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TOWARDS A LIBERAL ZIONIST PHILOSOPHY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION

SHIRA KOCH EPSTEIN

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Ordination
and
Requirements for Master of Arts in Religious Education Degree

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TOWARDS A LIBERAL ZIONIST PHILOSOPHY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION

SHIRA KOCH EPSTEIN

Summary

In five chapters, this thesis traces the development of Reform Zionism from the mid-19th century until today, and seeks to determine the ideological bases on which Reform Zionism can rest. Looking at liturgy, historical documents including rabbinic writings and statements, Jewish educational curricula, and the scholarship of the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, this thesis looks towards the development of a cohesive ideology of Reform Zionism, and what impacts such an ideology could have on Israel education.

The first chapter traces the early relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism, focusing specifically the liturgies of its congregations. The second chapter follows the history of Reform Zionism from the dawn of the twentieth century through the founding of the State of Israel, focusing on the platforms of the Movement leadership and the writings of particular Reform rabbis. Analyzing Reform Movement curricula of the 20th century, the third chapter addresses the major Zionist narratives that have influenced Reform Jewish education. The fourth chapter addresses Reform Zionist theology, looking at the theological writings of the first ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank in the early 1990's, and seeks to answer some of the questions that Reform Zionism poses as it dances the tense high-wire between the primacy of the sovereign self and a universalistic vision for Reform Judaism, and the preeminence of the collectivity for Zionism. This chapter addresses Reform theological responses to Zionism, focusing on the tension between universalism and particularism, and the relationship between Zionism and messianism. The final chapter presents some of the ongoing work of the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, of which I am the coordinator. In this chapter, I begin to propose some narratives that can be used for the expression of a Reform commitment to Zionism and Israel. Utilizing theories of narrative teaching, pedagogic content knowledge, and identity formation, this chapter suggests how such narrative development can serve as a basis for Reform Zionist Education.

TOWARDS A LIBERAL ZIONIST PHILOSOPHY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION

Shira Koch Epstein

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'עשה לך רב ,וקנה לך חבר' מסכת אבות, א' ו

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Shira Koch Epstein 28th Shevat 5766

Introduction

In September 2003, the North American Coalition for Israel Education (NACIE)[1] brought together David Ellenson, Arnold Eisen, and Moshe Halbertal to focus on the philosophical relationship between Israel and American Jewry, in both historical and contemporary contexts. The paper published summarizing this meeting reads, "Whilst each of [the] pillars of the classical Zionist idea was showing signs of decay, no new pillars were being constructed to replace them..."[2] Ellenson, Eisen, and Halbertal began to address the state of the existing pillars, and think about how they might be repaired and replaced.

As a committed Jew and Zionist, raised in the American Reform Movement, about to embark on a career in the rabbinate and as a Jewish educator, I am particularly perplexed by the absence of such thinking among my congregants and colleagues. As the leaders of the movement and the Reform Movement itself proclaim themselves as staunch Zionists, I find that Zionist language, philosophy, vision, and education are sorely lacking beyond the upper echelons.

In 1931, at a time when the leadership of the Reform Movement was widely anti-Zionist, 1 in 5 Reform Jewish families in large cities had Zionist members.[3] Today, when the leaders of our movement are ardently Zionist, only 21% of self-identified Reform

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[1] NACIE was established "to explore the contemporary connection between North American Jews and the State of Israel, and to develop a number of new change initiatives to help strengthen the Israel-Diaspora relationship." (NACIE Mission Statement)

[2] Jonathan Boyd and Esti Moskovitz-Kelman, *The Philosopher's Retreat: Exploring the Place of Israel in the Lives of American Jews* (Draft Version). (North American Council for Israel Education: January, 2004.)

[3] *Reform Judaism in the Large Cities- A Survey*. (New York, 1931).

Jews feel "very emotionally attached" to Israel.[4] Even with ardently Zionist leadership, the membership of the Reform Movement appears as disconnected from Israel as they were in the non-Zionist era of 75 years ago. Even if the data are not fully accurate, it is well documented that our educational leadership has been struggling to find ways to teach Israel to a population that seems ever more disaffected, disengaged, and ambivalent towards notions of Israel and Zionism. Perhaps the problem lies not in our educational techniques, but in an underlying lack of a cohesive vision and philosophy of why and to what end we are teaching Israel and Zionism.

When the ARZA Reform Zionist think tank first convened in 1993, it sought to find Reform religious language with which to describe the rationale for Reform Zionism. The think tank sought to respond to the Reform Movement's perceived (and perhaps real) lack of a clear Zionist philosophy or language with which to speak about that philosophy. In 1993, Rabbi Stanley Davids wrote:

> Our movement's accomplishments on behalf of the fulfillment of Zionism have been quite often nothing less than brilliant. But our understanding of the reasons for those accomplishments remained elusive. We were struggling to fulfill dreams whose rationales were seemingly beyond our grasp. Surely we cannot long continue in such a fashion before the activities of Reform Zionism encounter confusion and even disinterest in our core constituency. After all, how can we teach succeeding generations about the *mitzvot* that have so powerfully driven us if we cannot find the religious language with which to describe these *mitzvot?*[5]

It seems that Rabbi Davids' fears were founded. Twelve years after the production of ARZA's first Journal of Reform Zionism, the Reform Movement still lacks a cohesive Zionist rationale, and has not been able to disseminate a successful Zionist language to be

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[4] *National Jewish Population Survey*, 2001.

[5] Stanley Davids, "Introduction," *The Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 5.

shared by its constituents. According to the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey, only 27% of Reform Jews feel an emotional connection to Israel. Many educators report that they have omitted Israel from their curricula. When pressed on why they do not teach about Israel, educators respond that the level of confusion about the political situation, the role of Israel in Reform Judaism, and the state of Reform Judaism in Israel all make it difficult to determine what to teach.[6] This confusion has led to paralysis. Without articulate rationales for Reform Zionism, or compelling religious language with which to describe that Zionism, we are not engendering Zionism among Reform Jews.

This difficulty is well founded. Indeed, less than one century ago Reform Zionism would have been an oxymoronic term, as the Reform Movement and the Zionist Movement were largely at odds with one another. Reform Judaism evolved as a response to modernity, out of a Western notion of the sovereign self who chooses to adhere to a religion of rational thought and independent choice. Zionism too was a response to modernity, but one that highlighted Jewish collectivity and sought to realize a Jewish nationality and national home. At the outset, these were two opposing responses to modernity, and the Reformers and the Zionists were often at odds. As Dow Marmur has cogently written, Reform Judaism and Zionism held two competing visions of redemption.[7]

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[6] Barry Chazan, "Through a Glass Darkly: Israel in the Mirror of American Jewish Education," in *Beyond Survival and Philanthropy: American Jewry and Israel,* ed. Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk (Cincinnati: HUC, 2000), 128.

[7] Dow Marmur: "Reform Zionism in The Postmodern Age," *The Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 5.

Perhaps at one time the relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism was merely that of an ongoing dialectic.[8] However, over the last century, Reform Judaism has become a Zionist movement. How has Reform Jewish thought allowed for movement from a central notion of Jewishness as a phenomenon of the sovereign self working towards a universalistic ideal to a Judaism that embraces a collective sense of Jewish identity and peoplehood?

This thesis will trace the early relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism, focusing specifically on the platforms of the Movement leadership and the liturgies of its congregations. Following Reform Movement curricula of the 20th century, it will seek to determine what major Zionist narratives have influenced Reform Jewish education. It will seek to answer some of the questions that Reform Zionism poses as it dances the tense high-wire between the primacy of the sovereign self and a universalistic vision for Reform Judaism, and the preeminence of the collectivity for Zionism. Specifically I will address Reform theological responses to Zionism, focusing on the tension between universalism and particularism, and the relationship between Zionism and messianism. Lastly, I will evaluate the ongoing work of the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, of which I am the coordinator, to try to propose religious Jewish language that can be used for the expression of a Reform commitment to Zionism and Israel, and can serve as a basis for Reform Zionist Education.

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[8] I am choosing to use the following definition: Dialectic: The contradiction between two conflicting forces viewed as the determining factor in their continuing interaction. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, (Houghton Mifflin: 2000).*

Chapter 1: The Evolution of Reform Zionism: Early Reform

Traditional Rabbinic Understanding of Zion

Arnold Eisen, in his book *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homelessness and Homecoming,*[1] argues that Judaism has always been based on a conception of homelessness, exile and wandering. In his estimation, Jews orient themselves by a continual reference to a mostly-imagined, rarely actualized, home-center, to which they endlessly hope to return. This hope finds expression in the Talmudic tractate Avodah Zarah, written after the Romans had exiled the People Israel to from the Land of Israel. As Eisen writes:

> The Jews were exiles inside the land of Israel as well as outside it, and so the rabbis struggled to delimit a Jewish time and space amid a once-holy Land now utterly defiled—upon an earth which God Himself was forced to wander as an exile. No place was any longer holy, no locus of meaning any longer existed, to be inhabited or pointed to. Such was the world's condition in *ha-zeman ha-zeh*: "this time"—*all* time, all history, until the Messiah's coming to take Israel home. Deprived of a sacred center, the rabbis pointed to it all the more insistently, even as they enabled Jewish to live their lives—with God—outside it. They fantasized the discomfiture of their enemies, gave vent to their fears of death and temptation, and rehearsed again and again the unanswerable question of why God had allowed His Land, His people, and His world to sink into the degraded state of exile.[2]

According to Eisen, exile and homelessness, as well as a longing for return to an imagined home-center, became central religious concepts for rabbinic Judaism. Always longed for, always prayed for, and always imagined, the return to this center was only to occur with the coming of the Messiah.

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[1] Arnold Eisen, *Galut: Modern Reflections on Homelessness and Homecoming* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[2] Ibid., xvi.

Simon Rawidowicz calls this the Judaism of "the second house." According to Rawidowicz, there were two beginnings to Israel—two "houses." The "first house" began during the period of King Solomon, through the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. This was a period in which the majority of the People Israel lived in the Land of Israel. Much of this period was marked by Jewish political sovereignty. The "second house" begins in the time of the first Jewish Diaspora, with the leadership of Ezra, when most of the Jewish people lived and functioned religiously outside of the Land and away from the Temple. This "second house" crafted an existence in which political sovereignty, what we now refer to as statehood, was no longer essential to existence, or its connection to God. As David Ellenson, summarizing Rawidowicz, observes:

> To be sure, the second house continued to express a "yearning" for a return to the Land and for the reestablishment there of Jewish political sovereignty. However, this "yearning" Rawidowicz observed, was "connected with a vision of the future, ...not something which exist[ed as a contemporary] reality." The second house "discovered the secret of settling down in the Diaspora" and "refused to let [itself] depend on land and stone" as an indispensable prerequisite for Jewish existence. In simple terms, "The establishment of the second house did not cause the Diaspora to disappear." Instead, the second house established a foundation for Jewish life outside of the Land. Israel, in the period of the second house, became "freed from the land." As Rawidowicz perceptively phrased it, "[The second house [conceded territorial centralization as a condition for the existence of the nation."[3]

Whether viewed as an existential state or as a socio-religious response borne of political necessity, traditional Rabbinic Judaism was built for and by Jews whose self-conception was that of exiles from their land. This conception idealized and ritualized connections

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[3] As summarized by David Ellenson, "Envisioning Israel in the Liturgies of North American Liberal Judaism," in *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews,* ed. Allon Gal (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1996): 153-153. All quotations come from Simon Rawidowicz, *Studies in Jewish Thought (*Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), 104-109.

to Zion, but did not anticipate a this-worldly, political return. In fact, in an age where political occurrences were seen to validate (or represent) theological claims, Judaism developed around the notion that Israel was exiled from the land as a punishment. Furthermore, Israel should not seek to be restored to its land until the time that God would bring them back. This became a central to the messianic eschatology of Judaism—only with the coming of the Messiah would the People Israel find redemption in the Land of Israel. This theology finds expression in the Babylonian Talmud, where the rabbis wrote of three oaths taken by the Jewish people as they accepted Exile as punishment:

> "They were taken to Bavel, and there they will be until I redeem them". (Jeremiah 27) R. Zeira explains: that verse refers to the vessels of the Temple. Rav Yehudah: Another verse (forbids return to Israel) - "I put an oath upon you, daughters of Yerushalayim, with deer or wild goats..." (Song of Songs 2) R. Zeira: That oath says that we should not go up together, in a wall (Rashi: Together, by force). Rav Yehudah: Another verse recounts another oath - that even an individual should not return. R. Zeira interprets that verse following R. Yosi b'Rabbi Chanina, thus: These three verses: one that Israel should not return as a wall (together, by force); one that The Holy one Blessed be He made Israel promise not to rebel against the nations of the world; and one that the idolaters should not subjugate Israel too much.[4]

While the continuation of this text has been read to mean that visiting the land of Israel is a mitzvah, and moving there as an individual is permissible, the land was to remain out of the political reaches of the People Israel until God should deem it otherwise. With some exceptions (notably, Ramban, who argued that it is incumbent upon individual Jews to move to Israel, and himself moved to Israel with a large group in the 13th century), these

[4] Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 111a.

oaths were invoked throughout Jewish history to negate the idea of mass return to the land of Israel.

This theology of exile as Divine punishment, and return as a messianic hope, is expressed repeatedly in traditional Jewish liturgy. Worship is rife with prayers petitioning God for the ingathering of the exiles, the return to Zion, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Examples include the line in the *Yotzer Or,* the first of the blessings before the *Shema,* that reads, "Let a new light shine upon Zion, and may we all quickly merit its light." In the *Ahavah Rabah*, the prayer immediately preceding the *Shema*, we find the words, "Bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our land." In the weekday Amidah, among the petitions of the *Shemonah Esrei,* the eleventh is a prayer for the ingathering of the exiles (*Kibbutz Galuyot*), which traditionally reads: "Sound the great shofar for our freedom, and raise a flag to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you Adonai, who gathers the dispersed of his People Israel." The fifteenth petition is for Jerusalem, and traditionally reads: "And to your city Jerusalem, return in compassion, and may you rest within her as you said, and build her soon in our day, an eternal building. And quickly establish within her the throne of David. Blessed are you, builder of Jerusalem." The eighteenth benediction, for restoration of temple worship, concludes with the benediction, "Blessed are you, Adonai, who restores his divine presence to Zion."

In the Shabbat and Festival liturgy, we find paragraphs that express the hopes for a messianic return to Zion, including the reinstatement of the Temple and its sacrifices. The Shabbat morning Kedusha traditionally contains a paragraph which reads:

> From your place, our King you will appear and rule over us, for we are waiting for you. When will you rule in Zion? Soon in our day, forever and ever, you will dwell. May you be exalted and sanctified within Jerusalem your city, from generation to generation and for all eternity. May our eyes see your kingdom, as the word said in the songs of your might, written by David, your anointed righteous one: God will reign for ever, your God, Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!

Traditional liturgy also reflects the motif that exile is a punishment for the sins of the Jewish people. As a paragraph of the Amidah of the *musaf* service for the three festivals, reads, in whole:

> Because of our sins, we have been exiled from our land, and distanced from our soil, and we cannot ascend and to appear and to bow down before you, and to do our duties in the House of Your Choice, in the great and holy house upon which your name is called, because of the hand that was dispatched in your holy place. May it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our Ancestors, Merciful King, that you will return and you will be compassionate upon us and upon your holy place in your great compassion, and you will build it soon and magnify its glory. Our Father, our King, quickly reveal the glory of your sovereignty upon us, and appear and be raised over us in sight of all the living. And gather our scattered ones from among the nations, and bring together our dispersions from the corners of the earth. And bring us to Zion your city in gladness, and to Jerusalem the house of your holy place in eternal happiness. And there we will perform before you the obligatory sacrifices, the continual offerings in their order, and the additional offerings by their law. And the additional offerings of this (day of Shabbat) and (this day of the festival of ___) we will do and we will gather near before you in love according to the commandments of your will, and you wrote for us in your Torah, by the hand of Moses, your servant, from the mouth of your glory as it is written: (Applicable Torah passage in the sacrifices).

This theology of Exile as divine punishment and messianic return, and the sense that Jews were not to change their political situation by force prevailed until the modern period. Enlightenment, and the realities of emancipation, marked a new period in Jewish history and new reactions to the concepts of exile and return. The realities of political emancipation in Europe, the universalistic optimism of enlightenment philosophers, the

counterintuitive rise of anti-Semitism across the world, and the birth of modern nationalism all provided a ripe stage for new Jewish thinking about Zion, about Exile, and about political sovereignty.

Reform Judaism and Zionism: Two Jewish reactions to modernity

Reform Judaism was formed out of the great hopes of modernist universalism, wherein Jews would and could retain their Jewish religion, while being equal citizens of any nation-state and full members of secular society. Early Reformers disavowed the notion that Israel had a unique destiny, and interpreted "chosenness" as a particular role to be catalysts for redemption for all peoples, which they termed the Jewish "mission." As Howard Greenstein writes:

> In the context of Reform Judaism, the quality which distinguished the Jewish people from all others, was not its ritual peculiarities, but its prophetic mission to become a "light unto the nations". The founders of reform conceived of that function in almost exclusively ethical terms. If Israel was in any way a "chosen people," it was a matter of their special responsibility as the spokesmen for humanity. By their words and their performance, they were charged to insist that the management of human affairs must be subject to the rule of justice and mercy. The major task of the Jewish community was to labor actively toward the fulfillment of the messianic promise of peace, brotherhood and righteousness among all men.[5]

This messianic promise was to be fulfilled through ethical and moral behavior by Jews who were good citizens of the nations in which they resided. Political Zionism, following the ideas of its founder, Theodore Herzl, took the opposite approach. Disillusioned that Jews would ever be regarded as full citizens of any of the nation-states in which they

[5] Greenstein, 4.

lived, early Zionists sought to create their own secular Jewish nation-state. Herzl and his followers believed that the creation of a Jewish state would normalize Jews in the world, leading to the end of anti-Semitism. While there were divergent streams in early Zionism, including Herzl's political Zionism, the cultural/spiritual Zionism of Ahad Ha'Am, and the burgeoning religious Zionism of the Mizrahi movement, all of the early Zionist groups were united by a "rejection of the Exile (*galut* or *golus* in traditional parlance)."[6]

Dow Marmur cogently argues that Reform Judaism and early Zionism were opposing messianic movements:

> Whereas Reform Judaism was fueled by the messianic overtones of secular liberalism, the driving force of early Zionism was the messianism of secular socialism. The two Jewish movements had very much in common, but they were also very much apart. The messianic vision they shared pointed them in the opposite directions. The vision of Reform Judaism was firmly rooted in the Diaspora; the vision of Zionism had its focus in the land of Israel.[7]

Marmur goes on to argue that today, both of these positions are anachronistic. As neither the universalistic nor the particularistic visions have succeeded in their entirety, it is time for a new paradigm. For over 30 years, Reform Judaism has defined itself as a Zionist movement. Yet, this new paradigm, the synthesis (or perhaps ongoing dialectic) between the universal and the particular, is still undefined. Today, the functional fusion of Reform Judaism and Zionism, and indeed the Reform Zionist project, beg the question: what is the vision today? In order to understand where we are, and to project where we

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[6] Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. "Zionism," in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University, 1980, 1995), 530.

[7] Dow Marmur, "Reform Zionism in the Postmodern Age," *The Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 14-15.

are headed, we must delve into our past. What is the traditional Rabbinic understanding of Zion? How did Reform Judaism explain and understand this relationship, and how was this reflected by its leadership and its liturgies?

Reform Judaism's Evolving Understanding of Zionism

The relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism can be traced both through the published platforms and statements by the leadership of the Movement, and through its evolving liturgy. Rabbi Peter Knobel argues that liturgy, and specifically of prayer books, both define and influence the beliefs of Reform Judaism and Reform Jews:

> The writing of platforms and prayer books serves to define Reform Judaism and each is a reflection of the other. Each new platform and each new prayer book supplements rather than replaces for the prior one. Each prayer book and platform exhibits continuity with and a dependence upon the prior one and therefore change from one to the other is incremental and incomplete. In general prayer books and platforms are designed to be consensus documents meant to appeal to multiple constituencies in the movement.[8]

According to Knobel, the perspective of the movement and of its constituents is reflected in both the political platforms of the CCAR and the URJ as well as in our published prayer books. Knobel goes on to argue that liturgy has a unique ability to serve as a vision and as inspiration for those who utilize it in prayer, arguing that:

> our *siddurim* and *mahzorim* are more influential than our platforms on the average Reform Jew. The necessity of saying the words and experiences them in

[8] Peter Knobel, presentation to the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, unpublished (2005).

> communal settings of worship make them almost an "oral torah" which becomes part of the individual who recites them.[9]

So, what is the "oral torah" of Reform Judaism in regards to Zionism? Just as our platforms document a sea-change in Reform concepts of Zionism over the last century, so too does Reform liturgy. Tracing the Reform liturgy from its earliest European and American stages, through its American, European, and Israeli versions of today, we can see how the vision of the leadership of the CCAR and the Reform Movement regarding Zionism played out in the liturgies of Reform Jews.

The 19th century: Birth of Reform

Early German Reform Judaism was founded on modernist ideals of rationalism and universalism. The founders of Reform Judaism, following the prevailing (mainly Protestant) philosophies of their day believed in the innate equality of all men and the inherent human ability to live up to a universal ethical ideal. These early Reformers did not see Jews as a people or as a race, but as a religious or creedal group. Jewish Reformers were concerned with being equal citizens of the nations in which they lived, regarded as patriots and good citizens who happened to attend a different "church." The 1844 Reform Rabbinical Conference at Brunswick declared that "the Jew considers members of people with whom he lives his brethren. . . . The doctrine of Judaism is thus, first your compatriots then your co-religionists."[10]

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[9] Ibid.

[10] "The Reform Rabbinical Conference at Brunswick: The Question of Patriotism," in Mendes Flohr and Reinharz, 157.

As Reform Judaism and Proto-Zionism emerged in Europe, the early Reformers negated ideas of Jewish peoplehood or a return to Zion. At the Frankfort Rabbinical convention of 1845, a gathering of Reform Rabbis discussed their understanding of Jewish nationalism, messianism, ingathering of the exiles, and return to Zion. They resolved that Reform Jews do not aspire to nor should they pray for *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles), nor should Zion be seen as the locus of redemption. With certainty these rabbis declared that they did not support any political aspirations of Jews to have their own national entity. As they resolved:

> In the eighth session, July 20th...The committee recommended, that 'the idea of the Messiah deserves a high recognition in the prayers; yet all politico-national conceptions must be excluded from it.'...a motion was made and accepted, to solve the first preliminary question: "Shall the prayer for the return to the land of our forefathers and the restoration of the Jewish State be eliminated from our ritual?" This question was decided in the affirmative by the vote of the majority.[11]

These rabbis argued that modern Jews should not hope that spiritual progress would be found through a Jewish state. They agreed that the idea of a Jewish return to Zion was an anachronistic hope from an earlier time. Rather, they agreed that the Messianic idea should be expressed as a hope for universal redemption from evil, and a hope for spiritual and moral regeneration among all people.

As the early reformers began to express their displeasure with the theology of exile as punishment, and the return to the land as a messianic ideal, they also began to seek change in their liturgy. As the Conference stated:

> The national side of Israel has to be pushed into the background. The separation of Israel from other nations ought no longer to find expression in our prayers.

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[11] CCAR Yearbook 1 (1890): 87-88.

> The hope of the unification of the whole human family in truth, justice and peace should be emphasized. The hope that... All Israelites be gathered from every corner of the Globe and returned to the promised land has vanished entirely from our consciousness. The expression of such a hope in a prayer would be a naked untruth. [12]

This was a call for a reformation of liturgy to reflect the beliefs and ideologies of the Early Reformers, which indeed had already begun in the early 19th century.

European Liturgical Reform

Baruch Mevorach, in his article "Messianism as a Factor in the Early Reform Controversies," outlines the major arguments and liturgical changes made by early Reformers in Germany. He argues that the major issue of contention between early Reformers had to do with their view of Messianism, and specifically its link to Zion. While these early Reformers hoped to make their liturgies reflective of their ideologies, Mevorach argues that they also tried to link their changes to authoritative earlier rabbinic arguments. In the more conservative Westphalia, liturgical changes were intended to make worship more aesthetic according to prevailing European cultural norms, to shorten the service and to change some of the service into the vernacular (generally German).[13] In the more radical Berlin, Mevorach points to the desire to remove any national or political aspirations from the liturgy, and to make it more universalistic.[14] This desire, which reflects the beliefs of the rabbinical conferences of Frankfurt and Breslau, is

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[12] Ibid., 109-10.

