A PERFORMATIVE MODEL FOR TEACHING PRAYER TO ADULT REFORM JEWS IN A CONGREGATIONAL SETTING

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DIGEST

The goal of this thesis is to synthesize what we know about Adult Jewish education with the best way of teaching Reform Jews to pray. The thesis aims to help the Reform congregant engage in worship with meaning through knowledgeable participation. It combines the knowledge of how adults learn and how the prayers were compiled into the form we have today, with the best way to teach this information to Jewish adults.

Chapter One is an overview of how Jewish prayer came about from the time of the second Temple to the present. It traces the background upon which prayer is based and also discusses how it was compiled into the forms we have today. It focuses on the tension between *keva* and *kavannah* and goes on to explain some of the various philosophies of prayer.

Chapter Two is an overview of Service One in Gates of Prayer. It breaks down the service by rubric and gives the historical background for the prayer. It also delves into the rationale behind the choice of prayer by those who compiled this Reform Prayer book.

Chapter Three is an overview of how adults learn. It traces the characteristics of the adult learner as well as the way in which, by understanding these, we can best facilitate adult learning.

Chapter Four concentrates on how to teach the Jewish adult to bring knowledge and meaning to his or her life. Jews are taught the necessity of study, but some never understand its relevance. This chapter seeks to explore the possibility of empowering the

learner to be a willing participant in the learning process, and thus become a 'self-directed learner.'

I attempted to synthesize the learning of the above four chapters in order to teach the class to Jewish adults. I taught it in two different contexts: One was during a prayer minyan, and the second was as an adult education class. The Appendix is a copy of the study sheets I utilized when teaching this course.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this thesis surfaced when I was talking to my Mayerson Mentor, Rabbi Barr. I said that I didn't think people really knew how to pray. He then challenged me to design a learner's minyan that would help the average person to connect with the prayers. Perhaps if people knew more about the prayers, why they were praying, and/or to whom they were praying, the prayer experience would be more meaningful and relevant. This launched me on a two year mission to design and develop a prayer curriculum.

This thesis is the product of many hours of research, practice, teaching and learning. Throughout the project, I had the opportunity to work with wonderful people who agreed to assist me with my research by taking part in a learners minyan. I wish to offer my sincere gratitude to the congregants at Temple B'nai Abraham, Portsmouth, Ohio. And to Rabbis Lewis Kamrass, Ilana Baden and Michael Shulman who allowed me to teach part of this thesis at the adult education, Eitz Chayim, classes at Wise Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio. I also thank my students, who gave me great feedback and helped me to grow as both a teacher and a rabbi.

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INTRODUCTION

One Shabbat evening, while leading my student pulpit in Friday night services, I noticed that most of my congregants were not praying. Some were looking around, some were whispering to each other. After the next prayer, I stopped and asked the congregation what they knew about the following prayer. (The Amidah.) No one said a thing. Of course it was not the custom of this synagogue to talk during services. But during the Oneg Shabbat, a congregant came up to me and sheepishly admitted that he never prayed. In fact he didn't come to services to pray, but rather to see his friends and socialize after the service. The prayer part was what he had to endure in order to enjoy his friends. Other congregants at different times confessed that they never even thought about the prayers, their origins or their rationale. They had come to accept that this is what Jews do on Friday nights and that was fine with them.

But it wasn't fine with me. I wanted to know why prayer had become so empty to this group of Jews in the middle of rural America. I started asking Jews in the Reform congregations in larger cities, "what did they know of prayer?" I kept getting the same answers. The answers ranged from; "Not much," they just did what they thought they were supposed to do, to, "I listen to the music of the service," or "I enjoy the sermon." Perhaps, once in a while, they would feel as though they had some connection to the words on the page.

Public Prayer is a requirement for many Jews as well as for people of other faiths. Prayer is the expression of the religious emotion of man in relationship with his Creator. However it is an art form that seems to have lost its ability to transform and change the worshipper. There are many people who have tried to pray throughout their lives and

have decided that they lack the need and desire to participate in prayer. Others may desire to do it, but do not know where or how to start. When they experience worship, they sing the prayers, say the words, but no connection is made.

The aim of this thesis is to help the Reform congregant engage in worship with meaning, through knowledgeable participation. Dr. Lawrence Hoffman asks, "What's wrong with worship today? How can we make it more accessible for congregants?" He claims that, "Worship dysfunction has been going on for so long that people are not even sure that they can or should pray. So changing the worship system to facilitate worship will require, first and foremost, the recognition that worship moments are desirable and possible"[1]

Why is this necessary right now? Eric Yoffie said in his sermon at the 65th UAHC Biennial in 1999, "Reform Jews are rediscovering the power and the purpose of prayer. We sense that our Judaism has been a bit too cold and domesticated: we yearn to sing to God, to let our souls fly free. And we feel that through prayer we can rediscover our inner selves, and bind ourselves to the collective body of Israel...Far too often our members pray without fervor or concentration."

It is my hope that, through this thesis process of designing a model based on the concept of a "learners' minyan", I will create the means for people to discover the power of prayer and pray in a more informed and meaningful manner. Only when we arm our congregants with the tools showing them how and why to pray, and give them a safe environment that is conducive to prayer, will they feel comfortable enough to trust the process of prayer.

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[1] Lawrence Hoffman. The Art of Public Prayer – Not For Clergy Only, 2nd Edition. (Vermont: Sky Paths Publishing. 1999) 112.

I also want to via this thesis, explore the many ways in which adults learn. The entire subject area of educating adults has to be handled delicately. Adults are not bigger children in a classroom setting. Instead, adults in a worship setting must have a safe space where they can learn and explore their own conceptions of prayer and God. Therefore in order to create a successful learning and praying environment, as well as to reach the largest cross-section of adults, it is necessary to have a better understanding of how adults learn.

The thesis will be comprised of four chapters. The first chapter will explore the meaning of the prayers of the Reform service, their historical background and the various philosophies of prayer. The second chapter will be an overview of the origins of the prayers, when they came about, and how they were put together in the rubrics of the Reform service, focusing on the Friday night service in The Gates of Prayer, Service One.

The two chapters that follow will be an overview of how adults learn. I hope that with this knowledge, the thesis can be a vehicle to facilitate the transmission of information contained in the first component to the greatest number of adults. Adults learn differently. Because prayer is difficult and personal, I will attempt to find 'pathways' into prayer so that the greatest number of people will be able to access the content of the prayer, and thus find greater meaning in praying.

The third part is to design a highly interactive and content-full 'information sheet' to be used within the context of a service. It is part of a script that I will use in a service to synthesize all of these components into a useable framework. I will also integrate my thinking about adult education and the choices I make in teaching the prayers in this

manner. In other words, using what we learn from the first two components of this thesis, I will then integrate the information into a learning model for a Reform Friday night prayer service. This model service will be used for teaching prayer to adults within both an informational and emotional context.

I hope that I can create a *Kahal Kadosh* – "A Holy Congregation" where each worshipper becomes part of a greater congregation. I also hope that each worshipper will draw strength from the other worshippers and give a part of himself in the process. And from this prayer experience, he may go forth and live a life of greater meaning and on a higher ethical plane.

Chapter One – An Overview of Prayer

> "O God, I stand before Thee, knowing all my deficiencies, and overwhelmed by Thy majesty...Thou knowest what is for my good. If I recite my wants, it is not to remind Thee of them, but that I may better understand how great is my dependence on Thee...Oh, Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor are mine eyes lofty."
>
> Bahya ibn Paquda

Why Pray?

Prayer has been a timeless need of man since the early days of human existence. Prayer has been the mode of communication between man and a supernatural being. Throughout the ages, man has, on some level, felt the need to emote to a higher being, and this has formed the essence of prayer. "Prayer is the salient expression of religious emotion in man and of his relationship with his Creator. There are, of course, many other forms in which people may express their religious feelings - from those fixed ceremonial rites that in themselves constitute a religious ritual, to those acts which man performs in order to obey the will of God, or from which he may refrain because they negate the creator's will and command."[1] Prayer is the direct speech which man uses to be in relationship with his creator. Prayer functions as a process of communication that helps keep a person centered, and encourages the need for a higher spiritual being.

Prayer is for the benefit of man. It helps man feel connected in a world where chaos and tribulation can be overwhelming. "Even though God does not have to be told about your needs, He has given you an opportunity of opening your heart to Him, of sharing your concerns with Him. Petitionary prayer does not convey any information to God which He previously lacked, but it affords you the relief of verbalizing, in His

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[1] Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, A Guide to Jewish Prayer. (New York: Schocken Books, 2000) 8.

presence, whatever it is that you are striving for."[2] Prayer is available to all people and is a basic human need. Although some believe that prayer changes God, others believe that prayer can be efficacious and instrumental in achieving our ends. Whether we pray because we believe God hears our prayer, or we pray because we feel that it helps us, prayer can still be helpful and beneficial.

However, prayer is difficult. And just as it is hard for all people, so too is it difficult for Jews. In order to facilitate the fluency of prayer, there was a move by rabbis and scholars to fix a text. However, even with a fixed text, it has proven difficult to connect with the divine. Although some would argue that the problem is a modern one, this is not the case. "The history of Jewish prayer makes evident that modernity is not the sole cause of difficulty with prayer. The prayer's formal components work to make it alienating as well. Hence, the development of Jewish liturgy itself attests to the impact of form on the prayer experience."[3] The act of prayer is not something that comes easily to everyone. There are many reasons for this. Worship can be a sterile and seemingly meaningless experience. There are many reasons for this; the individual isn't ready, the environment is not suitable, or the language of prayer may make it seem inaccessible. Ernest Simon wrote, "Prayer is one of man's greatest but also most difficult acts."[4] The difficulty of prayer is a complex phenomenon and has perplexed man from biblical days to the present.

The focus of prayer has changed over time as well. Some prefer prayer that is spontaneous and impulsive, the result of an outpouring of emotion. Others prefer to have

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[2] Jakob J. Petuchowski, Understanding Jewish Prayer (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1972) 37.
[3] Riv-Ellen Prell, Prayer and Community: The Havurah in American Judaism (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989) 180
[4] Reuven Hammer, Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service. (New York: Schocken Press, 1994) 106.

prayer that is fixed and set in a way that is easy to say without having to recreate it on one's own. "Before the advent of modernity the Jew wanted to know *how* pray; now he wants to know *why* he should pray. While waiting for an answer he has lost the habit of praying; then he forgot how to pray; and by now he does not know to whom to pray."[5] So, the focus instead has been to find an easier way to connect to God through fixed text and fixed ways of worship. But, one size does not fit all. Prayer is complex and contact with God is not always achieved. In order to understand the crux of the worship difficulty, it is helpful to look at the history of Jewish prayer.

Since the Jews became a people, there has been a need to worship as a community to incorporate a notion of a collective identity. The individual is no longer praying alone, but rather is a part of something bigger than oneself. But what separates Jewish prayer from the prayer of other people? "Prayer is not an exclusively Jewish enterprise. It is an expression of our human status. The impulse to pray comes from basic human needs and desires. The informal words a person addresses to God may well be the same regardless of one's background."[6] So what makes prayer distinctively Jewish? "The distinctiveness of Jewish prayer is to be found in the concept of the God to whom we pray, a God who is the sole source of life, who can be entreated but not compelled, a God who is Father and King at the same time. Formal Jewish prayer utilizes the words others have formulated before us in order to guide us. These words specifically reflect Jewish belief, Jewish ideals, Jewish history, and Jewish hopes for the future. They are based upon uniquely Jewish concepts of God, the nature of God, and our relationship to Him."[7] Thus Jewish prayer concerns itself with the task of connecting to a God who is concerned with the

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[5] Abraham Millgram, Jewish Worship (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971) 598.
[6] Hammer, 11.
[7] Ibid. 11.

welfare and the well-being of the Jewish people.

Jews pray because they feel they are fulfilling a mitzvah and have a divine commandment to do so. Some prayers are considered to be as obligatory as were some of the Temple sacrifices. Although the Torah does not contain an obligatory commandment specifically stating that one should pray, it does contain the idea that man should serve God with all of our hearts, our souls and our being.[8] Moreover, prayer is a part of the fabric of the Jewish people from antiquity to modernity.

History of Prayer

Prayer as a means of connecting man to God has been an activity of the Jews since the days of the Bible. Prayer combines intelligence and imagination and a willingness to accept the notion of its efficacy. "Prayer was, of course, customary among the Israelites from earliest times. Prayer at fixed times is already alluded to in the Bible as the practice of individuals (Daniel 6:11, Psalms 55:18). Moreover most of the biblical psalms served as prayer-hymns, which were chanted by the Levitical singers in the Temple during the offering of the sacrifices, as a form of 'musical accompaniment' to that ritual."[9] However other cultures had their own forms of worship as well. Much worship and prayer was spontaneous, but there was also evidence of fixed forms of prayer. "Institutionalized prayer may not be quite as ancient as spontaneous prayer, but it, too, was known in the oldest civilizations, like those of Egypt and Babylonia, where prayer played a prominent part in the complex rituals accompanying temple ceremonies and sacrifices. Often prayer was invested with magical powers; its recital required expert knowledge. Only a properly trained priest who knew the words in their exact order, could

[8] Deut 11:13.
[9] Joseph Heinemann, Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns (Berlin: Walter de Gryter, 1977) 14.

recite them with the intonation necessary to ensure their efficacy."[10] However, as previously stated, in Judaism and in other cultures the ways of relating to God are similar. What makes Jewish prayer uniquely Jewish? Heinemann offers the opinion that "The ideas and motifs of biblical prayer differ qualitatively from the preceding pagan models, not only because they express a monotheistic view but because they do not resort to crude bargaining with the Deity; because spiritual issues take precedence over requests for material benefits; and because the prayers are permeated by a sense of the intimate relation between the individual and his God, in whom he trusts and whose love and guidance he desires. All traces of magic have disappeared by the time we come to biblical prayer, which does not seek to impose man's will on heaven through devices and formulas designed to compel the Deity's consent to man's request."[11] However, Heinemann's opinion of prayer is not always the case. Some Jewish prayers do resort to bargaining and material requests are made. (Bakashot, for instance) Egyptian and Mesopotamian prayer is infused with intimate relationships as well. Prayer was a way for Jews to connect with God on a deeper, more meaningful level.

The First and Second Temples were the primary centers for sacrificial worship. The Central Sanctuary, deemed to be the authentic place for sacrifice on behalf of the Israelites. "The Temple with its sacrificial order had been the focal point of Judaism and the Jewish people from the time of their return from exile in 583 BCE until its destruction...With no legitimate king of the lineage of David, it was the Temple that served as a symbol of Jewish unity and of the Jewish people's devotion to God."[12] The

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[10] Joseph Heinemann, with Jakob J. Petuchowski Literature of the Synagogue (New York: Behrman House, 1975) 1.
[11] Ibid. 2.
[12] Hammer. 84.

Temple sacrifice, with the Cohen officiating, was the primary mode of communal worship for the Jews during the Temple period. However synagogues also existed in other areas while the Second Temple was still in existence. Abraham Millgram seems to think that communal prayer took place in synagogues before 70CE. However, we have no evidence of this until after the Temple's destruction. After the destruction of the Second Temple, worship styles changed. New attitudes toward prayer and study were adopted and linked to the now defunct sacrificial system. New participatory forms of worship replaced the sacrificial system involving everyone, not just the Kohanim. "But unlike the sacrificial cult, in which the entire people is assigned no active participatory role (the sacrificial rite being performed exclusively by the Temple priest in the name of the people, and on their behalf), the new form of worship is to be performed by each individual, by the entire community of worshippers, wherever they may be."[13] Some believe that patterns of worship had already been established for those who wanted to pray their own prayer. "In those days, the Temple services and the inner service of prayer were considered as two parallel systems. In the Temple itself, only the *Shema* and a few benedictions were publicly recited, while whoever wished to pray in the Temple, did so in his own language and style; where the community could gather for public prayer as well as for study and public meetings."[14] The Temple was a place that linked the people to one another as well as to God.

Just as sacrifice was of utmost importance in the Temple, prayer was raised to that level later in the synagogue. Purity codes were upheld in the Temple and later in the synagogues. Since prayer now became a mitzvah, it was necessary to frame a correct

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[13] Heinemann. 14.
[14] Steinsaltz. 50.

way of praying. The rabbis carried forward some of the purity concerns of the Temple into the practice of prayer. "They struggled to establish the appropriate degree of purity required for the verbal worship of God. One must distance oneself from any excrement, garbage or bad odor by at least four cubits to recite Shema or Amidah. This requirement is so serious that if one happens to enter such an impure area while reciting Shema, one must stop the recitation, and if one notices in the middle of the Amidah that one's location is unsuitable, one is required to remove oneself in the middle of the prayer."[15] Thus purity and appropriateness were of the highest priority in prayer and worship.

The impact of the destruction of the Second Temple was devastating and was felt in many ways. Though it was the end of the centrality of the sacrificial worship, it also resulted in the emergence of new thinking – a paradigm shift in belief and attitude towards prayer. The following Midrash illustrates this paradigm shift:

> "Once, as Rabban Yohannan Ben Zakkai was coming forth from Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua followed after him and beheld the Temple in ruins.
> "Woe unto us!" Rabbi Joshua cried, "that this, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste!"
> "My son," Rabban Yochanan said to him, "be not grieved; we have another atonement as effective as this." And what is it? It is acts of loving-kindness, as it is said, "For I desire loving kindness and not sacrifice."" (Hos 6:6)[16]

However, while there was a move away from Temple sacrificial worship, there was still a desire to rebuild the Temple. "While the integration of the Temple system into the rabbinic liturgical world was a crucial element in legitimating the rabbinic worship system, the rabbis themselves always considered their system a poor substitute. They looked forward to the speedy rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple where God would again be worshipped properly and they certainly assumed that any sacrificial worship, outside

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[15] Langer. 13.
[16] (*Avot D'Rabbi Nathan 4*) in Hammer. 87.

of the official Jerusalem Temple would be decidedly unpleasing to God."[17] But while the Jews were hoping for the rebuilding of the Temple, the Rabbis had already started to formulate a way to legitimize a newer form of public communal worship. "...the Rabbis gathering at Yavneh after the destruction of the Temple did consider themselves the legitimate leaders of the people, based on the authority of their received heritage of the Oral Torah. Theirs was a dual challenge. Not only did they have to define the parameters of a new relationship with God that could function without reliance on the Temple and its sacrifices; they also had to convince the rest of the Jewish world that they taught God's authentic will and that their forms of worship were the only effective ways to maintain Israel's relationship with God, at least until the Temple could be rebuilt."[18] Until that time arrived, the rabbis attempted to replicate the motif that existed during earlier days when God dwelled among the Jewish people. "In many ways, the rabbinic understanding is a continuation of that of Temple times, when God was physically present in the Holy of Holies and reliably accessible there, even if the Divine Presence could not be understood to be confined to any single spot. After the destruction, God was to be found in a heavenly Temple, a place to which the mystical adepts of the period could travel. There, they might gaze on the Divine throne, participate in the angelic liturgies, and at times, communicate directly with the Creator. In this conception, God, sitting in heaven, could choose to enjoy and respond to Israel's prayers, much as a human king might receive and respond to his subjects."[19] Thus the Rabbis set out to fix prayer so that it was analogous to the worship style of the Temple, without the sacrifices.

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[17] Op Cit - Langer, Ruth – To Worship God Properly - Page 10
[18] Ibid. Page 4
[19] Ibid. Page 36-37.

