant argued that the vulnerability of Jews living in a non-Jewish world causes them to exercise caution when using alcohol, in fear of the repercussions that might otherwise occur from a possible demonstration of weakness. The historical perception that Jews do not abuse alcohol also is reflected in comments made by Nietzsche, who wrote: "In time of distress, Jews least of all . . . try to escape by recourse to drink."²⁴

²³E. M. Jellinek, "Immanuel Kant on Drinking," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 1 (1941): 777-78.

²⁴Frederick Nietzsche, Dawn of Day (1886): 205, quoted in Joseph L. Baron, ed., A Treasury of Jewish Quotations (South Brunswick: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), 221, quoted in Spiegel, 41.

A number of researchers and theorists have based their work on premises similar to those held by Kant and Nietzsche. Cheinisse (1908), citing Durkheim, linked drinking pathology to low rates of suicide and crimes of violence, and attributed these positive trends to the strong feelings of solidarity of Jews in the European *Shtetl*.²⁵ Like Kant, he understood the perceived lower rate of alcohol abuse among Jews as a function of a community dynamic and did not attribute it to individual characteristics or personal make-up. For Cheinisse, sobriety was a community trait to pass on to the young, rather than one of individual choice.²⁶

Other researchers later focused on Kant's specific notion that Jewish sobriety is the reaction to a dominant society in which their minority status subjected them to fear of censure and destruction. Fishberg (1911) observed that Jews in Europe knew that individual and collective advancement depended on their being more virtuous than Gentiles, and that public intoxication of a Jew would be highly visible.²⁷ Therefore, Fishberg's observation is also in concert with Kant's view, because he focuses on an external deterrent to Jewish abuse of alcohol.

²⁵A *Shtetl* was an isolated community in Eastern Europe that was exclusively inhabited by Jews who, most often, had very little contact with outlying communities.

²⁶Louis Lieberman, "Defining Jewish Alcoholism," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 34.

²⁷*Ibid.*

Glad (1947) later investigated the effect of community values on the rate of alcoholism in the Jewish community. Community values can be seen as an internal factor leading to a lower rate of alcoholism. Glad compared Jewish and Irish drinking patterns among adolescent males. He found, contrary to ideas put forth by Kant, Fishberg, etc., that comparably low rates of inebriety among Jews do not result from a self-perceived need to conform to social mores. He determined that Jews tend to regard the function of drinking as: (1) socially practical; and (2) religiously symbolic and communicative; whereas the Irish tend to regard drinking as: (1) promotion of fun and pleasure; and (2) conviviality.²⁸ Glad therefore inferred that the differing rates of inebriety in the adult Jewish and Irish cultures are explainable in terms of: (1) the Jewish tendency to drink for socially and symbolically instrumental results; and (2) the Irish tendency to use alcohol for personally and socially effective consequences.²⁹ This research indicated that lower rates of alcoholism among Jews resulted from community culture, and not from external pressures.

Glad also found that Jewish youth tend to use wine more often than hard liquor, as compared to the Irish youth and control subjects.³⁰ This is consistent

²⁸Donald D. Glad, "Attitudes and Experiences of American-Jewish and American-Irish Male Youths as Related to Differences in Adult Rates of Inebriety," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 8 (1947): 461.

²⁹Ibid., 462.

³⁰Ibid.

with Jews who perceive drinking as 'symbolically instrumental', in that wine and not hard liquor is central to Jewish ritual and practice.

Peter Bell (1984), also building on the concepts central to Kant's and Nietzsche's views, argued that the lower rate of alcoholism among Jews resulted from a clear social policy regarding use of alcohol, which had its historical roots dating back thousands of years.³¹ This social policy, Bell suggested, was codified by the Torah and by the Rabbis of the Talmud, who created a framework for alcohol consumption. This structure affected relations with the rest of the community, including the introduction of a prohibition against drinking wine intended for pagan rituals. Subsequently in accordance with the principle of 'erecting a fence around the law,' this prohibition was surrounded by a wider one, namely drinking any wine prepared by Gentiles, or even touching it.³²

Orthodox Judaism and the Rate of Alcoholism

The assumption that Judaism, specifically traditional Jewish observance, in and of itself, was successful in inoculating an individual or group of people from the threat of alcoholism, had continued to be advanced throughout the early and

³¹Peter Bell, "Anthropological Overview of Substance Abuse," The Alabama Journal of Medical Sciences 21(2) (1984): 162-165, discussed in Robert A. Davis, "Addiction in the Torah: A Jewish Community Primary Prevention Program" (rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati Campus, 1992), 99.

³²Raphael Patai, "From 'Journey Into the Jewish Mind' -- Alcoholism," in Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, ed. Rabbi Allan Blaine (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1980), 73, citing *B. Avodah Zarah* 29b, 31a-b, 36a; *B. Sanhedrin* 106a.

middle part of this century. One of the earliest academics to review these claims was R. F. Bales (1946). Bales compared the drinking rates of Irish and Jewish men through previously conducted research. He attributed the considerably higher rate of inebriation among Irish men compared to that of Jewish men, to the 'symbolic associations' that these men have with the act of drinking. Bales argued that since an observant Jew is exposed to alcohol regularly in ritual, from the time of his circumcision, he comes to associate drinking with religious practice and does not drink for the other effects of alcohol. The Irishman, Bales observed, drinks for purely social reasons.³³ This was consistent with Glad's research, conducted at about the same time.

Charles Snyder prepared the most comprehensive study of his time on alcoholism in the Jewish community, which he articulated in his book Alcohol and the Jews (1958). Snyder conducted the College Drinking Survey, using a questionnaire which he developed to collect data from 606 Jewish student drinkers. Respondents were asked to identify their religious affiliation as either Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Secular. His results showed lower rates of inebriety among Orthodox Jewish men than among those Jews from Conservative, Reform, or secular backgrounds.³⁴ Affirming Bales's and Glad's theory, Snyder's research led him to conclude: "Where drinking is an integral part of the

³³Robert Freed Bales, The "Fixation Factor" in Alcohol Addiction: An Hypothesis Derived from a Comparative Study of Irish and Jewish Social Norms (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 243ff.

³⁴Patai., 202.

socialization process, where it is interrelated with the central moral symbolism and is repeatedly practiced in the rites of a group, the phenomenon of alcoholism is conspicuous by its absence."³⁵

Although Snyder argued that Jews were not inclined toward alcoholism, he did point out, however, that rates of obesity and drug addiction among Jews were probably equal to those of the gentile community.³⁶ This relates to Bales' observation twelve years earlier that Jews' excessive and compulsive eating may represent an alternate addiction, as opposed to alcoholism. This indicates a growing awareness that Jews did suffer from addictive behavior, although alcoholism was not yet identified as a particular concern. Snyder also called attention to the increased drinking rates among college students who were military veterans.³⁷

This study was among the first indications of an increase in Jewish drinking, concluding that the longer the families of the Jewish students had resided in America, the higher the rate of intoxication among them. The data in this study, in Snyder's words:

... clearly show the erosive influence of the American environment on the traditional cultural patterns as reflected in drinking behavior. Assimilation to American culture, whether measured by abandonment of formal

³⁵Charles R. Snyder, Alcohol and the Jews (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958), 202.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 10.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 178, 181.

(Orthodox) religious observance, or by the passing of time (the generations) which, in general, means greater acculturation, leads to the weakening of the age-old Jewish immunity to alcoholism and the adoption of the environmental drinking habits.³⁸

A similar phenomenon to what Snyder identified was observed by Howard Jones (1963). He found that for the religious Jew, frequent but moderate drinking was considered a religious duty. The less observant the Jew, the more frequently drunkenness occurred. Also, the more orthodox the Jew, the more often there was a tendency for wine to predominate over hard liquor, and the more likely drinking would take place within the family circle rather than outside. However, the more the Jew tended to leave behind the traditional way of life and become assimilated to the prevalent Gentile pattern, the more his drinking also tended to approximate that pattern.³⁹

Building on the work of Snyder in the 1950's and Jones in the 1960s, the research conducted by Glatt (1970)⁴⁰ and Schmidt and Popham (1976)⁴¹ indicated that the degree of religious observance may have been a factor in determining

³⁸Ibid., 125.

³⁹Howard Jones, Alcoholic Addition: A Psycho-Social Approach to Abnormal Drinking (London: Tavistock Publishing, 1963), 23-24.

⁴⁰M. M. Glatt, "Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Amongst Jews," British Journal of Addiction 64: 297-304.

⁴¹W. Schmidt and E. R. Popham, "Impressions of Jewish Alcoholics" Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 37: 931-39.

alcoholism.⁴² Glatt, who studied middle-class Jews in the London area, found that alcoholism appeared to be more likely for Jews with few ties to their families and with limited Jewish experiences and backgrounds.⁴³ Again, religious identification and practice were seen as barriers which prevented a prevalent occurrence of alcoholism among Jews.

The role of religious involvement in preventing alcoholism is further discussed in an article entitled "A Contemporary Study of Jewish Alcoholism: The significant other point of view" (1980), by Unkovic, Adler and Miller. Here, the authors claim that alcohol disease among Jewish people is negligible, and yet they also state:

The extent of religious involvement proved to be the strongest predictor of alcoholism of all of our variables. More than 75% of the alcoholics had little or no religious involvement. . . It is logical that religiosity should be the strongest single element in Jewish alcoholism because it is the mainstay of Jewish life as a family.⁴⁴

This argument is furthered by Dr. Raphael Patai, who wrote: ". . . one can assume that the religiously and culturally sanctioned, or even imposed, moderate drinking

⁴²Sheldon Zimberg, "Alcoholism Among Jews," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 79.

⁴³Max M. Glatt, "Jewish Alcohol Addicts in the London Area" (in French), in Taxicomancies, January 1974, 6 (1):33-39; as summarized in Psychological Abstracts, 1974, No. 1207.

⁴⁴Allan Blaine, preface to Alcoholism and the Jewish Community, ed. Allan Blaine (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1980), 11.

patterns immunizes the Jews against alcoholism and does so very effectively."⁴⁵

He refers to data presented by Commissioner Jerome Hornblass of the New York City Addiction Services Agency which showed that "among those with a strong commitment to Jewish religion or to Jewish causes (e. g., the welfare of Israel, the problem of Soviet Jewry), alcohol and drug abuse were virtually unknown.

However, in those Jewish circles where this was not the case, the pattern of addiction was quite similar to the one manifested among non-Jews.⁴⁶ Finally, Patai concluded: "Data such as these indicate that the Jew who has lost the emotional support represented by Jewish traditions, observances, and values becomes as prone to alcohol abuse and addiction as his non-Jewish neighbor of the same socio-economic status."⁴⁷

A similar explanation for the increase in alcoholism among Jews was later put forth by Sheldon Zimberg, M. D., who argued that:

The sociocultural factor seems the most important factor that can explain this phenomenon. . . . Evidence to support this view related to: (1) more alcoholism occurring in Jews who are less Orthodox in religious practice; (2) Jews who leave their families and go to the military or college and are exposed to strong pressures to drink excessively without the pressures of maintaining Jewish identity; and (3) the observations of excessive drinking among Yemenite and Moroccan Jews whose Jewish identity with sobriety

⁴⁵Patai, 77.

⁴⁶Ibid., 80.

⁴⁷Ibid., 81.

cannot be contrasted with the larger group who are Moslems and who have a very low rate of drinking problems.⁴⁸

Another distinction between Orthodox and Reform/non-practicing Jews was later made by Glassner and Berg (1984), who suggested a difference between the two in their beliefs about the causes of alcoholism, and, by association, in their attitudes toward treatment. They found in their sample that the Orthodox Jews subscribed to disease definitions of alcoholism, although they pointed out that most Orthodox respondents did not appear to have given much thought to their answers, probably because alcoholism seemed foreign to them. Reform and non-practicing Jews explained alcoholism in psychological terms, such as 'dependence' and 'weakness'.⁴⁹ Ninety-three percent of Reform Jews who responded to the survey reported that they had known an alleged alcoholic, and thirty-seven percent said they knew a Jewish alcoholic; whereas only fifty-nine percent of the Orthodox said they knew of any alcoholic, and *none* reported knowing a Jewish alcoholic.⁵⁰

On the other hand, the belief that distance from religious affiliation or identity leads to a higher likelihood of alcoholism at all is disputed by some

⁴⁸Zimberg, 81.

⁴⁹Barry Glassner and Bruce Berg, "Jewish-Americans and Alcohol: Processes of Avoidance and Definition," in American Experience with Alcohol: Contrasting Cultural Perspectives, ed. Linda A. Bennett, and Genevieve M. Ames (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 104.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 101, 104.

researchers. In their study of one hundred Jewish alcoholics, Blume and Dropkin (1980), for example, found that their research did not support the notion that movement away from the religious affiliation of childhood or a feeling of Jewish identity is a necessary condition for alcoholism.⁵¹

Jewish Attitudes Toward Drunkenness

Rather than focusing on levels of religious observance, other researchers have explored the attitudes of Jews regarding alcohol and drunkenness. Ullman observed that, historically, attitudes about drinking had been consistent and integrated within the Jewish culture.⁵² Drinking under prescribed conditions was considered by Jews to be appropriate, whereas drunkenness was not the intended response of drinking. Also, children were introduced to alcohol at an early age, before use could be perceived as a rite of passage, which often leads to abuse.⁵³

Traditionally, Jews did not accept social drinking (i. e., the imbibing of alcohol for the primary reasons of fun, relaxation, or sociability) as a normative practice. These functions of drinking were associated with non-Jews and, in their minds, helped delineate the boundaries between them and non-Jews. Loss of

⁵¹Sheila Blume and Dee Dropkin, "The Jewish Alcoholic: An Unrecognized Minority," Journal of Psychiatric Treatment and Evaluation 2(1980): 1-4.

⁵²Albert D. Ullman, "Ethnic Differences in the First Drinking Experience," Social Problems: Official Journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 8(1), 1960: 52.

⁵³Ibid., 54.

sobriety was seen as a threat to the entire group rather than an individual's problem. The strong revulsion for the *shiker* ("drunkard") was not based solely upon the waste of one's life, but upon the perceived danger that the alcoholic represented for family, friends and associates.⁵⁴

A study by Knupfer and Room (1967) also investigated the disposition of Jews towards drunkenness. The researchers investigated the drinking habits and attitudes of Irish-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and Protestant-Americans. They found that there was, in fact, a difference between these populations, "suggesting that Jewish men are less likely to approve and more likely to disapprove mildly of drunkenness than Irish and Protestants, but are also in general less likely to express intolerance--either of drunkenness or abstention."⁵⁵

One result of the Knupfer and Room study did prove contrary to the common perception that Jews were immune from alcoholism. They found that among those who drink, the frequency of alcohol abuse was much the same (fifty-two percent for Irish; fifty percent for Jews).⁵⁶ A 1971-72 epidemiological community mental health survey in Kansas City, Missouri, including 976 participants, also detected an increased rate of alcohol abuse among Jews.

⁵⁴Lieberman, 34.

⁵⁵Genevieve Knupfer and Robin Room, "Drinking Patterns and Attitudes of Irish, Jewish and White Protestant American Men," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 28 (1967): 697.

⁵⁶Ibid., 684.

Although the rate of problem drinking was still determined to be very low among Jews (6.3 percent of the total), this was an increase over previous findings.⁵⁷

A number of studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s indicated that the rate of abstention among Jews was very low, but so was the rate of alcoholism. Also, it was found that Jews ranked highest among occasional drinkers.⁵⁸ In his essay, "The Great Jewish Drink Mystery," (1970) Mark Keller articulated his understanding of the myths and realities of Jewish drinking and drunkenness. "It happens that practically all Jews do drink, and yet all the world knows that Jews hardly ever become alcoholics."⁵⁹ Keller identified numerous studies, articles and commentaries that indicated the acceptance of this myth as reality.⁶⁰ However, Keller went on to say that the real mystery is not how Jews were able to avoid

⁵⁷Deidre Klassen and Robijn K. Hornstra, "Prevalence of Problem-Drinking in a Community Survey," Missouri Medicine 73 (February 2, 1976): 81-84.

⁵⁸Snyder, 3-4.

⁵⁹Mark Keller, "The Great Jewish Drink Mystery," British Journal of Addiction 64 (1970): 287.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 287-88. Cited in Keller notes: [1] R. H. Landman, Quart. J. Stud. Alc. 13, 87 (1952). [2] C. R. Snyder. Culture and Society; A study of Drinking Patterns and Sociocultural Factors Related to Sobriety among Jews. Doctoral dissertation, Yale University (1954). [3] C. R. Snyder. Alcohol and the Jews; A Cultural Study of Drinking and Sobriety. (Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies Monogr. No. 1) New Brunswick, N. J.; Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies Publications Division (1958). [4] R/ F. Bales. The "Fixation Factor" in Alcohol Addition; An Hypothesis Derived from a Comparative Study of Irish and Jewish Social Norms. Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University (1944). [5] D. D. Glad. Attitudes and Experiences of American-Jewish and American-Irish Male Youths as Related to Differences in Inebriety Rates. Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University (1947). [6] D. D. Glad. Quart. J. Stud. Alc. 8, 406 (1947). [7] I. Kant. Anthropologie; Pt. I, Book i, 1798. Cited in: Jellinek, Quart. J. Stud. Alc. 1, 777 (1941). [8] N. Kerr. Inebriety, Its Etiology, Pathology, Treatment and Jurisprudence. Lewis, London (1888). [9] R. Hunter. Poverty. Macmillan, New York (1904). [10] M. Fishberg. The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment. Scott, New York (1911). [11] L. Cheinisse. Sem. med. 28, 613 (1908). [12] E. Durkeim. Le Suicide. Alcan, Paris (1897). [13] N. S. Leskov, Complete Works, Vol. 6, pp. 351-397. Moscow: God-isd-khudozh. lit. (1957). (Orig. date 1880). Cited in Davis 86.

high rates of alcoholism in light of a low rate of abstinence. Rather, according to Keller, the Bible recorded a frequency of drunkenness among Jews during the ages of the Prophets. Keller argued that, on examination of other sources of information, there was an apparent disappearance of a significant amount of drunkenness in the 200-year period after the return from the first Babylonian exile (about 531 B.C.E.). Keller proposed that something happened concerning the attitudes of Jews toward drunkenness that seems to have protected them.⁶¹ Just what caused the change in attitude among Jews, Keller posed as the real 'Jewish drink mystery'.

The Rate of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Among Jews

Although just how prevalent alcoholism is remains inconclusive, research in the field has proven that alcoholism does exist in the Jewish community.⁶² Dr. LeClair Bissell, former director of the Smithers Alcoholism Center, observed that thirteen percent of patients detoxified from alcohol at the Center in 1978 were Jews.⁶³ In 1977, Charlotte Smith, Director of Community Activities for the National Council on Alcoholism, noted that forty percent of women in her

⁶¹Zimberg, 79-80.

⁶²Schmidt & Popham, 1976; Eldar, 1976; Krasilowsky, 1963; Wislicki, 1967; Blume, 1981.

⁶³Stephen Jay Levy and Lester Futernick, "Drinking and Drugging Among Jews," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 182.

workshops were Jews married to alcoholics.⁶⁴ In November, 1977, Sh'ma, a Jewish journal, devoted its entire edition to articles about the increase in alcoholism in the Jewish community, and discussed studies at the time which were examining the issue.⁶⁵ In 1987, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Handbook proclaimed: "... with increasing tendency for intermarriage and cultural assimilation, one is seeing a rising incidence of alcoholism [among Jews]. . ." ⁶⁶ And a more recent study (Rosen, 1989) revealed that approximately twenty percent of all alcoholics and addicts in treatment facilities are Jewish.⁶⁷

The same is true regarding drug use in the Jewish community. Edwin Lemert (1956) showed that drug use among Jews was equal to that among non-Jews.⁶⁸ According to Federal statistics, the number of Jewish clients admitted to drug treatment programs doubled between the years 1981-86, moving from four and one-half percent to nine percent.⁶⁹ A survey of the religious and ethnic background of 427 randomly-sampled cocaine abusers who called the National

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Sh'ma, A Journal of Jewish Responsibility 8/142 (1977), N. pag.

⁶⁶Roland E. Herrington, George R. Jacobson, and David G. Benzer, eds., Alcohol and Drug Abuse Handbook (St. Louis: Warren H. Green, Inc., 1987), 182.

⁶⁷Joel Dinnerstein, "Jews, God, and Alcoholism: A Guide to Understanding Alcoholism and Addiction in the Jewish Community" [unpublished article], Ohr Ki Tov--Jewish Institute on Alcoholism and Addiction, New York, n.d.

⁶⁸Edwin M. Lemert, "Alcoholism: Theory, Problem and Challenge. Part II, Alcoholism and the Sociocultural Situation," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 17 (1956): 310.

⁶⁹Levy and Futernick, 182.

Cocaine Hotline, "800-COCAINE", during January through April 1985, showed that nearly one-fifth (18%) identified themselves as practicing Jews or from a Jewish family of origin. The majority of these Jewish cocaine abusers were men and women between the ages of 25 and 40 who were employed in highly skilled jobs, professional careers, or self-owned businesses, and were earning over \$25,000 per year.⁷⁰

Pearlman and his associates (1972) concluded that, "Jewish students as a group were heavier drug users than Catholic or Protestant students, no matter which drug was considered among those surveyed."⁷¹ Daum and Lavenhar's (1986) studies of drug use by college students also consistently found significantly higher use rates among Jewish students and among those with no religious identification, when compared with Catholic and/or Protestant students.⁷² Other studies also arrived at similar findings.⁷³

⁷⁰Arnold M. Zahm and Mark S. Gold, "Cocaine and Jews," Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 162.

⁷¹Menachem Daum and Marvin A. Lavenhar, "Religiosity and Drug Use: A Study of Jewish and Gentile College Students," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 193-94.

⁷²Levy and Futernick, 182.

⁷³Anker et al. 1971, 1972; Biggs et al. 1974; Boggs and Hughes 1973; Bowker 1975, 1976a; Chipman and Parker 1972; Dvorak 1972; Ewing et al. 1970; Gallup Opinion Index 1974; Gergen et al. 1972; Goldstein et al. 1970; Greenwald and Leutgert 1971; Grossman et al. 1974; Haagen 1970; Killinger et al. 1972; Rouse and Ewing 1973; Strimbu and Sims 1974; Weinstein 1977, as cited in Daum and Lavenhar, 193-94.

The rate of Jewish alcoholics and chemically dependent people, as compared to those of other religious communities, is not the focus of the problem. Rather, the primary reason for concern is the growing number of identified Jews who now suffer from addiction. A possible reason for the rise in the rate of drug use and addiction among Jews was discussed by Arnold Zahm, Ph.D., and Mark S. Gold, M.D., who hypothesized that:

As Jews like many other immigrant groups have become assimilated into the mainstream of the American culture they have become more subject to certain cultural trends and influences. Over the past two decades a number of significant forces have contributed to the unprecedented levels of drug abuse seen throughout our society. These include: the political unrest and rejection of authority figures; the erosion of family values and traditions; the break-down of traditional taboos against illegal drug use and the increasing influence of extra-familiar, outside factors such as the peer group and the media on individual behavior and attitudes.⁷⁴

The Next Step

Although an accurate rate of alcoholism and drug abuse among Jews has not yet been determined, research is now pointing to the fact that the substance abuse that does exist within the Jewish community is of significant proportion to warrant concern. The Jewish community is beginning to devote more attention to the issue of addiction, and it is also beginning to allocate additional resources. Utilization of treatment programs which are already in place (e. g., the Twelve

⁷⁴Zahm and Gold, 167.

Steps programs) and enhancing their use of materials and resources geared to Jews may prove to be the most expedient and successful way to address the problem.

The Twelve Steps program is widely recognized as a credible treatment program for addressing addiction as well as other personal challenges. However, often the Jew feels uncomfortable with certain aspects of the program, making it difficult to participate. This is not intentional on the part of the program participants or others, but rather, it relates more to the perceived theological dissonance between Jewish tradition and the theology inherent within the Twelve Step creed or credo. In Chapter Two, this perceived theological dissonance will be discussed in greater detail.

CHAPTER TWO

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: INDIVIDUAL POWERLESSNESS, GOD'S POWER, AND THE JEWISH VIEW

Historical Review

In the sixty-three years of its existence Alcoholics Anonymous has helped an estimated two million alcoholics achieve sobriety.¹ As an organization, it has grown to include 86,000 groups in the United States, Canada, and other countries (a total of 141 countries as of 1996).²

William Griffith Wilson (1895-1971) is credited with the founding of the first A.A. group. In November, 1934, Wilson, who was a chronic alcoholic, learned from a long-time friend and former drinking buddy, about a Christian religious movement known as The Oxford Group, that had helped several alcoholics overcome their addiction. The following month, while lying in a hospital bed during one of his darkest moments of despair, Wilson began to reflect upon his friend's message of hope and inner strength. At that moment, Wilson,

¹J, A Simple Program: A Contemporary Translation of the Book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (New York: Hyperion, 1996), xv.

²Alcoholics Anonymous (New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1976), xxii.

who later became known as "Bill W.", cried out for help, and soon after, discovered that his obsession for alcohol had vanished.

In June of the following year, while he was away from home, a major business deal that Wilson was working on fell through, leaving him devastated. Although the temptation for alcohol was overwhelming, during the previous six-month period of abstinence Wilson had learned that the way to overcome an immediate challenge was to seek the company of another alcoholic to talk over his feelings. He called upon Robert Holbrook Smith, M.D. (1879-1950), who later became known as Dr. Bob, and this visit, which took place in Akron, Ohio, is viewed by the subsequent membership as the first A.A. meeting on the records.

The group in Akron began to grow. A second group soon was formed in New York City followed by a third one in Cleveland, in 1937. By the end of 1939 it was estimated that 800 alcoholics were on their way to recovery.³ The group received two major boosts in the ensuing two years. First, in the spring of 1940, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gave a dinner for many of his friends, to which he invited A.A. members and asked them to tell their stories. This recognition from a major public figure gave the group both publicity and credibility. Second, Jack Alexander published a compelling article in the March 1, 1941 edition of the

³ibid., xviii.

Saturday Evening Post, which gave the Society⁴ increased visibility and legitimacy. By the close of 1941, A.A. numbered 8,000 members.⁵

As Alcoholics Anonymous grew in membership and chapters, there arose a need for principles by which individual A.A. groups and the Alcoholics Anonymous Society, as a whole, could function. The principles evolved over time and were eventually confirmed as the "Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous"⁶ at the first International Conference held in Cleveland in 1950. These principles were described by the early membership:

It was thought that no alcoholic man or woman could be excluded from our Society; that our leaders might serve but never govern; that each group was to be autonomous and there was to be no professional class of therapy. There were to be no fees or dues; our expenses were to be met by our own voluntary contributions. There was to be the least possible organization, even in our service centers. Our public relations were to be based upon attraction rather than promotion. It was decided that all members ought to be anonymous at the level of press, radio, TV and films. And in no circumstances should we give endorsements, make alliances, or enter public controversies.⁷

A.A. Literature

The primary publication of A.A. is called Alcoholics Anonymous, but is known to members as "The Big Book." The first edition was published in April

⁴*Fellowship* and *Society* are other names for the A.A. movement; they are used interchangeably.

⁵Alcoholics Anonymous, xviii.

⁶See p. x for the text of the "Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous."

⁷Alcoholics Anonymous, xix.

1939, and in the following sixteen years, more than 300,000 copies were circulated. The second edition was published in 1955, and distribution totaled more than 1,150,000 copies. The third edition was published in 1976, and has been reprinted numerous since. By 1994, over 12.5 million copies of this edition were in circulation, bringing the combined number of printed copies to over 14 million. The "Big Book" is used by all groups world-wide.

Alcoholics Anonymous members often develop an emotional attachment to the Society, which transfers to their publication. The emotional response, coupled with continued success of A.A. to help alcoholics overcome their obsession to drink, results in significant hesitation to make changes to the corpus.

Consequently, the first section of the volume, which describes the A.A. recovery program, and the section called "The Doctor's Opinion," have remained unaltered since its first publication in 1939.

The chief addition to the second edition was an expanded section that recounted personal experiences and included a greater diversity of stories.⁸ Thus, the second and third editions reflected more accurately the diverse membership of Alcoholics Anonymous during each time of revision. The second edition also added a few appendixes, the "Twelve Traditions," and information about getting in touch with A.A.

⁸ibid., xi.

A Program for Recovery

Over the first three years, the basic tenets of the recovery program evolved through trial and error. The initial success in helping alcoholics achieve sobriety was irregular. However, it became much more favorable after the initial few years, once the Twelve Steps had become more formalized. From the program's inception, alcoholism has been viewed as an illness which could only be arrested and never cured.⁹ Alcoholism is likened to an allergy to alcohol; in order to avoid serious illness, it should not be ingested.

In A.A., individuals are directed to help themselves first, then to help other people in the program, and finally to help the program as a whole. The levels of involvement are:

1. **Attending meetings.** Local meetings serve a number of functions. Here is where the Fellowship takes hold, with members sharing their stories and experiences with each other, in an effort to break down barriers of isolation. The Twelve Steps are learned and constantly reinforced at meetings, along with the Twelve Traditions and other A.A. concepts and teachings. Participants find sponsors at the meetings and there is an opportunity to purchase Alcoholics Anonymous literature.

Initially, new members are encouraged to attend ninety (90) meetings in ninety (90) days to help with acculturation, and to work through the challenging first few months of sobriety. After this period, regular attendance is highly recommended, and during particularly challenging times members are encouraged to attend meetings as often as possible.

2. **Reading and discussing A.A. literature.** The second level involves reading A.A. literature and discussing reactions, both positive and negative,

⁹This is AA. . . an introduction to the AA recovery program (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1984), 10.

with members. The two principle publications are Alcoholics Anonymous, (the "Big Book") and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, which include the basic principles for getting sober and remaining that way, as described by the earliest members of A.A.

3. **Getting a Sponsor.** A sponsor is a member of A.A. who has experience with the recovery program. The sponsor helps with working the steps¹⁰ and lends support throughout the recovery process. Sponsors are acquired either by new members asking an experienced member of the Fellowship to sponsor them, or by potential sponsors extending an offer to new members. Ultimately, new members must choose their sponsors; they are never assigned.

4. **Working the Twelve Steps.** The Twelve Steps describe the path taken by the founding members of A.A. Participants receive supporting written materials and a sponsor, who helps the recovering addict achieve and maintain sobriety. Working the steps involves engaging in prescribed activities and following the path outlined in the Twelve Steps. With the guidance of their sponsors, recovering addicts progress (i.e., work) through the Twelve Steps in a consecutive order. After some time, as determined by each sponsor, participants move on to the next step, at the same time continuing to consciously practice or work all of the previous ones.

This is the core of the recovery program. All of the other aspects of A.A. are meant to support and strengthen the working of the Steps. The two key psychological factors upon which the program is built, and which are intended to produce the greatest likelihood of success, are humility and reliance upon a Power greater than oneself.¹¹

5. **Sponsoring others.** Sponsorship has two purposes: to help the sponsors themselves, as well as those persons they sponsor. The principle is summed up by the A.A. slogan: "In order to keep it, you have to give it away."¹²

¹⁰See the paragraph following this one for an explanation of the phrase *working the steps*.

¹¹This is AA. . . an introduction to the AA recovery program, 15.

¹²Terence T. Gorski, Understanding the Twelve Steps: An Interpretation and Guide for Recovering People (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1989), 8.

6. Service guided by the Traditions. As participants successfully move through the steps and work the program, they may be asked at a certain point to serve. This ensures the ultimate survival of the program and fosters growth as well as prosperity and achievement for the society as a whole.¹³

In Alcoholics Anonymous, members are urged not to make long-term pledges that they will never drink again. Rather, they are taught to take it *one day at a time*. This approach is known as the 24-hour plan. If there is an urge for a drink, alcoholics in recovery do not yield or resist; they merely abstain until tomorrow.¹⁴

The absence of rules, regulations, or mandated behavior is one of the unique features of A.A. both as a local group, and a global Society. Membership does not involve formal commitment or financial obligation. Members can attend as many meetings as they wish and most local groups "pass the hat" at meetings to defray their expenses of room rental and other incidentals.¹⁵

Alcoholics Anonymous: Is it a Religious Society?

Although Alcoholics Anonymous professes to be a spiritual recovery program, the Society goes to great lengths to clarify that it is not a religious society. Alcoholics Anonymous is not allied with any religious organization,

¹³Ibid., 4-8.

¹⁴This is AA. . . an introduction to the AA recovery program, 14.

¹⁵Ibid., 16-17.

tradition or sect, nor does it subscribe to any specific religious dogma. Clearly, the common bond is alcoholism and the desire to recover.

Alcoholics Anonymous does not consider itself to be an evangelical movement. It does not actively recruit adherents to a formal body of beliefs, and the message it offers is of direct interest only to those concerned with the problem of alcoholism.¹⁶ However, each group is considered autonomous in all matters that do not affect the welfare of the Society as a whole. Thus, although it would be atypical, it is possible for a specific group to choose to limit membership to those of a particular faith or religion.¹⁷

'God as we understood Him'

Reliance on a Higher Power is central to the Twelve Steps. Everyone who works the steps wrestles with developing a personal understanding of a Higher Power. Even Bill W., one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, had his own challenges when it came to believing in a Higher Power. He writes: "To Christ I conceded the certainty of a great man, not too closely followed by those who claimed Him. His moral teaching-- most excellent."¹⁸ And yet, he goes on to say:

¹⁶A Clergyman Asks About Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., rev. ed., 1979), 7.

¹⁷Ibid., 21.

¹⁸Alcoholics Anonymous, 11.

The word God still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling intensified. I didn't like the idea. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be. I have since talked with scores of men who felt the same way.¹⁹

Bill W. recounts that his friend who was involved in the Oxford Group suggested that if he were uncomfortable with a traditional understanding of God, he should determine his own conception of the divine. "It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning," reflects Bill W.²⁰

The A.A. principle that faith in a particular God concept is not the essential issue, evolved from Bill W.'s experience. Self-proclaimed agnostics and atheists are welcomed into the Fellowship. A person only needs to understand that staying sober requires help from a Power greater than oneself. Members who do not yet have faith in a personal God are encouraged to find a working definition of Higher Power that fits within their framework of beliefs. This working definition of a Higher Power is what is meant by the phrase 'God as we understood Him.'²¹

¹⁹ibid., 12.

²⁰ibid.

²¹See Steps Three and Eleven.

One, Two, Three: *Individual Powerlessness and God's Power*

The first three steps are the foundation upon which the remaining nine are based. Through Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable," addicts are forced to face the truth--that they have a drinking problem. This confession is framed in terms of being *powerless* over alcohol. It is a matter of humility; addicts acknowledge that they are at a low point, and that the mental obsession with which they are afflicted is so powerful, even all of the human willpower they can muster is not enough to break loose from the tyranny of this disease. This step serves as a recognized plea for help.

Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity," moves the mindset from total helplessness to hope based on belief. One key word in this step is *could*. Step Two does not require blind and total faith; rather, it seeks to establish open-mindedness. Addicts are asked to carefully consider the possibility that a Power greater than themselves could make a difference in their lives.

Also, it is important to point out that Step Two does not include the word *God*, whereas most of the later steps do incorporate it. This is because the Twelve Steps program acknowledges that many people come to the Fellowship either having never had faith in God, or having lost faith along the way. In this second step, newer members of the Society are asked to affirm that there is something

beyond themselves which can have a positive effect on their recovery. For those who cannot affirm a personal God, it is suggested that they use the method of substitution. "You can, if you wish, make A.A. itself your 'Higher Power,'" suggests Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, "they are certainly a power greater than you. . . You will find many members who have crossed the threshold in just this way."²²

The first two steps are understood as reflection, a personal reckoning with the problem at hand, and a positioning of the self for what is to come, with the hope that recovery is possible. Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him," is the initial call to affirmative action. This is the first time the recovering alcoholics are asked to make a change in their belief systems. The literature teaches that: "The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore dependence, as A.A. practices it, is really a means of gaining true independence of spirit."²³

Step Three is seen as pivotal in the recovery process. It is the beginning of overcoming an egocentric approach to life. Addicts in recovery are asked to change their desires and to align themselves with God's will and intention for

²²Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1981), 27.

²³*Ibid.*, 36.

them. This is the attempt to achieve inner peace through knowing that you are not left alone to determine the 'right' or 'wrong' direction of pursuit.

Powerlessness and God's Power: A More In-depth View

It is clear that almost every member of the Fellowship who works the program will affirm the belief that God can--and will, under certain conditions--remove defects of character. Most members believe that God's grace will result in divine forgiveness for their failings. However, this forgiveness is earned on an ongoing basis. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions states clearly that, ". . . in no case does [God] render us white as snow and keep us that way without our cooperation. This is something we are supposed to be willing to work toward ourselves. He asks only that we try as best we know how to make progress in the building of character."²⁴

Step Six, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character," seems to imply that God will proactively and unilaterally change an individual's character. However, a close examination shows that this is not the case. The key words *entirely ready* imply eagerness and preparedness for change, but not necessarily an expectation that God will make changes immediately or unilaterally. This step builds on the previous steps, which help recovering addicts align their will with God's. If both the individual and God desire a change in

²⁴Ibid., 65.

character, the change will be inevitable, albeit by a slow process which progresses throughout that person's lifetime.

The working of the Steps is intended to cause a shift in the way one views God's role in the life of the individual. Rather than calling on God only in moments of crisis, the A.A. member comes to understand that God plays an integral role in daily living. The Twelve Steps teach that faith is most powerful when it is exercised on a regular basis, not only times of emergency. God is seen as a partner in life rather than as an 'Emergency Room practitioner'.

God's role in the ongoing life of a recovering alcoholic who practices the Twelve Steps is perhaps best summed up in Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."²⁵ It is here that the Society's general understanding of God's role in the life of an individual and his or her responsibility is most clearly stated. Once recovering addicts succeed in aligning their will with God's, they are responsible for acting accordingly. Ultimately, the power lies with the individual, not with God. God provides the direction, counsel, strength, and support, but individual free will determines the recovering alcoholic's action or inaction--what will change and what will not change. The literature says it best:

²⁵See page ix for the entire Twelve Steps text.

As the body can fail its purpose for lack of nourishment, so can the soul. We all need the light of God's reality, the nourishment of His strength, and the atmosphere of His grace. . . There is a direct linkage among self-examination, meditation, and prayer. Taken separately, these practices can bring much relief and benefit. But when they are logically related and interwoven, the result is an unshakable foundation for life.²⁶

Judaism and the Twelve Steps: Possible Theological Dissonance?