[13] Baruch Mevorach, "Messianism as a Factor in The Early Reform Controversies," *Zion* (Hebrew) 34 (1969): 190.

[14] Ibid.

reflected in the early Reform liturgies of Germany and the United States. Jakob Petuchowski, in his *Guide to the Prayerbook,* argues that one of the major criteria for Reform liturgy is the omission of prayer for the ingathering of exiles and the return to Zion.[15] This ideology and its liturgical consequences can be traced back to the earliest Reform prayer books in Germany and the United States.

Chart 1 documents traditional liturgical references to Zion and the ingathering of the exiles, and tracks how different Reform communities altered their liturgies to reflect their own ideologies. The following is an analysis of a few of the major liturgical innovations of the Early Reformers that reflect their universalistic, non-Zionist ideologies. I will analyze the German prayerbooks from Hamburg (1819) and Breslau (Geiger, 1854), the German-inspired American prayerbook *Olath Tamid* (Einhorn, 1896) and the American Prayerbook *Minhag Amerika* (Wise, 1857), and their influence on the first *Union Prayer Book* (1895).

Hamburg *Gebetbuch* of 1819

The first documented European Reform Liturgy was arguably The Hamburg Temple Prayerbook (*Gebetbuch)* of 1819.[16] Ellenson notes that this liturgy was "influenced by the Berlin 1817 *siddur* of *Die Deutch Synagoge oder Ordnung des Gottesdienstes für die Sabbath- und Festtage des ganzen Jahres, zum Gebrauche der Gemeinden, die sich deutcher Gabete bedienen* (The German Synagogue or Order of the Service for the Sabbath and Festivals of the Entire Year, for the Use of Communities that Use German

[15] Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Guide to the Prayerbook* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR, 1968).

[16] Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford, 1988), 56.

Prayers)."[17] While this early prayerbook retained Hebrew usage and a traditional structure, it sought to reflect the values and ideals of this early Reform Jewish community. The main "reforms" utilized by this prayerbook were the use of prayers in German, a left-to-right opening book, and the use of many Sephardic rather than traditional (for Germany) Ashkenazic constructions. Ellenson, following Ismar Schorsch, notes that this last change was due to an idealization of the aesthetics and philosophical openness within Sephardic tradition.[18]

While the book utilized traditional Sephardic and Ashkenazic prayers, its editors were selective, and expressed their ideologies through deletions, alterations, and departures from the traditional liturgy. Clearly, the Hamburg community did not favor a return to Zion, nor a messianic ideal that included an ingathering of the exiles, and as such, eliminated much of the traditional liturgical calls for return. As Michael Meyer notes: "Without question, the omission and alteration of certain liturgical passages dealing with the messianic return to Zion was the most audacious innovation of the Hamburg Reformers."[19] Ellenson and Meyer both note that while the Hamburg Reformers wished to remove or change the liturgical call for a return to Zion, they sought traditional texts to use as substitutes. This follows Mevorach's argument, as mentioned above, that the early Reformers wished to link their liturgical changes to earlier rabbinic arguments. Often using amended Sephardic liturgy, or older formulations from the middle ages and before, these Reformers tried to establish their position from within older, extant traditional

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[17] David Ellenson, *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2004), 195.

[18] Ibid., 196.

[19] Meyer, 59.

liturgies. While they made many changes, these liturgists did not remove all of the petitions for a return to Zion. Regarding the Hamburg Prayerbook, Michael Meyer notes:

> The desire to eliminate or alter passages that dealt with the return to Zion was carried out partly by choosing less troublesome Sephardi formulas and partly by omissions and original substitutions. Yet the editors left unchanged the petition: "May our eyes see Your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are You who restores his presence to Zion." The Hamburg Reformers had not lost their love of Zion, nor did they fail to recognize its significant role in Jewish history. But they did not hope or desire to return there themselves or to rebuild the ancient temple.[20]

For these early Reformers, Zion was a place from where Torah and Judaism came, and therefore held symbolic significance. However, they did not hope for a return to Zion or a rebuilding of the Temple. This stance is more clearly articulated in the second half of the 19th century by Abraham Geiger of Breslau.

Geiger *Getbetbuch* of 1854

Abraham Geiger was the spiritual leader of the early Reform Jewish community of Breslau in the mid-19th century. Following, and responding to the Hamburg Liturgies, Geiger criticized the ideological inconsistencies of these texts, especially in regard to notions of the election of Israel and Israel's mission.[21] In his 1854 prayer book, Geiger hoped to construct a liturgy that reflected a consistent Liberal Jewish ideology. As a Liberal Jew, Geiger sought to define Jews, or Israelites, as a religious community rather than a national or racial group. Geiger believed that "it is inherent in the very nature of the Jews that their history should primarily be a spiritual one, and, as such, a process that

[20] Meyer, 56.
[21] Ellenson, 205-6.

helped shape the entire world, and that it should not be expressed either in civic policy or primarily in political or communal life."[22]

Like the Hamburg Reformers, Geiger did not believe in the elevation of Israel, nor did he hope for a messianic ingathering of the exiles or return to Zion. However, he did believe that Israel (the People) has a unique history and mission to spread monotheism to the world through religious and ethical, rather than political or national means. So, while his eschatology was universalistic, he did regard the People Israel as the bearers of the unique task of bringing monotheism and its ethics to the world.[23] Zion, for Geiger, was the physical and spiritual source from which Judaism came, but not a locus for aspirations of physical return. As he wrote in the introduction to his 1854 prayer book:

> Jerusalem and Zion are places whence instruction went forth, and to which holy memories are attached. But, on the whole, they are to be celebrated more as a spiritual idea, as the nursery of the Kingdom of God than as a certain geographical locale connected with a special divine provenance for all times.[24]

His liturgy reflected this ideology. Like the Hamburg prayer book, he removed or changed many passages calling for the ingathering of the exiles or the return to Zion. However, he did retain the notion of Zion as the symbol of a spiritual source from whence Judaism went forth.

Like his Hamburg predecessors, Geiger removed the paragraph beginning "*mipnei chataeinu*" from the Musaf *Kedusha* for the three festivals. For the Shabbat morning

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[22] Abraham Geiger. "A History of Spiritual Achievements," In *A Reform Zionist Perspective: Judaism & Community in the Modern Age.* ed. Michael Langer. (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1977), 65 - 66.

[23] Ellenson, 205.

[24] This is from Jakob Petuchowski's translation of the introduction to the 1854 Geiger prayer book, found in *Prayerbook Reform in Europe* (New York: 1968), quoted in Ellenson, 206.

Kedusha, where the Hamburg prayer book substituted the Musaf *Kedusha* to remove the paragraph on God's return to Zion, Geiger chose to retain the Shabbat morning *Kedusha*, removing the words "when you will reign in Zion" and "may you be exalted and sanctified in Jerusalem." Geiger also removed calls for the ingathering of the exiles, removing the line "*v'havienu l'shalom m'arbah kanfot ha'aretz*" from the *Ahavah Rabah* prayer. Oddly, while he criticized the Hamburg prayer book for its inconsistencies, he too retained the Hebrew (with no German translation) of the *Or Chadash* line at the end of the *Yotzer Or* in the morning service. For Geiger, this must have been a call for new light to shine upon Zion as a spiritual source rather than as a geographical or political locale. Geiger's ideology of Zion as a source of the Jewish people, but not a future destination, seems to be reflected in his choice of wording for the prayer in the Amidah for the ingathering of exiles: "Sound the great shofar for our freedom and save, Adonai, your people, the remainder of Israel, in the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you Adonai, who saves the remainder of Israel."[25]

Early American Reform

Einhorn's *Olath Tamid*

David Einhorn, born and trained in Germany, expressed some of the most liberal views in the *Rabbinerversammlungen* of the 1840's. His liberal (and often radical) views on theology, liturgy, and ritual practice raised the ire not only of his contemporary rabbis,

[25] Abraham Geiger, *Israelitisches Gebetbuch*, (Breslau, 1854), 41, my translation from the Hebrew.

but also of the Austrian government, who forced his synagogue to be closed in 1852.[26] In discussing liturgical reform, at the rabbinic conference of 1845, "Einhorn proposed that Messianic prayers be formulated in such a way as to express the hope of the spiritual regeneration and union of all mankind in faith and love, accomplished through Israel."[27]

After his ultra-liberal views and conflict with more traditional colleagues drove him out of Europe, Einhorn found a home in America, at Congregation Har Sinai Verein in Baltimore, Maryland. There he published his prayerbook, called *Olath Tamid*, in German and Hebrew. One of first American Reform Liturgical traditions, it was considered a radical departure from earlier liturgies[28], although, as Eric Friedland writes, he followed the theoretical models of the 1819 Hamburg Temple *Gebetbuch* and Holdheim's 1848 *Gebetbuch für jüdische Reformgemeinden.*[29]

In his prayerbook, Einhorn abridged and amended much of the traditional liturgy. *Olath Tamid* greatly edited and/or removed many sections and passages that remained in the Hamburg and Geiger *Gebetbuchs*. Einhorn's changes also reflected a universalism that excluded hopes for a return to Zion or an ingathering of the exiles. Following Holdheim, Einhorn dropped the *musaf* service, and thus did not have to address the

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[26] Eric L. Friedland, *Were Our Mouths Filled with Song: Studies in Liberal Jewish Liturgy* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1997), 17-18.

[27] The Frankfort Rabbinical Convention" (July 15, 1845) in *CCAR Yearbook I* (1890).

[28] It is notable that the earliest American Reform prayer book was much more radical than *Olath Tamid*. *The Issac Harby Prayer book*, handwritten by Harby in 1830 for the use of the "Reformed Society of Israelites" is read from left to right, and almost entirely in English. The liturgy is translated and abridged—and this prayer book makes no mention of Israel, Zion, or the ingathering of the exiles. Perhaps when Einhorn arrived in America nearly a quarter-century later, his ideas were not so radical.

[29] Friedland, 21-23.

mipnei chata'einu paragraph as it was deleted with its entire surrounding liturgy. Einhorn did include prayers for *Tal* and *Geshem* in the *shacharit* service on appropriate festivals, and special sections were added to the morning service for each festival. However, these special prayers made no mention of Zion, nor of a hope for return to the Land of Israel, nor hope for the ingathering of the exiles.

According to Friedland, Einhorn followed Leopold Zunz's hypotheses on the historical development of the liturgy.[30] In order to include shortened liturgy, that reflected his theology, and had a ring of historical authenticity, Einhorn chose to use the formulas that Zunz suggested as aboriginal for prayers such as *Yotzer Or*.[31] This did not include the line *Or Chadash*, and therefore lent an authentic ring to this deletion of what was, for Einhorn, an ideologically difficult line. *Olath Tamid* also followed Zunz's version of the Ahavah Rabah, which did not include the passage "*V'havienu l'shalom...*" Einhorn went further than Geiger in his abbreviation of the Shabbat morning *kedusha*, and among the discarded material was the paragraph referring to God's reign in Zion. In re-formulating the Amidah, Einhorn followed Zunz's assertion that the introductory three and concluding three benedictions of the Amidah were fixed from an earlier time, and the middle blessings were variations on themes. Thus, Einhorn kept the first and last three benedictions of the Amidah, but wrote his own variations for the middle benedictions.[32]

These variations, outlined in chart 1, removed most references to Zion or ingathering of the exiles. Einhorn's version of the 11th benediction (לקבץ גלויותנו) calls for

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[30] Friedland, 24-25.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

a "trumpet of liberty" to resound "for all nations," in a universal "covenant of peace" which will bring those nations closer to God. The concluding benediction reads, "Blessed be Thou who lovest the community of nations." Einhorn, like Geiger, understood the covenant not in terms of "chosenness" but rather a "mission" to be a light to the nations. This is expressed in Einhorn's rendition of the prayer for Jerusalem, which is changed to read, "God, O Lord, let thy dwelling be in our midst, and let the glory of Thy holiness shine upon us, and Thou hast made us the people of the covenant unto the light of the nations. Sanctify Thy name to those who sanctify it. Praised by Thou, God, who art sanctified by us before the nations."[33]

Wise's *Minhag Amerika*

In 1855, the Cleveland Conference, responding to a need for a liturgical rite that would unify the different American Jewish communities, asked Isaac Mayer Wise to create a prayer book.[34] Wise and his colleagues sought to create a liturgical text that would please both Reformers and the Orthodox.[35] Yet, as noted by Friedland, even as Wise sought to appease the more traditional factions, he did not compromise his Reform ideology. So, while the prayer book was considered a much more moderate reformation of the liturgy than *Olath Tamid*, it still reflected a Reform ideology. Additionally, the

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[33] David Einhorn, ed.., *Olath Tamid, Gebetbuch für Israelitische Reform Gemeinden* (New York: Thalmessinger and Cahn, 1858).

[34] Meyer, 233-35.

[35] Friedland, 50.

1872 edition was no longer intended for the Orthodox community, and therefore went much further in its reforms than the earlier 1857 edition.[36]

Minhag Amerika, for all of its traditional structure and forms, did not mask its universalistic Reform ideology, especially in its later edition. Choosing Sephardic formulations, favoring the use of biblical over rabbinic texts as a basis for liturgical development, and using innovations of the 1819 Hamburg *Gebetbuch*, Wise created a liturgical pastiche with a traditionalist feel and a Reform ethos. This is clear in his exclusion or emendation of most prayers calling for a return to Zion or ingathering of exiles. For example, while Wise retains the musaf service for the three festivals, he amends the *mipnei chata'einu* paragraph, combining it with an amended version of the paragraph "*melech rachaman.*" (see prayer chart 1 for a more detailed analysis). Wise excludes the line "Or Chadash" from both versions of his prayerbook. He follows the 1819 Hamburg Gebetbuch in an altered Sephardic formulation of the line of the *Yotzer Or* that calls for the ingathering of the exiles.

While the 1857 edition of Minhag Amerika is not always consistent in its removal or editing of prayers that call for a return to Zion (most notably the Shabbat morning kedusha), the 1872 edition has removed or changed all such liturgy to reflect a Reform, universalistic ideology. This is most notable in the weekday Amidah. In the 1857 version, Wise changes the benediction calling for the ingathering of the exiles, but retains the traditional formulations of the benediction for Jerusalem and chatimah " המחזיר שכינתו לציון." In the 1872 version, the benediction for Jerusalem was completely reformulated,

[36] For a longer assessment of Wise and Minhag America, see Meyer, 233-235, and Friendland, 50-54.

calling upon the "people of the covenant" to be a "light unto the nations." The end of the prayer for worship is reformulated to read, ""Let all kingdoms on earth behold Thy light, Thy truth, and may all mankind be united to worship Thee. Praised be Thou, O God to whom, alone we render worship." In this way, even Wise's "traditionalist" prayer book clearly reflected the prevailing Reform "non-Zionist" ideology of his day.

The Declaration of Principles of Reform Judaism

Wise's universalistic ideology and denial of Jewish nationalism were not fully consistent in his liturgy, but he played a central role in the American Reform Movement's unequivocal foundational anti-nationalist statement. In 1885, Kaufmann Kohler called for a meeting of the leaders of Reform Judaism, which would be a continuation of the earlier conferences in the 1840s in Germany and in 1869 in Philadelphia, PA. Isaac Mayer Wise presided over the meeting, which took place from November 16-19, 1885 in Pittsburgh, PA. This conference led to the writing of a "Declaration of Principles," also known as "The Pittsburgh Platform." This statement became the philosophical and ideological foundation for the development of the Reform Movement in North America. As documented by the liturgies they developed, these early Reform leaders were proponents of a universalistic, religious and ethical Judaism. At the time that some of their European brethren were concerned with renewing a national project in the historic Eretz Yisrael, these fathers of Reform Judaism rejected political Zionism for theological and ideological reasons. The early Reform Movement declared Jews as a cohort of co-religionists with a shared faith and intellectual pursuit of

justice for all. This ideology was diametrically opposed to the nationalist claims of political Zionists. As Wise, Kohler, and their colleagues wrote in the Platform:

> We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.[37]

Thus, the leaders of the Reform Movement unequivocally denied any political or national aspirations, and indeed defined themselves as a religious community rather than as a people. As they worked to unify their movement, they also agreed to craft a uniform liturgy that would reflect their universalistic ideology.

***The Union Prayer Book* of 1895**

This universalistic ideology of the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform is expressed liturgically in the Union Prayer Book of 1895. Isaac S. Moses presented a draft, edited by Kaufmann Kohler, which closely follows the structure and outline of Einhorn's *Olath Tamid.* Like Einhorn, the editors of the *Union Prayer Book* chose to amend and abridge traditional liturgy in order to both shorten the service and to reflect both Zunz's historical explanations of the development of the prayers, as well as a universalistic ideology. Many prayers are rendered in the vernacular English only, and at times the English translations of Hebrew prayers are purposefully changed in order to re-focus ideological or theological notions of the authors.

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[37] *Declaration of Principles*, "The Pittsburgh Platform", 1885. Available at http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=39&pge_prg_id=3032&pge_id=1656

Like Holdheim and Einhorn in their prayerbooks, Moses and Kohler did not include the *musaf* service in the *Union Prayer Book*. The weekday Amidah is shortened and abridged—and reflects the universalistic anti-nationalist stance of the Pittsburgh Platform. As is clear from chart 1, the Union Prayer Book retained most of Einhorn's changes in liturgy that referred to Zion or to the ingathering of the exiles. Indeed, the Union Prayer Book omitted prayers that Einhorn had not—notably, the Hashkiveinu prayer and the benediction המחזיר שכינתו לציון, "who returns His divine presence to Zion." Whereas Einhorn followed Hamburg in translating this benediction in a way that deletes any reference to Zion, "Be Praised, O God, whom alone we worship and serve," the *Union Prayer Book* omits it entirely.

As in the 1872 edition of Olath Tamid, the middle benedictions of the Amidah are condensed into one prayer, in the vernacular, expressing various petitions to God. This prayer expresses the universalistic hope of Reform Judaism as expressed in the Pittsburgh Platform. The absence of reference to Zion or Israel, the refutation of the notion of the ingathering of the exiles, and the expression of a covenantal mission (as opposed to "chosenness") is clear from the phrasing of the 11th benediction, which follows closely to that used by Einhorn: Grant, O Lord, that the sound of freedom he bread throughout all lands, and all nations enjoy the blessings of true liberty; let the reign of wickedness vanish like smoke and all dwellers on earth recognize Thee alone as their King, and all they children be united in a covenant of peace and love."[38]

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[38] *The Union Prayer-Book for Jewish Worship, Part I.* (Cincinnati: CCAR, 1895), 275.

Conclusion

The early Reform movement clearly defined itself as non-nationalistic, and certainly non-Zionist. For centuries Zion had been a locus of longing, an imagined center, and a unifying eschatological dream for the Jewish people. Now, as a political Zionism sought to bring that dream into reality through a physical and political return to Zion, the founding fathers of Reform Judaism relegated Zion to sole historical importance. According to leaders such as Abraham Geiger, David Einhorn, and Isaac Mayer Wise, Zion was the place from which Torah, and the basis of our system of belief, had come. As we discover in the writings and liturgies of the early Reform movement, religious mission of the Jews was not to unify as a nation, but rather to seek redemption *in* the four corners of the earth, as active participants in the societies and nations in which they lived.

Prayerbook and Year	3 Regalim Musaf: Mipnei Chata'einu: ... מפני חטאינו גלינו מארצנו ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו
Traditional Ashkenazi Liturgy	(my translation) "Because of our sins, we have been exiled from our land, and distanced from our soil, and we cannot ascend and to appear and to bow down before you, and to do our duties in the House of Your Choice, in the great and holy house upon which your name is called, because of the hand that was dispatched in your holy place. May it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our Ancestors, Merciful King, that you will return and you will be compassionate upon us and upon your holy place in your great compassion, and you will build it soon and magnify its glory. Our Father, our King, quickly reveal the glory of your sovereignty upon us, and appear and be raised over us in sight of all the living. And gather our scattered ones from among the nations, and bring together our dispersions from the corners of the earth. And bring us to Zion your city in gladness, and to Jerusalem the house of your holy place in eternal happiness. And there we will perform before you the obligatory sacrifices, the continual offerings in their order, and the additional offerings by their law. And the additional offerings of this (day of Shabbat) and (this day of the festival of ___) we will do and we will gather near before you in love according to the commandments of your will, and you wrote for us in your Torah, by the hand of Moses, your servant, from the mouth of your glory as it is written: (Applicable Torah passage in the sacrifices)."
Hamburg 1819	Removed
Hamburg 1841	Removed
Geiger Gebetbücher 1854 (Breslau)	Removed
Einhorn's Olath Tamid 1896 (1913 translation, Chicago)	NO MUSAF—an abbreviated blessing for Geshem/Tal is put into shacharit Amidah, and "special prayers" in English for each chag. None speaks of return to Zion or ingathering of the exiles. Instead there is language such as (for Pesach) "Wherever Israel may still suffer from the oppression of men, deliver Thou him...let the glad trumpet call of bodily and spiritual redemption, which Israel of old heard at Sinai, soon ring from one end of the earth to the other, that all nations may become Thy people, praising and revering Thee with one accord as their king."(87) for Shavuot: "Lift on high the banner of light and truth and virtue, that everywhere darkness, superstition and wickedness be dispelled for ever. May the great day speedily appear when all people shall stream to Thy holy mountain-- when Thy house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations and the joyful shout resound from one end of the earth to the other: O Zion, Thy God reigneth." (89)

Prayerbook and Year	3 Regalim Musaf: Mipnei Chata'einu: ... מפני חטאינו גלינו מארצנו ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו
Minhag Amerika 1857/1872	Includes Musaf, but removes most of "מפני חטאינו" paragraph, combining parts of it with a significantly altered "Melech Rachaman" paragraph which traditionally calls for the re-establishment of temple worship at the three festivals. אלוהינו ואלוהי אבותינו מלך רחמן רחם עלינו טוב ומטיב הדרש לנו שובה אלינו בהמון רחמך. אבינו מלכנו גלה כבוד מלכותך עלינו מהרה והופע והנשא עלינו לעיני כל חי כמו שהבטחתנו על ידי נביאיך ככתוב. והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית-יי בראש ההרים ונשא מגבעות ונהרו אליו כל-הגוים והלכו עמים רבים ואמרו לכו ונעלה אל-הר-יי אל -בית אלוהי יעקוב ויורנו מדרכיו ונלכה בארחתיו כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים. ונאמר קול קורא במדבר פנו דרך יי ישרו בערבה מסלה לאלהינו. כל-גיא ינשא וכל-הר וגבעה ישפלו והיה העקוב למישור והרכסים לבקעה. ונגלה כבוד יי וראו כל-בשר יחדו כי פי יי דבר In this way, Wise removed the passages that did not correspond to his ideology, but found passages from the prophets that could be used in their place, notably Isaiah 2:3 and 40:3-5.
Union Prayer Book 1895	No Musaf

Chart 1

Prayerbook and Year	Kedusha for Shabbat Shacharit: paragraph: From your place, o king…when will you reign in Zion…may you be exalted and sanctified within Jerusalem"	chatimah of hashkivenu: ברוך אתה ה' הפורס סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים	והביאנו לשלום מארבע כנפות הארץ	אור חדש על ציון תאיר ונזכה כולנו במהרה לאורו
Traditional Ashkenazi Liturgy	From your place, our King you will appear and rule over us, for we are waiting for you. When will you rule in Zion? Soon in our day, forever and ever, you will dwell. May you be exalted and sanctified within Jerusalem your city, from generation to generation and for all eternity. May our eyes see your kingdom, as the word said in the songs of your might, written by David, your anointed righteous one:	Blessed are you, Adonai, who spreads the shelter of peace upon us, upon all Israel, and upon Jerusalem.	Bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our land.	May a new light shine upon Zion, and may we all quickly merit its light.
Hamburg 1819	replaced with Kedusha for Musaf to remove this paragraph	traditional	replaced with Sephardi nusach "quickly bring blessing and peace upon us" but omits "and break the yoke of the gentiles from upon our necks and lead us speedily with upright pride, to our land.")	removed

Chart 1

Prayerbook and Year	Kedusha for Shabbat Shacharit: paragraph: From your place, O king…when will you reign in Zion…may you be exalted and sanctified within Jerusalem"	chatimah of hashkivenu: ברוך אתה ה' הפורס סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים	והביאנו לשלום מארבע כנפות הארץ	אור חדש על ציון תאיר ונזכה כולנו במהרה לאורו
Hamburg 1841	Same as 1819	Blessed are you, o god, who protects your people Israel forever. (Sephardi formulation)	Same as 1819	אור חדש על ציון תאיר ונזכה כולנו במהרה לאורו Hebrew only. Parenthesis, small type.
Geiger Gebetbücher 1854	removed "when you will reign in Zion" and "may you be exalted and sanctified in Jerusalem"	Blessed are you, Adonai, who spreads the shelter of peace upon us, upon all Israel (omits Jerusalem).	removed passage	retained-- Hebrew only אור חדש על ציון תאיר ונזכה כולנו במהרה לאורו
Einhorn's Olath Tamid 1896 (1913 translation)	reformulated and abbreviated to just the traditional responses of the weekday kedusha-- this paragraph is removed	Blessed Be Thou, O God, Redeemer of Israel! (p.5)	removed passage	removed
Minhag Amerika 1857/1872	In the 1857 version, it is retained in its traditional entirety, however it is placed at the end of the Amidah for recitation in the case that the chazzan chants a repetition of the Amidah. Shabbat morning kedusha is removed in the 1872 version, as Wise only includes a silent Amidah.	This is the formulation in 1857: ברוך אתה ה' הפורס סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל ידאי שמך ועל ירושלים In 1872, it is changed to ברוך אתה ה' הפורס סוכת שלום עלינו באהבה.	Follows Hamburg 1819, using the beginning of the Sephardic nusach of "quickly bring peace and blessing upon us: but omits "break the yoke…"	removed
Union Prayer Book 1895	reformulated and abbreviated-- this paragraph is removed	no hashkiveinu at all	removed passage	removed

Prayerbook and Year	Amidah-- 11th benediction – תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו ושא נס לקבץ גלויותנו	Amidah-- for Jerusalem ולירושלים תשוב ותישכון בתוכה כאשר עירך ברחמים דיברת ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם	Amidah-- המחזיר שכינתו לציון
Traditional Ashkenazi Liturgy	Sound the great shofar for our freedom, and raise a flag to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you Adonai, who gathers the dispersed of his People Israel.	And to your city Jerusalem, return in compassion, and may you rest within her as you said, and build her soon in our day, an eternal building. And quickly establish within her the throne of David. Blessed are you, builder of Jerusalem.	(Be favorable Adonai our God…May our eyes behold your compassionate return to Zion. Blessed are you Adonai, who returns his divine presence to Zion.
Hamburg 1819	No weekday service	No weekday service	there in entirety
Hamburg 1841	the banner of freedom will be lifted up "for all who sigh in their servitude" and asked that God gather up the "disowned" (rather than "dispersed" among the people Israel	inserted Isaiah 2:3-- כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' בירושלים	"who alone we serve in reverence" (with justification from Rashi, Brachot 11a)
Geiger Gebetbüche r 1854	"sound the great shofar of freedom and save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel, in the four corners of the earth. Praised are you O Lord, who saves the remnant of Israel."	removed "and rebuild it speedily in our day"	
Einhorn's Olath Tamid 1896 (1913 translation)	combined with justice and heretics: "Let O Lord, freedom sound in all the regions of the earth, speed the day when wickedness shall be no more and selfishness shall cease from troubling the hearts of Thy children. Thou, who loveth justice and righteousness, grant that soon Thy kingdom be established on this earth. Then our mourning will have come to an end and we shall praise Thee in joy.	Removed	same as Hamburg in Hebrew, translated "Be Praised, O God, whom alone we worship and serve."