The Need for Fixed Prayer

This fixing of the worship service was no easy task. It took many years and underwent a lot of changes and amendments. We don't know if the fixing of texts had begun years earlier. We do know it was done in order to establish a form of worship that could be passed down from generation to generation. The fixing of prayer had much to do with the spread of rabbinic authority out into the community; it allowed the "masses" to pray as the Rabbis wanted them to do. The fixing of texts happened over time in order to help the person to pray with greater focus and to unite the prayers of the various communities. "It should be noted that fixed prayer texts are intended primarily as an aid to prayer, providing clearly formulated words and thoughts to articulate the feelings of the heart that the individual cannot always adequately express, whether because of lack of knowledge or poverty of language. But if a person wishes to pray by and for himself, he may do so, and the fact that there are fixed forms of prayer need not prevent or constrain him."[20] Fixed prayer allowed the worshipper to better concentrate on God. "It is, then, the aim of fixed prayer to provide man with a stimulus to turn his thoughts to God; to remove the individual from the realm of the mundane and the routine, and to elevate his thoughts and feelings to the level of the Divine and the Absolute."[21] Fixed prayer had many advantages as well. "The democratization of the divine worship, then, constitutes another revolutionary aspect of fixed, statutory prayer, and paves a new, more intimate and immediate way by which man may approach God and fulfill his divine obligations, anywhere and at anytime."[22] However, the rabbis sought as well to make prayer parallel to the sacrificial system of worship, in order to keep it on a par with the now defunct

[20] Steinsaltz. 20.
[21] Heinemann. 18.
[22] Ibid. 14.

mode of sacrificial worship. "Obligatory and fixed prayer is understood here to be a legitimate form of divine worship, on a par with the sacrificial cult of the Temple, through which Israel fulfills its daily communal obligations to the Lord."[23] If this was in fact what was done, then the rabbis had the difficult task of sifting through the already existing prayers and putting them into some systematic form. "Thus the first stage in the development of the liturgy was characterized by diversity and variety and the task of the rabbis was to systematize and to impose order on this multiplicity of forms, patterns and structures."[24] It is not known exactly when the liturgy was fixed. Some claim that the liturgy could not have been fixed as early as the first century. "It is hard to say exactly when, but liturgy was probably in place, at least in rabbinic circles, by the last century BCE or the first century CE. The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek, and means "public works". It is akin to the Hebrew word, avodah, which also means "work," but refers explicitly to "the public work of the Temple cult, the sacrificial system." The Rabbis transform private prayer of the moment into a public work like the cult: the honoring of God by the offering of our lips."[25]

The rabbis based the structure of prayer on the old sacrificial service, attempting to continue the form of the Avodah, the cultic sacrifice. What is based on the cult is the obligation to recite the prayers at the time of the sacrifices. There is a twice-a-day model of the Temple sacrifices, and the three-times-a-day model of individual pious persons such as Daniel and/or a Psalmist. "It was finally decided that the fixed daily prayer would be obligatory for all, and that only two prayer services – *Shacharit* in the morning

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[23] Ibid. 14.
[24] Ibid. 37.
[25] Lawrence Hoffman, Minhag Ami/My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers. Modern Commentaries Volume 1. (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing 1998) 4.

and *Minhah* in the afternoon – would be considered as fully mandatory. Only in relatively later times did *Ma'ariv*, the evening prayer, also become obligatory."[26] M. Berachot states that the evening prayer has no "Keva" – no fixed time. This means it was not obligatory. In Talmudic materials, the evening prayers grew in popularity with the more pious groups. The Ma'ariv service that would take place in the synagogue on Friday nights with a festive meal and worship. As the communities spread, there was a rabbinic need for control and authority. This resulted in the compilation of the Siddur.

History of the Siddur

The first Siddur was compiled in the ninth century. "The first known Siddur written by a major authority with the aim of establishing a fixed liturgy was that composed by Rav Amram ben Sheshna Gaon (d. ca. 875 CE), in response to a request by the Jews of Barcelona, Spain. It included a main prayer text, and the laws and customs of prayer. Rav Amram Gaon's Siddur thus became a classic source for the creation of a single prayer liturgy in many Jewish communities around the world."[27] This was only the first of many incarnations of the Siddur. One would assume that once the first Siddur was compiled, prayer would be fixed. "The biggest surprise, perhaps, is that Jewish prayer was not altogether fixed by the Middle Ages. Even as late as the twelfth century, not everyone was praying the same liturgies. Also new prayers were still being composed. Apparently, both the how and the what of worship had yet to be firmly fixed. This often comes as a surprise to people who imagine that all the details of the Jewish service must go back to antiquity."[28] But, it was difficult to fix customs for Jewish communities spread out across the Mediterranean and into Northern Europe. Each group

[26] Steinsaltz. 52.
[27] Ibid. 57.
[28] Lawrence Hoffman, The Way Into Jewish Prayer (Woodstock VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000) 13.

developed its own customs because they were relatively isolated from the others. However, the general structure, rubrics and major prayers were uniform. "Although the basic system of rabbinic prayer was well defined by the time of codification of the Mishnah, it has constantly been subject to further refinements over the centuries. As these refinements have accumulated, they have been transmitted along with the original system, as halacha, which defines the legal boundaries of acceptable prayer."[29] The Halacha of prayer is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to mention that the need to pray "correctly" comes from a desire of the rabbis for the prayer to be accepted by God, and thus they drew parameters around what was defined as acceptable. "A potent force during the early development of rabbinic prayer and its legal system was the need to establish that this innovative means of worship was indeed an acceptable, meaningful, constructive worship of God. Once the general outlines were established, Jewish communities and their leaders continually refined the details of this system to ensure its ongoing ability to please God, fulfill Israel's covenantal responsibility of worship, and thus ensure God's continuing providential care for Israel"[30] The Siddur reflects the attempt to make prayer acceptable to God and accessible for all who desired to pray.

The Siddur in its basic form is a collection of prayers. But in a larger sense, it is much more than that. "The prayer book is our Jewish diary of the centuries, a collection of prayers composed by generations of those who came before us, as they endeavored to express the meaning of their lives."[31]

> "The material that appears in the Siddur was created over a period of thousands of years and has not stopped growing. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that there are two elements that characterize the Siddur and differentiate it from all that

[29] Langer. 2.
[30] Ibid. ix.
[31] Hoffman. Minhag Ami. 1.

> came before. The first is that the Siddur is exactly what its name proclaims, "an order of service"...In the Bible, we have a record of prayers that were recited by individuals or by the entire people at specific times, but they were not part of an order of service to be recited on a regular basis...The second new characteristic is that the recitation of the order of prayer is a matter not of choice but of religious obligation. The positive commandment to recite certain prayers at certain times is no less incumbent on the Jew than the offering of sacrifices had been or observance of the regulations of the Sabbath and festivals."[32]

The Siddur is one of the books most used by Jews throughout the ages. While other books are read once in a lifetime or studied from time to time, the Siddur is used for prayer and study everyday by Jews all over the world. "To know the prayer book is to know our history from within. It is to be in touch with the soul of the Jewish people, as it has evolved in good times and in bad through persecutions and Golden Ages. The Siddur is our encounter with 3,000 years of fate..."[33] It is a book that ties not only community to community, but generation to generation. The fact that so much of the Jewish experience can be found in the Siddur is a lot of the reason for its appeal. "One aspect of the bond with the Siddur lies in its being a book that unites the entire Jewish people. Other books have limited appeal, being meant only for those able to study them and interested in doing so; but every Jewish person uses the Siddur. Even if not all of the "People of the Book" were familiar with the Bible, or never studied the Talmud, the Siddur was known to all."[34] But the Siddur had even greater appeal. It had the capacity to touch the soul of all who used it as a vehicle to connect with the ancestors who came before us. It bonded us to one another and to our Jewish past as well. "Another aspect of this deep and intimate bond arises from the very essence and nature of Jewish prayer. The Siddur is not merely a book containing the liturgy of the synagogue, but a

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[32] Hammer. 75-76.
[33] Hoffman. Minhag Ami. 2.
[34] Steinsaltz. 4.

comprehensive collection of prayers and benedictions relating to every aspect of Jewish life."[35] The power of the Siddur is apparent in its usage. "For generations, the Siddur was the first book the Jewish child learned to read, and through the struggle to grasp the combination of its letters, he repeated and learned to recite its phrases by heart."[36] But this is not reason enough for the great appeal of the Siddur. It is also the book that is the widest representation of Jewish history, belief and hope in one collection. "In the same way as the Siddur represents the entire expanse of Judaism, it also reflects it through the dimension of time, in the generations of Jewish creativity. Some passages, taken from the Torah and other books of the Bible, hearken back to the earliest history of the Jewish people...The Siddur is not a finished work produced by the efforts of a particular author, but rather a kind of treasury in which the people of Israel, generation after generation, have deposited things of exquisite beauty. Each generation chooses its own pearls of wisdom and emotion, stringing them together to form verses of prayer."[37] The more recent changes were made to bring greater meaning and have wider appeal to Jews living in modern Western culture.

Keva And Kavanah

Kavanah is a Hebrew word that is difficult to translate. It could mean devotion, intentionality, attention and/or concentration. The Talmud states that "he who prays must direct his heart to heaven."[38] It is the spontaneous outpouring of ones heart to God. Most people engage in this kind of prayer at one time or another. Another type of prayer necessitates a community. It is based on the idea that there is a God who actually a)

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[35] Ibid. 4.
[36] Ibid. 3.
[37] Ibid. 5.
[38] Berakhot 31a

hears our prayers and b) will answer them. It also supports the need for a fixed liturgy, which then dictates a kind of performance on our part. That is, if we prayed for rain and the prayer was answered, the way we prayed was tried again to produce the same outcome. This made the prayer fixed (keva). Subsequent generations would come along and attempt to infuse the fixed prayer with new intention. Petuchowski claimed that "One generation's kavanah is another's keva, and one generation's keva may be another's kavanah. What is liturgically fixed and routine for one generation may provide the source of intense spirituality for another."[39] Ironically, the rabbis during the Rabbinic period were initially opposed to the writing down of prayer. It wasn't until the ninth century that we got a fixing of the liturgy for the Siddur. This was done to help the person pray with more intention. However there were pitfalls to fixing prayer. "The danger of creating a fixed, legally enshrined liturgy is that prayers might be recited with technical correctness, but quite mechanically and without concentration on their meaning and purpose. The rabbis establish that one should have kavanah to fulfill any commandment properly, including those involving prayer. However they recognized the impossibility of universal achievement of this ideal and consequently established minimal levels of concentration necessary for prayer to be acceptable."[40] So the goal instead is some modicum of devotion in prayer, as much as possible when one is praying. Certainly it is understood that no human being can maintain a consistent level of *kavanah*. Devotion is a goal rather than a state of being. The rabbis had a lot to say about the necessity for *kavanah*. For the rabbis, *kavanah* was the absolute prerequisite of true prayer. "Prayer without *kavanah* is like a body without a soul." (Don Isaac

[39] Prell. 184.
[40] Langer. 23.

Abravanel, *Yshu'oth Meshiho.* Jerusalem, 1967, p. 14a) The nature of such a prayer of *kavanah* cannot be determined."[41] Petuchowski goes on to say that there is a need for fixed prayer, which leads to *kavanah.* "This need for a recognizable constant leads to the gradual crystallization of fixed parts of the worship service which remain, with very minor local modifications, always and everywhere the same. Thus a prayer *tradition* comes into existence, a routine element which gives community worship its "fixed" aspect. It is what the ancient Rabbis called k*eva,* the fixed, the routine, the traditional."[42] Riv-Ellen Prell expounds on what Petuchowski said about *keva* and *kavanah* and adds, "Jewish prayer is not only a liturgy but a performance as well, requiring an attitude and often necessitating the support of a community. The meanings of fixed forms will change given the context of performance."[43] It is a struggle to balance the *keva* and *kavanah* in every prayer situation.

One way to achieve devotion and intentionality in prayer is to direct one's thoughts to the object of the prayer. "Clearly, the dialogic character of prayer requires every worshipper to adopt a theological position. The Tannaim insisted that everyone who prays should direct his mind to God (Ber 31a). Such intention is pointless unless the worshipper has some idea of the object of his worship. Yet the fact is that the average Jews pays scant attention to the meaning of "God."[44] So, Jews need not only to know about the prayers in the Siddur, they need also to have an understanding of the concept of God and how k*avanah* can point to that goal of closeness with God. "Prayer requires k*avanah,* which implies not only concentration but meaning and intention in expressing

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[41] Jakob J. Petuchowski. Understanding Jewish Prayer (New York: KTAV Publishing1972) 3.
[42] Ibid. 7.
[43] Prell. 184.
[44] Petuchowski. 3-4.

ourselves before God. The word *kavanah* can also mean "to aim." There must be intent in whatever we say, aiming toward closeness to God."[45] One way to attain that closeness with God, is to use a fixed prayer text. Thus there was a need for the fixing of the prayer texts in one place. This gave rise to the need for a Jewish prayer book, or Siddur.

The Siddur is not only the compilation of biblical passages, blessings, prayers and the experience of the Jewish community through history, but also of the reinterpretation of these in different forms. The Jewish prayer book evolved over at least three centuries. Through experimentation, creativity and controversy, additions have been made which show that for the Siddur to perform its task, it has to be interpreted, reinterpreted and reconsidered. The act of reconsidering, that is to constantly reinterpret and define what is meaningful, is the task of the person who prays. And it is their task to improvise to keep the prayer fresh. "The rabbis called this improvisation *kavanah*, a word we usually translate as inner directedness of the heart, a proper balance, we believe, to the numbed rote that mumbling through the prayer book can become."[46] There are different levels of *kavanah*. "The lowest level is one that is nearly passive: simple understanding of the words being recited. This basic level of *kavanah* – to 'direct his heart to the meaning of the words which he utters' – is a basic requirement pertaining to any act of reading or recitation: to at least comprehend what is being uttered."[47] Many of those who pray today do not possess even a modicum of understanding of what is being said in prayer. "The next level of *kavanah* goes beyond that of simple reading and understanding, to the identification of the worshipper with the prayers recited. The prayers in the Siddur are no

[45] Hammer. 13.
[46] Hoffman. Minhag Ami, Volume 1. 3.
[47] Steinsaltz. 35-36.

longer seen as an external text, but are an expression of inward feeling and experiences."[48]

But even this deeper level has another added layer to it. "There are various degrees of this second level of *kavanah* as well, corresponding with the depth and intensity of identification. For some, the words in the Siddur are a general guide for the inner emotions that run parallel to them. At a higher degree of identification, words and worshipper fuse together, with every word and phrase of prayer becoming his very own thoughts and feelings."[49] Of course there are other forms of *kavanah* that come from various mystical traditions and esoteric teachings. "There are yet deeper kinds of *kavvanot*, that are not only more complex, but which demand that the worshipper enter into a different mode of prayer. The *mekhavim* – as those praying in this manner are sometimes called – are said actually to experience what they fix their minds upon. One who directs his prayer toward higher worlds not only knows the "address" of a particular phrase within a prayer, but is able to raise himself to that level."[50] This is in contrast to the kind of prayer that is just done by rote, with no spiritual connection. "Heschel decries this 'spiritual absenteeism.' Some modern men and women 'pray by proxy' (he says), letting the rabbi or cantor do the work while they sit passively in their pews turning the pages; others read the words, but they recite the prayer book 'as if it were last week's newspaper....The words are there but the souls who are to feel their meaning, to absorb their significance, are absent. They utter shells of syllables but put nothing of themselves into the shells.' (Heschel, Man's Quest For God, 50,51)"[51] Thus, it is up to the person

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[48] Ibid. Page 36
[49] Ibid. Page 37
[50] Ibid. Page 37
[51] Hoffman, The Way Into Jewish Prayer. 35.

praying to find a spiritual connection with the divine. Sometimes one does not feel like praying. Prayer is obligatory for the traditional Jew, not for the Reform Jew. This is where the balance between *keva* and *kavanah* can be of value. Prayer can respond to the person's emotional needs as well as to the person's sense of duty. Just as a painter must work at his craft in order to become masterful, a person who prays daily, whether he feels like it or not, will have a better chance of finding the balance between *keva* and *kavanah*.

Philosophies of Prayer

This section is a summary of Jack Cohen's book, *Major Philosophies of Jewish Prayer in the Twentieth Century*. His work has been very helpful in looking at the different philosophies of prayer. There are many philosophers who had much to say on the subject of worship and prayer. Although this section is by no means a comprehensive analysis of the different philosophers, it will serve as a good overview of the different views that certain philosophers held about prayer.

Hermann Cohen, a neo-Kantian, German philosopher, has much to say about what he believes is the most important aspect of prayer the worshipper must focus upon. He believes that Jews must pay careful attention to the environments in which they live, absorbing what is in keeping with the Jewish spirit and warding off dangers to that spirit. In line with this precaution, Cohen writes, "Prayer...must be evaluated and used as a means of education to the content of faith in order to introduce and impress the most important ideas upon the religious mind."[52] Cohen believes that prayer forms the congregation and that the individual is molded through the congregation, if he or she is willing to join with other members of the group to form a community. Cohen references

[52] Jack Cohen. Major Philosophies of Jewish Prayer. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000) 11.

the Aleinu prayer, which 'proclaims the messianic advent of God's universal kingdom.'[53] Cohen uses the Aleinu prayer to demonstrate his vision of the common Jewish ideal. In the Aleinu, where the Jewish service reaches its climax, the congregants dedicate themselves to united humankind. "Each worshipper attains his true humanity as a member of the God-seeking collective." Cohen's idea of God is obscure, but his idea of prayer is easier to understand. "Despite the abstractness of Cohen's definition of God, it is obvious that it emanates from and has concrete bearing on human experience...It is readily seen, therefore, that prayer is one of the main instruments by means of which humans establish their relationship to God and infuse it with emotional force."[54] Cohen believes that prayer is the movement from intellect to action. "Prayer transposes the correlation between humans and God from the realm of intellect alone to that of purposive action...Therefore, when worshippers enter the synagogue to pray, they must bring their minds with them."[55] This need to have their mind included in the prayer process then changes as one undergoes a prayer experience. "What happens in the prayer experience? Cohen declares that, "for all spiritual, for all moral action, the mind needs to withdraw into itself; it needs the concentration of all its inner forces and prospects." Such concentration is essential for the difficult reconciliation with God that constitutes redemption for mortal humans."[56] Cohen goes on to offer his idea of how a person should approach prayer. "Prayer must, therefore, be ever fresh. God must be approached again and again with the excitement of adventure. The hope is always present that the quest will succeed, but the worshippers know that their success can only be proximate

[53] Ibid. 14.
[54] Ibid. 15.
[55] Ibid. 15.
[56] Ibid. 16.

and that they will always have to renew their pursuit of the Beloved."[57] Cohen gives us a lot of insight into the work of the individual during worship.

Franz Rosenzweig, on the other hand, focuses more on the communal aspect of prayer and its influence on the community. "Prayer, let us remember, is not a solo occurrence. It can occur only when the I has been aroused by the Thou, when the individual has found the neighbor, and when they, together with their other neighbors, have formed a community. Salvation comes to the individual only through the harmony of a chorus. Only when a people has been created can God be praised (Ps. 102:19)."[58] Rosenzweig stresses the necessity of community. "The language of prayer is the language whereby neighbors communicate with one another. It is the language of men and women, but it is also the means whereby the mute world is brought into the scheme of redemption."[59] Rosenzweig focuses on the aspect of redemption of the community as more important than the individual during prayer. It is only through the strength of community that the individual is able to pray. Now we will look at another aspect of prayer, that of the inner working of the individual during prayer.

Rav Abraham Isaac Kook stresses intellect over feeling. He believes that the individual has intellectual work to do besides the actual emotion of prayer. "While not denying the emotional impulse that leads to prayer, Kook insisted that in true prayer, it is necessary for intellect to be active more pervasively than feeling, so as to enable the worshipper to bring ever fresh content to his supplications and meditations."[60] Kook builds on the ideas of earlier Jewish thinkers who resisted the temptation to pray by rote

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[57] Ibid. 17.
[58] Ibid. 33.
[59] Ibid. 33.
[60] Ibid. 45.

recitation. "Kook sided with those early sages who opposed the tendency to have prayer become a mindless recital of a rigid, habitual liturgy. That type of prayer obviously depends on the desire of the worshipper to fulfill a duty or an emotional urge to approach God through a sanctified procedure."[61] That sanctified procedure will be covered later in this chapter, when we look at the formulaic aspects of prayer. However Kook goes on to warn against an overabundance of intellect in prayer. "On the other hand, Kook cautions against exaggerated intellectualism in prayer. In as much as reason is less spontaneous than feeling and therefore requires conscious effort, a person can easily become so involved in intellectualism as to lose the inner emotion that inspires piety and constitutes the aura of prayer."[62] Some would argue however, that the words in the Siddur get in the way of the intellect. That is, the words are antiquated and the ideas are not in keeping with modern sensibilities, which don't allow for connection with the prayer book. "Kook paid no attention to the inconsistencies between his theorizing and the content and wording of the classic prayers. In this respect, he did not differ from the type of modern intellectual, who is comfortable with the old prayer book despite its obvious anachronisms and views that contradict the standards of modern ethics and cosmology. Such individuals, I emphasize, deliberately underplay the intellectual ingredient in prayer, preferring to emphasize its emotional origin and purpose."[63] It is difficult to balance the two worlds of emotion and thought in prayer, especially when the words on the page don't speak to modern sensibilities. Kook sought to combine the two. "Kook however, was not as simple-minded as those who manage consciously to live in two disparate and often contradictory worlds. He brought all of existence into his conception

[61] Ibid. 45.
[62] Ibid. 45.
[63] Ibid. 47.

of prayer. As I have suggested, he was not able to do so without undue inner disquiet about the possible effect of his method on the conduct of the synagogue worship. He took full advantage of the art of interpretation and reinterpretation to discover, in the liturgy and in the entire Halachic approach, ways of accommodation to the demands of contemporary thought."[64] Some would argue that Kook was a twentieth century proponent of reforming the thinking behind the prayers, in order that they would speak to the modern sensibilities of the contemporary worshippers. "Moreover he was able to elicit from the vast Rabbinic literature many valuable insights not yet appreciated by so-called modernists. I maintain, in other words, that Kook was able to convince himself that Judaism could cope with the latest knowledge and that its system of prayer could be interpreted so as to give free play to advanced intellect."[65] In any case, Kook sought to harness the spiritual energy that is inherent in man to transcend boundaries and roadblocks to prayer.