As previously described, the Disease Model of addiction treats chemical dependency as an illness of attitudes--isolation, loneliness, guilt, and shame. It holds that the addict is looking for relief from these feelings. Recovery from addiction, therefore, involves many areas of emotional growth, which include becoming self-aware, breaking out of isolation, and sharing one's real feelings and self with others. It also involves developing a sense of independence and individuality, as well as a system of personal values. To achieve these goals, Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve Steps groups employ a treatment program which focuses on spirituality as the way to lift the obsession for one's drug of choice. The basics of these programs are: (1) faith--a belief that a Higher Power can restore one's sanity and take care of one's life; (2) moral inventory--equivalent to *teshuvah* or *cheshbon hanefesh*; (3) sharing--revealing one's inner self; (4) prayer (i. e., *tefilah*); and, (5) helping others--*tsedakah*.²⁷

²⁶Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 98.

²⁷Nochem Gringras, "Judaism, Addiction and Faith: The Spiritual Odyssey of Recovery," Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 268-69.

As previously stated, the Twelve Steps program does not require or advance a particular faith, religion, or theological understanding. However, the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as the publications of the other Twelve Steps groups, clearly identifies the program as one that is spiritual in nature. It advocates that recovering addicts find and develop a faith, religion, or theological understanding for themselves to help guide them along the spiritual path of recovery.

Although it does not advocate a particular religion or faith preference, many Jews perceive the Twelve Steps program as grounded in Christian theology or, at the very least, theologically incompatible with Judaism. A number of researchers and other professionals in this field report that Jews seem to have difficulty with various steps. Maxwell (1977, 1984) observed that many alcoholics new to A.A. encounter difficulty with the first three steps of the program, which require accepting powerlessness, attaining belief in a Power greater than one's self, and turning one's will and life over to the care of such a Power.²⁸ In order to address their concern, he offered a broad interpretation of the steps, which he called 'naturalistic,' that may be useful to Jews, as well as those "atheists, agnostics, naturalists and a great variety of supernaturalists," who rely on the phrase in Step Three--"God as we understood Him"--in order to find meaning in the program.²⁹

²⁸Lisa Master, "Jewish Experiences of Alcoholics Anonymous," Smith College Studies in Social Work 59(2), 1988: 184-85.

²⁹Ibid., 185-186.

Dr. Michael Signer, a self-revealed member of Alanon, concurs with Maxwell, believing that the relationship between God and the individual is the most difficult for Jews to confront. He adds that, from a Jewish perspective, Steps One, Two, and Three can be understood as focusing on *ben adam lamakom*, the relationship between an individual(s) and God.³⁰

In a workshop on "Judaism and the Twelve Steps" at the second national conference on "Addiction and Jews," Rabbi Daniel Grossman specifically addressed the subject of the Jew's difficulty with the concept of surrender required by A.A. He suggested that in the process of politicizing the meaning of the concept of surrender, Jews have stripped it of its religious content. Stating that the concept of surrender invokes the "image of Jews as sheep," for example, going to their deaths in the Holocaust, he asserted that acceptance of powerlessness does not require surrendering to another human being but to oneself and to God.³¹

Rabbi Carol Glass adds another observation, suggesting that Steps Three, Six and Seven are the most troubling for Jews. She believes that for many, these steps seem to advocate the abdication of responsibility for directing one's life, the relinquishment of free will, and a requirement to "turn 'it' over to God"--concepts which Jews generally associate with Christianity and not with Judaism.³²

³⁰The First Annual Greenwich Colloquium: Coping with Substance Abuse (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, n.d.), videotape.

³¹Master, 185.

³²Carol Glass, "The Twelve Steps and Jewish Tradition," JACS Journal, 2(1), 8.

Three-quarters of those in the Spiegel study used Alcoholics Anonymous to achieve or maintain sobriety, despite the fact that nearly half of them expressed some discomfort with what they perceived as Protestant overtones in the ritual of the program.³³ The system used in the Twelve Steps program is not one of will but of spirituality, and of acceptance rather than resistance. Alcoholics and addicts no longer try to stop their compulsion by attacking it directly (i. e., as compared to the Life Process Program³⁴). Rather, they give up on trying to gain control and surrender their compulsion to God. At this point, many people experience a so-called 'spiritual awakening' or catharsis in which they suddenly feel their compulsion lifted. In this shift of consciousness, they lose their craving.³⁵

The fact that Jews have difficulty with Twelve Step meetings, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, is expressed by Sheldon Zimberg, M. D.:

... [A] major problem in the treatment of alcoholism in Jews is the fact that A. A. meetings may not be as helpful to Jewish alcoholics. This observation results from the reality that most A. A. meetings are conducted in churches and the Lord's prayer is said at many meetings although A. A. is not religious or sectarian oriented and the aim is to affect the spiritual aspects of the recovery process. The Christian ambiance of most A.A. meetings, however, makes Jewish alcoholics feel uncomfortable, and hinders the process of identification and increases denial.³⁶

³³Master, 185.

³⁴Refer to chart in Appendix A.

³⁵Gringras, 272.

³⁶ Sheldon Zimberg, "Alcoholism Among Jews," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 81.

In the introduction to Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman echoes the ideas advanced by others regarding the difficulty many Jews have with Twelve Steps, adding that:

Those from more liberal [Jewish] backgrounds talked about how unprepared they were as Jews for the faith demands and process of the Twelve Steps. They knew a lot about Jewish history and holidays, but very little about God. The synagogues and temples they attended were active places, but lacked spiritual depth and meaning in their lives.³⁷

The same can be said for many traditional Jews, who tend to focus on religious observance rather than personal faith. Thus, Zimmerman's observation may provide insight into why Steps One, Two, and Three, as well as the later ones that specifically relate to God and God's role in the process of recovery, may be those that are the most difficult for Jews to consider. The suggestion that individuals might have to accept their powerlessness and subsequently trust in God's power to do what they cannot do on their own would, in turn, be difficult for those who, as Zimmerman observes, are unprepared to wrestle with God issues.

Jews tend to focus more on *religion*, understood in this context as having to do with practice, observance, ritual, service, and matters of ethics and morals, and less on *faith*, belief in a divine Being whose existence cannot be proven through tangible evidence. *God-talk* is not a language many Jews practice, and therefore a

³⁷Kerry Olitzky and Stuart A. Copans, Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery, with foreword by Sheldon Zimmerman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1991), 7.

program of recovery which focuses on spirituality and on a Higher Power, may seem foreign.

Most Twelve Steps meetings are held in churches, which also may lead to problems for Jews.³⁸ Associating a Jewish concept of God with the Twelve Steps program while attending meetings in a Christian church, may be extremely difficult for many. The images of Jesus which are prevalent in many churches may, either consciously or subconsciously, pose an obstacle to the non-Christian who is wrestling with those steps which involve issues of faith. In truth, however, the high percentage of meetings held in churches and the subsequent images of Jesus encountered at those meetings, may have more to do with the perceived link between the Twelve Steps program and Christianity than the theology that is introduced by the program. An objective assessment of the program's literature does not yield the same perception. In other words, by the housing of many Twelve Steps meetings in churches, people may now view the recovery program as being 'owned' by Christians, and consequently possessing tenets which subscribe to Christian theology.

Another reason why Jews may have difficulty with certain steps is related to basic Jewish teachings which place considerable emphasis on individual free will and personal responsibility. As Glass suggests, the perception that the Twelve

³⁸Abraham Twerski, "Spirituality, Prayer, The Twelve Steps and Judaism," The JACS Journal 3(1)(1986): 6.

Steps program advocates an abdicating of one's free will, turning over the responsibility of one's actions to a God who will fix the problems, may result in theological dissonance for many Jews. Two considerations must be highlighted when addressing this concern. First, the Twelve Steps program *does not* advocate abdicating one's free will or denying responsibility for one's actions. Second, the idea that individuals can have challenges that are beyond their capacity to correct, and the belief that God can step in and *do* something in a proactive way, at first consideration, may appear antithetical to Judaism. However, a broad review of rabbinic literature will demonstrate that, on the contrary, these concepts are compatible with rabbinic theology.

Resolving the Perceived Theological Discord

Many people who recognize the increasing problem of addiction in the Jewish community and who wish to address it effectively are committed to making resources more easily accessible, and to providing a more comfortable environment for the return of a recovering Jewish addict who may feel distanced from the community. Thus, it is of utmost importance to address the issues raised by those who claim that the Twelve Steps program, with its proven success, is incompatible with Judaism.

However, resistance and denial continue to be the two foremost issues which need to be confronted if meaningful progress is to be made. The minimal success of JACS in its effort to increase the number of meetings housed in

synagogues and Jewish organizations is one indication of the work that still needs to be done in order to address both addiction and recovery in the Jewish community. The limited number of publications geared toward Jews who suffer from addiction, and the relatively small number of rabbis who are trained in addiction counseling³⁹ are other areas which must also be addressed if we are to fully mobilize the Jewish community's resources on behalf of recovering addicts and their significant others.

The remaining chapters of this thesis will deal with two concepts which have been identified as obstacles for Jews who choose the Twelve Steps program as a treatment for addiction: human powerlessness and God's power. The main body of Twelve Steps literature, as previously discussed, talks about the goal of aligning one's will with God's will, so that the two are in harmony with each other.

A person must have a genuine desire to pursue God's will as a way of life. However, the Twelve Steps program does not suggest seeking God's will for every action; it is not concerned with the minutiae of daily life. Rather, the program emphasizes the importance of making God's will your will when it comes to mitigating those behaviors that are either self-promoting or self-destructive.

Success in making God's will your will is considered transformative in every area of life, and it is this aspect of the Twelve Steps Program that triggers

³⁹Ibid.

addicts to release their obsession for alcohol.⁴⁰ A profound awareness that God will help in the process of recovery allows for a sense of inner peace and a belief that every individual is protected and deeply secure in the hands of the divine; no one is alone.

Addicts are encouraged to turn their will over to the care of God, but in no way are they directed to abdicate personal responsibility by believing that divine intervention alone will rid them of their addiction. Rather, they are shown the steps that will lead them along the path of recovery. Addicts are guided toward abandoning their egocentric, self-destructive behaviors by choosing to make their will God's will. This is the ultimate exercise of free will because the divine will is not superimposed without choice; the recovering addict willingly solicits God's partnership.

In the minds of those who work the Steps, eventually the obsession for drink is lifted because they have acknowledged that a just and compassionate God could not possibly desire self-destructive behavior for those who are created in God's image. In other words, once the alcoholic is able to achieve the goal of aligning personal will with the will of the Almighty, the obsession disappears because God does not will obsessive, out of control behavior for anyone.

⁴⁰Or the preferred drug of choice.

The idea that individuals can and should align their will with God's will is theologically consistent with Jewish tradition.⁴¹ The problem lies in the fact that, as in any other written work, the perceived understanding of a piece may differ significantly from the author's intended meaning and purpose. Concepts expressed in phrases such as: "God's power," "turning it over," and "let go and let God," when taken out of context, may be perceived differently from what was originally intended.

Whereas Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and other Twelve Steps publications, clearly emphasize personal responsibility throughout recovery and understand God's role in providing the intangibles such as guidance and strength, it appears that many have come to understand that Twelve Steps professes that God, at some point in time, can and will change an individual (i. e., divine intervention).⁴² This is not the definitive message contained in Twelve Steps literature. Also, the fact that Bill W. expressed his own difficulty with Christian theology, and it is his written material that continues to be at the core of all A.A. literature, indicates that a belief in divine intervention is not an essential tenet of the Twelve Steps program. Nevertheless, perception is often more powerful than reality.

⁴¹See *Pirke Avot* 2:4 and other rabbinic texts which are identified and discussed in Chapter Three.

⁴²Refer to Chapter One for the reasons suggested by Maxwell, Grossman, and Glass, for Jews having difficulty with particular steps in the program.

Although the literature does not advocate the abdication of personal responsibility in favor of divine intervention, many members of the Fellowship, as well as those who view the Twelve Steps program as spectators, without actually working the program themselves, have come to believe that the opposite is true. Consequently, when attempting to reconcile the Twelve Steps program with Jewish tradition, it becomes important not only to address the apparent intended meaning of the concepts of individual powerlessness and God's power as expressed in the literature, but also to address the perceived interpretation of these concepts as well.

Therefore, the first part of Chapter Three will present rabbinic passages that deal with individual powerlessness and God's power, and which affirm the Twelve Steps literature's description of these concepts. The second part of the chapter will attempt to reconcile the popular understanding of human powerlessness and God's power with rabbinic theology.

CHAPTER THREE
INDIVIDUAL POWERLESSNESS AND GOD'S POWER:
A RABBINIC VIEW

"God is not always silent and man is not always blind. In every man's life there are moments when there is a lifting of the veil at the horizon of the known, opening a sight of the eternal."¹

Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Issues

The rabbinic process of interpreting text involves looking at a given issue, or verse, from a number of perspectives and opinions. Those who study rabbinic literature are rarely presented with a single, unified opinion. Instead, one is most often left to weigh the preponderance of the arguments and opinions which are provided. This is not to say that firm rulings or teachings on a given subject are absent. Often, however, a conflicting opinion is given in a subsequent passage

¹Cited in Kerry Olitzky and Aaron Z., Renewed Each Day: Daily Twelve Step Recovery Meditations Based on the Bible, vol. II (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992), 183.

either in the same *tractate*, elsewhere in the *Talmud*, or in another body of rabbinic literature, such as *Midrash*. Also, minority opinions are given significant emphasis in the discussion, even when a firm ruling or teaching is provided. This affords the minority opinion some weight in considering the overall perspective of the Rabbis on a given subject.

In light of the nuances of rabbinic literature, on most issues it is impossible to determine a single opinion or perspective. This is certainly true when it comes to understanding the Rabbis' views on individual powerlessness and God's power. Individual powerlessness is defined in this paper as the inability to confront and overcome a circumstance(s) or situation(s) on one's own. Such circumstances either appear like they are out of control, or may in fact be beyond the individual's control.

The opinions expounded by the Rabbis on the subject of individual powerlessness are characteristically disparate. Therefore, in order to achieve a comprehensive scope of their views, including the many nuances and opposing positions, one must examine a broad sampling of rabbinic literature. From this body of text, one can then select specific related passages that will support a particular view. It is the intent of this chapter to use these texts to construct working definitions for both individual powerlessness and God's power that will demonstrate their compatibility with the Twelve Steps interpretation of both of these terms.

As was stated in the previous chapter, the Twelve Steps program views individual powerlessness and God's power: (1) in terms of the overarching model depicted by the program's literature; and (2) through the terms' perceived meanings and uses (i.e., divine intervention in place of individual achievement). The literature that drives this program of recovery does not argue unequivocally that God proactively will cause certain events or circumstances to occur for an individual. Rather, it emphasizes the role of God as a helper who will provide the will and ability to achieve sobriety, and the strength to maintain it. In the words of the Serenity Prayer: "... the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."²

One popular working understanding of the two terms concerns the notion held by both members and non-members of the Society that one can "turn it over" to God and that God will handle these challenges on their behalf. Hence, many people often conclude, incorrectly, that Twelve Steps advocates God's activity in place of individual responsibility. This is what leads many Jews to wrongly conclude that Twelve Steps is incompatible with Jewish theology.³ Yet, even those who believe that God can intervene on behalf of the addict also claim that it is essential to take personal responsibility for one's actions, and do all that is possible to move towards recovery.

²Ernest Kurt, Not--God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous (Center City, MN: Hazelden Educational Services, 1979), 297.

³See Maxwell, Grossman, and Glass, as discussed in Chapter One of this paper.

A review of selected rabbinic passages will help illustrate that mainstream Jewish theology affirms the understanding of both individual powerlessness and God's power as compatible with Judaism. The Rabbis articulate God's role both as affecting human will and as proactively causing events which can sway an individual's or people's actions. Based on the fact that *pikuach nefesh* (i.e., the saving of a life) takes precedence over almost every other human concern, one can conclude that the Twelve Steps or another equally successful treatment program is not only suitable and advisable for a Jew in need of recovery, but should be considered compulsory.

The competing notions that drive the Rabbis' discussions in this area focus on divine providence versus human free will. The debate between these two concepts is encapsulated in Rabbi Akiva's teaching in *Pirke Avot* (3:15): "Everything is foreseen, but the right [of choice] is granted, and the world is judged with goodness, and everything is in accordance with the preponderance of [man's] deed[s]."⁴ The Rabbis hold fast to the notion that God, the Omniscient One, knew all that was, is, and will be, and that the Mighty One has a hand in all that happens in the world. However, they also strongly believed in human free will and personal responsibility for one's actions. A difficulty arises when trying to reconcile these two apparently conflicting views – that God has a hand in all

⁴ Translations of Talmudic passages contained throughout this and succeeding chapters are taken from I. Epstein, ed., The Babylonian Talmud (London: The Soncino Press, 1935-48), unless otherwise noted.

that happens, AND, that individual free will and choice play an active role in determining one's ultimate fate.

The following Talmudic passage illustrates one way in which the Rabbis begin to reconcile the two conflicting teachings:

This supports Resh Lakish, for Resh Lakish said: What is meant by, *Surely he scorneth the scorners, But he giveth favor unto the lowly?*⁵ If one comes to defile himself, he is given an opening; if one comes to cleanse himself, he is helped.

[B. Shabbat 104a]

Here, Resh Lakish differentiates between the cynic and the humble, saying that those who do not have faith in God will be left to their own devices and allowed to sin. In colloquial terms, those who choose to sin will be given enough rope to hang themselves. Divine intervention will not occur on their behalf, neither to prevent their action nor pardon their sin after the fact. However, those who humble themselves before the Almighty will receive both divine forgiveness and assistance in their righteous actions.

In the case of addiction and the Twelve Step program of recovery, this rabbinic teaching is easily applied. Prior to entering recovery, addicts are likened to scorners. They are left on their own; God neither helps them in their self-destructive behavior nor intervenes to prevent it. God sees what the addicts are

⁵Proverbs 3:34.

doing to themselves and to those who are part of their lives, but is not willing to superimpose divine will over human free choice, regardless of the cost. However, once an addict moves out of denial and enters the path of recovery, then that person receives divine assistance in moving down the path toward healing and future blessing. Admitting that you are powerless over alcohol--or any other addictive substance--and that your life is out of control, can be viewed as the ultimate act of humility, which makes you worthy of God's benevolence. Step One, therefore, can be seen, as depicted in the *B. Shabbat* 104a selection, as a way to make a transition from the perception of "scorner" to "lowly" (i.e., admitting one's powerlessness is a supreme act of humility).

Maintaining a chemical addiction and failing to seek treatment can be linked to self-defilement. The harm inflicted on the self and others deviates from the path of holiness and purity, which is pursued by following those appropriate acts which glorify God—i.e., subscribing to such ideals as justice, righteousness, and mercy. God has granted free will, according to Resh Lakish, and therefore has "given an opening" (i. e., prepared a way to allow one to sin.)

Seeking recovery, on the other hand, can be likened to cleansing oneself. The addict acknowledges the problem and strives to return to the path of holiness by doing God's will. In this case, according to Resh Lakish, once recovery and healing are sought with sincerity and humility, God is able and willing to step in and help.

Taking into account both Resh Lakish's explanation of divine assistance and Rabbi Akiva's teaching on *Pirke Avot*, we can identify a rabbinic notion that God is omniscient, and has a hand in helping those who strive to live a 'holy' life. However, should one choose the path of sin, God permits that person to act accordingly, but withholds divine assistance as a consequence.

It is the nature of divine assistance that is in question in this text, as it is throughout rabbinic literature. Does God's help provide an emotional and cognitive shift which brings strength and commitment to the individual, or does God effect change by causing certain things to occur? As demonstrated above, the first position would be consistent with the greater understanding of God's role in recovery as depicted by Twelve Steps literature. The second belief would be compatible with addicts who expect God to heal them. The dichotomy between the two positions, as depicted in select rabbinic texts, will be addressed in the remaining pages of this chapter.

Making Your Will as God's Will

For the Rabbis, the primary means for uncovering God's will is *Torah*, which they understood to be divinely given to Israel. Thus, the Rabbis hold that it is the individual's obligation to practice that which is written so that God's will is done. This dictum is expressed in *Pirke Avot*:

He [Rabban Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehudah haNasi] used to say: Do the will of God as if it were your own, so that He will do your will as if it were His will. Nullify your will for the sake of His will so that He will nullify the will of others for your sake.⁶

[*Pirke Avot* 2:4]

Here, there is not only an expressed obligation to fulfill God's will, but doing so is believed to have significant, positive ramifications. If you live according to God's will, making it so much a way of life that it seems instinctive, then God will fulfill your will as if it were God's intention from the outset. Further, if you subjugate your will to the will of God, then God, in turn, will bend the will of others to follow yours.

The progression of this logic would mean that ultimately, God's will would be done, because once individuals align their desires with God, when God nullifies the will of others in the wake of those persons, God will be making the desire of others subject to the divine will as well. The ultimate goal, as understood by the Rabbis, is that we all will live according to God's design and purpose.

This goes beyond performing the *mitzvot*, for as *Rashi* writes regarding this passage: "Even when you do your own business, do it for the sake of Heaven."⁷ In all action, one is instructed to follow the divine will as one understands it, in

⁶Avrohom Davis, The Complete Metsudah Siddur: Weekday/Sabbath/Festival: A New Linear Prayer Book with English Translation of the Classic Commentaries (New York: Metsudah Publications, 1990), 673-74.

⁷I. Epstein, ed., The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin: Aboth, trans. J. Israelstam (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), 14.

order that: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."⁸ Every act should be in concert with God's will. This is relevant to recovering addicts who come to learn that a compassionate, just, and merciful God does not want them to abuse their body and to live a life marked by chaos, causing pain for them and for their significant others. Rather, they come to know that God's will is for them to refrain from using their drug of choice and to move onto the path of recovery.

The importance of doing God's will is articulated in this *Midrash*:

When the Israelites do God's will, they make His left hand as His right hands; but when they do not do His will, they make, if one may say so, His right hand as His left. If they do God's will, He sleeps not, but if they do not do His will, then, if one may say so, He sleeps. If they do His will, wrath is not by Him, but if they do not do His will, wrath is by Him. If they do His will, He fights for them; if they do not do His will, He fights against them, and even, if one may say so, they make the Merciful One cruel.

[*Mechilta, Shirata, Beshalach*]⁹

Here the Rabbis attribute the strength of God's ultimate power to Israel's willingness to perform the divine will. If the people as a whole are willing to travel along the path which God has prescribed for them, God's power is increased by their actions. But if the people deviate from this path, they become responsible

⁸*Leviticus* 19:2; Translation from The Jewish Publication Society, *Tanach--The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985), 185.

⁹*Mechilta, Shirata, Beshalah*, §5, p. 134; *Mechilta*, vol. II, p. 141, as quoted in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1938), 81.

for God's diminished power, which also results in the Almighty's inability to provide strength on their behalf.

The above *Midrash* also emphasizes the concept discussed previously [see the discussion of *Pirke Avot* 2:4, 3:15; and *B. Shabbat* 104a above], that God will remain awake (i. e., involved in providing help) only if the divine will is done. In addition, this exposition introduces the idea that God remains on the side of those who perform the Eternal's will, but turns against (i. e., shows cruelty toward) those who fail to pursue God's intended path.

In the above texts, the doctrine of free will is maintained, with significant emphasis placed on the importance of exercising human free choice in an appropriate way. There is a call for one to follow God's path willingly; reward is afforded to the individual, and to the people as a whole, if the correct path is chosen. If not, God's power is diminished, and divine assistance is not received.

The *Mechilta* passage demonstrates the rabbinic viewpoint concerning the interrelated nature of human free will and God's power. By exercising free will appropriately, an individual is able to increase God's power. The converse also is true in this scheme. This same framework is employed in the Twelve Steps program, which describes the recovering addict's role in accessing God's power. The Higher Power, according to the program's foundation, is successful in restoring and maintaining the addicts' sanity only when they work the steps.

Individuals are called upon to do their part, and God is then called upon to assist in the process of recovery and healing.

God's power also is viewed as a model for the people to emulate. God's attributes are seen as the ideal, worthy of being emulated. The previous texts implore individuals to shape their will to mirror the divine will. The following text instructs us to model God's actions:

R. Hama son of R. Hanina further said: What means the text, *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God?*¹⁰ Is it then, possible for a human being to walk after the *Shechinah*; for has it not been said, *For the Lord thy God is devouring fire?*¹¹ But [the meaning is] to walk after the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He. As He clothes the naked, for it is written, *And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin, and clothed them,*¹² so do thou also clothe the naked. The Holy One, blessed be He, visited the sick, for it is written, *And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre,*¹³ so do thou also visit the sick. The Holy One, blessed be He, comforted mourners, for it is written, *And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son,*¹⁴ so do thou also comfort mourners. The Holy One, blessed be He, buried the dead, for it is written, *And He buried him in the valley*¹⁵ so do thou also bury the dead.¹⁶

[B. Sotah 14a]

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 13:5.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 4:24.

¹² Genesis 3:21.

¹³ Genesis 18:1. Since the preceding verses deal with Abraham's circumcision, it is deduced that the time of the visit was when he was recovering.

¹⁴ Genesis 25:11.

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 34:6.

¹⁶ A similar exegesis is arrived at in *Genesis Rabbah* 8.13. See Appendix C for the text.

Both the need to subjugate one's will to God's will and the importance of acting as God would act, speak to the recovering addict in significant ways. The release from the obsession for the drug of choice occurs when the addict makes "a decision to turn one's will and life over the care of God as that person understands Him."¹⁷ Once this occurs, the road to recovery comes into view. Without the obsession for one's drug of choice and the havoc wreaked by its use, the recovering addict is able to act in a manner that is worthy of being called God's path and to follow God's model of righteous behavior.

Yetser ha-Ra: The Cause of One's Obsessions?

What is it that causes the obsession for a drug of choice in the first place? The Rabbis use *Yetser ha-Ra* ("Evil Inclination") as a metaphor for the emotional draw to do those negative things which otherwise would be considered undesirable. The metaphor of *Yetser ha-Ra* works well for addiction because it indicates that the cause of this affliction should NOT be attributed to a deficiency of character. This metaphor helps us to understand that the obsession is unrelated to one's moral make-up, and yet it leaves the responsibility for dealing with the problem in the hands of the individual. Every person is believed to be hounded by

¹⁷See Step Three.

Yetser ha-Ra, according to the Rabbis, including those as great as Abaye, who was told by Elijah that: "The greater the man, the greater his Evil Inclination."¹⁸

The origin of the Evil Inclination is ironic, because that which leads us to deviate from the Eternal design, according to the Rabbis, was created by God in the first place. We learn from *Midrash* that: "[R. Aibu interpreted: It was a regrettable error on My part to have created an evil urge (*Yetser ha-Ra*) within him, for . . . [he] he would not have rebelled against Me."¹⁹ Once within him, Rabbi Isaac taught that the [Evil] Inclination of a man grows stronger each day²⁰ and R. Simeon b. Lakish stated that the Evil Inclination of a man grows to the point where it seeks to kill him.²¹

Although God created the Evil Inclination, the Almighty also provided a means for overcoming it on a daily basis. *Sifre Deuteronomy* teaches: "Busy yourselves with words of *Torah* and the inclination to evil will not rule over you; but if you abandon the words of *Torah*, it will gain mastery over you."²² Not only do the Rabbis view *Torah* as the means by which to learn the divine will, but they

¹⁸*B. Sukkot* 52a.

¹⁹*Genesis Rabbah* 27:4

²⁰*B. Sukkot* 52a.

²¹*B. Sukkot* 52b.

²²*Sifre Deuteronomy*, Piska 45.

also deem it as the "antidote"²³ to combat the Evil Inclination, and as the "elixir of life"²⁴ which leads to sustained healing from life's wounds. Therefore,

The School of R. Ishmael taught: My son, if this repulsive [wretch] assail thee, lead him to the schoolhouse: if he is of stone, he will dissolve, if iron, he will shiver [into fragments], for it is said, *Is not My word like as fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*²⁵ If he is of stone, he will dissolve, for it is written, *Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;*²⁶ and it is said, *The waters wear the stones.*²⁷

[Kiddushin 30b]

The Rabbis taught that although we are afflicted by *Yetser ha-Ra* and thereby led to a path of evil and self-destruction, we have the means to overcome it, should we choose the path of *Torah* (i. e., choose to do God's will).

It should be noted that, although the Rabbis found *Torah* to be an indispensable means for overcoming the Evil Inclination, without the aid of Heaven, which gives the *Torah* its real efficacy, it is not an all-powerful remedy in itself. Thus with reference to the verse, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed" (Ps. 119:80) the Rabbis taught, "David said, 'Master of the

²³B. Bava Bathra 16a.

²⁴Sifre Deuteronomy, Piska 45; B. Kiddushin 30b.

²⁵Jeremiah 23:29.

²⁶Isaiah 55:1.

²⁷Job 14:19; B. Sukkot 52a uses "stone" as a metaphor for *Yetser ha-Ra*, Isaiah 55:1 above, uses water as a symbol for *Torah*. Therefore, this verse is expounded to mean that *Torah* wears down the Evil Inclination.

world, when I am occupied in thy Law, allow not the Evil *Yetser* to divide me. . . that the Evil *Yetser* may not lead me astray. . . but make my heart one, so that I may be occupied in *Torah* with perfect fullness."²⁸ This same idea is put forth in *B. Sukkot* 52b, which says, "Were it not that the Holy One, blessed be He, is his [one afflicted by the Evil Inclination] help, he would not be able to withstand it."

The paradigm of *Torah* as the means for dealing with *Yetser ha-Ra* can easily be applied to the problem of addiction and the desire to combat it. If the Evil Inclination leads us to negative behaviors and obsessions, such as addictions, then a life of *Torah* (i. e., learning, spirituality, and observance) is an appropriate response. If one agrees that the Twelve Steps program is considered a spiritual treatment which can be practiced in a manner that is fully consistent with Jewish tradition and theology, the program becomes one lens through which we can come to understand the *Torah* in a new light. It also enables us to experience God's love and power in new ways.

The Twelve Steps Program: A Spiritual Treatment

The Twelve Steps program is predicated on the belief that a spiritual treatment is needed to facilitate withdrawal from an addictive substance, and to help maintain sobriety. Those who subscribe to this program of treatment agree that there is a need to fill the void left when a drug of choice finally is abandoned.

²⁸*Exodus Rabbah* 19:2.

Members of the Fellowship subscribe to the notion that: "The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are."²⁹ This view is consistent with a traditional Jewish understanding of God's role.

In the *Midrash* we read:

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee (Ps. 55:23). A mortal has a patron and goes to him the first time, and the patron receives him; the second time, and he receives him; the third time, he does not personally welcome him; and the fourth time, he cannot spare a moment for him. But not so the Holy One, blessed be He: Every time you impose yourself upon Him, He receives you. Hence *Cast what befalls thee upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee*: "Cast thy burden upon Him, and He will carry it for thee."

[*Midrash of Psalms 55:6*]

Here the Rabbis explain that God's benevolence and patience never fail; God always is ready and willing to receive those who seek the Merciful One. This imparts particular comfort for recovering addicts who may initially have concerns about seeking support from those whom they have wronged in the past. They may fear that these persons will be unwilling to extend a helping hand, either at first or later, if old habits begin to surface. The concept expressed in this *Midrash* reassures them that God will be available not just for the short term, but throughout their recovery.

This *Midrash* places the Twelve Steps teaching that one should 'turn it over to God' squarely within the framework expressed by rabbinic theology and

²⁹ Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1981), 36.

practice. The rabbinic dictum to "Cast thy burden upon [God], and God will carry it for thee," means that you should allow God to bear the burden and pain of your past affliction as you begin to take the steps necessary for recovery and healing, both of body and of spirit. It also affirms the appropriateness of turning one's will over to the care of God because of a belief that a Higher Power can, or will, help lift the obsession for alcohol or other drug of choice, and thereby restore one to sanity.³⁰ Hence, this *Midrash* helps us to understand that God will both carry the burden when necessary, and sustain those in need at all times.

God's Providence in the World

The nature of God's providence in the world is debated throughout rabbinic literature. There is general agreement concerning God's effect on the course of nature, and also concerning the ability for humankind, or at least particular individuals, to effect an outcome. This is illustrated by the discourse surrounding weather conditions, particularly rain, in *B. Ta'anit* and elsewhere. For example, R. Judah haNasi is purported to have decreed a fast in a time of drought in order to bring about rain. It was not until he became humble before God that his prayers were answered and the rains came.³¹ In this instance, we learn that humility is essential to the acceptance of prayer, and that prayers can lead to action if specific criteria are met.

³⁰See Steps Two and Three.

The Rabbis teach that personal stature does not automatically make one's prayers worthy of God's action; that the prayers of those of lesser stature may be just as worthy of being answered as those of the most pious. This is illustrated by the account of Rav, who decreed a fast, but the rains did not fall. However, when the *sheliach tsibur* ("service reader") recited the liturgy and prayed for wind, it began to blow; and when he prayed for rain, it started to fall. When Rav asked the man to divulge the special merit that warranted the answering of his prayers, he responded that he was a teacher of children, both rich and poor, and that he did not require payment from those who lack the means. Here we learn that every person has the potential to become worthy of having their prayers answered.

In these two examples, the prayers were answered for persons who went beyond the letter of the law and gave of themselves. Sincerity of the heart as expressed in deed resulted in God's action. This lesson is significant to the addict who comes to Twelve Steps seeking recovery. Merely attending meetings and going through the motions as outlined in the program are not enough to effect a change; neither is abdicating all personal responsibility in the hope that God will intervene in spite of the addict's inertia. Rather, the Twelve Steps program teaches, and the Rabbis affirm, that personal commitment, sincerity of heart, and a willingness to act on one's own behalf and in support of others, are essential to

³¹B. Ta'anit 24a.

God's ultimate role in recovery. Personal responsibility and human action are deemed necessary in both the Twelve Steps program and rabbinic theology.

The texts from *B. Ta'anit* cited above describe God's role in affecting nature. In these examples, individual action brings forth the rain, a benefit that is reaped by all. Elsewhere, we are told of instances when only one person benefited from righteous acts. In *B. Shabbat* we are told that Rabbi Akiva had a daughter about whom the astrologers predicted: "The day she enters her bridal chamber a snake will bite her and she will die."³² When she ultimately escapes tragedy, Akiva seeks to know what made her worthy of God's favor. She tells him about the *tsedakah* she had performed earlier that day. "Rabbi Akiva went out and expounded: And charity saves from death; and not just from an unusual death, but even from death itself."³³ Here the Rabbis teach that personal actions can directly affect the events one encounters in life. Hence, we learn that God responds to righteousness, acts of charity, and sincerity of heart.

The Twelve Steps program mirrors what we have learned from the Rabbis; God can directly impact the life of an individual. Step Two states: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." It does not say that a "Power. . . will restore, but rather, *could* restore. Step Two considers the possibility that God has powers that are beyond the realm of human capabilities;

³²*B. Shabbat* 156b.

³³*Ibid.*

i.e., when in doubt about your own power, you can count on God to deliver the desired results. It does not demand perfect faith that God can or will do anything. Instead, one is implored to consider the *possibility* that there is something beyond the self that can be of assistance in the healing of spirit and body.

The Rabbis operate under the assumption that God may or may not act in a particular situation, and that such a possibility demands consideration. For example, in *B. Shabbat* 32a, we read: "Let a person never stand in a dangerous place, and say to himself that [the Heavenly minions] will perform a miracle for him and save him from harm, for perhaps they will not perform a miracle for him."³⁴ The Rabbis do not suggest that a miracle will *not* be performed for someone who stands in a dangerous place, but rather, there is both a *possibility* that it will or will not occur. Consequently, we are expected to do whatever we can to avoid dangerous situations whenever possible. This is consistent with Twelve Steps, which advocates that recovering addicts do everything possible to help themselves, but at the same time expressing the faith that God will help along the way.

Divine Providence and Human Existence

A number of instances can be cited when the Rabbis are willing to go even further than suggesting that individuals *may* encounter a miracle at rare moments

³⁴*B. Shabbat* 32a; see also *B. Ta'anit* 20b.

in their lives. They extend the providence of God even so far as to state:

"[R. Chanina further said:] Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven, as it says: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require thee but to fear.*"³⁵ Every aspect of a person's nature and situation in life (e. g., height, complexion, intelligence, wealth) is in God's hand; but whether or not that person will be God-fearing is left to the individual. Each of us has a choice--but we should choose the path of fear of Heaven (*Rashi*; see also *Tosafot* to *Megillah* 25b).³⁶ A similar idea is expressed in *B. Chullin* 7b,³⁷ where it is written: "R. Hanina said: 'A man does not bruise his finger below [upon earth] unless it be decreed concerning him on high,' for it is said: *A man's goings are of the Lord; how then can man look to his way?*"³⁸

Here, the Rabbis go well beyond suggesting that God may assist at times. They state that God controls every aspect of existence, with the exception of fearing God. This idea is also related in a *Midrash* about R. Simeon b. Yohai, who was purported to live in a cave with his son for thirteen years. At the end of this period, he emerged from the cave and saw a hunter engaged in hunting birds. The *Midrash* tells us that when R. Simeon heard a voice exclaim from heaven,

³⁵*Deuteronomy* 10:12; see also *B. Megillah* 25a and *B. Niddah* 16b.

³⁶*B. Berachot* 33b.

³⁷According to the Munich MS.

³⁸*Proverbs* 20:24. Cited in Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1975), 280.

"Mercy!" the bird escaped unmolested, but when he heard heaven declare "Death!" the hunter killed his game. This led R. Simeon b. Yohai to declare: "Even a bird is not caught without the assent of Providence--how much the more so the life of a human being."³⁹

This *Midrash* from *Genesis Rabbah* reaffirms the rabbinic idea that all of life is under the control of heaven. This is contrary to the often expressed position in rabbinic literature that freedom of choice is granted to humans, and that consequently we are held accountable for our actions. Therefore, if one focuses exclusively on the rabbinic line of thinking which says that all control of human destiny is afforded to heaven, one would be discounting the apparent majority of the opinions and ideas expressed throughout rabbinic literature regarding freedom of choice. The converse also is true. If one focuses exclusively on human free will and fails to acknowledge the rabbinic understanding that God plays an integral role in all that happens, the idea of divine action would be inappropriately ignored. There is room for both positions in the rabbinic scheme.

The words of R. Simeon b. Yohai reflect the rabbinic belief that, in the end, all that occurs is in the hands of the Almighty. The Rabbis hold that God is in charge of the events of everyday life (e. g., the coming of the rains, the fate of a bird who is hunted, the bruising of a finger of a man), and that the Merciful One will determine the time of the people's ultimate redemption with the coming of the

³⁹*Genesis Rabbah* 79:6; *Y. Shevi'it* 9:1 [38d].

messiah. We learn in a *Midrash* that, "It is not in the power of Israel to do anything but wait for the Holy One, blessed be He, to redeem them in reward for saying *I waited patiently for the Lord*."⁴⁰ The timing of God's kingdom as it is established on earth, the ultimate dream of the Rabbis and all Jews, is described as being outside the realm of human power to effect proactively. Here the Rabbis offer an alternative view to the one they offer frequently in other passages.⁴¹ In this *Midrash* they suggest that the timing of redemption is ultimately in the hands of God. All the people can do is wait and hope, as it is written: "Since the Attribute of Justice delays it [the coming of the messiah], why do we await it? -- To be rewarded [for hoping], as it is written, *blessed are all they that wait for him*."⁴²

The virtues of waiting and hoping for God's power to be invoked, as expressed by the Rabbis, relates to the Twelve Steps call to take it 'one day at a time.' Recovery is not achieved overnight. The recovering addict is required to work the steps and remain patient. The program stresses process over a potential end result, and it expresses optimism that in God's intended time, the obsession for one's drug of choice will be lifted.