Chart 1

Prayerbook and Year	Amidah-- 11th benediction – תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו ושא נס לקבץ גלויותנו	Amidah-- for Jerusalem ולירושלים תשוב ותישכון בתוכה כאשר עירך ברחמים דיברת ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם	Amidah-- המחזיר שכינתו לציון
Minhag Amerika 1857/1872	Let resound the great trumpet for the liberty of all nations (כל-העמים); lift up the banner to unite them in the covenant of peace, and bring them nigh unto Thee (וקרבם אליך) to worship Thee in truth. Blessed be Thou who bringest nigh the abandoned (מקרב נדחים) [In the 1872 edition, this was changed to: "who lovest the community of nations. (עדת לאומים)]	In 1857, the traditional formulation was retained. In 1872, the prayer was re-formulated to read: שוכן בקרבנו יי אלוהנו ורוח קדשך הופע עלינו כאשר נתת אותנו לברית עם לאור גוים. קדש את.שמך על מקדישי שמך. ברוך אתה יי הנקדש בנו לעני הגוים God, O Lord, let thy dwelling be in our midst, and let the glory of Thy holiness shine upon us, and Thou hast made us the people of the covenant unto the light of the nations. Sanctify Thy name to those who sanctify it. Praised by Thou, God, who art sanctified by us before .the nations.	1857: traditional 1872: "Let all kingdoms on earth behold Thy light, Thy truth, and may all mankind be united to worship Thee. Praised be Thou, O God to whom, alone we render worship.
Union Prayer Book 1895	Combined with *malshinim*, freedom for all: "grant, O Lord, that the sound of freedom he bread throughout all lands, and all nations enjoy the blessings of true liberty; let the reign of wickedness vanish like smoke...	removed	removed

Chapter 2: The Birth of Reform Zionism: 1900-1948

Introduction

As evidenced by their liturgical reforms and public declarations, Reform Judaism was first based on a commitment to the idea of a universal ethical mission and a rejection of the national and political dimensions classically associated with Judaism. Theologically, Reform Judaism did not adhere to notions of exile or homelessness, nor did its leaders aspire to any type of return to the land or ingathering of the exiles.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Reform Judaism, with its universal, anti-nationalist notions of Judaism found itself at loggerheads with the ideology of political Zionism, which was on the rise in Europe, Russia, and America. Reform Jews, following the ideology of their leaders, were largely non- or anti-Zionist. However, over the next 30 years, social, political, and ideological forces would challenge this Reform theology and the Reform political stance in regards to Zionism. The drastic change in ideology can be seen in the evolution of beliefs held among the students at HUC-JIR: In 1900, only 17% of the student body of HUC-JIR identified themselves as pro-Zionist while 46% identified themselves as anti-Zionist; by 1930, these figures had switched to 69% pro-Zionist and only 9% anti-Zionist.[1] After adopting a firmly anti-Zionist position in 1885, the CCAR adopted a neutrality resolution in 1935, and a Zionist platform in 1937. What were the forces that allowed for such a dramatic change, and how did this affect the movement.

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[1]D. Max Eichhorn. "The Student Body - Today and Yesterday: The results of a comparative study of the HUC student bodies of 1900 and 1930." Appendix to Howard Greenstein. *Turning Point: Zionism and Reform Judaism* Brown Judaic studies ; no. 12 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 175.

The Rise of Political Zionism

As the second half of the 19th century progressed, many secular Jews in Europe began to think that political emancipation was not the panacea they had hoped it to be. Anti-Semitism was on the rise in Eastern and Western Europe—and notably, even in the epicenters of modern culture and liberal Jewish assimilation such as Vienna and Paris. The rise of nationalism in Europe at once reinvigorated anti-Semitism, while also awakening nationalist aspirations among Jewish intellectuals. In February 1896, Theodore Herzl, a secular European Jewish intellectual, published *The Jewish State.* In this seminal Zionist book, Herzl called for Jews to return to Zion and establish a sovereign Jewish state. For political Zionists, Jews were essentially "homeless," and the only chance for Jews to have a "normalized" existence was to have a Jewish national home.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the notion that Jews were essentially "homeless" was ideologically and theologically anathema to early Reform Judaism. Isaac Mayer Wise made that clear in 1879, by stating that the goal of Reform Judaism was the perfection of humanity through the unity and solidarity of all people: "We...believe it is well that the habitable world become one holy land and the human family one chosen people."[2] Wise, one of the founding leaders of the Reform Movement and the founder of the Hebrew Union College, was a virulent anti-Zionist. His opposition was not only ideological, as clarified by his liturgy, but also political—he felt that political Zionism was both impractical and dangerous for the Jews, and became an avowed enemy of the

[2] Isaac Meyer Wise. *The American Israelite,* 32, no. 4, (January 1879).

platforms of political Zionism as outlined by Herzl and Max Nordau at the First Zionist Congress:

> The Herzl-Nordau scheme appears to us to be about as important to Judaism as was Pleasanton's blue grass theory to science or as is 'Christian Science' to medicine. Pleasanton's empiricism was at least harmless, but Herzl-Nordau's is so fraught with the possibility of mischief...it becomes the duty of every true Jew to take an active part in the efforts to destroy it.[3]

Wise suggested that Zionism was a reaction to European and Russian anti-Semitism, a messianic movement that gained support from poor, disenfranchised, persecuted Jews who fantasized about returning to the past glory of Jewish nationhood. For Wise, such Zionism was irrelevant to American Jewry—but mass immigration from Europe, coupled with the political Zionist agitation in Europe, gave Wise cause for concern, and led him to condemn Zionism forcefully in his CCAR presidential address of 1898:

> ...all this agitation on the other side of the ocean concerned us very little. We are perfectly satisfied with our political and social position...We want freedom, equality, justice in equity to reign and govern the community in which we live. This we possess in such a fullness, that no State whatever could improve on it. That new Messianic movement over the ocean does not concern us at all. But the same expatriated, persecuted and outrageously wronged people came in large numbers also to us, and they being still imbued with their home ideas, ideals and beliefs, voice these projects among themselves and their friends so loudly and so vehemently, that the subject was discussed rather passionately in public meetings, and some petty politicians of that class are appointed as delegates, we learn, to the Basle Congress... The honor and position of the American Israel demand imperatively that this conference, which does represent the sentiment of American Judaism, *minus* the idiosyncrasies of those late immigrants, do declare officially the American standpoint in this unpleasant episode of our history.[4]

It is clear that the early anti-Zionism of the American Reform movement was influenced both by Reform ideology and the notion that impoverished and oppressed Eastern

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[3] Isaac Mayer Wise, *The American Israelite*, 45, no. 29, (19th January, 1899).
[4] CCAR Yearbook 8, 10-12.

European Jews were supporting an immature, irrational, and fantastical ideal that stemmed from their pitiful political and social situation. This divide, between German and Eastern European Jewish ideology, would continue to serve as a factor in later Reform anti-Zionism.

One of the most important early articulations of the Reform Movement's specific opposition to political Zionism came from Dr. Henry Berkowitz, a member of the first graduating class of HUC - JIR, a congregational rabbi and an active member of the CCAR. In his address at the 1899 annual meeting of the CCAR, Berkowitz identified three key reasons for rejecting Zionism. First, he argued that modernity can be equated with progress, and that emancipation will bring equality to the Jews in the lands in which they reside. Secondly, he sees Zionism as impractical, citing the "jealousies of the Christian and Mohammedan worlds"[5] which will not allow for the Jews to take over Palestine. Lastly, Berkowitz argued against Zionism on the grounds that Judaism is a religion, rather than a race or nationality, and that:

> the ultimate end and aim of our history is the maintenance of Judaism, not the maintenance of Jews...Judaism has preserved itself thus far because of the power of its ideals; the inspiration of its precepts...These are eternal and superior to race or nationality.[6]

Berkowitz's anti-Zionism was characteristic of the leadership of the CCAR and the Reform Movement at the turn of the century, and his anti-Zionist opinion held court at the Hebrew Union College.

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[5]Henry Berkowitz. "Why I am not a Zionist," in *Reform Judaism: A Historical Perspective*, ed. Joseph Blau (New York: Ktav, 1973), 376.

[6] Ibid.

Kaufmann Kohler, an avowed anti-Zionist, became president of Hebrew Union College in 1903. As the leader of the movement's seminary, Kohler was able to maintain a strongly anti-Zionist tenor among the faculty and leadership of the College. It was clear that while the leadership of HUC was anti-Zionist, there was dissension in the ranks. In his work, *Renew Our Days*: *The Zionist Issue in Reform Judaism*, David Polish presents the pro-Zionist statements of HUC professors Gotthard Deutch and Casper Levias, and CCAR leaders Bernard Felsenthal and Max Heller.[7] However, Kohler kept this Zionist element in its place, and even went so far as to dismiss professors with Zionist leanings, beginning with Casper Levias in 1905. In 1907, Kohler clashed with three professors who had become nationalists: Max Margolis, Henry Malter, and Max Schloessinger. The three men submitted resignations as a form of protest, and to the surprise of all involved, Kohler accepted.[8] However, Zionism was a taboo subject on campus in Cincinnati until 1915, when Rabbi Stephen Wise was invited by students to come to Cincinnati for a conference, so that Wise could persuade Kohler to allow public discussion of Zionism on campus. This which resulted in a forceful pro-Zionist sermon delivered on-campus by rabbinical student James Heller.[9]

Heller, son of Reform Zionist Max Heller, delivered a sermon that provided a strong rationale for Reform Zionism. Using notions of the universal mission of the Jews and prophetic Judaism, Heller argued for a renewed nationalism. While he affirmed the Reform notion that the mission of the Jews was to "spread justice and righteousness," he

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[7] David Polish, *Renew Our Days: The Zionist Issue in Reform Judaism* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1976), 95-111.

[8] Greenstein, 11.

[9] For a full description of this incident, see Greenstein, 12.

argued that the best way for the Jews to do this was as a unified, sovereign body. Heller argued that the Jews must have a "strong body" through which its spirit would have the capacity to act. Only through this unity of soul with body, or spirit with nation, argued Heller, could Judaism fulfill its universal ideals.[10] Soon after, Kohler addressed the student body at the opening exercises of HUC in 1916 with a forceful anti-Zionist message. However, his rhetoric could not hold up to the nationalistic fervor that swept through the College after the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

Transition: 1917-1937

By 1920, Zionist activity was bearing political fruit. In November, 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour wrote a letter on behalf of the British government to Lord Walter Rothschild as a leader of the Zionist Federation, stating that the British government supported a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. The letter, known as the Balfour Declaration, was followed in 1920 with the Mandate for Palestine, charged to Great Britain by the Allied Powers, and confirmed in July 1922 by the League of Nations. In September 1922, President Warren G. Harding signed a joint Congressional resolution supporting Jewish settlement in Palestine.

A Jewish polity in Palestine was quickly becoming a political fact. This had profound impact on the students at Hebrew Union College. As Howard Greenstein documents, the 1920's were a decade in which the students of the Hebrew Union College became more Zionist as part of to a return to greater religious traditionalism in general.

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[10] James G. Heller, "The Home of the Jewish Spirit," *Hebrew Union College Monthly* 2 no. 6, (March, 1916): 189.

Greenstein argues that this was connected to a pronounced Eastern European influence within the student body and within American Judaism in general. The students began to agitate for more "Jewishness" to be instilled into Reform Judaism, and less "classical Reform." According to Greenstein, while Kohler would have quashed this call for cultural and emotional link to Jewish peoplehood to become part of the curriculum, the new president of HUC, Julian Morganstern, allowed students more intellectual and spiritual freedom.[11]

For Greenstein, the move towards Zionism in the early 1930's among the students of HUC was the beginning of the ideological struggle to incorporate Zionism into Reform Judaism. This was not Zionism borne out of practical concerns for the physical wellbeing of the Jews, but rather an ideological Zionism. Greenstein describes the concerns of these early Reform Zionists in the following way:

> Their commitment to Zionism was not conditioned by the desperate plight of European Jewry, which was not at all yet apparent. Neither could they be classified as Zionists because of their poverty and desperate struggle for upward socio-economic mobility, a charge which anti-Zionist Reformers had so often invoked to dismiss the credibility of the Zionist cause. These pro-Zionist rabbis...were Zionists as a result of their prescription for improving the quality of Jewish life. Zionism was for them a key to Jewish survival and regeneration in the Diaspora. That conviction would become a decisive factor in reshaping the attitude of the entire movement toward the concept of Jewish nationhood.[12]

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[11] Greenstein, 15-17. Greenstein traces the major changes in the student body in the 1920's. and notes that "Whereas Eastern European Jews had once been a source of embarrassment they had become by 1930 a romantic model of Jewish excellence. Another factor which accelerated the change in attitude towards Zionism was the steady influx of traditional elements...The pendulum had also shifted on the issue of ritual and ceremony."

[12] Greenstein, 18.

Many of these Reform Zionists, such as Abba Hillel Silver, were of Eastern European immigrant backgrounds, and had imbibed such attitudes from childhood. Yet, while the student body of HUC was shifting towards a Zionist stance, the leaders of the CCAR and the UAHC were not as quick to become Zionist. Prior to 1923, there was no documented support for Zionism among the leadership of the movement, and the feeling that Zionism was connected to Eastern European "clannishness" was another black mark against it.[13] For these German-American Reform Jews, reason remained tantamount, in opposition to the perceived emotionalism and subjectivity of their greenhorn Eastern European brethren. As Greenstein notes, in the 1920's, the leadership of the UAHC still held to the notion that

> a movement to divorce Jews from the rest of the world and to reconstitute them as a separate, political entirety was considered hopelessly archaic and obsolete. It was believed that nationalism of all kinds would one day yield to a universal community of mankind and the responsible and knowledgeable citizen would realize that it was his task to raze, not strengthen, the political sovereignties which divide men. That Jews, the heirs of prophetic universalism, should encourage and advocate a return to sovereignty and a retreat from reason for the sake of unfounded emotion and feeling was intolerable...[14]

In other words, while the young rabbis of the movement were swayed by Jewish nationalism and the influx of Eastern European traditionalism into American Reform

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[13] Greenstein, 20.

[14] Greenstein, 21. Interestingly, this reads as a counterpoint to Herzl's anti-universalist statement in *The Jewish State:* "It might further be said that we ought not to create new distinctions between people; we ought not to raise fresh barriers, we should rather make the old disappear. I say that those who think in this way are amiable visionaries; and that the Homeland idea will go on flourishing long after the dust of their bones will have been scattered without trace by the winds. Universal brotherhood is not even a beautiful dream. Conflict is essential to man's highest efforts." (Thedore Herzl, *The Jewish State* (1896), in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, Arthur Hertzberg, ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1959), 223.

Judaism, the established lay leaders of the movement held fast to the Pittsburgh Platform. Not only did they hold firm in their anti-Zionist, universalistic ideology, but they also were disinclined to change. The influx of Eastern European sentimentality, and it connection to Zionism, helped to cement many Reform Jews in their own anti-Zionist stances.[15]

The political victories of the Zionist movement in the early 1920's served to sway some influential Reform opinions and lead some Reform Jewish leaders to support Jewish settlement in Palestine. Notable among Reform Zionist leaders were Abba Hillel Silver and Stephen S. Wise.[16] Yet, for most Reform Jewish leaders, this partial support for a Zionist cause was practical, but not political. As the avowed anti-Zionists a generation before them, they were willing to allow for settlement for safety, but not for a political Zionism that called for Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. Palestine could be accepted as a place to settle homeless, déclassé Jewish brethren, but not a place in which the Jews would seek political sovereignty. The CCAR reaction to the Balfour Declaration stated:

> The Central Conference of American Rabbis notes with equal appreciation the declaration of the British Government by Mr. Balfour as an evidence of good-

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[15] This is a main part of David Polish's thesis as to why the UAHC leadership and a vocal laity remained largely anti-Zionist while the HUC students, and a large percentage of American Jews, were evidencing a growing commitment to Zionism. Polish traces the growing Eastern European Jewish influence on traditionalist practices and Zionism, and specifically the relationship between anti-ritual and anti-Zionist tendencies in Reform Judaism in the first decades of the 20th century. For more on this, see Polish, 68-88.

[16] For a detailed analysis of the Zionism of these two men, see Polish, 116-122. Judah Magnes was also a committed Reform Zionist, but in moving to Israel and founding the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he was largely absent from these Reform Movement discussions of Zionism.

> will towards the Jews. We naturally favor the facilitation of immigration to Palestine, of Jews who, either because of economic necessity or political or religious persecution desire to settle there. We hold that Jews in Palestine, as well as anywhere else in the world are entitled to equality in political, civil and religious rights, but we do not subscribe to the phrase in the declaration which says, "Palestine is to be a national home-land for the Jewish people." This statement assumes that the Jews, although identified with the life of many nations for centuries, are in fact to people without a country. We hold that the Jewish people are and of rights ought to be at home in all lands. Israel, like every other religious communion, has the right to live and assert its message in any part of the world. We are opposed to the idea that Palestine should be considered the home-land of the Jews. Jews in America are part of the American nation. The ideal of the Jew is not the establishment of the Jewish State -- not the re-assertion of Jewish nationality which has long been outgrown. We believe that our survival as a people is dependent upon the assertion of the maintenance of our historic religious role and not upon the acceptance of Palestine in the home-land of the Jewish people. The mission of the Jew is to witness to God all over the world.[17]

Henry Berkowitz, who heretofore was a well-known anti-Zionist, clarified this position with his petition, submitted to Woodrow Wilson in 1919, which sympathized with Zionist efforts to bring Jewish refugees to safety in Palestine, but opposed any political or national aspirations of Jews seeking sovereignty in Palestine.[18]

However, as the League of Nations and American President Woodrow Wilson began to support a Jewish settlement and some form of sovereignty in Palestine, even the anti-Zionists had to realize that a Jewish polity in Palestine was quickly becoming a fact. In 1920, the CCAR reluctantly endorsed the principle of Jewish settlement in Palestine, and pledged that all Jews should contribute to this effort.[19] They had to reconcile their

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[17] CCAR Yearbook 28 (1918): 133-4.

[18] For a more thorough explanation of this and other related events, see Greenstein, 21-23.

[19] Polish, 142.

ideology with the growing political reality of international support for the burgeoning Yishuv. As Zionist rabbis Max Heller and Horace Wolf argued to the CCAR:

> The Central Conference of American Rabbis must perceive that conditions annihilate theories. Truth and justice have not changed; but solemn duties are arising out of inexorable circumstances. Now that Palestine is to be, by world consent, a national homeland for our people, our duty is, first of all, to lift our hearts in fervent gratitude to the mysterious Providence which is guiding the Jewish people out of its wilderness and into the Promised Land; then to convey the expression of our warm appreciation to those human agencies...who have been instrumental in bringing about this consummation; to honor the memories of those no longer with us who have fought and suffered for the realization of our longings of almost two score centuries; lastly, to call, as earnestly as we can, upon our people that they shall take up, in a spirit of fervid loyalty and steadfast hope, the delicate and difficult tasks which now await us.[20]

Two controversies in the leadership of the movement clarify the ideological tension that surrounded Zionism in the 1930's and the growing power of the Zionist component in the Reform Movement: The Hatikvah Controversy of 1931 and the 1935 CCAR Neutrality Resolution.

The Hatikvah controversy

As outlined in the previous chapter, the anti-Zionist and anti-nationalist ideology of early Reform Judaism was evident in the liturgies used by the movement and its rabbis. In 1930-1931, a new liturgical controversy arose. The CCAR was developing a new hymnal to use with the Union Prayer Book. At the 1930 CCAR convention, the Hymnal Committee, chaired by Louis Wolsey, reported on the progress and development of the new Union Hymnal. Dr. Stephen S. Wise inquired as to why the committee did not include Hatikvah in their proposed list of hymns. Rabbi Wolsey "explained that the

[20] CCAR Yearbook 30 (1920): 143.

melodies included were limited to devotional music."[21] This led to a longer discussion on the inclusion of Hatikvah. Louis Witt, speaking as a self-proclaimed anti-Zionist, suggested that all of the verses of Hatikvah be included in the Hymnal. He reasoned:

> There are many members of our Conference who are Zionists, and to them this hymn is a very precious thing. As a matter of fairness to them, this hymn should be included in our hymnal. Further than that, however, the hymn is the one great outstanding mass song of our people. It is sung by Jews all over the world. I know it has been appropriated by Zionism, but, after all, since we are including many hymns that are non-Jewish in origin, we can include a hymn that is of Zionist origin. It is true that the Chairman said that the hymn had no devotional value and the hymn book is intended only for devotional purposes, but since we will include "America" and "The Star Spangled Banner," I feel in the same spirit, "Hatikvah" can be included.[22]

Stephen S. Wise responded with a powerful speech, continuing the argument that if the hymnal was to contain the American national anthem, which he argued was "military, bellicose, and in other ways objectionable," then it would be a dastardly mistake to omit "that song which springs from the heart of the Jewish people." Further, Wise argued:

> If you omit the "Hatikvah," it is as though you are saying to the Jewish people: "We are a church and nothing more." You are saying to the world: "We have nothing to do with the collective life of the Jewish people; we have broken with their dreams, we are done with their hopes, we stand alone, a Jewish Church."[23]

After Wise's impassioned speech, it was moved and adopted that Hatikvah be included in the new hymnal, but a formal roll call was not taken.

