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THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEO-REFORM IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM

by

Daniel J. Feder

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

March, 1994

Referee, Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus

To my wife Sandra

DIGEST

American Reform Judaism has undergone a dramatic transformation during the twentieth century. For over fifty years, Reform Judaism was defined by the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, a document which declared Reform Judaism's independence from traditional Judaism and ushered in a period known as classical Reform. This thesis traces the development of neo-Reform, which grew as a reaction to classical Reform. Neo-Reform can be defined as the reappropriation of previously discarded modes of religious practice and observance. The evidence of the trend is seen in many ways, including the increased use of Hebrew in the worship service, the donning of *tallitot* and *kippot* for prayer, the popularity of Bar and Bat Mitzvah as well as the reintroduction of other life cycle rituals, and the increased emphasis on the observance of festivals and holidays.

Chapter one traces the roots of Reform in Europe and America. The chapter begins with an examination of the liturgical and theological changes of the early reformers in Europe and their precedent setting conferences. Chapter one also chronicles the growth of Reform in America, including early Reform liturgy, conferences, and the establishment of a national Reform organization and seminary.

Chapter two discusses the unification of the radical American reformers through the landmark Pittsburgh Platform,

a document which reflected the rationalist and universalist leanings of its authors. Also included are analyses of the Union Prayer Book, life cycle and holiday observances, the explosive issue of Zionism, and demographics of the classical Reform era.

The flowering of neo-Reform is the focus of chapter three. The formative principles of the Reform movement were not monolithic, and even during the heyday of the classical period, there were rabbis who pushed for more tradition and ritual. Surveys conducted between 1928 and 1953 illustrate the renewed interest in ceremony and symbol among Reform rabbis and congregants. In addition, the chapter details the social and political forces which contributed to the return to tradition as well as the changes in Reform education engineered by Emanuel Gamoran.

The final chapter describes the dominance of neo-Reform since the 1970's. It explores the rise of ethnic interest among Reform Jews, the Gates of Prayer, and the proliferation of other publications which demonstrate the shift to neo-Reform. The chapter concludes with an analysis of neo-Reform's influence on the movement's educational system and examples of the increased use of ritual in Reform Judaism.

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INTRODUCTION

Early twentieth century writer Israel Zangwill wrote, "Like language, a religion was dead when it ceased to change."[1] The quote is an apt one to apply to Reform Judaism, for during the 109 years since the early reformers enunciated the Pittsburgh Platform and established how Reform Judaism differed from Orthodoxy, the movement has continuously evolved. This thesis analyzes the development of neo-Reform in American Reform Judaism. Neo-Reform can be defined as the reappropriation of previously discarded modes of religious practice and observance. The evidence of the trend is seen in many ways, including the increased use of Hebrew in the worship service, the donning of *tallitot* and *kippot* for prayer, the popularity of Bar and Bat Mitzvah as well as the reintroduction of other life-cycle rituals, and the increased emphasis on the observance of festivals and holidays.

When the Pittsburgh Platform was written in 1885, with Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler as its principle author, the underlying spirit of the document was the optimistic rationalism prevalent at the time. Bouyed by the United States' acceptance of Jewry, the early reformers felt that humankind was to become ever more tolerant and democratic. The authors were also moved by a desire to change traditional Judaism so as to better accommodate modern sensibilities. In doing so, the authors created a

distinction between Judaism's moral and ritual laws and accepted only the elements of tradition which elevated the spirit. The movement's first platform ushered in a stage known as classical Reform, during which men did not wear *kippot* or *tallitot*, prayer was in the vernacular, Hebrew was uncommon, and ritual and ceremonial observance was not emphasized.

By 1937, with anti-Semitism on the rise in both Europe and America and the Jewish resettlement of Palestine underway, the time was appropriate for the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) to author a new platform. The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism reflected the state of world Jewry and the realization that the hopeful messianism of 1885 was not a reality. Reform leaders admitted that classical Reform Judaism had stripped away too much ritual and ceremony from Judaism, leaving a void. This second platform recognized that in addition to moral and spiritual demands, Jewish life called for ritual practice. The document also bears witness to the rising sense of ethnic identity and Jewish peoplehood which, in turn, furthered Reform's return to tradition. During the same period, surveys show an eagerness for more traditional practices among congregants and rabbis.

By the 1970's, there was a widespread acceptance of neo-Reform, which is documented in the Centenary Perspective of 1976. During this period, especially after the publication of the *Gates of Prayer*, neo-Reform flowered and

led to new ways of expressing Jewish identification. *Kipppot* and *tallitot* became common in synagogues, Hebrew became an integral part of the worship service, and volumes of books were printed to empower Reform Jews to observe ritual and ceremony in a knowledgeable way. While the traditional practices were reintroduced, new and innovative ceremonies also were created.

The development of neo-Reform testifies to the ability of the Reform movement to adapt in order to meet the needs of its members. If, as Israel Zangwill opined, a religion is only as alive as its ability to change, then Reform Judaism appears well-prepared to face the dawn of the 21st century.

ENDNOTE

1. *Jewish Wisdom: A Treasury of Proverbs, Maxims, Aphorisms, Wise Sayings, and Memeorable Quotations*, compiled by David C. Gross and Esther R. Gross (Ballantine Books, 1992), 23.

CHAPTER 1

RELIGIOUS REFORMS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

THE ROOTS OF REFORM IN EUROPE

While Reform Judaism is aptly described as an American development, its beginnings are in Western Europe. In order to place Reform in its proper context, it is important to analyze and understand its European roots.

Before there was an actual Reform movement, there was a long period of reform, centered in Germany. The prevailing liberalism, Protestant influence, and relative freedom of the German culture, coupled with the existence of scholars who took a critical approach to Judaism, created an environment where change could begin.

Moses Mendelssohn, an early reformer who greatly influenced the German reformers who followed him, helped facilitate the transition of the Jew from ghetto isolation into the mainstream of European civilization. Mendelssohn was also the first thinker to recognize and wrestle with the basic problem that inevitably confronted the Jew once the transition was made: how to maintain loyalty to Jewish tradition and affirm its continuing validity in the face of the constant challenges posed by philosophies and ideologies of the modern world.

In his book, *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism,* published in 1783, Mendelssohn argued for religious freedom from interference by the state, but also for

freedom from interference by the state, but also for safeguards against the coercive power of religious authority. Since religious sentiment and loyalty could not be forced, he condemned the use of excommunication, which the Jewish religious authorities used to discipline dissidents.[1] Mendelssohn was not a reformer of ritual, however. He maintained the divine origin of Torah, upheld the biblical laws regulating the life of the individual Jew, and maintained the authority of rabbinic Judaism.[2] Yet Mendelssohn played a vital role in the religious reform which would follow him. In order for there to be ritual reform, the Jew must be free to profess heterodox doctrines. Mendelssohn challenged the prevailing system of religious authority and paved the way for modern Jews after him to affirm their religious faith yet participate fully in secular culture, leaving a legacy that is still felt. The task of reforming ritual and other aspects of Judaism fell to later reformers who built upon the freedoms Mendelssohn sought.

In the kingdom of Westphalia, a French possession, the first real reforms took place. Israel Jacobson, often considered the founder of the Reform movement, was a latter-day court Jew and wealthy German businessman who served as the president of the Wesphalia Jewish community.[3] Jacobson was an active and energetic philanthropist, financier, and Jewish communal worker in Seesen, a small town in central Germany. In 1801, he established a Jewish day school in

which secular subjects were taught, and in 1810, adjacent to his school, he built the first Reform temple. The Seesen Temple, as it was called, featured an organ and a choir that was made up of students of the school. Through his business travels, Jacobson noted the estrangement of many Jews from the faith. In the temple he founded, he worked to improve the aesthetics of Jewish worship so as to make the service more attractive to a population of Jews that found many of the prayers unintelligible because they were in Hebrew not German and the manner of conducting the service too disorderly.[4] He continued to use the traditional liturgy, but raised the decorum and dignity of the worship service by insisting praying be done quietly, as a congregation -- not even the Torah was chanted. Jacobson introduced German hymns and prayers and made a German sermon a regular part of the worship.[5]

Rabbi and historian David Philipson considered Jacobson the pioneer of the Reform movement based on his effort and success in making services attractive to many of his contemporaries. Jacobson demonstrated that Judaism could be given a public expression appealing to the current generation of worshippers. Jacobson, who was not a rabbi, is an example of how the Reform movement emanated from the people and not from the theologians of the time.[6]

When the Westphalian kingdom collapsed in 1815, Jacobson moved to Berlin. Initially, he opened a private temple in his home, but he moved the services into a larger

home of another community leader, Jacob Beer, when roomier quarters were needed.[7] In Berlin, Jacobson initiated further reforms, such as a two-hour Shabbat morning service which did not contain either the *musaf* service or the repetition of the *Amidah*. The Berlin Temple printed its own prayer book in 1817 containing some German prayers and hymns.[8] Berlin reformers were dealt a severe blow in 1823, when Jewish traditionalists convinced the conservative Prussian government to close the Beer temple.[9]

While government restrictions spelled the end of Berlin reforms, no such constraints existed in the free city of Hamburg. Under the leadership of Eduard Kley, who had been a preacher in the Beer temple, the Hamburg temple instituted systematic reforms. As in Seesen and Berlin, the Hamburg temple featured German prayers, a German sermon, organ accompaniment and choral singing, but the Hamburg reforms went even further. The Hamburg temple prayer book represents the first comprehensive Reform liturgy. For the first time a group also printed a prayer book that read left to right, like the vernacular books of the times, and many prayers contained both Hebrew and German texts. The reformers took the additional step of replacing the concept of a personal Messiah who would lead Jews back to Palestine with the more general concept of redemption for all of humankind, again reflecting the desire of the Jews to be seen as part of the larger society. The Hamburg service also went beyond its Berlin model in that references to the

rebuilding of Zion and the reinstitution of the sacrifices were tempered, the Haftarah reading was omitted altogether so as to allow more time for the sermon, and the triennial cycle was introduced for the Torah readings.[10]

A new generation of rabbis who had received university education appeared during the 1820's and 1830's, most notably Abraham Geiger, Samuel Holdheim, David Einhorn, Samuel Adler, and Ludwig Philippson. This second generation of reformers was greatly influenced by the scholarly study of the Jewish religion and people, known as the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The ideal of an impartial, scholarly approach to the past was a product of the German universities. Geiger, for example, explained that divine revelation was an on-going, continuous process and the Bible, no less than the Talmud, had to be understood as a product of its time. Geiger's significance lay in his effort to historicize and relativize the most sacred Jewish text of all. It is for this reason that Geiger is considered the person, who more than any other, created an ideology for the movement.[11]

The fruits of the emerging crop of young rabbis were realized during the 1840's, a decade of radical progress. Three major conferences were held between 1844 and 1846. As Rabbi Joseph Maier expressed at the conclusion of the first conference, the primary tasks of the rabbis were to develop and maintain Judaism and to revitalize the religious service.[12] Although the conferences achieved less than

their originators had hoped for, they were nonetheless landmarks in Jewish history.