Kook also stresses the necessity of the worshipper to come to the prayer service psychologically prepared to pray. "...we should notice the attention that Kook gives to psychological preparedness. Unless individuals are fully aware of the potential of their state of mind as they set out to utter the prescribed liturgy, they will fail to elicit from the prayer what it is meant to accomplish."[66] Kook believed that prayer was meant to accomplish a connection with God. It was the aim of humans to strive to connect with the divine. "Although prayer starts with human needs and aspirations, its primary aim is not to satisfy them but to cause humans to perceive what in their human concerns and

[64] Ibid. 48.
[65] Ibid. 48.
[66] Ibid. 50.

hopes corresponds with God's will."[67] Ultimately, Kook believes that the success of prayer is in direct correlation to the study of Torah. "For it is this occupation and not research into nature that equips the worshipper to seek God. Torah engages man in trying to weave together the realms of above and below, to appropriate for natural existence the treasures of the divine intellect."[68] Kook stresses the necessity of studying Torah in that it is the foundation of knowledge of God, to whom the prayer is directed. It also gives the worshipper the discipline necessary to pray with intentionality and purpose. "In order for worshippers to channel the emotional drives that generate or are generated by their prayer, they must be guided by knowledge of Torah, for this knowledge directs them in the paths of justice. Like other traditionalists, Kook looks to the Torah to discipline stormy emotions and to prevent spiritual aspirations from remaining abstract or becoming destructive."[69] Kook sees emotion as the reason that gives motivation to his actions after prayer.

Mordechai Kaplan agrees with Kook on this matter. "Both Kook and Kaplan see emotion as the force that impels the worshipper to put into action the ideals espoused in prayer. Without such feeling, prayer would remain an intellectual exercise of no practical consequence. Intellect gives direction to prayer; emotion supplies the energy needed to stimulate the worshipper to embark on the journey."[70] Kaplan goes on to say that the worshipper must know why he or she is engaged in the discipline of prayer. "Worshippers, therefore, according to Kaplan, must understand that they are engaged in

[67] Ibid. Page 52
[68] Ibid. Page 52
[69] Ibid. Page 53
[70] Ibid. Page 66

bringing to consciousness a process of change, to which they want to give direction."[71] Kaplan's view of prayer emphasized the part of the worshipper – that is, that he or she would emerge from prayer with the energy to engage in action. Prayer was not performed so that God would change things for the worshipper.

A differing opinion about the efficacy and intention of prayer was offered by Aaron Rote (Reb Arele). "As a mystic, Arele believed that each day of our life we have the opportunity and the duty, through our prayers, to redeem sparks of divinity that had been separated from God during the act of creation and that lie scattered in our imperfect, material universe."[72] Reb Arele goes on to explain his opinion of prayer and defines worship. "Actually, while we generally think of "worship" and "prayer" as identical in meaning, they are related to one another as genus and species or general and particular. Worship is the collection of acts of adoration of God, of which prayer is the most well-known and common form. Prayer can be both socially dictated or spontaneous, but it always involves some form of verbalization."[73] Reb Arele looks at prayer from a very human position, explaining its relationship is to man, not necessarily to God.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, on the other hand, looks at prayer not so much from the humanist perspective, but from the perspective of God. "On the other end of the cosmic stage stands God, who needs humans. In this perspective, prayer thus expresses our endeavor to become the object of God's thought and yearning, rather than the subject in pursuit of Him."[74] Heschel claims that God needs humans. "Heschel might be referring to the Rabbinic conception of humans as the partners of God in the work of Creation.

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[71] Ibid. 68.
[72] Ibid. 80.
[73] Ibid. 91.
[74] Ibid. 111.

Whatever God's purposes might be for human fulfillment, they cannot be attained without human involvement."[75] Heschel holds that there are various and diverse ways of praying, "In contemplating God, man has to integrate three methods: worship, gaining the knowledge that inheres in sacred texts, and action. 'The first is the way of sensing the presence of God in the world, in things: The second is the way of sensing His presence in the Bible; the third is the way of sensing His presence in sacred deed.' Heschel declares that experiencing God involves the total human person."[76] Heschel claims that God needs humans. Jakob Petuchowski claims that prayer is a manifestation of humans desiring to talk to God. Although prayer comes naturally to some, Petuchowski claims that this dialogue between man and God has to be cultivated and practiced. To this end, the rabbis sought to formulate the proper way for man to talk to God.

Yet, there are many modern Jews who have no idea how and why they should even attempt to pray. Lawrence Hoffman claims "All too often, those who attend church or synagogue find themselves bored or baffled by the service. Their predominant thought is how slowly the time ticks by – and that the service never seems to end."[77] It is hoped that armed with a certain understanding of the origins of prayers, how they were compiled, and the nature of the liturgical message, the person praying will have greater access to prayer and in turn, greater access to their Creator. Medieval philosopher, Nachmanedies said the purpose of worship is not for the deity, but for the benefit of humanity. It is hoped that as a result of the prayer experience, the person will emerge

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[75] Ibid. Page 112
[76] Ibid. Page 113
[77] Lawrence Hoffman, The Art of Public Prayer, Not for Clergy Only. 2nd Edition. (Vermont: Skylight Paths Publishing, 1999) 1.

more willing and able to live his or her life according to the messages found in the prayers. This topic will be covered in the following chapter.

Chapter Two – The Analysis of the Service

"You don't have to pray loudly; just direct your heart to heaven"
Rabbi Chia

Gates of Prayer, the most recent prayer book of the Reform Movement has kept its first service for Shabbat evening intact: the structure and contents adhere to those of the traditional Siddur. The rubrics are divided according to the traditional rubric structure. These sections will be described in greater detail in this chapter.

KABBALAT SHABBAT – Welcoming the Sabbath

Kabbalat Shabbat consists of a series of six psalms – Psalms 95 through 99 and psalm 29 followed by L'cha Dodi, a mystical poem. This is followed by psalms 92 and 93. Kabbalat Shabbat, "is of relatively recent origin. It was introduced by the Kabbalistic scholars of Safed in the middle of the sixteenth century. From there it spread to Jewish communities all over the world, gradually gaining acceptance as an integral part of the Friday evening service. However popular it became, it is not considered obligatory."[78] Kabbalat Shabbat was not originally part of what was considered the regular liturgy.

Before the sixteenth century, the Shabbat ma'ariv service began the same way as the weekday service. Additionally, Kabbalat Shabbat was not originally recited in the synagogue, or as part of the *ma'ariv* service; it was a separate ritual. It is said that Rabbi Isaac Luria used to take his disciples to the fields in the hills outside of Safed to welcome the Sabbath bride with songs and praise. The fields represent the Shekinah – the feminine aspect of God. The (male) Kabbalists represent the masculine aspect of God – and by going out into the fields, create a union of both sides. Facing the setting sun, they

[78] Hayim Halevy Donin, To Pray as A Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service. (New York: Basic Books, 1994) 257.

sang songs and hymns which were composed for the occasion. Joseph Caro, a member of Luria's circle in Safed was the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*. He does not mention the custom of Kabbalat Shabbat at all in his code.

The expression, "Kabbalat Shabbat" has two meanings. "One implies "welcoming"; the other implies "acceptance." In Halakhic literature, it is the latter connotation that is dominant. Just as on a fast day, one could "accept" (i.e. take on the restrictions of) the fast earlier than the time set for its obligatory commencement, by declaring it to be in effect for oneself from that moment on, a person could declare even before sundown that for him the Sabbath had begun. Any statement that takes note of the start of the Sabbath constitutes its acceptance. This is the moment of Kabbalat Shabbat."[79] The other meaning, "welcoming" becomes prominent in the Safed rituals. The whole ritual is about unifying the masculine and feminine aspects of Deity in a marriage ceremony/sexual union. The way the service of Kabbalat Shabbat came together can be looked at piece by piece.

First, the six psalms start the service. "The custom of reciting six psalms before the hymn of L'cha Dodi, which is the heart of this service, is ascribed to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero. The first of these psalms begins with the words Lekhu n'ranenah l'Adonai. The six psalms all express the theme of God' sovereignty, and symbolize the six working days of the week. For each day, we say a psalm that acknowledges God as King and Ruler of the universe. Psalm 92, also known as Mizmor Shir L'yom Ha Shabbat is a psalm for the seventh day, said right after L'cha Dodi."[80] Psalm 29, the last of the six psalms, has symbolic significance. It was already being recited before Shabbat evening

[79] Ibid. 257.
[80] Ibid. 258.

prayers by Sephardim. It is associated midrashically with the revelation at Sinai as well as literally depicting the power of God in nature. After the psalms comes a hymn that has a unique history. Rabbi Shlomo Halevy Alkabetz, one of the Safed Kabbalists, composed L'cha Dodi He arranged it so that the first letter of each stanza spells out his name (Shlomo HaLevy), which was a common practice among poets. Although there were a few different L'cha Dodi poems circulating at that time, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the foremost authority among Kabbalists, adopted this one. The stanzas of L'cha Dodi have unique contents. "The poem starts out with a refrain based on b. Sabbath 119a. In the first stanza: "Observe and remember," the author refers to the Midrashic explanation of the discrepancy between the two versions of the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8 and Deuteronomy 5:12, according to which God uttered both words simultaneously. In the second stanza, the sentence "last in the making, first in thought" means that, though Sabbath came after the creation of the world (Genesis 2:3), it was nevertheless the aim of the entire creation. According to another explanation, the author refers to the Torah which was created before the world. (b. Pes 54)."[81] The second stanza also has an interesting history. It begins with "come, let us go out to meet the Sabbath." In fact, as previously mentioned, the Kabbalists used to go outside of the city limits into the open fields; there they would chant psalms and songs and would thus receive the Sabbath. This custom, however, was later abandoned; and the Sabbath was received in the synagogue. The following stanzas take a slightly different approach in their content. The first two stanzas deal with the value of the Sabbath. The third through eighth stanzas speak about the hope for the rebuilding Jerusalem, the coming of the messiah, and the redemption of Israel. The Sabbath represents and anticipates the messianic fulfillment of

[81] Abraham Z. Idelson - Jewish Liturgy and its Development (New York: 1932) 129.

time in the world-to-come. The rebuilding of Jerusalem represents the spatial fulfillment of Jewish messianism in the way they merge together in this hymn. In the last stanza, the theme returns to Sabbath, calling it the 'crown of the husband'. In the Sephardic, Italian and Yemenite rituals, there is an additional phrase, "Come, O Bride, Sabbath Queen" which is repeated three times in some places. The custom in some congregations is to stand and turn toward the door while reciting the last stanza. This is to act as if the congregation is welcoming a guest, or receiving a bride. (It also reflects the earlier custom of going outside to greet the Sabbath.)

L'cha Dodi is followed by two psalms. The first is psalm 92, a psalm of thanksgiving, which bears the subtitle "A Psalm for the Sabbath Day". "It sings the praises of God, who in the fullness of time will destroy the wicked and cause the righteous to blossom forth. It also raises the ancient problem about the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortune of the righteous and answers by saying, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the wicked are doomed to destruction, the righteous are destined to endure. The wise understand this, fools do not."[82] The second psalm that follows, Psalm 93, contains the same theme of God's greatness as Psalm 92. It describes God in his glory, as he was when he created the world in six days. It was also known as the 'Song of the Levites' as the Levites were said to have sung this song in the Temple on Fridays.

After the traditional Kabbalat Shabbat service, Gates of Prayer retains the Hatzi Kaddish, which is a shortened form of the Kaddish. In more traditional congregations, a *minyan* is necessary for the recitation of the Hatzi Kaddish. The Kaddish was originally thought to have been a concluding prayer to a sermon that was given after reading the

[82] Donin. 260.

Torah. However, as time went on, it became the prayer that separated various rubrics of the service. It also took on different forms, such as the Kaddish d'Rabbanan, for instance, in which, "scholars and students of Torah are singled out as particularly deserving of reward." The best known form of the Kaddish, is the Mourners Kaddish which was considered the way the mourner could relieve the soul of a loved one from "eternal punishment and transfer it to the realm of heavenly bliss."[83] Unlike the rest of the Siddur, the language of the Kaddish is not Hebrew, but Aramaic, which was the vernacular at the time. Originally it was recited at the conclusion of study as a prayer, praising and sanctifying God's name. It called for the establishment of the sovereignty of God, for the time when God would reign supreme in the world. More about the Kaddish will be covered later in this chapter. The Hatzi Kaddish separates the Kabbalat Shabbat rubric from the Shema and its Blessings rubric.

SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS

The "Shema and its Blessings" rubric starts with the Barechu, which is also known as the 'call to worship'. Originally, it was an invitational formula, to praise God, the source of all blessing. The Barechu is based on a psalmic passage and the call and response structure was the custom of the time. Reuven Hammer says, "The Barechu Means literally, "bless". This is a summons that reflects the ancient call found in Psalm 135:19-21 to proclaim to all the greatness of God: "O House of Israel, bless Adonai..." To this the people responded: "Blessed is Adonai from Zion." The Midrash describes this practice and connects it to a verse: "Whence do we learn that when those who stand in the service in the synagogue and call out 'Bless Adonai who is blessed,' the

[83] Lawrence Hoffman, The Canonization of the Synagogue Service (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979) 56.

congregation must respond, 'Blessed is Adonai who is blessed for ever and ever.' From the verse, "When I proclaim the name of Adonai, give glory to our God. (Deut 32:3)"[84] The Barechu today has retained the call and response format. The Barechu in its simplest form is the ceremonial opening of the formal communal prayer section. From the beginning of the prayer service, until the Barechu, the congregation is still transitioning from a (voluntary) personal prayer mode to a more (required) communal one. From this point, the congregation prays in a unified manner, sharing in a communal dialogue, as opposed to an individual one. The Barechu emphasizes praying with a community. The Talmud asserts that prayer done in a community is more likely to be answered, as the prayer is less for personal gain and more for greater good. The way to perform the Barechu is that the entire congregation must stand. "The leader bows at the word Barechu and straightens up at the word Adonai. This is based on the verse, "Adonai...makes all who are bent stand straight." (Psalm 145:14) When coming before God we bow, but the proper attitude when addressing God is not groveling, but standing upright."[85] The bodily movements enact our willingness to declare God's Kingship and to serve God with full intention. Bowing demonstrates that we declare this not only in word, but physically with our bodies as well.

The Shema and its blessings are only recited twice a day, morning and evening. This is based on the rabbinic interpretation of the verse "Recite them (these words) when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deut 6:7) . The Shema is not an actual prayer, but a reading of selections from the Torah. It wasn't until later that the sages interpreted the Shema as a declaration of belief

[84] Reuven Hammer. Or Chadash - A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals. (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 2003) 28.
[85] Hammer. 28.

in one God. Then it became an oath of loyalty, demonstrating one's acceptance of God's sovereignty, and one's obligation to observe God's decrees. It is also customary to cover one's eyes while saying the Shema. It is a sign of accepting God's sovereignty and a method of concentrating and achieving proper intention. This was the custom of Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Nasi in the second century C.E., as recorded in Berakhot 13b.[86] The Halacha mandates that the recitation of the Shema is to be recited while seated. This is based on the debate between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, where Hillel ruled (and won) that the Shema should be recited in whatever position one was in when it was time to say it. However, the custom in most Reform congregations is to stand while saying the Shema. "Reform Jews saw the Shema as central to their claim that Judaism's uniqueness lay in its discovery of ethical monotheism. Wanting to acknowledge the centrality of the Shema, and recognizing that people[87] generally stand for the prayers that matter most, they began standing for the Shema despite the Halacha."[88] However, the custom changes from congregation to congregation, with some congregants choosing to remain seated during the Shema.

The first of four benedictions of the "Shema and Its Blessings" section during the Friday evening service, is the Ma'ariv Aravim. (In the morning, there are only three benedictions.) The themes of both the morning and the evening prayers are the same. Ma'ariv Aravim deals with creation, as does its morning counterpart, Yotzer Or. The two versions were composed specifically to have one appropriate for the morning and another for the evening. They were variations on the theme of creation. Each reflects its time of

[86] Hammer. 112.
[87] i.e. Lutheran, Christians.
[88] Hoffman, Minhag Ami Volume 1. 92.

day, since the Shema was to be recited "^m<)Wqb.W ^ßB.k.v'b.W."[89] The first blessing prior to the Shema is an occasional benediction, because of the requirement to recite the Shema at sunrise and at sunset. One should experience these times as times of change on the cosmic clock. "The first blessing prior to the Shema is a recognition of the role of God the Creator. The experience of the onset of the evening causes us to pause and appreciate the wonders of the world God has made and to remember the act of creation. The magnificent panorama of sunset followed by the appearance of stars and the moon, moves and inspires us to proclaim the greatness of God who brought all of this into being."[90] The prayer describes God's control over nature, the seasons and all creation. While the first blessing before the Shema centers on creation, the second focuses on another aspect of our relationship with God: The Torah, which is God's revelation.

Ahavat Olam speaks of God's gift of Torah, which is the purpose of Jewish survival, and God's love for His people and of the people's devotion to God. This is a Torah benediction, recited because we are going to recite passages of Torah. It is parallel in theme to its morning counterpart, Ahavah Rabbah. The Talmud mentions two opening formulae of the blessing that is recited prior to saying the Shema, Ahavat Olam and Ahavah Rabbah. We don't know what wording followed this: whether there were two entirely different versions, like there are today. "The slight variation in wording of the blessings for the morning and evening services stems from the two versions that existed among the sages of the Talmud. Samuel preferred the version that begins with the words Ahavah Rabbah (great love), but the majority of the rabbis were in favor of the version that begins with the words Ahavat Olam (eternal love) (Berakhot 11b). This therefore

[89] when you lie down and when you rise up.
[90] Hammer, 29.

became the version used in the Sephardic rite, both morning and evening. In the post-talmudic period, the Geonim decided that both should be said: "Ahavah Rabbah at the morning service and Ahavat Olam at the evening service. Such is the Ashkenazic rite."[91] The same way blessings are recited before we study the Torah, so is this blessing read before we read the Torah sections of the Shema.