One year later, at the CCAR convention of 1931, the issue once again arose. The hymnal was presented, with Hatikvah included. A motion was made and adopted that Hatikvah be included in the hymnal. Strident dissent ensued, especially among a number

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[21] CCAR Yearbook 40 (1930): 98.
[22] Ibid, 99-100.
[23] Ibid., 100-101.

of CCAR members who claimed that too few CCAR members had been present for the 1930 vote, and they argued against including a Zionist anthem in the hymnal. Rabbi James Heller reminded the conference that the proposal to include Hatikvah had been made by Louis Witt, an "ardent anti-Zionist." Heller then argued that a hymnal, unlike a prayer book, is not a prescribed order but rather a menu of options, and that "Nobody compels the members of any congregation to sing Hatikvah." He again raised the argument that, if the book was to include non-religious songs like The Star Spangled Banner, it should also include Hatikvah.[24] A number of dissenters called for another vote, this time motioning that Hatikvah not be included. The dissenters lost this vote, 41 to 54 with 2 abstentions.[25] Julian Morganstern, a non-Zionist, explained that, while he had voted against the inclusion of Hatikvah in 1930, he voted for its inclusion now "since the majority voted in favor of it last year I am willing to stand by that action."[26] It was then suggested that the 1930 vote had been incomplete since not all CCAR members were present, and that a vote by mail-in paper ballot be taken to survey the entirety of the Conference on the issue. A motion to authorize such a vote was defeated, 52 to 36.

This controversy was indicative not only of the tie between Reform ideology and liturgical music, but also of the tendentious nature of Zionism in the Reform Movement. Hatikvah was seen by anti-Zionists like Louis Witt as an expression of the religious longing for Zion, co-opted by Zionists for their own purposes. These anti-Zionists still felt that the song should be included in the Reform canon of liturgical music, for the

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[24] CCAR Journal 41 (1931): 114-116.
[25] Ibid., 102.
[26] Ibid., 103.

religious longing for Zion was a universal Jewish hope, regardless of contemporary political agitation. Other anti-Zionists saw Hatikvah as a symbol of the insidious nature of political Zionism, which was wrongly infecting the Jewish masses. To these Reform ideologues, the inclusion of the song was tantamount to sealing the death of the anti-nationalist philosophy of the movement's founders. The fact that this vote needed to be re-cast three times over two years highlighted the contentious nature of the argument—and the fact that the Conference voted each time for the inclusion of what had become the Zionist anthem indicated the tremendous shift towards Zionism among the leaders of Reform Jewry.

The 1935 Neutrality Resolution and Response

Four years later, the shift towards Zionism in the CCAR was clarified with what has come to be known as the "Neutrality Resolution of 1935." This resolution marked a dramatic shift in the ideology of the movement. Felix Levy, James Heller, and Barnett Brickner, all Zionists and all leaders of the CCAR, proposed a resolution that called for the Conference to denounce anti-Zionism, while permitting each member of the Conference to harbor his own opinion. Their proposed resolution elucidated the lack of consensus among the membership regarding Zionism:

> When there is an honest difference of opinion in respect to the nature of Reform Judaism, anti-Zionists should not force their views down the throats of Zionists, nor in turn should Zionists now demand that the Conference, at least in the present status of the problem, commit itself to the Zionist philosophy and

> program. A policy of neutrality and mutual respect and tolerance should be fostered.[27]

These Zionist rabbis were aware that the disagreement about Zionism in the Conference was not merely political, but went to the heart of the "nature of Reform Zionism." Thus, even though these rabbis were avowed Zionists, who argued repeatedly that Zionism should be one of the pillars of Reform Judaism, they understood the partisan nature of this claim.

The committee on resolutions suggested an alternate resolution, which did not include a paragraph about the difference of opinion within the conference, but rather resolved that while the CCAR had previously adopted anti-Zionist resolutions, there would now be no official stand on Zionism. Each member would be free to make his own judgment. Further, the Conference would continue to "co-operate in the upbuilding of Palestine, and in the economic, cultural, and particularly spiritual tasks confronting the growing and evolving Jewish community there."[28]

The committee's initial proposal contained a paragraph stating that "We believe that such an attitude [in opposition to Zionism] no longer reflects the sentiment of a very substantial section of the Conference membership."[29] Rabbi Newfield suggested that this paragraph be omitted, for without a vote, he felt that it was unknown how many members of the Conference saw Zionism as incompatible with Reform Judaism.[30] This resolution to omit the paragraph was adopted. CCAR President, Samuel Goldenson suggested that

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[27] For the full proposed resolution and the committees substitute, see CCAR Yearbook 45 (1935): 102.

[28] Ibid., 103.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 110.

the vote on this resolution should not be taken, as a committee was in place to draft a new platform for Reform Judaism, which was the proper forum for dealing with such a controversial matter. It is clear from Goldenson's comment that this resolution, even though it was merely proposing neutrality, was viewed as "tantamount to a declaration that we have reversed our attitude on Zionism."[31]

James Heller, one of the initiators of the resolution, took issue with this perspective, arguing that while Zionism would soon be seen as compatible with Reform Judaism by most of the members of the Conference, at this time he felt that this resolution did not "constitute a declaration of policy. It says in effect that the question is an open one from now on."[32] This led to an argument by some of the staunch Zionist members of the Conference, who felt that the resolution should endorse Zionism. Philip Bernstein suggested that the resolution be tabled until the Conference was prepared to adopt a strong pro-Zionist resolution, arguing:

> The Jewish national hope is an integral and indispensable element of my liberal Judaism. I can no more be neutral about this question than about the existence of God or the need for social justice. I believe that the Conference should take a positive stand endorsing Zionism. If it is not prepared to do so at the present time, let us not bind ourselves to purportless inaction, but postpone a decision until we are ready for it.[33]

Bernstein's motion to table the resolution failed by only two votes, 51 to 53. A substitute resolution was then proposed that Zionism was not incompatible with Reform Judaism, but this resolution failed. The resolution proposed by the committee, without the paragraph suggesting that the Conference membership was

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[31] Ibid., 111.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

no longer substantially anti-Zionist, passed by a wide margin, 81 to 25. The Conference was unready to make a clear Zionist statement, and a number of rabbis held on to their anti- or non-Zionist beliefs. However, as this vote indicates, by 1935 a large contingent of the CCAR had embraced Zionism, and the anti-Zionist fervor of the earlier generation no longer held sway over the Conference.

At this same convention, the presidency of the CCAR was handed from Samuel Goldenson to avowed Zionist Felix Levy. Upon accepting the presidency, Levy discussed the issue of Zionism, but vowed that his personal Zionism would not become an issue of contention in the conference:

> May I say that I rejoice that a Zionist is to become a President of the Conference...[which is] a reflection of a sense of fair play that is in the hearts of many men in this meeting, who feel that regardless of our personal interpretation of Judaism, we are all members of this Conference...Zionism (and I say this deliberately), so far at least as I am concerned, is no longer an issue in this Conference. I shall never bring it up.[34]

The Conference was not yet itself Zionist, and even the Zionist president was unwilling to express his Zionism in his presidential role. However, that the leadership of the Reform Movement was headed by a self-declared Zionist, and while neutrality was the "official position" of the CCAR, the election of Levy showed that Zionism was no longer seen as ideologically incompatible with Reform Judaism.

The Turn to Zionism: The Columbus Platform of 1937

The 1930's were a decade of extreme political turmoil on the world stage, and also a time of ideological transformation in the American Jewish community. Ideas of

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[34] Ibid.., 127.

nationalism had swept powerfully through Europe, and the idea of Judaism as a civilization, as espoused by Mordechai Kaplan, had taken strong root on American soil. Reform Jewish leaders, such as Barnett Brickner, argued that the Jews had a national identity.[35] By 1936, Reform Zionist leaders such as Abba Hillel Silver had argued forcefully for a Reform Zionist ideology, saying that both ancient Priest and Prophet had supported the rebuilding of Zion, and that the nationalist spirit of the Jews had lasted throughout exilic times. Today, argued Silver, Reform Jews should join the rest of the Jewish people, who were otherwise wholly loyal to the land of Israel. Such a nationalist connection to a greater people would encourage Jewish identity and allow for a unity of the spiritual and national dimensions of Judaism, which had been "unnaturally" divorced.[36] Thus Reform Judaism was influenced by the Kaplanian notions of Judaism as a civilization as well as the Eastern European connection to folkways and what would today be called ethnic identity.

The political realities of Europe had also quashed much of the earlier Reform optimism that Enlightenment universalism would hold sway and that the messianic hopes attached to the Enlightenment would be realized. As nationalism swept throughout Europe, along with racial theories and the rise of ethnic identities, Reform Jews no longer believed whole-heartedly in the Kantian ideals of their German predecessors. As Greenstein explains, by the 1930's:

> Ideologically, the Reform movement had reached an impasse. Its entire prognosis of a new and better world for the future as a consequence of human

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[35] For more extensive exposition on Brickner's nationalistic Reform ideology, see Polish, 165-168.

[36] Polish, 169-179.

> striving had crumbled in the cataclysm of one world war and on the brink of another...All the exuberance and confidence in man's capacity for moral excellence sounded hollow and naïve in light of past and imminent catastrophes. Zionism vigorously challenged Reform Judaism to re-examine its basic suppositions.[37]

Zionism challenged Reform Jewish leaders to re-examine the relationship between their universal ideals and the particularistic needs of the Jewish people in the contemporary political climate. The question of national identity was at the fore as the Jewish collectivity was being treated as a nationality in the international arena. American Reform Jews still held their nationality to be American, and their Judaism to be a subset of their American-ness. However, the political climate encouraged them to identify with the greater Jewish people. In addition, the earlier fears that supporting a Jewish entity in Palestine would lead to accusations of dual loyalties and harm their standing in America no longer seemed to be the case. As Barnett Brickner had expressed in his speech to the Conference in 1932:

> The early Reformers feared Zionism, because they said that a homeland in Palestine would *unhome* us everywhere; yet now without a homeland, the Jews of the world are unhomed nearly everywhere...[38]

These new political, social, and ideological factors converged, leading many Reform Jews and their leaders towards an embrace of Zionism. As Brickner summarized:

> Now that we have a different conception and a different perspective from that which the Reform leaders of a former generation had, I can see no reason for the continuance of our official hostilities to Jewish nationalism; unless Reform Judaism should again decide to go fearlessly and fully cosmopolitan in a day when the philosophy of cosmopolitanism has become bankrupt. Internationalism that does not efface cultural nationalism has taken its place. Our experience in

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[37] Greenstein, 129.

[38] CCAR Yearbook 42 (1932): 182-3.

> America during the past seventy-five to one-hundred years with the philosophy that we are Jews by religion only has demonstrated that wherever it has been rigorously taught and adhered to, it has lead toward assimilation...I am convinced that a Reform Judaism, ideologically synchronized with Jewish nationalism, made intellectually and spiritually satisfying, that work toward the reconstruction of our social order—such a Reform Judaism has a tremendous future within the household of Jewry itself.[39]

In 1937, a committee of rabbis headed by Samuel S. Cohon and composed of James Heller, Felix Levy, David Philipson, Max Raisin, and Abba Hillel Silver, were given the task of composing a document that would be known as "The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," a platform that would supplant the now outdated 1885 Pittsburgh Platform. Notably, all but one of these men were self-declared Zionists. Their statement, which came to be known as the "Columbus Platform," canonized the major ideological changes undertaken in Reform Judaism, especially regarding notions of peoplehood and Zionism. However, this platform was not a clearly Zionistic manifesto. Rather, it was a subtle statement of major change. This change was characterized by the newfound classification of Judaism as not only a religion, but a

> way of life... [which] requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular...[40]

This sea-change from the ideology of the framers of the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform was clearly influenced by the social, political, and ideological changes described above. While the framers of the Columbus Platform were some of the leading

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[39] Ibid.

[40] *The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism*, "The Columbus Platform", 1937. Available from http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=40&pge_prg_id=3032&pge_id=1656

Zionists of the Reform Movement, they could not espouse an ideological Reform Zionism that would be accepted by the majority of the Conference. Rather, the paragraph on Israel supports practical, economic, and cultural Zionism, but does not present an outright theological or religious ideology for Reform Zionism:

> In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life. Throughout the ages it has been Israel's mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, Justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.[41]

In order to appease the Conference, the language of the platform championed the ethics of universalism and the messianic goal of a "universal brotherhood." It is clear from this language that the "rehabilitation of Palestine" need not be seen as a nationalistic goal, but rather as a political necessity, as a "haven" for "oppressed" co-religionists.

However, the basis of a Reform Zionist ideology can be found in the phrase that calls for Palestine to be "a center of culture and spiritual life." This phrase reflects the developing ideology of American Zionism, based on Ahad Ha'Am's cultural Zionism. Mordechai Kaplan, Solomon Shechter, and Louis Brandeis had all helped to shape an American Zionism that did not call for a negation of the Diaspora nor for a return of Diaspora Jews to the land. Rather, their American Zionism saw Israel as a home for oppressed Jews as well as a spiritual and cultural center that would serve as a model for, and an agent of, the establishment of "justice, truth and peace on earth." As such, Palestine would be a particularly Jewish land, but as a spiritual center it could further the

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[41] Ibid.

"Messianic goal" of Reform Judaism, helping the world to realize a universal goal of "brotherhood, Justice, truth, and peace on earth."

This reflects the Reform religious Zionist vision of rabbis such as Barnett Brickner, Abba Hillel Silver, Stephen S. Wise, and Samuel S. Cohon. While Silver, Wise, and Brickner have been consistently regarded as the leading Zionists of their age,[42] Cohon's work, unpublished until 1988, sheds light on the framer of the Columbus Platform's religious commitment to the Land of Israel. It is to his views that we now turn.

Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon's Reform Zionist Ideology

Samuel S. Cohon (1888-1959) was born near Minsk, Russia, and came into contact with Reform Judaism when he moved to the United States at the age of 16. Ordained rabbi at HUC in 1912, he became Professor of Jewish Theology in 1923. Unlike his predecessor, Kaufmann Kohler, Cohon was a lover of Hebrew and a contributor to Hebrew periodicals such as *haDoar*. As early as 1920, Cohon wrote an article in the *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume* entitled, "Palestine in Jewish Theology,"[43] which traced the Jewish People's support for, duty to, and longing for the Land of Israel from ancient times, with a particular focus on the prophetic relationship to *Eretz Yisrael.* Cohon argued that the Land of Israel, or Palestine, carried religious significance from ancient to modern times:

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[42] For detailed analysis of the Zionism of Wise and Silver, see Polish, 116-122. For more on Brickner's Zionism, see Polish, 164-8.

[43] Samuel S. Cohon, "Palestine in Jewish Theology," *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume*(1925): 171 - 209.

> The physical atmosphere of Palestine formed the nursery of Israel's rich spiritual idealism. Nor has Palestine remained a mere museum of Jewish antiquities. Despite two thousand years of Jewish dispersion throughout the world, it has retained a powerful hold on Jewish custom, law, and ritual. The land of ancient memories has been enshrined in Jewish hearts as the land of future promise. Linked with the Messiah idea and with the belief in the Resurrection, Palestine was transferred from the realm of geography to that of faith. Not even the Reformation of Judaism has wholly separated the religion of the Jew from its native soil. The breath of the ancient Bible land inspirits many an institution and practice cherished by Reform Judaism.[44]

Cohon, like earlier Reform theologians, argues that the land of Israel (Palestine) is the source of Judaism and holds the roots of Jewish history: "For out of Zion shall go forth instruction (Torah) and the word of Jahweh from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)"[45] Cohon notes that the prophets, chief among them Deutero-Isaiah, presented a theology that allowed for Judaism to exist outside of the land of Israel, but did not abandon longing for the land. Cohon was not afraid to proclaim that the prophets, to whom Reform Jewry traced its theological roots, also aspired to a future in Palestine as well:

> It was left for Deutero-Isaiah to blend the national hopes and the lofty universalistic aspirations into perfect harmony. He interprets the stirring events of his day, the crash of Babylon and the rise of Persia as a world-power, as parts of Jahweh's plan of universal salvation. Jahweh comforts Zion, makes her wilderness like Eden, and fills her with joy, with praise, and with song. The ransomed captives shall return jubilantly to Zion...Israel's restoration in Palestine represents the practical manifestation of Jahweh's sovereignty.[46]

Cohon goes on to argue that after the destruction of the Second Temple, Diaspora Jews created a Judaism that could exist outside of the land, but did not forget Jerusalem:

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[44] Ibid., 171-2.

[45] Ibid., 181. Cohon uses this verse, and remarks on the fact that "Despite his universalism, Isaiah too, regarded Jahweh as linked with Palestine." (181) Recall also that the early Reform prayerbooks replaced prayers for Zion with this verse, and justified it by saying that the land of Israel was the root of our tradition, but not its destination.

[46] Ibid., 191.

> While identifying themselves with the countries in which they lived, the Jews of the Diaspora piously looked upon "the holy city as their metropolis in which is erected the sacred temple of The Most High God (Against Flaccus, VII, Younge vol. IV. p. 70)...The Jews of all lands considered it as a duty and a privilege to assist the sanctuary of Jerusalem.[47]

Cohon ends his article pointing towards the sanctification of the land of Israel and of Jerusalem in particular in early rabbinic texts such as the Mishnah. The thrust of his argument is that Judaism is closely bound to the Land of Israel (Palestine) from ancient times, and that "the Jews of the whole world profoundly shared the belief that Palestine was the Holy Land and Jerusalem the Holy City."[48]

In Cohon's 1937 work, *M'korot Ha'Yehadut,* the author presents traditional Jewish texts in the hopes of allowing scholars and rabbis to unite faith (*emunah*) with erudition (*heskel*).[49] In this work, written entirely in Hebrew and published in 1988 from an original manuscript, Cohon chooses texts to illustrate major theological issues in Judaism, divided into three sections: ideas, actions, and history. In his first section, he includes eight pages of sources on Israel and six pages of sources on the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael).* In this section, he includes traditional texts and rationales for connection to a sacred land of Israel, and seems to choose texts that support the notion that relationship to Zion is a Jewish duty, and ones that justify a religious longing for a return to Zion. The first text in this section is a case in point.

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[47] Ibid. 199.
[48] Ibid., 209.
[49] Samuel S. Cohon, *M'korot Ha'Yehadut* (Sources of Judaism) (Jerusalem: Publications for Judaism, 1988), 2.

Cohon chooses to lead off with a text from Tosefta Avodah Zarah 2:5, a text that proclaims:

> Better is the one [who resides] in the land of Israel, even in a city where all are idolaters, than the one [who resides] outside of the land of Israel, even in a city where all are faithful Jews (Israel). This teaches that settlement in the land of Israel in its entirety is equal to all of the mitzvot in the Torah and the one who is buried in the land of Israel, it is as though he is buried under the Tabernacle. [50]

This text, the first Cohon chooses, is a clear statement of the commandment to live in Israel. This rabbinic text equates the mitzvah of living in Israel with all other mitzvot, and asserts that leaving the land is tantamount to idol worship. This is one of the pre-eminent texts used by religious Zionists to make the case for Zionism. At the time that Cohon was quoting this text, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook was using this text as one of the bases for his understanding of religious Zionism.[51] Cohon includes other rabbinic texts that have become the theological basis for Religious and Messianic Zionism, including the pages from Bavli Ketubot 110b-112b, that specify "one should always live in the land of Israel, even in a city where the majority are idol worshippers, and not in the Diaspora, even in a city where the majority are Jews."[52]

Cohon, like the burgeoning Religious Zionists of his time, chooses texts that highlight the religious duty to settle the Land of Israel. Unfortunately, he does not expound on these texts, nor explain why he has chosen them for his sourcebook.

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[50] Tosefta Avodah Zarah 5:2, as quoted in *M'korot Ha'Yehadut*, 140. My translation.

[51] Rav A.I. Kook, *Orot,* "Eretz Yisrael" *4.*.

[52] Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 110b.

However, it is clear that Cohon's textual choices reflect an unflinching sense of a religious, spiritual, and theological tie to the land of Israel. It seems that Cohon, who served as a framer of the Columbus Platform, brought a religious ideology of Zionism to the Reform Movement, even as this ideology was not yet officially adopted by the Conference.

Conclusion

It is unclear to what extent this religious, spiritual Zionism of Abba Hillel Silver, Stephen S. Wise, Barnett Brickner, and Samuel S. Cohon affected the greater Reform movement in 1937—but the political ramifications of their Columbus platform had wide-reaching effects. In 1942, the CCAR reversed its neutrality and resolved to support the building of a Jewish Army in Palestine and the anti-Zionists in the Conference defected, forming the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, While this group remained strong throughout the 20th century, Daniel Polish maintains that the group was largely lay-led, and by the mid-1940's, most Reform rabbis had embraced Zionism.[53]

Thus, in the 1930's, Stephen S. Wise, Abba Hillel Silver, Barnett Brickner, and Samuel S. Cohon were developing a consistent religious Reform Zionist ideology based on the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am, one that closely resembled the American Zionism of Louis Brandeis, Solomon Schechter, and Mordechai Kaplan. This ideology was hotly contested among the leaders of the movement, as not all were ready to move from an anti-nationalist ethics- or "religion-" based understanding of Judaism to a

[53] Polish, 231.

nationalistic, ethnic, and culturally based understanding of Judaism. While this ideological debate raged, the political exigencies of the dire Jewish situation in Europe moved the dialogue on Zionism from one of ideology to one of "practicality." By 1940, it was clear that the Jews were not accepted as equal members of most of the societies in which they lived, and in the face of growing violent anti-Semitism, Jews needed a "safe haven" from which to escape persecution. Even most of the Reform rabbis who could not embrace a religious Zionist ideology saw that the world granting the Jews sovereignty in Palestine might grant some security to beleaguered Jews around the world. And, by the mid 1940's, the conversation regarding religious Reform Zionist ideology had been largely eclipsed by the political and practical need to support the resettlement of Jews in Palestine.

Chapter 3: Reform Zionist Education in the 20th Century

Introduction

While debate on Zionism raged among the leadership of the CCAR in the 1920's and 30's, Reform Jewry was beginning to embrace Zionism. While this was due to a complex set of political, ideological, and sociological realities of American Jewish life, as outlined in the previous chapter, the rise and evolution of Zionism in the Reform Movement can be observed through, and at times attributed to, changes in Reform Jewish Zionist education. A closer look at the development of American Jewish education in the Reform Movement, and specifically the evolution of the Reform Jewish understanding of Israel, can be seen through an examination of curricular materials used to teach about Israel. Looking at two textbooks published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for use in Reform Jewish religious schools, *Israel Today* (Harry Essrig and Abraham Segal, 1964) and *Our Land of Israel* (Chaya M. Burstein, 1995), we can highlight and trace some of the changes in Jewish education and Reform Zionism in the second half of the 20th century.

A brief history of American Jewish Education in the 20th Century

As Jonathan Sarna writes, American Jewish education has largely served to help American Jews "confront the most fundamental question of American Jewish life: how to live in two worlds at once, how to be both American and Jewish, a part of the larger

American society and apart from it."[1] Over the course of the 20th century, the answers to this question, and the educational goals and objectives influenced by these answers, underwent dramatic shifts. These changes were responses to sociological and ideological changes in American Jewry and Judaism, as well as evolving educational philosophies.