The first conference, convened in 1844 in Brunswick by Ludwig Philippson, served to clarify and direct the goals of Reform. Ideals were transformed into action at the second conference the following year in Frankfurt, which was devoted to liturgical issues. At that conference, a significant decision was made that *halakhah* did not require Hebrew in prayer. However, the attendees advised that for practical, subjective reasons, the *Barekhu*, *Shema*, Torah, and final three blessings of the *Amidah* should be read in Hebrew. While the liberal rabbis approved the use of the organ and the vernacular in worship, they decided to eliminate repetitious prayers as well as those calling for the coming of a personal Messiah to deliver the Jews out of exile. In place of the traditional view of the Messiah, they substituted a belief in the Messianic Age of peace and justice for all humankind. The Frankfurt conference will always be notable in the annals of Reform Judaism for two reasons: the progressive discussions on liturgy and Reform's intent and purpose.[13]

The final rabbinical conference of this period was held in 1846 in Breslau. The chief interest of the conference centered around Shabbat observance. The reformers adopted a statement which began with the need to restore "a worthy celebration of Shabbat as a day of rest and consecration."[14] While they emphasized the need to heighten consciousness of

the sanctity of Shabbat through communal worship and home observance, some concessions were made to secular culture by approving of acts which would foster the religious spirit of Shabbat, such as riding to synagogue or playing an organ -- acts previously forbidden on Shabbat because they were regarded as work. The rabbis also decided to eliminate the second day of festivals, shorten the *shiva* period from seven to three days, and regulate the rite of circumcision so as to make the procedure safer and more hygienic. The conference adjourned before action could be taken on the committee report recommending equal religious rights for women, but the idea seems to have had wide support among the participants.[15]

The twenty years following the failed 1848 Revolution in Germany were not a favorable time for religious liberalism. All of German Jewry suffered from the newly repressive political atmosphere. As in the 1820's and 1830's, some German governments once again regarded religious change among Jews with suspicion and displeasure.[16] Among the German rabbis who emigrated to the United States in the wake of these developments were Samuel Adler and David Einhorn, who had played important roles in the European Reform movement.[17]

Although it took more than twenty years to create a new platform for discussion, two synods were held between 1869 and 1871. The synods approved and expanded earlier decisions, and the participants decided to liberalize the

role of women in religious matters. The synods declared that women were eligible to serve as witnesses in ritual matters, encouraged the bride to participate more actively in the wedding service, and loosened marriage regulations.[18]

By the 1860's, the locus of reform activity had shifted to the United States. Due to the large-scale emigration of rabbis and lay Jews during the latter half of the century and a conducive atmosphere, Reform Judaism became a powerful and growing movement in American Jewry. Unhindered by government intervention, Reform Judaism would transform the religious character of Jewish America.

REFORM IN AMERICA

Reform Judaism found a receptive audience in America in the 1840's among German immigrants who were eager to preserve their Jewish traditions but also to assimilate into American culture. These new Americans found services in Hebrew and many of the old Sephardic traditions inconsistent with their new lives. The first Reform congregation was established in 1841 in Charleston, South Carolina after two decades of slow change. That change began in 1825, when a group of congregants at Beth Elohim asked for more decorum in the service to more closely parallel the more austere services of their Protestant counterparts, an English sermon expounding on Jewish texts and principles, and a more abbreviated service.[19]

However, the bulk of the congregation did not agree that changes were necessary, leading the would-be reformers to break away and form their own group called the Reformed Society of Israelites. The Society did not last long, but change would nonetheless come to the Jews of Charleston. In 1836, Beth Elohim hired as their *chazan* Gustavus Poznanski, thinking he would uphold their Old World traditions. However, Poznanski had other ideas, introducing greater decorum and reverence into the worship service. A turning point came in 1838 when the synagogue burned down. At the suggestion of Poznanski, as well as with support of a substantial group of congregants, the synagogue was rebuilt with an organ, which at that time was considered one of the true signs of Reform. As a result, some of the traditionalists broke off and formed their own congregation called Shearith Israel.[20]

Beth Elohim has long been considered to be the first Reform congregation in America, making Charleston the first city with two synagogues of different denominations. Although not all of Charleston's Jews were ready to accept the tenets of Reform, the formation of Beth Elohim was a significant step in the progression of the Reform Movement in America. The same tension between reformers and those seeking to keep more traditions that was played out in Charleston in the early days of the Reform Movement is still alive in many of today's synagogues and communities.

Before the year 1840, the Charleston congregation was the only congregation to take an interest in the Reform movement.[21] But by the decade of the 1840's, the impulse for religious reform had begun to spread in America. New congregations were organized based on the principles of Reform. By 1855, there were congregations with varying degrees of reformed ritual in Charleston, Baltimore, New York, Albany, and Cincinnati. In succeeding years, the number and size of Reform congregations increased at a rapid pace and reforms became more radical. Michael Meyer, author of *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, attributes this phenomenon to the influence of both the German and American cultures. An influx of immigrants to America increased the Jewish population from about 5,000 in 1825 to about 250,000 in 1875, with the vast majority coming from German-speaking lands. In the forties and fifties, a significant number of German immigrants came to America with some degree of familiarity with moderate reforms -- a more decorous synagogue, vernacular sermons, and a slightly abbreviated ritual. These new Americans sought the same kind of reformed ritual with which they were familiar in Germany and found in America a lay impetus for religious reform already present.[22]

A significant milestone in the development of American Reform occurred in 1846 when Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was elected rabbi of Beth El in Albany, New York. More than anyone else, Wise is credited with stimulating, unifying,

and giving direction to American Reform.[23] Eight years later, Wise left Albany to become the rabbi of Bene Yeshurun in Cincinnati. Almost as soon as he settled in Cincinnati, Wise began publishing his English weekly, *The Israelite*, and a year later he also put out *Die Deborah*, a German periodical. The periodicals helped to further communicate Wise's call for reforms and plans to unify American Judaism.

In 1855, Wise called a rabbinical conference in Cleveland to begin forming a union of congregations and to create a common American Jewish prayer book. The success of the conference was short-lived and limited, and it highlighted the polarization between traditionalists and hard-line reformers. Suspicions on both sides were unrelieved when the moderate Wise was elected president of the conference. It quickly became clear that consensus between the two sides was impossible and that the conference was doomed to failure unless compromises were made. A skillful mediator, Wise walked the fine line of a master compromiser. In an effort to disarm the traditionalists, Wise proposed that the delegates agree on the divinity of the Bible and the obligatory authority of the Talmud.[24] The traditionalists, however, were not his only adversaries.

Shortly after the conference, Einhorn, who had played an important role in the European Reform movement, emerged as Wise's most staunch opponent among the more radical reformers. The two leaders of early Reform were a study in contrasts. Whereas Wise was in his late twenties when he

immigrated to America, Einhorn was already forty-six years old when he assumed the pulpit in Baltimore. Einhorn's Reform philosophy had been shaped in Europe and would not change significantly in the United States. While Wise was affable, dynamic, and often careless in expression, Einhorn was reserved, scholarly, intensely serious, and careful to express himself articulately.[25]

Their theological conceptions were different as well. Wise was not consistent in his views. He was determined above all to establish a strong and unified Judaism in America and was quite ready to be flexible in order to reach his goal. Wise, however, would not compromise his belief that God's will had been directly revealed to Moses and that Moses himself, not later writers, had composed virtually all of the Pentateuch.[26]

Einhorn was as immovable in his dedication to radical reforms as Wise was to creation of a unified American Judaism. Central to Einhorn's theology was the belief that revelation was inherent in the human spirit from the beginning of humankind rather than from the giving of the Torah at Sinai. He wrote in 1857 that "Judaism is older than the Israelites; as pure as humanity, as the emanation of the inborn divine spirit, it is as old as the human race." Einhorn also believed that universalism was the essence of Reform Judaism. Judaism was "not a religion, but a religious people, that was newly created at Sinai, a priest people called upon, first of all, to impress the

ancient divine teaching more deeply upon itself and then to bring it to universal dominion."[27] Einhorn urged his congregants not to fear the term "radical reform." "Radical Reform wants a Judaism that bears the royal messianic mantle," he told his congregants. Referring to Wise, Einhorn called moderate Reform "A Judaism swathed in Orthodox and reformist rags."[28] In an essay on Einhorn, Kaufmann Kohler wrote, "Both conservatives and liberals dreaded the radical reformer who was so fearless in living up to his convictions and in condemning hypocrisy, whether in the pulpit or in daily life."[29] Einhorn's radical Reform, by nature, was uncompromising. The growing rift between the more radical eastern reformers, led by Einhorn, and the more moderate western reformers, led by Wise, would last until the Pittsburgh Conference of 1885.

Due to the schism between the two camps, it is not surprising that a unified prayer book was not produced. Before the end of the 1850's, Wise and Einhorn would produce separate liturgies. Einhorn's prayer book, *Olat Tamid*, was first published in 1856 and was widely acclaimed in the German-speaking Jewish communities in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and St. Louis.[30] The prayer book, which opened left to right, had gone through three printings and had been translated into English by 1872.

For his prayer book, Einhorn drew upon European Reform precedents, modified the Hebrew text, and provided some of

his own nonliteral translations. Reflecting his own religious beliefs, Einhorn left out petitions for the Messianic restoration of the Jewish state in Palestine and return to the Temple cult. He expressed his commitment to Israel's priestly and messianic role among the nations and transformed the concept of resurrection into immortality of the soul.