The Shema is considered the most important statement of faith in Judaism. Historically, Jews were saying Shema twice a day as early as the first century. Perhaps not all paragraphs were said, but the proclamation of Jews believing in one God was being said in some format. The total number of the words of the Shema together with the Barukh shem Kevod equals 245. "It is customary for the hazzan to repeat the last two words of the Shema and the first word of the passage which follows (Adonai Eloheichem Emet),[92] thus bringing the total up to 248, corresponding to the traditional number of organs in the body and the number of positive commandments in the Bible. This custom from the Psalmist's call: "All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like unto Thee!" is derived from a midrashic custom. When the Shema is recited in private prayer, the number is made up by reciting three words El Melekh ne'eman (Meaning "God, faithful King") before the recital of the Shema. The rabbis interpreted the word Amen as being composed of the initial Hebrew letters of these three words.[93] After the Shema verse itself, it is customary to say "Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto L'olam Va'ed" in quiet tones. "The formula of ancient origin is based upon a verse in Nehemiah, "Stand up and

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[91] Donin, 161.
[92] Initially this was done because these three words together come close to a biblical verse from Jeremiah 10:10.
[93] Raphael Posner and Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages (Jerusalem 1975) 77.

bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting: and let them say: Blessed be Thy glorious name, that is exalted above all blessing and praise."[94]

The public reading of the Torah distinguished the Jewish religion from other religions of the time. Reuven Hammer claims that, "the reading of the Ten Declarations is an obvious choice: The Theophany at Sinai is unique in that God spoke directly to all the people, without an intermediary."[95] The other three Torah selections are known as The Shema, which is still read twice daily as part of the evening and morning services. These Torah readings contain the basic themes of belief in one unique God, reward, punishment and redemption. The reason why The Ten Commandments disappeared from Jewish worship is that, according to rabbinic tradition, its very importance was the reason for its disappearance. Hammer tell us that these declarations were eliminated, "because of the "claims of the heretics." These heretics claimed that only the 'Ten Declarations' were sacred, that they alone represented the word of God, while the rest of Torah and its commandments were not holy. In order not to give credence to these arguments, the Talmud suggests, the sages eliminated the public recitation of the ten declarations."[96] These paragraphs were put together in relation to each other. First, the Shema paragraph emphasizes the doctrine of God's unity and stresses the duty to love God with one's whole heart and soul. The second selection affirms the theological doctrine of reward and punishment. The third paragraph of the Shema, which is partially omitted in the Reform prayer book, speaks of a God of redemption. "The third paragraph, Numbers 15:37-41, is mainly concerned with the command to make fringes on the corners of garments. In

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[94] Ibid. 76.
[95] Hammer, Entering Jewish Prayer. 81.
[96] Ibid. 81. This account is given in the Bavli, trying to explain the difference between current practice. It is not clear that an actual historical practice and change ever took place.

biblical times these fringes, or tzitzit, were not worn on some special garment, as they are today, but were attached to the corners of everyday garb where they could easily be seen...the fringes are a commandment whose only importance and meaning is to remind us of all the commandments."[97] Because the Reform movement was not interested in keeping the commandment that was concerned with the fringes; "they are regarded as questionable or unessential within the present liturgical context,"[98] the third paragraph in the Shema was eliminated. Although the second and third paragraphs were omitted from the Reform prayer book, it is important to understand the theology that is still retained in the more traditional prayer books. That is, if the Jews love God and serve God with all their hearts and with all their souls, as indicated in the first paragraph of the Shema, they will be rewarded, as indicated in the second paragraph. But if they deny that there is only one God and worship other Gods, they will be punished. This idea of direct physical and meteorological reward and punishment is problematic today when we have a greater understanding of the causes of rain and drought. It is difficult for the modern Reform Jew to believe literally that the presence or absence of rain is an indication of divine favor, or disfavor or that God's providence works this way. Hence this paragraph has also been omitted in most Reform prayer books. After the final paragraph, it is customary for the service leader to repeat the last two words of Numbers 15:41 (Adonai Eloheichem) and add the first word of the third blessing that follows the Shema (Emet).

The next section in the first service of Gates of Prayer is known as G'ulah, or Redemption. The first part of the blessing, 'True and Faithful' affirms the above creed, that God is trustworthy and that we believe His words and promises. It is based on the

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[97] Ibid. 127-128.
[98] Chaim Stern and A. Stanley Dreyfus "Notes to Shaarei Tefillah" in Gates of Understanding Lawrence Hoffman (New York: CCAR/UAHC, 1977) 186.

passage from Jeremiah 10:10. Then the blessing goes on to the theme of redemption. The Exodus story is sandwiched between words addressed to God. The Exodus from Egypt is the quintessential example of God's redemption. "The Song of the Sea, quoted so extensively, serves three purposes. It is the principle example of redemption for which we thank and praise God, connecting it with the end of the third paragraph of the Shema. It is the text that first served as Israel's acceptance of the kingship of God, thus tying it to the first paragraph of the Shema. And it is the paradigm of the future redemption for which we pray, the time when we will once again sing a song of triumph."[99] The Reform prayer book abridged the version of this prayer in the evening service, "to reaffirm the unity of God, proclaimed in the Shema, and allude to the Exodus from Egypt."[100] The Reform movement chose to translate the once used word "geulah" (Literally, 'who has redeemed Israel') to the word "ga-al" ('Redeemer of Israel'). It retains the same root, but changes the meaning.

In the evening service one more paragraph follows the blessing of Redemption, Hashkiveinu ("Cause us to lie down"). This blessing differs significantly from the other blessing of the Shema. It is a prayer that seeks divine protection and it has no parallel in the morning Shema section. The history of the Hashkivenu is very interesting. The prayer is of Palestinian origin. Then in Babylonia, which was the center of Jewish life during the Talmudic period, the nights were considered to be especially frightening. Dangerous criminals roamed, roads were dark and violence occurred in the sparsely populated areas. "Shield us from hatred and plague," and "Guard our coming and our going" literally meant just that. "Even by the time of the Talmudic age, the rabbis

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[99] Hammer. 41.
[100] Stern. 186.

believed that demons threatened people at night. According to R. Judah, for example, scholars required guarding at night-time (Ber54a). This belief led to the adoption of various protective formulas, including, according to R. Isaac, the Shema itself, which if recited upon one's bed, keeps the demons away (Ber 5a) The Hashkiveinu, reserved for nighttime recitation, and including express entreaty to word off Satan, may well have begun as such a protective prayer."[101] The concluding words of the blessing are changed on the Sabbath and on the festivals, to suggest that on these holy days we require less protection against harmful elements. On Shabbat, the conclusion of the blessing is changed to read: "Blessed is the Lord, whose shelter of peace is spread over us, over all His people Israel and over Jerusalem." On Shabbat and festival days people did not work, but spent the day in their homes and communities. The "shelter of peace" was a characteristic of the Sabbath in both a physical and a spiritual sense.

In the first service of Gates of Prayer, the Vishamru follows the Hashkiveinu. Vishamru speaks of the covenant that both God and Israel rest on Shabbat. In honor of Shabbat we add Vishamru, Exodus 31:16-17 about creation. On Shabbat and festivals, a verse or verses dealing with the day are added between the Shema and the Amidah. The observance of Shabbat is a recognition of Israel's covenant with God and of God's creation. Rashi, a 13th century biblical commentator commented that the Vishamru is an example of how God rested. Although God doesn't get tired, we understand God in human terms and relate to the fact that we humans need rest after six days of work. Another later commentator, Ramban, claims that the creation of Shabbat gave the universe a spiritual dimension. Reform Jews view this passage metaphorically and do not assert that creation actually happened in six days. In traditional congregations, the Hatzi

[101] Hoffman, The Canonization of the Synagogue Service. 78.

Kaddish would be added here to show the end of the "Shema and its Blessings" section and to separate this section from the Amidah section that follows. However, Gates of Prayer does not include another Hatzi Kaddish as a separation.

THE AMIDAH

The Amidah or Shemoneh Esrei ("Eighteen") is the 'Prayer par excellence' in Jewish tradition. It occupies a unique position in Jewish liturgy. It is recited three times a day and is included in every formal Jewish prayer service. It is preceded by Psalm 51:17, which provides a silent meditative moment before the actual blessings of the Amidah begin. On Friday evenings, the Amidah has only seven benedictions. The first three and the last three benedictions are identical with those of the weekday Tefillah. The Shabbat Amidah is different from that of the weekday Amidah in that the thirteen middle petitionary benedictions drop out and are replaced by a single benediction; it thus becomes seven benedictions. This middle benediction affirms the sanctity of the Sabbath day. The reason that is usually given for omitting the thirteen intermediate benedictions on the Sabbath is that they contain supplications for personal and communal needs. It is said that petitionary prayers are not suitable for the Sabbath, because the Jews are expected to banish distressing thoughts on Shabbat and holidays. "When we say that the Amidah is petitionary, therefore, we really mean to affirm the natural inclination of human beings to turn to God for ultimate matters such as wisdom, forgiveness, healing, justice and hope, the issues without which life would seem meaningless."[102] Historically, the Amidah was a substitute for the sacrifices offered in the Temple, thus making the Amidah an offering. It was a revolutionary idea that Jews could offer the words of their lips as an offering instead of sacrifice. Until Gamliel fixed the prayer, it is possible that

[102] Hoffman, Minhag Ami, Vol 2. 14.

some communities said the Amidah while others did not. The blessings could have been varied in thematic content and the number of blessings recited was not fixed. "Before Gamliel there had been no mandated arrangement; Gamliel's accomplishment was, therefore, extraordinary."[103] By the end of the first century, the prayers were arranged in the form that we still use to this day.

The first three blessings are known as blessings of praise. The first of these three, known as Avot, establishes our covenantal connection with God through our biblical ancestors. The second blessing, known as G'vurot, affirms God's power in saving and restoring life. The traditional text puts the focus of God's power in physical terms. The language of the blessing reflected the idea of "giving life to the dead,"[104] which was rejected by modern liberal Judaism.[105] This controversy has been ongoing since rabbinic times.[106] Some believe in a physical resurrection, others translate it more loosely to mean that the death of the person is not absolute. Lawrence Hoffman suggests that it is about faith. "When we say that we 'take something on faith' we mean that we believe in something that we have not seen...The highest level of faith is belief in something that no one has ever seen - like a God who provides eternal life, especially where the eternal life that is pictured is patently 'unbelievable' resurrection of the dead."[107] This debate continues amongst the liberal branches of Judaism. The Reconstructionist prayer book, Kol Haneshama, substitutes the phrase, "*mehayeh kol chai*" meaning, "one who nurtures

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[103] Ibid. 30-31.
[104] Bodily resurrection.
[105] It was amended to "*Mehayei Hakol* - The Source of Life" in Gates of Prayer.
[106] That is to say, there is some evidence of controversy over this belief in the first century between the Sadducies and the Pharises, for example. Maimonides too would have denied a physical resurrection. But there has not been controversy that we know of after this.
[107] Lawrence Hoffman. Minhag Ami - Volume 2. 73

the life of every living being."[108]

The third paragraph, "Kedushat HaShem" – God's Holiness, is the sanctification of God's name. It is always recited, whereas the extended Kedushah, is recited only when there is a minyan present at services.[109] Gates of Understanding explains that "the Hebrew we have rendered by 'those who strive to be holy' might be more literally rendered as 'holy beings' (i.e. the angels)."[110] Contemporary Midrash explains that the 'holy ones' refer to the people of Israel, while others maintain that the 'holy ones' are angels. The basic notion of this blessing is to extol God and holiness, both God's and our own.

The middle blessing, Kiddushat Ha Yom, as previously stated, proclaims the holiness of the day. The middle petitionary blessings said during the week, are not recited on Shabbat. The middle blessing is recited to acknowledge God's gift of Shabbat to Israel. The first paragraph of the evening version of the benediction reminds us of the creation story, where God rested from His labors on the seventh day. This is followed by the recitation of Genesis 2:1-4, the biblical account of the Sabbath of creation, which is reenacted every seven days. The last paragraph, although it contains petitions, is in keeping with the spirit of Shabbat. Donin states that the last paragraph echoes themes found in the weekday Amidah middle blessings. "Satisfy us...relates to spiritual needs; gladden us...refers to physical needs; while the phrase about "your salvation" pertains to national needs and aspirations."[111]

The last three blessings do not vary during the week or on Shabbat throughout the

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[108] Euphemistically.
[109] The extended Kedushah is never recited during a Ma'ariv service, in any case.
[110] Chaim Stern and A. Stanley Dreyfus "Notes to Shaarei Tefillah" in Gates of Understanding. 189. They paraphrased, as not to mention angels. The 'holy beings' refers to the angels, not Israel.
[111] Donin. To Pray as a Jew. 110

year. In these blessings, we ask that God accept our worship and we thank God for His gracious gifts. The first concluding blessing, called Avodah, asks that God accept our worship as a form of prayer. It is modeled after the prayer that the high priests offered in the Temple. And in the saying of this we ask that God receive our prayer, just as God would have received our sacrificial offering. The traditional text prays for the restoration of the sacrificial offerings; this theme is deleted in all liberal liturgies. The next blessing, Hoda'ah, Thanksgiving, expresses our gratitude for our lives and for the miracles that we experience in God's world. Just as we thank God after we have eaten a meal (birkat hamazon), we also express gratitude after we have prayed. This blessing mirrors the Temple service where, the Talmud tells us, there was a blessing for thanksgiving. It is also known as the Modim. When the prayer leader recites this blessing during the repetition of the Amidah, the congregation silently recites Modim de rabbanan, the "thanksgiving of the rabbis", so-called because various Rabbis in the Talmud were said to have recited it. The origin of the Modim de-Rabbanan is intriguing. The Talmud asks: "while the precentor recites the paragraph 'We give thanks' what does the congregation say?: The Talmud then quotes the prayers of four Talmudic sages, and Rabbi Papa concludes: "Let us recite them all." (Sotah 40a)."[112] David Aburdurham, the 14th century Spanish liturgical commentator, provides yet another rationale for this custom. He maintains that only the person praying can thank God for him or herself. Thus while it is acceptable to have an emissary on one's behalf, no one can thank God for you. Thus the congregant must recite another thanksgiving while the reader repeats the standard one. It is also customary to bow twice during the blessing: first at the beginning, when saying, "*Modim anachnu lach,*" and again at the hatimah, when saying "*Baruch Atah Adonai.*"

[112] Millgram, Abraham, Jewish Worship (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971) 138.

The last blessing is the Birkat Shalom, the blessing for peace and well being. Peace is the ideal state to strive for - both physically and spiritually. Thus it is a fitting blessing with which to end the Amidah. The Ashkenazic rite has a shorter version (Shalom Rav) of this prayer in the evening, while the Sephardim use the longer version (Sim Shalom) at every service. Gates of Prayer follows the Ashkenazic rite which is the basis of most Reform liturgies arising in central Europe.

The final blessing is followed by the private meditation of Mar, son of Rabina, as recorded in the Babylonian Talmud.[113] "My God, keep my tongue from evil, my lips from speaking guile."[114] The first line parallels the theme found in the Psalm verse that precedes the Amidah. Mar's prayer uses language from different psalms. The first sentence, "Guard your tongue from evil, your lips from deceitful speech," paraphrases Psalms 34:14. The last sentence is also from Psalms 19:15, "May the words of my mouth and the prayer of my heart be acceptable to You, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Those who compiled the Siddur took the last verse from the Kaddish and inserted it to close the silent meditation.[115] During this silent meditation, it is customary for the person praying to add personal prayers.

ALEINU

The final prayer for the service is known by its first word, Aleinu. The Aleinu affirms allegiance to God as an ultimate Sovereign and offers hope for a redeemed world. It expresses the desire that one day, the whole world will recognize that we are all children of God and thus, by extension, must be cognizant of the need to care for one

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[113] B. Ber. 17a.
[114] Jules Harlow. Pray Tell: A Hadassah Guide to Jewish Prayer. (Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing. 2003) 104
[115] Job 25:2

another. The Aleinu reiterates the sovereignty theme found in the Shema, and the Aleinu is one of the noblest expressions of prayer. Its author is reputed to be the Babylonian sage, Rav, who lived in the third century C.E.[116] Historically it was originally said only in the Musaf Amidah of Rosh Hashanah, where it serves as the introduction to the verses of Malkhuyot, acclaiming God's sovereignty. The Aleinu also became the closing prayer of each daily service in Germany throughout the year, around the thirteenth century. It is said of the Aleinu, "This, one of the most sublime of all the prayers in the liturgy, is a passage almost without parallel – in the loftiness of its language, and the intimacy of its association with martyrdom, and in the vigor with which it was censored. The first paragraph of the Aleinu acknowledges Israel's distinctiveness from the other nations. In the traditional Aleinu, it contrasts Israel's monotheistic worship with other peoples' worship of idols and other gods. This is followed by a passage from the prophet Isaiah which says, "for they worship vanity and emptiness, and pray to a god who cannot save." (Isaiah 45:20) This passage was censored by the Christian church in many European prayer books, and has been omitted from all Reform prayer books. The notes to the Gates of Prayer claim, "We attempt to restore (the Aleinu's) classical balance of particularism and universalism."[117] Gates of Prayer preferred to translate the passage, *shelo asanu ke goyyei ha'aratzot*, as giving us a unique destiny among the nations. It also provides other versions of the Aleinu on subsequent pages. However, all the Aleinu choices retained the charge to bend our knees in supplication, to acknowledge God as sovereign; the bending of the knee is a symbolic demonstration of our allegiance to God. The first paragraph ends with a verse from Deuteronomy (4:39).

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[116] The expression which is the source of this attribution is ambiguous. It could mean "study house," or "House of the Master." Rav is probably not a proper name here.
[117] Stern and Dreyfus. "Notes to Shaarei Tefillah" in Gates of Understanding. 251.

The second paragraph speaks of the day when those who live on earth will join us in acknowledging God as a universal God. It does not necessarily imply that everyone will convert to Judaism, but that all will acknowledge God's sovereignty. When this happens, harmony, peace and the perfection of mankind will have been achieved. The paragraph ends with verses from Exodus 15:18 and Zechariah 14:9.[118]

MOURNERS KADDISH

The Mourners Kaddish is one of the most loved and talked about prayers in all of Jewish liturgy. Its name, too, is an Aramaic word meaning holy. The Kaddish is not written in Hebrew (except for the last line of the Mourners Kaddish and the full Kaddish), but rather in Aramaic, the vernacular of the day. A Hebrew equivalent can be found in Psalm 113:2 "May the name of the Lord be blessed now and forever."[119] The opening words of the Kaddish were said to have been inspired by Ezekiel 38:23, "where the prophet envisions a time when God will become great and hallowed in the eyes of all nations; they shall learn 'that I am the Lord.' Its mood emanates from an awareness of God's infinite power and majesty. Kaddish is a hymn that praises God and yearns for the speedy establishment of God's kingdom on earth."[120] However not much is known about how it came into being.

The Mourners Kaddish is a prayer lead by those who have suffered a loss through death. Traditionally it was only to be said for the death of a wife, husband, parent, child or sibling. According to Jewish law, the mourner must recite the Kaddish for eleven months following the death and again on the Yahrzeit, or anniversary of the day of death,

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[118] These are two of the ten verses of Malchuyot on Rosh Hashanah.
[119] This language also conjures up images of the response to the Shema, "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam va-ed."
[120] Donin. 216

and at the Yizkor service on Yom Kippur.

The Kaddish itself, in its original incarnation, was not a prayer for mourners. It has only taken on that distinction since the thirteenth century. "The practice that mourners recite the Kaddish seems to have originated during the 13th century, at a time of severe persecution in Germany by the Crusaders. No reference is made to it in the Mahzor Vitry, an early prayer book compiled by a disciple of Rashi in the 11th century. According to a late aggadah, Rabbi Akiva rescued a soul from punishment after death by urging the sons of the deceased to lead the verse "May His great name be blessed..." The same idea was earlier expressed in Tractate Sanhedrin."[121] In the thirteenth century halachic work, Or Zarua, there is a mention made that the mourners say Kaddish at the end of the service. There is much speculation as to why the Mourners Kaddish became the liturgical response to death. One explanation is that a bereaved person expresses his acceptance of his loss by reciting the Kaddish. When one has suffered a loss, it is not uncommon to be bitter towards God. For that reason, it is a timely way to praise God and affirm our belief in his Divine will. Another explanation is that the Kaddish provides a way for the child to sanctify God's name publicly, thereby, in a sense redeeming the soul of the deceased. It is a way for children to show respect for their parents, and according to the Talmud, "a child can acquit the parent."[122] Also it is a prayer that looks forward to the speedy establishment of God's kingdom on earth and the resurrection of the dead. It also shows the everlasting bond that remains between parents and children, which is not severed even after death. Donin claims, "As the actions of parents influence the lives of children, so the faith and the good deeds of children help determine the spiritual destiny

[121] Posner, Kaploun, Cohen. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages. 114.
[122] Sanhedrin 104a.

met by the souls of parents."[123] That is why the Kaddish is said publicly, not when one prays alone. The whole purpose of the recitation by mourners is to bear public witness and to lead the congregation in prayer.[124] That is why the saying of the Kaddish necessitates a minyan. "If the minimum number of people that constitute a congregation ("a public assembly") is not met, the public nature of the sanctification of God's Name is missing. And if there cannot be a public response, the reason for saying Kaddish disappears.[125] There are two other kinds of Kaddish that are recited during services, (although they are not included in Gates of Prayer, Service I) called Kaddish Shalem and Kaddish d'Rabbanan. Kaddish Shalem is also known as the full Kaddish. It is recited after the Amidah or at the end of the service before the Aleinu. It consists of the Hatzi Kaddish plus three more passages. The Kaddish d'Rabbanan is recited after a public reading or teaching of a sacred text. It was the appropriate response after such a study.