Prior to the early 20th century, many American Jews learned in supplemental *Talmud Torahs*, traditional centers of learning where boys learned Jewish texts and Hebrew by rote from male teachers. Jewish education in the Reform Movement largely took place in Sunday schools or Sabbath schools, which were private and/or community-based, fairly independent, and mostly run by women. The first Jewish educational revolution of the 20th century took place under the leadership of Samson Benderly, influenced by the theology of Mordecai Kaplan and the educational philosophy of John Dewey. Benderly sought to put Jewish education at the center of the community by creating central agencies that would help create uniform goals and curricula. Benderly and his "boys," who included the Reform Zionist leader Barnett Brickner, were both Deweyan in their educational philosophy, and cultural Zionists swayed by the arguments of Ahad Ha'Am (as were Reform Zionists like Abba Hillel Silver and Steven S. Wise). The "Benderly boys," as they were known, nurtured a philosophy of Jewish peoplehood in which Judaism was understood in social and political terms. With this philosophy, they

[1] Jonathan Sarna, "American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective," in *Journal of American Jewish Education* (Winter/Spring,1998): 9.

worked to turn the Talmud Torah into a community center that worked to instill "Jewishness."[2]

As outlined in the previous chapter, the philosophy of the Benderly boys was counter to the prevailing Reform Jewish ideology of Judaism as a non-political, non-nationalist religion. However, the strength of the Benderly revolution found its way to the Reform movement not only through Barnett Brickner's work in the CCAR, but also through the appointment of Emanuel Gamoran to the post of Educational Director of the Commission on Jewish Education in 1923. Gamoran, a Zionist "Benderly boy" and disciple of Dewey educated at the "Teachers' Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Teachers College, Columbia University, was an unlikely choice to head the Reform Movements central agency for Jewish education. As Jonathan Krasner writes,

> With few exceptions, Reform leaders rejected any expression of Jewish nationalism and continued to stand by the previous generation's efforts to cleanse the Jewish religion of much of its ritual and legal vestiges. Gamoran, on the other hand, was the son of Hasidic immigrants with a soft spot for the nascent Zionist movement.[3]

Gamoran embodied all of the characteristics that the early leadership of the Reform Movement had tried to subdue: Eastern European sensibilities, a focus on folkways and Jewish praxis, a nationalist sensibility, and a perception that Jewish peoplehood was as important as Jewish ethics or religion. According to Krasner, Gamoran at first declined

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[2] David Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool: The Synagogue Center in American Jewish History* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 130-132. Kaufman also discusses the "Benderly boys," including Emanuel Gamoran, in his chapter, "Jewish Education as a Civilization: A History of the 'Teachers' Institute'" in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: JTS, 1997), 584f.

[3] Jonathan Krasner, *Representations of Self and Other in American Jewish History and Social Studies Schoolbooks: An Exploration of the Changing Shape of American Jewish Identity* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 173.

the appointment, feeling that he would not belong in the Reform Movement. Yet the Eastern European JIR Professor Dr. Henry Slonimsky was recruited to persuade him to take the post.[4]

Gamoran's appointment is one indicator of the success of the Benderly revolution was in transforming Jewish education. Benderly and his students were seen as the force for reforming and enhancing Jewish education in America. The nationalistic and cultural Jewish tendencies of the "Benderly boys", including Gamoran, were overshadowed for the leadership of the Reform movement by their sense that Reform Jewish education was not working-- and the hope that Gamoran's knowledge of contemporary educational philosophy and modern teaching methods would revamp and reinvigorate the stagnant educational system of the UAHC. Krasner reports that Gamoran

> downplay[ed] his status as an outsider, a Benderly Boy and a graduate of T.I. [Jewish Theological Seminary Teacher Institute]. Instead, he presented himself as a non-ideological, energetic, "can-do" pedagogic expert who would introduce the latest progressive educational methods to the Reform Religious School.[5]

However quietly, Gamoran successfully brought the philosophies of Dewey, Benderly, Kaplan, and Ha'Am to the Reform Movement:

> Gamoran began by posting two educational aims: 'the development of the individual and the preservation of the social group and the group life which fosters it and develops it.' He allowed that the latter goal was instrumental while the former goal was intrinsic. But he used his formulation to justify increased attention to American Jewish socialization and values clarification.[6]

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[4] Ibid., 173-4n.
[5] Ibid., 175.
[6] Ibid., 175, quoting *CCAR Yearbook* (1923): 76.

Gamoran's educational philosophy and his Jewish theology were bound together in an ideology that promoted the social group and group life as fundamental, and saw socialization as the primary mode of education. For such a Deweyan philosopher, Jewish living and Jewish communal life are paramount, and Jewish thought and ethics could not be divorced from the Jewish community or its way of life. Thus Gamoran was able to introduce Kaplanian notions of Jewishness and peoplehood into Reform Jewish education, by couching it in educational philosophy. By citing Dewey and his school of educational philosophers, Gamoran was able to convince the leaders of the CCAR that modern Jewish education must incorporate Jewish "doing" as well as "believing."

Gamoran's philosophies were highly contested in the Reform movement, especially among anti-Zionist classical Reform leaders. Yet, as Krasner points out, Gamoran's influence was tremendous on Reform Jewish education and Reform Judaism itself, largely through the textbooks produced under his tenure.[7] As Krasner notes, the UAHC and its Commission on Jewish Education became one of the sole producers and publishers of Jewish educational textbooks, beginning in the 1930's. The Reform Movement focused on modern textbooks that were grade-appropriate and well illustrated. As Krasner writes, "Gamoran fulfilled Benderly's dream of a 'graded well-printed, properly bound, illustrated set of textbooks that take into consideration the limited time at the disposal of our children'"[8] Throughout the 1940's and 50's, while the leadership of the movement embraced political and practical Zionism, largely ignoring religious Zionist ideology, Gamoran's tremendous influence led the UAHC to publish educational

[7] Ibid., 169-171.
[8] Ibid., p 172, quoting Benderly.

materials that focused on Jewish peoplehood, cultural and spiritual Zionism, and presented Jewish history and practice as uniting forces of one Jewish people.[9] Examples of these materials include *Dorothy and David Explore Jewish Life* (1938) by Michael Conovitz, and *Hillel's Happy Holidays* (1939) by Mamie Gamoran.[10] In fact, in 1952, the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism reviewed Reform Jewish educational materials to determine which of those materials adhered to early Reform anti-nationalist ideology. Of the 72 textbooks analyzed, the American Council for Judaism rejected 46 as completely "unacceptable" for their focus on Jewish peoplehood, their perceived particularism, and their Zionist proclivities.[11] Clearly, Gamoran's Zionism and focus on Jewish peoplehood strongly influenced Reform Jewish education.

The 1950's: The Next Phase

In 1955, Sylvan D. Schwartzman, a professor of Jewish religious education at HUC-JIR, published a monograph criticizing the UAHC curriculum that had been based on Gamoran's philosophy. Significantly, Schwartzman suggested that the curriculum was not sufficiently child centered, focused too heavily on the past, and was heavily weighted in the direction of sociology, while minimizing religion and ethics.[12] Schwartzman

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[9] Jonathan Krasner provides a detailed account of the argument between Gamoran and the anti-Zionist Reform Rabbi Samuel Schulman regarding the textbook *A History of the Jews in the United States*, which emphasized the cultural, ethnic, and people-centered notions of Judaism along with religious, ethical, and creedal notions. See Krasner, 180-197.

[10] In Krasner's analysis, he explains that these social studies texts depict and promote Jewish unity, religious pluralism, Jewish praxis, and Zionism. See 198-208.

[11] American Council for Judaism, *Textbook Analysis*. (New York, American Council for Judaism, 1952).

[12] Ibid., 228-9.

suggested less of a focus on history and Bible, and a larger focus on experiential learning and performative elements of Reform Judaism such as Hebrew prayer, holiday observance, and the observances of home and synagogue. This critique of the Gamoran curriculum was echoed in 1955 by Barnett Brickner, then President of the CCAR, who called for a change in Reform Jewish education. However, Brickner's ideology led him to suggest that Reform Jewish education retain the importance of Zionism and notions of Jewish peoplehood, even as it should emphasize personal practice, theology, and spirituality. In his address to the CCAR convention, Brickner remarked:

> Our Reform Jewish education has gone through several phases. At first, it was largely Bible centered... Then followed the second phase, when we realize that there is no necessary transfer from memorization to character formation; and we came to believe that knowledge is power -- that, if we imparted more information about Israel, Zionism, Jewish history, the Hebrew language and literature, customs, ceremonies etc., this would inevitably lead to the making of good Jews. During this phase there was an overemphasis on "peoplehood" and subject matter. We are now in the third phase, where we realize that the American child must be conditioned to become a reverent and believing Jew, a praying Jew, and observant Jew, one who feels spiritually secured America, who has kinship with K'lal Yisroel -- Jews in Israel and all over the world...[13]

Thus, Israel was important not as the center of Jewish culture and life, but rather as a place where "spiritually secure" American Jews could feel kinship as members of the larger Jewish people. This follows a largely Kaplanian understanding of Zionism, that posited "the establishment of a 'corporate life' of Jews," which asserted:

> that the Jews had a right to possess the land of Israel because of its essential connection to the Jewish past. Israel was to be the center of a Jewish renaissance, and as Israel was the spiritual center of the world Jewish community, Judaism was unlikely to survive without it. Kaplan's Zionism did not extend, however, to a need for American Jews to make *aliyah* or to the negation of the Diaspora. In fact, Kaplan articulated at an early date the theme

[13] *CCAR Yearbook (1955)*: 15.

of "partnership" between Israel and America that has become, according to Woocher, an important theme of the American civil religion.[14]

Thus Brickner encouraged Gamoran's focus on cultural Zionism and Jewish peoplehood while re-emphasizing belief and reverence. This concern of the mid-1950's with belief, observance, and spiritual security, coupled with changing social realities, became the underpinning for the changes in educational philosophy of the early 1960's.[15]

By the early 1960's, American schools were concerned with the search for relevance and the immediate concerns of students. This led to the development of "confluent education," an approach where the curriculum sought to draw upon the emotions and intellect of the individual. This was also a time when informal education began to rise in popularity in Jewish educational circles. The 1960's marked the flourishing of new camps, retreats, Jewish trips, elective experiential courses, and other modes of experiential education.[16]

Israel/Zionist Education in the Reform Movement: Two historical snapshots

In his book, *Envisioning Israel*, Allon Gal asserts that in the 20th century, American Jews formulated a conception of Israel that supported the Jewish State as the

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[14] Stephen Sharot and Nurit Zaidman, "Israel as Symbol and Reality: The Perception of Israel Among Reconstructionist Jews in the United States," in *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews,* ed. Allon Gal (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1996): 156.

[15] Also of note are the sociological forces in America by which Judaism was becoming "normalized" as one of the three major "public religions" through which Americans could define their place in normative American life. For more on this idea, see Will Herberg, *Protestant- Catholic- Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology.* 2d ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960).

[16] Michael Zeldin, "Jewish Schools and American Society: Patterns of Action and Reaction," *Religious Education* 78, No. 2 (Spring 1983): 185-6.

representation of Jewish survival, and envisioned it as the embodiment of the highest liberal ideals of America and American Judaism:

> Following the developments and events of the 1920s—1940s, survivalist trends became potent for the first time in the record of American Zionism. Israel epitomized the right of the Jewish people to exist; the State's existence thus became a goal unto itself. On the whole, however, a kind of synthesis between survivalism and missionism emerged. The Jewish State was often expected to exhibit exemplary behavior a la liberal America. Furthermore important groups adhered to the idea that Israel, by virtue of both its recent and its historic past, had a humanistic message to convey to the rest of the nations...[17]

Jonathan Sarna traces this idea of Israel as a "model state" to the American Zionist leaders of the early 20th century, such as Louis Brandeis, who hoped

> to create not just a Jewish state in Palestine but a utopian Jewish state, one that drew on American experience, took advantage of the latest in social, economic, and political thinking, and conformed to prophetic teachings as they understood them...A "model state" cast in the image of American served not only to defuse the sensitive issue of dual loyalty, it actually worked to strengthen the position of America's Jews by permitting them both to bask in the reflected glory of those engaged in building the state and to boast of their own patriotic efforts to spread the American dream outward.[18]

Walter Ackerman points out that Zionist education in Jewish classrooms in the United States in the first half of the 20th century tended to idealize Jewish efforts in Palestine/Israel. These textbooks show Israel as a place of youth, growth and development. The portrait painted of Jews in Israel is one of healthy farmers who live in the country, and who all treat each other justly. Ackerman echoes Gal, noting, "Palestine thusly presented is worthy of our support and allegiance because it embodies the

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[17] Allon Gal, "Overview: Envisioning Israel—The American Jewish Tradition" in Gal, *Envisioning,* 30.

[18] Jonathan D. Sarna, "Zion in the Mind's Eye of American Jews," in Gal, *Envisioning,* 57.

principles of liberal American progressivism."[19] However, as Ackerman rightly points out, this does not lead to any self-identification with Israel or the Zionist call for *aliyah*: "All this does not produce even the slightest suggestion that the young readers of these texts might themselves someday want to live in this wonderful place."[20] Thus American Jews were able to embrace a Zionism that did not call for a negation of the Diaspora nor that world Jewry move to Israel. Instead their Zionism called on them to "'build' the land of Israel, not 'be built' through it.[21] This is reflected in Reform Zionist educational materials produced from 1964 and 1994.

A. Mid-1960's: *Israel Today*

As stated above, the early 1960's were a time when Reform Judaism was concerned with Israel primarily as a place to which secure American Jews could and should feel kinship. While well-produced, grade-oriented textbooks were a trademark of Reform Jewish education, experiential and informal educational techniques were beginning to take root as the nascent philosophy of "confluent education" began to influence Jewish educators. *Israel Today*[22], a textbook intended for 7th and 8th grade students, reflects these two influences. The book is written clearly, and is graphically pleasing, with many photographs and pictures as well as charts and sidebars. The book is geared towards the middle school age with ideas for projects connected to B'nai Mitzvah

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[19] Walter Ackerman, "Israel in American Jewish Education," in Gal, *Envisioning,* 176.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Arnold Eisen and Michael Rosenak, *Teaching Israel: Basic Issues and Philosophical Guidelines*. "Israel in our Lives" project, (Jerusalem: The CRB Foundation, The Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education, The Charles R. Bronfman Centre for the Israel Experience: Mifgashim, 1997), 22.

[22] Harry Essrig and Abraham Segal, *Israel Today*, (New York: UAHC, 1964).

and family travel to Israel, as well as suggestions to "look ahead" towards teen trips and college experiences in Israel. The book suggests many activities and experiences that students are advised to try, in side-notes entitled, "Try This." Each "Try This" has a suggestion for something to do, i.e. finding a pen-pal, with specific information for where to write to adopt a class or school in Israel and find a pen-pal.

As the 60's progressed, History and Biblical texts, while still important, were no longer adequate as the only source of connection to Israel; Jewish educators sought to find contemporary relevance in modern Israel for the American Jewish student. As Samuel Grand, editor of *Israel Today,* notes in his introduction,

> We have felt for many years that the students in our Jewish religious schools were learning more about the ancient Israelites than about the modern Israelis...With the appearance of *Israel Today* we hope to provide for our students the proper balance between present and past—between history and the contemporary scene. The authors of this volume have also sought to strike a balance in describing the realities of present-day life in Israel.[23]

Unlike earlier texts on Israel, the Biblical rationale for Israel as a Jewish land is not a major focus of the book except in Chapter 4, "The Past Comes to Life," and there only in the context of archaeological excavations being undertaken by Israelis and Jews from around the world. Israel is presented from a political and secular, Zionist perspective. Any lingering questions of religious ideology or theology are absent—this book focuses on the practical and political realities of the State of Israel. This follows Liebman and Cohen's argument that while American Jews have a relationship with a symbolic Israel (Land/State/People), which plays a role in their Jewish identity, the Land of Israel does

[23] Ibid., ix.

not play a role in their religious identity or ideology.[24] Expanding on this argument, Stephen Sharot and Nurit Zaidman write that "Israel has an important place in the civil religion of American Jews and a minor place in their traditional religion."[25]

It is clear from the content of *Israel Today* that Reform Israel education did not promote a religious Zionist ideology nor suggest that Israel become an integral part of the *religious* Jewish identity of Reform Jewish students. It does not ask students to contemplate Zionist ideology or integrate Israel into their Reform Jewish beliefs and practice. Thus, Reform education here is a reflection of a larger American, and particularly Reform, Jewish phenomenon of supporting Israel and promoting *Ahavat Tzion* ("love of Zion") but not a theologically based or religious ideology of Zionism.

Israel Today seeks to paint a favorable (yet, somewhat realistic) picture of "contemporary Israel" in a way that will excite young American Jews to visit and feel a personal connection to the land and people on a secular level. Seeking both personal relevance and individual meaning, the textbook begins with a chapter entitled, "You and Israel." As the first paragraph of the book states,

> You can fly from New York City to Tel Aviv, Israel, in about twelve hours aboard an El Al jet plane. Israel is close to you in other ways, too. This tiny land looms large in your future, as a Jew and as an American. *You* are part of Israel's story. You will discover why as you learn about the first Jewish State in 2,000 years.[26]

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[24] Steven M. Cohen and Charles S. Liebman, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences.* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990), 94.

[25] Sharot and Zaidman, 152.

[26] Essrig and Segal, 1.

This book presents Israel with an American contextualization of relationship. Israel is presented as a family home and Jewish national home, but it is always mentioned in the same breath that "America is our country."[27] Israel is presented as a bastion of liberal and thesis that American Jews envision Israel as a "model state." In addition, Israel is presented as a unique place, where these values can be realized in a way that does not happen elsewhere. Each chapter has a sidebar called "Only in Israel," which has a small story or vignette which highlights the unique aspect of Israel that the chapter tries to present. For example, in the chapter on Israel's economy, the sidebar "Only in Israel" plays up the narrative that socialist ideals and generosity that are realized in Israel:

> In 1962, the salary of Israel's second President, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, was $1500, about what his show for turn, and less than many government workers. His extra expense allowance of $5,000, he donated to charities. The Knesset decided he ought to have a bigger salary -- four times bigger, in fact, or $6,000. Ben-Zvi objected. He didn't need or want the increase, considered it a bad idea. The Knesset insisted, so he accepted it -- against his will. Then he donated half his new salary to a fund for publishing historical documents.[28]

This textbook clarifies some of the overarching narratives of Reform Zionism in the 1960's. The table below presents some of the major narratives that are reflected in the book, and some chapter titles that connect to these narratives:

[27] Ibid., 4.
[28] Ibid, 115.

Value	Narrative	Chapters that Reflect Narrative
Peoplehood	Israel as Jewish national home that belongs to all Jews.	Ch 1: "You and Israel" Ch 23: "The Ties that Bind Us"
History and Heritage	Israel is the place where the Bible comes to life.	Ch. 4: "The Past Comes to Life"
Survivalism	Israel is the phoenix that has risen from the ashes: Israel is the revival of a "dead" land and the fulfillment of a nearly impossible dream	Ch. 6: "How Zionism Regained a Land"
Survivalism	We are pioneers who are building a barren land and making the desert bloom	Ch. 5: "Israel's Wild West" Ch. 12: "The Kibbutz Way"
Survivalism	Israel is the one place Jews can be safe from persecution	Ch 3: "Why the Jews Wanted a Homeland"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israel fulfills liberal and prophetic values: a. And Israel is a place of complete equality for Jews of all backgrounds, a nation of "One people. Many faces." b. Israel grants complete equality to its Arab citizens c. Israel is a democracy which also fulfills the socialist ideal	Ch. 7: "Two Israels—Or One?" Ch. 8: "The Arabs in Israel" Ch. 17: "Democracy in Action" Ch. 18: "Providing for the Common Welfare"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israelis, are resourceful, caring, work hard, are strapping and healthy, and fulfill the socialist ideal with democratic values	Ch. 9: "Israel's Youth at Work and Play, " Ch. 10:"Israel's 'Mixed' Economy" Ch. 11: "Your "Building a Nation" Ch. 12: "The Kibbutz Way"
Cultural/Spiritual Center	Israel is the cultural and spiritual center of the Jewish people	Ch. 14: "A Language of Their Own" Ch. 15: "Culture, Science and Sports" Ch 16: "In Search of Faith"
Survivalism	Israel has a strong and righteous army	Ch. 19: "The Army: School for Citizens"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israel is the only just, democratic nation in the Middle East and the problems of the region are the fault of the Arab nations	Ch. 20: "Israel and Her Neighbors" Ch. 22: "The Arab Refugees"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israel is a "Light Unto the Nations"	Ch 21: "Israel Among the Nations"

B. Mid-1990's: *Our Land of Israel*

The textbook *Our Land of Israel*, published by the UAHC press in 1995, is a soft-cover textbook intended for the intermediate grades (4-5). Like its predecessors, this book is well-crafted, with many pictures, charts, sidebars, and age-appropriate workbook-type activities. However, the Zionist narratives contained within the book and the ways it seeks to connect students to Israel have changed.

By the 1990's, the state of Israel was a 40+ year reality, and American Jewish students were three and four generations removed from their family's immigration to the United States. This, along with political realities of decades of war and terror in Israel, had led to a certain distance between American Jews and Zionism. In turn, this distancing created a lack of clarity in the ideology of Zionist education in the 1990s. As Walter Ackerman wrote in 1996:

> Jewish youngsters in America today do not know a world without Israel and are rooted in the country of their birth in a way unprecedented in the Diaspora. The erosion of traditional attachments to Eretz Yisrael coupled with a reality somewhat removed from the utopian commonwealth envisioned in the ideology of national rebirth may explain the strained quality of the justifications for learning about Israel.[29]

As Ackerman points out, in the 1990s, Israel was more distant from American Jews because the realities of modern Israel were no longer compatible with the major narratives Jews had used as a basis for their understanding of Israel. Earlier Zionist education focused on Israel being interesting and important because we have unique problems and unique solutions for fixing them. This narrative, that continued to be used as the basis for liberal Zionist education in the 1990s, was one in which Israel was

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[29] Ackerman, 1996, 181.

relevant and important as it was the country, that against all odds, championed American liberal ideals. This reflected the classical Brandeisian American Zionist narrative, as discussed in the previous chapter. As Ackerman notes:

> Israel is worthy of our loyalties as much for its affinity with the values of American idealism as for its place in the Jewish heritage. The appeal to Americanism in our text is of a piece with the posture of American Zionism, which even as it celebrates the pluralism that protects the promise of Jewish life in United States feels constrained to stress the compatibility between Jewish nationalism and American virtue.[30]

Rather than presenting overarching meta-narratives that may or may not resonate to an American audience, the textbook *Our Land of Israel* seeks to give students a more personal connection to Israel through a connection with Israelis. The book is based on the Jewish ideal *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Ba'Zeh*—"all Israel is responsible one for the other" (which is an ideal of collective, mutual responsibility)— and seeks to orient students towards a notion of Jewish peoplehood. As members of the same people, American Jews should relate to and care about Israelis, and thus care about Israel. Each chapter of the book focused on the personal story of one Israeli, and then connects history and meta-narratives to these personal stories. The following chart analyzes what narratives have become central in the curriculum of the 1990's.

[30] Ibid., 182.

Value	Narrative	Where found in *Our Land of Israel*
Peoplehood	Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Ba'Zeh .	Introduction
History and Heritage	Israel is the place where the Bible comes to life.	Ch. 1: "Naama and the Long Walk"
Survivalism	Israel is the phoenix that has risen from the ashes: Israel is the revival of a "dead" land and the fulfillment of a nearly impossible dream	Ch. 1: "Naama and the Long Walk"
Survivalism	Israelis must fight armed struggles to survive and keep Israel and Jews safe	Ch. 2: "Tamar Remembers"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israel is a place of complete equality for Jews of all backgrounds, a nation of "One people. Many faces."	The whole book, and specifically In Ch 2: "Israel's Vegetable Soup Immigration" (p. 20-21)
Importance of the Land	Israel is a place of unique natural beauty	Ch. 3: "Meirav Hikes"
Missionism/ "Model State"	Israel is like America	Ch. 4: "Sam Works and Plays" Ch. 13: "Jacob and Jessie Look at Israel"
Spiritual Center	Israel is a Jewish Spiritual Center	Ch 5: "Uriah Studies Torah" Ch 6: "Yotam Celebrates" Ch 7: "Israel Celebrates"
Survivalism	Israel grants complete equality to its Arab citizens	Ch. 11: "Mohammed, Sima, and Isra: Arabs in Israel"
Survivalism	Israel has a strong and righteous army	Ch. 12: "Abigail Fixes Jets: Israel's Army of Citizens"

The Unchanging Narrative: 1964-1994

As is clear from this presentation, the major Zionist/Israel narratives of the mid-1990's are in many cases the same as the major narratives of the mid-1960's. A

1974 study on the goals and purposes of Israel education revealed that the major goals of Reform Jewish Israel education were "to tie us to the Jewish people" (53%), "to create positive attitudes towards Israel" (46%) and "to teach us about our history and heritage" (40%)." [31] We see these goals reflected in the major themes of both curricula. Additionally, Gal's description of the American Jewish tropes of survivalism and missionism in regarding Israel remains apt. Survivalism is found as the value behind four of the major narratives of *Israel Today* and three of the narratives of *Our Land of Israel.* Missionism, or the idea that Israel should be a "model state" is the value behind three of the major narratives of *Israel Today* and three of the narratives of *Our Land of Israel.* We also see the idea of Israel as a "model state," strengthened in the later curriculum's focus on portraying Israel as "more like America" while explaining and/or apologizing for the ways that it is different.