⁴⁰*Midrash of Psalms* 40:1.

⁴¹Elsewhere, the Rabbis teach that such things as righteous living and ritual observance will facilitate God's sending the messiah to redeem the people.

⁴²*Sanhedrin* 97b.

Divine Providence vs. Free Will

The discord between those Rabbis who hold that God could impose the divine will through specific acts, and others who believe that free will must be exercised in repentance and righteous acts in order to bring about the final redemption, is encapsulated in a *sugya* in *B. Sanhedrin* (97b-98a). First, Rav expounds that all of the predestined dates for redemption, as determined by various Rabbis, had already passed, and that ultimately human repentance and acts of righteousness must be employed to hasten the messiah's coming. But R. Samuel maintains: "It is sufficient for a mourner to keep his period of mourning."⁴³ In other words, R. Samuel argues that Israel's sufferings in the Diaspora since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C. E., in themselves warrant redemption, regardless of whether Israel repents appropriately for its transgressions. He believes that, just as the period of mourning eventually comes to an end, so will the exile. Even if the people do not repent, redemption will occur at a time ordained by God, independent of Israel's actions.

The dispute between Rav and R. Samuel is continued in the following discourse between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua. R. Eliezer argues that if Israel repents, the people will be redeemed, but if it does not, redemption will not come. R. Joshua responds by saying that, if need be, God will: "... set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel will engage in

⁴³*Sanhedrin* 97b.

repentance, and God will thereby bring them back to the right path."⁴⁴ Here, R. Joshua counters that if the people do not repent of their free will, God will afflict them with circumstances that will lead them to repent and return to the divine path.

The *sugya* goes on to cite a *Beraita* in which the two sages debate the issue further.⁴⁵ In the end, we are told that R. Eliezer was 'silenced'. It is a rare for a sage to be described as 'silenced' in the *Talmud*, which indicates a clear preference for a particular view. In this case, we are led to understand that God has the power to effect change regarding the actions of Israel as a whole. Here, the Rabbis hold that self-motivated human action is not essential in determining the outcome; rather, divine intervention is employed to bring about the necessary change.

The implication of this passage, as it relates to the Twelve Steps program is significant. It has been noted that some members of the fellowship and those who are not working the Steps, perceive that divine intervention plays a key role in the Twelve Steps Program. From this discourse between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua and considering some of the Rabbinic passages discussed above, we can conclude that even those who pray and hold out hope for divine intervention in the recovery process, are operating within the bounds of rabbinic theology. Human free choice and action can be viewed in this regard as being a secondary factor in effecting

⁴⁴*Sanhedrin* 97b.

⁴⁵See Appendix C for the complete text.

personal redemption. God's intervention is seen here as the ultimate factor in determining the future. In short, it is compatible with Jewish tradition to ask God to forcibly change one's will.

Divine Providence & Free Will Working in Concert with One Another

In the beginning of this chapter it was suggested that it is possible to find support for a number of acceptable positions on a given topic within the genre of rabbinic literature. One belief or doctrine may be advocated in one place, whereas the opposite position is supported in another. When it comes to the concepts of God's power and individual free choice, both ideas are put forth as fully valid and as simultaneously operational in the world order.

Perhaps the passage contained in *B. Niddah* 70b-71a will help reconcile the two positions taken in rabbinic theology, particularly as they relate to our understanding of the Twelve Steps:

What must a man do that he may become wise? He replied: Let him engage much in study and a little in business. Did not many, they said, do so and it was of no avail to them? -- Rather, let them pray for mercy from Him to whom is wisdom, for it is said, *For the Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and discernment*⁴⁶ . . . What then does he teach us?-- That one without the other does not suffice. What must a man do that he may become rich? He replied: Let him engage much in business and deal honestly. Did not many, they said to him, do so but it was of no avail to them? -- Rather, let him pray for mercy from Him to whom are the

⁴⁶*Proverbs* 2:6.

riches, for it is said, *Mine is the silver and Mine the gold.*⁴⁷ What then does he teach us? -- That one without the other does not suffice.

This passage, interpreted in light of the interchange between R. Eliezer and R. Samuel in *B. Sanhedrin* 97b, leads us to understand that the deeds of humankind that are performed with sincerity of heart, and in accord with the precepts outlined in *Torah*, can ensure the desired results only if they are in accord with the divine will. Righteous acts in and of themselves, are not enough to warrant an automatic outcome. The Almighty plays an integral role and God's will ultimately will be done. The emphasis placed on God's all-encompassing providence in the texts discussed in this chapter in no way discounts the importance of righteous human conduct and action. It merely points out the role that God plays in the events of life, and brings the divine will into consideration when discussing the Rabbinic world view.

⁴⁷*Haggai* 2:8.

CHAPTER FOUR

HUMAN POWERLESSNESS AND GOD'S POWER, AS UNDERSTOOD IN PRAYER

Introduction

Prayer as theurgy is an attempt to access God's power on behalf of a specific person, group of individuals, community, or people. Often it is hoped that if the proper words are recited with sincerity, at the right time and in the correct manner they will be efficacious, thereby producing the desired outcome.¹ Throughout the ages, the proper words and appropriate time for prayer have been understood and practiced in a wide variety of ways.

In the Bible, the only fixed prayers that are required are *Viddui Bikkurim*, the confessions to be recited when bringing the first fruits, and *Viddui Ma'aser*, the tithe required of each worshiper, which is also the prayer of the high priest. *Viddui Bikkurim* and *Viddui Ma'aser* had a prescribed text, whereas the prayer of the high priest did not have a predetermined formula.² However, numerous other prayers are contained within the *Tanach*. The *Book of Psalms*, for example, includes a series of textual passages that many believe can function as prayer. In fact, numerous psalms have found their way into the fixed liturgy. This chapter

¹Richard Sarason, "Religion and Worship: The Case of Judaism," in Take Judaism, For Example: Studies Toward the Comparison of Religions, ed. Jacob Neusner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 58.

²Raphael Posner, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds., Jewish Liturgy (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1975), 246.

will discuss the *Book of Psalms* as a corpus, as well as specific segments that focus on Psalms of Lament and Psalms of Trust. These two collections that are thematically grouped, are particularly relevant to individuals who are seeking to give voice to personal powerlessness, and to verbalize a need for God's action on their behalf.

Prior to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C. E., public sacrifice and cultic worship were seen as the primary ways to evoke God's favor and subsequent action. Late in the Second Temple period, however, private prayer began to emerge as a valid form of worship. Unlike public sacrifice, private prayer focused on personal communication rather than ritualistic invocations performed by the priestly class. Ultimately, when the Temple was destroyed, prayer replaced public sacrifice altogether, and became the primary means for communicating with God.

Two genres of prayer, *Selichot* and *Tachanunim*, relate directly to the individual powerlessness and God's power. An overview of both of these genres will lend itself to a discussion of the way in which both *Selichot* and *Tachanunim* can help an individual or group focus on individual powerlessness and God's power through the use of statutory prayer.

The Book of Psalms: Historical Development

The English name "*Psalms*" is derived from the Latin Vulgate *Liber Psalmorum* or *Psalmi* for short. The *Book of Psalms* and *Psalter* are two English names that are used today for this book of the Bible. The universally accepted Hebrew name for the book in rabbinic and subsequent literature is סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים (*Sefer Tehillim*; cf. *B. Bava Bathra* 14b), often contracted to תְּהִלִּים (*Tehillim*; *B. Avodah Zarah*. 19a; *Y. Sukkot* 3:12, 53d; *B. Ketubot*. 12:3, 35a).³

³Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed., s. v. "Psalms, Book of."

Tractate Baba Bathra of the *Babylonian Talmud* proclaims King David as the author of the *Psalms*. However, even though seventy-three of the 150 psalms are designated *le-David*, the precise meaning of this term remains unknown, and nowhere in the Bible is there any indication of Davidic authorship. It is possible that this designation reflected either a tradition of authorship (i. e., "By David"), or a correlation of the content of the particular psalm with an event in the life of the King.⁴ *B. Baba Bathra* further justifies David's authorship because of its position in the *Tanach*, as the third section following the *Book of Ruth*. It explains that *Ruth* is placed before *Psalms* because the story told in this book belongs to the biography of David.⁵

The exact date of the writing of the psalms is unknown. Although some hold that they are of later origin, most biblical scholars maintain that they evolved during the latter part of the first Temple period and into the time of the Second Temple.⁶ The following evidence supports an earlier date: (1) the apparent knowledge of the psalms in *Ben Sira*; (2) the similarity between the Hebrew and the Greek *Book of Psalms*, which is generally agreed to have existed before the beginning of the second century; (3) the similarity of style between *Psalms* and the Hebrew of the Ben Sira manuscripts recovered at Qumran and Masada; and, (4) the absence of eschatological material, which was widely used in rabbinic liturgy by the time of the late Second Temple period.⁷ The final redaction

⁴Ibid.

⁵Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, trans. R. Graeme Dunphy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1990), 4.

⁶A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 14.

⁷*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s. v. "Psalms, Book of."

was completed no later than the end of the first century C. E., if not earlier.

The purpose and use of psalms appear to be diverse and far-ranging. *Mishnah Tamid* 7:4 tells us that the singing of psalms was part of the Temple cult. They were chanted by the Levitical singers in the Temple as musical accompaniment to the ritual sacrifice.⁸ This was especially true of those psalms that were later prescribed for a particular day of the week. The association between the cultic worship and liturgy appears to be significant. Without this link, it would be difficult to account for the preservation and transmission of the individual compositions over long periods of time until ultimately they were collected and canonized into a corpus.⁹

In the rabbinic period when psalms were incorporated both into statutory and non-fixed liturgies, their function as liturgical pieces became formally recognized. This process of inclusion evolved gradually, over a considerable period of time. In the *Talmudic* period, the statutory prayers did not yet include any psalms on *Shabbat* and weekdays. The only psalms recited were *Hallel* on *Sukkot*, *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Chanukah*, and later, despite a specific rubric to the contrary (*Shulchan Aruch* 10a), on the New Moon. The *Pseukei de-Zimra*, the second section of a morning worship service, consisted only of the last six psalms, the Hallelujah Psalms, Psalms 145-150.¹⁰

⁸Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns*, 3rd. ed. (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), 14.

⁹*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s. v. "Psalms, Book of."

¹⁰*Ibid.*

Eventually, a number of other psalms were incorporated into the liturgy, particularly in non-statutory worship.¹¹ The introduction to the grace after meals, prayers for relief from a drought, before going on a journey, the night prayer before retiring, prayers for and by the sick, the burial service, prayer for the house of mourning, the memorial service for the dead, and service of consecration of a tombstone, all include psalms within their corpus.

Psalms: Classification and Function

A. Z. Idelsohn suggests that a cursory inspection of the *Book* determines that forty-eight psalms are petitional in character; fifty-eight may be called meditations, and the rest are laudations or hymns. According to Idelsohn, this proves that "the urge for prayer compelled the Levitical singers to compose more petitions and meditations than hymns and laudations."¹²

Using various criteria, a number of attempts have been made to categorize the psalms into groups. One of the earlier categorizations used the introductory remarks, headings, titles or superscriptions. For example:

1. *Mizmor*: A song with background music; occurs fifty-seven times, thirty-five of these instances are connected to David. This term dominates the Davidic collection and is the preferred term for the *Psalms* of the Individual.
2. *Shir*: A cultic song or temple song which occurs twenty-nine times, including 13 cases where it is combined with *mizmor*.

¹¹"Non-statutory" worship includes the liturgy for prayer which is to take place at a time other than the regular, daily services. The three daily services were established to correspond with the prescribed time for the daily cultic sacrifices.

¹²Idelsohn, 15.

3. *Maskil*: An aesthetic or didactic poem which occurs thirteen times in the headings; a number of them in the Korach collection and in the second David collection.¹³

A second method for classification is by content. This is a grouping together of material that is similar in subject matter. One such model suggested by H. Gunkel, a noted biblical scholar, includes the following categories:

1. Hymns
2. Songs of Yahweh's Enthronement
3. Laments of the Nation
4. Royal *Psalms*
5. Laments of the Individual
6. Thanksgiving of the Individual
7. Prophecy on the *Psalms*
8. Wisdom in the *Psalms*

Gunkel also identified 'minor' types such as:

- Blessings and Curses
- The Song of Ascents
- The Song of Victory
- Thanksgiving of Israel
- The Legend
- The Torah

Gunkel's classifications and model were adopted by Seybold and reworked as the following:

a. **Hymns:** This group embraces texts that combine song, profession of faith, and prayer; and which had their fixed place in the public worship of the first and the second temple.

¹³Seybold, 110.

b. **Royal Psalms:** The ten Royal *Psalms* relate to the "Ritual of the King", and the royal cult at the state sanctuary.

c. **Laments of the Community:** Written for the collective group, these liturgical texts build on lament and supplication. They usually open with an invocation and close with a promise of praise. One of their characteristic features is the argumentative style, recalling promises of the past, pointing out contradictions of the present, suggesting conclusions, and offering motives. The goal expressed in these passages is to win God's intervention.

d. **Laments of the Individual:** These are prayers of supplication from individuals who find themselves in the midst of unfortunate circumstances. They include the following components: invocation, representation of self/misery, requests which are combined with expressions of confidence, arguments to motivate God's intervention, declarations, and vows of thanks and praise.

e. **Thanksgiving of the Individual:** These psalms appear to be derived from the Festival of Thank-Offerings, in which the sacrifice, called the *Todah*, was occasionally replaced by the performance of a psalm. Their purpose was the expression of thanks for an experience of deliverance, and praise for the deliverer in the presence of the community.

f. **Wisdom Poems:** These are alphabetical psalms with a fixed formal structure, which are intended to teach or instruct.

g. **Psalms of Ascents:** This collection seems to have sprung from the circles of pilgrims, and is intended to serve them as a song and prayer book.

h. **Historical Psalms:** In these psalms, narration of a particular story is central.

i. **Liturgies:** Similar to a litany (instruction followed by an answer), these psalms were delivered to pilgrims on their entry to the sanctuary, or they unfolded as a dialogue between the gate-keeper and pilgrims in the temple gateway.

Regardless of the message of a particular psalm, as a whole the theme of God's omnipotence and omnipresence dominate the book. The character of the

various texts as testimonies of faith, sequence in which some of the individual prayers are placed, and attribution of many psalms to the life of David, all suggest that the collections served to focus the people's attention on their belief in God. This was intended to reinforce their faith by reading and meditating on model texts.¹⁴

The original composition of the psalms, as discussed above, appears to have been intended for performance in the form of a hymn. The prayers may have been sung or spoken with rhythmic clapping, or performed with a wail of lament.¹⁵ When used as prayer, the psalms were offered aloud in public. Usually the supplicant(s) would stand or kneel and pray with raised hands. Part of the ritual concerning the recitations of psalms may also have included prostrating oneself on the ground before beginning to pray.¹⁶

The Lament Psalm: Description and Function

Among the various categories of psalms, the two that most directly address the themes of human powerlessness and God's power are *lament* and *trust*.¹⁷ As stated above, two classifications of lament are generally recognized: laments of the community and laments of the individual. In light of Israel's focus on lauded praise of God, the prevalence of lament in this book of the Bible and in Jewish liturgy, at first may appear ironic. Walter Brueggemann points out, however, that for Israel, the ". . . *extravagance of praise* does not silence or censor Israel's need,

¹⁴Ibid., 24.

¹⁵Ibid., 85.

¹⁶Ibid., 82.

¹⁷Psalms of Trust are not part of Gunkel's system of classification, but they are identified by him as related to Psalms of Lament, and are determined by other scholars to be a category of psalms.

but seems to legitimate and authorize a second extravagance, the *extravagance of complaint*, lament, accusation, petition, indignation, assault, and insistence."¹⁸ Throughout Jewish scripture and text, prayer and narrative are dialectical; there is a tension between praise/fear and lament/petition.

The characteristic components of the Psalms of Lament are: address, complaint, petition, motivation, vow of offering, and assurance of being heard.¹⁹ These elements are intended to serve three functions. First, the address helps to establish that it is appropriate to expect some action from God. Second, the main body of the psalm describes the situation of trouble. This often includes situations of sickness (e. g., *Psalms* 6:2; 13:3; 22:14-15; 38:5-6; 39:4-6), loneliness and a sense of abandonment (e. g., *Psalms* 31:11; 38:11), danger before enemies (e. g., *Psalms* 6:8; 7:1-4, 13; 17:9, 13; 35:4; 38:12; 55:3; 56:2; 64:1-6), shame and humiliation (e. g., *Psalms* 4:2; 22:6-7, 17; 69:19), and death (e. g., *Psalms* 28:1; 59:3; 88:3-9). Included in the description of trouble may be one of a number of reasons that God should be expected to act on the petitioner's behalf: (1) appeal to God's reputation (e. g., *Psalms* 13:4; 25:11; 57:5); (2) appeal to a past action of God with which God should be consistent (e. g., *Psalms* 22:4-5; 143:5); (3) the guilt of the speaker (e. g., *Psalms* 25:11; 38:18); (4) the innocence of the speaker (e. g., *Psalms* 26:3-7; 35:7; 69:7); (5) the promise of praise (e. g., *Psalms* 6:5; 22:22); (6) the helplessness of the speaker (e. g., *Psalms* 25:16; 55:18; 69:1; 142:4, 6); and (7) the trust of the speaker (e. g., *Psalms* 17:8-9; 22:9-10; 43:2; 57:1; 71:6). The third component of the

¹⁸Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms & The Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 54.

¹⁹Clear examples of the components in the text may be seen in Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 66-69, as indicated in Brueggemann, 70.

lament is to affirm the belief that God hears the complaint and request and will, indeed, act on the petitioner's behalf.²⁰

The Lament Psalm, the Recovering Jewish Addict, and the Themes of Human Powerlessness and God's Power

Two functions of the Psalms of Lament that relate to the recovering addict are to: (1) express the human experience in vivid terms; and (2) evoke and form new perceptions regarding the human experience. In this way, the Psalms of Lament may be able to move an individual or group of people from despair to hope by helping them understand that God's power can effect a change in the human experience. Regarding the *Psalms* providing an expression of the human experience, Walter Brueggemann notes:

Persons and communities are not fully present in a situation of disorientation until it has been brought to speech. One may in fact be there but absent to the situation by denial and self-deception. . . to speak first the words *to* the disoriented, and then to have the disoriented actually speak the words, can be a new cognition and embrace of the actual situation.²¹

In other words, Brueggemann is arguing that both the existence of the psalms in the Bible and the act of speaking them aloud afford an opportunity to break through the walls of isolation and denial, and empower the individual to move toward acceptance within the comfort of biblical text. The second function of the Psalms of Lament is to enable supplicants to move beyond merely admitting

²⁰Brueggemann, 70-71.

²¹Ibid., 27-28.

their problem. It is one vehicle by which they can begin to re-orient their world view toward understanding that God can provide both active help and support in recovery and healing.

Fully a third of the Psalter is devoted to psalms of lament by the individual, telling us in no uncertain terms that authentic worship emerges when worshipers dare to express their pain and raise before God their deepest questions about the reign of injustice in the world.²²

The Psalms of Lament offer a vehicle by which addicts are able to understand their situation more clearly through scripture.²³ Numerous psalms relate to both their condition and the steps necessary for recovery. For example,

I've been poured out like water.
All my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax,
Melted within me.
My strength has dried up like a piece of pottery.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
And you lay me down in death's dust

[*Psalms* 22:15-16]

In passages such as this one, addicts can identify with the psalmist, who may have struggled with a tragedy similar to their own. *Psalms* 22 describes the pain of its author in physical terms. The addict may relate to the psalmist because of the physiological changes and resulting pain which often accompany both the time of abuse and period of substance withdrawal. The recovering addicts'

²²J. David Pleins, *The Psalms: Songs of Tragedy, Hope, and Justice* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 13.

²³Laments of the Individual, according to Pleins, 187, include *Psalms* 3-7; 10; 11; 17; 22; 25; 26; 28; 31; 35; 38; 39; 40:12-18; 42; 43; 51; 54-57; 59; 61; and 64.

identification with the psalmist and his plight may make passages such as the one above an appropriate vehicle for expressing the emotional hurt and physical pain they experience at various times during recovery. In addition, they can serve as a form of validation for recovering Jewish addicts, who can find not only a description of their situation, but an affirmation of the theology and ideology they seek to employ in the Twelve Steps program as well.

Beyond expressing feelings of anguish and pain, the psalms can function both as prayers themselves, and as a starting point from which supplicants can form their own lament, petition, and praise. By linking their prayer and recovery to the words of the Bible, they are able to strengthen their bond to Jewish tradition and to the Jewish community. They can also use the sentiments expressed by the psalmist as inspiration that speaks to their Jewish origins, and thus, within this familiar and comforting framework, can help them articulate their own feelings and needs concerning recovery.

As recovering addicts begin to work the steps, the *Psalms* may help them understand, internalize, and give expression to those concepts which focus on human powerlessness and God's power through biblical scripture. For example,

Help me, God,
for the waters have come up to my neck!
I've sunk into the miry depths,
There's no place to stand.
I've gone into deep water.
The flood has overtaken me

[*Psalms* 69:2-3]

expresses the sentiment which often accompanies Step One, when the member admits powerlessness over the addiction, that life has become unmanageable. Thus, *Psalms* 22 and *Psalms* 69 are two examples of the manner in which the

recovering addict is able to connect Twelve Step concepts with Jewish scripture in a clear and practical way.

The process of 'turning it over' to God, which is related to Step Three, can be facilitated from a Jewish perspective with passages such as the following:

Show me favor, Lord, for I am wasting away.
Heal me, Lord, for my bones are terrified.
My inner self is terribly frightened.
And you, LORD--how long?

[*Psalms* 6:3-4]

Here, one sees an alignment with the sentiment of Step One as the supplicant reiterates the feelings of fear and trepidation resulting from the lifting of denial, admission of the problem and acute awareness of vulnerability. At the same time, there is an expression of reaching out toward the Almighty, who can assist with healing (i. e., as articulated in Step Three).

The ultimate benefit of using psalms to express feelings of pain and a longing for healing may be the honest pathway to God that is opened up, allowing the recovering addict to experience a deeper, more profound inner struggle and encounter with faith. The *Psalms* empower the recovering addict to ask difficult, honest questions of God, with the 'protection' that scripture provides by anchoring the sentiment in a holy tradition. Because of the honesty that exists in voicing doubt and pain while searching for answers, this approach may pave the way for more readily accepting God's power. As J. David Pleins describes: "Hand in hand with the worshiper's doubts come affirmations concerning God that are sources of

encouragement and hope for the worshiper. Throughout the individual laments, the sufferer seeks to affirm God's ability to help those in need."²⁴

Psalms of Trust

The goal of one who is working the program of Twelve Steps is to move beyond admitting powerlessness and to achieve a strong faith that God can provide the assistance needed for recovery. The same is true for the psalmist. As Westermann observes: "There is not a single psalm of lament that stops with lamentation. Lamentation has not meaning in and of itself. . . . What the lament is concerned with is not a description of one's own suffering or with self-pity, but with the removal of suffering itself."²⁵ Such is the case in any Twelve Steps program: recovering addicts are encouraged to look honestly at their situation, and then to move toward a lifting of the obsession for their drug of choice, by working the steps.

Psalms of Trust are not identified in Gunkel's scheme of classification, but as Westermann points out, the lament psalms move toward alleviating suffering, and often this is through the building of trust with God. Therefore, Psalms of Trust can be seen as related to Psalms of Lament. Whereas the Psalms of Lament deal primarily with human suffering and God's inaction, ". . . the Psalms of Trust juxtapose human suffering with divine presence, and out of this conjunction awaken in the worshipper the desire to trust in the One who, although silent, is nevertheless present."²⁶ To this end, the Psalms of Trust liken God to such images

²⁴Pleins, 26.

²⁵Df. Westermann, Praise and Lament in the Psalms (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 266-267, as quoted in Pleins, 28.

²⁶Pleins, 50.

as 'help' and 'shield' (*Psalms* 115:9-11), 'rock' and 'deliverance' (*Psalms* 62:7-8), and 'guard' (*Psalms* 121:5).

The *Psalms* of Trust²⁷ go beyond the *Psalms* of Lament by attempting to move past the hurt caused by God because of perceived disinterest or indifference. They risk disappointment by investing confidence in God's justice, mercy, and power. The psalmist seeks God even when engulfed in grief, in order to gain strength, hope, and courage for the future. In addition, the *Psalms* guide us as we move along the path of faith. They not only help us search for strength, hope, and courage, but they inspire us to seek a deeper spiritual understanding of our present and future situation.

In *Psalms* 121, known in the Hebrew as *Esa Eini*, we find a prime example of a *Psalm* of Trust which draws on the images discussed above:

I turn my eyes to the mountains;
Where will my help come from?
My help comes from *Adonai*,
Maker of heaven and earth.
Adonai will guard you from all harm;
God will guard your life.
Adonai will watch over your comings and goings now and always.

[*Psalms* 121:1-2, 7-8]

At a time of pain and need, the psalmist reaches up to the mountains; ultimately, help and strength come from God. Thus, God is viewed as Creator, Protector, and Shield. The psalmist also identifies God as a Power that will not only help in a time of immediate need and desperation, but as an Eternal force which remains active in one's life for all time. God's presence can offer peace to those who seek

²⁷Examples of *Psalms* of Trust include *Psalms* 16; 23; 27; 62; 63; 91; 115; 121; 125; 131.

healing because of the comfort that comes from knowing they will never be alone. By 'letting go and letting God', one is able to feel safe because God "will watch over your comings and goings now and always." (*Psalms* 121:8)

A similar message is found in *Psalms* 27:

Adonai, hear my voice when I cry out
Take pity on me and answer me.
Do not turn away Your servant in anger
You have been My help.
Never leave me, never desert me
Adonai will care for me still.

[*Psalms* 27:7. 9-10]

Here, the psalmist trusts that God is listening to his plea. Deep faith is demonstrated by the use of imperatives (e. g. "Hear my voice"; "Never leave me") followed by the conclusion that "*Adonai* will care for me still." The supplicant reaches out to God and trusts that God will respond reciprocally. No doubt is expressed; if asked, God will help the person in need. God remains present; God's action is invoked by the psalmist.

Throughout the *Book*, the words of the ancient psalmist move us to search for the same courage and faith that kept our ancestors engaged with the Eternal, even when they were confronted by overwhelming challenges both as individuals and as a community. The *Psalms* link us to those who came before us, who also searched for God's power in the face of their own powerlessness. This struggle has been alive for Jews throughout the generations, because it is closely related to the human experience at all levels, it is the same struggle expressed by individuals

of other faiths. The *Psalms* are one avenue that can be pursued to give a Jewish voice to both the search for God and to maintaining that relationship once it is established.

Tikkun HaKlali

The use of *Psalms* as a vehicle toward healing is deeply rooted in Judaism. The expression of a longing for healing can be found in the fixed, daily liturgy or statutory prayer service, and also independently. The *Tikkun HaKlali*, a series of ten psalms which were identified by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) as having special power in bringing about the healing of body and spirit, is one example of using psalms to facilitate healing.

Rabbi Nachman was the great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the progenitor of Hasidism. Like his great-grandfather, Rabbi Nachman stressed spirituality within the Jewish tradition. His identification of the *Tikkun HaKlali* is consistent with his search for power within the text and tradition. The following description of the ten psalms identified by Rabbi Nachman is presented by Rabbi Simkha Weintraub:

Psalms 16 starts with a powerful expression of trust and faith in God and gratitude for God's goodness. The psalmist feels the nearness of the Divine Presence and confidence in Divine protection.

Psalms 32 urges us to look deep into ourselves, to examine where and how we have distanced ourselves from God, and to return to God as the Source of true life and joy.

Psalms 41 speaks explicitly about sickness, vividly portraying the torment and suffering endured by so many, expressing thanks to God for the possibility of healing, and stressing the need for caregivers to be sensitive, understanding, and supportive.

Psalms 42 beautifully depicts the yearning for God "as a hart thirsts for springs of water," describing the pain and suffering of both the individual and the nation in exile while affirming the hope of ultimate deliverance.

Psalms 59 is a cry from the heart for God to deliver us from the forces that oppress us and cast us down, echoing David's plea for rescue from Saul's soldiers and his thanksgiving upon receiving Divine refuge and support.

Psalms 77 is an important turning point in this collection, beginning with an expression of anguish and abandonment, the pain and persecution of a long, bitter exile--but moving into an affirmation of faith that God is ever-present and compassionate, despite appearances to the contrary.

Psalms 90 offers a profound comment on human destiny, contrasting human frailty and the brevity of human life with God's eternity and omnipotence, asking God for wisdom, joy, security, support, and compassion.

Psalms 105, after calls to sing and praise, traces the national history of the Jewish People from the covenant with the Patriarchs and Matriarchs through the Exodus from Egypt, which serves as a prototype of Redemption.

Psalms 137 takes us back to the acute pain of exile; weaving in nine verses a tapestry of grief, despair, memory, affirmation, and anger. . . which may be viewed as the proverbial darkness that comes before the light, as these Ten *Psalms* conclude with *Psalms 150*, a paean and musical symphony of praises.²⁸

Statutory Prayer: Its Development and the Theology It Articulates

The centrality of liturgy in Judaism, according to the Rabbis, is evident from the numerous references to prayer, dating from the late Second Temple and Post-Temple periods. Prayer at fixed times is alluded to in the Bible (*Daniel 6:11*; *Psalms 55:18*).²⁹ Scholars point to evidences of community prayer hundreds of

²⁸Simkha Y. Weintraub, ed., Healing of Soul, Healing of Body: Spiritual Leaders Unfold the Strength & Solace in Psalms (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1994), 20-21.

²⁹Heinemann, 14.

years before the destruction of the Temple, and even before the Hasmonean period. However, it did not enjoy a central position as the main mode of communication with God, nor did it become solidified with a fixed liturgy, until around the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

Prior to the reign of Josiah (approximately 400 years after the construction of the first Temple), sacrificial worship was not centralized, but occurred randomly throughout the Holy Land. We are told in *II Kings* 22 that Josiah was motivated to purify the people of all idolatry when he found a book of priestly teachings.³⁰ Thereafter, worship in the form of sacrifice remained centralized in the Temple in Jerusalem until the time surrounding the Destruction.

Prayer became the main form of worship after the end of sacrifices, around the time of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C. E. Unlike sacrifices, which could only be offered by a priest in the Temple, prayers could be performed anywhere, by any individual.

As an efficacious act and also in terms of its perceived value to God, the Rabbis intended prayer to be equated with sacrifices. "What kind of service is that which takes place in the heart? We must answer: It is prayer!" (*B. Ta'anit* 2a, and parallels). Obligatory, fixed prayer is understood here to be a legitimate form of divine worship through which Israel fulfills its daily communal obligations to the Lord: "Just as the sacrificial cult is called *avodah*, so, too, is prayer called *avodah*" (*Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 41).³¹

The earliest detailed information that we possess about fixed, statutory prayers, comes from the Tannaitic period (i. e., the time of the *Mishnah*). At this time, Rabbi Gamliel was instrumental in establishing prayer services as obligatory,

³⁰Jewish tradition has come to recognize this text as the *Book of Deuteronomy*.

³¹Heinemann, 14.

with statutory prayers for worship. He directed that the blessings included in the *Amidah* become fixed (*B. Berachot* 28b; *B. Megillah* 17b), and that they be recited every day.³² The *Mishnah* and other Tannaitic sources also solidified the precise text and structure of the benedictions that surround the Biblical paragraphs of the *Shema* in the morning and evening, those in the Grace After Meals, and others.

However, not all of the *Tannaim* supported the establishment of a fixed liturgy. Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Eleazar were among those who preferred spontaneous, non-legislated prayer which allowed for individual expression of praise and needs. It is reported that Rabbi Eleazar and others used to improvise a new prayer every day (*Y. Berachot* IV, 4).³³ The Rabbis, as a collective whole, declared: "whoever makes his prayer fixed, his prayers are no longer petition (*Mishnah Berachot* IV; *B. Berachot* 29b)."

Even when standardized prayer became recognized, changes in the liturgy continued to be made throughout the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, and finally became fixed in the period of the Geonim (c. 600-1100 C. E.). Different versions became authoritative in Babylon and Palestine. All the rites which have survived until today have their ultimate origin in the Babylonian practice.³⁴

In addition to providing a perceived mode of communication with God that was equal to and eventually supplanted cultic sacrifice, prayer also represents a connection to God when performing ritual and *mitzvot* (i. e., it is a form of *avodah*, 'service'; see *Sifre to Deuteronomy* 41 above). The numerous benedictions that are prescribed before performing a *mitzvah*, before and after eating a meal, upon

³²Idelsohn, 27.

³³Ibid., 28.

³⁴Heinemann, 29.

beholding some particularly impressive or strange natural phenomenon, etc., are designed by the Rabbis to reinforce the notion that everything experienced or enjoyed comes from God.³⁵ This reminder for the Jew occurs often, as "a man is obliged to recite one hundred benedictions each day". (*B. Menachot* 43b)

Human Powerlessness and God's Power as Expressed in Rabbinic Prayer

The tension between the perceived need for a fixed liturgy and the fear of inhibiting spontaneity and an outpouring of one's heart before God are reflected in places throughout rabbinic literature. The *Talmud* implores, "Do not make your prayer routine, but offer free supplications and petitions before God" (*B. Berachot* 28b). People were urged to insert their own personal petitions into the last of the intermediate benedictions (*B. Avodah Zarah* 8a); but, if afflicted with some trouble, they may then insert their own prayer into any of the intermediate benedictions (*l. c.*; *B. Berachot* 34).³⁶

In light of the concern for maintaining personalized prayer offerings beyond the statutory liturgy, the *Talmud* provides us with a glimpse into the individual prayers of a number of our sages. There is a collection of such prayers in *B. Berachot* 16b-17a, as well as a number of other prayers for special occasions, contained primarily in this same *tractate*. These prayers, which often invoke God's action, offer clear illustrations of a deep-rooted belief that God could and would perform specific acts on behalf of an individual, group, or entire people. Most of these prayers are written in the plural, consistent with the importance placed on community worship by the Rabbis; yet the implication of individual need and desire is evident.

³⁵Sarason, 54.

³⁶Idelsohn, 257.

One example of a rabbinic prayer written in the plural that clearly provides insight into an individual's needs and desires, is contained in *B. Berachot*. Rav, on concluding his Prayer (synonymous with the *Amidah* section of a worship service), would add the following:

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to grant us a long life, a life of peace, a life of good, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of bodily vigor, a life in which there is a fear of sin, a life free from shame and confusion, a life of riches and honour, a life in which we may be filled with the love of Torah and the fear of heaven, a life in which Thou shalt fulfill all the desires of our heart for good!

[*B. Berachot* 16b]

This prayer reflects Rav's belief that God can and will affect the life of a person or persons. Rav goes beyond asking for God to provide strength and comfort; he asks God to control life's circumstances, and through direct involvement with individuals, to ensure good health and happiness. Here, the Rabbis indicate a belief that God can be intimately involved with all that a person encounters, and can also alter a situation for one's benefit. Rav's words appear to have had strong appeal throughout the generations. This passage later was adopted by the *Ashkenazim* as the preface to *Birkat ha-Chodesh*, the Blessing of the New Month.

The theology expressed by Rav in this prayer not only validates as Jewish those precepts advocated by the Twelve Steps program in its literature, but also affirms that the belief held by some recovering addicts that God can and will proactively come to the rescue by providing viable solutions or answers, is consistent with Jewish tradition. Rav's prayer does not include what he and his fellow worshipers must do to effect those things for which he prays, and yet one would not suggest, upon consideration of the entire *Talmud*, that the Rabbis would allow individuals to abdicate their responsibility as they work toward Rav's ideals.

The same is true for members of a Twelve Step fellowship. One is not to forego personal responsibility in healing, but rather seek to work in concert with the divine. The Twelve Steps program teaches the recovering addict to seek God's help, not God's unilateral action.

The personal prayer offered by R. Alexandri when he finished reciting the *Amidah* further illustrates the relevance of rabbinic prayer and theology to the recovering Jewish addict:

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to station us in an illumined corner and do not station us in a darkened corner, and let not our heart be sick nor our eyes darkened! According to some, this was the prayer of R. Hanuna; and R. Alexandri, on concluding his prayer, used to add the following: Sovereign of the Universe, it is known full well to Thee that our will is to perform Thy will, and what prevents us? The yeast in the dough and the subjection to the foreign Powers. May it be Thy will to deliver us from their hand, so that we may return to perform the statutes of Thy will with a perfect heart!

[B. *Berachot* 16b]

Both prayers that are attributed to R. Alexandri in this passage are significant for the recovering Jewish addict. The first can be seen as a metaphor for the addict in denial. This prayer can be used to implore God to open the eyes of those who do not see things as they 'really are', so they can witness the self-destruction (i. e., sick heart and darkened eyes). It also implores God to reveal the divine self to all who seek the Eternal's presence, rather than allow them to remain in spiritual darkness.

The second prayer attributed to R. Alexandri also relates to the recovering addict's situation. "Sovereign of the Universe, it is known full well to Thee that our will is to perform Thy will." In other words, we have "made a decision to turn

our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him,"³⁷ and yet, still we are having difficulty with this step. "What is it that prevents us?" asks R. Alexandri, rhetorically. "The yeast in the dough and the subjection to the foreign powers." Rashi tells us that the "yeast in the dough" is to be understood as the *Yetser ha-Ra*, ("Evil Inclination"), which causes a ferment in the heart.³⁸ The same is true, metaphorically, for the addict. The obsession for one's drug of choice--for which "foreign powers" would be an appropriate metaphor--prevents an addict, at first, from performing God's will. By working the steps, which provide a spiritual path to recovery, the addict is able to invoke God's "will to deliver us [recovering addicts] from their [drugs of choice] hand, so that we [recovering addicts] may return to perform the statutes of Thy will with a perfect heart!"

Along these same lines, the Twelve Step call to God that "Thy will be done" also is affirmed in rabbinic prayer. According to Rabbi Eliezer, one should pray as follows [when in danger]: "Do thy will in heaven above, and grant equanimity to those who fear Thee below, and do that which is good in Thine eyes. Praised art Thou, O Lord, who hearest prayer."³⁹ At a specific moment of danger, Rabbi Eliezer does not direct us to pray for health or survival, but rather to pray that God's will ultimately be done. The problems inflicted on the self and others by those who are suffering from addiction are well documented,⁴⁰ and therefore the situation in which addicts find themselves can be likened to times of

³⁷See Step Three.