[123] Donin. 224.
[124] To take the place of the deceased parent in the community, so to speak.
[125] Donin. 217.

Chapter Three – An Overview of Adult Education

> "If you don't teach an ox to plow when he's young, it will be difficult to teach him when he is grown."
>
> Ben Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 8:4

What is Learning?

"Gather the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children." (Deuteronomy 4:10). Learning and teaching has been a value in Judaism since Biblical times. Today Jews are seeking to find ways to learn and teach both the youth and the adult population. But in order to understand learning and how best to teach, we must explore how adults learn and, with that information, find ways to best serve adult learners. What follows is a brief overview of learning and adult learning theory.

It is difficult to come up with a precise definition of what exactly learning is. But experts who have delved in this field for ages have attempted to do just that. Experts in the learning field also attempt to prove that adults learn differently from children. In order to understand how to teach adults, we must attempt to define what learning is and how we can best capitalize on that definition to give us the greatest understanding of how to teach.

Jean Piaget was a forerunner in understanding how humans develop. Piaget developed a four step approach to understand how humans grow in understanding. However, his research did not go into depth about how adults learn. Erik Erikson, who was inspired by Piaget's work, took a more adult-oriented approach. His idea of stage theory development shows that adults develop and grow at different points in their adult life. Piaget, also held the notion that a person's experience is how intelligence is shaped. "Intelligence is not an innate internal characteristic of the individual but arises as a

product of the interaction between the person and his or her environment and for Piaget, action is the key."[126] That means that environment is important for both the learner and the educator. According to Piaget, the learner has to be capable of taking in new ideas and putting them to use in his or her life. "In Piaget's terms, the key to learning lies in the mutual interaction of the process of accommodation of concepts or schemas to experience in the world and the process of assimilation of events and experiences from the world into existing concepts and schemas."[127] The learner has to feel he is able to take in the learning and make it useful in his life, or else the learning will be lost.

Malcolm Knowles, a more recent learning theorist, believed that there are significant differences between the way adults and children learn. He popularized the term andragogy[128], which is the way one teaches adults.[129] Andragogy will be discussed later in this chapter. Knowles attempted to understand the differences between adult and child learning and to develop learning strategies for adults. He referred to learning as:

> 1) The acquisition and mastery of what is already known about something.
> 2) The extension and clarification of meaning of one's experience or
> 3) an organized, intentional process of testing ideas relevant to problems. In other words, it is used to describe a product, a process or a function.[130]

Learning, however, is not just a simple concept but a process of assimilation of knowledge. In his book, The Adult Learner, Knowles quotes Carl Rogers, another well-known social scientist, on the subject of learning. Rogers uses elements of humanistic psychology to define learning. He claims that learning is:

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[126] David Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984) 12.
[127] Ibid. 23.
[128] From the Greek *aner*. Meaning man or adult.
[129] As opposed to the word, pedagogy, meaning the way we teach children.
[130] Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton, Richard A. Swanson, The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, 5th edition (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1998) 11.

1. Personal involvement. The whole person, including his or her feelings and cognitive aspects, are involved in the learning event.
2. Self-initiation. Even when the impetus or stimuli come from the outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending comes from within.
3. Pervasiveness. Learning makes a difference in the behavior, attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner.
4. Evaluation by the learner. The learner knows whether the learning meets personal need, whether it leads towards what the individual wants to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance the individual is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the learner's essence. Its essence is meaning. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience.[131] (Rogers, 1969. Page 5)

Knowles sets up these different ideas concerning what learning is to help the reader understand that defining learning is complicated. It is hard to define and difficult to measure, because learning is significant for different peoples and cultures. For our purposes, we will look at how adults learn facts and ideas and also how to bring meaning and worth to the learners' life.

Other definitions of what learning is include, "Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action. We appropriate symbolic models, composed of images and conditioned affective reactions acquired earlier through the culture or the idiosyncrasies of parents or caretakers - a highly individualistic "frame of reference" - and make analogies to interpret the meaning of our new sensory experience."[132] Learning involves a changing of our preconceived perceptions and being changed in some way as a result of new information, so that we may better utilize this new learning. Maslow defines the goal of learning as, "the full use of talents, capacities,

[131] Ibid.14.
[132] Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like and Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." In Learning as Transformation, Edited by Jack Mezirow. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) 5.

potentialities, etc."[133] (Maslow, 1970, page 150) In this way, learning can expand our human potential and increase our capacity to grow as individuals. Knowles boils down the definition of learning to the "process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise."[134] In order to make best use of this definition, we will look at various theories, philosophies and models of learning.

Theories and models of education

There are many different philosophies about education. John Dewey is considered to be the most influential and has had a great impact in the field of education. He held many concepts about education that contrasted principles with traditional education. Dewey believed that experience is the starting point for all learners, "All genuine education comes about through experience."[135] Dewey felt that experience is never the result of education, just the opposite. Dewey also held other concepts in his system which included, experience, democracy, continuity, and interaction. These ideas were fresh and different in their day and influenced other experts who continued this work. Dewey influenced Jerome Brunner who was a proponent of the inquiry method of teaching. Brunner believed this theory had to meet certain criteria. Such criteria included, whether the experience predisposes the individual toward learning, whether it would make the student eager to learn, what the best learning method is for a student and whether there are any inherent rewards for learning. He also presented a hypothesis that shifts the learning from the teacher as expositor and student as listener to a hypothetical mode. "The hypothetical mode leads to students engaging in acts of discovery, a process which Brunner sees as having four benefits: (1) increasing intellectual power, (2)shifting

[133] Knowles. 15.
[134] Ibid. 17.
[135] Ibid. 94.

from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards, (3) learning the heuristics of discovering, and (4) making material more readily accessible in memory. This mode is more congruent with and more likely to nurture the will to learn."[136] But involving the learner in this process is the key to Brunner's idea. Teachers must attempt to get learners to consider different ways of thinking about their world and their lives. "Hence, effective facilitation means that learners will be challenged to examine their previously held values, beliefs, and behaviors and will be confronted with ones that they may not want to consider...This experience may produce anxiety, but such anxiety should be accepted as a normal component of learning and not something to be avoided at all costs for fear that learners will leave the group."[137] It is important for the educator to provide a safe environment for learning to occur. Brunner was also a proponent of the necessity for the learner to be open-minded. "Brunner defines open-mindedness as "a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one's own values." Reflective discourse involves what the Greek Skeptics called epoche, a provisional suspension of judgment about the truth or falsity of, or the belief or disbelief in ideas, until a better determination can be made."[138] A person must feel safe enough to risk trying a new idea or allowing himself to see a new perspective. In this way, a person becomes competent in his own experiential learning process.

Kurt Lewin, who was a contemporary of Piaget, developed what was known as 'field theory'. This is the theory that fields of forces, patterns, stimuli or events determine learning. Lewin believed, "Immediate personal experience is the focal point for learning, giving life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts

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[136] Ibid. 98.
[137] Ibid. 106.
[138] Mezirow. 13.

and at the same time providing a concrete, publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the learning process."[139] Dewey, Lewin and Piaget had a lot in common. They all agreed that creating meaningfulness was a force that drove education. "Common to all three traditions of experiential learning is the emphasis on development toward a life of purpose and self-direction as the organizing principle for education."[140] The ideas of having a purpose and self-directed learning are important in finding meaning in one's life. That is one important value of education.

Another recent expert in the field of learning, Jurgern Habermas, dealt with the idea that domains of learning were important in the assimilation of education. Kolb tells us that, "Habermas has helped us understand that there are two major domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality, and modes of validating beliefs. One is instrumental learning - learning to control and manipulate the environment or other people, as in task-oriented problem solving to improve performance. The other is communicative learning - learning what others mean when they communicate with you. This often involves feelings, intentions, values, and moral issues."[141] Learning takes on a deeper meaning than was once widely held. Stephen Brookfield, a more recent expert had the idea of critical reflectivity – that the purpose of teaching and learning is that educators should attempt to transform the way they think about themselves and their world. He said, "...Significant personal learning might be defined as that learning in which adults come to reflect on their self-images, change their self concept, question their previously internalized norms (behavioral and moral) and

[139] Ibid. 21.
[140] Ibid. 18.
[141] Mezirow. 8.

reinterpret their current and past behaviors from a new perspective..."[142] That is the learner has a paradigm shift in thinking and learning. It is not only the assimilation of facts and experiences, but also a way to navigate through the world and through our life's experiences.

What is Andragogy?

As previously stated, Andragogy is the idea that adults learn differently from children. Brookfield describes andragogy in different ways. He says, "The concept of andragogy can be interpreted in several ways. To some it is an empirical descriptor of adult learning styles, to others it is a conceptual anchor from which a set of appropriately "adult" teaching behaviors can be derived, and to still others it serves as an exhortatory, prescriptive rallying cry."[143] Many experts see adult learning similarly, but categorize it differently. Eduard C. Lindeman, who was strongly influenced by Dewey, laid the foundation of andragogy by noting his assumptions of adult learning. He believed that "Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered. Experience is the richest source for adult learning. Adults have a need to be self-directing. And that individual differences among people increase with age."[144] These assumptions about adult learning are different from Brookfield's beliefs, although they are similar in some ways. Brookfield believes that there are four Central Features to Andragogy. These are, "Adults work best when they are in collaborative groups; that success comes when adults begin to exert control over their personal and social environments and thus begin to see

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[142] Kolb.105.
[143] Stephen Brookfield, Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986. 90.
[144] Knowles. 40.

themselves not as controlled by external and unchallengeable forces, but as initiating, proactive beings capable of creating their personal and social worlds rather than simply living passively within them; the focus of activities is determined by adults' perceptions of relevance rather than being externally imposed; and adults learn best when they engage in action, reflection, further action, and further reflection."[145] Both of these assumptions about adult learning have merit and were a good starting point for the study of adult education. Modern experts who have studied adult learning believe that a more holistic approach towards learning must be taken.

Studies have shown that not all individuals learn the same way. A person's ability to adapt and assimilate information has much to do with how well he will learn. Learning transformation is the way that a person transforms an old idea to a new one. Jack Mezirow uses this idea of 'learning transformation' to show how learning takes place. "Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind."[146] Learning is complex and must be addressed as a complex idea. Which brings up the previous notion that, in order for learning to take place, a person must be able to use his imagination to lead him to a new paradigm of belief. Mezirow believes that imagination is central to understanding the unknown. He claims that it's the way we examine alternative interpretations -we "try on" another's point of view. The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be.[147] Mezirow reiterates Brunner's idea of the ways a person learns and claims that the way a person learns is that, "Transformations

[145] Brookfield. 113.
[146] Mezirow. 19.
[147] Ibid. 20.

in the habit of mind may be epochal, a sudden dramatic reorienting insight, or incremental, involving a progressive series of transformations in related points of view that culminate in a transformation in habit of mind."[148] Transformative learning transforms our mind set, our frame of reference and the habits of our mind and makes them more open, able to change and be reflective, so that the individual is more capable of changing his beliefs and opinions to ones that will prove to be more useful and meaningful.

David Kolb suggests that, in his opinion, all learning is relearning. This is especially true for adults who have had numerous experiences, since learning, according to Kolb, is grounded in experience. He also claims that the learning process can be studied scientifically. For Kolb, "learning is not so much the acquisition or transmission of content as the interaction between content and experience, whereby each transforms the other."[149] Kolb bases his model on Lewin's problem-solving model, which is similar to Dewey's and Piaget's models. Kolb believes there are four steps in the experiential learning process. "Concrete experience, observation and reflection, formation of abstract concepts and integration and then the testing of the implications in new situations. Kolb suggests that these four modes combine to create four distinct learning styles.[150] There has been much research about learning styles and strategies which, when utilized, is helpful for adult learners. These methods not only provide comfort for the adult learner, but also improve their ability to learn and integrate information. The danger is an adult expecting learning situations to accommodate different learning styles. When this does not happen, the adult may feel unable to adapt adequately. Instead, learning styles should

[148] Ibid. 21.
[149] Kolb.147.
[150] Ibid. 148.

be used as a guide. Adult learners are able to learn differently from their preferred style. It is up to the adult to have the motivation to do so.

The motivation to learn for the sake of learning is known as 'self-directed learning.' In Jewish learning tradition, this is known as Torah lishmah. It is the ability for adult learners to change perspectives and shift paradigms. It is not just applying techniques of learning, it is more about replacing one way of interpreting the world with another. Adults respond to societal and personal demands differently at different times in their lives. An idea or technique that worked for someone in their young adult life, may have to change during mid-life or older age learning. And adults are responsible for making sure that this learning can occur. The crux of self-directed learning is when an adult realizes that adulthood is concerned with the internal change of consciousness as well as the external management of events. Individuals become aware of their unique learning styles and practice the control and management of the method and direction of learning. This is done sometimes with a facilitator, sometimes alone. However, no man is an island. A learner should not feel that he is to be self-reliant in the learning process. He will learn best when he avails himself of the different learning resources that are available to him. "The highest level of autonomy is realized when adults make a conscious and informed choice among learning formats and possible activities on how best to achieve their personal learning goals."[151] When adults develop a sense of their uniqueness and their ability to learn, they will find that their motivation and personal investment in learning increases.

Learning Styles

[151] Brookfield. 56.

Learning styles are different from cognitive styles. "The terms learning style and cognitive style are often erroneously used interchangeably. Cognitive styles are thought to be more stable traits and refer to a person's typical manner of acquiring and processing information (Messick, 1984). Learning style is a broader concept, embracing more than just cognitive functioning, and refers to more general preferences for types of learning situations."[152] Learning styles refer to different models and environments for learning. "Though there is little uniformity in the way researchers define them, they tend to differ from cognitive style in two ways: (1) learning styles include cognitive, affective and psychomotor/physiological dimensions and (2) they include characteristics of instruction and instructional settings along with learning."[153] Humans adapt to their learning. However, learning is much bigger than what takes place in a classroom. Certainly it has to be, as children learn a great deal before they ever set foot in a classroom. Kolb claims that learning occurs in all human settings and in all personal relationships. Learning also is a part of all life stages, from childhood to adolescence, to middle and old age. Therefore it encompasses other more limited adaptive concepts such as creativity, problem solving, decision making, and attitude changes that focus heavily on one or another of the basic aspects of adaptation.[154] Kolb also believes that learning is a holistic process since it encompasses all life situations. Learning and knowledge must have an experience of transformation. That is, for learning to occur and last, there must be some kind of assimilation of that learning into the person's life. Ideas are not fixed but are formed and re-formed through experience. Learning by itself is not enough. "The simple perception of experience is not sufficient for learning; something must be done with it.

[152] Knowles. 161.
[153] Ibid. 162.
[154] Kolb. 32.

Similarly transformation alone cannot represent learning, for there must be something to be transformed, some state or experience that is being acted upon."[155] In order for this to occur, the learner must be motivated to learn, and when this happens, the learner has a better chance of retaining what has been learned. The next chapter will deal more specifically with learners and teachers and how best to derive meaning from the learning experience.

[155] Ibid. 42.

Chapter Four – How to Teach Adult Learners

"Don't poke fun at an uneducated man; you may mock your own ancestors"
Ben Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 8:4

Teachers

One may not remember who won the World Series last year, but ask any adult and he will be able to tell you about at least one teacher who made an impact on his life. He could also probably recall the subject that was taught, the classroom setting and maybe even his classmates. Teachers are a critical part of quality education. There are guidelines for teachers to use to help facilitate learning. It is up to the facilitator to clarify what the purpose of the class is, as well as to help the group understand what their needs are, both at an individual level and a group level. It is important for a facilitator of learning to allow for a sense of freedom. "The facilitator has much to do with setting the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience. If his own basic philosophy is one of trust in the group and in the individuals who compose the group than this point of view will be communicated in many subtle ways."[156] This will then create a safe and inviting learning climate. The teacher has to find a way to ignite the desire for the student to learn and then find meaning in the learning. When the individual is self-motivated, the teacher's job is much easier and the result will be more successful. To inspire learning, the teacher must remain sensitive to the words of and the feelings of the students. With an understanding of where the students are in the learning process, it is possible to be empathetic and motivating at the same time.

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[156] Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton, Richard A. Swanson, The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development. (5th edition) (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1998) 85.

Sometimes teachers are described as midwives - those who literally help in the 'birthing' process the student from one place to another, through the acquisition of new thoughts and ideas. However this process should not be just a one-way street. Belenky says, "None of the women we interviewed wanted a system in which knowledge flowed only in one direction, from teacher to student. Even those who were most respectful of authority wished to be treated at least as containers of knowledge rather than empty receptacles."[157] Women seem to know that they possess knowledge, even if it is buried inside them. The teachers they desire are ones who are able to draw them out, and "Help them expand and articulate their latent knowledge: a midwife teacher."[158] The best kind of teacher encourages a student to think and to trust his or her own voice. They allow the space for learners to do this. "They assist the students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it."[159] This gives the learner an opportunity to grow from their inner strength and learn to trust their own voice.

Another model of teaching is the idea of the 'connected teacher'. Connected teachers have a link with their students and also believe in them. "They trust their students' thinking and encourage them to expand it..." In looking at the two models, most women were more partial to the teacher as midwife since the 'connected teacher' could be in a position to challenge old beliefs and ideas more aggressively. This method of challenging the learner was not as 'safe' as the midwife model.

The ideal teacher of adults, according to educator Frank C. Pearce, is one who is "people centered." The people centered teacher is less concerned with things, rules and

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[157] Mary F. Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule, Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Mind and Voice Second Edition Printing. (New York: Basic Books, 1996) 217.
[158] Ibid. 217.
[159] Ibid. 217.

conformity, and more concerned with people, solutions and individuality. He claims "the teacher must have understanding, flexibility, patience, humor, practicality, creativity and preparation."[160] Florence Nelson claims that there are three requirements to teaching. These are, "A love for your subject, a desire to share it; and a basic competence in the subject."[161] There are, of course, more characteristics of what makes for a good and competent teacher. These include, "being warm, caring and accepting of the learners. Having a high regard for the abilities of the learners. Viewing themselves as participating in dialogue between equals with the learners and being open to change, new experiences and seeking to learn themselves."[162] But in order for students to feel endowed with the capacity to learn, the environment of the learner must be a safe place.

Trust is an important component of teaching. The students must feel that they are in an environment where it is safe for them to learn. In order to create this kind of space, teachers need to build trust with their students and take risks. Stephen Brookfield encourages teachers to admit their errors. "Learners seem to warm to teachers who acknowledge that they don't have all the answers and that, like their students, they sometimes feel out of control. So be prepared to admit to being plagued by occasional feelings of anxiety and unease about inadequacies you perceive in yourself."[163] Taking risks is also a way for teachers to build trust. When teachers allow themselves to follow their own intuition, even if the course they take was not planned, or does not work, it can still be useful in showing that the teachers is human, and willing to take a risk. Another approach a teacher can use to build trust is to present a problem and let the students solve

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[160] William A. Draves, How to Teach Adults (Manhatten, KS: Learning Resources Network, 1984) 15.
[161] Ibid. 15.
[162] Stephen Brookfield, Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986. 62.
[163] Stephen Brookfield, The Skillful Teacher (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1991) 168.

it. The teacher must be prepared to hold back and allow the learners to explore the issue and different avenues of questioning. It gives the students an opportunity to reflect on their learning while it facilitates dialogue and encourages the students to consider different perspective and interpretations.

It is also important for teachers to develop a relationship with their adult students. Adult students need to feel that they are safe to participate and can establish a rapport with a real person. Diane Tickton-Shuster says, "They want the teachers to share a bit of themselves, and to demonstrate concern for who the learners are as well. In this way, the students may feel that the teacher is listening and responding to their needs and that they are free to actively participate in the learning process."[164] Teachers assist adult learners to attain a state of positive self-appreciation. So, the job of an educator is many-sided. According to Kolb, "one's job as an educator is not only to implant new ideas, but also to dispose of, or modify old ones. In many cases, resistance to new ideas stems from their conflict with old beliefs that are inconsistent with them. If the education process begins by bringing out the learner's beliefs and theories, examining them and testing them, and then integrating the new, more refined ideas into the person's belief systems, the learning process will be facilitated."[165] It is therefore very important for the teacher to create a safe learning environment for exploring feelings and trying new ideas.