Wise's *Minhag America* appeared in 1857 and became the more widely used prayer book, especially in the Midwest and South, where his influence was the greatest. Wise claimed that by 1874 one hundred congregations used his prayer book. The dominance of *Minhag America* is partly explained by Wise's vision of creating a prayer book for all of American Judaism, not just Reform. Thus, Wise wanted only moderate changes in the liturgy and retained the Hebrew. The prayer book came in three editions: one had only Hebrew text, one had Hebrew and English, and one had Hebrew and German. In the dual-language prayer books, the Hebrew opened from the right, and the vernacular opened from the left. By shuttling back and forth between the Hebrew and the translation, each congregation could compose its preferred mixture.

Like *Olat Tamid*, *Minhag America* eliminated the traditional elements that were inconsistent with Reform ideology, such as the restoration of the sacrificial cult and the Messianic return to Jerusalem, and like Einhorn, Wise abbreviated the service, though less radically.[31] To

avoid the controversial issue of bodily resurrection, Wise printed intact only the Hebrew text, even though the prayer was not in keeping with Reform's ideology. Wise was primarily concerned with creating a prayerbook for all of American Judaism, so he was willing to sacrifice unity of ideology.

A significant contingent of radical Reform rabbis opposed Wise and his moderate approach to religious reform, and they called a conference in 1869 to concur on basic principles which would distinguish Reform from Orthodoxy. Even though he was not part of the conference's inner circle, Wise attended.[32] The conference is important because it was the precursor of the Pittsburgh Platform which came twenty years later and established the principles of classical Reform. The participants at the 1869 conference composed a set of Reform principles that would become the cornerstone of the movement. Among the positions taken were: opposition to Jewish nationalism, support of the mission of Israel, abrogation of distinctive priestly rites and the idea of immortality, downgrading the use of Hebrew, and equalizing the status of the woman at a marriage service. Five Philadelphia attendees, including Kohler and Wise, went on to help write the landmark platform of 1885.[33]

The 1870's was a decade of building for the Reform movement. In 1870 thirteen rabbis, mostly from the Midwest, met in Cleveland to revise Wise's *Minhag America*. At a larger gathering of rabbis in Cincinnati a year later, an

outline was produced for a rabbinical curriculum and the assembly voted to create a Union of Israelite Congregations in America. Two years later, in 1873, Wise's vision of a union came to fruition when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was established in Cincinnati. Thirty-four congregations from thirteen states were charter members and by 1879 the Union increased to 118 congregations, half of the known congregations in the United States.[34] The next landmark in Reform's development occurred in 1875 when the Hebrew Union College opened as a seminary for training Reform rabbis in America. During the period of organizational growth, from 1869 to 1885, no conference of American Reformers was held. As Reform Judaism approached the mid-1880's, rabbis across the country would recognize the need to better define their movement and its tenets.

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33. David Polish, "The Changing and the Constant in the Reform Rabbinate," in *The American Rabbinate*, ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck, (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1985) 180.

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CHAPTER 2

THE AGE OF CLASSICAL REFORM IN AMERICA

THE PITTSBURGH PLATFORM

In 1885 Kaufmann Kohler, one of the leading proponents of American Reform, addressed a letter to his colleagues calling on them to meet for a conference in Pittsburgh, "for the purpose of discussing the present state of American Judaism, its pending issues, and its requirements, and of uniting upon such plans and practical measures as are demanded by the hour."[1] Nineteen rabbis answered the call in an attempt to lay down a set of defining and definitive principles which would serve as a foundation for American Reform Judaism for more than fifty years.

The conference honored Isaac Mayer Wise, the titular head of the Reform Movement, by electing him president, but Kohler was clearly in charge of the proceedings. Unlike the principles espoused in Philadelphia in 1869, the Pittsburgh Platform was not in essence a document of rejection. As Michael Meyer writes in *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, "Its main purpose is not to declare where Reform departs from Orthodoxy (though that is not entirely lacking), but what it seeks to affirm."[2] The platform begins with a universalist statement, recognizing "in every religion an

attempt to grasp the infinite." Judaism, however, "presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages." While the Jews preserved a God-idea which was a "central religious truth for the human race," the statement is important because it declares that the philosophical progress of Jewish teachers is to be understood in relation to the intellectual level of the society in which the Jews lived.

This idea is further clarified in the platform's paragraph on the Bible. The rabbis describe the Bible as, "the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as priest of the One God." According to the conferees, the Bible is neither a secular narrative nor the word of God from Sinai. As a "most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction," the Scriptures represent the narrative of a people inspired to undertake the religious task of becoming holy.

An optimistic rationalism, prevalent during the latter half of the nineteenth century, infuses the platform. The United States' acceptance of Jewry, led the early reformers to believe humankind would become increasingly tolerant and democratic. A key example of the influence of rationalism was the platform's reconciliation of science and theology. The reformers

were concerned with insuring that Reform Judaism appeared consistent with modernity, so they explained that Judaism and modern science complemented each other:

> We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domains of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age.

The rabbis also believed that Judaism was a "progressive religion," committed to the "postulates of reason." Indeed, a dominant theme throughout the document is modernity, as witnessed by the many appearances in the text of the words "modern," "modern times," "today," "our age," and "progressive."

Another sign of the rabbis' interest in creating a thoroughly modern Judaism is their rejection of all the laws which appeared foreign to their American sensibilities: laws that regulate diet, priestly purity and dress. In this respect, the platform represents a landmark because of its clear summary of the Reform rabbinate's approach to Biblical and Talmudic law:

> We recognize, in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and to-day we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

Like reformers since the time of Mendelssohn, the rabbis in Pittsburgh distinguished between the ritual and

moral laws and judged the moral laws to be of more lasting importance. The criteria for adhering to ritual laws were whether they elevated and sanctified the lives of Jews as well as whether they conformed to modern sensibilities. While the reformers saw ritual laws as a means to an end (a higher degree of holiness), the ethical laws were ends in themselves.

The document did not discuss only internal issues in the Jewish community. The authors were acutely aware of Judaism's role within the greater contemporary society and envisioned an ever-improving state of harmony between peoples:

> 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 men.

In *Response to Modernity*, Meyer explains that like other Americans, the rabbis, "were caught up in the resurgence of hopefulness that swept across the United States" after the Civil War.[3] What distinguished them from other Americans was that they linked the glorious future of humanity with their own religious messianism.

In keeping with a universal perspective, the authors boldly announced that they consider Israel, "no longer a nation, but a religious community." This rejection of ethnic bonds between Jews characterized Reform Judaism

until the middle of the twentieth century, when the creation of the state of Israel changed that perspective.

In sum, the conference in Pittsburgh produced a statement which reflected the heritage of Reform Jewish ideas developed over nearly a century by individual thinkers in Europe and America. While the platform was never adopted by any official institutions such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), or the Hebrew Union College (HUC), it was broadly accepted by Reform rabbis and congregations. The document remained the only official statement of Reform ideology passed by a conference of American rabbis until the Columbus Platform of 1937.

Just after the turn of the century, David Philipson summed up the state of Reform practice in the wake of the Pittsburgh Platform:

> Sufficient to say that now, owing to these reforms in the ritual, the service in the reform congregations is decorous, uplifting, and reverential. The chief liturgical and ritual reforms may be summed up as consisting in the reading of prayers in the vernacular...the introduction of the organ with mixed choirs, the abolition of the women's gallery and the introduction of family pews, the worship with uncovered heads, the substitution of the confirmation ceremony for boys and girls in the place of the Bar Mitzvah for boys alone, the abolition of the calling of the Torah, the selling of *Mitzvot* and like practices that had become abuses, the abolition of the second day holidays. These reforms are now accepted as a matter of course, and show how completely Judaism in America has been modernized.[4]

Later, the period between the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 and the Columbus Platform of 1937 became known as Reform's classical phase, to distinguish it from the neo-Reform which arose in reaction to it. Division between the two periods, however, is not clearly marked, with elements of classical Reform practiced before 1885 and after 1937. Contrary to the impression of many then and now, the movement's formative principles as stated in the Pittsburgh Platform were not monolithic. Rather, the governing trends were fluid and a tension always existed between the dominant majority and the articulate minority.[5]

MIGRATION FROM EUROPE

The demographics of American Jewry went through a radical transformation during the nineteenth century. As waves of European immigrants came to the shores of America, the demography, social structure, cultural life, and communal order of the American Jewish community was radically altered. In 1830, the Jewish population in America numbered 6,000, just .05 percent of the general population. Between 1830 and 1880 the face of American Jewry changed, as more than 200,000 German Jews immigrated to America, bringing with them a predilection to Reform Judaism.[6] In 1880, during the beginning of classical Reform Judaism, perhaps one-sixth of the 250,000 Jews in

America were of east European descent, but the demography of American Judaism would change significantly during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Jewish historian Arthur A. Goren attributes the massive influx of east European Jews to America to the dire economic and political situation of the Jews in their native lands. The Russian pogroms in 1881 and 1882, which followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, made for perilous living conditions, while the infamous May Laws of 1882 and their economic policy of pauperization made it all but impossible for Jews to survive economically.[7]

By 1900 the Jewish population in America had increased to more than a million, and by 1920 it had more than tripled to over 3.3 million, with east European immigrants accounting for about five-sixths of the Jewish population.[8]

Despite the change in demographics, Reform congregations remained almost exclusively German during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The arrival of East European Jews, however, speedily reduced the relative proportion of German Jews in America and along with it, the relative influence of Reform institutions. The German Jews, who were largely Reform Jews, were losing their hegemony -- both in terms of demographics and community leadership.[9]

The Reform community responded to the East European Jews with ambivalence, in large part because the newcomers

were so different from themselves. The immigrants included atheists and socialists, Zionists and Orthodox Jews. The immigrants spoke Yiddish and possessed their own cultures, thereby negating the Reform principle that Jews were different only in religion. As a result, many Reform Jews, including the movement's top leaders, perceived the immigrants as uncouth, un-Americanized greenhorns. Isaac Mayer Wise dismissed the East Europeans' ideologies as, "the idiosyncrasies of those late immigrants."[10]

Despite the contempt the East European Jews aroused in American Reform Jews, in *Response to Modernity*, Meyer explains that they endeavored to help their brethren out of a sense of obligation, by fighting against immigration quotas and restrictions and contributing to charities active on New York's Lower East Side, where many immigrants settled. Another early response to the immigrant situation was to "convert" the newcomers to Reform, by teaching them the necessity of becoming active participants in the modern world and sharing with them the benefits of Americanization. One method of Reform outreach was to publish in Yiddish various pamphlets explaining the principles of Reform Judaism.[11]