³⁸*B. Berachot* 17a.

³⁹Jakob J. Petuchowski, Understanding Jewish Prayer (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1972), 35-36.

⁴⁰See Chapter One of this paper.

danger. A case can then be made that, according to Rabbi Eliezer's dictum, Jewish recovering addicts not only are within their right to call out for God's will to be done, but are obligated to do so in light of their predicament. Directing one's will to make it one with God's will, as it is described in the Twelve Steps,⁴¹ is consistent with this passage of the *Talmud*. In this way, one is able to invoke God's power by becoming one with the divine will.

Other prayers contained within the *Talmud* affirm the belief that God's power can be invoked to help individuals accomplish what may be impossible to do on their own.⁴² Collectively, these texts assist us in understanding that even the beliefs of those who transcend the simple meaning of Twelve Steps liturgy--related to God's role in recovery--are consistent with rabbinic theology.

The Purpose of Prayer for the Recovering Addict

In the words of Joseph Heinemann: "It is doubtful whether the average man [or woman], absorbed as he [or she] is in the monotonous routine of daily life, would ever turn his [or her] thoughts spontaneously to God, except perhaps in times of extreme joy or distress. It is, then, the aim of fixed prayer to provide man [and woman] with a stimulus to turn his [or her] thoughts to God."⁴³ Recovering addicts seek a deeper understanding of the divine and a more intimate relationship with God. Not only are those who are engaged in Twelve Steps called upon to internalize a belief that "a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity,"⁴⁴ but they are taught to seek an ongoing relationship with the divine.

⁴¹See Step Three.

⁴²See Appendix C for additional examples.

⁴³Heinemann, 17-18.

⁴⁴See Step Two.

Prayer can serve as a chief means by which such an exchange can continue and grow over time. Prayer also allows the scope of the relationship between God and members of a fellowship to progress beyond the immediate problem of addiction to a deeper, more spiritual level.

It must be noted that Jewish prayers were originally created by the common person. The prototypes for the prayers which were later formed into statutory liturgy were, in their inception, the spontaneous improvisations of people who sought to express their faith, needs, and desires to God. The initial development of the liturgy was dominated by variety and self-expression, which only later became systematized by the Rabbis. Accordingly, creative, spontaneous expressions of faith as well as the call for assistance from the Almighty, can be traced to a long-standing Jewish tradition. The existing liturgies provide a reservoir of prayers to help stimulate spontaneous expressions of faith.

Prayer is able to equip the recovering addict either to re-enter the Jewish community more easily and comfortably, or to build on a previously existing relationship. The same language of prayer is spoken in all Jewish circles, and thereby can come to serve as a bridge between those in recovery and the greater Jewish community. In fact, the spiritual work which the Jew in recovery has performed can prove useful when shared with non-addicts who continue to search for their own faith identity. The skills acquired in the Twelve Steps program are beneficial to others; this provides recovering addicts with something unique which they can bring to a new community.

Jakob Petuchowski z"l, the great liturgist of his time, once suggested that petitionary prayer is not meant as a means of conveying information to God, because God already knows all. Rather, he taught that petitionary prayer is for the benefit of men and women; it allows us to open our hearts to God. Prayer, according to Petuchowski, "affords you the relief of verbalizing, in [God's]

presence, whatever it is that you are striving for."⁴⁵ Both the act of sharing at meetings and that of private prayer can be seen, in light of Petuchowski's observation, as ways of verbalizing in God's presence. Neither is meant to benefit God; both are meant to benefit the individual. He suggested that we are given an opportunity to stand before the Eternal as we stand before ourselves. As we are honest with the Eternal, we become honest with ourselves. Prayer is a means to honesty, as it is a way to move towards recovery.

According to Petuchowski,

There are three main advantages in availing ourselves of the petitionary prayers furnished by the Tradition:

- (a) There is, first of all, the recognition of our dependence upon God. We are not alone in the world. Our limited human strength is not the only power which gets things accomplished. With the help of God, goals can be reached which would otherwise be beyond us. Petitionary prayer makes us aware of this.
- (b) Petitionary prayer, sanctioned by Tradition, also gives us the confidence that what we are asking for is in consonance with the teachings of our religion. We do not pray for the attainment of goals which would be contrary to the aims of our faith or irreconcilable with the nature of God as Judaism conceives Him. Consequently, knowing that what we express in prayer is acceptable to God, we can feel all the more assured of divine help in the attainment of our verbalized goals.
- (c) Petitionary prayer, sanctioned by Tradition, enlarges the range of our concerns. People can become very egotistical and self-centered in prayer. They can confine their prayers to their own very immediate concerns, paying little attention, if any, to the needs and the concerns of their fellowmen. But a petitionary prayer, uttered by a whole community, can save us from such pitfalls.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Petuchowski, 37.

⁴⁶Ibid., 37-38.

These are three key characteristics which will be invaluable to the recovering addict. To know that one is not alone at the most difficult and seemingly lonely times in life presents a glimmer of hope that there are brighter times just ahead. For addicts who may have alienated many of their family members and friends, the comfort of knowing that there is a Higher Power who will be there for them at all times can prove to be an important link in a necessary chain of support.

To utilize the prayers for supplication that have been fixed by the Rabbis, affirms that the words are consistent with Jewish tradition, and will guide recovering addicts in the offering of their own pleas for assistance from God. The existence of a tradition of petition with a justified reason for expecting God to act, is the factor that keeps the Twelve Steps program within the pale of tradition.

Finally, the offering of petition as a community, whether it is the fellowship of the Twelve Steps program or a community of Jews who are engaged in formal prayer, reminds us that we cannot exist on our own. We need others and they need us. Praying as a community is mandated within Judaism, which demands a minimum of ten people (*minyan*) for formal prayer. Twelve Steps advocates meetings and fellowship; one should never have to face addiction and recovery alone. On these three points, Judaism and Twelve Steps share a similar approach and incorporate similar values.

Tachanun and Selichot: A Closer Look at Human Powerlessness and God's Power in Liturgy

One could reasonably expect to find a relationship between a people's theology and its liturgy. Similarly, a variety of theological concepts as expressed in a people's liturgy probably reflects a full range of opinions on certain issues. The next section of this chapter will provide an overview of the beliefs related to

God's power and human powerlessness that are reflected in the traditional Jewish liturgical rubric of both *Tachanun* and *Selichot*. This will be accomplished by describing the history, content, and function of each within Jewish liturgy, followed by a description, analysis, and comparison of their use [or absence] in the traditional Ashkenazic liturgy and in selected Reform liturgies that were prepared in the United States, beginning with *Olat Tamid* and *Minhag America*, and including selected editions of The Union Prayer Book and Gates of Forgiveness. *Tachanun* and *Selichot* were selected as the main focus because their themes address the issues of God's power and human powerlessness. These sections of the traditional Jewish worship service usually are not embodied within Reform liturgies, and when they are included, it is most often with significant deviation from the traditional text.

Tachanun (תחנון): Its History, Content, and Function

Tachanun means "Supplications," and is the general name for the prayers between the *Amidah* and the concluding prayers in the traditional liturgy. The word *Tachanun* has its origin in the Bible, and one finds the root used in a number of places, including *Daniel* 9:3 and 9:20. In the *halachah*, the technical terms used for this section are נפילת אפים, "falling upon the face," or נוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם, "they fell upon their faces." These expressions come from the Talmud and are explained in *Megillah* 22b.⁴⁷

In *Mishnah Tam.* 7:3 and again in *Ben Sira* 50:16-21, we find a description of a ritual practiced in the Temple during which the people would fall upon their faces several times as an expression of reverence.⁴⁸ This custom may have been

⁴⁷ Ismar Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 66.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

transferred from the Temple to the synagogue where, after the structure of the Eighteen Benedictions had become formalized [by the rabbis], provision was made in the daily service for the private prayers of individuals.⁴⁹ Some scholars believe that the Rabbis' decision to place the private prayers or "supplications" after the *Amidah* originated with the biblical text. They reason that in *Daniel* 9:3 we read: "And I will turn my face to the Lord God to request by prayer and supplications...." ["prayer" being understood as the *Amidah*, which is followed by "supplications"] (See also verse 17-20). This same idea can be derived from *I Kings* 8:54, where it says that "Solomon finished praying to God this entire prayer and supplication."⁵⁰

The expression of personal prayers became so important, some of the sages' private prayers are included in the *Talmud*⁵¹ for example, in *B. Berachot* 16b-17a, and in the *Y. Berachot* 4:2 and 7d.⁵² At first, private, non-fixed praise and petition followed immediately after the *Amidah*, but the private prayer of Mar, the son of Rabina (one of the Rabbis' prayers included in *B. Berachot* 16b) ultimately was incorporated into the fixed liturgy. As a consequence, the period for personal 'supplications' was shifted to follow Mar's prayer.⁵³ For a time, the period set aside for 'supplications' remained somewhat open for private expression of individual concerns, with only a few examples of furnished texts for this section.

⁴⁹The evidence for this conclusion is not clear.

⁵⁰Haim Halevy Donin, *To Pray as a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and Synagogue Service* (United States: Basic Books, 1980), 202.

⁵¹See the previous section of this chapter.

⁵²Elbogen, 66.

⁵³Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: The World Union of Progressive Judaism, Ltd., 1968), 23.

However, after the fourteenth century, a standardized text began to crystallize and became part of the structured congregational service identified by the name *Tachanun*.⁵⁴

The text itself was based on biblical models such as *Ezra* 9:6, *Nehemiah* 1:5, and particularly *Daniel* 9:3ff, the classic example of a prayer of petition and supplication. The petition is preceded by a confession of sin, stressing the worshiper's unworthiness; God's favors are sought as a free will gift of grace. This theme has been preserved in all of the variations and forms of the supplications; all express the sinfulness and unworthiness of humankind.⁵⁵

There is a second part of the Supplications which originated later on, perhaps resulting from the precentor claiming for himself a portion of this section which originally was intended for individual worship. This collection probably belonged at first to the *Selichot* ritual. Some additions have been made to this section over the years, including the שומר ישראל poem within *Ashkenaz* (described below), which is used in other rites only on fast days and on the days of *Selichot*. These additions seem to have found a place in the weekday prayer book only in the last century.⁵⁶

Today, *Tachanun* is included in the *Shacharit* and *Minchah* services, and appears in two versions, a short and long form. The longer one, known as "the long וְהוּא רַחוּם," is said on Mondays and Thursdays, which are considered ימי רצון, days of grace on which prayer is more readily accepted (*Shulchan Aruch*, O. H. 134:1 in *Rama*). The special merit of these days is ascribed to the tradition that Moses ascended Mt. Sinai for the second tablets on a Thursday and returned forty days later, on a Monday (*Shulchan Aruch*, O. H. 134:1 in

⁵⁴Donin, 204.

⁵⁵Elbogen, 68

⁵⁶Ibid.

M. D.)⁵⁷ The shorter version is said on the other weekdays and consists of the following:

1. ויאמר דוד -- a verse from *II Samuel* 24:14 which forms an introduction to the short confession that follows.
2. רחום וחנון -- a short confession.
3. יי אל באפך -- *Psalms* 6, without the introductory phase. In it, David pleads with God for mercy, and then feels confident of God's compassion and forgiveness.
4. שומר ישראל -- a hymn that continues the plea for compassion. The protection of God who watches over Israel is invoked for the remnant of Israel that faithfully sustains God's unity and glory.
5. ואנחנו לא נדע -- a collection of biblical verses. The first is from the prayer of King Jehoshaphat in *II Chronicles* 20:12; the remaining verses, following in the same vein, are from the *Book of Psalms*. The first verse expresses complete dependence upon God. Now we can only rely on the mercy of the Lord.⁵⁸

On Mondays and Thursdays the above shorter structure is preceded by a lengthy section consisting of seven somber elegies and penitential prayers that are recited silently while standing. These are followed by the shorter *Tachanun*, with one exception. Immediately before שומר ישראל is another penitential hymn, יי אלהי ישראל, which addresses the horrors of persecution and of our need and desire for mercy and help.

The *Shulchan Aruch* prescribes when one recites ויאמר דוד and the following confession and psalm, that person should rest the brow upon the arm, which is the reason for the *halachic* term נפילת אפים (as discussed above).

⁵⁷Isaac, Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 26.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 25.

Originally worshippers prostrated their entire body, thus symbolically indicating their complete humility before God and committing their destiny entirely into the Almighty's hands.⁵⁹ This section should be performed while sitting, using the left arm when not wearing *tefillin*, as at the *Minchah* service, and the right arm when *tefillin* are worn. The procedure is reversed for left-handed people.⁶⁰ When saying *Tachanun* in a place where there is no Ark, we do not assume this posture. This is in keeping with the spirit of the verse in *Joshua* (7:6), where it says that he "fell on his face on the ground before the Ark of the Lord."⁶¹

Tachanun is not recited on days of joy and sorrow. On days of joy, these prayers would detract from the mood; on days of sorrow, there is no need to add more sorrow. *Tachanun* is therefore omitted on *Rosh Chodesh*, during the whole month of *Nisan*, on *Lag B'omer*, from *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until and including the day after *Shavuot*, on *Tish'ah B'Av*, the fifteen of *Av*, on the morning before *Rosh Hashanah*, from the morning before *Yom Kippur* until and including the day after *Sukkot*, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of *Adar* (during a leap year, on this date in both *Adar I* and *Adar II*), and on the fifteenth of *Shevat*. It also is not recited in a house of mourning during the days of *Shivah*, on a wedding day if the groom is present at services, or on the occasion of a *Berit Milah* if the father, the *sandek*, or the *mohel* is present. In the Rabbinical Assembly Weekday Prayer Book, *Yom Ha'atsma'ut* is included as an occasion on which *Tachanun* is not said.⁶²

⁵⁹J. H. Hertz, The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, rev. ed. with commentary (London: Shapiro Vallentine & Co. 1959), 180.

⁶⁰Klein, 26.

⁶¹Donin, 205.

⁶²Ibid.

Tachanun is not recited during the *Minchah* service immediately prior to *Shabbat* or during any of the *Shabbat* services. However, three verses are recited immediately following the *chazarat ha-shats*, and before the *Kaddish* during *Shabbat*, all of which come from *Psalms* (*Psalms* 119:142, 71:19, 36:7). It is suggested that these verses could have been introduced as a replacement for the *Tachanun* that is said at this point on weekdays.⁶³

Tachanun: Its Presence and Absence in Non-Traditional Liturgies

In most instances, non-traditional Jewish liturgies appear to omit *Tachanun*. *Olat Tamid* does not appear to include a weekday service for times other than special occasions (e. g., festivals). Consequently, *Tachanun* is not included because its specified place in liturgy is after the *Amidah* of the weekday *Shacharit* and *Minchah* services. The 1895 edition of The Union Prayer-Book does include a weekday service, but does not incorporate *Tachanun*. The *Avot* and *Gevurot* of the *Amidah* are included in English only; the *Kedushah* embodies some Hebrew. The petition for health is removed, and the petitions that are included are phrased as a request for God to allow certain things to happen. There is no expressed expectation or request for things to occur in which a person could see tangible results. Rather, if these hopes are one day realized, human reasoning would allow us to conclude that humankind accomplished these things with God's support. The text reflects a low expectation that God will *do* something on our behalf. It can be argued that if one does not request or anticipate that God will effect change, than one's faith will not be challenged by the absence of the desired outcome. On the

⁶³I. Abrahams, Companion to the Authorized Daily Prayer Book (New York: Hermon Press, 1966), 171.

other hand, a different theology could be expressed by stating a cliché in the negative: "Do not ask and you will not receive."

Isaac Mayer Wise's Minhag America includes the short *Tachanun*, with some editing. The first line referring to David from *II Samuel* 24:14 was omitted. All of the following section, *Psalms* 6, beginning with **אל באפך** is included. The verses beginning with **שומר ישראל** are omitted and replaced by one line from *Avinu Malkeinu* which is not included in the traditional *Tachanun*, but rather is placed earlier in the traditional liturgy. The *siddur* then continued with the remainder of the traditional *Tachanun* text. Wise did not include the long supplication for Mondays and Thursdays.

Tachanun and the Issues of Human Powerlessness and God's Power

The content of *Tachanun* depicts the conflict, pain, and longing for relief as felt by both the community and each individual. Part of the material included is written in first person singular (e. g., the short confession **רחום וחנון** preceding *Psalms* 6) and the other portion is written in the first personal plural (e. g., **ואנחנו לא נדע**). The elegies and petitionary prayers are added on Mondays and Thursdays). From the text, individuals reciting *Tachanun* are able to understand that their feelings of despair are not isolated and that others share the expressed grief and search for relief.

The times when *Tachanun* is not recited, listed above, show a striking sensitivity for the plight of an individual, and therefore may prove comforting to those in need. The times when *Tachanun* is not recited relate to an individual's situation (e. g., mourning; *Berit Milah*). Donin notes that,

Nowhere else in religious worship do we find such a striking example of how the entire congregation is made to share the joy or sorrow of the individual. The rules that govern the omission of *Tachanun* from services

are an expression of the Jewish community's concern with responsibility for the individual. No Jew is ever alone. He is always part of an extended family that shares his sorrow and his joy.⁶⁴

One can further understand the concept of God's power from the story contained in *II Samuel* 24, which describes King David's troubled feelings after he recognized that he acted improperly by ordering the counting of the people of Israel and Judah. David prayed to God for forgiveness and God responded by sending the prophet Gad to David. After Gad provided David with a choice between receiving his punishment from God or at the hands of the people, the *Tanach* goes on to say:

And David said to Gad [the prophet], I am deeply troubled; let me fall into the hand of the Lord for His mercies are many, but let me not fall into the hand of man.

[*II Samuel* 24:14]⁶⁵

This line begins the short version of *Tachanun*. It relates an individual's sense of being in deep trouble; there is a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness. The beleaguered person chooses to seek God, who is compassionate and merciful, rather than face the alternative which, in this case, is affliction at the hands of the people. By selecting this verse as the opening line of *Tachanun*, the Rabbis indicate a belief in the power of God to act in an observable, clearly defined manner. They validate the need for individuals to admit that they have acted improperly, and then to deliberately place their fate in the hands of God.

⁶⁴Donin, 209.

⁶⁵Translation from Donin, 204.

This theme is echoed in the confession that follows the *II Samuel* verse in the *Tachanun* text:

O Merciful and Gracious One, I have sinned before Thee.
O Lord full of mercy, have pity on me and receive my entreaty.⁶⁶

Feelings of human inferiority and powerlessness are depicted in this selection. God is seen as possessing the power to restore the individual to good standing. The petitioner calls upon God's mercy and compassion in the hope that God will act favorably on behalf of the individual.

Tachanun progresses with the recitation of *Psalms* 6:

O Lord rebuke me not in Thine anger, nor chastise me in Thine indignation.
Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am wretched,
Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are trembling.
My soul is also terrified; and Thou, O Lord, how long?
Return, O Lord, extricate me from my plight, save me for the sake of thy
loving kindness.
For in death there is no remembrance of Thee, in the grave, who shall give
Thee thanks?
I am weary with my groaning; every night I make my bed to swim [with
tears];
With my tears, I melt away my couch.
My eye is dimmed with vexation; it grows old because of all my
adversaries.
Let me be, all of you who do wrong,
For the Lord heard the voice of my weeping.
The Lord heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.
Let all my enemies be ashamed and frightened;
They shall turn back, they shall suddenly be ashamed.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

The verse "Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am wretched; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are trembling," (*Psalms* 6:2) depicts the recognition of being in trouble, with no control over one's fate. The person appears to be suffering both physical and spiritual pain and acknowledges the inability to directly effect change. Here is a plea for God to act and bring healing. This theme is reiterated in verse 4, with a request that is based solely on God's loving kindness, for God to bring freedom from suffering and to perform an act of grace by saving the sufferer. The humility of the precentor is communicated throughout the psalm, leading to a sense of hope expressed in verses 8-10 that the courage of the individual to walk through these steps will be rewarded by God with fulfillment of the petition.

The final section of the short *Tachanun* [as well of the long version, which is recited on Mondays and Thursdays] begins with וְאֵלֵינוּ לֹא נִדְעַ. This passage states that we have attempted every possible solution to our problems and there seems to be nothing else that can be done. Therefore, we 'turn it over' to God and hope that God will act in mercy and kindness and aid us in our time of helplessness. This is an expression of humility and honesty--a recognition that we are not in control of our fate or worthy of God's redemptive care--coupled by a plea for guidance and help. God is our last hope; indeed, our only hope. Only God can save us from our suffering. The Almighty can rescue us and bring salvation.

Tachanun does not seek scapegoats for our troubles. We do not blame God; we do not try to find solace in blaming the oppressor. We accuse only ourselves of being at fault. Our weakness, our sins, and our failings have put us into such a dire situation. We plead guilt and throw ourselves entirely on God's mercy.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Ibid., 206.

Selichot (סליחות): Its History, Content, and Function

The Synagoga poetry is arranged as insertions in the various parts of the worship service. Accordingly, the ideas of the prayers are worked into the poetical selections. They fall into the following main divisions: *Piyut*, *Selichot*, *Kina*, and *Hoshana*.⁶⁹ The term "*Selichot*" is used for elegies, penitential prayers, confessions of sin, and lamentations, together with the petitions and expressions of hope attached to them.⁷⁰ *Selichah* means forgiveness of sin, as is expressed in scripture (see *Psalms* 130:4 and *Daniel* 9:9). According to the Rabbis, scripture tells us that God promised humankind forgiveness for their sins and provided a means to achieve; God answers the cry for help "whenever we call" (*Psalms* 20:10). The *Midrash* calls these prayers *תסדר סליח* (i. e., rite of forgiveness) (*Tana deve eliyahu Zuta*, 42).⁷¹ The Rabbis said: "God showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him.: 'Whenever Israel sins, let them perform this rite before Me and I shall forgive them'"; "There is a covenant that the Thirteen Attributes do not return unanswered" (*B. Rosh Hashanah* 17b). This Talmudic conception explains how the Thirteen Attributes--revealed to Moses when he received the second set of tablets (Ex. 34:6-7)--became the nucleus of all prayer for atonement. Thus, to this day, they serve as a refrain constantly repeated in all the *Selichot*.⁷²

Selichot is the product of scriptures, rooted in biblical poetry, language, meter, and form. Expressions, refrains, and whole phrases, even paragraphs, were

⁶⁹Idelsohn, 39.

⁷⁰Elbogen, 177.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 178.

incorporated into the *Selichot* literature.⁷³ Originally, *Selichot* were instituted solely for *Yom Kippur*; the main theme of the day was to implore God to forgive us for our sins. However, *Rosh Hashanah* was considered the Day of Judgment, and therefore penitential prayers and supplications for God's mercy were felt to be necessary on that day as well. *Selichot* were used for these and other biblical fast days, and for special fast days that were proclaimed on occasions of drought or other calamities, as described in *Mishnah Taanith* I-III.⁷⁴ The services on these days were opened with exhortation to repentance, and were suitable for the introduction of penitential prayers. Originally, the service consisted mainly of biblical passages selected for the occasion and grouped together. Eventually, the verses were accompanied by *piyutim* of a penitential character, and the whole was termed *Selichot*.⁷⁵

Until 1150, the poets who wrote *piyutim* were very productive and there was always a wealth of new material. The number of *Selichot* and content of the poems were not entirely fixed within the liturgy, but could be changed from time to time. It seems that, except on the Days of Awe, only the precentor had a collection of *piyutim* at hand, and it was entirely up to him to determine how they were to be used. On only a few of the fast days were the *Selichot* to be recited in a prescribed format.⁷⁶

The genre of literature called *Selichot* is enormous. For about fifteen hundred years Israel continued to create poetry expressing inner distress, disasters,

⁷³Idelsohn, 43.

⁷⁴Ibid., 44.

⁷⁵The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905 ed., s.v., "Selihah."

⁷⁶Elbogen, 280.

and persecutions. Communities that lived in greater comfort and ease, e.g., the European *Sefardic* group, have a scanty *Selichot* literature compared to those groups (i. e., the *Ashkenazim*) that were subjected to the Crusades and other major debacles. The corpus of this latter group is considerable.⁷⁷

The *Selichot* are divided into four major divisions:

1. Prayers in which we are called upon to confess our sins and resolve to amend our ways.
2. Prayers which deal with martyrdom of Jewish heroes.
3. Prayers which petition God for a happy and healthy year for ourselves, our family, and the entire world.
4. Prayers which beseech the Angel of Mercy to act in our defense.⁷⁸

Today, the *Sefaradim* start to recite *Selichot* on the first day of *Elul*, and the *Ashkenazim*, on the Sunday before *Rosh Hashanah*. For the *Ashkenazim*, if *Rosh Hashanah* falls on Tuesday or earlier in the week, recitation of *Selichot* begins on the Sunday morning of the preceding week so that it is said for at least four days. This tradition can be traced back to the time of sacrificial offerings in the Temple. The offering was examined for four days for defects or blemishes that could disqualify it from being sacrificed. Man should consider himself like a sacrificial offering on *Rosh Hashanah*, and hence, needs a minimum of four days of self-examination. (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Ba'er Heitiv*)⁷⁹ In America it has

⁷⁷Idelsohn, 253.

⁷⁸Ralph DeKoven, *Mahzor Meforash: A High Holiday Prayerbook with Explanatory Notes* (United States: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1972), 3.

⁷⁹Klein, 178.

become customary to hold the first *Selichot* service on Saturday night after midnight.

One explanation for the *Ashkenazic* practice of beginning to recite *Selichot* on Sunday is offered by S. Y. Agnon:

We have evidence of this in what King David said (*Psalms* 119:6): "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous ordinances."

We always rise early on the first day of the week for penitential prayers, because it is the day after the Sabbath, and people make it a practice to study on the Sabbath when they are free from work and can study Torah. For that reason it is good to begin the penitential prayers on Sunday, when the folk are happy at having fulfilled the commandment to study the Torah, and also because the pleasure they have taken in the Sabbath. Our sages, of blessed memory, said that the Divine Presence dwells neither in the midst of sadness, nor in the midst of idleness, but in the midst of joy at having fulfilled a commandment (*Shabbat* 20b). Therefore, it is good to pray when one is in the midst of joy at having fulfilled a commandment. [*Leket Yosher*] (*Days of Awe*, pp. 31-32.)

Today, the standard form for the *Selichot* service in traditional liturgy is to begin with *Psalms* 145 and end with שומר ישראל. Both are followed by *Kaddish Shalem*, in order to correspond to the pattern of the regular service. The collection of biblical quotations, the thirteen attributes and their introductory prayers, the short confession אשמנו, and some concluding prayers are the constant of each service. The variables are *piyutim*, as different ones are recited each day.⁸⁰

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 179.

Selichot in High Holy Days Liturgies, and the Issues of Human Powerlessness and God's Power

Traditional liturgy, as illustrated in the discussion on *Tachanun* above, does not shy away from proclaiming that God has the power to affect the individual and community directly. This is evident in a number of places in traditional High Holy Day liturgy as well. For example, inserted in the *chazarat ha-shats* of the High Holy Day *Amidah* in traditional liturgy, the *Avot* contains a lengthy plea to God to *do* things to, and for the individual. The following two passages are examples of such inserted personal pleas. They are contained in a *piyut* written by Rabbi Meshullam ben Kalonymus:

Teach me to pour forth sweet meditation,
Grant me Thy shelter, bring me near to Thee;.....

Direct my steps that my speech falter not,
O Creator, sustain me lest I fall;
Uphold and strengthen me from weariness,
Accept Thou my words and let me not stumble.⁸¹

In this *piyut*, God is implored to play an active role in the life of the petitioner. There is not only a plea for forgiveness, but a call for God to "direct my steps," and to "sustain me." The supplicant admits that it is not possible to attain all of these things alone; God's assistance and partnership is needed.

This same theme is expressed in many places throughout the traditional High Holy Day liturgy, including a *piyut* preceding *Al Chet* in the Yom Kippur morning service:

... Blot out and remove our transgressions and sins from thy sight. Bend our will to submit to thee; subdue our stubbornness, that we may turn back to thee; renew our conscience, that we may observe thy precepts. Open

⁸¹Philip Birnbaum, *High Holyday Prayer Book* (New York: Montauk Book Mfg. Co., Inc., 1951), 624.

our heart to love and revere thy name, as it is written in thy Torah: "The Lord your God will open your heart, and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." (*Deuteronomy* 30:6)⁸²

Again, in the prayers that are offered, the worshiper goes beyond asking for forgiveness. There is a call for God to "bend our will," a theme that has been discussed in other liturgical settings and which has been shown to directly relate to Twelve Steps theology. This *piyut* does not ask for God to cause miracles; it focuses on God helping to examine and address one's inclination and feelings. The Twelve Step program participant may relate best to this message because it goes to the heart of an addict's problem: the obsession for that person's drug of choice. Here, God is asked to help lift the obsessions in our lives, ". . . to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." Beyond being the watchword of the faith of Israel, this may also serve as the watchword of Twelve Steps as well.

Some Reform liturgies throughout the generations have included similar theological ideas; others have omitted passages altogether with this world-view. For example, the traditional *mahzor* for Yom Kippur morning after the *Amidah* transitions with: "May we and all Israel people be remembered and inscribed before thee in the book of life and blessing, peace and prosperity, for a happy life and for peace. Blessed art thou, O Lord, Author of peace."⁸³ On the other hand, Einhorn's *Olat Tamid* has the *Amidah* immediately followed by the Confession, which ends with: "O let us then hasten, ere the hour be flown, in deep contrition and humility of soul, to resolve with sincere vows to lead henceforth, a better life

⁸²Ibid., 678.

⁸³Ibid., 614.

in thought and action! Let us make confession before our Judge and God that we have sinned."⁸⁴ Instead of imploring God to act favorably in judgment and to grant life for the upcoming year, Einhorn chose to emphasize the human role in repentance and action. This theme is repeated within the long silent devotion that follows *Al Chet*, in which the reader is led to reflect on sinful human deeds and personal responsibility in living a just life. Throughout the *mahzor*, Einhorn repeatedly implies that repentance, improvement of character, and quality of life are ultimately determined by human choice and action rather than by divine judgment and intervention.

The High Holy Days edition of the Union Prayer Book, published in 1908, includes petitions for forgiveness. Just as in the *Shabbat* and weekday edition, published thirteen years earlier, petitions are offered that would not be *answered* with an action that can be *seen* or necessarily credited to God. How does one see forgiveness, or strength? Rarely, if ever, is there a request for God to do anything. Rather, the petitions request an emotionally supportive response by God, not an active one. A similar theology is expressed in the more recent Gates of Forgiveness published in 1993. Again, most of the pleas are made for an emotional and intellectual response of acceptance and forgiveness from God, without the request of a tangible expression. The focus is on the individual's and community's need to 'return' to God, again emphasizing human responsibility and rarely requesting God's action. There are only a few instances when God's power is alluded to, for example in the use of the English verse in which God is referred to as potter and humankind as God's clay.

⁸⁴David Einhorn, Olat Tamid: Book of Prayers for Jewish Congregations, trans. Ernest G. Hirsch (n.p.: 1896), 121.

The Union Prayerbook and the Issue of God's Power

The evolution of the Reform *siddur* has seen marked changes in the liturgy. Hebrew content has risen dramatically from the original publication until today. Also, the most recent prayerbook contains multiple worship services to allow for flexibility among diverse congregations and liturgical preferences.

The theology expressed in these liturgies also has evolved over the years. Whereas the earlier editions were laden with strong images of God's grace, goodness, and power, the most recent publication addresses the latter much less frequently. For example, in the 1936 edition of the Union Prayerbook, we read: "Teach me, O Lord, to obey Thy will, to be content with what, in Thy wisdom, Thou hast allotted to me, and to share Thy gifts with those in need of my help. . . And when, in thy Wisdom, Thou sendest trials and sorrows, grant me strength to bear them patiently, and courage to trust in Thy help."⁸⁵ This is only one of many passages which articulate a faith in an omniscient and omnipotent God. The reason for prayer is made clear to those who use this liturgy: God is in control. Worship is deemed an effective way to invoke God's grace, goodness, *and* power. The awesome nature of the prayer experience is magnified in the words of the liturgy.

Similar passages are found in the 1961 edition of the Union Prayer Book. The following prayer, for example, helps worshipers humble themselves before the Almighty: "When we pray for new blessings, may we come to Thee in the spirit of humility and submission, remembering that we cannot know whether what we ask is really for our own good. Thou alone knowest and orderest all things well,

⁸⁵Central Conference of American Rabbis, The Union Prayerbook (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1936), 18.

whether Thou grantest our petitions or deniest them.”⁸⁶ Members of the Fellowship will relate to these and similar passages, which express concepts that are central to the Twelve Steps program.⁸⁷ This liturgy also is consistent with the rabbinic theology described in the previous chapter. In one instance, for example, the Rabbis called for the individual’s will to be aligned with the divine will.⁸⁸ Elsewhere they proclaimed that everything is under the control of heaven (i. e., God), except the fear of heaven.⁸⁹

The most recent Reform *siddur*, Gates of Prayer, as was discussed above, contains significantly fewer passages related to God’s power or regarding the need to submit to God’s wisdom and will. Also, a plea for God’s action is absent from much of Reform Judaism’s High Holy Day liturgies. Therefore, it is not surprising that liberal Jews often have difficulty with the Twelve Step program’s call to ‘turn it over’ to God.⁹⁰ This thesis has shown that the concepts of human powerlessness and God’s power which are expressed in the Steps are consistent with Jewish theology. Therefore, developing liturgies which are stylistically familiar to today’s Reform Jews, and also contains liturgical texts which invoke God’s power, is a worthy endeavor which can benefit recovering addicts and non-addicts alike. One example of such a liturgy will be presented in Chapter Five.

⁸⁶Central Conference of American Rabbis, The Union Prayerbook (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1961), 25.

⁸⁷See Steps Three, Six, Seven, and Eleven.

⁸⁸See *Pirke* 2:4.

⁸⁹See *B. Berachot* 33b; *B. Megillah* 25a; *B. Nidah* 16b.

⁹⁰See Chapter Two.

CHAPTER FIVE

GATES OF PRAYER WORSHIP SERVICE WITH ADDITIONAL READINGS RELATED TO THE THEME OF GOD'S POWER

The primary goal of this chapter is to demonstrate one way to enhance the most widely used liturgy in American Reform synagogues for those who wish to express a longing for God to play a more active role in their lives and in the life of the community as a whole. It is an attempt to add more petition to the praise already contained in Gates of Prayer. Another goal is to assist people in voicing their hopes that God will help them do what may seem otherwise insurmountable. For this reason, passages that call us to action on our own behalf have also been added.

As a whole, this prayer service is intended to help the community call out as a single voice when asking for God's power to be enacted on their own behalf, and simultaneously to petition for human empowerment. These goals arise from the expressed needs of recovering Jewish addicts. They are the two themes that are stressed by the Twelve Steps program for recovery.

In addition, it is important to note that there are also a large number of non-addicts who long for God to play a more active role in their lives. For many

people, the English texts contained in Gates of Prayer fall short of giving adequate voice to these needs and desires. Gates of Prayer seems to place a greater emphasis on praise and thanksgiving rather than petition.

In the few existing texts that have been composed and compiled specifically for recovering Jewish addicts, one finds that often they deviate significantly from themes expressed by the traditional liturgy. Moreover, their content is often so specific, the non-addict feels alienated when praying with this liturgy.

This worship service is designed to express the themes of the Twelve Steps program, using the language of prayer rather than the language of recovery. It will address two concerns: 1) that the addict and non-addict will be able to pray from the same liturgy, both gleaning what they need from worship; and 2) that the recovering addict will be able to enter most Reform (and some Conservative) synagogues and be familiar with the liturgy.

No liturgy can appeal to all Jews. Thus, it is intended that this liturgy be used by those who are familiar with the Gates of Prayer and its structure. Building the new upon the foundations of the old is one of the most effective ways to introduce any type of change. Therefore, it was decided to add new readings to the existing liturgy, rather develop a completely unfamiliar text and structure.

The addition of passages without deleting any of the existing ones has produced a lengthy liturgy for the Reform weekday morning service. However, this service was not meant to be prayed aloud in its entirety. The *sheliach tzibur*

may choose from Hebrew, Gates of Prayer English liturgy, and new selections.

Some may be skipped altogether; others may be read in silence. In this sense, it is to be used in the same manner as Gates of Prayer.

The presentation of this compiled liturgy may be considered difficult to use because there is not a marked difference in print style between the Gates of Prayer text and added selections. Therefore, although a single diamond separates the Gates of Prayer reading from the new selection, and two diamonds separate one prayer from another, the two readings often run together. This makes it difficult to read one and skip another without the service leader offering innumerable cues. The use of varying types or another layout would rectify this problem.

The origins of the new texts vary significantly. Some are taken directly from the *Talmud*, many of which are described in context as the “additional prayer” of a rabbi after the *Tefillah* was recited, and others come from the *Torah*, or from medieval or contemporary sources. Often a prayer was moved from its originally intended use to another part of the service in order to stress a particular theme. The text reflects a compromise between heavily dominated male God language and a completely gender-sensitive liturgy. Pronouns such as “He” and “Him” are omitted wherever possible. These pronouns most often are associated with male images, and thus, may alienate members of the congregation. The word “Lord,” however, is used in this booklet, for three reasons:

1. The gender-sensitive Gates of Prayer for the Weekdays does not include the petitions of the *Tefillah* anywhere in the volume. Removing the word “Lord” from the text therefore would have required mass edits, which would have detracted from the expressed intention of remaining closely linked to Gates of Prayer.
2. Personal opinion, which was affirmed by anecdotal evidence, leads to the conclusion that, whereas the words “He” and “His” conjure up male-specific images, for many people “Lord” is imagined as royalty – both male and female.
3. For many people, the word “Lord” connotes majestic power, whereas “Sovereign” or “Ruler” can conjure up negative images. The benefit of incorporating a word which implies God’s power outweighed the potential negative result of alienating some people. Therefore, it appeared to be the best decision.

The only major alteration in the Hebrew is the addition of the passages of the traditional *Shema/V’ahavta*, which are omitted from the Gates of Prayer.

These passages speak directly to the theme of God’s power. They are biblical texts, and as such, can be viewed through whatever theological lens seems most comfortable for the worshiper. Moreover, other Reform/liberal Jewish liturgies do include these passages (e.g., *Avodah Shebalev*). Therefore, within the liberal framework, there is a precedent for this decision.

Five silent meditations follow the *Tefillah*; this is a major addition to the English portion of the service. Silent prayer can be one of the most powerful forms of worship, and yet the *sheliach tzibur*, sensing discomfort among the congregants, often rushes through this designated time. This sense of discomfort

may result from one of our own shortcomings; viz., that we have not done a very good job in teaching people how to pray nor of helping people learn how to pray. The inclusion of optional readings at this point may inspire creative worship and assist the participants in directing their thoughts toward the divine.