In order to have a lasting impact, teachers must keep the subject matter relevant to what will be most useful for the learner's life. One way to do this is for the teacher to elicit learner's feelings about the material, as the teacher teaches. "More enduring

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[164] Diane Tickton Schuster and Lisa D. Grant, "Teaching Jewish Adults..." From The Jewish Teachers Handbook, (Denver: ARE Publishing) 2003. 5.
[165] David Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984) 28.

knowledge builds over time, through an interactive process between teacher, learner and content. To have a lasting impact, adult educators must be able to help their learners engage in reflective dialogue that interweaves their own life experiences with the subject matter they are studying."[166] When students reflect on their ideas and feelings, they engage in active learning. Meanwhile the teacher must keep the subject matter relevant, accessible and meaningful, while being affirming and encouraging.

Finally it's important to stress the necessity of feedback for the teacher. When teachers receive feedback, they can use the information to make sure that learning has been taking place. If this is not the case, they can adjust their teaching to better meet the needs of the learners. "Both Vella and adult learning expert Stephen Brookfield (1991) strongly recommend that teachers solicit ongoing student feedback as courses progress, both about the content and the process of learning. This kind of assessment provides teachers with important information about how the students perceive the experience and whether any adjustment to content or process should be made."[167] Successful teachers adapt their lessons in response to the information they've received. This shows that they have listened to the students' needs and adequately addressed any problems or concerns they may have had. It also serves to build trust and promotes students' thinking about the learning process. The learning process will be covered in greater detail later in this chapter.

Different Types of Learners

In the book, Women's Ways of Knowing, Belenky talks about different types of learners and the journey of those learners to move from one level to the next. She claims

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[166] Tickton-Shuster. 4.
[167] Ibid. 5.

that the lowest level of knower is the "silent knower". The silent knower is one who doesn't know that he or she has a right to know. Metaphorically speaking, this is someone who is "deaf and dumb" and experiences a disconnection with abstract thought and reflection, although she has developed a capacity for language. "When these women attempt to describe the self, they remain standing in their own shoes, describing only what they see gazing outward from their own eyes. They find no vantage point outside the self that enables them to look backward, bringing the whole self into view."[168] Those who are silent knowers are limited in their confidence and did not view school as a place where they thrived nor did they find their voice. Because of this, they don't even know how to begin to acquire knowledge.

Received knowers are the next level of learners. They see knowledge as coming from a source outside themselves, such as from a 'higher' authority. Unlike silent knowers, received knowers see learning as coming from listening. "They equate receiving, retaining and returning the words of authorities as learning - at least with the kind of learning they associate with school."[169] Relying on authority for a single view of what is truth and learning is not a good way to learn. It does not allow for preparing students to think and adapt to a changing world.

The next kind of knower in Belenky's view is the 'Subjective Knower.' Subjective knowers rely on their own personal experience as the basis for knowledge. They 'trust their gut' and believe that their intuitive knowledge is best and therefore correct. "Truth, for subjective knowers, is an intuitive reaction – something experienced, not thought out, something felt rather than actively pursued or constructed. These

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[168] Belenky. 32.
[169] Ibid. 39.

women do not see themselves as part of the process, as constructors of truth, but as conduits through which truth emerges. The criterion for truth they most often refer to is "satisfaction" or "what feels comfortable to me." They do not mention that rational procedures play a part in the search for truth."[170] It is hoped that those who are subjective knowers will proceed to a more analytical and objective place in their lives, although this does not always happen. Gut reactions are not always infallible and intuition can be deceptive. Therefore, it behooves the person to make the shift to a better, more capable way of thinking and learning.

That level of learning is known as the procedural knower. The procedural knower recognizes the inherent value of multiple perspectives and has the capacity to analyze data from different sources and make decisions based on opposing views. "Procedural knowledge is "objective" in the sense of being oriented away from the self – the knower – and toward the object the knower seeks to analyze or understand."[171] The synthesis of procedural knowers and subjective knowers is an integration of the two. The object is not to abandon reason nor feeling. The hope is that the knower will be able to integrate both forms of knowing into their learning.

The highest form of learning, according to Belenky, is the constructed knower. This learner can develop her own base of knowledge after carefully analyzing the data available to her. She can push the boundaries of her perspective and be open to different possibilities and new ways of thinking. Belenky claims, "To learn to speak in a unique and authentic voice, women must "jump outside" the frames and systems authorities

[170] Ibid. 69.
[171] Ibid. 123.

provide and create their own frame."[172] This learner is capable of weaving together objective and subjective knowing. They have a tolerance for internal contradiction and are able to take risks in both learning and teaching. These learners understand that they are able to contribute to the empowerment of others and improve both their own lives and those of others. They understand that the responsibility to learn is their own.

Hence learners have a responsibility in the learning process. Adults come to learning situations when the need arises. Something in an adult's life creates a situation in which he needs to access new information. Whether it is for professional or personal reasons, the adult goes through a process of becoming ready to learn something new. Adults vary in learning situations. Some learners need direction on how to do something, other learners need emotional support and encouragement. Learners need direction when they want to become competent in a subject. Support refers to the encouragement one needs when taking part in the learning process before gaining sufficient confidence. In order to best accommodate the learner, it is necessary to understand the prior experiences that impact on learning. If the teacher can create a wider range of individual learning styles, provide a rich resource for learning and provide a grounding for adults' self-identity, then the process of learning will be more successful. However change is stressful for learners. That is why it is necessary for the learner to be ready for this upheaval, otherwise known as the learning process. "Learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habits, knowledge and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments...Learning that occurs during the process of change can be referred to as the "Learning process."[173] How do we know if

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[172] Ibid. 134.
[173] Knowles. 12.

a person is ready to learn? Knowles defined three laws of learning for animals and humans. He suggests that there is a 'law of readiness' which is the circumstance under which a learner tends to be satisfied or annoyed, to welcome or to reject; 'The law of exercise' is the strengthening of connections with practice; and 'the law of effect' which is the strengthening or weakening of practice as a result of its consequences.[174] When the learner is ready to practice and sees some kind of positive response to the work, then it shows that willingness and readiness came together at a critical time in the learning process.

Although it is not a good idea to push a learner into something before he is ready, there are ways of inducing readiness in adult learners. For instance if you can show the person how the learning is relevant and meaningful for him, it may orient him to being open about learning and, in this way, encourage him in his learning process. However sometimes moving from a safe place to an unsafe one brings up students' discomfort. Resentment can build, especially when the teacher is unaware that the student has lost his comfort zone. It is possible for the student to feel and even behave resentfully toward the teacher. "With this sense of threat, students may feel that they have failed in their educational efforts. Knowing that these emotional reactions are typical helps teachers live through them."[175] Learners must also be aware that they are developing a self-image as a learner. Many adults who have been out of a learning environment for a long time, may not regard themselves as able to attain new skills, knowledge and insights. Learners' egos are fragile and many are not willing to do things they cannot do well. It is not easy to try something new as one runs the risk of looking foolish in public.

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[174] Ibid. 25.
[175] Brookfield. 47.

Brookfield explains, "Students' resistance to a particular learning activity may simply reflect their feeling that it is occurring in an overly public forum rather than their dislike for the focus of the learning activity."[176] This psychological aspect is often overlooked. It is crucial for learners to feel that it is safe to look 'foolish', that they have permission to learn, and thus the process won't be traumatic and threatening. Parker Palmer relates "I should have remembered from my own experience that students too, are afraid: afraid of failing of not understanding, of being drawn into issues they would rather avoid, of having their ignorance exposed or their prejudices challenged, of looking foolish in front of their peers."[177] Learners have to build trust with the teacher as well. Students carry a lot of learning history with them into any learning situation. Memories of past teachers, both positive and negative, are part of the learner. "It is impossible to separate adults from the wealth of experience they bring to the learning situation. Rather than attempt to deny or discount this experience, educators should attempt to benefit from it and to assist the learner to utilize it."[178] When the learner trusts the teacher, he will be more open to new and different learning situations, as he knows that he will be safe in the process. However, Brookfield says that it is important for educators to understand that one can never predict how an adult (or a group of adults) will respond when presented with new ideas, interpretations, skill sets, experiences or materials.[179] Adult learners want to know that the learning experience will be positive for them.

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[176] Ibid. 152.
[177] Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 37.
[178] Wickett, R.E.Y. – Models of Adult Religious Education Practice. Religious Education Press, Birmingham 1991. 47.
[179] Brookfield., 2.

Models of Learning and Teaching

Although learning theories differ from teaching theories, it is important to discuss different models of both learning and teaching, in order to understand the options that adults have in the learning process. R.E.Y. Wickett uses different models to give the educator options as to how best to structure a class for different purposes. The first model we will look at is the "learner centered educational model", which focuses specifically on the learner and makes the teacher secondary to the process. "A model will assist the educator to understand the nature of the learner's situation and to create a context in which the learner will be enabled to learn and grow through an appropriate process."[180] This model is good for the individual who needs to feel that the teacher is present and available to him. This is appropriate for a small group, but doesn't serve the needs of a larger group. Another model Wickett talks about is the 'group goals have more precedence over the individual goals' model. "The tradition model and some alternative models, which are based upon the group approach to learning (for example, the study circle), focus more attention on the group and less upon the individual. Group goals are important in group learning situations, but they are not the sole issue to be considered. This means that we must be more careful to consider the individual learner and the personal aspects of learning in the evaluation process."[181] Someone who needs the attention and focus of the teacher, or who needs to share and reflect openly, would not function well in a group centered environment. Yet another model is the Interdependent Group model. This model focuses on the individuals within the group teaching one

[180] Wickett. 3.
[181] Ibid. 67.

another. Those who have skills in certain areas help those who lack certain skills and vice-versa. They come to depend on one another as they work together. "The model is referred to as an "interdependent" mode because it emphasizes working relationships with members of a group. Each learner is dependent on the other learners for mutual support in the learning process."[182] The teacher can also offer support, and the combination insures the accomplishment of both the group and the individual goals and the successful completion of learning. The benefit of interdependent groups is that the teacher is not the focus of the individual, instead, the group acts as a vehicle for maximizing the learning process. Wickett claims that, "The exciting aspect of this (interdependence) model is that it moves the learner away from dependence on authority, while not isolating the learner in the final process."[183] Dependency on the teacher gives the teacher "expert" status and assumes that the learner is dependent on the teacher. Interdependence gives the teacher and the learner permission to combine their roles interchangeably as expert and learner. Both learn from each other and the teacher's role is resource for the learner, not expert. The learner must undergo a "transformation of attitude" to see the teacher differently from that of an expert. "This transformation of perspective toward the teacher is quite critical. To cease to view the teacher as a superior being and the fount of all that is good and useful, is most difficult for those who have been taught to revere teachers or, indeed, any person with expertise...the learner begins to see his or her own resources, such as preciously acquired knowledge and skills, as having value."[184] In this interdependence model, the learner is ultimately responsible for the results of the learning and it is he who must be satisfied with the outcome of the learning activity. By using

[182] Ibid. 119.
[183] Ibid. 120.
[184] Ibid. 120-121.

many different models of learning, we can aspire to a greater diversity of activities that learners can utilize. In this way, we can reach a wider cross-section of learners.

Meaning

The learner must be motivated to take the challenge to learn. The learner must have goals and some kind of criteria that will give him the opportunity to evaluate the experience. When a person finds meaning, substance and relevance of learning, he will see the inherent value and will be more self-motivated to learn and be most effective. "Adults participate in Jewish study for a variety of reasons. All (Jewish adult learners) are looking to "make meaning" out of Jewish study, but they come with different motivations, different questions, different learning styles and different anxieties and concerns...some others come with existential questions about their own identity or about God that they may not even be able to articulate, but are propelling them to study nevertheless. To be effective, teachers of Jewish adults must be able to identify and address all those varying motivations, interests, and needs, so that participants feel valued and respected, and will keep coming back for more."[185] People come to the synagogue hoping to bring meaning to their lives. Sometimes they are cognizant of this fact, and sometimes they are not. It is up to the teacher to lead the student to this purpose. "The task for Jewish educators is to create time and space for individuality to make connections and links between "my story" and the "big story" (Groome, 1980) - The story of Jewish people. Torop (1990) models this process. He suggests that cultivating imagination through the use of stories, in this case Biblical stories, in the educational setting can "Create a supportive holding environment in which canopies of meaning my come unraveled and be rewoven. The embedding of one's personal story in the Jewish

[185] Tickton-Schuster. 3.

story places Jewish values and loyalties at the core of one's existence."[186] It is believed that Jewish education can help individuals find meaning in their lives. In this way the Jewish person can use knowledge to find a deeper understanding of God and develop a deeper spiritual connection to the God of his understanding. And when he has found a place for God in his life, he can find a place for himself within the Jewish people. "Jewish education needs to nurture 'meaning making'. Fundamental is the incorporation of stories, particularly those found in Jewish texts, for the faith formation of individuals. This helps embed the individual's story and values in the Jewish story and values."[187] But being culturally connected is not enough for some. Many have the desire to be connected on a human level, to understand the divine more completely and thus have more of a spiritual experience.

Mezirow speaks about "meaning structures." These are frames of reference that help to build assumptions and expectations. He claims that it provides the learner with a context in which he may make meaning of what is being taught and have an experience appropriate to that understanding. He says, "Frames of reference are the results of ways of interpreting experience. They may be either within or outside of our awareness. Many of our most guarded beliefs about ourselves and our world - that we are smart or dumb, good or bad, winners or losers - are inferred from repetitive affective experience outside of awareness. Because of such affectively encoded experience each person can be said to live in a different reality."[188] Frames of reference often represent culturally held frames

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[186] H.A. Alexander, and I. Russ, What We Know about Jewish Education (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1992) 131.
[187] Ibid. 133.
[188] Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." In Learning as Transformation, Edited by Jack Mezirow. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) 16.

of reference. This refers to learning that is unintentionally assimilated from the culture - or the personal perspectives derived from parents or teachers. Therefore our meaning schemes operate outside of our awareness. These 'habits of mind' as Mezirow calls them, determine how we see a situation. And thus they suggest a line of action that a person will automatically follow unless the process is brought into critical reflection. Once we rethink these old ideas, we can see them in a new light and it is possible for us to make greater meaning out of something we once took for granted, as we have reframed it in a new light and have a different perspective on it. Henri Nouwen asserts his idea of making meaning as "three dimensions of spiritual growth." He believes the process is important for the teacher to understand. "Nouwen writes about the search which occurs within each individual for the spiritual dimension of the self, the search which involves the spiritual dimension of others, and the search which occurs in direct relationship with God."[189] People will leave religious institutions unless they can learn how to integrate their personal and spiritual lives. Therefore it is important that the teacher show students how to find meaning in Judaism. "Without demystifying the rituals, students will feel disconnected and may reject those traditions. They will look for meaning elsewhere. One symptom of this is the disconnect felt during services and with traditional prayers, especially with those said in Hebrew, a foreign and therefore distant language."[190] Thus in order to help the learner make and find meaning, the teacher must orient the total person, giving purpose and goals to the person's quest, and support their hopes, struggles, thoughts and actions. It is the essential search for this meaning that fuels both the teacher and the student.

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[189] Wickett. 22.
[190] Raviv, Rachel "Teaching About Prayer" From The Jewish Teachers Handbook, (Denver: ARE Publishing) 2003. 418.

However it is not enough for Jewish adults to follow blindly in the path of another's' ideas. In their quest for a spiritual connection and desire to find meaning, they must take risks, go outside their comfort zone and explore Judaism and what being Jewish means to them. Wickett sees the role of the "Religious Educator" as being able to become invisible in the learner's process. "Sometimes an adult religious educator will make the largest contribution to members of the faith community by getting out of their way and letting people get on with their own learning. More specifically, a religious educator can help people clear away some of the barriers that inhibit learning, barriers such as satisfaction with pat answers, reluctance to raise questions and fear of admitting doubts."[191] In this way, we can help our learners become the 'constructed knowers' of which Belenky writes. We can ultimately develop adult Jewish learners who are sophisticated and self-motivated. Thus the focus of our teaching to these learners must transcend the transmission of information and reach the empowerment of students to learn on their own.

[191] Wickett. 32.

Chapter Five – Teaching Prayer to Adult Reform Jewish Congregants in a 'Learners Minyan' Setting

Goals:

- To teach Adult Reform Jews the historical origins of the prayers
- To teach Adult Reform Jews the meaning of the prayers
- To find "pathways" into prayer for participants to connect with the prayers
- To help participants find their 'voice' in prayer as well as in the education process

Assumptions I held regarding Adult Learner:

- I thought it would be easier to teach this class!
  - I didn't think debates would erupt
  - I thought that all students would be well behaved and not disrupt the flow
  - I thought that the students would take responsibility for their learning from the start. I didn't realize that this happens over time. (This will be covered in detail in the conclusion.)

- I thought all the learners would have a sense of their goals.
- I thought all of the learners would more actively participate in the learning process

Assumptions I held regarding the Subject:

- I believed all of the students would feel as passionately about the subject as I did
- I thought the subject would be overwhelming to some if not presented adequately and methodically
- I was afraid there would be too much to teach and I would not be able to do it all

The Setting:

I arranged the seats in a semi circle so the students could all see one another. Also, circular seating promotes everyone being able to see each other, so that the focus is not solely on the teacher. Although I stood before the congregation, it was not uncommon for the learners focus to shift to the person who was speaking.

The Class:

Before we began to pray and learn, we took time to introduce ourselves so everyone would know who was in the congregation and why they had come to this learners minyan and what they had hoped would come of it.[192] The answers given were: "I was curious," "I wanted to support your thesis," "I have always wanted to learn how to pray," "I don't think this will change the fact that I don't feel anything when I pray, but I am open," and "This is something I've wanted to do but never had the opportunity, living in a small town." This process of letting everyone share, not only allowed us to get to know each other, but also gave me insight as to where everyone was. The reasons they were here ranged from curiosity to desire. There was some hesitancy in the sharing as this was a new forum for them.[193] Because they already were familiar with each other, the space seemed 'safer' more quickly.[194]

After introductions, the minyan began. I asked everyone to shut their eyes and to breathe deeply. To feel the breath enter their lungs and to feel the breath as the stress left their bodies.[195] I sang a niggun to relax them and after I sang it a few times, I invited

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[192] Martin Buber claimed that "all real living is meeting." I wanted to give the students the opportunity to connect with each other and it also promotes trust between the students and the teacher. Mary Belenky says, "None of the women we interviewed wanted a system in which knowledge flowed only in one direction, from teacher to student. Even those who were most respectful of authority wished to be treated at least as containers of knowledge rather than empty receptacles." (As quoted in this thesis on page 63.)

[193] Page 62 of this thesis discusses the idea that it is incumbent on the facilitator to create a mood of safety and of freedom. Even with the initial hesitancy, I used this as an opportunity to be sensitive and open to their needs as learners in a new learning setting. There are guidelines for teacher to use to help facilitate good learning. Knowles says, "The facilitator has much to do with setting the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience. If his own basic philosophy is one of trust in the group and in the individuals who compose the group than this point of view will be communicated in many subtle ways." (Knowles. The Adult Learner. 85.)

[194] When teaching this class at Wise Temple, this was not the case. The students did not know each other and the room was set up in a classroom style. This made for a very different kind of teaching and learning environment. Although learning took place, it was not as deep and as process oriented as the experience in Portsmouth, Ohio.

[195] I used this process as a way to relax the congregation, as I was taught by Levy Kellman at Kol Haneshamah in Jerusalem, Israel. In order to pray, one must be relaxed and in the mood to pray. Also, "But prayer should be a multi-sensory, multi-level experience, it should connect the pray-er to God, to the Jewish community both past and present, and to his/her own thoughts. To achieve these connections, some pray-ers must reach an almost

them to join me.[196] We sang it softly at first, and then gradually got faster and louder. Then, I brought them back down musically to a quieter, slower pace and we ended the niggun together.

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meditative state. Reaching this state is not a skill that comes naturally to many; it is too often overlooked and, it is easily dismissed as too new age or as non-Jewish. Yet, Jewish tradition not only embraces this meditative state, it provides techniques to achieve it properly." Raviv, Rachel "Teaching About Prayer" From The Jewish Teachers Handbook, (Denver: ARE Publishing 2003) 418.