It is not surprising, considering the vast cultural differences, that the early East European immigrants kept their distance from Reform congregations. First generation immigrants found little that was appealing in

Reform, and only occasionally did the second generation turn to it. It was not until after World War One that descendants of immigrants entered the Reform movement in large numbers.[12]

Individual rabbis, however, made an effort to make the newcomers feel welcome. Horace J. Wolf deplored the fact that the Reform temple had become "a class institution" and suggested that its motto instead should be "Here let no Jew feel himself strange."[13] Others, like William Rosenau, in 1904, informed their colleagues that the Reform movement had much to gain from the immigrant Jew.[14]

As the years went by, exposure to the immigrant perspective deepened the Jewish consciousness of the Reform community, making the Reform Jew more aware of the fullness of Jewish heritage and the importance of interacting with the non-Reform Jewish community. In 1920 Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron commented that the immigrant Jew had, "roused the older Jewish residents out of their smug complacency into a consciousness that all's not well in the Reform Jewish camp." Lazaron explained that the immigrant Jew helped clarify were Reform Judaism had been remiss:

> The immigrant Jew has made us realize that the lack of understanding of our history, our literature, our hopes and ideals, the lack of contact with the great stream of Jewish life, has caused the indifference among us; has cooled that Jewish enthusiasm which, if the knowledge of our message, if

the appreciation of our purpose were present, would charge American Jewry with a new vitality."[15]

The addition of more East European immigrants to Reform congregations changed the demographic make-up of the Reform movement. By 1930, almost half of the movement's total membership claimed east European ancestry.[16] As many third generation descendants of immigrants joined Reform congregations, they brought with them a nostalgia and desire for ceremonial observance and traditional forms of worship. This pressure from within was one factor in the renewed interest in Jewish practice during the first half of the twentieth century.

A NEW REFORM LITURGY

One of the hallmarks of classical Reform Judaism was the *Union Prayer Book* (*UPB*), which was adopted as the official liturgy of American Reform Judaism in 1892. The *UPB* was tinkered with over the years, but it was not fundamentally altered for eighty years, spanning two Reform platforms. Consistent in its universal and rational approach to Judaism, the *UPB* effectively expressed the mind-set expounded in the Pittsburgh Platform. The prayer book opened from left to right and the preponderance of the liturgy was written in English. Since David Einhorn's style of liturgy was more popular in Reform congregations than the more conservative liturgy of

Isaac Mayer Wise, the *UPB* was patterned after Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*. The use of Hebrew was minimal, the style of translations was elevated, sometimes even poetic, and services were shortened to meet the desires of the Reform populace.[17]

An example of the emphasis on English is the omission of most of the Hebrew from the middle blessings of the *Amidah* as well as a mostly English *Aleinu*. In place of the traditional Hebrew *Aleinu* is an English reading emphasizing the prayer's universal aspects. In a nod to tradition, the *UPB Aleinu* concludes in Hebrew with *Va'anachnu kor'im*.

In keeping with classical Reform philosophy, the *UPB* de-emphasizes the particularistic elements of the traditional liturgy. In the paragraph after the *V'ahavta*, the reference to Israel's redemption from Egypt is eliminated, and in the *Tzur Yisrael* the prayer is reformulated to reflect a universalist message ("O rock of Israel, be pleased to redeem those who are oppressed, and delivered those that are persecuted.")[18] In the traditional *Kaddish*, the concluding line calling for peace upon Israel is paraphrased in English to read, "May the Father of peace send peace to all troubled souls, and comfort all the bereaved among us."[19]

The *UPB* also reflects the early reformers' interest in synagogue decorum. It is evident that congregational participation was not highly valued by the composers of

the prayerbook, because the rabbi conducted most of the readings, communal and responsive readings were minimal, and instead of communal singing, the music was provided by a choir and instrumental accompanists. Other characteristics of the *UPB* include frequent use of the word "amen," and references to the rabbi as "minister."

Part II of the *UPB*, the prayer book for the High Holy Days, was printed in 1894 and contains significantly more Hebrew passages, including a Hebrew variation of the *Aleinu*.[20] In the Rosh Hashanah morning service, instructions appear for the *shofar* to be sounded between creative versions of the *Malchuyot*, *Zichronot*, and *Shofarot* themes, yet the traditional blessings recited before the blasts are not included. This modification is significant because many congregations by this time had replaced the cacophonous sound of the ram's horn by the more controlled sound of a trumpet, as indicated in Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*,[21] or were merely simulating the sound of the *shofar* on the organ.[22]

Classical Reform ideology is exemplified by a unique feature in the *UPB*: an appendix of brief readings in English from the Pentateuch and the Prophets or Writings, designed to replace the more extensive Torah service. It is significant that the abbreviated readings did not correspond to the weekly portions assigned by tradition. Instead, the readings were chosen by content -- the meaningful moral or religious message -- and reflected

Reform's desire to the rid the synagogue of passages which dwelt on issues such as priestly law, the sacrificial cult and ritualistic purity.

The issue of selecting Torah and Haftarah portions, known as *sedras*, that differed from the rest of the Jewish world became an issue during the first decade of the twentieth century. At the 1904 CCAR convention, Rabbi Joseph Friedlander stated: "There is something in the *Sedras*, that has a unifying form between the Jews of all countries and all shades of opinion. I believe the weekly portions, as now arranged in the *Union Prayer Book* are a mistake. It makes a distinction between orthodoxy and reform."[23] After a short discussion at the convention, Rabbi Maurice Harris concluded that the Reform rabbinate preferred the traditional reading of the weekly *sedra*.[24] In his speech before the convention, Harris expressed his conviction that from each "time-honored" *sedra*, an appropriate lesson could be drawn.[25]

The 1904 discussion is significant because it represents the first effort by Reform rabbis to reject an established and accepted innovation, and to return to the previously discarded, traditional form.[26] Through the desire to harmonize community rituals with the greater Jewish world and the determination to derive meaning and relevance from venerated traditions, the CCAR took the first step toward a general return to tradition. While the decision to return to the traditional observance of

the weekly Torah portion did not represent a major alteration of the synagogue worship service, the motivations underlying that decision would guide many of the movement's decisions throughout the twentieth century.

The *Union Hymnal* and the *Union Haggadah*, also products of the CCAR, helped shape the classical Reform era. The *Union Hymnal*, published in 1897, consisted mostly of English hymns on universal themes, a few of which were borrowed from the hymnal of the Episcopalians.[27] In 1907 the *Union Haggadah* appeared, providing Reform Jews with a Passover *seder* for the home which had eliminated all passages expressing cruelty or vengeance (the ten Plagues, for example), or which violated sober rationality (the opening of the door for Elijah). Despite the changes, the *Union Haggadah* included a number of the ceremony's traditional symbols, contained a number of the familiar Passover songs, and even added a new Hebrew *piyyut*. While the Haggadah reflected an appreciation of ritual and symbol, it also indicated the growing attention paid to home observance. Historian Michael Meyer writes that by the first decade of the twentieth century, Reform Judaism was giving more attention to home observance.[28] In addition to its Haggadah, in 1911, the movement also published a special prayer book containing Sabbath and festival rituals for the home.

As early as 1930, both laity and rabbis felt dissatisfied with the *UPB*. In a paper delivered at the 1930 CCAR convention, Solomon Freehof wrote of a "widespread revolt against the *Union Prayer Book* coming from both laymen and rabbis."[29] He offered to relieve the sameness and boredom that worshippers felt by infusing the prayer book with original *piyyutim* and instilling the "living creativeness and the blessed variety" once provided by the literature discarded in the preparation of the *UPB*.

Others saw additional problems with the Reform worship service. Israel Bettan, professor of homiletics at HUC, believed that the problem stemmed from the lack of congregational participation in the service. The laity grew tired of the liturgy because they, as worshippers, had been relegated to the status of spectators and thus tended to listen to services rather than participate. Bettan felt that if congregants were schooled in the use of the book and encouraged to participate joyfully in the worship service, then they would learn to love the book, and it would steadily become "more precious" in their sight. He suggested increasing the number of unison and responsive readings to permit fuller participation of the entire congregation .[30]

Bettan also questioned the classical Reform predilection to downplay aspects of Jewish particularism for the sake of emphasizing Judaism's universalist

elements. Whereas earlier Reform leaders had praised the *UPB* for its accessibility to Americans of all faiths, Bettan reminded his colleagues that the prayer book "is more than a manual of public worship; it is a manual of Jewish public worship." A central purpose of communal worship, he declared, must be to reinforce the awareness of group identity, of common beliefs and shared experiences.

> In fact, it is the function of the prayer book, among others, to strengthen in us the consciousness that we are a separate and unique group; that we are a religious people, held together by the ties of a common history and faith and destiny; that we are the direct descendants of the patriarchs, and the rightful heirs to the noble legacy of prophet and psalmist. To be sure, it teaches us to pray to the Master of all the worlds, the Creator of all men; but it insists that the Lord of the universe is none other than the God of the fathers, and the Father of all men is none other than the Shepherd of Israel.[31]

While Bettan found the *UPB* lacked identification between the worshiper and the liturgy, another rabbi and HUC professor, Samuel S. Cohon, found other faults with the prayer book. He called for a liturgy which would be more distinctly theistic than the present *UPB*, appealing to the omniscient, all-pervading, all-sustaining providential God. Cohon gave a merciless critique of the UPB to the conference in 1928. "The *Union Prayer Book* unconsciously reflects the present apathy and skepticism toward prayer," he said. Cohon found the prayerbook hobbled by its nineteenth-century rationalism. More often

than not, he felt, the prayers exhorted the individual to perform moral acts rather than appealing fervently for divine assistance. They were more an internal dialogue than a "communion between finite man and the infinite God." Petitionary prayers were toned down to avoid intellectual embarrassment. The liturgy was not "a cry for health, for sustenance and for relief from pain, sorrow and distress," but only "a vague meditation on an ethical theme." Cohon concluded that the *UPB* "conveys the impression that it was especially written for a people composed of retired philanthropists and amateur social workers."[32]

HOLIDAY AND LIFE-CYCLE OBSERVANCE

The anti-ritual disposition of the early Reform movement would dominate through the first quarter of the twentieth century, but the beginnings of a change could be seen as early as 1896, when Rabbi Aaron Chorin delivered a paper to the CCAR titled "Our Shifting Attitudes." A member of HUC's first graduating class, Chorin advocated giving "full attention" to festivals and ceremonies which had been deemed worthy of retention.[33] Even Kaufmann Kohler modified his earlier anti-tradition posture and echoed Chorin's concern in 1905 by asserting the need for ceremonial practice in Reform Judaism, and acknowledging that ceremonies have the capacity to enrich and embellish

modern life. Kohler stated that doctrine alone, however lofty, does not stir the soul and bring it in touch with the higher realms of holiness and love the way religious acts do.[34]

The desire to reclaim certain traditional elements which had been discarded led to a revision in 1923 of the *Union Haggadah*, which had been compiled just sixteen years earlier. The revised Haggadah included "The Four Sons" in Hebrew and English, a ceremony of opening the door for Elijah, more complete versions of *Dayenu* and the *Birkat Hamazon*, and the Hillel sandwich. What had been condemned in 1907 as too playful, disjointed, and disturbing to the sense of devotion was viewed later as creating a positive mosaic of moods and sources.