Interestingly, what a "model state" should look like did change between 1964 and 1994. By 1994, the socialist ideal that was so important in the curriculum of the 1960s is no longer reinforced. This is a reflection of the realities of modern Israel, but also the American Jewish and Israeli embrace of capitalism in the second half of the 20th century. In *Our Land of Israel,* the Kibbutz is not described as a "socialist utopia" but rather a "large farming village in which everyone shares the work." Sharing work is no longer considered a socialist ideal, and indeed it is

[31] Barry Chazan, "Israel in American Jewish Schools Revisited," *Jewish Education* 47 (2) (Summer 1979): 7-8.

reiterated that the "kibbutz is a democracy."[32] The children in the book are portrayed as playing Dungeons and Dragons, watching cable, and playing with their computers. The narrative, "Israel is like America" which existed in the 1960's when it came to liberal social values, has grown to encompass the cultural norms of America as well.

These three top goals of Reform Israel education ("to tie us to the Jewish people," "to create positive attitudes towards Israel," and "to teach us about our history and heritage,") are what Chazan calls "low level...reflect[ing] no ideological principles beyond the assumption that Israel is important, nor delineat[ing] any clear sense of meaning of Israel for Jewish life."[33] Chazan notes that the two goals that reflect a religious or ideological perspective and commitment are not deemed important by most Reform Jewish schools—only 7% considered it a goal "to teach about Israel as a religious Holy Land" and only 5.4% felt it important "to encourage *aliyah*."[34] All of this reflects a lack of ideological clarity in the Reform Movement's understanding of Zionism.

This is evident in the 1964 text, and little appears to have changed by the mid-1990's. The one major change appears to reflect the rise of "spirituality" and the decline of "ethnic pride" that had transformed American Jewish life as it traversed the years from 1960 to 1990. The later curriculum focuses three full chapters on the narrative "Israel as spiritual center." This is a first shift towards

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[32] Chaya M. Burstein, *Our Land of Israel* (New York: UAHC, 1995), 104-105.
[33] Chazan, 7-8.
[34] Ibid.

regarding Israel as a special, or even holy, Jewish place. In *Our Land of Israel,* Israel is portrayed as a place where one can live, practice, and celebrate Judaism while "feeling" Jewish. The cultural aspects of Israel seem to have fallen by the wayside; we no longer hear of Israel as a center for the arts, language, or cultural innovation. However, Israel is a place where special Jewish feelings are allowed to flourish. Yet, Israel is not portrayed as an integral part of American Jewish religiosity, but rather a place where visiting Jews (and resident Jews) can have personal "spiritual" experiences, with an emphasis on individual experience rather than the collective.

Perhaps one of the major changes from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s is the portrayal of (and explanation of) Israel as a military power. As Ackerman suggests, by the mid-1990's, many American Jews were becoming disillusioned with Israel. The political and military realities, of the 1980's and early 90's, as well as the perception of Ultra-Orthodox hegemony over Jewish life in Israel did not match the image of Israel as a champion of liberal American values. According to Ackerman:

> What children learned about Israel and schools in other places hardly prepared them for the sites and sounds to which they were exposed during the war in Lebanon and later the Intifada. Questions of politics and the objectivity of media coverage aside, much of what they saw (and still see) on television often seems to violate American notions of fair play and the ideals of prophetic justice that they have been taught or hallmarks of Israel's social ethic. Loyalties, if that all existing, are strained.[35]

In the mid-1960s, Israel was a country that was struggling to create a strong and just citizen-army to protect itself from its powerful neighbors. This narrative has

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[35] Ackerman, 188.

persisted—however by the mid-1990s this was no longer the entire story. Israel had one of the strongest militaries in the world, with support from the United States, the world superpower. After the war in Lebanon in the early 1980s and the Intifada of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the media image of Israel was often that of a powerful aggressor and was at times perceived as a bully on the world stage. The curriculum of the 1990's played up the classical survivalist narrative "Israel must fight armed struggles to survive and keep Israel and Jews safe." Chapter 12, "Abigail Fixes Jets: Israel's Army of Citizens," reviews the many wars Israel has fought, and its continued need to defend its borders and citizens from hostile neighbors and terrorists. The chapter concludes with a somewhat optimistic (although uncertain) hope for peace.

Conclusion

In the 20th century, the Reform Jewish stance towards Zionism and Israel changed as dramatically as the status of Israel herself. The changing educational norms and social realities of American Jews, coupled with the changing sociological, political, and military realities of Israel led to drastic revisions in the Reform stance on Zionism. However, in the 30-year span between the mid-60's and the mid-90's, while Israel's realities and the American Jewish perceptions of Zionism changed drastically, Reform religious school curricula did not. The curricular changes are more reflective of changes in Jewish education and Jewish educational goals in

general than of changes in Zionist narrative. There appears to be little, if any, ideological development in the Reform understanding of Zionism.

Political and practical concerns had overshadowed ideology and theology in the development of Reform Zionism, and this lack of theology or ideological development is well documented in Reform Zionist education. Additionally, Reform Zionism, like American Jewish Zionism in general, developed around themes of survivalism and missionism—Israel had a role to play for "them" (displaced Jews) and maybe even for an abstract "us," but not for an individual "me." American Jews could look at Israel, could support Israel politically and philanthropically, and could even tour Israel—but they were not asked to make Israel an integral part of their personal Jewish identity nor given any narrative through which to understand Israel in light of contemporary reality.

By the early 1990's, historical and sociological forces in Israel had conspired to deflate the major narratives and ideas of Reform Zionism (and American Zionism). The seemingly miraculous events of the 1960's and 70's, which had bolstered ideas of survivalism and missionism, had been eroded by the war in Lebanon, the election of Meir Kahane to the Knesset, clashes between Ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews in Israel, the first Intifada, and the "Who is a Jew debate." The major narratives outlined in Reform Zionist curricula had been deflated by the realities of modern Israel. Without a narrative that made for personal relationship and religious connection to the Land, many Reform Jews found themselves distanced from Israel. This is the narrative that must now be developed. Zionist education was floundering, and Reform leadership was unable to

articulate a cohesive vision and philosophy for the teaching Israel and Zionism to American Reform Jews, in light of the changes described above. By the early 1990's, the time was ripe to reconsider and re-envision Reform Zionist philosophies and narratives so as to bring American Jews and Israel closer together.

Chapter 4: Towards a Reform Zionist Theology: The ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank 1989-95

Historical Background: 1967-1989

As many scholars, including both sociologists and theologians, have observed, the events of the 1960's, and particularly the seemingly miraculous victory of Six Day War of June, 1967, led to a sense of euphoria and a surge of religious Zionist messianism.[1] This victory unleashed wide support to a prevailing notion among many Jews that God had surely saved the downtrodden, weak Jewish "David" (Israel) from the "Goliath" of the surrounding Arab nations. This Religious Zionist messianism brought renewed vigor to the idea that Israel was indeed *reishit tzmichat ge'ulateinu* (the first flowering of our redemption) and *at'chalta d'geula* (the beginning of the redemption).[2] This strong pro-Israel identification and fervor allowed religious Zionism ideology a foothold among moderate American Jews. Many Reform Jews, were also swept into a wave of ethnic identification and nationalist excitement (although not necessarily extreme messianism). The Yom Kippur War of 1973 did little to dampen this fervor—in fact, it strengthened the American Jewish survivalist resolve. In the early 1970's, Reform Jews began to

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[1] For more on Religious Zionist Messianism, see Aviezer Ravitsky, *ha-Kets ha-Meguleh u-Medinat ha-Yehudim : Meshichiyut, Tsiyonut ve-Radikalizm Dati be-Yisra'el.* (Tel Aviv : Am Oved, 1993

[2] The prayer for the State of Israel, as written by Israeli Chief Rabbi Issac Halevy Herzog, called Israel "reishit tzmichat ge'ulateinu," and, in a letter dated 8th Tevet 5708 (1948) from Rabbi Herzog wrote: "Blessed be He who has brought us to this stage (i.e. the State) although it is still only the beginning of the Redemption (*Atchalta diGeulah*), and perhaps only the beginning of the beginning (*Atchalta d'Atchalta*), that is the first ray of light announcing the rising dawn; but I verily believe that the night of Galut has passed and gone. (according to Bernard Moses Casper, "*Reshit Zemichat Geulatenu*," June 4, 2003, published by the World Zionist Organization online at http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=1431

identify with and visit Israel in ways that were previously unimaginable. The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion created a mandatory first-year study program in Jerusalem for all rabbinic students. Reform youth began to visit Israel in large numbers on summer tours. In the mid-1970's, the Reform Movement supported *Garin Arava*, a group of devoted Reform Zionists who moved to Israel and worked to found Kibbutz Yahel in 1977.

In 1976, the CCAR again issued a statement outlining the beliefs of the movement. This document, entitled "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective" was written in honor of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the UAHC and the HUC. Just as the Platforms of 1885 and 1937, this statement sought to define the current ideology of Reform Judaism. This Platform marked the profound change in the Reform Jewish relationship to the people and State of Israel. In this 1976 platform, the rabbis of the CCAR defined Judaism as a people and a religion:

> *The People Israel* -- The Jewish people and Judaism defy precise definition because both are in the process of becoming. Jews, by birth or conversion, constitute an uncommon union of faith and peoplehood. Born as Hebrews in the ancient Near East, we are bound together like all ethnic groups by language, land, history, culture, and institutions. But the people of Israel is unique because of its involvement with God and its resulting perception of the human condition. Throughout our long history our people has been inseparable from its religion with its messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed.[3]

Thus, by 1976, the CCAR defined Israel as group bound both by religion and as an ethnic group with a bond of peoplehood. While this seems a full-scale adoption of the notions that the early Reformers worked so hard to eschew, the Reform rabbis of 1976 still saw

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[3] *Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective,* Adopted in San Francisco, 1976.

"the people of Israel [as] unique because of its involvement with God and its resulting perception of the human condition. Throughout our long history, our people has been inseparable from its religion with its messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed." In this acceptance of peoplehood, the notion of the universalistic mission of the Jews is still paramount: the collective Jewish people exists in order to work for the redemption of all of humanity.[4]

As this relates to Zionism, the CCAR rabbis of 1976 felt "bound" to the land and the "newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties" to the "third Jewish commonwealth." Israel, for these rabbis, is a place that provides "unique opportunity for Jewish self-expression," and they asserted a stake in and responsibility for the State, its security, and its Jewish character. The Centenary Perspective supports the Zionist goal of *aliyah*, but not for all. Instead, *aliyah* is encouraged for those who "wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion." It is personal religiosity, rather than a duty to the collective, that would spur one to move to Israel.

The Zionism of the CCAR rabbis of 1976 may indicate a revolutionary transformation of the ideology of the Reform Movement, but it does not mark a retreat from the universalistic ethics of the earlier Reformers. While individuals may move to Israel if this will be personally fulfilling, the 1976 platform holds Israel as one of many Jewish communities that can and should be strengthened. In this document, the language of "a brotherhood of co-religionists" has been traded for the language of "community,"

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[4] For more on this contemporary ideological understanding of a particular group (the Jews) being chosen to undertake a universal mission, see Arnold Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study in Religious Jewish Ideology,* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1983).

and the focus has shifted inward, concerned more with the character of communal Jewish life than the effect of Judaism on the rest of the world. However, regarding Israel and Zionism, the universalistic ethics of the earlier Reformers have been retained. As the section on Israel concludes, "The State of Israel and the Diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals." This call, which on one hand argues for a renewed sense of peoplehood, and on the other seeks to "transcend nationalism" in order to avoid primary concern with "dangerously parochial goals," elucidates the tension between classical Reform theology and classical Zionist theology, which will be further outlined later in this chapter.

This same period of renewed pro-Israel fervor and political advocacy led the founding of the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) in 1978, thus creating a needed body through which the Reform Movement could take part in the World Zionist Organization through elections to the World Zionist Congress. ARZA's founding platform declared ARZA a

> religious Zionist body...[which] has come into being after nearly 50 years of a growing identification by Reform Judaism, first with the national aspirations of the Jewish people, then with the State of Israel. It was created out of the recognition that in our tradition there is no division between the religious domain and the polity of the Jewish people. The religious mandate of our prophetic and rabbinic traditions require us to participate in issues and institutions which affect Jewish existence.[5]

At the same time that the leaders of the Reform Movement were declaring their own commitment to Israel and seeking to define their own ideology of Zionism, the messianist

[5] "The ARZA Platform," adopted by ARZA's First National Assembly, 1978.

fervor and territorial expansionism of post-'67 Religious Zionism (particularly as espoused by groups such as the Gush Emunim), were deeply troubling to the leadership of the Reform Movement. While the CCAR continued its strong political advocacy for Israel in a 1976 Resolution that called on the United Nations and the United States to support Israel and "to continue its opposition to the calumnies against Zionism and the Jewish People in the United Nations,"[6] the same resolution called on the State of Israel to

> denounce efforts of such groups as Gush Emunim which can only further exacerbate existing tensions and drive Arabs and Jews further apart at a time when the cause of peace requires a narrowing of the gap between them and we commend the government of Israel for its efforts to restrain the illegal activities of Gush Emunim.

Already in the 1970's, Reform Jews were beginning to sense a discomfort with the political realities of the State of Israel. Extremist Jewish messianism, as espoused by the Gush Emunim, began to exacerbate Reform Jewish discomfort with the particularism of Zionism, and lead them towards a fear of associating Zionism with messianism, and often the rejection of a theology suggesting that the State of Israel could signal the dawning of the messianic age. As outlined in the previous chapter, historical and sociological forces in Israel had conspired to temper the major narratives and ideas of Reform Zionism (and American Zionism). Political events of the 1980's, including the war in Lebanon, the election of Meir Kahane, clashes between Ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews in Israel, the first Intifada, and the "Who is a Jew debate," began to cause Reform Jews to question and reconsider the major Zionist narratives they had once championed.

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[6] CCAR Resolution, "Israel," Adopted by the CCAR at the 87th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1976.

The Problem of Reform Zionist Ideology and the Formation of the Think Tank

While embracing a practical Zionism on a political level, 20th century Reform Judaism never developed its own consistent ideological or theological Zionist response. As earlier outlined, the Columbus Platform marked the turn from non or anti-Zionism to a practical, survivalist Zionism among the CCAR and the Reform Movement. The 1940's through the 1960's were a time of political and practical support for the nascent Jewish State, but during that time the movement largely ignored the ideological or theological issues that had defined the earlier debate on Zionism. Instead, Reform Jews championed an American Zionism that envisioned Israel as the fulfillment of the highest American ideals while being a refuge for downtrodden, persecuted Jews. As we have demonstrated, this did not translate into a religious or theological (or even personally relevant) relationship with Israel among American Jews. Rather, as Liebman and Cohen have pointed out, the American Jewish relationship to Israel was largely one of political advocacy and philanthropy, what they call the "mobilized model."[7]

While the Centenary Perspective seemed to renew the Reform connection to Jewish peoplehood, the political realities of Israel in the 1980's and 90's and the deeply ingrained universalistic ideology of Reform Judaism worked to distance Reform Jews from Israel. The 1980's began the decline of the "mobilized model" and a decline in American Jewish interest in Israel.[8] Eugene Borowitz documents the ideological shift

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[7] For a complete description of this phenomenon, see Steven M. Cohen and Charles S. Liebman, "Israel and American Jewry in the Twenty-First Century: A Search for New Relationships," in *Beyond Survival and Philanthropy*, Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk, eds. (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 2000), 3-24.

[8] Cohen and Liebman, in Gal and Gottschalk, eds., *Envisioning,* 12-17.

among Reform Jews from what he terms "Israelocentrism" and a focus on ethnic identity to a renewed focus on belief and universalistic covenantal mission.[9]

Religious Zionism has always been imbued with a particularistic messianism that was anathema to classical reform theology. In the post-Holocaust era, the strength of the nation of Israel became imperative to the survival of the Jewish people, which some, like Emil Fackenheim, elevated to a level of theological imperative. However, this theology has not been resonant to the mainstream American reform Jew, whose lack of "homelessness" and perceived security in the United States does not lead them to feel a need for another home.[10] As we have documented, the value of survivalism has led many American Jews to philanthropic and political support of Israel as a haven for other needy Jews, but not a personal identification with Israel as their own "safe haven."

American Reform Jews, whether or not it was philosophically "fashionable," or even consistent, still identified with the American neo-Kantian ideals of universalistic perfection of a unified humankind.[11] The particularistic notion of a Jewish State did not resonate easily with this understanding. This tension is evident in the language of the Centenary Perspective. As Liebman and Cohen have forcefully argued, contemporary American Jews largely connect to their Judaism in largely universalistic, moralist,

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[9] Eugene B. Borowitz, "On the Passing of the Ethnic Era," *Sh'ma* 20/397 (September 21, 1990):122-4.

[10] Arnold Eisen presents a detailed analysis of Jewish conceptions of homelessness, homecoming, *galut* and *golah* in his book *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflections on Homelessness and Homecoming* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986.) For sociological data on American Jewish conceptions of homelessness and "at-home-ness" see Steven M. Cohen and Charles S. Liebman, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The American and Israeli Experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

[11] Richard G. Hirsch, "Toward a Theology of Reform Zionism," Sh'ma 20/397 (September 21, 1990) reprinted in the *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 22.

individualist, and voluntaristic terms.[12] These values often preclude strong association with Israel or with the Jewish people. The War in Lebanon in 1982 served as a turning point—the events of the war and the rhetoric behind the incursion led to a faltering of the "liberal narrative." By the late 1980's, Reform Jews found themselves unsure of how to relate to an Israel that was not keeping with their American liberal ideals, nor seemed to accept their form of Judaism as authentic. As sociologists documented the faltering American Jewish relationship to Israel, Reform leaders recognized that the vacuum in Reform Zionist theology and ideology left Reform Jews without any grounding for their relationship to Israel. As Ellen Umansky argues:

> A well-articulated, meaningful theology is important because it grounds our experiences. It provides a framework for our lives and valuable tools of interpretation...We may never reclaim the sense of certainty with which many classical Reformers talked about their faith, but we can reclaim, indeed I think we *must* reclaim their willingness to use theological language and their insistence that beliefs be consistent with actions.[13]

. In 1989, the CCAR realized that the Reform Jewish response to Zionism was rife with theological and ideological inconsistencies, which had not been addressed largely due to a pre-occupation with political necessities and crises. As Richard G. Hirsch notes:

> Reform Jews have been so consumed with the intermittent crises of the Middle East and the problems inherent in the character of Israeli society and Israel-Diaspora relations that we have not devoted our attention to formulating the meaning of Israel in theological terms.[14]

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[12] Cohen and Liebman, 2000, 13-16.

[13] Ellen Umansky, "Zionism and Reform Judaism: A Theological Reassessment," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 48.

[14] Richard G. Hirsch, "Reform Zionism's Task Today," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 22.

This led the CCAR to pass a resolution in favor of the creation of a Reform Zionist Think Tank by ARZA. The resolution called upon the Think Tank to:

> Formally consider the relationship of the Reform Jew to Zionism and to Israel, and to seek to define the Reform Zionist mission. These questions have been posed in various ways since the inception of the Zionist movement and have been the subject of ongoing re-evaluation ever since. A variety of statements have been issued but at no point has the Reform Movement engaged in a through-going analysis or defined a position...The intent of the Think Tank is to formulate a statement of principles on Reform Zionism that will spur a renewed Reform Commitment to the concept of Jewish Peoplehood which is at the heart of the Zionist idea.[15]

As this resolution indicates, the Think Tank was given the task of defining the Reform Jewish understanding of peoplehood, and re-evaluating the Reform commitment to Zionism through a careful reassessment of Reform ideology. As Ammiel Hirsch, then director of ARZA suggested, "In developing a religious philosophy on Zionism...the very foundations of Reform Judaism itself would have to be reevaluated...the question of Zionism could not be isolated from the essence of Reform Judaism."[16]

In the first two journals of the Think Tank, published in 1993 and 1994, several Reform Jewish theologians seek to delineate a Reform Zionist ideology. Here we will outline the arguments of four such theologians: Dow Marmur, Richard G. Hirsch, Ellen Umansky, and David Ellenson. Each presents a different response to the tension between conceptions of a universalistic Reform mission and the particularistic nationalism inherent in Zionism.

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[15] CCAR Resolution, "Reform Zionist Think Tank," adopted June, 1989.

[16] Ammiel Hirsch, "Forward" to *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 2.

A Dialectical Synthesis of Reform and Zionism: Dow Marmur

Dow Marmur, in his article "Reform Zionism in a Postmodern Age," suggests that the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel brought about a paradigm shift as great as that caused by the Enlightenment and French Revolution.[17] Following Borowitz, Marmur calls the earlier paradigm that of "the age of modernity," and the current period as "the postmodern age."[18] Modernity led to two messianic movements: Progressive Judaism, born out of universalistic notions of the perfectibility of humankind through reason and Zionism, born out of secular socialism. Marmur argues that neither movement has fully succeeded, and that both are outdated, not fitting the contemporary (postmodern) paradigm. Rather, it is time for a synthesis of these two responses to modernity:

> the new, postmodern paradigm seeks to fuse the two partial truths of Jewish universalism and Jewish nationalism into something new and different...The first plank of...a platform [for Reform Zionism today], I believe, should be to celebrate the new paradigm by adding the nationalism dimension to the universalist stance of Reform Judaism.[19]

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[17] Dow Marmur, "Reform Zionism in the Postmodern Age," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 14-19.

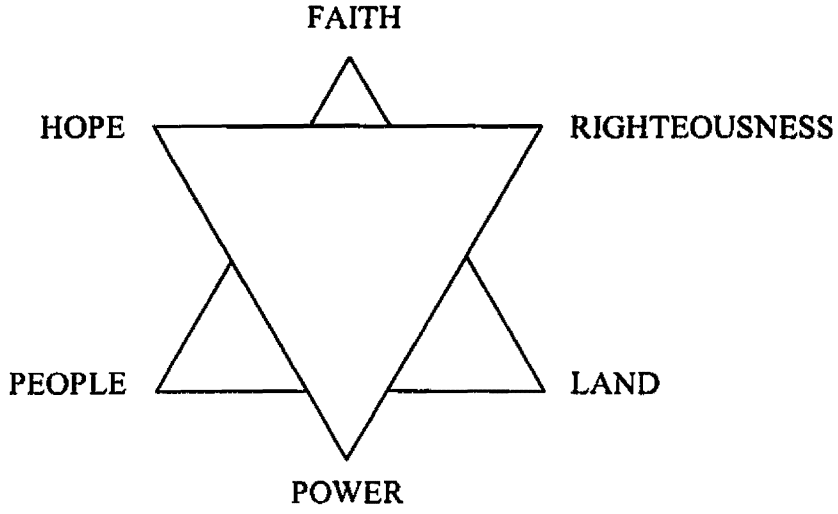
[18] It is interesting to reflect how Zionist thinkers and historians mark these eras: The historian Ben Zion Dinur, of Hebrew University, defines the modern and post-modern periods of Jewish history from a perspective in which the entire Jewish experience is marked by a trajectory towards sovereignty in the Land of Israel. For Dinur, the modern period created the conditions that allowed the State to be formed, and the post-modern period begins with Jewish political sovereignty. Thus he suggests modern period of Jewish history begins in 1700 with the *aliyah* of one thousand Jews to Palestine with Rabbi Judah the pious, and the post-modern period of Jewish history begins in November, 1947, which the United Nations resolution to establish a Jewish State. Marmur or Borowitz, who might (following Graetz) mark the modern period to a similar era, but beginning with emancipation and acculturation, and mark the post-modern period as the time after the Holocaust and the founding of the State. For more on this idea, see Ben Zion Dinur, *Israel and the Diaspora* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1969).

[19] Marmur, 15-16.

This synthesis involves "Zionizing" Reform Judaism, and "sacralizing" Zionism. Marmur presents this idea through the use of what he calls "Jewish geometry," modeled after Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*. The base of Rosenzweig's star was a triangle of world-God-man. This was Rosenzweig's universalistic revision of the traditional triangle of *Am-Eretz-Torah*. Marmur, following Buber, suggests that the founding of the State of Israel allows for the traditional triangle to be re-established:

> The present effort to fuse universalist, partially right, Reform and particularist, partially but differently right, Zionism, enables us to restore the triangle, and once again, affirm Israel as faith, people, and land precisely as did our biblical ancestors.[20]

Restoring notions of land and people into Reform, and returning faith to secular Zionism, begins the synthesis that Marmur seeks. This re-particularization of the triangle is merely the base of Marmur's theological model. He suggests a second triangle, consisting of Hope, Righteousness, and Power. Thus Marmur's "Star of Return"[21]:



[20] Ibid., 17.
[21] Ibid., 17-18.