** Please note that permission was neither sought nor obtained for reprinting any of the texts contained in the following liturgy or for adapting any of the works included herein. Sources are cited, except when drawn from Gates of Prayer. It is not the intent of the author of this thesis to claim authorship of the liturgy in this section, but rather to demonstrate how particular themes can be reinforced in existing liturgy.*

May the door of this synagogue be wide enough
to receive all who hunger for love,
all who are lonely for fellowship.

May it welcome all who have cares to unburden,
thanks to express, hopes to nurture.

May the door of this synagogue be narrow enough
to shut out pettiness and pride, envy and enmity.

May its threshold be no stumbling block
to young or straying feet.

May it be too high to admit complacency,
selfishness, and harshness.

May this synagogue be, for all who enter,
the doorway to a richer and more meaningful life.



It is not only in the synagogue that we should "know before whom we stand." We face the Eternal every moment we live; we stand before God in every action we take.

The presence of Adonai fills the whole world; God's glory is everlasting. There is not a place in the heavens or the earth that is not holy.

There is no moment in time that is not sacred; no aspect of existence that does not bear the seal of godliness.

If we but open our eyes we would recognize, as did Jacob of old, that the gateway to heaven is wherever we stand.

It is to open our eyes to the holiness everywhere about us and the godliness within us that we gather in this house of prayer.

*Here we renew those bonds which link us to our people and our faith.
Here we seek to glimpse the total dimension of human life, to sense the drama that is Judaism, and the role of the prophets, poets, and sages in fashioning that drama.*

Here we are reminded of those who dedicate their lives to the sacred task of guiding us to an ever fuller appreciation of those values which exult life.

Out of the fullness of our hearts we give thanks for the privilege of sharing in this service.



מִה־טֹבוֹ אֱהָלֶיךָ, יַעֲקֹב, מִשְׁכְּנֶתְךָ, יִשְׂרָאֵל!
וְאֲנִי, בְּרַב חֲסִדֶּךָ אָבוֹא בִּיתְךָ,
אֲשֶׁתְּחַוֶּה אֶל־הֵיכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ.
יְהוָה, אֶהְבֵּתִי מַעֲוֶן בִּיתְךָ, וּמִקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ.
וְאֲנִי אֲשֶׁתְּחַוֶּה וְאֶכְרַע, אֲבָרְכָה לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה עֹשִׂי.
וְאֲנִי תַפְלִיתֶיךָ, יְהוָה, עַת רְצוֹן.
אֱלֹהִים, בְּרַב־חֲסִדֶּךָ, עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ.

How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places O Israel!
 By Your abounding love, O God,
 I enter Your house;
 with awe I worship in Your holy Temple.
 I love Your house, O Eternal One,
 the dwelling-place of Your glory;
 humbly do I worship You,
 humbly seeking blessings from God my Maker.
 To You, Eternal One, goes my prayer:
 may this be a time of Your favor.
 In your great love, O God,
 answer me with Your saving truth.



FOR HEALTH

אשר יצר

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת־הָאָדָם
 בְּחָכְמָה, וּבָרָא בּוֹ נִקְבִּים וְנִקְבִּים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים. וְגִלּוֹי
 וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדְךָ, שָׂאם יִפְתָּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אוֹ יִסְתָּם
 אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקִים וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה,
 יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל־בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Blessed is our Eternal God, Creator of the universe, who has made our bodies with wisdom, combining veins, arteries, and vital organs into a finely balanced network. Wondrous Fashioner and Sustainer of life, Source of our health and our strength, we give You thanks and praise.



And God said: 'Let us make humankind, in our image, according to our likeness. . . So humankind was created in God's image, in the image of divine did God create them, male and female, God created them. . .and God blessed them. . . Now God saw all that the Eternal had made, and here: It was exceedingly good!



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוּק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

Blessed is the Eternal, our God, Ruler of the universe, who
hallows us with His Mitzvot, and commands us to engage in
the study of Torah.

וְהַעֲרֵב־בֵּנָא, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶת־דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ, וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנַהֲיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצֵאֵינוּ, וְצִאֲצֵאֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה, יי, הַמְּלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Eternal our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet to us,
and to the House of Israel, Your people, that we and our chil-
dren may be lovers of Your name and students of Your Torah.
Blessed is the Eternal, the Teacher of Torah to His people Israel.

אֵלֹו דְּבָרִים שְׂאִין לָהֶם שְׁעוֹר, שְׂאָדָם אוֹכֵל פְּרוּתֵיהֶם
בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהִקְרָן קִיּוֹם לֹו לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְאֵלֹו הֵן:

These are the obligations without measure, whose reward, too,
is without measure;

To honor father and mother;

to perform acts of love and kindness;

to attend the house of study daily;

to welcome the stranger;

to visit the sick;

to rejoice with bride and groom;

to console the bereaved;

to pray with sincerity;

to make peace when there is strife.

כְּבוֹד אָב וָאִם,

וּגְמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים,

וְהִשְׁכַּמַּת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ

שְׁחִירֵית וְעֶרְבֵית,

וְהִכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים,

וּבִקּוֹר חוֹלִים,

וְהִכְנָסַת כָּלָה,

וּלְוִיַּת הַמֵּת,

וְעִיוֵן תְּפִלָּה,

וְהִבָּאת שְׁלוֹם

בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ;

And the study of Torah is equal to them all, because it leads to them all.

In each age we receive and transmit Torah.
 At each moment we are addressed by the World.
 In each age we are challenged by our ancient teaching.
 At each moment we stand face to Face with Truth.
 In each age we add our wisdom to that which has gone before.
 At each moment the knowing heart is filled with wonder.
 In each age the children of Torah become its builders
 and seek to set the world firm on a foundation of Truth.



FOR THE SOUL

אלהי נשמה

אלהי, נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא! אתה בראתה, אתה
 יצרתה, אתה נפחתה בי, ואתה משמרה בקרבי. כל־זמן
 שהנשמה בקרבי, מודה אני לפניך, יי אלהי ואלהי אבותי,
 רבון כל־המעשים, אדון כל־הנשמות.
 ברוך אתה, יי, אשר בידו נפש כל־חי, ורוח כל־בשר־איש.

The soul that You have given me, O God, is a pure one! You
 have created and formed it, breathed it into me, and within
 me You sustain it. So long as I have breath, therefore, I will
 give thanks to You, O Lord my God and God of all ages,
 Master of all creation, Lord of every human spirit.

Blessed is the Lord, in whose hands are the souls of all the liv-
 ing and the spirits of all flesh.



Source of Mercy
 With loving strength
 Untie our tangles.
 Your chanting folk
 Raise high, make pure.
 Accept our song.
 Like Your own eye
 Lord, keep us safe
 Who union seek.
 Cleanse and bless us,
 Infuse us ever with loving care.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן
לְשִׁכּוֹי בִּינָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has
implanted mind and instinct within every living being.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who has made me a Jew.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בֶן חוֹרִין.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who has made me to be free.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who opens the eyes of the blind.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who provides clothes for the
naked.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

*Blessed is the Eternal our God, who brings freedom to the
captive.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, whose power lifts up the fallen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְּכִין מַצְעַד־יִגְבֵּר.

*Blessed is the Eternal our God, who makes firm each person's
steps.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוּרָה.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who girds our people Israel
with strength.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל

בְּתִפְאָרָה.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who crowns Israel with glory.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַנוֹתֵן לְיָעָף כֹּחַ.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who gives strength to the weary.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּעֲבִיר שְׁנָה מֵעֵינַי וְתַנּוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, who removes sleep from the eyes, slumber from the eyelids.



Blessed art Thou, O Lord,
every day,
Because every day is precious,
Every day is a lifetime
mirroring all life itself.

*Thank you for the morning
when I feel fresh and young
And wake to the beauty
all around me.*

Thank you for the afternoon
when the sun is high
Suspended in triumph
above a work-a-day world.

*Thank you for the evening when
the shadow cast a sheltering
palm above the universe
Permitting it to pause
ready for the dark.*

Thank you for the night
with the ever-present stars
To remind me that darkness
is never absolute.

*Thank you for the calm
that is restorative,
Not a mindless obliteration
of reality.*

Thank you for the sleep
that heals and strengthens
And fills my heart with hope
for a new tomorrow.



בָּרוּךְ שֶׁאָמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא.
 בָּרוּךְ עוֹשֶׂה בְּרָאשִׁית, בָּרוּךְ אוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה.
 בָּרוּךְ גּוֹזֵר וּמְקַיֵּם, בָּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הָאָרֶץ.
 בָּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת, בָּרוּךְ מְשַׁלֵּם שָׂכָר טוֹב לִירְאָיו.
 בָּרוּךְ חַי לְעַד וְקַיָּים לְנֶצַח, בָּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל, בָּרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ.
 בְּשִׁבְחוֹת וּבִזְמִירוֹת נִגְדָּלָה וְנִשְׁבַּחַהּ וְנִפְאָרָהּ, וְנִזְכֵּיר שְׁמָהּ
 וְנִמְלִיכָהּ, מִלְּכֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ. יְחִיד, חַי הָעוֹלָמִים, מֶלֶךְ, מְשַׁבַּח
 וּמִפְאָר עַד־עַד שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל.
 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ מְהֻלָּל בַּתְּשֻׁבּוֹת.

Blessed is the One who spoke, and the world came to be.

Blessed is the Source of creation.

Blessed is the One whose word is deed, whose thought is fact.

Blessed is the One whose compassion covers the earth and all its creatures.

Blessed is the living and eternal God, Ruler of the universe, divine Source of deliverance and help.

With songs of praise we extol You and proclaim Your sovereignty, our God and King, for You are the Source of life in the universe.

Blessed is the Eternal King, to whom our praise is due.



With a great love You have loved us Adonai, and You have shown us overwhelming tenderness. For the sake of Your great name and for the sake of our ancestors who trusted in You, You have taught us the laws of life. Have mercy upon us, and teach us. Put into our hearts the ability to understand, obey, learn, teach, observe, and perform all the words of Your teachings.



יְתַדְּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְנִמְלִיד מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.
יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיד הוּא, לְעָלְמָא מִן
כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאָמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Let the glory of God be extolled, let His great name be hallowed in the world whose creation He willed. May His kingdom soon prevail, in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let His great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Let the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, be glorified, exalted and honored, though He is beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter, and let us say: Amen.

♦ ♦

KAVANAH. As we bless the Source of Life, so we are blessed. And the blessing gives us strength and makes our vision clear. And the blessing gives us peace, and the courage to dare.

FAITH ROGOW

COMMENTARY. *Barehu* calls the congregation together for formal worship. The sections that precede it in the morning service, *Birhot Hashahar* and *Pesukei Dezimrah*, have brought individuals gradually closer together until they could reach the mutual connection needed for joining together in prayer. The emotional stirring and heightened awareness brought by these earlier sections now become focused in the tighter intellectual structure of the Shema and its blessings and the *Amidah*.

D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The first major theme following *Barehu* is that of Creation. We wonder at the order, the complexity, the vastness of our world. Struck by our own smallness, we are nonetheless also caught up in the grace of having a home amidst the splendor that is nature. Our wonder and our sense of smallness give way to thankfulness for the gift of life in this world.

D.A.T.

שמע וברכותיה

בָּרְכוּ אֶת־יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ!

Praise the Lord, to whom our praise is due!

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Praised be the Lord, to whom our praise is due,
now and for ever!

♦ ♦

CREATION

יוצר

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא הַשֶּׁשֶׁת,
עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת־הַכֹּל.

Praised be the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes
light and creates darkness, who ordains peace and fashions all
things.

הַמְאִיר לָאָרֶץ וְלַדָּרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים, וּבְטוֹבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ
בְּכָל־יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

With compassion He gives light to the earth and all who dwell
there; with goodness He renews the work of creation con-
tinually, day by day.

מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, יְיָ! כָּל־כֶּלֶם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ, מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ
קִנְיָנְךָ.

How manifold are Your works, O Lord; in wisdom You have
made them all; the earth is full of Your creations.

תְּתַבָּרֶךְ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל־שִׁבְחַ מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ, וְעַל־מְאֹרֵי־אוֹר
שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ: יִפְאָרוּךְ. סְלָה.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, יוֹצֵר הַמְּאֹרוֹת.

Let all bless You, O Lord our God, for the excellence of Your
handiwork, and for the glowing stars that You have made:
let them glorify You for ever. Blessed is the Lord, the Maker
of light.

♦

Sovereign of the universe, who reigned
Ere earth and heaven's fashioning,
When to create the world You deigned,
Then was Your name proclaimed Ruler.

And at the end of days shall You
The One on high, still reign alone,
Who was, who is, and still will be
Unchanged upon Your glorious throne.

As You are one, Your powers transcend,
Supreme, unfathomed, depth and height;
Without beginning, without end,
You are dominion, power and might.

My God and my Redeemer,
my Rock in sorrow's darkest day,
A help and refuge unto me,
You are my cup's full portion, when I pray.



אַהֲבָה רַבָּה אֶהְבְּתֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חֲמֶלְהָ גְדוֹלָה וַיִּתֶּרָה חֲמֶלְתָּ
עָלֵינוּ. אֲבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ, בְּעֶבֶר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שִׁבְטָחוּ בָךְ וְתִלְמָדֵם
חֲקֵי חַיִּים, כֵּן תַּחֲנֵנוּ וְתִלְמָדֵנוּ.

Deep is Your love for us, O Lord our God, and great is Your
compassion. Our Maker and King, our ancestors trusted You,
and You taught them the laws of life: be gracious now to us,
and teach us.

אֲבִינוּ, הָאֵב הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הַמְרַחֵם, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְתֵן בְּלִבֵּנוּ לְהִבִּין
וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל, לִשְׁמָע לִלְמַד וּלְלַמֵּד, לִשְׁמֹר וּלְעֲשׂוֹת וּלְקַיֵּם
אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי תִלְמוּד תּוֹרַתְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Have compassion upon us, O Source of mercy, and guide us
to know and understand, learn and teach, observe and uphold
with love all the teachings of Your Torah.

וְהֵאָר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲד לִבֵּנוּ
לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ. וְלֹא־נִבּוֹשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי בִשְׁם
קֹדֶשְׁךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּטַחְנוּ. נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ,
כִּי אַל פּוֹעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת אַתָּה. וּבִנוּ בְּחֶרֶת וְקִרְבָּתֵנוּ לִשְׁמָךְ
הַגָּדוֹל סָלָה בְּאַמֶּת, לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ וּלְיַחְדְּךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַבוֹחֵר בְּעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.

Enlighten us with Your Teaching, help us to hold fast to Your
Mitzvot, and unite our hearts to love and revere Your name.

*Then shall we never be shamed, for we shall put our trust in
You, the great, holy, and awesome One. We shall rejoice and
be glad in Your salvation, for You, O God, are the Author of
many deliverances. In love You have chosen us and drawn us
near to You to serve You in faithfulness and to proclaim Your
unity.*

Blessed is the Lord, who in love has chosen His people Israel
to serve Him.

♦

Eternal God, in whose service we are enlisted and in whose name we have gathered, lift our thoughts that we may renew our minds; and lead us beside the still waters so that we may restore our souls.

We thank You, O Lord, for our hallowed memories and for our abiding hopes.

Help us to show that we are Your children by giving ourselves faithfully to Your tasks.

Help us to convert our convictions into conduct and commitment.

Help us to narrow the gap between our principles and our practices, between our aspirations and our actions.

Keep us from blaming others for our own faults; helps us to heal the wounds we have thoughtlessly inflicted.

Help us to face defeats with courage and to carry our successes with humility.

Keep us from the pride that blinds the mind and from the anger that locks the heart.

Make us loyal to our convictions in the face of falsehood; but help to speak the truth in love.

Day by day, draw us closer to Your teachings, closer to each other, and closer to You.



The one who listens to the words of friends, spouse, significant other, children, parent, And does not catch the note or urgency: "Notice me, help me, care about me," HEARS -- but does not hear.

The person who listens to the news; And thinks only of how it will affect them personally; Hears -- but does not hear.

The person who joins in prayer and feels that it is but a duty to be performed mechanically, hears the liturgy, but does not really HEAR.

Each and every day O God, Sharpen our ability to really hear.

May we hear the call for help of the lonely soul, their unspoken pleas and dreams.

May we hear the words of those who ask for our help, and the needs of those who are not yet able.

May we Hear you, O God, for only then can we hope for the gift of serenity and peace.



שִׁמְעֵ יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד!

Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Blessed is His glorious kingdom for ever and ever!

All are seated

וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לֵבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל
מְאֹדְךָ. וְהָיוּ סִדְּרֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִנֶּה הַיּוֹם, עַל
לֵבְךָ. וְשִׁנְנֶתָם לְבָנֶיךָ, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלִבְתְּךָ
בְּדֶרֶךְ, וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ. וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ
לְטָטְפֶת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ. וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

דברים י"א, י"ב-כ"א

וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמִיעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹתַי, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִנֶּה אִתְּכֶם
הַיּוֹם, לְאַהֲבָה אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לֵבְכֶם וּבְכָל
נַפְשְׁכֶם. וְנִתְּתִי מִטֶּר אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ, יוֹרֶה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ; וְאִסְפֹּתִי
דִּגְנוֹתַי, וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ. וְנִתְּתִי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדְךָ לְבִהְמֹתֶיךָ; וְאִבְלֹתַי
וְשִׁבְעֶתַי. הִשְׁמֵרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּח לִבְכֶם, וְסָרְתֶם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם. וְתָרַח אִף יְיָ בְּכֶם, וְעָצַר
אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מָטָר, וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ;
וְאִבְדְּתֶם מִתְּהַרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְיָ נָתַן לָכֶם. וְשָׁמַתֶּם
אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים עַל לִבְכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם; וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת
עַל יָדְכֶם, וְהָיוּ לְטָטְפֶת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם. וְלִמְדֶתֶם אֹתָם אֶת
בְּנֵיכֶם לְדָבָר בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלִבְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ, וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ
וּבְקוּמְךָ. וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

לִמְעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם, עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
יְיָ לְאַבְתִּיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם, כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל הָאָרֶץ.

במדבר טו, לו-ס"א

וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: דִּבַּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֲלֵהֶם, וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כְּנָפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם; וְנִתְּנוּ עַל
צִיצִית הַכֶּנֶף פֶּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת. וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית, וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ
וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יְיָ, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם; וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי
לִבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר אֹתָם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם. לִמְעַן
תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי; וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם.
אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת
לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים; אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם—

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you are sitting at home and when you go on a journey, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 11:13-21

And if you will carefully obey my commands which I give you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, I will give rain for your land at the right season, the autumn rains and the spring rains, that you may gather in your grain, your wine and your oil. And I will produce grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. Beware lest your heart be deceived, and you turn and serve other gods and worship them; for then the Lord's anger will blaze against you, and he will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no produce, and you will quickly perish from the good land which the Lord gives you. So you shall place these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are sitting at home and when you go on a journey, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—that your life and the life of your children may be prolonged in the land, which the Lord promised he would give to your fathers, for as long as the sky remains over the earth.

Numbers 15:37-41

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel and tell them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put on the fringe of each corner a blue thread. You shall have it as a fringe, so that when you look upon it you will remember to do all the commands of the Lord, and you will not follow the desires of your heart and your eyes which lead you astray. It is for you to remember and do all my commands and be holy for your God. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord your God.



אֶמֶת וְיִצִיב, וְאֶהוּב וְחָבִיב, וְנוֹרָא וְאֲדִיר, וְטוֹב וְיָפֶה הַדָּבָר
הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
אֶמֶת, אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם מְלַכְנוּ, צוּר יַעֲקֹב מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ.
לְדֶר נֶדֶר הוּא קִיָּם, וְשִׁמּוֹ קִיָּם, וְכִסְאוֹ נָכוֹן,
וּמַלְכוּתוֹ וְאַמוּנָתוֹ לְעֵד קִיָּמָת. וַיְדַבְּרוּ חַיִּים וְקִיָּמִים,
נְאֻמִּים וְנַחֲמָדִים, לְעֵד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים.
מִמְצָרִים גָּאֻלָּתָנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ.
עַל־זֹאת שָׁבְחוּ אֱהוּבִים וְרוֹמְמוֹ אֵל, וְנָתַנוּ יָדִידִים זְמִירוֹת
שִׁירֹת וְתִשְׁבָּחוֹת, בְּרָכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת לְמֶלֶךְ, אֵל חַי וְקַיָּם.
רֵם וְנִשְׂא, גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא, מְשֻׁפִּיל גְּאִים וּמִגְבִּיהַ שְׁפָלִים,
מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים וּפּוֹדֶה עֲנָוִים, וְעוֹזֵר דָּלִים.
וְעוֹנֶה לְעַמּוֹ בַּעֲת שׁוֹעֵם אֱלֹיו.



We are standing at the edge of the Sea of Reeds,
looking into the waters before us.
They are deep, and we cannot see to the other end.
We know we should cross, but we are afraid,
even though it is clear that we must move on.
We must leave Egypt, with its narrowness and oppressiveness.
We are no longer needed or wanted there, and will be destroyed if we do
not cross.
Ahead of us lies an uncertain future,
a vast wilderness of wandering,
of danger, sudden storms, and thirst.
But beyond that is a Promised Land
of fulfillment, peace and joy.
And as we cross this sea, and beyond,
We are enveloped by God's glorious clouds.
On all sides we feel God's love
and we have full faith in Adonai's steadfastness.
Yes, we will jump and plunge into the deep
And at the other side we will sing to my God
who has delivered us from Egypt, forever.



תְּהִלּוֹת לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן, בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבָרֵךְ. מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ כָּלֵם:

All praise to God Most High, the Source of blessing! Like Moses
 and Israel, we sing this song of rejoicing:

Who is like You, Eternal One, among מִי־כַמֶּכָּה בְּאֵלִים, יְיָ?
 the gods that are worshipped?

Who is like You, majestic in holiness, מִי כַמֶּכָּה, נָאֲדָר בְּקִדְשׁ,
 awesome in splendor, doing wonders? נוֹרָא תְהִלָּת, עֹשֶׂה פִלָּא?

שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ גְאוּלִּים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל־שִׁפְתַּי הֵימָּן; יַחַד כָּלֵם
 הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ: "יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!"

A new song the redeemed sang to Your name. At the shore of the
 Sea, saved from destruction, they proclaimed Your sovereign
 power: "The Eternal will reign for ever and ever!"

צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוֹמָה בְּעֶזְרֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּפְדֵה כְּנָאֲמֶךָ יְהוּדָה
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. גְּאֻלָּנוּ, יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.
 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, גֹּאֲלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

O Rock of Israel, come to Israel's help. Fulfill Your promise of re-
 demption for Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer is the Lord of Hosts,
 the Holy One of Israel. Blessed is the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.

♦ ♦

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your glory.

GOD OF ALL GENERATIONS

אבות ואמהות

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ;
 אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
 אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רֵבֶקָה, אֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה, וְאֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל.
 הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֶלְיוֹן,
 גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאִמּוֹת,
 וּמַבִּיא גְאֻלָּה לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם, לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.
 מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מֶגֶן אַבְרָהָם וְעִזְרַת שָׂרָה.

Praised be the Eternal One, our God, God of our fathers and our mothers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, God of Sarah, God of Rebekah, God of Leah and God of Rachel, great, mighty, and exalted.

You bestow love and kindness on all Your children. You remember the devotion of ages past. In Your love, You bring redemption to their descendants for the sake of Your name.

You are our Ruler and Helper, our Savior and Protector. We praise You, Eternal One, Shield of Abraham, Protector of Sarah.



Then Moses took the book of the Covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people;

And they said: All that the Eternal One has spoken we will do, and we will obey.

The Eternal One, our God, made a covenant with us at Sinai.

Not only with our ancestors did the Eternal One make this Covenant, but with us, who are all of us present and alive today.

Not with you only do I make this solemn Covenant, but with those who are standing here with us today before the Eternal One, our God, and with those who are not here with us today.

Not you only, but all future generations were present in spirit at that moment.



אתה גבור לעולם, אדוני, מחיה הכל אתה, רב להושיע.

Eternal is Your might, O Lord; all life is Your gift; great is Your power to save!

מכלל חיים בחסד, מחיה הכל ברחמים רבים. סומך
נופלים, ורופא חולים, ומתיר אסורים, ומקים אמונתו
לישני עפר.

With love You sustain the living, with great compassion give life to all. You send help to the falling and healing to the sick; You bring freedom to the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

מי כמותך, בעל גבורות, ומי דומה לך, מלך מלכות ומחיה
ומצמיח ישועה?*

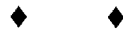
ונאמן אתה להחיות הכל. ברוך אתה, יי, מחיה הכל.

Who is like You, Master of Might? Who is Your equal, O Lord of life and death, Source of salvation? Blessed is the Lord, the Source of life.



May it be your will, Adonai, my God and God of my ancestors, to lead me, to direct my steps, and to support me in peace. Lead me in life, tranquil and serene, until I arrive at where I am going. Deliver me from every enemy, ambush and hurt that I might encounter on the way, and from all afflictions that visit and trouble the world.

Bless the work of my hands. Let me receive divine grace and those loving acts of kindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all those I encounter. Listen to the voice of my appeal, for You are a God who responds to prayerful supplication. Praised are You, Adonai, who responds to prayer. Amen.



נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־שִׁמְךָ בְּעוֹלָם, בְּשֵׁם שְׁמִקְדִּישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׁמַי מְרוֹם,
בְּכַתּוּב עַל־יַד נְבִיאָךְ: וְקָרָא זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאָמַר:

We sanctify Your name on earth, even as all things, to the ends of time and space, proclaim Your holiness, and in the words of the prophet we say:

קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

Holy, Holy, Holy is God Most High! The whole earth is ablaze with Your glory!

אֲדִיר אֲדִירָנוּ, יְהוָה אֲדִנְנוּ, מִהֲאֲדִיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ!

Source of our strength, Sovereign God, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!

בָּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ.

Praised be the glory of God in heaven and earth.

אֶחָד הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הוּא אֲבִינוּ, הוּא מְלִכְנוּ, הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ;
וְהוּא יִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ בִּרְחֻמּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָּל־חַי:

You alone are our God and our Creator; You are our Ruler and our Helper; and in Your mercy You reveal Yourself in the sight of all the living:

"אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם"

I AM YOUR ETERNAL GOD!

יְמִלֶךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן, לְדֹר וָדֹר. הַלְלוּיָהּ!

The Eternal One shall reign for ever; your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נִגִּיד גְּדֻלָּתְךָ, וְלִנְצַח נִצְחִים קִדְשָׁתְךָ נִקְדִּישׁ.
וְשִׁבְחָךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִפִּינוּ לֹא יִמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

To all generations we will make known Your greatness, and to all eternity proclaim Your holiness. Your praise, O God, shall never depart from our lips.

We praise You, Eternal One, the holy God.



May the presence of Adonai be felt forever.

May Adonai be pleased with the Divine work.

God glances at the earth and it shakes.

God touches the mountains and they tremble.

I will sing to Adonai as long as I live.

As long as I exist, I will chant hymns to God.

May my meditation be pleasing to God.

that I may go on rejoicing in Adonai.

May sinners disappear from the earth

and the wicked be no more.

Give praise to Adonai. Hallelujah.



All are seated

אַתָּה חוֹנֵן לְאָדָם דָּעַת וּמַלְמֵד לְאָנוּשׁ בִּינָה. חֲנֵנוּ מֵאַתָּה
דָּעָה, בִּינָה וְהַשְׂכִּיל.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, חוֹנֵן הַדָּעַת.

You favor us with knowledge and teach mortals understanding.
May You continue to favor us with knowledge, understanding,
and insight.

Blessed is the Lord, gracious Giver of knowledge.



Your decrees are my delight, my intimate companion.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts, that I may study Your
wondrous acts.
Your teaching is true.
Though anguish and distress come upon me, Your *mitzvot* are my delight.
Your righteous decrees are eternal, give me understanding that I might
live.



הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ אֱבִינוּ לְתוֹרָתְךָ, וְקַרְבֵּנוּ מִלְכֵּנוּ לְעִבּוּדְךָ,
וְהַחְזִירֵנוּ בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַרוֹצֶה בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה.

Help us to return, our Maker, to Your Torah; draw us near,
O Sovereign God, to Your service; and bring us back into Your
presence in perfect repentance.

Blessed is the Lord, who calls for repentance.



*Close my eyes from evil and my ears from gossip, my heart from reflecting on
unchaste thoughts and my mind from thinking of transgression. Guide my feet to
walk in Your mitzvot and Your righteous path. May Your mercy be turned on me
to be among those spared and preserved for life in Jerusalem.*



סְלַח־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ, מְחַל־לָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵינוּ כִּי פָשַׁעְנוּ, כִּי
מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אַתָּה.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, חַנוּן הַמֵּרַבָּה לְסִלּוֹחַ.

Forgive us, our Creator, when we have sinned; pardon us, our Sovereign
Ruler, when we transgress; for You are a forgiving God.

*Blessed is the Lord, the gracious God, whose forgiveness is
abundant.*



When we are weak, sustain us;

When we despair, open our hearts to joy.

When we are torn, lead us;

When we are tormented, touch us with tranquillity.

When we deceive, turn us to You;

When we corrupt, capture our hearts anew.

When we blunder, restore us.

With compassion, teach us that peace is based on Your truth.

And give us a second chance!



רֵאֵה בְּעֵינֵינוּ וּרְיָבָה רִיבֵינוּ, וּנְאֻלָּנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ, כִּי
גּוֹאֵל חֶזֶק אַתָּה.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Look upon our affliction and help us in our need; O mighty
Redeemer, redeem us speedily for Your name's sake.

Blessed is the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.



Adonai, our God, treat us with compassion all the days of our lives. Assuage
our fears, establish the work of our hands, heal our wounds, and save us from
the grip of our enemies. May weeping and wailing not be heard in our
homes; may destruction and devastation not be found within our borders.
May we be worthy and reverent before You. Teach us Your Torah, and
enlighten us in Your presence. Unite our hearts to revere You that we may
prosper in all our paths, wherever we turn, until the day when You gather us
unto You. Bring us from peace to peace that we may find tranquillity in our
way of life in Your presence and delight at Your right hand forever.



FOR HEALTH

רפואה

רַפְּאֵנוּ יְיָ וְנִרְפָּא, הוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְנוֹשְׁעָה, וְהַעֲלֵה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה
לְכָל-מַכּוֹתֵינוּ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, רוֹפֵא הַחוֹלִים.

Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall
be saved; grant us a perfect healing from all our wounds.

Blessed is the Lord, the Healer of the sick.



Source of mercy, spread Your shelter of peace over all the ill among us, and watch with special care over those whose names have been recited aloud and those who remain in our hearts. Help us, as we seek ways of healing; share Your kindness with us, that the bonds of love and caring be increased; and grant courage and hope to the sick and the well together. Reveal Your compassion and Your blessing upon all who are ill and comfort them. Speedily and soon, let us see together a day of complete healing, a healing of body and a healing of spirit.



FOR ABUNDANCE

ברכת השנים

בְּרֹךְ עָלֵינוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶת-הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת-כָּל-מִינֵי
תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְטוֹבָה. וְתֵן בְּרָכָה עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, וְשַׂבְּעֵנוּ
מִטוֹבָךְ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים.

Bless this year, O Lord our God, and let its produce bring us
well-being. Bestow Your blessing on the earth and satisfy us
with Your goodness.

Blessed is the Lord, from whom all blessings flow.



May it be Your greatest pleasure, Adonai our God, to give each person
everything that he needs; and may you supply to each and every person
what she requires. Praised are You who hears prayer.



FOR FREEDOM

חרות

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵרוּתֵנוּ, וְשֵׂא נֶס לְפָדוֹת עֲשׂוּקֵינוּ, וְקוֹל
דְּרוֹר יִשְׁמַע בְּאַרְבַּע כְּנָפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, פּוֹדֶה עֲשׂוּקִים.

Sound the great horn to proclaim freedom, inspire us to strive
for the liberation of the oppressed, and let the song of liberty
be heard in the four corners of the earth.

Blessed is the Lord, Redeemer of the oppressed.



Know that each and every shepherd has a unique melody for each of the grasses
and for each place where he herds; for each and every blade of grass has its own
song, and from these songs of the grasses, the shepherd composes his song.

*Would that I merited hearing the sound of the songs and praises of the grasses, how
every blade sings to the Holy One wholeheartedly, with no reservations, and
without anticipation of reward. How wonderful it is when one hears their song,
and how very good to be amongst them, serving the Lord in awe.*



FOR JUSTICE

משפט

עַל שׁוֹפְטֵי אֶרֶץ שְׁפוּךְ רוּחְךָ, וְהִדְרִיכֵם בְּמִשְׁפָּטִי צְדָקָה,
וּמִלֹּךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה לְבִדְךָ, בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים!
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מֶלֶךְ אוֹהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט.

Pour Your spirit upon the rulers of all lands; guide them, that
they may govern justly. O may You alone reign over us in
steadfast love and compassion!

*Blessed is the Sovereign Lord, who loves righteousness and
justice.*



Unite our hearts to fear Your name. Keep us far from that which You
despise. Bring us near to that which You love, and deal justly with us for
the sake of Your name.



עַל־הַצְדִּיקִים וְעַל־הַחֲסִידִים וְעַל־יְהוָה רַחֲמֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
וְתֵן שָׂכָר טוֹב לְכָל הַבּוֹטְחִים בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאַמֶּת, וְשִׁים חֶלְקֵנוּ
עִמָּהֶם לְעוֹלָם.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מְשַׁעֵן וּמִבְטָח לַצְדִּיקִים.

Have mercy, O Lord our God, upon the righteous and faithful of all peoples, and upon all of us. Uphold all who faithfully put their trust in You, and grant that we may always be numbered among them.

Blessed is the Lord, the Staff and Support of the righteous.



May the Almighty, whose spirit is with us in every righteous deed, be with all men and women who spend themselves for the good of humanity and bear the burdens of others, who give bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and take the friendless into their homes. May the work of their hands endure, and may the good seed they are sowing bring forth an abundant harvest.



FOR JERUSALEM

שלום ירושלים

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תִּפְנֶה, וִיהִי שָׁלוֹם בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ,
וְשָׁלוֹה בְּלֵב יוֹשְׁבֶיךָ, וְתוֹרַתְךָ מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא וּדְבָרְךָ
מִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן שָׁלוֹם בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

And turn in compassion to Jerusalem, Your city. Let there be peace in her gates, quietness in the hearts of her inhabitants. Let Your Torah go forth from Zion and Your word from Jerusalem.

Blessed is the Lord, who gives peace to Jerusalem.



For Zion's sake I will not keep silence; for Jerusalem's sake I will speak out, until her right shines forth like the sunrise, her deliverance like a blazing torch.



אַת־צֶמַח צְדָקָה מְהֵרָה תִצְמַיֵם, וְקֶרֶן יְשׁוּעָה תִרְוַם בְּנֹאמְדִי,
כִּי לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּינוּ כָּל־הַיּוֹם.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, מִצְמִיחַ קֶרֶן יְשׁוּעָה.

Cause the plant of justice to spring up soon. Let the light of deliverance shine forth according to Your word, for we await Your deliverance all the day.

Blessed is the Lord, who will cause the light of deliverance to dawn for all the world.



Open the righteous gates to me
So that I may enter them and praise Adonai.
This is the gateway to Adonai,
the righteous shall enter through it.
I praise You. You have answered me.
You have become my deliverance.



שִׁמְעַ קוֹלֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּגִים אַתָּה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

Hear our voice, O Lord our God; have compassion upon us, and accept our prayer with favor and mercy, for You are a God who hears prayer and supplication.

Blessed is the Lord, who hearkens to prayer.



In desperation, I call out to You for help and guidance. With Your infinite love, patience and wisdom, I can take hold of the serenity I so long to grasp. With belief and trust in You, my precious G-d, everything is within my reach. At times, however, I must lift up my arms and outstretch my hands just a little bit farther.



רַצָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּתְפִלָּתָם בְּאַהֲבָה תִּקְבַּל,
וּתְהִי לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.
אֵל קְרוֹב לְכָל-קְרָאִיו, פָּנֶיךָ אֵל עֲבָדֶיךָ וְחַנּוּנוֹ; שְׁפוּךְ רוּחְךָ
עָלֵינוּ, וְתַחֲיֵנָּה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמַּחְזִיר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

Be gracious, O Lord our God, to Your people Israel, and receive our prayers with love. O may our worship always be acceptable to You.

Fill us with the knowledge that You are near to all who seek You in truth. Let our eyes behold Your presence in our midst and in the midst of our people in Zion.

Blessed is the Lord, whose presence gives life to Zion and all Israel.



O Lord our God, many are the evasions and deceits which we practice upon others and upon ourselves. We long to speak and hear truth only, yet time and again, from fear of loss or hope of gain, from dull habit or cruel deliberation, we speak half-truths, we twist facts, we are silent when others lie, and we lie to ourselves. But we stand now before You, and our words and our thoughts speed to One who knows them before we utter them. We know we cannot lie in Your presence. May our worship teach us to practice truth in speech and in thought, not only before You, but before our fellow-man and women.



ON ROSH CHODESH, CHOL HAMO-EID, AND YOM
HA-ATSMA-UT

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויזכר ויזכרנו ויזכרון כל-עמך
בית ישראל לפניך, לטובה לחן לחסד ולרחמים, לחיים ולשלום
ביום

Our God and God of all ages, be mindful of Your people Israel on this

first day of the new month,	ראש החדש הזה.
day of Pesach,	חג המצות הזה.
day of Sukkot,	חג הסוכות הזה.
day of Independence,	העצמאות הזה.

and renew in us love and compassion, goodness, life and peace.

This day remember us for well-being. Amen. זכרנו, יי אלהינו, בו לטובה. אמן.

This day bless us with Your nearness. Amen. ופקדנו בו לברכה. אמן.

This day help us to a fuller life. Amen. והושיענו בו לחיים. אמן.

♦ ♦

THANKSGIVING

הודאה

מודים אנחנו לך, שאתה הוא יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
לעולם ועד. צור חיינו, מגן ישענו, אתה הוא לדור ודור.
נודה לך ונספר תהלתך, על-חיינו המסורים בידך, ועל-
נשמותינו הפקודות לך, ועל-נפשיך שבכל-יום עמנו, ועל-
נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל-עת, ערב ובקר וצהרים. הטוב:
כי לא-כלו רחמיך, והמרחם: כי-לא תמו חסדיך, מעולם
קנינו לך.