Just as the revised Haggadah was intended to revive interest in the Passover *seder* in the home, as early as 1911, renewed observance of holidays in the synagogue became an issue. David Philipson claimed he helped revive the observance of Sukkot in his congregation by creating a service that incorporated a processional of children. Philipson described a service which included decorations: the pulpit and platform were adorned with fruits, vegetables, and flowers of the season. A beautifully decorated *sukkah* was built on the platform. After the Sukkot evening service, the religious school children entered singing a hymn of praise. Every class joined the processional, bringing fruit and traditional Sukkot

symbols like the etrog, the alm branch, the myrtle and the willow. Philipson maintained that celebrating the harvest festival was as important to modern, American Jews as it was to their ancestors in Israel, but that the ancient way of observance was no longer possible. Thus, he advocated changing the mode of observance so as to encourage and retain the festival.[35]

While Philipson's Sukkot ceremony cannot be described as a return to tradition since it consists of a ritual that had not previously existed in traditional Judaism, it does represent a desire to recreate interest in observing a holiday that was widely disregarded in Reform circles. Consistent with the style of standard worship services in Reform congregations, the Sukkot ceremony did not call for any congregational participation other than the children's processional. The beauty of holiday was to be experienced via one's seat in the congregation.

One area Reform rabbis did not see any need to change was the replacement of the Bar Mitzvah with Confirmation as the ceremony marking acceptance of young Jews into the adult community. David Philipson condemned the Bar Mitzvah ceremony in 1890 as a ceremony without soul or significance. In modern society, a thirteen-year-old boy is not considered to be of legal age, making the ceremony a "dry formality" which had out lived its usefulness, according to Philipson. He rejected the notion that Confirmation and Bar Mitzvah could exist side by side, and

contended that the time had come for Bar Mitzvah to disappear entirely.[36]

As late as 1913, the Responsa committee under Kaufmann Kohler chided congregations that still observed Bar Mitzvah. "I maintain that the Bar Mitzvah rite ought not to be encouraged by any Reform rabbi, as it is a survival of Orientalism like the covering of the head during the service."[37] Despite the disapproval of the rabbinic leadership, many congregations continued holding Bar Mitzvah ceremonies. Ultimately, the rite that Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf would attack in 1912 as an unintelligible act of formality which left "the heart and soul untouched, and the mind uninformed as to the fundamental facts and principles of the history and religion of Israel,"[38] was never totally removed from Reform practice. In fact, the Bar Mitzvah rite would grow considerably in popularity during the twentieth century, attesting to the pull of tradition for Reform Jews.

During the classical period of Reform Judaism, there were voices which called for heightened observance of holidays, yet the actual steps toward tradition were small and slowly made. It would take a new generation of rabbis and laity with a desire to use ritual and symbol in their practice before a widespread shift in Reform observance would be made.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ZIONISM

One general principle that characterized the classical phase of Reform Judaism is its anti-Zionist posture. Reform's earliest proponents fervently believed in the universal mission of the Jew, so it seemed contradictory for them to maintain loyalty and allegiance to the Jewish people on any other than a religious basis.[39]

An indication of an absence of Jewish nationalism among Reform rabbis is seen in the adoption of the CCAR's seal. The CCAR, the last of the three major national institutions of American Reform Judaism to be formed, made its appearance in 1889, and unlike the UAHC and HUC, the CCAR was a Reform institution from the beginning. Seven years earlier, as the reformers were no doubt aware, Russian Jews had founded the BILU, the Zionist organization that began the modern resettlement of Palestine. The group's name was an acronym for the first four words of the Hebrew text of Isaiah 2:5, *Bet Yaakov lekhu v'nelkha* ("O House of Jacob! Come let us walk"), omitting the final words of the verse, *b'or Adonai* ("by the light of the Lord"). Perhaps as an answer to the BILU's nationalism, the CCAR seal also quotes Isaiah 2:5, but it says *Lekhu v'nelkha b'or Adonai* ("Come let us walk by the light of the Lord"), omitting the words *bet Yaakov* ("House of Jacob").[40]

Even though some of the top leaders of political Zionism came from the ranks of Reform, the deeply-rooted image of classical Reform Judaism was thoroughly anti-national. The roots of anti-Zionism as a cardinal principle of Reform are found in Germany. In 1840, Samuel Holdheim said, "only if the Jew surrenders all particularistic national conceptions . . . can he be truly attached to his fatherland."[41]

European-born Max Lilienthal enthusiastically supported America as the new Zion in an address delivered in 1868:

> We Israelites of the present age do not dream any longer about the restoration of Palestine and the Messiah crowned with a diadem of earthly power and glory. America is our Palestine; here is our Zion and Jerusalem.[42]

Kohler, who along with Emil G. Hirsch, was one of the most significant figures during American Reform's classical phase, also expressed his disapproval of Zionism. Kohler explained that Israel's hope "for a Messianic age, a time of universal knowledge of God and love of man" replaced the traditional belief in a personal Messiah and political restoration of Israel. Political and cultural Zionism, according to Kohler, "can have no place in Jewish theology." Political Zionism, Kohler felt, was born of East European anti-Semitism and had the merit of awakening many Jews who had become alienated from their religion. Rather than Zionism, Kohler said, the

household of Israel requires "a regeneration, not of the nation, but of the faith of Israel, which is its soul."[43]

In response to the first Zionist Congress of 1897, the CCAR remained consistent in its opposition to Zionism. That same year, the CCAR issued this statement:

> Resolved, that we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission . . . Such attempts do not benefit but infinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted . . . We reaffirm that the object of Judaism is not political nor national, but spiritual . . .[44]

According to the CCAR, the objective of Judaism was to bring about peace, justice, and love to the human race and to bring about a Messianic time when all humanity will form one brotherhood, and thus the political efforts to form a Jewish nation could not be further from the CCAR's goals. In fact, the CCAR asserted that the Zionist movement actually hurt Jews who were persecuted in their lands because it confirmed for their enemies that the Jews were foreigners in countries where they lived as patriotic citizens.

Not all American Reform rabbis were against Zionism, however. The original Zionist presence within the Reform movement consisted of Bernhard Felsenthal, Max Heller, and Professor Caspar Levias.[45] Felsenthal was the most active and vocal of the three. At HUC, David Neumark, a professor of philosophy, supported Zionism with a

religious dimension. At the onset of the Zionist movement, Neumark wrote that Zionism should be given a fair trial. Unlike Kohler, Neumark believed that the large centers of Judaism would benefit from the establishment of a spiritual center in Palestine. "Let it always be remembered, however," Neumark asserted, "that a spiritual center must be religious . . . Zionism must be given a religious content."[46]

The CCAR reacted to the Balfour Declaration in 1917 by reiterating Reform's universal message. After expressing the CCAR's "grateful appreciation" for the British government's "good-will toward the Jews," the CCAR notes that although it naturally favors facilitating the "immigration to Palestine of Jews searching for equality in political, civil, and religious rights," it does not agree with the declaration's words that "Palestine is to be a national home-land for the Jewish people."[47] Three years later, when Great Britain received the mandate for Palestine, the CCAR reiterated its earlier rejection of Palestine as a national home for the Jewish people.

Historian Meyer explains that there were multiple reasons why the great majority of Reform rabbis during the twenties remained leery of Zionist political activity, beginning with the perceived ideological conflict between Reform's worldwide mission and the national focus of Zionism as well as the fear of disloyalty charges. Meyer adds that many rabbis saw Zionism as a rival focus of

Jewish identity. Most classical Reform rabbis were trained to see Jewishness first and foremost as a religion rather than as a national identity. A universal faith (Reform Judaism) and national aspirations (Zionism) could not both be the essence of Jewishness. Hence, most Reform rabbis remained hesitant to subordinate their vision of Judaism by participating directly in Zionist political activity.[48]

As Zionist activity heightened in the 1920's and 1930's, Stephen S. Wise and Abba Hillel Silver were the leading Zionist advocates within the Reform movement. Despite finding himself in the minority, Wise was able to convince his fellow rabbis to include the words and music of "*Hatikvah*," the anthem of the Zionist movement, in the revised *Union Hymnal* of 1932. An early and militant Zionist, Wise founded his own Free Synagogue in New York, where no one could contest his right to speak and act on Zionist issues as he chose. When he opened the Jewish Institute of Religion in the heart of Manhattan in 1922, he set out to educate more broadly oriented spiritual leaders: "liberal" rabbis for *k'lal yisrael*, the totality of the Jewish people.[49]

Silver, rabbi of The Temple in Cleveland, was an equally committed Reform rabbi and militant Zionist. In an address that heralded the end of classical Reform, at the CCAR convention in 1935 Silver delivered a scholarly

attack on the Pittsburgh Platform and on classical Reform Judaism in general. Silver concluded that:

> It is the total program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today -- the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the Jewish people itself, and all its national aspirations.

Silver accepted the universal messianism and the mission ideas that characterized classical Reform, but he refused to view them as substitutes for Jewish nationalism.

A shift in CCAR policy occurred in 1935 when Felix Levy, an avowed Zionist, assumed the presidency of the conference. It was the first time a Zionist had served as CCAR president since Max Heller held the position between 1909-1911. That same year, the CCAR included enough Zionists to pass a resolution altering the conference's position on Zionism from one of opposition to neutrality. In a compromise resolution, the CCAR declared that "acceptance or rejection of the Zionist program should be left to the determination of the individual members of the Conference themselves" and that the CCAR "takes no official stand on the subject of Zionism."[50] Although neutrality was the conference's position, it is worth noting that after the presidency of Levy, no anti-Zionist held the position of CCAR president, indicating a change in what was once a deeply-held Reform tenet. While the

Zionists may not have convinced all of their colleagues that Reform Judaism and Zionism were compatible, by 1937 it appeared clear to many in the movement that Reform Judaism and Zionism were not by nature antithetical.