This star provides a summary of Marmur's Reform Zionist theology: Hope, which here explicitly relates to *Hatikvah*, the hope of the Israeli anthem to be a free people in the land of Israel, is placed as the crux of the Jewish people who have renewed their faith in the future through their Zionist endeavors. Power is a new axis for the Jewish people—it is the reality in which Jewish people, who are sovereign in a land, find themselves in and with power. Marmur suggests that a Reform Zionist theology must take into account Irving Greenberg's call to "use power 'with the memory of powerlessness.'"[22] Lastly, righteousness is the responsibility of a people of faith who have power in a land—the responsibility to put "the lofty principles of the faith of Israel...to the test in practical application."[23]

Thus Marmur suggests a dialectical synthesis between the universalistic mission of classical Reform Judaism, and the particularistic, messianic idea of classical Zionism. As Eric Yoffie points out in his response to the article, Marmur does not explicitly outline the place of messianism and redemption in his Zionist theology. He points to the notion that the unification of faith and peoplehood are necessary for hope for the future—but this oblique reference to a better future does not outline Marmur's eschatological vision. Yoffie is able to resonate with Marmur's theology, and at the same time say:

> ...the development of Reform Zionism must reject messianic elements. Messianism has no place in our Zionism...The task of the religious Zionist, I suggest, is the building of a holy community—a task which is difficult enough on its own terms without becoming entangled in messianism.[24]

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[22] Ibid., 18.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Eric H. Yoffie, "Building a Zionist Paradigm," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 19.

Marmur's call to re-evaluate the two major Jewish responses to modernity, Reform Judaism and Zionism, is apt. His structure for beginning the dialectical synthesis between the two is helpful in defining the major terms upon which to build a theology and ideology of Reform Zionism. Yet, we are left without a clear definition of the place of messianism or mission in his Reform Zionist theology.

Reform Zionist Messianism: Richard G. Hirsch

In his article, "Reform Zionism's Task Today," Richard G. Hirsch further develops a Reform Zionist theology that calls for a synthesis of the universalism of Reform Judaism and the particularism of Zionism. Hirsch does outline a theology that deals with covenant, messianism, and the mission of the Jewish people. Specifically, Hirsch crafts a theology by which the universal mission of the Jewish People is to be set into motion through the collectivity of the Jewish People creating a just society in the Land of Israel through the polity of the State of Israel.

Hirsch begins with the contention that Reform Judaism has developed, and largely holds to, a revisionist non-Zionism. That is, at a time when the Jewish state does not fulfill what Reform Jews understand as the Zionist vision, they de-emphasize the importance of the state in their own religiosity. Hirsch refers to Eugene B. Borowitz's call to replace "Israelocentrism," or ethnic connection to the Jewish people, with belief. Hirsch argues that this is a non-Zionist statement, for it holds belief as a more important component of Jewishness than peoplehood. Hirsch admits that both those he would call Zionists and those he terms non-Zionists agree that Israel must be strong and

interdependent with a strong Diaspora. However, he argues that ideas of peoplehood and ethnicity must be elevated to a religious level, and, rather than competing with belief for importance, become an essential part of that belief and observance. As he writes:

> As a religious movement, we cannot limit our relationship to the Jewish state to the pragmatic dimensions of moral, political and economic support. A religious movement is obligated to make the effort to incorporate the phenomenon of Zionism into the very essence of belief and observance.[25]

Thus, Hirsch argues that not only the Land of Israel, but the State of Israel must have theological significance in Reform Judaism.

Hirsch's Zionist theology does not ascribe particular sanctity to the State of Israel that gives it inherent holiness or a mandate to behave as though it is automatically superior to other nations. However, for Hirsch, the State of Israel returns the Jewish people to sovereignty, and thus allows for the collectivity of the Jewish people (rather than individuals, which Hirsch argues is the Christian mission) to work towards fulfillment of the covenant with God. As a collectivity, with sovereignty, the Jewish people have the opportunity to build a covenant nation:

> The return to Israel was inextricable from the messianic vision. Jewish particularism was rooted in profound universalism. How could Jews bring about the era of fellowship and peace for all humankind? By creating in the land of Israel a just society that would serve as a role model for other societies.[26]

Israel is not inherently holy, but the return to sovereignty in the State allows for the Jewish people, as a group, to create a covenant nation that serves as a model for all humanity. This is similar to the traditional religious Zionist messianic idea; however,

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[25] Richard G. Hirsch, "Reform Zionism's Task Today," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 22.

[26] Ibid., 23.

Hirsch suggests that the return to the land and to sovereignty is not in itself "*at'halta d'geulah*" (the beginning of the redemption), but rather the necessary precursor to the creation of a righteous, covenant society—which is "*at'halta d'geulah.*" Hirsch argues:

> The State of Israel is the testing grounds for keeping the covenant between God and God's people. How do the Jews as a people create a just society when they are given responsibility? ...The establishment of an independent state is only the means to a goal and not the goal itself. The state was created not only for those who live in it, but also for the purpose of keeping the entire Jewish people and its heritage alive...The State of Israel is the Jewish people's symbol of hope in its own future and in the future of all humankind.[27]

Hirsch does not weigh in on the definitions of *golah* or *galut*, and assumes that the Diaspora can and will continue to exist. However, while he asserts that Jews have the freedom to choose to live wherever they so choose, he does grant a primacy to the Land and State of Israel and promotes *aliyah.* In his formulation, the development of Israel takes precedence over the development of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and that the Jew who lives in Israel can "do more than anywhere else to sustain the collective existence of the Jewish people."[28] He writes:

> Without Zionism there is no *aliyah*; without *aliyah* there is no Zionism...We do not have the option of building two Jewish states, each with a flag of its own color, one called "the *goldene medinah*" (America) and the other called the "blue and white *medinah*" (Israel). We have only one people, and that people has undertaken responsibility for building only one Jewish state...If there is no qualitative difference for the Jewish people between a Soviet Jew immigrating to Brighton Beach (New York) or Bat Yam (Israel), then there is no justification for a Jewish state.[29]

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[27] Ibid., 24.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Moving from theological statement to charge, Hirsch wrote "The Task of Reform Zionism Today" for the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank. In this article, Hirsch further elaborates on his Reform Zionist theology, and reasserts his notion that particularism must be embraced by Reform Jews—and that Reform Judaism must assert the religious significance of the Jewish people's collective Jewish existence:

> Reform Judaism can never "coherently embrace" Zionism if we continue to define Reform Judaism as "an inherently universalistic religious tradition."...Judaism is first and foremost the faith of a people. This people encounters God not through the life experiences of an individual founder of the faith, as in the instance of Christianity and Islam, but through the experiences of the people in history...God's charge is always delivered to the entire Jewish people: *v'atem ti'hi'yu li mamlekhet kohanim v'goy kadosh*—"you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6)...The covenant mandates the Jewish people to establish a just society, a "kingdom of priests."[30]

Hirsch here goes beyond his earlier statement, unequivocally positing that Reform Zionism is a "messianic Zionism." Although he proposes a type of messianism, he negates any personal messiah. Rather, he reiterates the position that the building of a just society in Israel (Yoffie's cautions notwithstanding) is "the beginning of the redemption," and states that Reform Judaism must accept such responsibility as part of the collective mission of the Jewish people-- building a society that will affect all humanity so that *tikkun olam* can be achieved.[31]

Responsibility to the Collective: Ellen Umansky

Ellen Umansky drafts her theology for Reform Zionism in her article, "Zionism and Reform Judaism: A Theological Reassessment." Agreeing with Hirsch and Marmur

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[30] Ibid., 29.
[31] Ibid., 29-32.

that the Reform dichotomy between universalism and particularism is false, she argues that classical Reform never completely rejected particularism. Rather, particularism was subsumed under universalism.[32] This does not, however, temper the reality that the nationalist or peoplehood-oriented ideology of Zionism was difficult to assimilate into the universalistic ideology of classical Reform Judaism—and Umansky reiterates that to do so provokes the reformulation of the Reform idea of mission.

For Umansky, like Marmur and Hirsch, the current era and context demands a re-formulation of Reform theology that takes Zionism and the State of Israel into account. This theology is predicated on Reform Jewish experience, and historical context. Theology, which "provides a framework for our lives and valuable tools of interpretation," must articulate "beliefs [that are] consistent with actions."[33] This struggle for consistency leads Umansky to reject the notion that Diaspora is *galut*, whether physical, or (as suggested by some Reform Zionists like David Polish) spiritual/psychological. Umansky's experience, which she thinks resonates for many American Jews, dictates the rejection of *galut:*

> ...As a Reform Jew and as a feminist, I am most at home—spiritually as well as physically—in the United States. Given the current realities of religious and political life in Israel, it is here, and not in Israel, that I can live out my religious life most fully. Theological statements that speak of "ingathering of the exiles" thus have no resonance for me. Neither, I might add, does the broader theological concept of *galut*.[34]

This rejection of *galut* as a spiritual or psychological category becomes the underpinning of a theology that demands the replacement of the classical Reform idea of Judaism as

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[32] Umansky, 45-46.
[33] Ibid., 48.
[34] Ibid., 50.

personal religion with the idea that relationship with God and the world happens in collectivity, as a people. Here, Umansky argues a theologically similar position to Hirsch and Marmur—even though it leads her to different conclusions.

Like Marmur, Umansky contends that Reform Judaism was founded on, and continues to emphasize, the idea of the autonomous Jewish self. She points to Eugene Borowitz's covenant theology, in which the Jewish self connects to God in covenant as a "single soul in its full individuality."[35] She rejects the classical Reform understanding that Judaism is a personal religion, responding:

> In contrast, I would like to suggest that the Jewish self exists in covenant not as "a single soul in its full individuality" but as a relational soul in community with others. Rather than beginning with the autonomous self who chooses to become a Jewish self, I would suggest that we begin by recognizing that no self is fully autonomous, that—as Martin Buber wrote long ago—we always exist in relationship to others and to the world in which we live.[36]

This suggests that covenant is not enacted by individuals, but by the collectivity of the Jewish people in relationship with one another. Umansky argues that the people and the land of Israel can only be moved to central importance if the Reform mission articulates the idea of the Jew as a member of the Jewish people. This is Umansky's reformulation of the Reform Jewish mission statement:

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[35] Eugene Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1991), 293. Borowitz, in a note to his article in the *Journal of Reform Zionism* 2 (1995), argues that this idea was taken out of context. He explains his notion of the Jewish autonomous self, saying, "The Jewish self lives in a intimate relationship with a real God not merely as a spiritual individual but as a single self ineradicably grounded in the people Israel's ongoing, historic, messianic relationship with God." (29, *n*4) Thus, while Borowitz attacks Umansky for misreading his theology, he seems to indicate that her theology is not so different from his own.

[36] Umansky, 49.

> To be a Jew is to be a member of a covenanted civilization that affirms the centrality of God, Torah and Israel, and that views active commitment to Jewish continuity and the flourishing of Jewish life as both personal and communal obligations. It further views as obligatory an active striving for *tikkun nefesh* (the repair of the soul), *tikkun ha-ahm* (repair of the people) and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world).[37]

While this is a reformulation of Jewish theology, as Norman Patz rightly points out, Umansky shies away from explicitly state how the collectivity of the Jewish people is to relate to the Jewish land. She does not "enter the current controversy which juxtaposes concern for Israel against spirituality."[38] While she calls for the individual Jew to see their Jewish responsibility in collective terms *(tikkun ha-ahm)*, she does not articulate how the Diaspora Jew is to fulfill that responsibility in regards to the Land of Israel. In fact, she suggests that the Diaspora Jew, even as a part of the Jewish collectivity, may not find a physical or spiritual home in the land of Israel. Thus, while her theology moves from an individualist stance to a collectivist stance, it is unclear how it relates to the Land and State of Israel. Perhaps Hirsch could be just as critical of Umansky as he is of Borowitz, for this theology could just as easily serve what Hirsch deems a "revisionist non-Zionism."

Survival Trumps Mission: David Ellenson

In his consideration of Reform Zionism, David Ellenson traces the development of Reform ideology and agrees with Marmur's assessment that Zionism and Reform Judaism were two opposing responses to modernity. In responding to the "post-modern

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Norman Patz, "Israel: A Key Component of Jewish Spirituality," in *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 51.

paradigm" (to use Marmur's language) Ellenson reflects Umansky's notion that that Reform thought has always, and continues in the current context, to subordinate the particular to the universal, writing:

> The nationalistic affirmations advanced by Zionism have remained suspect throughout the history of our movement, and they have not been granted religious status. Jewish nationalism has been accorded legitimacy by Reform only when it self-consciously acts in the service of some grander, more universal cause that "transcends nationalism" with its "dangerously parochial goals," (CCAR Centenary Perspective, 1976).[39]

Ellenson challenges this ideology by asking whether classical Reform universalism can or should maintain relevancy after the sobering horrors of the Holocaust, and when there is an extant Jewish state, suggesting:

> We need not be held in slavish obeisance to the ideals of nineteenth century universalism. A new ideology, sensitive to but distinct from the patrimony of the past, must be contemplated, and other theological currents need to be explored as we seek to uncover and articulate a contemporary ideological basis for the Reform Movement's approach to Zion.

In seeking a contemporary ideology that is distinct from the "ideals of nineteenth century universalism" and deeply aware of the paradigm shift in Jewish thought predicated by the historical events of the early 20th century, Ellenson turns to the theologies of Irving "Yitz" Greenberg and Emil Fackenheim.

Ellenson begins with Greenberg' assessment that the Holocaust "casts doubt upon the messianic optimism of our nineteenth century ancestors."[40] For Ellenson, the events of the Holocaust both dampen our belief in innate human goodness and morality, and

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[39] David Ellenson, "Reform Zionism Today: A Consideration of First Principles," in *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 2 (1995): 15.

[40] Ibid., 15.

they no longer allow us to "identify and assert its compatibility with the tenets of Western or any other civilization."[41] Ellenson also follows Greenberg in asserting that the Holocaust erases the dichotomy between secular and spiritual:

> The secular is not the antithesis of the spiritual. The former is, if anything, the testing ground for the strength and expression of the latter. This indicates, for Jews, that the nationalism of our people can no longer be seen as distinct from our religion...We must not warp our own expressions of Judaism by condemning nationalistic manifestations of Judaism and Jewish identity as "anti-religious.[42]

Like Greenberg, Ellenson asserts that after the Holocaust, the sacredness of life and the perpetuation of the Jewish people take on a theological significance, for it reinstates validity into God's promises of the covenant. Ellenson suggests that the Holocaust teaches us that powerlessness is morally unacceptable, and thus political sovereignty becomes a religious imperative. Therefore, the existence of the Jewish people as a collectivity is itself a religious imperative, as it demonstrates that the covenant still exists. In this understanding, the survival of the Jewish people takes on supreme importance.

This is reiterated through the theology of Emil Fackenheim, who famously asserted that the Holocaust leads the Jewish people to be commanded to perpetuate, in order not to allow Hitler "a posthumous victory."[43] Ellenson reminds us that Fackenheim, like Greenberg, contends that the State of Israel is imperative to the survival of the Jewish people, and thus "support for the state and Zionism become, for Fackenheim, the sacred obligation of every Jew."[44] Thus existence for its own sake, even

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[41] Ibid., 16.
[42] Ibid.
[43] See Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York: Harper, 1972).
[44] Ellenson, 17.

a completely secular existence, is regarded as a precondition for life and thus a moral obligation, which is elevated to the level of the sacred.

Ellenson raises the major critique of this theology, namely that offered by Arnold Eisen, which suggests that raising the significance of existence qua existence to a level of sacred meaning can lead to a neglect of the import of what the state is or does. Ellenson rightly points out that this disregard for the mission of the Jewish people beyond its mere survival raises serious questions for Reform Jews, "weaned on concepts of universalism and mission."[45] Ellenson is cognizant of this tension, and asserts that Jews, especially Reform Jews, must be cognizant of the importance of morality and ethics. However, for Ellenson, survival for the sake of survival is of such theological significance, that it retains religious significance even in the absence of concern for our religious tradition:

> The legacy of our religious tradition's emphasis on justice as well as our Reform commitment to morality and ethics make Israel the ultimate testing ground for the truth of Jewish teaching and values. However, to accept this critique as decisive is, in my view, unwise and wrong in the current situation. For nothing should obscure or deny the religious significance the state possesses by virtue of the sheer fact of its existence.[46]

While Ellenson is not eager to discard the moral compass of Reform Judaism, and sees that Israel can serve as the locus for creating a righteous Jewish society, he seems to suggest that the power and safety of Jewish sovereignty maintain sacredness even if the character of the State does not adhere to Jewish values. Here, Ellenson navigates the tension between mission and survival by leaning heavily towards survival. While Israel may be the place where Reform Jewish ideals can be achieved, Ellenson is not concerned

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

with that State serving to further a universalistic mission. Rather, he is most concerned with the most particularist of goals: survival of the people for its own sake.

In his conclusion, Ellenson relates a personal anecdote of his religious sentiment at experiencing the re-birth of the Jewish people in Israel. He reiterates that the building of the State of Israel is at once "fraught with religious significance" and a marker that the Jewish people have moved past mere belief and yearning to theologically significant action.[47] After his strong call for survival to supersede universalistic mission, he backtracks seems to re-emphasize the importance of a commitment to the universalist ideals of Reform Judaism, and like Marmur and Hirsch, to seek balance between particularism and universalism:

> Our Zionism must be built upon the dialectical foundations of universalism and particularism and the interplay between them. Both poles must be accorded religious legitimacy by our movement, for only them can a platform be constructed in which each can inform, and at times, provide a corrective for the other.[48]

Thus, while Ellenson seems to lead more heavily towards the particular than the universal, perhaps he is seeking a corrective for the earlier "monism of universalism"[49] so long a reality in the Reform Movement. Ellenson's focus on survivalism reminds us of Michael A. Meyer's caveat:

> ...if survival is essential for all else, all else is also essential for survival. In other words, there must be a rationale for the Jewish people to exist as a people, and not only for Jews as adherents of the Jewish religion and as Israeli citizens...Here too there is a covenant text from the Tanakh that is appropriate for the goal of our collective agenda. It comes from Second Kings 23:3: *Va-*

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[47] Ibid., 18.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

> *ya'amod kol ha-am ba-brit* (and the entire people stood within the covenant.) We need common objectives, based on common respect and the common quest for explicating and applying Jewish values, that will enable all of us to stand together within the covenant.[50]

Conclusion

As we have seen from these four explorations of Reform Zionist Theology, undertaken by the Reform Zionist Think Tank in 1989-1995, the challenge is in creating a synthesis (and dialectic) between classical Reform universalism and classical Zionist particularism. This is indeed the underlying question of authentic Reform Jewish thought, as Michael Stroh succinctly summarizes:

> As a movement with an historical orientation, Reform has come to see that authenticity in Judaism is neither universalist nor particularist, but a tension between universalism and particularism...While the historical experience of early Reform Judaism led it to see peoplehood as an abstract theological concept, more recent history has exposed the denatured quality of peoplehood, so understood. The yearning for a return to the land is now recognized as an authentic expression of Jewish particularism.[51]

Marmur, Hirsch, Umansky, and Ellenson each fall on a continuum between the most universalistic, mission-driven ideas and the most particularist, survival-driven ideas. All four thinkers agree that Reform Judaism must respond to the post-modern era by embracing peoplehood, and emphasizing Reform Jewish duty to the Jewish collective. Yet, when it comes to mission, the balance between power and justice, messianism, aliyah, and the place of the Diaspora, these theologians are not in agreement.

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[50] Michael A. Meyer, "Response to Avraham Burg: To Stand Within the Covenant," in *Beyond Survival and Philanthropy*, Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk, eds. (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 2000), 227.

[51] Michael S. Stroh, "Religious Zionism: A Reform Perspective," in *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 33.

Dow Marmur demonstrates that Reform Zionism is about hope for the future, and a possibility for redemption, as the people of Israel use their faith tradition to lead them to use power justly in the Land and State of Israel. Richard Hirsch goes further—calling for a Messianic vision in which the State of Israel is the agent through which the Jewish people can create a just society, and thus provide a model for redemption, thus heralding the dawn of the messianic age. Eric Yoffie, in his response to Marmur, speaks for many Reform Jews in his assertion that:

> ...In my view, the development of Reform Zionism must reject messianic elements. Messianism has no place in our Zionism. In historical terms, messianism has consistently been a highly destructive element, almost always impossible to control. It has certainly wreaked havoc on the modern Jewish state. In theological terms messianism—no matter how refined—is an extraordinary theological arrogance....The task of the Religious Zionist, I suggest, is the building of a holy community—a task which is difficult enough on its own terms without becoming entangled in messianism.[52]

Yoffie sees messianism in the terms of Orthodox Religious Zionism— a triumphalist ideology of territorial maximalism and an extreme expression of often violent fanaticism. Yet Carole Balin points out that Reform Judaism has always been a messianic movement, and that a prophetic messianism may allow us a more sober and less arrogant messianism:

> The most crucial tradition bequeathed to us by the prophets vis-à-vis Zionism is their messianism. Prophetic messianism is always conditional. That is to say, the future remains open with the hope that imminent doom can be averted if behavior is corrected. (In contrast, apocalyptic thinking always has an aura of inevitability about it.)...This prophetic approach to the future makes the claim that what is imperfect is not necessarily broken, and what is not sacred is not necessarily profane...So it goes that what is not messianic is not necessarily in

[52] Eric H. Yoffie, "Building a Reform Zionist Paradigm," in *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 19.

> exile, and pre-redemptive and pre-messianic historical circumstances are imbued with religious significance. Thus the prophetic form of messianism, where the hope for improvement is never abandoned and remarkable manifestations of human potentiality are appreciated, represents a departure from messianic absolutism, which Zionism can and ought to embrace wholeheartedly. For when viewed through the lens of prophetic messianism, the State of Israel—even with all of its flaws and imperfections—emerges as a force worthy of our blessing and veneration.[53]

Though not a Reform theologian, David Hartman presents a Zionist argument that he feels is representative of Reform Zionist theology that can perhaps be said to summarize and articulate the views the Reform thinkers cited above. Reflecting on the words of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, he writes:

> For Soloveitchik, the shared suffering and common historical fate of the Jewish people represent what he calls a *brit goral*, a "covenant of destiny"...Although the Reform movement has interpreted the covenant of *mitzvah* very differently from Soloveitchik, you clearly share his appreciation of the "covenant of destiny" (*brit goral).*[54]

This "covenant of destiny," also translated as the "covenant of fate" is explained by Soloveitchik as the covenant of shared experience and shared destiny, which binds the Jewish people together. This shared experience leads to a shared responsibility, which Soloveitchik calls *arevut.*[55] The Jew is necessarily part of a collective, and thus

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[53] Carole B. Balin, "A Method for Forging a Syntehsis Between Reform Judaism and Zionism," *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 60.

[54] David Hartman, "An Open Letter to a Reform Rabbi," in *Conflicting Visions: Spiritual Possibilities of Modern Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1990), 209-210.

[55] Soloveitchik outlines his religious understanding of Zionism, and his concepts of *brit goral* (covenant of fate), *brit ye'ud (*covenant of destiny) and *arevut* in a 1956 lecture delivered at Yeshiva University entitled: *Kol Dodi Dofek; The Voice of My Beloved Knocks,* which has subsequently been published in *Besod haYahid vehaYahad*, ed. Pinhas Peli (Jerusalem: Orot, 1976) and translated into English by Lawrence Kaplan, published in *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV and the RCA, 1992).

responsible to all other members of the collective. Eugene B. Borowitz, the covenantal theologian of the Reform Movement, also suggests that the Jewish people are bound together as a collective. While Borowitz's notion of covenant focuses more attention on the "particularity of the single self", he does allow that:

> The Jewish self lives in intimate relationship with a real God not merely as a spiritual individual but as a single self ineradicably grounded in the people of Israel's ongoing, historic, messianic relationship with God. Covenant involves all five of these vectors, God, the Jewish people today, the Jewish tradition, the people living toward "the messiah," and the single selves who are involved in all of this.[56]

When peoplehood is taken seriously, and is a prerequisite to entering the covenant, then a Jewish identity devoid of serious contemplation of and relation to the State of Israel is necessarily lacking. As Hartman observes:

> Judaism does not begin with an individual leap of faith, but with a leap of solidarity with the Jewish community...One cannot enter a covenantal relationship with God outside the collective framework of the Jewish people...Peoplehood and nationhood are the central frameworks for building spiritual meaning in our daily life. Israel prevents us from identifying faith as "the leap of the alone to the Alone." Israel is not just another Jewish community. To understand the concern for Israel among Jews in the Diaspora, we must appreciate how Israel has succeeded in mediating the Jewish nation's visibility in the world. A Jew's sense of connection with the people of Israel, his or her historical and collective identity, is shaped by the State of Israel...In a religious sense, therefore, Jewish life in the Diaspora would be impoverished if your congregations were disconnected from the drama of Israeli society.[57]

Perhaps this synthesis between peoplehood and mission best provides a solid basis for Reform Zionist theology.