We gratefully acknowledge that You are the Lord our God
and God of our people, the God of all generations. You are
the Rock of our life, the Power that shields us in every age.
We thank You and sing Your praises: for our lives, which are
in Your hand; for our souls, which are in Your keeping; for
the signs of Your presence we encounter every day; and for
Your wondrous gifts at all times, morning, noon, and night.
You are Goodness: Your mercies never end; You are Compas-
sion: Your love will never fail. You have always been our hope.

וְעַל כָּל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְיִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִתְרומֶם שְׁמֶךָ, מְלִכֵּנוּ, תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

For all these things, O Sovereign God, let Your name be for ever exalted and blessed.

On the Ten Days of Repentance insert:

וְכָתוּב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל־יְמֵי בְרִיתְךָ.

Let life abundant be the heritage of all Your children.

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֶלָה, וַיְהִלְלוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּאַמֶּת, הָאֵל
יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ וְעֲזָרָתָנוּ סֶלָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ, וְלֹךְ נֶאֱדָה
לְהוֹדוֹת.

O God our Redeemer and Helper, let all who live affirm You and praise Your name in truth. Lord, whose nature is Goodness, we give You thanks and praise. ♦

O God, who revealed Yourself to a lonely shepherd
in a lowly thorn-bush enveloped in flames
which marvelously was not consumed,

We thank You for Your precious gifts
which stubbornly defy the fires that would consume them:

*For the yearning of liberty
which will not be strangled by the cold chains of tyranny.*

*For the striving of truth
which will not be discouraged by the persistent clamor of falsehood.*

*For the struggle for justice
which will not be defeated by the cruel powers of malice.*

*For the urge to love
which will not be stifled by the cynical call to hate.*

*For the belief in tomorrow
which will not be crushed by the heavy burdens of today.*

*For the will to live
which will not be choked by the rude hands of sorrow.*

*For the power of the spirit
which will not be conquered by the brute spirit of power.*

*For the faith in You
which will not be uprooted by the chilly winds of despair.*

*For all these precious gifts
we offer thanks to You who first spoke to Moses
from the bush that burned, but was not consumed.*

♦ ♦

ON CHANUKAH

על הנסים ועל הפְּרָקוֹן, ועל הגְּבוּרוֹת ועל התְּשׁוּעוֹת, ועל
המִלְחָמוֹת, שְׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

בַּיָּמִי מִתְהַיָּהוּ בְּרִיּוֹחָנוּ כִּהְיוֹ זָדוֹל, חֲשָׁמוֹנִי וּבְנִי, כְּשֶׁעָמְדָה מַלְכוּת
וְנוֹ הִרְשָׁעָה עַל-עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁכִּיתָם תּוֹרָתְךָ, וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻמֵּי
רְצוֹנְךָ.

וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים עָמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בַּעַת צָרָתָם. רַבָּתְךָ אַחֲרֵיכֶם,
דָּגַתְךָ אַתִּידִינָם, מִסַּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים, וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מַעֲטִים,
וְטַמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוֹרִים, וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים, תָּדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי
תּוֹרָתְךָ.

וְלֵךְ עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם זָדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וְלַעֲמֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה
גְּדוֹלָה וּפְרָקוֹן בַּהִיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

וְאַחֵר כֵּן בָּאוּ בְנֶיךָ לְדָבִיר בֵּיתְךָ, וּפָנוּ אֶת-הֵיכָלְךָ, וְטָהְרוּ אֶת-
מִקְדָּשְׁךָ, וְהִדְלִיקוּ נֵרוֹת בְּחִצְרוֹת קֹדֶשְׁךָ, וְקִבְּעוּ שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה
אֵלֶּיךָ לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל.

We give thanks for the redeeming wonders and the mighty deeds by
which, at this season, our people was saved in days of old.

In the days of the Hasmoneans, a tyrant arose against our ancestors,
determined to make them forget Your Torah, and to turn them
away from obedience to Your will. But You were at their side in time
of trouble. You gave them strength to struggle and to triumph, that
they might serve You in freedom.

Through the power of Your spirit the weak defeated the strong, the
few prevailed over the many, and the righteous were triumphant.

Then Your children returned to Your house, to purify the sanctuary
and kindle its lights. And they dedicated these days to give thanks
and praise to Your great name.

* *

ON PURIM

על הנסים ועל הפְּרָקוֹן, ועל הגְּבוּרוֹת ועל התְּשׁוּעוֹת, ועל
המִלְחָמוֹת, שְׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

בַּיָּמִי מָרְדֳּכַי וְאֶסְתֵּר בְּשׁוֹשׁן הַבִּירָה, כְּשֶׁעָמַד עֲלֵיהֶם הָמֵן הִרְשָׁע,
בִּקֵּשׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-הַיְּהוּדִים, מִנֶּעַר וְעַד-זָקֵן, טָף
וְנָשִׁים, בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד, בְּשִׁלּוּשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנֵים-עָשָׂר, הוּא-יְחָדֵשׁ אֲדָר,
וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוֹז.

וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים הִפְרַתְּ אֶת-עֲצָתוֹ, וְקִלְקַלְתָּ אֶת-מַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ.

We give thanks for the redeeming wonders and the mighty deeds by
which, at this season, our people was saved in days of old.

In the days of Mordecai and Esther, the wicked Haman arose in
Persia, plotting the destruction of all the Jews. He planned to destroy
them in a single day, the thirteenth of Adar, and to permit the plunder
of their possessions.

But through Your great mercy his plan was thwarted, his scheme
frustrated. We therefore thank and bless You, O great and gracious
God!

* *

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם, טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-
כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמָּךְ.

Peace, happiness, and blessing; grace and love and mercy:
may these descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world.

בְּרַכְנוּ אֲבִינוּ, כָּלֵנוּ כְּאַחַד, בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ, כִּי בְאוֹר פְּנִיךָ נָתַתָּ
לָנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תּוֹרַת חַיִּים, וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד, וְצַדִּיקָה וּבְרָכָה
וְרַחֲמִים, וְחַיִּים וְשְׁלוֹם.

Bless us, our Creator, one and all, with the light of Your pres-
ence; for by that light, O God, You have revealed to us the
law of life: to love kindness and justice and mercy, to seek
blessing, life, and peace.

וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֶךְ אֶת-עַמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-עֵת וּבְכָל-שָׁעָה
בְּשְׁלוֹמָךְ.*

פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשְׁלוֹם.

O bless Your people Israel and all peoples with enduring
peace!*

Praised be the Lord, who blesses His people Israel with peace.



O God, You have called us to peace, for You are Peace itself. May we have the
vision to see that each of us, in some measure, can help to realize these aims:

Where there are ignorance and superstition,

Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.

Where there are prejudice and hatred,

Let there be acceptance and love.

Where there are fear and suspicion,

Let there be confidence and trust.

Where there are tyranny and oppression,

Let there be freedom and justice.

Where there are poverty and disease,

Let there be prosperity and health.

Where there are strife and discord,

Let there be harmony and peace.



SILENT PRAYER

אֱלֹהִי, נָצַר לְשׁוֹנִי מִרָע, וּשְׁפָתִי מִדְּבַר מְרָמָה, וְלִמְקַלְלִי
נַפְשִׁי תְדוּם, וְנַפְשִׁי כְּעֹפֶר לְכָל תְּהִיָּה. פָּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ,
וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדּוּף נַפְשִׁי, וְכָל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה, מְהֵרָה
הַפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקַלְקַל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם. עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן שְׁמֶךָ, עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן
יְמִינְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן קִדְשְׁתָּךְ, עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן תּוֹרָתְךָ. לִמְעַן
יִחַלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ. הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי.

O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from deceit.
Help me to be silent in the face of derision, humble in the pres-
ence of all. Open my heart to Your Torah, and I will hasten
to do Your Mitzvot. Save me with Your power; in time of
trouble be my answer, that those who love You may rejoice.

♦ ♦

יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי־פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ, צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי.

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be
acceptable to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

or

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

May He who causes peace to reign in the high heavens let peace
descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world.

♦ ♦

God, grant me the serenity

אלי תן בי את השלום

To accept the things I cannot change,

לקבל את הדברים שאין ביכולתי לשנותם

The Courage to change the things I can,

אומץ לשנות את הדברים אשר ביכולתי

And the wisdom to know the difference.

ותבונה להבחין בין השניים

Meditation #1

I confess to You, who are perfect, all my flaws and imperfections. You know them even better than I, but You want me to acknowledge them freely. I confess my hypocrisy and smugness, my lack of feeling and double standards. They are not easy to see. Help me to see them.

I confess to You, because You are patient, the times I have been vain or obstinate. Give me common sense. Let me see myself as others see me, and be content.

I confess to You, who understand me, all my small and silly deeds. With embarrassment I remember my pettiness, my white lies, my lack of tact, and my half-truths. Help me not to mislead others or be tripped up by them.

Meditation #2

I confess to you, my truest friends, my need for friendship. There are times when I have felt let down, and even betrayed. Help me to remember the times which I have not kept faith with others or let them down. Then perhaps my failures may join me to them through understanding, even if I cannot love.

I confess to You, the lower of love, the times I have felt unloved, or even unable to love enough. In the coming year give me the power to love, to give without price, and receive without excuse.

I confess to You, for in You I trust, the desires of my heart which make me ashamed, and the suspicions in my mind which are neither right nor justified. I should like the courage to face them, accept them as my own, and with Your help transform them.

Meditation #3

Adonai, hear my voice when I cry out
Take pity on me and answer me.
Do not turn away Your servant in anger
You have been My help.
Never leave me, never desert me
Adonai will care for me still.

Meditation #4

We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end war,
For we know that You have made the world in a way
That we must find our own path to peace
Within ourselves and with our neighbors.
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end starvation,
For You have already given us the resources
With which to feed the entire world
If only we would use them wisely.
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to root out prejudice,
For You have already given us eyes
With which to see the good in all people
If we would only use them rightly.
We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end despair,
For You have already given us the power
To end poverty and to give us hope
If only we would use our power justly.
Therefore we pray to You, O God,
for strength, determination, and patience,
To continue the never-ending work
of learning peace
of seeking justice
of resisting prejudice
of guarding hope
of giving comfort
of choosing life.

Meditation #5

May it be Your will, Adonai my God, and God of my ancestors, that
you imbue our days with love and brotherhood, peace and friendship.
Bring our lives to a happy end and fulfill all our hopes. Fill our dominion
with disciples, and grant that we may enjoy our portion in Paradise.
Provide for us a good heart and a good associate. Grant that we may rise
early and find each day our hearts' desires, and let our souls' yearnings
come before You for our future good.

עלינו

All rise

*Let us adore
the ever-living God,
and render praise
unto Him
who spread out the heavens
and established the earth,
whose glory
is revealed in the heavens above,
and whose greatness
is manifest throughout the world.
He is our God; there is none else.*

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיוֹסֵד אֶרֶץ,
וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וְשׁוֹכֵנֵת עֲזוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים.
הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין עוֹד.

וְאִנְחָנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים
לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

*We therefore bow in awe and thanksgiving before the One who is
Sovereign over all, the Holy One, blessed be He.*

All are seated

*May the time not be distant, O God, when Your name shall be
worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and
error be no more. Fervently we pray that the day may come
when all shall turn to You in love, when corruption and evil
shall give way to integrity and goodness, when superstition
shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye,
when all who dwell on earth shall know that You alone are
God. O may all, created in Your image, become one in spirit
and one in friendship, for ever united in Your service. Then
shall Your kingdom be established on earth, and the word of
Your prophet fulfilled: "The Lord will reign for ever and ever."*

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִי יי אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

On that day the Lord shall be One and His name shall be One.

Grant us a generous spirit, humility and modesty, a good portion in life, and good companions. Our God and God of our ancestors, may Your name not be profaned through us. May we not become a mockery or a curse among fellow creatures. May we be assured of a future. May our hope not be snuffed out by despair. Grant us a share in Your Torah, with all who do Your will. Save us from harsh decrees. Do not turn us away unanswered. Answer our prayers.



Our thoughts turn to those who have departed this earth; our own loved ones, those whom our friends and neighbors have lost, the martyrs of our people, and those of every race and nation whose lives have been a blessing to humanity. As we remember them, let us meditate on the meaning of love and loss, life and death.



At the rising of the sun and at its going down
We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
We remember them

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them

At the beginning of the year and at its end
We remember them

As long as we live, they too will live;
For they are now a part of us
As we remember them

When we are weary and in need of strength
We remember them

When we are lost and sick at heart
We remember them

When we have joy we crave to share
We remember them

When we have decisions that are difficult to make
We remember them

When we have achievements that are based on theirs
We remember them

As long as we live, they too will live;
For they are now a part of us
As we remember them



יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,

Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba be-al-ma di-ve-ra chi-re-u-tei,

וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְכָל־בֵּית

ve-yam-lich mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei
de-chol beit

יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֻלָּא וּבְזִמָּן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-ma-ya.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר

Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach, ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei, ve-yit-ha-dar

וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלֵּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעָלָא מִן־כָּל־

ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu, le-ei-la min kol

בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְּאֲמִירָן בְּעֻלְמָא,

bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta, da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma,

וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן־שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל,

Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-ma-ya ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,

וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־

O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu ve-al kol

יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yis-ra-eil, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

Let the glory of God be extolled, let His great name be hallowed, in
the world whose creation He willed. May His kingdom soon prevail,

in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let His great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Let the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, be glorified, exalted, and honored, though He is beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter, and let us say: Amen.

For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true, and let us say: Amen.

May He who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world, and let us say: Amen.

♦ ♦

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort to all who are bereaved. Amen.

ESA EINAI

E-sa ei-nai el he-ha-rim,

mei-a-yin ya-vo ez-ri.

Ez-ri mei-im A-do-nai,

o-seh sha-ma-yim va-a-rets.

אשא עיני

אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל-הַהָרִים,

מֵאֵין יָבוֹא עֲזָרִי.

עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יי,

עוֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.

I lift up my eyes, unto the mountains,
From whence does my help come?
My help will come from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth.

BENEDICTION

May you live to see your world fulfilled
May your destiny be for worlds still to come
May you trust in generations past and yet to be

May your eyes shine with the light of holy words
And your face reflect the brightness of the heavens
May your lips ever speak wisdom
Your fulfillment be in justice
Even as you ever yearn to listen to the words of
The Holy Ancient One of old

May your heart be filled with intuition
And your words be filled with insight
May sons of praise be upon your tongue
Your vision straight before you
Even as you ever yearn to listen to the words of
The Holy Ancient One of old.

SOURCES¹

cover- Gateways Beit T'Shuvah, High Holy Days Services *Mahzor*

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- p. 2- "And God said. . ." *Genesis* 1:26; 1:27; 1:28; 1:31
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- p. 4- "Source of Mercy. . ." adapted from *Ana Be'koach* by Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi in *Hashir Ve'hashevach*
- p. 6- "Blessed art Thou. . ." Marcia H.; in Kerry Olitzky, Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery, 93.
- p. 7- "With a great love. . ." adapted from the traditional *siddur* by Rabbi Michael A. Signer; in Kerry Olitzky, Renewed Each Day, vol. I, xiii.
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- p. 12- "Eternal God, in whose service. . ." Author unknown
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- p. 24- "Know that each and every shepherd. . ." Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav
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- p. 26- "In desperation, I call out to You. . ." Esther L. in "The Chabad Times", Rochester, New York, Adar 5757, 15.
- p. 27- "O Lord, our God. . ." Rabbi Chaim Stern
- p. 28- "O God, who revealed Yourself. . ." Gateways Beit T'Shuvah: High Holy Days Services *mahzor*.
- p. 30- "O God, You have called us to peace. . ." adapted by Rabbi Chaim Stern from Rabbi John D. Rayner.
- p. 31- "The Serenity Prayer."

- p. 32- Meditation #1- From the prayerbook of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*.
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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the Research

A clear picture of the prevalence of alcoholism and chemical dependency in the Jewish community still has not emerged. Some researchers conclude that the rate of alcoholism is similar to that experienced in other communities.¹ Others argue that it remains significantly lower than among the rest of society, and that the percentage has not risen significantly in recent years.² Thus, only outside analysis and interpretation can determine the accuracy of the research.

Bainwol and Gressard reviewed nine studies related to alcoholism in the Jewish community, conducted between 1970 and 1983.³ They found that only four⁴ of these studies used sound methods of investigation, and thus produced results that could be considered reliable. These four studies indicated that the rate of alcoholism continued to be lower in the Jewish community than among the rest

¹See Glatt (1975), Blume and Dropkin (1980), and Bissell and Blume (1978).

²See Wechsler et al. (1970), Flanzer (1977), Boscarino (1980), and Glassner and Berg (1980). Discussion to follow.

³Suzanne Bainwol and Charles F. Gressard, "The Incidence of Jewish Alcoholism: A Review of the Literature," Journal of Drug Education, 15(3) (1985): 221.

⁴H. Wechsler et al., "Religious-Ethnic Differences in Alcohol Consumption, Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 27 (1970): 391-99; J. P. Flanzer, "Alcohol Use Among Jewish Adolescents: A 1977 Sample," in Currents in Alcoholism (vol. 6), M. Galanter, ed. (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1979), 257-68; J. Boscarino, "Isolating the Effects of Ethnicity on Drinking Behavior: A Multiple Classification Analysis of Barroom Attendance," Addictive Behaviors 5 (1980): 307-12; and B. Glassner and B. Berg, "How Jews Avoid Alcohol Problems, American Sociological Review, 45 (1980) 647-64.

of the population. Since the findings of the three studies conducted between 1970 and 1983 that showed an increasing rate of alcoholism in the Jewish community employed flawed research designs, Bainwol and Gressard discounted them.

Whether or not Bainwol and Gressard's analysis is accurate is subject to debate. Their criticism of five of the studies was based on errors in sampling. They concluded that the four studies that utilized more scientifically sound sampling methods must have contained more accurate information, and these studies pointed to a lower rate of alcoholism among Jews. One of the studies that seemed to be reliable, Wechsler et al. (1970), investigated subjects who were admitted to a hospital emergency room after an automobile accident. In this study, they found that the percentage of Jewish patients with signs of alcohol involvement was consistently lower than the proportion among other religious/ethnic categories. They inferred that when alcohol is involved in injuries, it suggests excessive consumption. Therefore, they concluded that drinking problems must be less prevalent among Jews.

Although the sampling method may have proven to be more scientifically sound, the foundation upon which the conclusions were drawn was not. First of all, if we assume that most Orthodox Jews do not drive on *Shabbat*, a day which historically has had a high number of traffic accidents, this would significantly skew the results. Further, it is possible that Jews may be less likely to drink and then drive, which also would significantly impact the findings. Fewer alcohol related accidents cannot be seen as evidence to conclude a lower rate of alcoholism or alcohol abuse because of potentially confounding variables unique to a culture.

Bainwol and Gressard also cited the Flanzer study (1977) as having a methodologically sound sampling technique, which led them to ascribe credibility to their results. Flanzer found that only three percent of Jewish teenagers reported

having alcohol problems, which was significantly lower than the fifteen percent of all high school students who reported a problem.

Again, this study may include a representative sample, but there appears to be another flaw in the methodology--the conclusions drawn in this research relied upon self-reported information. Self-reporting as a method for obtaining scientific data may present abnormal variances among Jews when asking questions related to alcohol use. In this regard, Walter Duckat observed:

Jews are less likely to recognize alcoholism in themselves, since they have historically been 'immune.' They therefore tend not to seek treatment. Even after identifying a problem, embarrassment or confusion may inhibit their search for help. When they do seek treatment they may be more likely to turn to private practitioners or private institutions not required to maintain demographic utilization statistics.⁵

A more accurate assessment of Flanzer's findings, therefore, would state that significantly fewer Jewish teenagers *reported* having problems with alcohol. This may, in fact, be due to an actual lower percentage of alcoholism. It also may result either from a hesitancy to report problems because of embarrassment or feelings similar to those described by Kant (i. e., real or perceived pressure from the outside community), or from denial, which leaves the teenagers unaware of a problem, even if, in fact, that problem exists.

Self-reporting also presents another challenge when conducting research in the Jewish community. Often researchers seek to identify differences among Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and non-affiliated Jews. The group in which a subject is placed frequently is determined by self-identification.⁶ This may not be

⁵Walter Duckat, "Jews and Alcohol," The Jewish Spectator (Winter 1981): 19-22, quoted in Bainwol and Gressard, 221.

⁶E. g., Glad (1974) and Glassner and Berg (1984).

judged as the accurate assignment in many instances by those who define religious affiliation in terms of criteria beyond self-identity. Self-identity is not accepted as valid by many clergy and lay leadership when determining if one is Jewish; it cannot be the sole determinant when identifying movement affiliation.

Boscarino (1980) also was judged by Bainwol and Gressard to possess an accurate subject sample for drawing conclusions. This study determined that Jewish-Americans frequented bars less often than did Irish, English and Italian Americans. This fact cannot be used to conclude that there is a lower prevalence of alcohol-related problems in the Jewish community. The sum of the research and observations described in Chapter One pointed to a different sociological use of alcohol among Jews than for other religious and ethnic communities. Among Jews, alcohol often is used for religious ritual. Even social use is different. Doing a '*lechayim*' on *Shabbat* or another occasion may lead to abuse. Public drinking, especially in a community largely populated by non-Jews, would be culturally irregular among Jews, even for those who drink socially on a regular basis. Barroom behavior, therefore, is not an accurate method for investigating alcohol use and abuse among Jews.

The fourth study recognized as methodologically sound by Bainwol and Gressard was conducted by Glassner and Berg (1980). As in the previous three studies, design flaws unrelated to sampling are apparent. This study, like Flanzer's research, employed a survey that relied on self-reporting to gather information. The researchers apparently recognized a potential problem with this technique and therefore attempted to confirm their data through 'key informants' from within the Jewish community. These individuals, therefore, would be affected by the same factors that could taint self-reported information on alcohol abuse (e. g., internal community pressures and denial), and by concerns regarding a real or perceived threat from the surrounding community.

More recent studies indicate that both alcohol and drug abuse are prevalent among Jews. Rosen (1989) determined that twenty percent of all alcoholics and addicts in treatment facilities are Jewish. Levey asserted that "...even a conservative estimate based on population projections indicates that as many as one million Jews nationally are affected, either because they themselves are alcoholics or because a family member has a problem with alcohol."⁷

Bainwol and Gressard's study, as well as the additional criticism described above, illustrate the difficulties involved in attempting to determine the rate of addiction among Jews. Although there may be design flaws in this and other research, we still can conclude from a preponderance of the evidence and from anecdotal accounts, that a number of Jews suffer from addiction. Our understanding of the potential harm that alcoholism and chemical dependency can invoke upon an individual, family, or community makes this a cause for concern. Regardless of the 'real' number, the rabbinic proclamation: "Whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he saves an entire universe" (*B. Sanhedrin* 19b) calls us to action. The question no longer is whether or not we *need* to act, but rather, how it is best for us to react to this challenge which faces the Jewish community.

Judaism and the Twelve Steps

The Life Process Program, as discussed in Chapter 1, focuses on identifying the activities surrounding a person's addiction in order to institute a plan for behavior modification. There are many virtues in this approach to treatment for addiction. The need to develop coping skills and a change of environment for addicted individuals are well-informed and worth pursuing.

⁷Cited in Joel Dinnerstein, "Jews, God, and Alcoholism: A Guide to Understanding Alcoholism and Addiction in the Jewish Community" [unpublished article], Ohr Ki Tov--Jewish Institute on Alcoholism and Addiction, New York, n.d., 3.

The Twelve Steps model, however, appears to be a more comprehensive approach to treatment, with an already operative structure and long history of proven success. The Twelve Steps program offers the support network of a community of recovering addicts who serve as examples, showing others what can be achieved in recovery. Also, A.A. has developed a base plan in the steps themselves in order to allow for some cohesiveness in approach among members of the Fellowship. At the same time, however, recovering addicts, with the guidance of a sponsor, are encouraged to work the steps in a way that is suitable to their background and individual needs.

This model is analogous to public prayer. A *minyan*, a group composed of a minimum of ten individuals, comes together to form a community, with each person reading from the same liturgy, yet bringing their unique selves and particular spiritual needs to the worship service. The liturgy is written in the plural and recited by the community, and yet each individual is understood to be interacting in a personal relationship with God. Hence, the Twelve Step framework may prove to be familiar, and thus comfortable for some Jews, if ample affirmation from the Jewish community and appropriate published resources are developed to help a recovering addict navigate the program from a Jewish vantage point.

Participating in Twelve Steps programs such as A.A. has been shown to have a profound effect on recovering Jews. The impact can even go beyond dealing with the addiction, and result in an improved relationship for the alcoholic with Judaism as well. In her research, Spiegel found that all of those in her sample who found sobriety through the A.A. program shared a sense of enhanced spirituality. They all spoke of their renewed commitment to Judaism and to God

with excitement and fervor. The spiritual aspect seemed to be of paramount importance.⁸

Concerning their reaction to A.A., all of her subjects characterized their overall experiences as positive, but they varied as to whether their initial reactions also were positive, or if these feelings evolved over time. Fourteen subjects stated that their level of involvement or identification as Jews had changed during the time of their involvement with A.A. Of those, ten asserted they had become more involved or more strongly identified as Jews, although four said they had become less involved. Four of the ten who cited increased involvement described this change in the context of participation in JACS groups.⁹ Of the four who described less involvement, two of these persons stated that, because of time conflicts and constraints, they had to choose between A.A. and religious involvement.¹⁰ This research indicates at least two potential positive results from a Jewish addict's participation in the Twelve Steps program: (1) recovery from addiction, and (2) the development of a stronger religious identity and spiritual fulfillment grounded in Judaism.

Regardless of these and other proven benefits of participation, Jews still show resistance to accepting Twelve Steps as a viable treatment program because often it is viewed as inconsistent with Jewish tradition and theology. Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D., who specializes in working with addicts, addresses the resistance expressed by some in accepting the Twelve Steps program as

⁸Marcia Cohn Spiegel, "The Heritage of Noah: Alcoholism in the Jewish Community Today" (master of arts thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, California School, 1979), 102.

⁹JACS will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁰Lisa Master, "Jewish Experiences of Alcoholics Anonymous," Smith College Studies in Social Work 59(2), 1988: 190-92.

compatible with Judaism. His answers to commonly expressed concerns can be summarized as follows:

1. A majority of meetings are held in churches because few Jewish facilities have welcomed A.A. [and other Twelve Steps groups]. If more rabbis and community leaders will overcome their denial and resistance, more A.A. meetings will be held in synagogues.
2. Although many A.A. meetings close with the Lord's prayer, which is not part of the Jewish liturgy, there is nothing in A.A. that precludes substituting a Jewish prayer (perhaps the 23rd Psalm?).
3. The lack of Jewish literature on spirituality is not due to theological incompatibility, but to a default by Jewish theologians who have avoided the topic.¹¹

Twerski and others argue that the Twelve Steps program is fully compatible with Jewish tradition and theology. They are working to help Jews understand the need and value of the Twelve Steps program for Jewish recovering addicts and their significant others.

The Spiritual Treatment

The Twelve Steps program talks about a 'spiritual treatment' for addiction. In As Bill Sees It, Bill Wilson, A.A.'s co-founder, wrote: "We are only operating a spiritual kindergarten in which people are enabled to get over drinking and find the grace to go on living to better effect. Each man's theology is his own quest; his own affair."¹² It then becomes the Jewish addicts' responsibility to pursue their

¹¹Abraham Twerski, "Judaism and the Twelve Steps," Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 123-24.

¹²[Wilson], As Bill Sees It (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1967), cited by Susan Berman, "The Twelve Steps and Jewish Tradition" (Center City, MN: Hazelden Educational Materials, Hazelden Foundation, 1988), 3.

own spiritual journey, informed by Jewish sources, in order to integrate the Twelve Steps program with their religious tradition.

Although 'spirituality' can be defined in a variety of ways, terminology centered around this word often makes many Jews uncomfortable. There is a popular perception that spirituality is associated with Christianity and/or New Age culture, and therefore is incompatible with Judaism. This perception may result from Judaism's emphasis on religion as opposed to Christianity's focus on faith, as discussed in Chapter Two. Spirituality may be related more closely to faith than to religious practice, but as was mentioned earlier, faith remains an essential aspect of Judaism. Spirituality has its place in Jewish tradition.

Jewish scholars attempt to articulate a Jewish approach to spirituality and faith. Neil Gillman, a modern Jewish philosopher and teacher, defines spirituality as "that which, according to the believer, God demands above all."¹³ "The spiritual Jew," says Gillman, "is the ideal embodiment of Judaism."¹⁴ Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University, explains, "Faith entails more than belief in the existence of God; it also encompasses trust in, reliance upon."¹⁵ Both Gillman and Lamm describe faith in God and behavior that is consistent with God's will as central to Judaism. Thus, the Twelve Steps program's emphasis on a Higher Power, if approached in a manner that is consistent with Judaism, may be seen to enhance rather than diminish or conflict with one's Judaism. This is

¹³Neil Gillman, "Judaism and the Search for Spirituality," Conservative Judaism, 38(2) (1986): 6.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Quoted in Nochem Gringas, "Judaism, Addiction and Faith: The Spiritual Odyssey of Recovery," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 292.

essentially the case, since the program focuses on the divine will and on having the faith and trust in God to 'turn it over' as one pursues recovery.

Rabbi Twerski takes a different approach to the issue of spirituality. He says that "all the unique features of a human being *in their totality* are what constitute the *spirit* of a man. When man exercises these unique features, he is being *spiritual*. Thus, *spirituality* is simply the implementation of those distinctive features that separate man from animal."¹⁶ He gives the example of freedom of choice as one unique feature of humankind which differentiates us from animals. Whereas animals are slaves to their biological drives (e. g., if hungry, they must look for food; if in heat, they must seek to mate), humans are able to deny impulses and act according to higher principles because they are perceived as right and wrong. Exercising one's freedom of choice, according to Twerski, is an act which is grounded in spirituality.

Development of character, ongoing personal growth and the ability to reflect about a purpose for existence, also are identified by Twerski as components of the spirit. He describes spirituality as a 'process,' a growth experience, rather than as a 'thing' which can be achieved all at once. Jews should seek the ideals of being engaged in the process of spirituality, thereby exercising free choice in an ethical way; developing one's character; nurturing personal growth; and reflecting on purpose of life. Twelve Steps is a program that provides a structured way to pursue these ideals. For the addict, it can foster recovery; for the non-addict, the Twelve Steps program can provide a path to a more meaningful spiritual existence.

¹⁶Abraham J. Twerski, I'd Like to Call for Help But I Don't Know the Number: The Search for Spirituality in Everyday Life (New York: Pharos Books: A Scripps Howard Company, 1991), 9.

The Twelve Steps Program: Potential Benefits for the Jewish Non-addict

Non-addicts also are able to benefit from working the program outlined in Twelve Steps. Many non-addicts have reported that, as a result of the practice of the Twelve Steps, they have been able to meet other difficulties of life. They see the Steps as a way to a happier life and a more peaceful way of living.¹⁷

Twelve Steps can be used as an effective program for faith development. Faith in a deistic God is not essential to Twelve Steps, but can be inferred as the ideal. In spite of the theological accommodations taught to those who profess to be atheists or agnostics (e. g., making A.A. one's Higher Power), anecdotal evidence indicates that most individuals who enter the program in disbelief eventually develop or rekindle a deep faith in the divine. In the words of A.A. members themselves:

During this process of learning more about humility, the most profound result of all was the change in our attitude toward God. And this was true whether we had been believers or unbelievers. We began to get over the idea that the Higher Power was a sort of bush-league pinch hitter, to be called upon only in an emergency.¹⁸

Spiegel's research indicated that Jews have a similar response when it comes to faith development.¹⁹

The reason for the Twelve Steps program's success in moving agnostics and atheists toward faith in a divine God may be grounded in the wording of the steps themselves. Step One does not ask the addict to confront any issue of faith; all that is required is admitting powerlessness. Step Two raises issues of faith in two

¹⁷Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1981), 15-16.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁹As described above.

non-threatening ways: (1) the word 'God' is not used; rather, 'Power' is in its place; and, (2) the addict is asked to consider the possibility that this Power *could* restore sanity. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the program raises hope and possibility; it does not require internalizing the principle as a matter of faith.

Step Three marks two significant changes in the program concerning faith. For the first time, belief that there is 'something' beyond the self that one can reach out to, is deemed necessary. Also, the word 'God' is introduced for the first time in the Steps, although it is tempered by the phrase "as we understood Him."

Individuals working the program encounter faith in a way that allows room for adapting the principles of the Twelve Steps program to their own theological perspective. Great care is exercised in helping agnostics and atheists work this step in accordance with their own perspective. And yet, the word 'God' now becomes part of the vocabulary of the faithful member of a Twelve Steps group.

Step Four does not address an issue of faith. After being confronted with a need for faith for the first time in Step Three, there is temporary respite from theological wrestling. When Step Five is encountered later on, the word 'God' is no longer followed by the phrase "as we understood Him." It is assumed that either by this time faith in a divine God has been achieved, or the individual has been able to create a schema for working around issues related to faith. The phrase "as we understood Him" is used only one more time, in Step Eleven, with the assumption that the beliefs of self-declared agnostics and atheists remain recognized and valid. It also serves to remind those who believe in God and God's power that, should they be confronted by challenges to their faith and suffer moments of doubt in the future, they do not have to abandon the Steps. Rather, they need only fall back on the notion that we all understand God in different ways; all that is required is an adaptation of their definition of 'God' to fit their new reality.

The wisdom of this approach to faith development lies in removing the obstacle posed by the word 'God' that troubles many and thereby inhibits their beliefs. This term often brings with it a certain amount of 'theological baggage' for those who have been taught, or believe, that there is only one definition of God; holding that anyone who cannot subscribe to this definition is a non-believer. By removing the word 'God' and reintroducing it later in the Steps, those who work the program are empowered to explore their own theological views, integrating them into their world-view. By focusing on what they do believe, rather than on those ideas they cannot accept, many people find that they are able to identify with God in a new light. Using an equivocal name for the divine is consistent with the *Torah*, and therefore with Jewish tradition. When first asked, God directed Moses to tell the people that *Eh'ye asher Eh'ye* sent him (Exodus 3:14). In addition, the Rabbis of the post-Temple period often referred to God as *ha-Makom* ("The Place") and as *ha-Rachaman* ("the Merciful One").

By utilizing the principles related to faith development that are contained in the Twelve Steps, we can help non-addicts and addicts alike who are seeking faith in God and enhanced spirituality. Some understand 'Higher Power' as the Laws of Nature; others can affirm a conscience that tells them what is 'right' and 'wrong.' If we can help those who are struggling to achieve a belief in God to first affirm that there is a Higher Power greater than oneself, then we can start them on a journey which may lead to faith in a deistic God.

Integrating the Twelve Steps Program Into Torah Study

Just as the Twelve Steps program deals with addiction, so did the Rabbis understand a life of *Torah* as resistance against *Yetser ha-Ra*. Thus, if the Evil Inclination leads us to negative obsessions such as addictions, then a life of *Torah* (i. e., Jewish spirituality, observance, and learning) can be considered an

appropriate treatment. This teaching is pointed out in the following Midrashic passage:

Expounding on God not accepting Cain's offering: R. Hanina said: If your Temptor comes to incite you to levity, cast him down with the words of the Torah, as it is written, "The [evil] imagination, when near to thee, thou shalt combat"-- *tizzor* (Isaiah 26:3). And if you do so, I attribute merit to you as though you had created peace, [as the verse continues], "Thou createst (*tizzor*) peace (ib.)"²⁰: not *tinzor* (thou shalt keep) is written but '*tizzor*' (thou shalt create). And should you argue that he is not in your power, then "Surely it is safe in thee" (ib.) and I have already written for you in the Torah, AND UNTO THEE IS ITS DESIRE, BUT THOU MAYEST RULE OVER IT. R. Simon said: If your Temptor comes to incite you to levity, gladden it with the words of the Torah, for it says, "The evil imagination is gladdened (*samuk*)."²⁰ And if you do so, I attribute merit to you as though you had created two worlds, for *shalom* (peace) is written here not once, but twice.

[*Genesis Rabbah* 22:6]

Taking into consideration this *Midrash* and the Rabbis' understanding of *Torah* study as a treatment for afflictions caused by the *Yetser ha-Ra*, it can be deemed appropriate to integrate the Twelve Steps program into the study of *Torah*, as a remedy for addiction and other life issues that can be approached with the help of the Higher Power: God. The Twelve Steps program may help us to use the *Torah* as a metaphor for one's inner struggle to gain faith, thereby helping people to find additional meaning in its teachings.

Rabbi Michael A. Signer points out that *Torah* study involves more than merely reading; it is a process that allows us to see ourselves through the lens of our tradition. We are able to pursue our search for God as we read how the Jewish community has conducted its search throughout the generations. The following

²⁰In the first passage *tizzor* is derived from *zarar*, to fight against; here it is derived from *yazar*, meaning to form or to create.

excerpts from his foreword to Renewed Each Day²¹ creates a schema by which the *Torah* can be studied and shown as relevant to the lives of modern Jews, addicts and non-addicts alike:

The first book of Torah is called *Bereishit*, or "beginnings" in Hebrew. . . In each set of narratives, they discover meaning in their lives by acknowledging God. Reciprocally, God nurtures and cares for them. . . None of the characters in *Bereishit* are perfect. (p. xv)

The second book of Torah is called *Shemot*, or "Names." Once we move from the setting of limits and boundaries in a nurturing relationship, we can call things by their proper name . . . Before he can lead others, Moses experiences humiliation, pain, and alienation. Yet, from the presence of God, Moses draws sufficient strength to accomplish more than he ever thought he could. (p. xv)

The third book of Torah is *Vayikra*, "and God called." It describes the difficult process by which the Israelites learned how they could maintain their contact with God on a daily basis. . . How *does* God call us? . . . The answer. . . would seem to be *in the details*. . . *Vayikra* provides us with models for what constitutes misdeeds or sins, how human beings can reconcile their grievances with one another and with God. (p. xvi)

In the fourth book of Torah, *Bamidbar*, "in the Desert," we observe the period of wandering and the struggle to maintain holiness. It is clear that this is a story of progress and not perfection. Moses and the community frequently disagree. When the chance to reach the Promised Land is put forward, many want to shrink back from the challenge. . . Reading *Bamidbar* from the perspective of recovery can teach us that our day-by-day journey, "slips" and all, leads to blessing. (p. xvi)

The fifth book of Torah, *Devarim*, or "words," provides some real surprises. From the end of *Bamidbar*, we might have assumed that the journey into the Promised Land was only a few battles away. Instead, we learn that the Promised Land is never conquered within the literary boundaries of Torah. Instead of ultimate achievement, we have a majestic series of speeches that review the voyage of God and the Israelites. The

²¹Kerry Olitzky and Aaron Z., Renewed Each Day: Daily Twelve Step Recovery Meditations Based on the Bible, vol. I (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992), xiv-xvii.

theme of a nurturing covenant in which both human beings and God set limits and obey them, is central to *Devarim*. Faithfulness is the key to the "blessings" and "curses" which are offered to the Israelites. What they take with them into the Promised Land are the "words" by which they live. Above all, they are urged to "choose life in order that you might live." If they ever feel inadequate to the obligations of the covenant, they are reminded, "The commandments which I give you is not in the heavens that you should ask who will go into the heavens and bring it to us. . . but it is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart that you might do it." (p. xvi-xvii)

This framework, as described by Signer, helps people to relate better to the *Torah* and also demonstrates how it can be used for faith development. The spiritual path traveled by Moses and the Israelites and the issues with which they wrestled, speak to us today. Through *Torah* study, we may be able to relate to some of the answers the Israelites found many generations ago.