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[43]. Kaufmann Kohler, *Jewish Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), 389-391.

[44]. *CCARY*, vol. 7 (1897-98), LXI.

[45]. Polish, *Reform Rabbinate*, 186.

[46]. Plaut, *Growth of Reform Judaism*, 148-149.

[47]. *CCARY*, vol. 28 (1918), 133-134.

[48]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 326.

[49]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 327.

[50]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 327.

CHAPTER 3

THE GROWTH OF NEO-REFORM

THE COLUMBUS PLATFORM

The twentieth century witnessed a steady growth in appreciation of tradition. As early as 1905, Rabbi Max Heller declared that the Pittsburgh Platform represented "in more than one way an obsolete viewpoint." Rabbi Louis Grossman of Isaac Mayer Wise's temple in Cincinnati even suggested that Reform itself needed to recapture the Orthodox spirit, if not the Orthodox manner. Whereas at the turn of the century, such feelings were just beginning to take hold, a generation later Reform's new approach would become the norm.[1]

In the realm of *halakhah*, Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of San Francisco expressed a pioneering idea in 1903 when he said American Jews needed a guide for religious behavior. Voorsanger maintained, "The great need of our people at the present time is that of a strong and correct definition in what, aside from official service, charity and the natural manifestations of virtuous conduct, Judaism really consists."[2] By 1925, when Rabbi Louis Binstock delivered a paper calling for a code which would standardize Reform practice and belief, he won many supporters. Binstock voiced concern that each Reform rabbi was teaching a different approach to Shabbat and holiday observance. As a

result, he felt that the movement's equivocation and diversity of opinion toward Jewish tradition and practice puzzled the layman and often destroyed respect for Jewish tradition and practice.[3]

Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon, professor of theology at the Hebrew Union College (HUC), emerged as the prime voice among Reform rabbis who called for a new platform to represent a Reform Judaism that had changed considerably since the Pittsburgh Platform had been promulgated almost fifty years earlier. In 1935 Cohon called for a crystallization of thought as to what is primary and what is secondary" among the principles and precepts of Judaism.[4] A year later, when he presented the report of the Commission on the Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism, Cohon spoke of the need for the new platform to serve as a teaching tool for Reform Jews:

> The time has come for us in this age of chaos, to take our Judaism seriously and instruct our people in the way they should follow and the things they should do. We should teach them that we believe in God, in Israel and in Torah, and show them how to revive prayer, ceremonials and other observances, whereby we can strengthen our lives.[5]

Cohon represented the majority of Reform rabbis who criticized classical Reform Judaism for stressing only the ethical imperatives, neglecting the mystical element and ceremonial law. He advocated a greater appreciation for Jewish history, culture, and identification with the Jewish people. Classical Reform emphasized the individual as the

final authority for religious decision, but Cohon expressed the importance of Jewish law within a liberal framework. He stressed observance, in addition to thought and faith.[6]

As discussed in chapter two, Cohon criticized the *Union Prayer Book* (UPB) for a liturgy full of self-exhortations to perform moral acts rather than appealing for divine assistance.[7] While he recognized the psychological value of prayer, for Cohon the point of prayer was the "direct experience and realization of the divine."[8]

While Cohon represented the majority of the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), there existed a vocal minority. Within the Reform rabbinate there were a number of rabbis, mostly younger men, who were religious humanists. This faction, led by Rabbi Barnett Brickner, was influenced by Mordecai Kaplan and the Reconstructionist movement. Unlike Cohon and the theists, the humanists focused on the human dimension of religion rather than the divine. Brickner identified God with human goodness and perceived prayer as meditation, not petition.[9]

Further fragmenting the CCAR was the power struggle between two potential chairs to lead the new platform's commission: Cohon and Rabbi Samuel Schulman. Cohon was an East European, a Hebrew scholar, a cultural Zionist, and spoke of the mystical aspect of prayer. Schulman was respected for his intellect and command of Jewish sources and served as president of the CCAR, but was Cohon's ideological opposite. Schulman was a classical reformer and

anti-Zionist who placed Jewish religion far above Jewish peoplehood. Cohon's draft of the platform was adopted by the CCAR, but the power struggle between Cohon and Schulman lasted throughout the conference.[10] The commission faced a considerable task. The great differences in worship and observance in synagogues demonstrated the importance of a platform that could unify the movement, but the theological division within the movement made agreement difficult.

The purpose of the 1937 convention in Columbus was to approve the new platform Cohon and others had created, called the Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism or the Columbus Platform. The body of rabbis present at the convention were deeply divided. Some, like committee members James Heller and Max Raisin, advocated adoption of the committee's work. Many agreed with Leo M. Franklin, who wanted to send the document back to the committee for revisions. Others advocated no platform at all. A fourth group wanted to consider a draft submitted independently by Schulman. An initial vote against the adoption of any platform ended in an eighty-one to eighty-one deadlock. Adoption of the platform was a foregone conclusion, however, after the CCAR's incoming president, Felix Levy, cast the deciding vote.[11] Following a brief recess and additional discussion, the one hundred and ten CCAR members who remained for the vote overwhelmingly adopted the Declaration of Principles, known as the Columbus Platform.[12]

The 1937 platform illustrates the dramatic changes within the movement since 1885. The Pittsburgh Platform gushed with a hopeful messianism and confidence that humanity was becoming ever more united, but the Guiding Principles echoes the problems of society and contains an extensive paragraph on social justice. In 1885 the Reform movement found it necessary to establish how it differed from traditional Judaism, and it read like a document of rejection. Fifty-two years later, a more confident movement promulgated a platform that is most noticeable for its elements of tradition -- its endorsement of observance and Jewish peoplehood.

The organization of the document bears witness to the affirmation of tradition. Traditional categories include God, Israel, and Torah. Other sections include ethics and religion, social justice, and religious life. The section on Israel is novel to the Guiding Principles. The Pittsburgh Platform emphasized universalism and eliminated the cultural and peoplehood aspects of Judaism. In the 1937 platform, the plank on Israel includes a paragraph on the people Israel and mentions that Israel has been held together by the ties of a common history, and above all, by the heritage of faith. Especially striking is the second paragraph on Israel, which broadly endorses political and cultural Zionism. In language echoing the Balfour Declaration, the platform speaks of 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."

The seven paragraphs devoted to the rubric "Religious Practice" indicate the higher level of importance the Reform rabbinate placed on traditional modes of observance during this period. Whereas the Pittsburgh Platform focused on the rejection of antiquated laws and customs, the Guiding Principles emphasizes the responsibilities of Jews to preserve Shabbat and Holy Days, keep a Jewish home, pursue a Jewish education, and cultivate "the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and synagog." The Pittsburgh Platform creates distance between Reform and Orthodoxy, but the Columbus Platform highlights the importance of observing traditions within the Reform movement.

The penultimate paragraph of the statement clearly indicates the new inclination toward tradition within Reform Judaism:

> Judaism as a way of life 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, in our worship and instruction.

The Guiding Principles called upon Reform Jews to broaden their conception of Jewish identity. Influenced by

Mordecai Kaplan's idea of Judaism as a civilization, the authors encourage the use of Hebrew, religious art and music, and symbols and customs, as viable forms of religious expression. In contrast to the Pittsburgh Platform, the tone of the Guiding Principles is essentially positive, and the platform expresses the belief that Reform Judaism contains a relevant and important message for contemporary society.

The authors of the platform were aware of the dramatic change in Reform priorities. The statement ends with reference to the "timeless aims and ideals of our faith" which "we present anew to a confused and troubled world" and a call for Jews "to rededicate themselves anew to them." It is significant that the language in the section on religious practice assumes a prescriptive tone that reveals the CCAR's vision of revitalizing Reform Judaism through an intensification of religious practice.

While there is much that is different about the Pittsburgh Platform and the Guiding Principles, fundamental religious beliefs remained constant. Both documents affirm the concept of an omnipresent God, the immortality of the soul, and the universality of Jewish ethics. The Guiding Principles also reiterates the evolutionary and progressive elements of Judaism.

The Guiding Principles represented a new phase of Reform Judaism. In the fifty-two years since the Pittsburgh Platform, Reform rabbis concluded classical Reform had

stripped too much ritual and ceremony from Judaism, leaving a void. By 1937, the CCAR realized ceremonial expressions enhance a rational theology, that ritual acts have the power to inspire ethical behavior, and Jewish history and culture can foster a stronger Jewish identity. By the late 1930's, there was a renewed interest in traditional ritual and ceremonial observance among the laity as well as rabbinic leadership.

The Reform movement changed dramatically between 1885 and 1938. While voices calling for a return to tradition began to be heard at the turn of the century, the majority of Reform leaders by 1938 applauded the changes in Reform practice and ideology. As Reform Judaism emerged after World War Two, neo-Reform would continue to spread throughout the movement.

SURVEYS SHOW JEWISH PRACTICE INTENSIFIES

The Columbus Platform reflected the Reform rabbinate's new-found appreciation of Jewish ritual observance. This appreciation on the part of the rabbinate also extended to Reform laity, as is documented by surveys of both laity and rabbis taken between 1928 and 1953. In fact, the survey results may well have influenced the Columbus Platform's authors. The first survey in 1928 established that there was a definite interest in ritual and ceremony and surveys

published in the 1930's reflect a rise in this interest. It is important to note that surveys tend to evoke responses from those most interested in the subject, so the survey results may include more responses from people interested in ritual and ceremony than is reflective of the general population of the time.

The first survey in Reform Judaism on the religious attitudes and practices of the laity was published in 1928 by the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods (NFTB). The analysis of the survey, *The Voice of the Jewish Laity: A Survey of the Jewish Layman's Religious Attitudes and Practices*, was written by Arthur L. Reinhart and included responses from men only. An excerpt from the preface written by NFTB president Roger W. Straus reflects the state of Reform Judaism in the late 1920's.