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[56] Eugene B. Borowitz, "What is Reform Religious Zionism" in the *ARZA Journal of Reform Zionism* 2 (1995): 24.

[57] Hartman, 208-209.

Chapter 5: Towards a Reform Zionist Narrative and Its Educational Implications

Introduction

As we have documented, the path from Reform non-Zionism (and even anti-Zionism) to the development of a contemporary Reform religious Zionism has been marked by a lack of ideological clarity. While it remains true that the majority of American Reform Jews do not have a strong connection to Israel,[1] in the last 15 years, the leadership of the Reform Movement, and particularly those involved in the ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, have begun to address the lack of clarity in Reform religious Zionist ideology so as to promote a greater sense of solidarity between Reform Jews and Israel.

As coordinator of the Reform Zionist Think Tank, I am often asked to speculate on why the leadership can be so devoted to and the people so disconnected from Israel and Jewish Peoplehood. I am also frequently asked why and how the ideological work of the Think Tank can and should affect Reform Judaism and Reform Jewry, and especially how it connects to Jewish education. In concluding this thesis, I will try to outline some of the work the Think Tank has been doing of late, and how it might affect not only Reform Zionist education, but the place of Israel in the minds and hearts of Reform Jews.

The Sovereign Self's search for Meaning vs. the Call of the Collective

As Steven M. Cohen and Arnold Eisen argue in their work *The Jew Within*, American Jews connect to and make decisions about Judaism as a "Jewish Sovereign

[1] National Jewish Population Survey, 2001.

Self." They argue that the "Jewish Sovereign Self" is not motivated by a sense of "guilt" or "duty." Rather, American Jews feel they possess an inalienable right to be Jewish. They feel that they have the right to define and choose their own Jewish behaviors. This way of being Jewish is marked by voluntarism and personalism. The search for personal meaning becomes the decisive factor in determining their level of Jewish observance and involvement. This allows American Jews to feel that they are free to pick and choose which Jewish beliefs hold personal meaning for them, aside from any system of ideology or traditional norms. Cohen and Eisen also argue that these "Jewish Sovereign Selves" are anti-judgmentalist—if belief and practice is principally based on personal meaning, rather than a communally enforced system of tradition or norms, then no one has the right to judge another Jew practicing a Judaism they deem relevant.[2]

In her presentation at the September, 2005 ARZA Reform Zionist Think Tank, Bethamie Horowitz suggested that the American Jewish quest for "meaningfulness" is a result of Jews and Judaism being accepted and even celebrated in American culture. Horowitz argued that when Jews were stigmatized, they had to choose to either join the group, or willfully distance themselves (often as "self-hating Jews"). According to her sociological data, 97% of American Jews consider being Jewish "favorable." In such a situation, Jews no longer actively "accept" or "reject" their Jewishness. Instead, they generally either indifferent towards their Jewishness, or they strive actively to make it personally relevant and meaningful. Horowitz suggests that American Jews, particularly liberal American Jews (which includes Reform Jews), choose their Jewish identity like a

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[2] Steven M. Cohen and Arnold Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000)

meal at a salad bar, selecting which Jewish elements they want as a part of their identity. She suggests that these choices tend to fall in three categories: values, practices, and "people consciousness."

Thus, American Jews, and particularly Reform Jews, view their Jewish identity as a pastiche of choices they can make about what is personally relevant and meaningful. If, as Horowitz suggests, these choices fall into the categories of values, practices, and "people consciousness," this indicates a disconnection between these three elements of Judaism. If, as our Reform Zionist theologians suggested, peoplehood and the collective is an inherent component of our religiosity (which thus informs our values and practices), how does such a theology reach "Jewish sovereign selves" who are picking and choosing which elements of Judaism and Jewish tradition have any relevancy?

Educating for Jewish Citizenship

This is exactly the question that Lisa Grant seeks to answer in her article, "Educating for Jewish Citizenship."[3] Grant notes that the primacy of the "Jewish sovereign self" poses a challenge to those who would advocate peoplehood as the foundation for Jewish identity. The emphasis on "self" frequently leads to a disconnection with the collective and causes American Jews to feel removed from a personal connection to Israel, particularly as a "homeland." This disconnection between "Jewishness" and Judaism leads Grant to observe:

> Jewish identity seems to be increasingly separated into two distinct components – Jewishness (ethnic identification) and Judaism (religious practice). We note

[3] Lisa D. Grant, "Educating for Jewish Citizenship." *Jewish Education News* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 23-25.

> with anxiety and trepidation, the apparent decline in communal involvement, and express concern that Jews are less connected to each other, more focused on religious behaviors than on building community. In response, we engage in intellectual deliberations organized around reinvigorating connections to Jews throughout the Jewish world.[4]

Grant suggests that, rather than focusing narrowly on re-invigorating a sense of Jewish peoplehood in Jews who are disconnected from the community, we must reunite Jewish religiosity, which Grant identifies with Jewish religious practice, with notions of Jewish peoplehood, which she calls "Jewish communal engagement." Grant suggests that this can be achieved through education that focuses on creating and sustaining a sense of Jewish citizenship. As she writes:

> How can we more effectively educate for Jewish citizens rather than consumers of Jewish goods and services? First, rather than polarizing the natural dualisms in Jewish life – individual and community, universalism and particularism, religion and ethnicity, Diaspora and Israel – we need to live within the tension. Each element is an essential component of Jewish identity.[5]

If, as suggested earlier, Jews will choose their identity from a "salad bar" of options, that are likely to include values, practices, and "people consciousness," Grant suggests that Jewish educators can stock that salad bar in such a way that these components are integrally mixed. Yet how does a Jewish educator or clergyperson affect a Jewish person's identity development? In constructing an answer, we must turn to contemporary ideas of identity development and its relationship to culture and narrative.

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[4] Ibid., 23.
[5] Ibid, 24.

Identity Development and Narrative Knowing

Based on Vygotsky's idea that individual identity is constructed through and by the culture in which they live,[6] contemporary sociology and psychology has developed the notion that individual identity is based on the crafting of personal stories, or a cohesive narrative through which the self understands and contextualizes his or her life.[7] The cultural narrative informs the personal narrative, which in turn affects the larger culture as individuals partake in and shape that culture.

Thus, the narrative upon which we base our Jewish culture and our collective identity influences the "sovereign Jewish selves" as they construct their own narratives and identities. In turn, each Jewish self's narrative will influence and inform the larger, collective narrative. The Jewish sovereign self is defined by its understanding of the Jewish narrative, and in this way can find a meaningful connection to the larger Jewish people.

Jerome S. Bruner suggests that one of the fundamental ways that people understand and perceive the world is through narrative. According to Bruner, narrative ordering helps the individual to understand how events in the world affect one another.[8] Thus, narrative becomes a powerful teaching tool and a way for educators, clergy, therapists, and others to help students, congregants, and clients to develop their own identities in relationship to the greater culture. As Hayden Whyte instructs us, "narrative

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[6] L.S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962). (Original work published 1934)

[7] Among others, see D.E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences.* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).

[8] Jerome S. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds.*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate *knowing* into *telling.*"[9]

Narrative thus becomes the medium through which educators and clergy can effect and transform the identities of their students and congregants. As Sigrun Gudmundsdottir suggests, teachers help students make meaning of the events of their lives through narrative reflection, engaging shorter stories into a greater curricular narrative which changes as it is shaped by reflections upon experiences that affect the story.[10] This ability of an educator to take content and to integrate it into themselves in a way that enables them to transmit it to their students (pedagogy) has been defined as "pedagogic content knowledge."[11] As Gudmundsdottir summarizes:

> Teaching, as I see it, is basically about the making of meaning. Teachers have to make meaning for themselves in the content they teach and they have to transform their private meaning into a form they feel students will understand. And to do this they need a knowledge-base: pedagogical content knowledge...the making of meaning for teachers involves the creation of narratives, curriculum stories, and shorter stories...there is an important narrative element in pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to create these narratives. I...suggest that teaching is like writing a story, and the understanding of teaching is like arriving at an interpretation of a story.[12]

While experienced educators must rely on 'pedagogical content knowledge,' Jewish educators and clergy must themselves have a 'pedagogical content knowledge' that incorporates their own understanding of Judaism, Jewishness, and their relationship to the

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[9] Hayden Whyte, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative,* ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 1-25.

[10] Sigrun Gudmundsdottir, "Story-Maker, Story-Teller: Narrative Structures in Curriculum." *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 23 vol. 4 (1991): 207-218.

[11] This term was coined by Lee S. Shulman in "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform," in *Harvard Educational Review, 57,* vol. 1 (1987): 1-22.

[12] Gudmundsdottir, 218.

Jewish people. As this relates to Zionism, this means that our educators and clergy must have themselves explored their own narratives, and know what story it is that they live by and have to tell to their students and congregants. By themselves connecting to a cohesive and meaningful narrative, which provides meaning to a combined sense of Judaism and Jewishness, they can translate this narrative into 'pedagogical content.' These narratives must address issues of values, practice, and peoplehood orientation.

As I have argued, narrative becomes the prism through which ideology can take on personal meaning in the life of each Jew. The sovereign Jewish self understands its own story, but it can choose to see itself in the greater narrative of the Jewish people. The question is: if, as I have demonstrated, the classical Zionist narratives and the earlier Reform Jewish narratives are no longer relevant to the contemporary Reform Jew, what do we have to replace them?

Possibilities for change in the Reform Zionist Narrative

The Reform Zionist Think Tank is currently contemplating how Reform Zionist ideology at once shapes and is shaped by our metaphors and narratives. Following the idea that Jewish identities are constructed out of elements of Jewish religious tradition, connections to peoplehood, culture and language, politics and history, the Think Tank has broken into groups focusing on each of these areas. Privy to the conversations of each group, I hope to share some of the sparks that have arisen from these conversations and may have significance as we go forward in determining the narratives we choose to employ as we teach and preach towards a Reform Zionist understanding.

Connection to Zion as a Duty of the Heart

One of the questions that comes to light when struggling with the notion of a sovereign self who feels no obligation to conform to religious norms or traditional practice is how we encourage a Jewish identity that feels a tie and a responsibility to the greater Jewish people. Indeed, the category of *mitzvah* is difficult to define in a Reform Jewish context, where one makes personal choices as to how and when they feel "commanded" to behave in a certain way. In conversation, Dr. Barry Kogan suggested that perhaps a more appropriate basis for Reform religious obligation can be found in the terminology of the medieval Jewish philosopher Bahya ibn Paquda, who proposes the expression *Chovot ha'Levavot,* "duties of the heart," in his work of the same name. For Bahya, there are two types of Jewish duties: *Chovot ha'evarim,* "duties of the body," and *chovot ha'lev*, "duties of the heart." Whereas duties of the body are the outward exhibitions of adherence to Jewish law, inspired by divine revelation of the law, duties of the heart are the inner ideas and moral obligations behind behavior and practice, which arise from what we today would call the moral conscience.[13]

While Kogan suggested that this understanding of *chovah* might undergird a Reform sense of Jewish obligation in general, he suggests that as a duty of the heart, a commitment to Israel and Zionism would necessarily be tempered by our obligation to a moral consciousness, and a commitment to a universalism borne out of respect for the "other." This is not itself a narrative for Reform Zionism, but rather an underlying idea

[13] *Chovot ha'Levavot* has been translated and explained in Menachem Mansoor, *The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

that could help to shape a Reform Jewish understanding of religious duty that can resonate for Jews searching for personal meaning.

Israel as "Second-home-land"

In addressing the need for a Reform Zionist language, in a talk entitled "The Reform Zionist Project: The Importance of Language and Metaphor,"[14] Dr. William Cutter suggested that if language is home, and the language of Israel is Hebrew, then American Jews cannot conceive of Israel as home, because for them, Hebrew is always a second language. Elan Ezrachi, in his address to the Think Tank in September, 2005, also argued that Israel is not regarded as the "father-land" for American Jews, who most frequently trace their families to the shtetls of Eastern Europe. Israel may be a mythical "homeland," but as we have demonstrated earlier in this work, American Reform Jews do not resonate with the idea that Israel is home. Bethamie Horowitz, in her September 2005 Think Tank presentation, suggested that American Reform Jews, in visiting Israel, find the experience dissonant. Her data indicate that, accustomed to being in the Jewish majority at home, liberal American Jews find their ideas of Jewish life and practice to be on the margins of Israeli society. Unable to speak the language and marginalized in their Jewishness, many Reform Jews feel remarkably foreign in this land they are expected to call "home."

[14] This talk was conducted at the Reform Zionist Think Tank Meeting, September 6-8, 2005 at Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York. All of the addresses referred to in this paragraph took place at that meeting.

Cutter contended that Israel is not "home" for American Jews. Yet home, Cutter points out, home narrative has a central place in Jewish tradition. How are American Reform Jews to understand Israel as home or as homeland? In his talk and the conversation that followed, Cutter suggested that perhaps Israel can be regarded as a "second home." Many upper-class Jews are familiar with the notion of a second home, or a summer home. This is the home that one goes to for rest and relaxation, perhaps for rejuvenation. As a part-time resident of a different community, one identifies with the place, yet does not vote, with an understanding that it is the task of the full-time residents to determine the political leadership of that second home. Yet, a second-home-resident will participate in the upkeep of the second home, paying certain taxes and involving oneself in community issues that affect the overall nature of the place or one's partial residence. Cutter noted that the more time one spends in a second home, the more one is affected by that community and can affect change in that community themselves.

This narrative of Israel as second home could be a powerful reshaping of the home-narrative that has been so alienating for many American Reform Jews. A second home is not a hotel, nor a one-time vacation site. Rather, it is a locale in which one puts down partial roots, finds rejuvenation and fulfillment, and joins the community as someone whose status is at once insider and outsider. I suggest that this metaphor needs further exploration as we determine how, or if, it should become part of our Reform Zionist narrative.

Israel as Holyland or as a Land of Holiness?

Dr. Lawrence Hoffman explains what I have called narrative knowing in relationship to ritual. He suggests that the postmodern self is a "ritual self," who understands the world as intermediated through traditional and immediate interpretations in ritual ways.[15] (This is a slightly different nuance than the notion that narrative telling, re-telling, and reshaping affects and constructs identity and the self's interaction with the world. For Hoffman, this behavior is ritualized as the narratives, or interpretations, are woven together.) He suggests that Reform Jews ritualize the sacred, and that for Zionism, Reform Jews must ritualize their connection to sacred space. He suggests that just as we seek redemption in time, which he connects to the universal, we must also seek redemption in space, which is the Land of Israel. He argues that sacred time must be paramount for Diaspora Jews, while sacred space is the focus of Israeli Jewry—yet each must be aware of and connected to the other.[16]

This notion of land as inherently sacred is problematic for many Reform thinkers. Jonathan D. Magonet has persuasively argued that, in Jewish tradition, the land is not inherently holy, but is imbued with holiness by God's presence. As he writes:

> It is God's presence that ensures the holiness of the land, not any special nature of the land itself. Indeed, God cannot be present in the land, so to speak, when it is polluted by the actions of the nations that preceded Israel—or by those of Israel itself.[17]

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[15] While Hoffman has made this point in various places, he summarizes this idea in his article, "Reform Religious Zionism: Celebrating the Holy in Time and Space," *Journal of Reform Zionism 2* (1995): 33.

[16] Ibid., 34.

[17] Jonathan D. Magonet, "Covenant and Holiness: Help or Hindrance in Seeking a Reform Theology?" in *The Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 6-12.

Magonet thus argues that the land itself is not holy except by the actions of Israel that allow for God's presence to dwell there. As outlined in chapter four, Richard Hirsch argues that the Land of Israel is holy in that it is the place where the Jewish people can carry out the covenant with God, through sovereignty in the State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael).* Therefore, Israel is not inherently holy land, but rather a land in which holiness can be actualized through the creation of a just society. Thus Jews, whether residing in Israel or in the Diaspora, are part of the collective venture to make Israel holy by working to enact the covenant in the land by creating a just State. The question that remains to be answered is how this narrative can be incorporated in a meaningful way into the volantaristic, America-centered narrative of American Reform Jews.

Israel as Hope-land

As outlined in chapter four, Dow Marmur suggests that the existence of the State of Israel has allowed the Jewish people to have faith in the covenant, and hope for the Jewish future.[18] Eugene B. Borowitz has suggested that:

> Nowhere can Jews hope to better fulfill the multilayered responsibilities enjoined upon them by the Covenant than in the land of Israel organized as a political, sovereign, self-determining nation, the State of Israel. [19]

Thus the State of Israel is the place in which the Jewish people have "the best chance" of creating a covenantal society. As Richard Hirsch argues, it is through identification with

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[18] Dow Marmur, "Reform Zionism in the Postmodern Age," *The Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 14-19.

[19] Eugene B. Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1991).

the Jewish people and the State of Israel that Jews can hope to participate in the fulfillment of the covenant.[20] As we noted in chapter four, David Hartman suggests:

> Israel is not just another Jewish community. To understand the concern for Israel among Jews in the Diaspora, we must appreciate how Israel has succeeded in mediating the Jewish nation's visibility in the world.[21]

Israel is not only the place where the Jewish people has sovereignty and thus the greatest hope of enacting the covenant by building a just society, but also the medium through which the Jewish people can carry out its universal mission by "mediating the Jewish nation's visibility in the world."

In seeking a narrative understanding of this conception of Zionism, I will call Israel the Jewish "hope-land." "Hope-land" is a place where the collective hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people can most effectively be carried out. It is in Israel and through Israel that the collective Jewish people find a voice in the world and perhaps in history. In the Diaspora, individual Jews affect the world. Through Israel, the hopes of a nation and a people have the possibility of being realized. By connecting to and engaging with our "hope-land," the hopes of individual Jews for progress and *tikkun* have a greater chance for realization.

Educational Implications

As Dr. Carol Ochs has taught, theologies matter, for they give shape to our hopes. Additionally, she asserts that theology is not something we merely think about, but

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[20] Richard Hirsch, "Reform Zionism's Task Today," *Journal of Reform Zionism* 1 (1993): 22.

[21] David Hartman, "An Open Letter to a Reform Rabbi," in *Conflicting Visions: Spiritual Possibilities of Modern Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1990), 209-210.

something we think *with*—our theology affects how we understand the world, the narrative by which we understand ourselves. Further, she argues that the importance of theology lies in the behaviors that our theology motivates.[22] We have outlined the possibilities of a cohesive Reform Zionist theology, and suggested how this might affect our narratives—but how can our ideology/theology and our narratives affect our behaviors? And how do we encourage Reform Jews to incorporate these narratives into their identity such that peoplehood consciousness and connection to Israel motivate their Jewish behaviors?

Bethamie Horowitz, in her think tank presentation in September, 2005, suggested that Jewish identity formation follows a three step process: early imprinting, reflective process, and imaginative process. Imprinting, she argues, is a process that is complete by around age ten, when a child's basic identity is formed. Baseline skills, attachments, habits and thoughts are formed, through interaction with family, school, and community. This imprinting imparts habit competence and enculturation, as knowledge and information is filtered through experience. This is the period in which basic community norms, expectations, and rhythms become part of a person's identity. Reflective process is essential to experience becoming part of identity. The experience is not the teacher, but rather the reflection on the experience and the ways that this becomes part of a person's narrative and experience. This goes on throughout a person's lifetime. The third step of identity formation is what Horowitz calls the imaginative process: it is the reaction to a unique life event that pulls a person from the expected life trajectory and

[22] Most recently, Dr. Ochs shared these ideas at a senior seminar session at HUC-JIR/NY in February, 2006.

inspires them to imagine something new or different in their lives. This process is usually the result of unique moments in the life cycle or life experience.

How does this affect our understanding of turning ideology into narrative, which in turn shapes identity and thus behavior? Horowitz's explanation of the process of Jewish identity formation first reminds us that educators and clergy must make the narratives of Reform Zionism a part of community life, norms, and expectations. This must incorporate both information and experience, from earliest childhood and throughout a child's interaction with the Jewish community. This also leads to an argument that we must find ways for Jewish families to incorporate this Zionist narrative into their home practice of Judaism. In the past, a small *pushke* for the Jewish National Fund in the home helped children understand a philanthropic commitment to Israel as a part of their identity. As we move from the mobilized model to encouraging Reform Jews to see Israel as the locus of hope for bringing *tikkun,* what objects and rituals can we incorporate into family life?

If identity is influenced by reflection on experience, how do we ensure that our Israel education allows not only for the transmission of knowledge and information, as well as transformational experiences (including interaction with Israelis and experiences constructed to help Jews identify with the greater Jewish people), but also time for reflection on how this knowledge and experience affects their lives and their identity? Lastly, if the imaginative process transforms identity, we need to assure that we are incorporating the Reform Zionist narrative into experiences that we know have the potential for creating such imaginative moments. How does our Reform Zionist ideology

and narrative fit into our life cycle moments such as brit/brit bat, bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation, and weddings? How do we utilize trips to Israel to encourage the development of Reform Zionist identity and the transmission of our unique narrative?

Horowitz's schema, along with our understanding of Reform Zionist ideology, leads to the suggestion that Israel and Zionism can not merely be a "topic" or a "subject" about which we teach, preach, and program. Rather, Israel and Reform Zionism must become an essential element of Judaism and our Jewish narrative—an integral part of the larger Jewish whole. We have been successful in making *tikkun olam* a part of the universal understanding of what it means to be a Reform Jew—and an essential part of our liturgy, the "enduring understandings" of our movement's educational curricula, and the messages conveyed by our leadership. Can we do the same with the narrative of Israel as our "second home" and our "hope-land," a place to which we have unique ties and unique responsibilities? I surmise that, if we do, Israel and Zionism become an essential part of the identity of American Reform Jews.

Conclusion

This work has evaluated the history of Reform Zionism, and begun to chart the trajectory towards a meaningful and authentic Reform Religious Zionism. My teacher, Lawrence Hoffman, consistently reminds us that ideas have consequences. In regards to Zionism, he writes:

> It has recently occurred to me that the very locution, "the idea-intoxicated Jew," is becoming an oxymoron; we are all being increasingly pressured to become mere programmers. In 1959, Arthur Hertzberg could write a book called *The Zionist Idea*. That was when "Zionist" was a living adjective, and "idea" was a

> living noun. Our generation's parallel book would be named, *How to Plan the Perfect Israel Program.* [23]

This is no less true today than it was in 1995, when these words were written. I have chosen not to give concrete lesson plans or programs that clergy and educators could take and try to faithfully replicate in their communities. I firmly believe that ideas matter, and that engaging in the development of a Reform Zionist ideology must necessarily be the first step towards meaningful Reform Zionist education.

As I have outlined above, narrative plays an important role in identity building and transformation. Narrative is informed by, and informs, our ideology. What we believe affects the stories that we hold as our truths—and our stories affect what we believe. As I articulated in the introduction, Reform Zionism is a dialectic between universalism and particularism, the Jewish sovereign self and the Jewish collective. It is incumbent upon each of us to continually reassess our understanding of this dialectic, and to decide how it informs and helps us construct our identities and our narratives. Our leaders and our teachers must themselves determine how Israel and Zionism integrate into their own narratives, and how that informs their pedagogical content knowledge.

I conclude by paraphrasing Richard Hirsch: One of the first early Zionist movements was called BILU—an acronym for *Beit Ya'akov L'chu V'Neilcha*—"O House of Jacob, come let us walk (together). The motto of the CCAR is *L'chu V'Neilcha B'or Adonai*—"Come let us walk by the light of *Adonai.*" The early Zionists were loathe to refer to God; the early Reform rabbis were afraid to refer to the Jewish people. As

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[23] Hoffman, 31.

Reform Zionists, we must be ever ready to integrate our Judaism with our Jewishness, and proclaim together the words of Isaiah 2:5: *Beit Ya'akov L'chu V'Neilcha B'Or Adonai!*—Oh House of Jacob, come let us walk (together) by the light of *Adonai!*"[24]

[24] Hirsch, 32.

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