The Twelve Steps Program and the Psalms

The concepts of human powerlessness in the face of overwhelming circumstances and challenges, and the notion that God's power may be invoked on one's behalf, are central themes in *The Book of Psalms*, particularly those identified as Psalms of Lament and Psalms of Trust. Psalms, therefore, provide not only validation, but a vehicle for expressing the themes of human powerlessness and God's power in a Jewish voice. Recovering Jewish addicts will identify with many of the feelings and images presented in the psalms, and can use them to further their spiritual journeys. The expressions of pain and anguish appear overwhelming in many places; however, the reader is comforted whenever the psalmist is able to transcend his troubles, in spite of apparently hopeless circumstances. Even at a time when it appears that God is not reacting to his needs, he reaches out. Thus, the psalmist is able to invest confidence in the divine presence; his trust has been recognized and acknowledged.

Recovering Jewish addicts may find that they can acquire the same comfort and peace expressed by the psalmist. By using psalms to enhance their journey, they are guided toward the spiritual healing promoted by the Twelve Steps program. With God's help, the recovering addict may one day be able to share in the psalmist's words:

I thank you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart.
I honor Your name forever.
For You showed great kindness to me,
by rescuing me from Sheol's lowest depths.

[*Psalms* 86:12-13]

Psalms provide inspiration and comfort to non-addicts as well. In The Twelve Steps in Ministry: A Guide for Program Development, Don Benton offers sample lesson plans for using select psalms as a Bible study. He also identifies verses from the Psalms that relate to each of the Twelve Steps.²² Although this program was designed for Christian Bible study, it can be adapted easily for a Jewish adult education or confirmation class. This is another way the Twelve Steps program can be used to enhance faith development.

The same verses identified by Benton for Bible study can be used by those working the program for directed meditation and study. This will help the process of grounding the Twelve Steps program within Jewish text and tradition. For those adept at Hebrew, the psalms as biblical poetry may bring particular inspiration and comfort.

²²See Appendix E for list of psalms and verses.

The Twelve Steps Program and Prayer

Prayer, both fixed and extemporaneous, affords us an opportunity to give voice to our needs, hopes, and dreams. It is a mode of communicating with God by expressing faith and devotion. For those who use the traditional liturgy for prayer, one can find texts throughout the *siddur* and *mahzor* which express the ideas and feelings associated with individual powerlessness and God's power. It was demonstrated how *Selichot* and *Tahanun* are two parts of the liturgy that particularly focus on these concepts.

On a rational and intellectual level many Jews, particularly modern, liberal Jews, have difficulty relating to the idea that God may have a direct, observable effect on an individual or the community (i. e., God "doing" something).²³ And yet, the call for opportunities to enhance spirituality may mean that there are many Jews who have an emotional need to express their hopes and prayers that God *will* do many of the things that they cannot accept rationally. Many feel the need to pray for God to grant health, life, and happiness, in spite of any rational doubt they may have about God's existence or ability to address these prayers. There is an emotional need to express the hope, if not the belief, that something greater than ourselves is driving the course of life in an active way, that insures the belief that justice will prevail.

In many places of the liturgy, we include passages that are in conflict with our rational, liberal theology (e. g. "*Vezot ha-Torah asher sam Moshe.....*") We are able to either ignore the intellectual conflict or apply a metaphorical understanding in order to meet our need to include some of this liturgy in our worship services. The same accommodation would be appropriate when it comes to expressing our petitions for God's presence and action in our lives. Even those

²³See comments by Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman in Chapter Two.

who question God's power may be comforted by words which implore God's action on our behalf. This desire may be driving the more regular inclusion of prayers for health, such as *Mi Sheberach*, and may be a factor leading to the popularity of healing services in many Reform congregations today.

It is possible that the emotional ties which many older Reform Jews still have to the Union Prayer Book may stem, in part, from the theology used therein.²⁴ The Gates of Prayer reflects the time of its writing, when many liberal Jews rebelled against the notion of an active, personal God. The number of personal pleas to invoke God's power to act on one's behalf are much fewer, and the petitions that are contained are more universalistic. It may be that Jews who used the Union Prayer Book to give voice to the need for God to act in their lives miss this theme in the current *siddur*.

As the Reform movement designs its liturgy for the first part of the next century, it would be well-informed to look more closely at some of the traditional liturgy, such as *Tahanun* and *Selichot*. Also, the Union Prayer Book may offer some liturgical elements and selections worth considering for a return to today's Reform worship service.

Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons,
and Significant Others (JACS)

In 1979, a group known as JACS (Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons, and Significant Others) was formed under the auspices of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the New York Board of Rabbis. Many communities have established local JACS affiliates to stimulate community

²⁴See Chapter 4 for a description of the theology expressed in the Union Prayer Book.

awareness, provide information and resources, and create a supportive and understanding network for Jewish recoverers and their families. JACS is based in New York, and a majority of the organization's activities take place throughout New York City. In addition, JACS affiliated groups exist in Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Westport, CT; Boca Raton, FL; Miami Beach, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Westboro, MA; Baltimore, MD; Silver Spring, MD; St. Louis Park, MN; Kansas City, MO; Nashua, NH; Cherry Hill, NJ; Livingston, NJ; Morganville, NJ; Brooklyn, NY; Manhattan, NY; Rosedale, NY; Syracuse, NY; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Philadelphia, PA; and Austin, TX.²⁵

To serve the unmet needs of recovering families, combat the denial and resistance of a fearful Jewish community, and inform the community-at-large, JACS established a three-fold purpose and program:²⁶

1. *Conduct Retreat and Support programs* which would enable recovering Jews and their families to connect with each other, reconnect with Jewish tradition, and explore resources within Judaism to enhance their recovery.
2. *Effect Community Outreach* which would inform and sensitize Jewish spiritual and lay leaders, communal workers, mental health professionals,

²⁵Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons, and Significant Others, "The JACS Newsletter," New York, February 1998.

²⁶Renah Rabinowitz, "Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency in the Jewish Community: Sh. . . . Sh. . . . Sh," *Addictions in the Jewish Community*, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 136.

and the community-at-large about the disease of alcoholism and chemical dependency.

3. *Serve as a Resource Center* which would act as an information exchange and research center on the effects of alcoholism and drug dependency on Jewish family life.

In the early and mid-1980s, anonymous questionnaires were distributed at JACS retreats to learn more about those who attended. Participants came from Orthodox (19%), Conservative (22%), and Reform (36%) family backgrounds, with 23% from homes only minimally related to Judaism or not at all.²⁷ Approximately half of the respondents were from families where there was regular synagogue attendance.²⁸

The emphasis in JACS, based on the Twelve Step model, is on informality and personal sharing. Faithful members of JACS explore the relationship between Twelve Step spiritual concepts and those found in Jewish tradition. Participants include rabbis and others who have specific knowledge in this area.

In addition to these activities, JACS also:

1. Operates community outreach programs which inform and sensitize clergy, professionals, lay leaders, congregants, teachers, parents and students about the disease of chemical dependency and its effect on individuals, the family and the community.
2. Conducts a Speakers Bureau and participates in both local and nationwide forums.

²⁷ Anecdotal evidence indicates that the percentage of Orthodox Jews has risen significantly in recent years.

²⁸ Stephen Jay Levy and Lester Futernick, "Drinking and Drugging Among Jews," in Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 189.

3. Produces events and sponsors activities that allow Jewish alcoholics, addicts, and loved ones to network with others and enhance their recovery. These include:

- a. Two weekend retreats a year.
- b. A day-long Spiritual Intreat.
- c. Holiday celebrations, including High Holiday workshops and recovery seders.
- d. Women's and men's activities, including day-long retreats.
- e. Lectures and educational opportunities dealing with recovery, relationship and rabbinical issues.

4. Publishes the "JACS Journal," newsletters and other printed matter that draw upon the experience and expertise of those in the Jewish and professional communities for discoursing on the effects of chemical dependency, the possibilities for recovery and change, and the resources available for recovering addicts.

5. Acts as a catalyst to help Jewish agencies recognize the problem of alcohol and drug abuse in their own communities and work toward solutions.²⁹

In September, 1985, a number of interested JACS associates met in Philadelphia and developed a unified statement of purpose. The representatives accepted a Mission Statement developed by the JACS Foundation which reflected on the challenges they expected to face in the coming years.³⁰

²⁹JACS Home page, <<http://www.jacsweb.org>>, 1998.

³⁰See Appendix F for text of Mission Statement.

Final Comments

This study has presented information which leads us to believe that the rate of addiction among Jews is at least significant enough to cause concern. The Twelve Steps program presents one way of addressing the issue. Much can be done to facilitate healing for those who suffer from a personal addiction or the addiction of a loved one, even without committing vast financial resources. Efforts to overcome individual and communal denial are essential if advances are to be made.

One of the most frequent objections to the Twelve Steps program that is raised by rabbis and others, concerns a misperception that the program suggests that addicts are not responsible for dealing with their addiction. Although addiction is couched in terms of an illness which leads to an irresistible compulsion, addicts are never relieved of the responsibility for managing their recovery. Rabbi Twerski points out that Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all," and Step Nine: "Made direct amends to such people whenever possible except when to do so would injure them or others," clearly hold individuals responsible for their behavior.³¹ Misinformation and denial continue to be major obstacles to addressing addiction in the Jewish community. Additional publications and seminars can help address this problem.

Easier access to Jewish textual resources and facilities also are essential if we are to sufficiently meet the needs of those who suffer from alcoholism and other addictions. Making space available in Jewish agency sites for Twelve Step meetings would certainly help raise consciousness and affirm the Twelve Steps program as consistent with Jewish theology and tradition. Jewish addicts will be

³¹Twerski, I'd Like to Call for Help But I Don't Know the Number: The Search for Spirituality in Everyday Life, 65.

more willing to seek help if safe havens are available. JACS is a leading advocate for Jewish recovering addicts, and help is needed to support their efforts.

On the whole, the Jewish community has made some progress in recent years toward breaking down the walls of silence and isolation. At least it has recognized addiction as a problem that a Jew needs to face. With God's help, we will continue to make advances in this area in the years to come.

APPENDIX A

The Life Process Model and Disease Model are discussed in The Truth About Addiction and Recovery by Peele, Brodsky, and Arnold. The following chart¹ will help summarize the two models of addiction:

Disease Model

1. Addiction is inbred and biological.
2. The solution is medical treatment and membership in spiritual groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous
3. Addiction is all-or-nothing; you are or you aren't an addict
4. Addiction is permanent and you can relapse at any moment
5. Addicts are "in denial" and must be forced to acknowledge they have a disease
6. The recovering addict/alcoholic is the expert on addiction
7. Addiction is a "primary" disease
8. Your main associates must be other recovering addicts
9. You must accept the disease philosophy to recover
10. Surrendering to a higher power is the key to recovery

Life Process Program

1. Addiction is a way of coping with yourself and your world
2. The solution requires self awareness, new coping skills, and changing your environment
3. Addiction is a continuum; your behavior is more or less addicted
4. Addiction can be outgrown
5. You should identify problems and solutions in ways that work for you
6. Those without an addiction problem are the best models
7. Addiction stems from other life problems you have
8. You should associate with a normal range of people
9. Getting better is not a matter of believing a dogma
10. You should develop your own power to get better

¹Stanton Peele, Archie Brodsky, and Mary Arnold, The Truth about Addiction and Recovery, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 22.

APPENDIX B

Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D. argues that the 12-steps are, in fact, inherently compatible with Jewish theology. He reconciles the steps with Judaism with the following thoughts:¹

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable.

R. Twerski: Clearly, this first step has no religious connotation.

Step 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

R. Twerski: The Talmud states, "A person's temptation becomes more intense each day, and were it not that God helps him, it would be impossible for him to resist (*Sukkot* 52a)." . . . The Talmud tells us that even though giving in to destructive impulses may be recognized to be foolish and detrimental, no one would be able to resist these urges without the help of God. . . Step number two is thus a statement of fundamental Jewish belief.

Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him.

R. Twerski: Turning one's life and will over to the care of God does not mean that one can relinquish responsibility. Although the quoted principle of the Talmud indicates that unaided man is helpless, it clearly does not mean that a person should make no effort, and place total responsibility on God. The Talmud states that God's *assistance* to man is indispensable. "Assistance" implies that one is taking some action, but needs help. A person must do everything which is within his power to make his life constructive and productive. Divine help, if sought, will be forthcoming only when one has done his share of the work.

¹Abraham Twerski, "Spirituality, Prayer, The Twelve Steps, and Judaism," *JACS Journal* 3(1) (1986): 6-9.

Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

R. Twerski: All the work of Jewish moralists and ethicists are replete with the need for *cheshbon hanefesh*, a detailed personal accounting which is to be taken daily and a more general overview of the direction, accomplishment, and shortcomings of one's life taken periodically, with special emphasis on introspection in the period beginning with Rosh Hashanah and concluding on Yom Kippur. Anyone familiar with the Siddur knows that confession before God is not restricted to Yom Kippur. A detailed confession is required twice daily.

Step 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7. Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

R. Twerski: In Jewishness, man is defined not as *homo sapiens*, a hominoid with intelligence, but as *homo spiritus*, a hominoid with a divine spirit, as it is stated in Genesis: "And God blew into his nostrils a spirit of life, and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). Man's distinction from lower forms of life lies in his spirit, not in his intellect.

Man is thus essentially a biologic animal, with all of the lusts, cravings, impulses, and drives that are natural to all animals. In contrast, however, man has a spirit which enables him to master these innate urges. But all that unaided man can do is master these forces; he cannot eradicate them any more than he can change the color of his eyes.

While man alone cannot extirpate undesirable internal drives, God can, if His help is sought. A prerequisite for divine intervention, however, is that man must first do all that is within his own power to subdue undesirable traits.

Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

R. Twerski: The *Shulchan Aruch*, or Code of Jewish Law states that all atonement in the world is ineffective if a person has harmed another, unless forgiveness from the victim of one's wrongdoings has been sought. If he [the victim] remains obstinate in refusing forgiveness, and the offender has sincerely regretted his behavior, Divine forgiveness is assured. If the victim has died, the *Shulchan Aruch* requires that one take a *minyan* and visit the victim's burial place and publicly ask forgiveness.

Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

R. Twerski: Taking a personal inventory on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is not sufficient. This must be an ongoing process. The need for recognizing a wrong and promptly admitting it is stressed by the Talmud. The longer one delays in admitting a sin, the more apt he is to explain away and justify his behavior, until it may even begin to appear as the right thing to do.

Step 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

R. Twerski: One of the first prayers upon rising is for Divine guidance and strength to do God's will. In *Ethics of the Fathers*, the Talmud states, "Make His will your will, and negate your will before His (*Pirke Avot* 2:4)."

Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

R. Twerski: Everywhere in Jewish ethics, there is great emphasis on mutual responsibility for one another's actions.

APPENDIX C

RABBINIC TEXTS DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER THREE¹

Avot 3:15: Everything is foreseen² but the right [of choice] is granted, and the world is judged with goodness, and everything is in accordance with the preponderance of [man's] deed[s].

B. Shabbat 104a: *Kuf* [stands for] *Kadosh* [holy]; *Resh* [for] *Rasha'* [wicked]; why is the face of the *Kuf* averted from the *Resh*? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: I cannot look at the wicked. and why is the crown of the *Kuf*³ turned toward the *Resh*? The Holy One, blessed be He, saith: If he repents, I will bind a crown on him like Mine. And why is the foot of the *Kuf* suspended?⁴ [To show] that if he repents, he can enter and be brought in [to God's favour] through this [opening]. This supports Resh Lakish, for Resh Lakish said: What is meant by, *Surely he scorneth the scorners, But he giveth grace unto the lowly*?⁵ If one comes to defile himself, he is given an opening;⁶ if one comes to cleanse himself, he is helped.

¹All translations are taken from The Babylonian Talmud, Soncino Edition, unless otherwise noted.

²MV., 'seen', I. e., God sees all. The verb *vPm* often means *looking ahead* in time or distance. When this is said of God, 'foreseen' is, strictly speaking, not applicable or admissible, as God is independent of time and space, I. e., there is with Him neither past nor future nor distance, and he 'sees' everything at once. Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God*, p. 159, points out that the idea of God's prescience in Rabbinic literature goes back to Simeon b. Shetah (or Judah b. Tabbar) who called God, *ucajn kgc* (Master of Thoughts); Sanh. 37b, Schechter, *Some Aspects*, p. 285, refers to ARN (Addenda), pp. 75a and 81b, from which it would seem that *hupm* was taken by some to refer to *man*. In one case (p. 75a) 'everything is seen by man: by means of the "keys of wisdom" granted to him, man can learn what the "heavenly likeness" is, and choose the right way.' The other reference (p. 81b) takes *hupm* to mean 'covered', 'hidden' (from the root *vpm* which in the *Pi'el* form means 'cover', 'hide') and explains: 'since man sinned, the light of wisdom was hidden from him and he knows not what will happen in the future.' MV., p. 514, and *Aruch* s.v. *sgx* quote a reading *iupm* 'hidden'.

³The upward turn of the 'tittle' or 'dagger' on the upper line of the *Kuf*.

⁴Not joined to the rest of the letter.

⁵*Proverbs* 3:34.

⁶I. e., he is permitted, but not actively helped.

Avot 2:4: He used to say: Do his will as [thou wouldst do] thine own will,⁷ so that He may do thy will as [he does] his [own] will. Set aside thy will in the face of His will, so that He may set aside the will of others before thy will.

Hillel said: Separate not thy self from the community, neither trust thou in thy self until the day of thy death,⁸ moreover judge not thy fellow-man until thou hast reached his place. Say not a thing that cannot be understood [at once], [trusting] that in the end it will be understood. Say not: 'when I shall have leisure I shall study; perhaps thou wilt not have leisure.

B. Shabbat 104a: This supports Resh Lakish, for Resh Lakish said: What is meant by *Surely he scorneth the scorners, But He giveth grace unto the lowly?*⁹ If one comes to defile himself, he is given an opening; if one comes to cleanse himself, he is helped.

B. Sotah 14a: R. Hama son of R. Hanina further said: What means the text, *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God?*¹⁰ Is it then, possible for a human being to walk after the *Shechinah*; for has it not been said, *For the Lord thy God is devouring fire?*¹¹ But [the meaning is] to walk after the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He. As He clothes the naked, for it is written, *And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin, and clothed them,*¹² so do thou also clothe the naked. The Holy One, blessed be He, visited the sick, for it is written, *And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre,*¹³ so do thou also visit the sick. The Holy One, blessed be He, comforted mourners, for it is written, *And it*

⁷See B., L. and R. Jonah who further develop the idea, 'make they will identical with God's will'. Rashi: 'even when thou doest thine own business do it for the sake of Heaven'.

⁸Do not rely upon the material or spiritual position you have attained. Unless one is constantly on one's guard these may only too easily be lost. Or construe the *Mishnah* thus: 'Separate not thyself from the Community, neither trust thou in thyself, until the day of thy death,' I. e., do not, ever in your life, rely on your own powers to the extent of deliberately remaining detached from the community. Cf. 1:14.

⁹*Proverbs* 3:4.

¹⁰*Deuteronomy* 13:5.

¹¹*Deuteronomy* 4:24.

¹²*Genesis* 3:21.

¹³*Genesis* 18:1. Since the preceding verses deal with Abraham's circumcision, it is deduced that the occasion was when he was recovering.

came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son,¹⁴ so do thou also comfort mourners. The Holy One, blessed be He, buried the dead, for it is written, *And He buried him in the valley*¹⁵ so do thou also bury the dead.

B. Sukkot 52a - b: Abaye is troubled regarding his Evil Inclination 'If it were I', said Abaye, 'I could not have restrained myself', and so went and leaned in deep anguish against a doorpost, when a certain old man¹⁶ came up to him and taught him: The greater the man, the greater his Evil Inclination.

R. Isaac stated, The [Evil] Inclination of a man grows stronger within him from day to day, as it is said, *Only [52b] evil all the day*.¹⁷ R. Simeon b. Lakish stated, The Evil Inclination of a man grows in strength from day to day and seeks to kill him, as it is said, *The wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to slay him*,¹⁸ and were it not that the Holy One, blessed be He, is his help, he would not be able to withstand it, as it is said, *The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor suffer him to be condemned when he is judged*.¹⁹

The school of R. Ishmael taught, 'If this repulsive wretch meets thee, drag him to the *Beit Hamidrash*. If he is of stone, he will dissolve, if of iron he will shiver into fragments. 'If he is of stone he will dissolve', for it is written, *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the water*²⁰ and it is written, *The waters wear the stones*.²¹ 'If he is of iron, he will shiver into fragments', for it is written, *Is not my word like as fire? Saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*²²

¹⁴Genesis 25:11.

¹⁵Deuteronomy 34:6.

¹⁶Tradition identifies the anonymous old man with the spirit of Elijah.

¹⁷Genesis 6:5; as the days go on the evil increases.

¹⁸Psalms 37:32.

¹⁹Psalms 33.

²⁰Isaiah 55:1; sc. the Torah.

²¹Job 14:19.

²²Jeremiah 23:29.

Genesis Rabbah 27:4: And it repented (*Wayyinnahem*) the Lord that He had made man on the earth. R. Judah said: [God declared:] ‘It was a regrettable error on My part to have created him out of earthly elements, for had I created him out of heavenly elements, he would not have rebelled against Me.’ R. Nehemiah interpreted it: I am comforted (*menuham*) that I created him below, for had I created him above, he would have incited the celestial creatures to revolt, just as he has incited the terrestrial beings to revolt. R. Aibu interpreted: It was a regrettable error on My part to have created an evil urge (*Yezer ha-Ra*) within him, for had I not created an evil urge within him, he would not have rebelled against Me. R. Levi interpreted: I am comforted that I made him from the earth.

Sifre Deuteronomy Piska 45: *Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart* (11:18): This tells us that words of *Torah* are comparable to the elixir of life. A parable: A king grew angry with his son and struck him a violent blow, but then put a bandage on the wound and said to him, “My son, so long as this bandage is on your wound, you may eat whatever you please, drink whatever you please, and bathe in hot or cold water (as you please), and you will suffer no injury; but if you remove it, the wound will forthwith become ulcerated.” Thus also the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, “My children, I created an Inclination to evil in you than which there is none more evil. *If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up?* (*Genesis 4:7*) -- busy yourselves with words of *Torah* and the Inclination to evil will not rule over you; but if you abandon the words of *Torah*, it will gain mastery over you, as it is said, *Sin coucheth at the door, and unto thee is its desire* (*Genesis 4:7*). It has no business but with you, but if you wish, you can gain mastery over it, as it is said, *but thou mayest rule over it* (*Genesis 4:7*), and *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head* (*Proverbs 25:21-22*).” Evil indeed is the Inclination to evil, for even He who created it testifies to its evil nature, as it is said, *For the imagination of man’s heart is evil* (*Genesis 8:21*).

B. Bava Bathra 16a: *Although thou knowest that I am not wicked, and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.*²³ Raba said: Job sought to exculpate the whole world. He said, Sovereign of the Universe, Thou hast created the ox with cloven hoofs and thou hast created the ass with whole hoofs; thou hast created Paradise and thou hast created Gehinnom: thou has created righteous men and thou hast created wicked men, and who can prevent thee? His companions answered him: *Yea, thou doest away with fear and restrainest devotion before God.* If God created the Evil Inclination, He also created the *Torah* as its antidote.

²³Jeremiah 10:7.

B. Kiddushin 30b: Our Rabbis taught: *we-samtem*²⁴ [reads] *sam tem* [a perfect remedy]. This may be compared to a man who struck his son a strong blow, and then put a plaster on his wound, saying to him, 'My son! As long as this plaster is on your wound you can eat and drink at will, and bathe in hot or cold water, without fear. But if you remove it, it will break out into sores.' Even so did the Holy One, blessed be He, speak unto Israel: 'My children! I created the Evil Desire, but I [also] created the *Torah*, as its antidote; if you occupy yourselves with the *Torah*, you will not be delivered into his hand, for it is said, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be exalted?*²⁵ But if ye do not occupy yourselves with the *Torah*, ye shall be delivered into his hand, for it is written, *sin couchest at the door.*²⁶ Moreover, he is altogether preoccupied with thee [to make thee sin], for it is said, *and unto thee shall be his desire.*²⁷ Yet if thou wilt thou canst rule over him, for it is said, *and thou shalt rule over him.*²⁸

B. Kiddushin 30b: The School of R. Ishmael taught: My son, if this repulsive [wretch] assail thee, lead him to the schoolhouse: if he is of stone, he will dissolve, if iron, he will shiver [into fragments], for it is said, *Is not my word like as fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*²⁹ If he is of stone, he will dissolve, for it is written, *Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;*³⁰ and it is said, *The waters wear the stones.*³¹

Midrash of Psalms 55:6: *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee* (Psalms 55:23). A mortal has a patron and goes to him the first time, and the patron receives him; the second time, and he receives him; the third time, he does not personally welcome him; and the fourth time, he cannot spare a moment for

²⁴Deuteronomy 11:18: *Therefore shall ye lay up (we-samtem) these words etc.*

²⁵Genesis 4:7; sc. above the Evil Desire.

²⁶Genesis 4:7; so the E.V. Possibly the *Talmud* translates: at the door of sin -- I. e., when one yields to the Evil Desire -- one lies lost -- I. e., becomes its slave.

²⁷Genesis 4:7.

²⁸Genesis 4:7

²⁹Jeremiah 23:29.

³⁰Isaiah 55:1, I. e., the *Torah*.

³¹Job 14:19.

him. But not so the Holy One, blessed be He: Every time you impose yourself upon Him, He receives you. Hence *Cast what befalls thee upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee*: "Cast thy burden upon Him, and He will carry it for thee."

B. Ta'anit 24a: The Gemara now relates a series of stories concerning fasts decreed by various great people for the lack of rain: R. Yehudah Nesiah decreed a fast over the lack of rain. He prayed for mercy, but the rains did not come. He said: See how much of a difference there is between Samuel the Ramathi and Yehudah ben Gamliel. Woe is the generation that has been put in such a state. Woe to him in whose days such a thing has occurred. [R. Yehudah Nesiah became dejected, and the rains came.³² [The Shottenstein Edition]

B. Ta'anit 24a The Gemara relates another incident similar to the last: Rav came to a certain place which was experiencing a drought. He decreed a fast but the rains did not come. A *Sheliach tsibur* went down before the Ark in [Rav's] presence to lead the prayers. When he said: *He makes the winds blow*, the wind blew, and when he said: *He makes the rain fall*, the rains came. [Rav] said to him: "What do you do?" that you merit to have your prayer answered immediately? He said to [Rav]: "I am a teacher of small children, and I teach the children of the poor as well as the children of the rich; and whoever cannot afford to pay me, I do not take anything from him. Moreover, I own fish ponds; and any [child] who rebels and refuses to study, I bribe him with some of [the fish,] and we prepare it for him, and appease him, until he is ready to come and study. [The Shottenstein Edition]"

B. Shabbat 156b: From R. Akiva too [we learned that] Israel is free from planetary influence. For R. Akiva had a daughter. Now astrologers told him, On the day she enters the bridal chamber a snake will bite her and she will die. He was very worried about this. On that day [of her marriage] she took a brooch [and] stuck it into the wall and by chance it penetrated [sank] into the eye of the serpent. The following morning, when she took it out, the snake came trailing after it. 'What did you do?' her father asked her. 'A poor man came to our door in the evening,' she replied, 'and everybody was busy at the banquet, and there was none to attend to him. So I took the portion which was given to me and gave it to him.' 'You have done a good deed,' said he to her. Thereupon R. Akiva went out and lectured: "*But charity delivereth from death*": and not [merely] from an unnatural death, but from death itself.

³²Humility is essential to the acceptance of prayer, as stated in Scripture: *A heart broken and humbled, O God, You will not despise* (Psalms 51:19). Thus, the distress felt by R. Yehudah Nesiah over the great decline in the generations and their leadership since the days of the prophet Samuel was sufficient to bring about a favorable response to prayers.

B. Shabbat 32a: And when are men examined? -- Said Resh Lakish: When they pass over a bridge.³³ A bridge and nothing else? -- 'Say, that which is similar to a bridge.' Rav would not cross a bridge where a heathen was sitting: said he, 'Lest judgment be visited upon him, and I be seized together with him.' Samuel would cross a bridge only when a heathen was upon it, saying, 'Satan has no power over two nations [simultaneously].' R. Jannai examined [the bridge] and then crossed over. R. Jannai [acted] upon his views, for he said, 'A man should never stand in a place of danger and say that a miracle will be wrought for him, lest it is not. And if a miracle is wrought for him it is deducted from his merits.' R. Hanin said, 'Which verse [teaches this]? *I am become diminished by reason of all the deeds of kindness and all the truth.*³⁴ R. Zera would not go out among the palm-trees on a day of the strong south wind.

B. Ta'anit 20b: R. Huna had wine [stored] in a certain dilapidated house and he desired to remove it. He took R. Adda b. Ababa into that house and kept him occupied with traditional teaching until he had removed it. As soon as he had left the house it fell in. R. Adda b. Ababa noticed this and was offended, because he agreed with the statement of R. Jannai who said: A man should never stand in place of danger and declare, 'a miracle will befall me'; perhaps a miracle will not befall him. And if a miracle does befall him he suffers thereby a reduction from his merits. R. Hanan said: This can be inferred from the verse where it is written, *I am not worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth.*³⁵

B. Megillah 25a: A certain man went down [before the ark] in the presence of Rabbah and said, 'Thou hast shown pity to the nest of a bird, do thou have pity and mercy on us'; (Thou hast shown pity to an animal and its young³⁶ do thou have pity and mercy on us). Said Rabbah: How well this Rabbi knows how to placate his Master! Said Abaye to him: But we have learnt, *He is silenced?* -- Rabbah only wanted to sharpen Abaye's wits.

A certain reader went down before the ark in the presence of R. Hanina and said, 'The great, the mighty, the terrible, the majestic, the strong, the powerful God'. He said to him: Have you finished the praises of your Master? Even the

³³That involves danger, and then they are liable to be punished for their misdeeds.

³⁴Genesis 32:10.

³⁵Genesis 32:2. R. Hanan renders the verse thus: I have become smaller on account of all the mercies, etc.

³⁶V. Leviticus 22:28. This sentence is bracketed in the text.

first three, had it not been that Moses wrote them in the Law³⁷ and the Men of the Great Synagogue came and ordained them,³⁸ we should not recite; and you say all this! It is as if a man had thousands of thousands of *denarii* of gold and people to praise his wealth would say he had a thousand. Would it not be an insult to him?

R. Hanina said: Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven as it says, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God ask of thee but to fear.*

B. Niddah 16b: He requires it for the same exposition as that made by R. Chanina b. Papa. For R. Chanina b. Papa made the following exposition: The name of the angel who is in charge of conception is '*Night*', and he takes up a drop and places it in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, saying, 'Sovereign of the universe, What shall be the fate of this drop? Shall it produce a strong man or a weak man, a wise man or a fool, a rich man or a poor man?' Whereas 'wicked man' or 'righteous one' he does not mention, in agreement with the view of R. Chanina. For R. Chanina stated: Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of God, as it is said, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear they God require of thee, but to fear etc.*³⁹

B. Berachot 33b: R. Chanina further said: Everything is in the hand of heaven except the fear of heaven,⁴⁰ as it says, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord they God require of thee but to fear.*⁴¹ Is the fear of heaven such a little thing? Has not R. Chanina said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: The Holy One, blessed be He, has in His treasure enough except a store of the fear of heaven, as it says, *The fear of the Lord is His treasure?*⁴² -- Yes; for Moses it was a small thing; as R. Chanina said: To illustrate by a parable, if a man is asked for a big article and he has it, it seems like a small article to him; if he is asked for a small article and he does not possess it, it seems like a big article to him.

³⁷Deuteronomy 10:17.

³⁸V. Nehemiah 9:32.

³⁹Deuteronomy 10:12.

⁴⁰I. e., all a man's qualities are fixed by nature, but his moral character depends on his own choice.

⁴¹Deuteronomy 10:17.

⁴²Isaiah 33:6.

B. Chullin 7b: *There is none else beside Him.*⁴³ R. Chanina said, Even sorcery. A woman once attempted to cast a spell over R. Chanina. He said to her, 'Try as you will, you will not succeed in your attempts, for it is written, *There is none else beside Him.*'

B. Genesis Rabbah 79:6: R. Simeon b. Yohai and his son were hidden in a cave for thirteen years. Their food consisted of withered carobs, until their bodies broke out in sores. At the end of this period, he [R. Simeon] emerged and sat at the entrance of the cave and saw a hunter engaged in hunting birds. Now whenever R. Simeon heard a heavenly voice exclaim from heaven, 'Mercy!' it escaped; if it exclaimed 'Death!' it was caught. 'Even a bird is not caught without the assent of Providence,' he remarked; 'how much more then the life of a human being!'

Y. Shevi'it 9:1: For thirteen years R. Simeon b. Yohai lived hidden in a cave. The cave [was next to] a carob tree. [He stayed there] until his body became afflicted with [a skin disease that looked like] rust spots. At the end of thirteen years he said, "Shouldn't I go out to see what has happened in the world?" He went out and sat at the mouth of the cave. He saw a certain hunter trapping birds.

When [Simeon] would hear an echo say from heaven [in Latin], "Pardoned," the bird escaped; but if the echo said "Death," the bird was trapped. [Simeon] said, "Without [the intervention of] heaven, [even] a bird does not perish; all the more so a human being!"

Midrash of Psalms 40:1: *For the leader. A Psalm of David, I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry (Psalms 40:1-2).* These words are to be considered in the light of the verse: *And it shall be said in that day: "Lo, this is our God, for whom we waited, that He might save us" (Isaiah 25:9):* It is not in the power of Israel to do anything but wait for the Holy One, blessed be He, to redeem them in reward for saying: *I waited patiently for the Lord,* as it is written: *The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him (Lamentations 3:25),* and also, *Return to the Stronghold, ye prisoners of hope (Zechariah 9:12).* But perhaps you say, *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved (Jeremiah 8:20);* then *Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for the Lord (Psalms 27:14).*

⁴³Deuteronomy 4:35. R. Chanina having been quoted in the previous passage, the Gemara now deals with several other of his statements.

B Sanhedrin 97b: What is meant by '*but at the end it shall speak [we-yafeah] and not lie?*' -- R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Blasted be the bones of those who calculate the end. For they would say, since the predetermined time has arrived, and yet he has not come, he will never come. But [even so], wait for him, as it is written, *Though he tarry, wait for him.* Should you say, We look forward [to his coming] but *He* does not: therefore Scripture saith, *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.*⁴⁴ But since we look forward to it, and *He* does likewise, what delays [his coming]? -- The Attribute of Justice delays it. But since the Attribute of Justice delays it, why do we await it? -- To be rewarded [for hoping], as it is written, *blessed are all they that wait for him.*

B. Sanhedrin 97b - 98a: Rav said: All the predestined dates [for redemption] have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds. But Samuel maintained: It is sufficient for a mourner to keep his [period of] mourning.⁴⁵ This matter is disputed by Tannaim: R. Eliezer said: If Israel repent, they will be redeemed; if not, they will not be redeemed. R. Joshua said to him, If they do not repent, will they not be redeemed! But the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will thus bring them back to the right path.⁴⁶ Another [Baraita] taught: R. Eliezer said: If Israel repent, they will be redeemed, as it is written, *Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.*⁴⁷ R. Joshua said to him, But is it not written, *ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money?*⁴⁸ *Ye have sold yourselves for naught, for idolatry; and ye shall be redeemed without money* -- without repentance and good deeds. R. Eliezer retorted to R. Joshua, But is it not written, *Return unto me, and I will return unto you?*⁴⁹ R. Joshua rejoined, But is it not written, *For I am master over you: and I will take you one of a city and two of*

⁴⁴Isaiah 30:18.

⁴⁵Israel's sufferings in the *Galuth* in themselves sufficiently warrant their redemption, regardless of repentance.

⁴⁶In the *Yerushalmi* the last sentence, 'But the Holy...right path is given as R. Eliezer's reply to R. Joshua.

⁴⁷Jeremiah 3:22.

⁴⁸Isaiah 52:3.

⁴⁹Malachai 3:7.

*a family and I will bring you to Zion?*⁵⁰ R. Eliezer replied, But it is written, *In returning and rest shall ye be saved.*⁵¹ R. Joshua replied, But is it not written, *Thus saith the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nations abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, [98a] Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship?*⁵² R. Eliezer countered, But is it not written, *If thou wilt return*⁵³ *O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me?*⁵⁴ R. Joshua answered, But it is elsewhere written, *And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*⁵⁵ At this R. Eliezer remained silent.

B. Niddah 70b - 71a 'Three were concerned with matters of conduct': What must a man do that he may become wise? He replied: Let him engage much in study and a little in business. Did not many, they said, do so and it was of no avail to them? --- Rather, let them pray for mercy from Him to whom is the wisdom, for it is said, *For the Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and discernment.*⁵⁶ R. Hiyya taught: This may be compared to the action of a mortal king who prepared for his servants a banquet but to his friends he sent from that which he had before himself. What then does he teach us?⁵⁷ --- That one without the other does not suffice. What must a man do that he may become rich? He replied: Let him engage much in business and deal honestly. Did not many, they said to him, do so but it was of no avail to them? --- Rather, let him pray for

⁵⁰Jeremiah 3:14: 'master over you' implies even against your wishes -- I. e., without repentance of the whole nation (Rashi).

⁵¹Isaiah 30:15.

⁵²Isaiah 49:7: 'to him whom man despiseth etc.' implies that he is still an unrepentant sinner (Rashi), or that their prostration in itself will bring about the redemption (Yad Ramah).

⁵³I.e., to thy land.

⁵⁴Jeremiah :1.

⁵⁵Daniel 7:7., thus proving that Messiah's coming is dependent only upon the utter prostration of Israel, not his repentance.

⁵⁶Proverbs 2:6.