> We are of the opinion that Judaism -- religiously -- is not only not weak, but that we are riding on the crest of another great wave of revival, wherein our laymen are searching anew for means of expressing their religious conviction, in consonance with modern thought and knowledge.[13]

Straus's observation attests to the beginning of neo-Reform in American Judaism. Although the return to tradition was in its nascent stage, Reform Jews were starting to seek out the more traditional ways of observing their faith and were starting to reclaim practices which had been discarded during the classical period of Reform. While Straus saw the wave as already arrived, Alexander Cahn,

chairman of the National Committee on Religious Propaganda, states in the foreword of the survey analysis, the purpose of the study was to answer the questions, "How to cause this intensified wave? How to create the force from which it shall result? How to sustain the force from which such a wave many emanate?"[14] At the same time, the study sought to uncover the source of the religious revival and to help perpetuate it, the study was also made to refute the assertion that Reform Jews were losing interest in their religion. Reinhart wrote that the survey was conducted "to answer the almost endless flow of accusations against the American Reform Jewish Laymen -- particularly those affiliated with the Reform wing -- that they are becoming more and more disinterested in religious matters."[15]

Among the survey results were quite strong reactions to the *UPB*. While the prayer book evoked more negative responses than positive, one individual stated, "No church ritual is as beautiful as our *Union Prayer Book*."[16] Others were not as favorably inclined toward the *UPB*. As one respondent expressed, "We are abbreviating our services too much for the sermons and singing . . . It appears to me that each Rabbi has his own way or method of carrying out the whole or shortening the services in each congregation." Another felt that the whole complexion of the service was not conducive to worship: "Repetition of traditional prayers, services, including traditional music, bores me and would put me in anything but the proper frame of mind to

enjoy the service or the sermon, so I come in just before that."

Another reflected the sentiment that a guide of Jewish law was necessary:

> I believe that a Jewish code (religious or otherwise) is necessary. One that can be practiced daily. This code to be taught to adults and children. The Prayer Book should be revised to conform with the new code, so that any one could preach and live the same religion. It is not right to leave Judaism to each individual to be interpreted in any way he sees fit as most of us are not well enough informed to do so.[17]

The above response echoes the classical reformer Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger's call for a guide of Jewish practice. Others shared an interest in Jewish practice based on an awareness of tradition. Beginning in the early 1940's, Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof conducted a far ranging exposition of *halakhah* (Jewish law). Although he did not favor the creation of a guide or code, his articles and books on Jewish practice showed how modern Reform practice could turn to *halakaoh* as "guidance not governance."[18] Although the CCAR did not publish its own guide to the Jewish life cycle until 1979, various rabbis wrote their own guides earlier. The extent to which they were followed is uncertain.[19]

Another response reflected the lack of emotional content in the Reform service and the *UPB*: "Not enough appeal to the imagination." Yet another called for all of the Hebrew in the *UPB* to be used during the service. It is

interesting to note that formal religious training seemed to influence the desire for Hebrew in the service. Reinhart noted that 86 percent of those who had been confirmed or Bar Mitzvah desired Hebrew, against 80 percent for the respondent without these advantages. Overall, 85 percent of the respondents desired Hebrew in the service, with 15 percent opposed to Hebrew.[20]

On the subject of home observance, only 14 percent of the total number of respondents stated that they say a blessing before the meal, 23 percent observed *Kiddush* on Shabbat and holidays, and only 6 percent reported that Shabbat candles were lit in their homes. A blessing before the meal was observed more regularly by the older men, while the generation under 30 had a decidedly larger percentage retaining the Shabbat and holiday *Kiddush*, according to the report. It is also interesting to note that having children in the family seemed to have a small influence on home observances.

Jewish education appears to play some role in home religious observance. Among men with formal religious training, 25 percent recited the *Kiddush* on Shabbat and holidays, whereas only 17 percent of the men with no formal religious education did so. The discrepancy was smaller between the same two groups on the subject of a blessing before the meal (14 percent for those with a religious education, 12 percent for those without a religious education).[21] The comments gathered by Reinhart reveal that

there was a consensus of opinion "decidedly in favor of more active Judaism in home life" and that Reform in the late 1920's was experiencing "the revival of many of the older observances which seem to have left definite impressions on today's adult."[22]

In 1931, the UAHC published a report titled *Reform Judaism in the Large Cities: A Survey*. The survey, conducted by Abraham Franzblau, the director of the Commission on Research of the UAHC, was based on research conducted between 1928 and 1930 and included responses from both men and women. It revealed that 43 percent of Reform Jews fast regularly on Yom Kippur and that Shabbat candles were lit in more than a quarter of the homes. The survey found that temple members were firmly against having more parts of the service in Hebrew by a ratio of three and a half to one.[23]

Regarding instruction of Hebrew in religious school, the response was evenly divided, but among respondents with children aged seven to fourteen, the teaching of Hebrew was favored at the rate of more than one and a half to one. The figures showed that the youngest group of respondents had as strong a majority in favor of teaching Hebrew as the oldest group had against it. Yet while more than half of the parents favored teaching children Hebrew, only one-fourth of the children in the religious schools actually received instruction in that subject.[24]

On the issue of frequency of religious instruction, while most members strongly favored sending their children to religious school, they just as strongly opposed increasing its sessions to twice a week. The survey also indicated that there was a strong desire for adult education classes on Judaism at the synagogue. In light of the nascent rise in traditional observance, it is interesting that Sunday services were favored by two out of three respondents.[25] This is especially noteworthy since the NFTB survey from 1928 revealed that the Sunday service was preferred by 23 percent of the men.[26] The UAHC survey may be a more accurate indicator of Reform preference, since it reflects the sentiments of a broader range of respondents. The issue of the Sunday service had been the subject of much rabbinic debate during the first decade of the century, although enthusiasm waned and the issue subsided.[27]

An interesting component of the 1931 survey is its study of the influence of nativity. Respondents were classified according to four categories of nativity: those born in this country of parents born in this country, those born in this country of one foreign and one native parent, those born in this country of foreign-born parents, and those foreign-born. The survey showed that the frequency of regular observance of ceremonies was from 10-22 percent higher among the foreign-born than among the natives. Comparison of the responses of the native and foreign groups reveals interesting differences in attitude toward questions

about Hebrew in prayer and religious school. Those born of native-born parents were almost unanimously opposed to having more Hebrew in the services.[28]

Reinhart published a second analysis of survey results for the NFTB, this one reflecting feelings about the synagogue service. The work is undated, but appears to have been published in the mid-1930's.[29] Whereas the study published in 1928 delved into the laity's practices, the second study focused on the general lay attitude toward the ritual of the synagogue service.

The responses to the question, "Is the stress laid on the special services for Pesach, Shabuoth, Sukkoth, Hanukkah and Purim sufficient, too much, not enough?" gives a strong indication of the dormant interest in holiday observance. 71.3 percent voted sufficient at present, 3.1 percent too much, and 25.6 percent expressed the opinion that there was not enough. One respondent said: "I have never heard any good reason for doing away with Simchath Torah. To my mind, it is one of the most beautiful of our Holidays, I certainly think it should be restored." Another commented: "I would very warmly recommend reading the 'MEGILLA' on Purim, the displaying of the 'Esrog and Lulav' during the Sukkoth Holyday." Yet another respondent expressed a general rise in interest in the role of ceremonial holiday observance:

> I favor a reintroduction of more of the discarded ceremonials such as, for example, Simcath Torah processional on last day of Sukkoth; children's

participation in ceremonies and services in Temple, especially on the Festivals and Holy Days.[30]

Regarding the time of the main service, less than 20 percent favored the Sunday service, with about 46 percent in favor of the late Friday night service, and only seven percent preferring the early Friday night service.[31] In response to the question pertaining to the balance between tradition and modernity, 69 percent of the men and almost 87 percent of the women voted that it was proper. However, compared to the earlier surveys, the second Reinhart work shows many congregants did desire more ritual and ceremony in the worship service. Some of the responses in favor of more modernity were: "I do not think the prayers fit present day needs or life as it is today," and "The ancient culture can be and should be maintained but the effort to do this should not overshadow the spiritual needs of our life as it is in the scientific world of today."[32]

On the other side, much sentiment was expressed that there was not enough tradition in the service. One person stated that "Services are too modern or Christian to suit me." Another expressed:

> I find too great similarity in form of our services to the Christian church services. Would prefer a greater introduction of the Orthodox in our Reform services. Feel that this influence would be more lasting and beneficial upon the younger generation on whom we must rely for perpetuation of our Judaism.

While the above respondent echoed others who felt Reform services were "aping Christian forms," others

expressed the feeling that more ritual and tradition would help add an emotional element to the services. In the words of one respondent: "I favor reintroducing some of the traditional Jewish style in [the] service. It seems to me that we have gone too far to the 'left.'" Another person offered:

> The reform service has departed too greatly from the traditional ritual of Judaism. Certain of the ancient customs and traditions must be introduced in order to attract persons who are dissatisfied with Orthodoxy but who are unwilling to accept the ultra-reformed service. More emphasis must be placed on the observation of the holidays in addition to the New Year and Day of Atonement.[33]

All three surveys, the two conducted by Reinhart and the one conducted by Franzblau, reflect the sentiments of those who miss the traditional synagogue music in the Reform service. One person in the second Reinhart survey wrote, "Another great loss to my mind is the dispensing with the Cantor. We have gone too far in eliminating all that is beautiful and inspiring in our services."[34]

Two respondents gave answers which spoke to the need of emotion in the service. The responses reflect an age in which services appealed to the rational senses in congregants, but did not connect the worshipper to Jewish peoplehood in the past or present. Wrote one: "Ritual makes a deep impression on the mind and helps the memory to retain the services by association. It makes a direct appeal to the emotions which are part of religion." And another: "The

reform service has eliminated in too large a degree, the appeal to the senses, the emotions and the past. We are not yet ready for an entirely intellectual religion."[35]

A considerable number of respondents expressed the belief that the service included an insufficient proportion of Hebrew. About 23 percent wished for more Hebrew in the service, 74 percent enjoyed the current balance, and under 3 percent felt there was already too much Hebrew in the worship service. Reinhart reported:

> In all classifications the largest percentage of votes, both men and women, were based on the opinion that Hebrew serves as a link between past and present. The second largest consistently stressed the distinctiveness of the language, and the third largest its unifying force.[36]

The Reinhart study gives a picture of Reform Judaism in the 1930's, suspended between classical Reform and neo-Reform. It would be an exaggeration to state that the body of Reform Jews were clamoring for more ritual and traditional observance, yet a clear transition was in the making. A growing number of Reform Jews were restless with the current state of Reform worship services, and their support would give the rabbis the mandate to initiate a gradual shift to the side of more tradition.