[196] "The research...clearly supports the idea that the use of song in the classroom can have a positive effect on learning outcomes as well as student motivation. Songs can play a valuable role in multi-modal presentation, and they can be powerful teaching tools when they are integrated with other subjects." Gross, Steven M. The Use of Music as a Tool in Jewish Education (Rabbinic Thesis. Hebrew Union College, 1996) 38.

Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat)

Kabbalat Shabbat consists of the a series of six psalms – Psalms 95 through 99 and psalm 29 followed by L'cha Dodi, a mystical poem. This is followed by psalms 92 and 93.

Before the sixteenth century, Kabbalat Shabbat was not recited in the synagogue, or as part of the *ma'ariv* service; it was a separate ritual. It is said that Rabbi Isaac Luria used to take his disciples out to the field in the hills outskirts of Safed to welcome the Sabbath bride with songs and praise. The fields represent the Shekinah – the feminine aspect of God. The (male) Kabbalists, by going out into the fields, represent the masculine aspect of God – and the union of both aspects. Facing the setting sun, they sang songs and hymns which were composed for the occasion.

Psalm 29

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד. הָבוּ
לַי־וָה בְּנֵי אֵלִים:
הָבוּ לַיי כָּבוֹד וָעֹז:
הָבוּ לַיי כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ.
הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיי
בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ:

Psalm 96

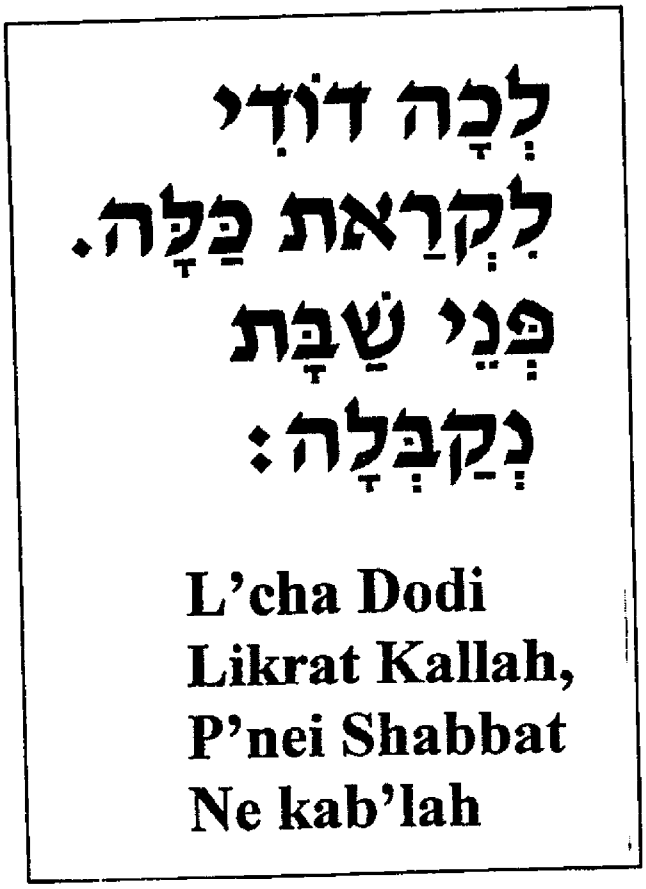
שִׁירוּ לַיי שִׁיר חָדָשׁ.
שִׁירוּ לַיי כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

The "Kabbalat Shabbat" expression, has two meanings. "One implies "welcoming"; the other implies "acceptance." The service starts with six psalms. These psalms all express the theme of God' sovereignty, and symbolize the six working days of the week. For each day, we say a psalm that acknowledges God as King and Ruler of the universe. Psalm 92, also known as Mizmor Shir L'yom Ha Shabbat is a psalm for the seventh day, said right after L'cha Dodi.

Psalm 29 was already being recited by Sephardim before Shabbat evening prayers. It is associated midrashically with the revelation at Sinai as well as literally depicting the power of God in nature. The last of the six psalms has symbolic significance.

L'cha Dodi

L'cha Dodi was composed by Rabbi Shlomo Halevy Alkabetz, one of the Safed Kabbalists. He arranged it so that the first letter of each stanza spelled out his name (Shlomo Ha Levy), which was a common practice among poets. Although there were a few different L'cha Dodi poems circulating at that time, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the foremost authority of Kabbalists, adopted this one. The stanzas of L'cha Dodi have unique contents. "The poem starts out with a refrain based on b. Sabbath 119a. In the first stanza: "Observe and remember," the author refers to the Midrashic explanation of the discrepancy between the two versions of the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8 and Deuteronomy 5:12, according to which God uttered both words simultaneously.



The second stanza also has an interesting history. It begins with "come, let us go out to meet the Sabbath." In fact, under the leadership of Isaac Luria, the Kabbalists used to go outside the city limits into the open fields; there they would chant psalms and songs and would thus receive the Sabbath. This custom, however, was later abandoned. The first two stanzas deal with the value of the Sabbath. The third through eighth stanzas speak about the hope for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the coming of the messiah, and the redemption of Israel. The Sabbath represents and anticipates the messianic fulfillment of time in the world-to-come. The rebuilding of Jerusalem represents the spatial fulfillment of Jewish messianism in the way they merge together in this hymn. In the last stanza, the theme returns back to Sabbath, calling it the 'crown of the husband'. In the Sephardic, Italian and Yemenite rituals, there is an additional phrase, "Come, O Bride, Sabbath Queen" which is repeated three times in some places. The custom in some congregations is to stand and turn toward the door while reciting the last stanza. This is to act as if the congregation is welcoming a guest, or receiving a bride. (It also reflects the earlier custom of going outside to greet the Sabbath.)

How I taught L'cha Dodi

While I played some background music on the guitar, I took about five minutes to give the congregants some historical background on the L'cha Dodi.[197] I asked them to close their eyes and visualize going out into the field. As they felt the sun going down and the dusk slowly creeping up on them, I asked them to call out how they feel. A few of the students called out at the same, which seemed to jolt them and I realized it was not a good idea.[198] After we visualized the going out into the field, we started to sing L'cha Dodi. After each stanza, I offered a short explanation about what it meant and then we continued to sing.[199] At the end, we imagined that we had come back in from the fields, were sitting in a sanctuary, waiting to greet the Sabbath bride. We stood up at the last stanza and bowed to the right and left and then finished the song. I asked for reactions to the practice of bowing and the feedback was mostly negative[200]. Although they didn't

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[197] For some students, who had some knowledge of the L'cha Dodi, this was reinforcement. For others who had no prior knowledge, this information was new. On page 51 of the thesis, I quoted Knowles who referred to learning as the acquisition and mastery of what is already known about something. This was done not only to impart information, but to show the learners to know that I knew my subject matter. Florence Nelson claims that there are three requirements to teaching. "A love for your subject, a desire to share it; and a basic competence in the subject." Draves, William A. How to Teach Adults (Manhatten, KS: Learning Resources Network, 1984) 15. See page 64 of the thesis as well.

[198] This was very jarring for both the students and me. In order to redirect the class and return to the state of Kavanah, (see page 14 of the thesis), I had to admit I made an error in judgment. This was actually a good thing for the class to see. Page 64 of the thesis supports the idea that it's good for students to see the teacher's humanity. It is up to the teacher to admit her faults and move forward.

[199] I attempted to draw a connection between the meaning of the prayer and the actual prayer itself. I hoped that through the process of visualization, learning about the content and the actual practice of singing the prayer would all lead to the learner understanding the prayer itself. Knowles claims that, "Adult education is a process through which learners become aware of significant experience. Recognition of significance leads to evaluation. Meanings accompany experience when we know what is happening and what importance the event includes for our personalities." (Knowles, Adult Learner. 38.) See also page 66 of the thesis for further clarification.

[200] I forgot to take into consideration the fact that this congregation was made up of Classical Reform Jews who were not used to the idea of bowing and swaying. Since I had forgotten this and did not explain the rationale to them at first, the class was not open to doing this comfortably. However, when I realized my error, and explained the rationale of performing the prayer the way it was done in Safed, (as well as in many congregations across the country) it was met with more openness and enthusiasm. On page 70 of this thesis, I wrote about the importance of not pushing the learner into something before he is ready. I was not sensitive to the fact that moving, while praying would be jarring to some who were not used to this. Also, perhaps they had old ideas about appearing foolish in public. Moving during prayer was not part of the decorum that these Reform Jews were used to. Once I acknowledged the fear, the discomfort and my oversight, the class relaxed

mind the visualization, they felt that the rising, turning and bowing in the middle was distracting and did not add to the overall feeling of the prayer. The next time I did this with them, we started the prayer while standing and that helped them feel less clumsy, rising, turning and bowing.

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a little. Although I had written about the importance of these aspects of teaching, it was only through actually doing the teaching that the point was driven home.

The Barechu (Call to Worship)

The Shema and its Blessings rubric starts with the Barechu, also known as the 'call to worship'. Originally, it was a declaration that God is the source of all blessing. The Barechu came about when the Jewish people returned from the Babylonian exile, sometime around 421 BCE. The leaders, Ezra and Nehemiah, called them to come and hear the Torah and pledge to uphold it. Using Nehemiah 9:5, they said, "Stand and bless Adonai your God who is forever and ever. And say: Praised be Your glorious name, and may it be exalted by every blessing and praise."[201] The Barechu is also based on a psalmic passage and the call and response structure was the custom of the time. The Barechu today has retained the call and response format. The Barechu in its simplest form is the ceremonial opening of the formal communal prayer section. From the beginning of the prayer service, until the Barechu, the transitioning congregation is still prayer mode to from a personal one. From this a more communal congregation point the manner, as prays in a unified individual one, opposed to an communal sharing in a Barechu dialogue. The Barechu emphasizes praying with a community. The Talmud says that prayer taking place in a community is more likely to be answered, as the prayer is less for personal gain and more for the greater good. The way to perform the Barechu is that the entire congregation must stand. "The leader bows at the word Barechu and straightens up at the verse Adonai. This is based on the verse "Adonai...makes all who are bent stand straight." (Psalm 145:14) When coming before God we bow, but the proper attitude when addressing God is not groveling, but standing upright."[202] The bodily movements replicate our willingness to declare God's Kingship and to serve God with full intention. Bowing shows that we declare this not only in word, but with a willing body, as well.

Barechu et Adonai Hamvorach

Baruch Adonai Hamvorach L'olam Va-ed

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ׃

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

[201] B'Chol Levavcha Page 39.
[202] Hammer page 28.

How I taught the Barechu

I started this section by asking the congregants if they remembered playing outside with their friends and having their parents call them inside for dinner. This kind of calling us inside is the rationale behind the Barechu. One does not want to jump right into prayer.[203] Just as athletes warm up before starting any kind of high impact activity, Jews too should "warm up" before tackling the more important prayer.[204] Thus is the function of the Barechu. It is the first prayers in the "Shema and Its Blessings" unit and serves as a call to worship and preparation for the other prayers.

I then asked the participants to reflect back on their lives and recall if any of them had actually ever prepared to pray.[205] No one stirred. I asked them, "what would happen if they approached prayer like an athlete approaches a big game? How would it change the intention?" Certain members of the group started to share personal experiences. One man talked about the one time he tried meditation, and that the teacher had stressed the importance of the preparation as being as important as the act itself. Another gentleman offered the idea that when he ran a marathon, he started running very slowly and only when he had passed the third mile, did he start to feel he had gotten in his stride. A woman shared that she never sat down to review a paper (she was a professor), without preparing to read by making a cup of tea and covering herself with her favorite blanket.

These instances all showed that the participants were connecting to the idea of warming up to pray in their own way. They cited their own experiences and understanding. The sharing of the ideas encouraged others to do the same and gave the Barechu new meaning.

Diane Tickton-Shuster claims that the best way to teach Jewish adults is to allow them to tell their stories. By giving them space to do so, they were able to see how the prayer related to their lives and given a new intention in prayer the next time they came to pray.[206]

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[203] Joel Lurie Grishaver says in his book, Shema is for Real, "Before you start working out, you **WARM Up**. You stretch. You do some jumping jacks. You get your body ready for the demands of the practice and the game." (Page 34).

[204] Page 34 Shema is for Real.

[205] I was attempting to get the learners to think back on their lives. To share in a broader context. I cover the necessity for this on page 51 of my thesis. I wanted to draw a parallel from their life experience to the learning we were currently doing. I was attempting to help them realize that the learning we were doing in this minyan had a bigger purpose. As Mezirow writes, "The broader purpose, the goal, of adult education is to help adults realize their potential for becoming more liberated, socially responsible, and autonomous learners - that is, the make more informed choices by becoming more critically reflective as "dialogue thinkers" (Basseches, 1984) in their engagement in a given social context." (Mezirow, Jack "Learning to Think Like and Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." In Learning as Transformation, Edited by Jack Mezirow. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. 30.)

[206] (Diane Tickton-Shuster and Lisa D. Grant "Teaching Jewish Adults..." From The Jewish Teachers Handbook. ARE Publishing. 6.)

Ma'ariv Aravim and Ahavat Olam –

2 Blessings that precede the Shema on Shabbat Evenings

The first of four benedictions of the Shema and Its Blessings section during the Friday evening service, is the Ma'ariv Aravim. The themes of both the morning and the evening prayers are the same. Ma'ariv Aravim deals with creation, as does its morning counterpart, Yotzer Or. The two versions were not composed specifically to have one appropriate for the morning and the other for the evening, they were variations on the theme of creation. The prayer describes God's control over nature, the seasons and all of creation. While the first blessing before the Shema centers on creation, the second focuses on another aspect of our relationship with God: The Torah, which is God's revelation.

Ahavat Olam, speaks of God's gift of Torah, which is the essence of Jewish survival, and God's love for His people and It is parallel in devotion to God. morning theme to its Ahavah Rabbah. counterpart, mentions two The Talmud blessing that is versions of the saying the Shema, recited prior to Ahavah Rabbah. Ahavat Olam and as blessings are In the same way study the Torah, recited before we read before we this blessing is sections of the read the Torah Shema.

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם, בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ, אָהָבְתָּ. תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָנוּ לִמַּדְתָּ. עַל כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשָׁכְבֵּנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ נָשִׂיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ. וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאוֹרֶךְ יָמֵינוּ וּבָהֶם נֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה: וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אַל תָּסִיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ. אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

How I taught Ahavat Olam

Since adult learners have a need to be self-directed and don't just want the teacher to transmit her knowledge to them[207], I had to come up with a way to teach this prayer, that would be both meaningful and have a lasting impact. I have seen this prayer taught by making reference to Rosenzweig's so called Star of Redemption.[208] On a handout, I separated the star of David into two triangles. I pointed out that Rosenzweig speaks of a three-point relationship in the upper triangle between God, the World, and Man. He also claims that the lower triangle represents Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. As the points of the triangle are interwoven so, too, are these six elements. Just as God makes the world through creation, God chooses man through revelation. (Here I asked for forms of revelation besides the Torah. I got answers including modern day prophets, such as Gandhi and Mother Theresa. One said that he felt God's presence at certain times during prayer. Another described that when she meditates, she feels God revealing what action she should take next.) I used that last comment as a jumping off point to say that God, with the help of man, brings about the act of redemption. Man is God's co-worker in creation. Our tradition teaches us that although God created the world, man must complete the work.[209] I suggest to the class that we are the only hands God has.

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[207] See Models of Learning and Teaching on pages 72-74 of this thesis. It is also appropriate to add that Knowles also derived a lot about the role of the learner and the facilitator from Carl Rogers. Knowles claims that "Learners participate actively in the learning process. The teacher helps the learners to organize themselves to share responsibility in the process of mutual inquiry." (The Modern Practice of Adult Education. 58.)
What is also important to point out is the difference between pedagogy and andragogy. Although this is covered in the thesis on pages 56-57, it is appropriate to revisit this idea. For a pedagogic learner, the idea is that they are learning something that will be useful to them at a later time. For the andragogical learner, education is about developing competence that will prove useful to them in their lives. Knowles calls this "learning for learning's sake." The positive feelings one gains through learning and its application to their lives adds to the self-worth of the learner.

[208] See page 17 of this thesis where I briefly discuss Rosenzweig and his focus on prayer and its communal influence.

[209] Pirke Avot 2:16

The Shema (Morning)

We accept and bear witness to God's sovereignty. That's a loaded statement! But, that's what the Shema is, it's a statement, not a prayer. Surprise! That's true – it is a scriptural reading from Deuteronomy 6:4. With the Shema, we also read three other Biblical passages. The four passages together constitute Kriat Shema, or Reading the Shema.

Shema Yisrael Adonai
Eloheinu Adonai Echad

Baruch Shem Kevod
Malchuto L'olam Va-ed

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ , יְיָ אֶחָד׃

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

The purpose of the Shema was to differentiate the Jews from other cultures who believe in more than one God. According to the rabbis, when we recite the Shema, we bear witness to God's existence. Hence the Ayin and the Daled are accentuated in the biblical text. We are to be witnesses to God's oneness and God's sovereignty. We also emphasize this by reciting the next line, Baruch Shem Kavod, the congregational response, which is not from the bible. It was the congregational response originally said in the Temple in Jerusalem, once a year, where the High Priest, on Yom Kippur, would pronounce God's name in the Holy of Holies. The people would fall and declare "Blessed be God's Glorious Kingdom forever and ever."

The Va'ahavtah is the continuation of the first paragraph of the Shema. It is from Deuteronomy 11:13-21, which commands us to love God, study these words, teach them to children and bind them on the hand and forehead. It is then followed by L'ma'an Tizk'ru, the third paragraph of the Shema that comes from Numbers 15:40-41. It reminds us to remember and observe God's commandments and to be holy.

The Shema (Evening)

There are two blessings that precede the Shema in the evening which are worth noting. The first is a blessing that speaks about creation. It is known as Ma'ariv Aravim. (The corresponding morning blessing is known as Yotzer Or.) The next blessing that precedes the Shema is about revelation, known as Ahavat Olam. (It corresponds to the blessing that is said before the Shema in the morning known as Ahavah Rabah.)

Shema Yisrael Adonai
Eloheinu Adonai Echad

Baruch Shem Kevod
Malchuto L'olam Va-ed

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ , יְיָ אֶחָד :

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד :

The next section is known as G'ulah, or Redemption. The first part of the blessing, 'True and Faithful' (Emet V'emunah) affirms the above creed, that God is trustworthy and that we believe His words and promises. It is based on the passage from Jeremiah 31:10. Then the blessing goes on to the theme of redemption. The Exodus story is sandwiched between words addressed to God. The Exodus from Egypt is the quintessential example of God's redemption. "The Song of the Sea, quoted so extensively, serves three purposes. It is the principal example of redemption for which we thank and praise God, connecting it with the end of the third paragraph of the Shema. It is the text that first served as Israel's acceptance of the kingship of God, thus tying it to the first paragraph of the Shema. And it is the paradigm of the future redemption for which we pray, the time when once again we will sing a song of triumph."[210]

[210] Hammer. 41.

How I taught the Shema

Malcolm Knowles said that adults learn in order to be able to do one of three things. Either "to perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way."[211] Using the Shema, I attempted to give the participant the opportunity to learn to pray as simply as possible.[212] I asked the group, "What prayer do you remember from childhood?"[213] Most responded that they remembered the Shema being the most important, the one their parents taught them or the one they recalled from Hebrew School.[214] (Other prayers recalled included the Mi chamocha and Modeh Ani.) I then asked why they thought the Shema was such a significant memory. The overall answer was that it seemed to be the most important prayer in Judaism. One made a comment about the legend of Rabbi Akiva (I was really surprised that they knew the story.) Another said it was the prayer her parents taught her, because it was the only one they knew.

Teaching the Shema as a sentence is not a difficult task. Teaching the deeper meaning of the Shema is a lifelong endeavor. It is not necessarily the job of the facilitator to continue the teaching, but it is up to the student to continue the learning.[215]

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[211] (Malcolm S. Knowles, Andragogy in Action, (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers, 1984) 12.)

[212] See this thesis, pages 74-77. According to Knowles, the instructor is a facilitator for learning. My job as the prayer leader/teacher was to facilitate prayer and give the student a 'pathway' into prayer, by using an experience from childhood. Adults are very influenced by their childhood experiences, both positive and negative. Therefore, it is important to start at a point that is common to all adults (their childhood) and allow them to grow from there.