⁵⁷Sc. what is the use of study if mercy from heaven must in any case be sought?

mercy from Him to whom are the riches, for it is said, *Mine is the silver and Mine the gold*.⁵⁸ What then does he teach us? --- That one without the other⁵⁹ does not suffice. What must a man do that he may have male children? He replied: He shall marry a wife that is worthy of him [71a] and conduct himself in modesty at the time of marital intercourse. Did not many, they said to him, act in this manner but it did not avail them? --- Rather, let him pray for mercy from Him to whom are the children, for it is said, *Lo, children are the heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is the reward*.⁶⁰ What then does he teach us? That one without the other does not suffice. What is exactly meant by '*the fruit of the womb is a reward*?' R. Hana, son of R. Chanina replied: As a reward for containing oneself during intercourse in the womb, in order that one's wife may emit the semen first, the Holy One, blessed be He, gives one the reward of the fruit of the womb.

Y. Berachot 4:2: R. Hiyya bar Abba adds [to this prayer recited after the recitation of the Prayer of Eighteen], "And unite our hearts to fear Your name. And keep us far from that which You despise. And bring us near to that which You love. And deal justly with us for the sake of Your name."

Y. Berachot 4: The house of R. Yannai says, "When one wakes up from his sleep, he must say, 'Blessed are You, Lord, who resurrects the dead. My master, I have sinned before You. May it be thy will, Lord my God, that you give me a good heart, a good portion, a good inclination, a good associate, a good name, a good eye, and a good soul, and a humble soul and a modest spirit. And do not allow Your name to be profaned among us. And do not make us the subject of [evil] talk among Your creatures. And do not lead us in the end to destruction. And [do not turn] our hope to despair. And do not make us depend for sustenance on other people. for the beneficence of others is small and their hatred is great. And set our portion with Your *Torah*, with those who do your will. Rebuild Your house, Your [Temple] courtyard, Your city, and Your Temple speedily in our days."

Y. Berachot 4:2: R. Hiyya bar Abba [Wawa] prayed, "May it be thy will, Lord our God, and God of our fathers, that You put in our hearts [the ability] to repent fully before You so that we not be put to shame in the presence of our forefathers in the world to come [after our death, on account of our sins]."

⁵⁸Haggai 2:8.

⁵⁹Honest dealing without prayer and *vice versa*.

⁶⁰Psalms 127:3.

Y. Berachot 4:2: R. Tanhum bar Scholasticus prayed, "And may it be thy will, Lord my God, God of my fathers, that you break the yoke of the Evil Inclination and vanquish it from our hearts. For you created us to do Your will. And we are obligated to do your will. You desire [that we do Your will]. And we desire [to do Your will]. And what prevents us? That bacteria [the Evil Inclination] which nings the Sabbath, and the Day of Atonement, and infects us [lit.: the yeast which makes the dough rise]. It is obvious to You that we do not have the strength to resist it. So let it be thy will, Lord my God, and God of my fathers, that You vanquish it from us, and subdue it, so that we may do thy will as our own will, with a whole heart."

Y. Berachot 4:2: R. Yohanan used to pray, "May it be thy will, Lord my God, and God of my fathers that you imbue our portion [of life] with love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. And bring [our lives] to a happy end and [fulfill] all our hopes. And fill our dominion with disciples. And grant that we may enjoy our portion in paradise [in the world to come]. And provide for us a good heart and a good associate. And grant that we may rise early and find [each day] our hearts' desires. And let our souls' yearnings come before You for [our future] good."

Berachot 29b: The *Mishnah* cited one version of the "short prayer" recited when traveling through a dangerous area. The Gemara now cites several alternative versions: The Rabbis taught in a *Baraita*: One who travels in a place infested with bands of wild animals and robbers, prays a short prayer. What is the text of this short prayer? R. Eliezer says: Do your will in the heavens above and grant peace of mind to those that fear you below, and what is good in your eyes, do to them. Blessed are you *Hashem*, who hears prayer.⁶¹

B. Berachot 2: The Gemara asks: What is the wayfarer's prayer? The Gemara records its text:

May it be Your will, *Hashem*, my God, that You lead me toward peace, emplace my footsteps toward peace, and uphold me in peace. May You rescue me from the hand of every foe and ambush along the way. May You send blessing in my handiwork, and grant me grace, kindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see me. Blessed are you, *Hashem*, Who hears prayer.⁶²

⁶¹Translation taken from the Schottenstein edition translation of the Babylonian Talmud.

⁶²Translation taken from the Schottenstein edition translation of the Babylonian Talmud.

APPENDIX D

RABBINIC TEXTS WHICH RELATE TO INDIVIDUAL POWERLESSNESS OR GOD'S POWER, BUT ARE NOT DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER THREE¹

B. Shabbat 32a: *Gemara* finishes a discussion which concludes that women are most vulnerable to the consequences of their sins at the time of childbirth, and follows with a discussion on when men are most open to retribution for their sins. This leads to a recounting of what steps some of the *Amoraim* took to protect themselves from danger. A few rabbis provide the precautions they took, including Rabbi Yannai, who said that, before boarding a riverboat, he would check it for leaks. The *Gemara* tells us that this reasoning is consistent with what Rabbi Yannai said elsewhere: "Let a person never stand in a dangerous place, and say to himself that [the Heavenly minions] will perform a miracle for him and save him from harm, for perhaps they will not perform a miracle for him. And even if the *do* perform a miracle for him, they deduct it from his merits; the miracle does not come without paying a price."

The prooftext offered for the above is: *I have been diminished by all the kindness and by all of the truth that you have done for your servant.*² [Jacob feared that his merits were diminished by all the kindness God had already bestowed upon him.]

B. Shabbat 53b: Having mentioned utters of an unusual nature, the *Gemara* relates a story about udders of a miraculous nature: "The Rabbis taught in a *Baraita*: It happened with a certain person that his wife died leaving a son to nurse, and he did not have enough money to pay the fee of a wetnurse. A miracle was performed for him--his breasts were opened like the two breasts of a woman, and he nursed his son.

¹Translations containing **bold** text are from the Schottenstein Edition of the Babylonian Talmud. Texts not containing any **bold** text are from the Soncino Edition.

²*Genesis* 32:11

"Rav Yosef said: "Come and see how great this man was, for such a miracle was performed on his behalf!" "On the contrary! How inferior this man was, for the natural order was changed on his behalf!"

B. Bava Metzia 59a: The Gemara substantiates the assertion that tearful prayer is answered swiftly: "Rabbi Elazar said: From the day that the Temple was destroyed, the heavenly gates of prayer were locked and our prayers are not answered as readily as before, as it is stated:³ *Even when I cry out and plead, He stifles my prayer.* But even through the heavenly gates of prayer have been locked, the heavenly gates of tears have not been locked, for it is stated: *Hear my prayer, O God, and listen to my outcry; you will not be deaf to my tears.*"

B. Ta'anit 24b: The Gemara relates how the rains came for Rav Yehudah: Rav Yehudah saw two people who were sporting with bread, by throwing it back and forth playfully. It is evident from this that there is an abundance of food in the world. He focused his eyes angrily upon these people, and there was a famine. The rabbis then said to Rav Kahana the son of Rav Nechunya, [Rav Yehudah's] attendant: "You, master, who appear regularly before [Rav Yehudah,] cause him to go out through the door that is near the marketplace" so that he will pass through there and see how desperate the situation is. He caused him to do so, and [Rav Yehudah] went out into the marketplace. He saw a crowd of people there. He said to them [his attendants]: "What is the meaning of this?" They said to him: "They are standing waiting for a container of dates that is to be sold." He said: "It is evident from this that there is a severe famine in the world." He said to his attendant: "Take off my shoes." He removed one shoe and the rains came. When he reached out to remove the other shoe, the prophet Elijah appeared and said to him: "The Holy One, Blessed is He, has said, 'If you remove the other shoe, I will destroy the world.'"⁴

³*Lamentations* 3:8. God surely continues to answer our prayers after the Temple's destruction but He does not answer as quickly or as readily. We must figuratively "knock on the heavenly gates" before our prayers are answered (*Meiri*).

⁴*Maharsha* suggests that after bringing enough rain to end the drought and famine by removing one shoe, Rav Yehudah wished to remove the other shoe and bring more rain to restore the prosperity that had existed before. He was told, however, that after causing Heaven to alter radically the course of nature once, it was not proper for him to ask that it be done a second time, when such intervention was not critical.

Others explain this in quite the reverse manner. God's love for Rav Yehudah was so great that He would not permit Rav Yehudah to further afflict himself (*Benayahu*).

B. Ta'anit 24b: The Gemara now relates a series of stories about the Tanna, R. Haninah ben Dosa: **R. Haninah ben Dosa** was once walking on the road when the rains came. He said before [God]: "Master of the Universe! The entire world is at ease, but Haninah is in distress!" The rain ceased as a result of R. Hanina's prayer. When he reached his house, he said before [God]: "mater of the Universe! The entire world is in distress while Haninah is at ease!" The rains came again as a result of this prayer.

B. Ta'anit 16a: Our Brethren! It is not sackcloth or fasting per se that cause one's prayers to be answered; rather, repentance and good deeds cause one's prayers to be answered. For so we find regarding the people of Nineveh, who fasted and prayed to God for forgiveness and were answered, that it is not stated concerning them: "And God saw their sackcloth and their fast" But rather: *And God saw their deeds that they repented their evil ways.*⁵

B. Berachot 16b: The Gemara now cites examples of personal prayers that righteous men appended to their *Shemoneh Esrei* recitals. Elazar, upon completing his *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer, would say thus: May it be Your will Hashem our God, that You cause to dwell in our lot love, brotherhood, peace and companionship, and enlarge our boundaries with students, and cause our end to prosper with a future and a hope, and set our portion in the Garden of Eden, and establish us with a good companion and a good inclination in Your world, and may we rise every morning and find that the yearning of our heart is to fear Your Name, and may our needs and their fulfillment come before You for the good.

B. Berachot 16b: R. Zeira's additional prayer: R. Zeira, upon completing his *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer, would say thus: May it be Your will, Hashem our God, that we not sin, nor be ashamed or disgraced before our fathers.

B. Berachot 16b: Rav's additional prayer: Rav, after his *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer, would say thus: May it be Your will, Hashem our God, that You give us long life, a life of peace, a life of Goodness, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of physical health, a life in which there is a fear of sin, a life in which there is no shame or humiliation, a life of wealth and honor, a life in

⁵Jonah 3:10

which we will have a love of *Torah* and a fear of Heaven, a life in which You will fulfill for us all our heart's desires for good.⁶

B. Berachot 17a: R. Alexandri's additional prayer: R. Alexandri, after his *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer, said thus: May it be Your will, Hashem our God, that You stand us in an illuminated corner and do not stand us in a dark corner. And let not our hearts be pained or our eyes dimmed.

B. Berachot 17a: The Gemara notes a different attribution of the above: There are those who say that actually it was Rav Hanuna who recited this prayer, and that R. Alexandri, after praying the *Shemoneh Esrei*, said thus: Master of the Worlds, it is revealed and known before You that our will is to do Your will. And who prevents us from performing Your will? The yeast in the dough⁷, and our subjugation to foreign regimes. May it be Your will that You save us from their hands, and that we return to perform the statute of Your will with a complete heart.

B. Berachot 17a: the additional prayer of Mar, the son of Ravina: When Mar, the son of Ravina, completed his *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer, he said thus: My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. And to those who curse me, let my soul be silent; and let my soul be like dust to everyone. Open my heart to your *Torah*, and let my soul pursue Your commandments. And save me from evil mishap, from the Evil inclination, from an evil woman, and from all evil occurrences that happen to come into the world. And all those who design evil against me, speedily nullify their counsel and disrupt their design. May the expression of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer.

B. Berachot 29a: The *Mishnah* stated that according to one Tanna a person is not required to pray the complete text of the eighteen blessings. Rather: R. Yehoshua says: An abridgment of the eighteen is recited.

⁶Since a person may desire something that he regards as good but in reality is detrimental for him, Rav prayed that only those requests that God knows are good should be fulfilled (Rashash).

⁷I. e., the evil inclination in our hearts, which incites and agitates us [just as yeast agitates the dough] (*Rashi*)

The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "An abridgment of the eighteen?"

The Gemara answers: An abridgment of each and every blessing. And Shmuel said: The middle thirteen blessings are condensed into one blessing, using the following text: Give us discernment, O Hashem, our God, to know Your ways and circumcise our hearts to fear You and forgive us so that we may be redeemed, and keep us far from our sufferings, and fatter us in the pastures of Your land, and our dispersions gather in from the four corners of the earth, and those judges who err, let them be inspired to judge according to Your mind, and against the wicked life of Your hand, and let the righteous rejoice in the building of Your city and in the perfection of Your Sanctuary, and in the flourishing of the pride of David, Your servant, and in the preparation of a lamp for the son of Jesse, Your anointed. Before we call you, You answer; Blessed are You, Hashem, Who hears prayer.

B. Berachot 60a: The Rabbis taught in a Baraita: One who enters a public bathhouse says: May it be Your will, Hashem, my God, that you spare me from this danger and from its like, and may no matter of ruin or iniquity befall me; but if a matter of ruin or iniquity does befall me, then let my death be an atonement for all my sins.

B. Berachot 60b: The text said when retiring for the night: One who goes to sleep on his bed should say: From the words, "Hear, O Israel" until "*And it will come to pass that if you continually hearken.*"⁸ And he also says this blessing: *Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who casts the bonds of sleep upon my eyes and slumber upon my eyelids, and Who illuminates the pupil of the eye. May it be Your will, Hashem, my God, that You lay me down to sleep toward peace, and grant me my share in Your Torah, and accustom me to submit to the authority of Your commandments, but do not accustom me to submit to the authority of a transgression. Do not bring me into the grasp of an error, nor into the grasp of scorn. Let the Good Inclination dominate me, but let not the Evil Inclination dominate me. Rescue me from an evil mishap and from terrible diseases. May I not be confounded by bad dreams and bad notions; may my offspring be perfect for You, and may you illuminate my eyes lest I die in my sleep. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who illuminates the entire world with His glory.*

⁸That is, he should say the first of the three passages of *Shema*. Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

B. Berachot 60 b: The Gemara turns to the beginning of the day: When he wakes, he says: *My God, the soul You placed within me is pure. You fashioned it within me, You breathed it into me, You safeguard it within me, and eventually You will take it from me, and restore it to me in the Time to Come. As long as the soul is within me, I thank You, Hashem, my God and the God of my forefathers, Master of all the world, Lord of all souls. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who restores souls to dead bodies.*

B. Berachot 60b: Finally, when he washes his face he should say: *Blessed are You . . . Who removes the bonds of sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. And may it be Your will, Hashem, my God, that You accustom me to study Your Torah and attach me to Your commandments. Do not bring me into the grasp of an error, nor into the grasp of a sin, nor into the grasp of a challenge, nor into the grasp of scorn, and compel my Evil Inclination to be subservient to You. Distance me from an evil person and an evil companion. Attach me to the Good Inclination and to a good companion in Your world. Grant me today and every day grace, kindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see me and bestow beneficent kindness upon me. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who bestows beneficent kindness upon His people Israel.*

B. Sanhedrin 90b: The Romans asked R. Yehoshua ben Haninah the following two questions: From where in Scripture is it known that the Holy One, Blessed be He, resurrects the dead, and that He knows what will be in the future?⁹ He said to them: Both principles are evident from this following verse: For it is stated: *And Hashem said to Moses, "Behold, you will lie with your forefathers and rise will this nation and stray after the gods of the peoples of the land..."*¹⁰ The Romans retorted: But perhaps the verse means only and rise will this nation and go astray. . . and thus in no way indicates a future resurrection. [R. Yehoshua] said to them: Take, at any rate, half the proof in your hands--namely, that [God] knows what will be in the future; for even you concede that the second part of the verse indicates God's knowledge of the future

⁹Certainly, God's knowledge of the future is evident from all the prophecies mentioned in Scripture. What the Romans asked, rather, concerned God's knowledge of those future events that will be determined by man's free will. How do we know that God's knowledge of the future extends event to such matters? (*Emet Le Yaakov*).

¹⁰*Deuteronomy* 31:16; the first part of the verse indicates tat Moses will be resurrected. The second part (that the nation will stray after the gods of Canaan) indicates that God knows what man will choose to do of his own free will [since God does not coerce man to sin (see *Rashi*)].

B. Bava Bathra 9b: The Gemara enumerates the blessings that a donor [of charity] receives: **One who gives a *perutah* to a pauper is blessed with six Heavenly blessings, as it is written: *Will you not break etc. [your bread for the hungry] and the wailing poor bring to your house etc.; when you see the naked [you shall cover him].***

The Gemara now enumerates the blessings that a comforter receives: **And one who comforts [a pauper] with words is blessed with eleven Heavenly blessings. For it is stated:¹¹ *And if you draw out (from) your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted spirit, then your light will shine through the darkness, and your gloom will be like the noonday.***

The next verse continues to shower blessings on the comforter: ***And God will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul (even) in (times of) drought etc.***

The next verse offers more blessings: ***And through you (i. e. your good deeds) the ancient ruins will be rebuilt; you will raise up the foundation of many generations etc.*** All these blessings¹² will come to one who comforts the poor with word of kindness and compassion.

The Gemara records another statement by R. Yitzchak on the topic of charity: **And R. Yitzchak also said: What is the meaning of that which is written:¹³ *He who pursues* (opportunities to perform acts of) *charity and kindness will find life, charity and honor* (from God)? **Because one pursues charity he will find charity?! Scripture implies that he will become poor and find people to give *him* charity, which is hardly just reward! Rather, the verse comes to tell you that concerning anyone who pursues opportunities to perform acts of charity, the Holy One, Blessed be He, provides him with funds and he uses them for charity. Thus, the reward for pursuing charity is prosperity.¹⁴****

¹¹*Isaiah* 58:10.

¹²Actually, the Gemara has only partially recounted the eleven blessings. The full list, which appears in verses 10-12 of *Isaiah* 58, is . . .

¹³*Proverbs* 21:21.

¹⁴I. e., he will always have money to donate to charity. *Maharsha* explains differently: One who cannot afford to give charity, but *pursues others* to persuade them to give, will become prosperous and thus able to contribute himself.

B. Kiddushin 62a: As a preface to its first discussion, the Gemara introduces a concept: **There, in Tractate Terumot, we learned in a Mishnah:**¹⁵ **We do not separate *terumah* . . . from cut produce that is still attached to the ground. And if one indeed separated *terumah* in this fashion, what he separated is not considered *terumah*.**

The Gemara now poses a related question: **Rav Assi inquired of R. Yochanan:** **If [a person] said: "Let the fruits that have been picked in this row become *terumah* for the attached fruits in this other row, or if he said: "Let the attached fruits in this row become *terumah* for the fruits that have been picked in this other row," and in both cases, he stated that the *terumah* designation should go into effect when [the attached fruit] is actually picked; then later, when [the attached fruit] is picked, what is [the law]? Does the designated fruit now become *terumah* (as per the owner's declaration), or not?**

R. Yochanan replies: **[R. Yochanan] said to [Rav Assi]: Anything that is in one's power to change is not viewed as lacking the act that will change it. Thus, since the owner has the power to pick the attached fruit whenever he wishes, his designation of *terumah* is valid, just as if the fruit were actually already picked.**

B. Ta'anit 11a: A Baraita relates the punishment of one who disassociates himself from the travail of his community: **The Rabbis taught in a Baraita:** **At a time when the people of Israel are steeped in distress and one of them separated himself from the community, and does not share in their pain, the two ministering angels that accompany a person¹⁶ come and place their hands on his head, and they say: This Ploni, who has separated himself from the community, shall not witness the consolation of the community when they are delivered from their affliction.**

Y. Sukkah 5:1: Said R. Jonah, "Jonah b. Amittai was one of those who came up for the festivals [to Jerusalem], and he came in for the rejoicing of *bet hashhoebah*, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

"This serves to teach you that the Holy Spirit rests only on someone whose heart is happy."

¹⁵*Terumot* 1:5.

¹⁶As Scripture states: *He will charge His angels for you (Psalms 91:11)*. The plural indicates that two angels escorted each Jew, one on his right side and the other on his left (*Rashi*; see *Maharsha*).

Avot 2:16: He [i.e., R. Tarfon] used to say: it is not [incumbent] upon thee to finish the work, but neither art thou a free man so as to [be entitled to] refrain therefrom;¹⁷ if thou hast studied much *Torah*, they give thee much reward, and faithful is thine employer to pay thee the reward of thy labour; and know that the grant of reward unto the righteous is in the time to come.

B. Yoma 71a: Rabbah said: When rabbis in Pumbeditha would take leave of each other they would say: May He Who grants life to all who live, grant you a long, happy and right life! - *I shall walk before the Lord in the lands of the living*.¹⁸ Rav Judah said: That means the place of markets [public thoroughfare]. *For length of days, and years of life, and peace, will they add to you*.¹⁹ But there are years, which are years of life, and years, which are not years of life? - R. Eleazar said: These are such years of man as have changed from evil to good.

Genesis Rabbah 8.13: R. Abbahu said: The Holy One, blessed be He, took a cup of blessing and blessed them. R. Judah b. R. Simon said: Michael and Gabriel were Adam's 'best men'. R. Simlai said: We find that the Holy One, blessed be He, blesses bridegrooms, adorns brides, visits the sick, buries the dead, and recites the blessing for mourners. He blesses bridegrooms, as it is written, *And God Blessed Them*; He adorns brides, as it is written, *And the Lord God built the rib ... into a woman (ib. 2:2)*; He visits the sick, as it is written, *And the Lord appeared unto him*, etc. (ib. 18:1); He buries the dead, as it is written, *And He buried him in the valley*, etc. (*Deuteronomy 34:6*). R. Samuel b. Nahman said: He also visits mourners, as it is written, *And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddam-aram, and blessed him (Genesis 35:9)*²⁰ How did He bless him? With the blessing of mourners.

¹⁷MV has an interesting alternative interpretation, viz., 'You were not made a free man (i.e. delivered from Egyptian bondage) so that you might remain exempt from Torah and Precepts.' The divine purpose of the Redemption was that Israel might accept God's Law. *Exodus 19:4,5, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians ... Now therefore, if ye will harken unto My voice in deed, and keep my covenant. Deuteronomy 4:37 - 40, ... and brought thee ... out of Egypt ... and thou shalt keep His statutes and his commandments. ibid. 6:23, 24, And He brought us forth from thence ... and he commanded us to do all these statutes.*

¹⁸*Psalms 116:9.*

¹⁹*Proverbs 3:2.*

²⁰This immediately follows the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse (v. 8), and it is understood that Jacob was in mourning for her when God appeared to him.

Genesis Rabbah 2.26: *Expounding on God not accepting Cain's offering:*

R. Haninah said: If your Temptor comes to incite you to levity, cast him down with the words of the *Torah*, as it is written, *The [evil] imagination, when near to thee, thou shalt combat -- tizzor* (Isaiah 26:3). And if you do so, I attribute merit to you as though you had created peace, [as the verse continues], *Thou createst (tizzor) peace (ib.)*²¹: Not *tinzor* (thou shalt keep) is written but '*tizzor*' (thou shalt create). And should you argue that he is not in your power, then *Surely it is safe in thee (ib.)* and I have already written for you in the *Torah*, AND UNTO THEE IS ITS DESIRE, BUT THOU MAYEST RULE OVER IT. R. Simon said: If your Temptor comes to incite you to levity, gladden it with the words of the *Torah*, for it says, '*The evil imagination is gladdened (samuk).*' And if you do so, I attribute merit to you as though you had created two worlds, for *shalom* (peace) is written here not once, but twice.

Exodus Rabbah 5:9: R. Tanhuma said: The word of the Lord went forth in two aspects, slaying the heathen who would not accept it, but giving life to Israel who accepted the *Torah*. This is what Moses said to them at the end of forty years: *For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?* (Deuteronomy 5:23). Only you have heard His voice and lived, but the heathen heard it and died. Just see how the Voice went forth -- coming to each Israelite with a force proportioned to his individual strength, and to the young, according to his strength, and even to Moses according to his strength, as it is said: *Moses spoke and God answered him by a voice* (Exodus 19:19), that is, with a voice which he could endure. Similarly, it says: *The voice of the Lord is with power* (Psalms 29:4); not 'with His power', but '*with power*', i.e. with the power of *each* individual, even to pregnant women according to their strength. Thus to each person it was according to his strength.

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:2 #3 : *And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin and clothed them* (Genesis 3:21). We find that the Holy One, blessed be He, performs acts of benevolence: He adorns brides, blesses bridegrooms, visits the sick, buries the dead, and comforts mourners. He adorns brides, as it is written, *And the rib which the Lord God had taken*' (Genesis. 2:22). R. Johanan said: He made her, adorned her and displayed her to Adam. R. Abbahu said: Perhaps you may think that he displayed her to him from between a carob-tree or a sycamore; not so, but after decking her with twenty-four

²¹In the first passage *tizzor* is derived from *zarar*, to fight against; now it is derived from *yazar*, to form, create.

articles of adornment He displayed her to him, as it is said, *'And brought her unto the man'* (Genesis. 2:22). Blesses bridegrooms, as it is said, *And God Blessed Them* (Genesis 1:28). Visits the sick, as it is said *And God appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre.* (Genesis 18:1); Buries the dead, as it is said, *And He buried him in the valley.* (Deuteronomy 34:6). 'Comforts mourners' as it is said, *And the name of it was called Allon-bacuth* (Genesis 35:8). R. Samuel b. Nahman said: What is 'Allon-bacuth' (oak of weeping)? While [Jacob] was observing the mourning for Deborah, his nurse, the news reached him of [the death of] his mother Rebekah, and therefore he wept two weepings. Therefore it is said, 'Allon-bacuth'. Of Jacob it states, *And he blessed him* (Genesis 9) i.e., He blessed him with the benediction for mourners.

Lamentations Rabbah 1:6 #33: *And they are gone without strength before the pursuer.* R. Azariah said in the name of R. Judah b. R. Simon: When Israel perform the will of the Omnipresent they add strength to the heavenly power; as it is said *To God we render strength* (Psalms 60:14). When, however, Israel does not perform the will of the Omnipresent, they weaken, if it is possible to say so, the great power of Him Who is above; as it is written, *Thou didst weaken the Rock that begot thee* (Deuteronomy 32:18). R. Judah b. R. Simon said in the name of R. Levi b. R. Tarfon: When Israel perform the will of the Omnipresent they add strength to the heavenly power; as it is stated *And now I pray thee, let the power of the Lord be great* (Numbers 14:17). When, however, Israel do not perform the will of the Omnipresent they weaken, if it is possible to say so, the great power of Him Who is above, and they too *are gone without strength before the pursuer.*

Song of Songs Rabbah 4:5 #1: Raba said in the name of R. Simeon: A human being cannot apply the poultice till he sees the wound. Not so He by whose word the world came into being; He first prepares the plaster and then inflicts the wound, as it says, *Behold, I will bring it healing and cure, and I will cure them* (Jeremiah 33:6). And it is also written, *When I would heal Israel,* etc. (Hosea 7:1). Said the Holy One, blessed be he: '[First] I came to heal the iniquities of Israel, and Then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria (Hosea 7:1). But the other nations He first smites and then heals, as it says, *And the Lord will smite Egypt, smiting and healing* (Isaiah 19:22) -- smiting them by the had of Aaron and healing by the hand of Moses.

Sifre Deuteronomy Piska 40: *The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it* (Deuteronomy 11:12): One verse said, *The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it,* while another verse says, *He looketh on the earth and it trembleth, He*

toucheth the mountains and they smoke (Psalms 104:32) -- how can both of these verses be true? When Israel does God's will, the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, and they suffer no injury; when Israel does not do God's will, He looketh on the earth and it trembleth. Thus in regard to reward, Scripture says, The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it while in regard to punishment it says, He looketh on the earth and it trembleth.

B. Shabbat 53b: Our Rabbis taught: It once happened that a man's wife died and left a child to be suckled, and he could not afford to pay a wet-nurse, whereupon a miracle was performed for him and his teats opened like the teats of a woman and he suckled his son. R. Joseph observed, Come and see how great was this man, that such a miracle was performed on his account!²²

B. Bava Bathra 16a: *Although thou knowest that I am not wicked, and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.*²³ said: Job sought to exculpate the whole world. He said, Sovereign of the Universe, Thou hast created the ox with cloven hoofs and thou hast created the ass with whole hoofs; thou hast created Paradise and thou hast created *Gehinnom*: thou has created righteous men and thou hast created wicked men, and who can prevent thee? His companions answered him: *Yea, thou doest away with fear and restrainest devotion before God.* If God created the evil inclination, He also created the *Torah* as its antidote.

Midrash of Psalms 108:1: *A song, a Psalm of David. My heart is prepared O God; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises (Psalms 108:1-2).* Elsewhere, this is what Scripture says: *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications (Daniel 9:3).* But is not prayer the same as supplication? The distinction between them is this. Righteous men first incline themselves toward the Holy One, blessed be He, so that He will listen to their prayers. And so our Rabbis taught: A man must begin to pray only in a mood of humility -- not in a mood of frivolity, nor in a mood of lightness, nor in a mood of banter -- so that the Holy One, blessed be He, will listen to his prayer.

²²In *Berachot* 20a Abaye himself regards miracles wrought for people as testifying to their greatness and merit. Rashi observes that his lowliness lay in the fact that a means of earning money was not opened to him.

²³*Deuteronomy* 10:7.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE STUDY PLAN

In The Twelve Steps in Ministry: A Guide for Program Development,¹ Don Benton, a Methodist Minister, offers a suggested course of study which relates *Psalms* and other biblical verses to the Twelve Steps. The program is designed to foster spiritual growth and development, and is intended both for recovering addicts and non-addicts. His sample study plan and suggested verses are reproduced on the following pages. Please note that Reverend Benton included New Testament verses in his original document, however, they have been omitted from this appendix.

¹Don C. Benton, Twelve Steps in Ministry: A Guide for Program Development (Dallas, TX: By the author, Lover's Lane Methodist Church, n.d.), N. pag.

Sample Bible Study Plan

Title: The Psalms and the Twelve Steps – A six-week study of certain Psalms that relate to certain Steps.

Lesson 1 – Psalms 13 and Steps 1, 2 & 3

Lesson 2 – Psalms 51 and Steps 4 & 5

Lesson 3 – Psalms 23 and Steps 6 & 7

Lesson 4 – Psalms 34 and Steps 8 & 9

Lesson 5 – Psalms 119 and Steps 10 & 11

Lesson 6 – Psalms 145 and Step 12

Sample Lesson Plan

Lesson 1 – Psalms 13 and Steps 1, 2 & 3

Time

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 10 min. | Open with Serenity Prayer and reading of preamble for Twelfth Step Ministry Bible Study class (including introductions and group guidelines). |
| 30 | Class members are invited to read the entire Psalms silently as the leader reads it aloud. Then the leader will share personal insight into this particular Psalms and how he/she feels it relates to Steps. It is helpful to relate other perspectives of what the author of the Psalms is saying and what it says about the author's relationship with God. |
| 15 | Members are encouraged to ask questions and share experience, strength and hope they find in relating to the Psalmist. |
| 5 | Closing (announcements, offering, the LORD's Prayer) |

The Twelve Steps and Biblical References

Step One

**We admitted we were powerless over our dependencies –
that our lives had become unmanageable.**

Psalms 5:1	Psalms 6:2-4	Psalms 6:6, 7
Psalms 10:14	Psalms 12:5	Psalms 13:1
Psalms 16:4a	Psalms 18:6	Psalms 18:27
Psalms 22:1, 2	Psalms 22:11-13	Psalms 25:16-18
Psalms 28:1, 2	Psalms 30:10	Psalms 31:9, 10
Psalms 31:22	Psalms 34:18	Psalms 38:1-9
Psalms 39:4, 5	Psalms 40:17	Psalms 42:6-8
Psalms 44:15, 16	Psalms 55:4-8	Psalms 69:1-3
Psalms 69:20	Psalms 69:33	Psalms 72:12, 13
Psalms 88:1-4	Psalms 102:1-7	Psalms 116:3, 4
Proverbs 14:12	Proverbs 18:14	Proverbs 23:29-35
Proverbs 26:12	Proverbs 28:26	

Step Two

**Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves
could restore us to sanity.**

Psalms 18:1-3

Psalms 18:16-19

Psalms 20:7, 8

Psalms 27:13, 14

Psalms 33:18-22

Psalms 46:1-3

Psalms 71:1-3

Psalms 107:27-31

Psalms 107:41-43

Psalms 109:21-27

Psalms 116:5-7

Psalms 118:3-9

Psalms 119:123-125

Psalms 119:162-166

Psalms 121

Psalms 130

Psalms 139:1-16

Psalms 142

Psalms 149:4

Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 2:2-12

Proverbs 15:16

Isaiah 40:28-31

Lamentations 3:17-22

Lamentations 3:21-24

Lamentations 3:55-57

Step Three

**Made a decision to turn our will and our lives
over to the care of God, as we understood God.**

Psalms 3:5, 6

Psalms 4:8

Psalms 9:9, 10

Psalms 17:6-8

Psalms 23

Psalms 28:6-9

Psalms 31:19, 20

Psalms 37:5, 6

Psalms 56:3, 4

Psalms 61:1-4

Psalms 62:5-7

Psalms 68:19, 20

Psalms 86:11-13

Psalms 91:1-4

Psalms 94:17-19

Psalms 116

Psalms 118:8, 9

Psalms 143:8-10

Psalms 147:11

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Proverbs 14:26, 27

Proverbs 16:3

Isaiah 30:15

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Psalms 66:18

Psalms 73:21, 22

Psalms 90:8

Proverbs 4:7

Proverbs 5:3-6

Proverbs 10:17

Proverbs 13:13

Proverbs 14:14, 15

Proverbs 15:11

Proverbs 15:31-33

Proverbs 16:2, 3

Proverbs 19:19

Proverbs 20:1

Proverbs 20:19, 20

Proverbs 21:9

Proverbs 22:24, 25

Proverbs 23:27

Proverbs 23:29-35

Proverbs 25:28

Proverbs 26:20-22

Proverbs 29:1

Proverbs 29:11

Proverbs 29:20

Proverbs 29:22, 23

Proverbs 30:11, 12

Isaiah 53:6

Lamentations 3:40

Step Five

**Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being
the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Psalms 32:3-5

Psalms 38:17, 18

Psalms 40:11-13

Psalms 41:4

Psalms 51:3, 4

Psalms 62:8

Psalms 69:5

Psalms 119:66, 67

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 21:2

Proverbs 27:17

Proverbs 28:13, 14

Proverbs 30:32

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all our shortcomings.

Psalms 4:4, 5

Psalms 16:7-11

Psalms 19:12, 13

Psalms 32:9-11

Psalms 94:12, 13a

Psalms 119:10-12

Psalms 119:28-40

Psalms 139:23, 24

Psalms 141:3, 4

Proverbs 3:11, 12

Proverbs 13:18

Proverbs 17:10

Step Seven

Humbly asked God to remove all our shortcomings.

Psalms 10:17

Psalms 19:12-14

Psalms 25:8-11

Psalms 32:1

Psalms 32:6-8

Psalms 34:4-6

Psalms 34:15

Psalms 37:4-6

Psalms 37:23, 24

Psalms 39:7, 8

Psalms 51:1, 2

Psalms 51:3-5

Psalms 51:10

Psalms 57:10

Psalms 79:9

Psalms 91:14-16

Psalms 103:2, 3

Psalms 119:133

Psalms 139:23-24

Proverbs 18:12

Proverbs 22:4

Isaiah 1:18, 19

Step Eight

**Make a list of all persons we had harmed
and became willing to make amends to them all.**

Numbers 5:6-7

Psalms 124:6-8

Psalms 133:1-3

Proverbs 14:1

Proverbs 14:30

Step Nine

**Made direct amends to such people whenever possible
except when to do so would injure them or others.**

Numbers 5:6

Psalms 51:14-17

Psalms 90:17

Psalms 126:5, 6

Proverbs 3:27

Proverbs 12:18-20

Proverbs 15:1-4

Proverbs 16:6, 7

Proverbs 16:20-24

Proverbs 25:11

Step Ten

**Continued to take a personal inventory
and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

Psalms 24:3-5

Psalms 49:1-20

Psalms 68:5, 6

Psalms 73:13, 14

Psalms 85:8, 9

Psalms 101:2-4

Psalms 103:8-18

Proverbs 12:1

Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Psalms 1:1-3

Psalms 25:1-5

Psalms 50:14, 15

Psalms 55:22

Psalms 63:1-7

Psalms 84:5-12

Psalms 105:1-4

Psalms 127:1-2

Step Twelve

**Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps
we tried to carry this message to others and
practice these principles in all our affairs.**

Psalms 22:22-26

Psalms 31:26-31

Psalms 40:1-8

Psalms 78:4

Psalms 92:1-4

Psalms 96:1, 2

Psalms 106:1-3

Psalms 107:1-2

Psalms 107:21, 22

Psalms 111:1-10

Psalms 145:1-21

Proverbs 31:26-31

Isaiah 58:10, 11

Isaiah 61:1

APPENDIX F

JACS MISSION STATEMENT¹

1. A JACS group is an autonomous, non-profit, volunteer membership organization concerned with the disease of alcoholism and chemical dependency among Jews.
2. A JACS group has the threefold purpose of:
 1. providing spiritual and communal support for addicted Jews and their families;
 2. serving as a resource center and information exchange;
 3. conducting community outreach.
3. A JACS group supports the existing 12-step recovery programs dealing with alcoholism and chemical dependency but is not a substitute for them. Rather, JACS supplements and compliments the existing self-help programs, and attempts to help addicted Jews and their families to integrate Jewish traditions and heritage with the recovery process.
4. A JACS group serves as a resource center on alcoholism and chemical dependency for the Jewish community. It works within the community to assess the needs of chemically dependent Jews that have not been met, and acts as a catalyst and advocate to meet those needs.
5. A JACS group may facilitate educational forums, outreach programs, and training seminars. While individual members may share their experience and information, JACS does not engage in treatment of primary care, nor does it operate as a referral service.
6. a JACS group may have concerned professionals and spiritual leaders among its members, but it is not a professionally run program, nor is it a professional organ of an existing communal, social service, religious or commercial establishment.
7. A JACS group acts as an informal network for its members, enabling them to share information, to stay and explore Jewish themes, and to discuss their cultural, emotional and spiritual experiences as Jews.

The JACS Foundation has accepted the challenge and welcomes the encouragement and support of the very community it will continue to serve.

¹ Renah Rabinowitz, "Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency in the Jewish Community: Sh. . . . Sh. . . . Sh," Addictions in the Jewish Community, ed. Stephen Jay Levy and Sheila B. Blume (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Jewish Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., 1986), 140-141.

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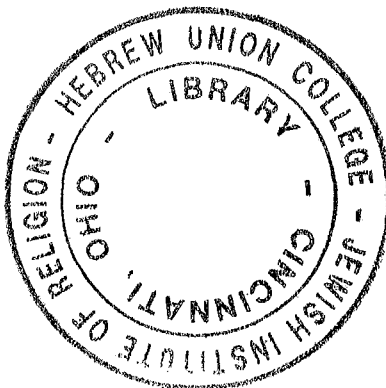
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