[213] Eduard C. Lindeman said, "The resource of highest value in adult education is the learners experience. If education is life, then life is also education." (Knowles. The Adult Learner. 37.) Where else is a better place to start then a person's own experience?

[214] See pages 58-59 of the thesis where I talk about Kolb's idea that all learning is relearning. In order to see the Shema in a new way, I had them start at their childhood. I used a method of asking about their concrete experiences to be revisited in a new light, in order to make them more comfortable. These questions are difficult and can make people uncomfortable. Thus, it was incumbent on me as the facilitator to make the environment as safe as possible. See also page 54 of the thesis where I talk about learners being challenged to examine old beliefs. It also stresses the need for a safe learning environment.

[215] See page 63 of the thesis. I was trying to be a 'midwife' for the students. I wanted to move them to acquire new thoughts and ideas. I did this by involving the learners in their own learning process. Jack Mezirow says, "Adult Education may be understood as an organized effort to assist learners who are old enough to be held responsible for their acts to acquire or enhance their understandings, skills, and dispositions. Central to this process is helping learners to critically reflect on, appropriately validate, and effectively act on their (and others') beliefs, interpretations, values, feelings and ways of thinking." (Op Cit. Mezirow. Learning Transformation. 26.) By asking the students to reflect on their own beliefs, interpretations and ways of thinking, I was setting the stage for them to consider

Instead of trying to gloss over the history and the deeper meaning of the Shema, I asked the students to begin to think about what it meant to them. Why was it important that their parents taught it to them?[216] Why did they think a belief in one God was central to Judaism? What about people who don't believe in God, are they too to be considered Jews? These questions fostered dialogue between the participants, and although no one came to any concrete conclusions, the thinking process had been started.[217]

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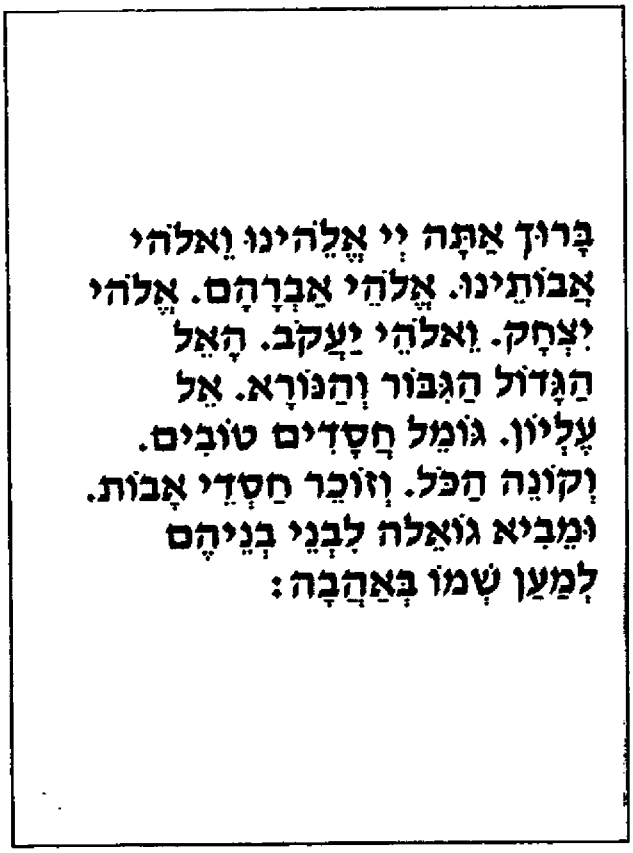
new ideas and ways of interpreting the prayer. This was done by asking the questions that followed as well as fostering discussion amongst the learners.

[216] It's important to note that not all participants' parents had taught them the Shema. Over 50% of the participants only knew it because of coming to Synagogue and did not previously understand it as the most important statement of faith in Judaism. Where we as Jews bear witness to God's sovereignty. See page 36 of the thesis.

[217] Diane Tickton-Shuster stresses the need for adult learners to grapple with their own issues and draw their own conclusions. She writes, "Teachers of adults must maintain a delicate balance between content and discussion. Adult learners want a content - rich and intellectually challenging program. They also want to engage in a meaningful conversation and share personal experiences that are relevant to the topic." (Op Cit. "Teaching Jewish Adults," 6.)

The Shabbat Amidah

The Amidah/Shemona Esrei that is said on Shabbat differs from that of the weekday Amidah. The shorter Amidah comes from the rabbis, who instituted a shorter Amidah because they didn't think that petitionary prayer was appropriate for the mood and meaning of Shabbat. The middle thirteen prayers remind us of our needs and problems. On Shabbat and should be joyous, the regular routine problems. Tefillah was holidays, we substitute for the not immerse in offerings and on of our daily were no personal Furthermore, the Temple. considered a sacrificial the Sabbath there offerings in the



We aren't sure who wrote the Amidah. According to tradition, the Amidah was written by the rabbis of the Great Assembly. Jews have been reciting the Amidah for over 2000 years.

The first three prayers of the Amidah, Avot (forefathers), Gevurot (God's power), and K'dushat Ha shem (God's holiness) are the same on both weekdays and Shabbat. The final three prayers, Avodah (worship), ho'da'ah (thanksgiving) and Birkat Shalom (peace). A final prayer, Birkat may'ain sheva (essence of the prayer) is added to the traditional Shabbat Amidah. Historically this final prayer was added to allow those who prayed a little more slowly to have companionship as they walked home. (It was dangerous during those Talmudic times! Night-time was scary without streetlights and people were safer if they walked home together.) This allowed everyone time to finish and not have to walk home alone!

The middle prayer is known as the kiddushat Hayom (Holiness of Shabbat). It confirmed that Shabbat is sacred and more blessed than the other days of creation. Until the first century, the Amidah was the same for every Shabbat. Then the expansion of the middle Shabbat prayer began and now we have variations. On Friday evening the middle prayer stresses the creation story and how Shabbat relates to it. During the Shabbat morning service, the theme of the commandment to keep Shabbat is stressed.

The Closing Meditation of the Amidah (Silent Prayer)

The closing prayer of the Amidah/Shemona Esrei is also known as the Mar bar Ravina prayer. Ravina was a late Babylonian master who used this prayer as a fitting meditation for the end of the Amidah. Historically, Gamliel II had banned private prayer after the rubric of Blessings, to from taking place said the Amidah. the Shema and its their private make sure people of the Amidah, People moved Sometimes, prayers to the end have a private instead. in the ninth people did not Amram Gaon prayer to offer, so prayer book, he century, when prayer as an codified the first those who didn't included this prayer of their opportunity for begins with a have a private my tongue from own. The prayer from deceit. (It's petition to guard end the prayer evil and my lips "Adonai, open my a fitting way to mouth may that begins with glory".) The lips that my adapted from a declare your (34:14) The sentence is with the insertion verse in psalms. prayer concludes of two biblical passages. "May the words of my mouth..." is the conclusion of Psalm 19:15 and "Oseh Shalom..." is based on Job 25:2 where God "makes peace in the heavens"

שָׁלוֹם רָב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ
תָּשִׂים לְעוֹלָם כִּי אַתָּה הוּא
מֶלֶךְ אָדוֹן לְכָל הַשָּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב
בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בִּשְׁלוֹמֶךָ:

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו. הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Sim Shalom/Shalom Rav

Sim Shalom comes during the part of the Amidah that is known as the blessings of peace, which follow the blessings of Thanksgiving. In traditional prayer books, this section includes the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26. Reform prayer books changed the prayer slightly to delete the actual priestly blessing, but to retain the essence of it. The priestly blessing presented two problems. The first, the notion that Moses wrote the Torah. The second is the idea that only priests are sacred. Einhorn, for instance, changed "priests of Your holy people" to "for priests, <we who are> your holy people" in order that everyone would understand that all are sacred, not just the priests.

Shalom Rav is the liturgy found in the Evening service that asks for Israel to be blessed with enduring peace. These blessings for peace precede the Silent Prayer of Mar bar Ravina. יִהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וְהֶגְיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ. יְיָ צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי:

How I taught the Amidah

The Amidah is not an easy prayer to teach. First of all, it is long and has many components. One could take an entire year and still not ever scratch the surface of the meaning of the prayer. The layers of its history present a rich opportunity for lecture.[218] However in order to make the prayer meaningful, I wanted to have the participants connect it to their own ancestors. I started with the literal meaning. I explained that the Amidah begins by reminding God that we are connected to our ancestors. We are links in a chain from that time to the present. I then asked the participants to share an experience where they had someone in their family "go to bat" for them, so to speak. The answers ranged from the simple – "my mother has called in sick to work for me," to more complex answers. "I needed my brother in law to help me out of a scrape with the law. He used the fact that he was an upstanding citizen to vouch for me." These subjective answers allowed the learners to experience a sense of personal involvement and feel that this prayer had real life merit.

I also used the second benediction, the *G'vurot*, (God's might) to extend this idea. If a family member is willing to help us, why not our God? This opened up a can of worms about whether or not God was to be used in this fashion. Was God able or willing to intervene? Did God exist at all on this level or was God a 'first cause' which set the world in motion and then stepped back and let it go? Although this was not the direction I wanted the discussion to take, it was important to let the students grapple with their ideas and feelings about God, in order to let them grow spiritually and intellectually.[219] This 'Self-directed learning' is important to the adult learner in order to contemplate introspection and foster growth. Stephen Brookfield claims that self-directed learning is "a matter of learning how to change our perspectives, shift our paradigms, and replace one way of interpreting the world by another."[220] After the minyan, Several participants shared their view that this discussion had been particularly interesting and helped them grapple with their own personal God concept. Because of this, they felt that the Amidah seemed to have more meaning for them during this particular service. I challenged them to continue this grappling to see how it would change their understanding of the prayer and how it would ultimately change the way they related to God.

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[218] Frontal lecture is safe for some learners because it does not ask them to do anything except sit back and receive knowledge. However, it is not seen as the best way to learn. See page 59 about learning styles .

[219] Alexander and Russ in their book, What We Know About Jewish Education, cite four themes in faith development:
1) Knowing, feeling and doing are interconnected. People need to be viewed holistically, combining the cognitive and the affective, the rational and the spiritual, the secular and the religious.
2) Human beings make meaning out of their lives continuously throughout their life spans, the way of being in this world is to make meaning.
3) Becoming a maker of meaning involves the individual as an adult who makes commitments.
4) Experience informs faith development. Experience is a source of knowledge. Experience acts as a conduit for turning knowledge into Jewish living. Page 130.

[220] Brookfield. 19.

The Aleinu

The final prayer of every service is known as the Aleinu. Historically, the Aleinu was attributed to Rav, a third century Babylonian sage. But many scholars say that the Aleinu predates Rav by over a century. Whoever wrote the Aleinu, one theme stands clear. The Aleinu affirms the allegiance to God as the ultimate Sovereign and speaks of a universal hope. The hope is that people everywhere will affirm God's sovereignty. It reminds us to be concerned for one another and that this must be accepted by all people. The Aleinu reiterates the theme of the Shema, where we accept and are witnesses to God's sovereignty.

Aleinu L'shabe-ach L'a-don ha Kol La teit g'du-la l'yo-tzeir b'rei-sheet, sheh-lo a-sa-nu k-go-yei ha-a-ra-tzot, v'lo sa-ma-nu k'mish-p'chot ha-a-da-ma; sheh-lo sam chel-kei-nu ka-hem, v'go-ra-lei-nu k'chol ha mo-nam. Va-a-nach-nu ko-r'im u-mish-ta-cha-vim u-mo-dim li-f'ney meh-lech ma-l'cheh ha-m'la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu.

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל. לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית. שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת. וְלֹא שָׂמָנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה. שֶׁלֹּא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ כָּהֶם וְגוֹרָלֵנוּ כְּכָל הֲמוֹנָם. וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

The Aleinu is a biblical passages Aleinu themes. A Deuteronomy the first passage. Exodus which second passage Zechariah. The the end of the sounds a bit like a the right tune for a as the Aleinu. in the twelfth Aleinu became chanted by many Why? Let's look at the structure of the Aleinu.

The first paragraph acknowledges Israel as a distinct nation from all others. It depends on Jews accepting the fact that God created heaven and earth. The second paragraph is about our sharing this distinction in the future with other nations of the earth. We look forward to the day when all nations will acknowledge God's sovereignty. Only then will mankind have been perfected. Liberal and Reform Jews find this problematic because the Aleinu is quite particularistic and thus the translations have been somewhat altered to express a more acceptable distinctiveness. Instead of coming across as particularistic and implying that other faiths are inferior, it has instead stressed the Jews' uniqueness and expressed the Jewish commitment to God's uniquely revealed laws. In our prayer book, Gates of Prayer, the Hebrew text has remained the same, but the translation says, "(God) has set us apart from other families of earth, giving us a destiny unique among the nations." There is also an alternative Aleinu offered in Reform prayer books that changes the Hebrew, but retains the idea of an underlying ideological unity of all people. We praise God who created heaven and earth and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world.

How I taught The Aleinu

The Aleinu was originally part of the Rosh Hashanna liturgy. It was incorporated by the Rhineland Jews as the conclusion for the daily service. Eventually it became an accepted custom. I introduced the first paragraph as a polemic against Christianity and as an example of particularism in medieval Europe.[221]

Classical Reform prayer books changed the meaning of the English translation. Gates of Prayer includes the particularistic elements, but also gives other options. I presented this to the class, which seemed to be a mistake because the class erupted into a heated debate.[222] Is Judaism better off being unique and set apart, or has assimilation been good for the Jewish community. This debate lasted until I realized that there was not going to be any resolution. The best thing that happened is that each person had delved into their own psyche to reconcile this conundrum for himself. I tried to redirect the class to the other elements in the Aleinu – the aspect of Tikkun Olam found in the second paragraph, the hope expressed in the last part. But this seemed to be lost during the first class. I realized that I had to try it again the next time we met, and hoped that this prayer did not take on a negative context for the participant.

However, the class was evenly divided on this issue. I wondered if we could define how far assimilation can go without a loss to Judaism? Is it possible to be non-particularistic and still be a nation with a distinct mission? The next time I present this prayer, I will realize the potential for debate and grappling with these issues, and then I will encourage the participants to come up with their own answers. In this way, the Aleinu, for better or for worse, will be a part of their mind as well as their psyche.

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[221] See pages 45-47 of the thesis.

[222] See pages 72-74 of the thesis where I discuss Wickett's idea of interdependency. Although the students no longer viewed me as the 'expert' in this area, I felt that I had somehow lost control of the class. I felt inept and didn't see that I could stop the debate. Then, I realized that the debate was part of the learning process, just as Wickett described! Perhaps through debate and what I perceived as chaos, came some fostering of new ideas and imagination. Mezirow writes, "Imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by "trying on" another's point of view. The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be." (Op Cit, "Learning to Think Like and Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." Mezirow, Page 20) Also see page 51 of this thesis where I cite Piaget's idea of accommodation and assimilation. This is relevant because by grappling with the issues inherent in the Aleinu, the learners assimilated new ideas into their own lives and will hopefully continue these discussions (and the grappling with these issues) both publicly and privately in the future.

Conclusion

"What is more important, study or performance? Rabbi Tarfon said that performance is greater. Rabbi Akiva said that study is greater. Everyone present agreed that study is greater because it leads to performance."

Sifre Deuteronomy 41

I preferred to teach this subject in the context of a prayer minyan. The class came together and was more successful when taught this way because we grew to trust one another. I was both a teacher as well as a participant in the learning process. In the minyan model, the participants were able to get to know one another and learned to trust each other. Diane Tickton-Shuster stresses the importance of this mutual trust between the student and the teacher. The building of trust and the passage of time enabled the participants to delve deeper into their own experiences and shape their views more readily. There was time for contemplation, development of concepts and expression of their own different personal interpretations.[223] This led to 'ownership' of the prayers. The prayers were no longer just words on the page, but held personal connection and meaning for the participants.[224]

Does prayer reveal more about a human need rather than a need of God's? This was a question that kept coming up in the minyan. Although I had briefly addressed this idea in chapter one of the thesis, it was an ongoing question for the class. Does God need our prayer? If so, what makes Jewish prayer distinct from the prayers of other people?

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[223] Many of the participants underwent a learning journey. Some participants started at what Belenky would call a "silent knower". One who does not know he or she has the right to know. Others were received knowers and subjective knowers. Still others were procedural knowers and constructed knowers. Putting such a diverse group together to discuss, grapple, argue, debate and teach one another was a wonderful way to learn. Mezirow claims that, "We change our point of view by trying on another's point of view. We are unable to do this with a habit of mind. The most personally significant and emotionally exacting transformations involve a critique of previously unexamined premises regarding one's self." ("Learning to Think Like and Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." 21.)

[224] Diane Tickton-Shuster claims that adults come to the synagogue to bring meaning to their lives. One reason why this prayer minyan was successful was because it helped the participants to understand how prayer fit in their lives as Jews. They now had tools to help them pray with more meaning and Kavanah.

We never came to any answers on this question as a group, but I feel it is part of my own quest to find some answers to this question.

Also, was prayer a Torah commandment, or did prayer truly begin after the destruction of the Temple? I touched upon this in chapter one, but did not go into great depths to answer this question. It was not a commandment, per se, but it was mentioned in the bible as happening. Daniel and Hannah are examples of spontaneous prayer. Also, the whole idea of the sacrificial system was replaced by prayer, so one could claim that prayer is a biblical commandment by extension of the sacrificial system.

Most of the participants gave feedback about their experience during the class.[225] One man said that he now understood prayer to be an "opportunity for self reflection." We pray because of our own need, not necessarily because God wants us to do so. (The latter had been his understanding before he participated in the minyan.) A woman shared with us that she had learned the Hebrew of the prayer, and enjoyed praying in Hebrew, but never had understood the meaning of the prayers. Even the English translation did little to help her connect to the prayer. Her experience had been that prayer bored her because it was not meaningful and so she would not want to participate. Now, she felt she had a renewed interest in the practice of prayer.

Learning Hebrew and the prayers alone (as well as their history) does not necessarily provide one with the best orientation to undertake meaningful prayer. Practice of prayer is crucial for developing Kavanah and a more meaningful experience. But, this is a catch-22. Some find prayer boring and don't do it often because it is not meaningful and they don't find meaning in prayer because they are not practiced in it.

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[225] I stressed this idea on page 66 of this thesis.

However, practicing prayer in a safe, group environment was a good start to developing the skills needed to practice praying in the future.

I purposely did not delve into the value of specific texts. The traditional text itself can be a gateway for spiritual expression. Departing completely from the meaning of the text (as is done in some of the newer English translations found in Gates of Prayer and the forthcoming Mishkan Tefillah prayer book) can also be meaningful to some. Some may claim that the traditional text has some inherent power. When I discussed Kook at the end of chapter one, I wrote that Kook believed we should retain the original texts and find within ourselves the roadblocks that block us from connecting with the prayer. I don't think it is necessary to retain the translations of the original texts just for the sake of tradition. Otherwise, we as Reform Jews would still be praying for the return of the Babylonian exiles. Instead, it may be worthwhile to allow the revamping of the translations of prayers, while attempting to teach that which we have revamped.

My students claimed they learned more about the traditional text, and this helped them to relate in new ways to the text amended by the Reform movement. One gentleman said that he felt he had a better understanding of what was being reinterpreted, by knowing the original text. (From the Amidah, the *Michayeh meytim* vs. *Michayeh ha kol*.)

I learned a great deal, not just by researching this topic, but also by teaching it in various ways. To teach the topic as a class experience is more cerebral and 'safe.' Classroom teaching does not seem to allow the learner to touch the part of himself that would otherwise be moved in prayer. However, teaching this class within a prayer

minyan context gives the participant license to explore his or her understanding of the meaning of prayer and the best way to pray.

I hope that by teaching this group of Reform Jews how to pray, I helped them to create a *Kahal Kadosh* – "A Holy Congregation." Each worshipper made this journey both as an individual and as part of a group and I hope that each person was able to gain something lasting and meaningful from the experience. My wish is that each participant grew spiritually and will continue to pray more deeply and with more intention. I pray that each individual will go forth and be a more ethical and loving person as a result of this experience. It is my lifelong goal to help Reform Jews learn how to pray and find pathways into the prayer experience. Through that experience may more Jews find prayer meaningful and be encouraged to pray more often.

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