After the Reinhart and UAHC studies revealed the resurgence of an appreciation of ritual and ceremonial observances, the UAHC and CCAR took official action to encourage the ritual trend at the 1937 Biennial General

Assembly of the UAHC. A resolution was passed to promote the use in Reform congregations of "traditional symbols, ceremonies, and customs" which had fallen into disuse. The resolution encouraged use of Jewish music and a cantor, singing or recitation of the Kiddush, and participation in services by laity.[37] In order to facilitate the incorporation of traditional and innovative ceremonies into home and synagogue observances, the next year, in 1938, the UAHC's Commission on Synagog Activities joined with the CCAR in the establishment of a Joint Committee on Ceremonies. Its purpose was to "enrich Jewish life and worship in synagog and home by the utilization of drama, pageantry and ceremonial" activities.[38] The effort succeeded. Surveys published during the 1950's reveal a natural extension of the sensibilities and desires expressed in the earlier reports.

Rabbi Morton M. Berman, then chairman of the Committee on Reform Practice, delivered his committee report at the General Assembly of the UAHC in 1950. Berman observed:

> The study reveals widespread and increasing acceptance by congregations and their members of ritual practice and ceremonial observance. It demonstrates that Reform Judaism is determinedly engaged in helping to meet a fundamental need of every human being for symbolism and ceremonialism in his religious life. It provides striking evidence that our movement has undertaken to correct a most costly error made by the early anti-ritualistic Reformers who were earnestly intent upon emphasizing ethical and religious principles and righteous conduct but looked upon "the ceremonial system to be a trivializing of the noble teaching of Judaism . . . and the deep learning involved in the study of it . . . as a wastage of

intellectual capacity, and an alienation from the broader culture in the modern world."[39]

Berman wrote that the early builders of the Reform movement failed to recognize that "man cannot live by reason alone, that he needs to sate his emotional hunger for the poetry and beauty, for the mysticism and drama which are to be found in meaningful symbolism and ceremonialism." Further, he noted that the study demonstrated "that a new attitude pervades our Movement with respect to the significance of ritual and ceremonial observance. It is now generally recognized that these disciplines have the power to restore in the Jew a sense of kinship with God." Berman explained the ritual and ceremony are reminders of the providential role God has played throughout the ages, a provider of support for the Jew's faith, and the bulwark of the Jew's self-respect. Echoing the Guiding Principles, Berman concluded that "they give the Jew a sense of rootage in his people's past, but they also fill him with a fortifying sense of union with all other Jews of our time who engage in these practices."[40]

It is ironic that although the Guiding Principles was supposed to bring uniformity of worship and ritual practice to the movement, diversity reigned supreme after the Columbus Platform was adopted. Berman noted that his study showed "a considerable variety of practices and distinct variations in practices themselves," prompting some to charge that anarchy existed in the movement. Of the 255

congregations which participated in the 1950 study, there were more than 30 congregations which shared in traditional practices such as two days of observance on Rosh Hashanah and the major festivals, Passover for eight days, Simchat Torah as an additional day instead of being combined with the eighth day of Shemini-Atzeret, *keriah* or tearing of garments for the dead, observance of dietary laws, and circumcision as a requirement for conversion. On the other end of the spectrum was the small minority of congregations (about a dozen) which completely resisted any restoration or innovation of practice. However, the more than 240 congregations which responded with a move toward increased ritualism helped create a picture of a growing movement toward what resembles traditional Judaism.[41] Berman added that "This voluntary system of taking what one congregation feels that it needs and of rejecting that which it does not need could not produce a pattern of uniformity of practice." Yet while there was no uniformity, Berman found there "to be essential unity of purpose in the practices" that were being employed: "to provide a means of identification with the group -- of securing the feeling of at-homeness in Judaism, and of self-fulfillment of the individual -- of satisfying his spiritual and esthetic needs."

The 1950 survey was instrumental in documenting the widespread and increasing acceptance by congregations and their members of ritual practice and ceremonial observance, but nearly all of the survey respondents were rabbis. In

1953, a survey representing over 450 Union congregations and more than 1,200 congregants, was directed to a wide sampling of the laity as well as rabbis. This provided a closer look at individual practices and preferences. For example, while the 1950 survey showed that half of the congregations said their members used a *mohel* or that about 80 percent of the rabbis permitted the use of a *chuppah*, it does not tell us how many congregants availed themselves of the *mohel* or the *chuppah*. The 1953 survey is instructive because it allows a comparison of the views of the laity and the rabbinate.

The 1953 survey indicated a significant rise in ceremonial and ritual observance compared to earlier decades and supported the conclusion that there existed in congregants a wider acceptance of tradition than previously thought and more extensive practice in the homes. Beyond the statistics which support this conclusion, the report mentioned the increasing number of classes for adults organized to study ritual and ceremonial observances, the widespread introduction of festival observances, the strikingly large increase in the sale of ceremonial objects for home use, and the expanding emphasis on instruction in ritual practice and ceremonial observance for children in religious schools. On top of the previous rise in practice, a considerable percentage of congregants and rabbis expressed desire for more practice. Of the respondents, 29 percent of the laity and 51 percent of the rabbis felt that

there should be more ritual and ceremonial practices in their congregations.[42]

An indication of the rise in the preference for ceremonial observance was the information that 17 percent of the laity indicated they would use only a mohel for circumcision, against 12 percent of the rabbis. In addition, 43 percent of the laity reported they would insist upon a rabbi being present if a surgeon were employed, while 85 percent of the rabbis thought a rabbi should be invited to participate in the rite. The above information shows a strong interest among both the laity and the rabbinate in the circumcision ceremony. Earlier surveys did not include the subject, which bears testimony to the rise in the interest it attracted among Reform Jews. A related increase was found in the naming of children at Shabbat services. The survey shows 91 percent of the rabbis reported naming baby boys and girls at Shabbat services. The naming of boys at Shabbat services was an innovation, because it was traditionally done at the circumcision.

In spite of the disapproval of the classical reformers, the Bar Mitzvah remained part of Reform Judaism. According to the survey, Bar Mitzvah was practiced in the congregations of 92 percent of the rabbis who responded. The 1953 figure represents a 4 percent increase since 1950. The 35 percent of congregations which practiced the rite of Bat Mitzvah, is an increase of 9 percent from three years earlier. The survey shows 62 percent of the rabbis approved

of the rite. Although classical Reform rabbis wished to replace Bar Mitzvah with Confirmation, both rabbis and laity viewed the two as separate, and 67 percent of the congregations conduct Confirmation on Shavuot day, up 9 percent from 1950, as opposed to the closest Shabbat or Sunday.[43]

The laity appeared to be more eager to incorporate more tradition into the wedding service than the rabbis. Almost 25 percent of the laity would insist upon a *chuppah* for the service, against only 6 percent of the rabbis. Of course, this does not indicate how many rabbis encouraged their congregants to conduct the service under a *chuppah*. While 16 percent of the laity would request that a *kippah* be worn at the service, only 9 percent of the rabbis would make that request. Regarding the breaking of a glass, 40 percent of the laity would ask for the ritual, but only 20 percent of the rabbis would expect it to be done. Both laity and rabbis expressed preference for the service to take place in the synagogue or home as opposed to a hotel or public hall. No comparison is possible for the latter category. Although the question about wedding location was not asked on an earlier survey, Berman interpreted the responses he received as part of the increasing movement away from weddings occurring in public places.[44]

There was also a rise in traditional synagogue practices. A full 60 percent of the rabbis wore a *tallit*, representing a 16 percent increase in just three years, and

27 percent wore a *kippah*, a 9 percent increase. Among the laity, 61 percent expressed approval of these practices. Regarding synagogue music, 34 percent of the congregations now employ a cantor, and 64 percent of the laity and 83 percent of the rabbis would like to have a cantor in their synagogue. The 85 percent of the congregations which kindled the Shabbat candles at the evening service, is an increase of 14 percent since 1950, and 89 percent of the congregations sung *Kiddush* at the services.[45]

It is noteworthy that 48 percent of the laity considered prayer the most important part of the service, while 34 percent chose the sermon, and 18 felt music was most important.[46] In Reinhart's 1928 survey, 73 percent of the laity preferred the sermon, with only 18 and 9 percent listing prayer and music, respectively, as their preferences.[47] While the wording of the questions are different, "most important" rather than "preference," it appears that in 1953 congregants appreciated prayer much more than they did in 1928, another sign of the return to tradition in Reform Judaism.

Ritual in the home was on the rise as well. While less than 25 percent of the laity kindled Shabbat candles at home in 1931, 59 percent did so in 1953. While 26 percent made *Kiddush*, only 18 made *Motzi* (the blessing over the bread), and 4 percent said the *Birkat Hamazon* (the blessing after the meal). In terms of holiday observance, it is interesting to note that 52 percent of the laity reported

fasting on Yom Kippur, a 7 percent decrease from 1928. Regarding observance of Passover and Chanukah, 74 percent of the laity hold a *seder* on Passover and 81 percent light candles on Hanukkah, 90 percent doing so for eight days.[48] This is in marked contrast to the UAHC survey in 1931 which reported about 50 percent of the homes neither held a Passover seder nor kindled Chanukah candles.[49]

The percentage of laity in favor of Hebrew education for their children rose considerably between 1931 and 1953. In 1931, about half of the respondents supported teaching children Hebrew, but by 1953, 74 percent of the laity wanted Hebrew education for their children, and 34 percent supported twice-weekly Hebrew instruction.

Taken as a whole, the surveys, which span a quarter of a century, indicate a profound shift in the focus of the Reform movement. Both rabbis and congregants showed an interest in prayer, ritual and ceremony (both at home and in the synagogue), Hebrew in services, and religious education for children and adults. Reform Judaism would continue to evolve in the twentieth century, but as Reform approached the 1960's it stood confident in its departure from classical Reform and in its embrace of neo-Reform.

REFORM JEWISH EDUCATION

Reform Jewish education underwent a revolution between 1923 and 1958, the tenure of Emanuel Gamoran as education

director for the UAHC Commission on Jewish Education, then newly formed. In his doctoral dissertation, Kerry M. Olitzky describes the condition of Reform Jewish education in America at the time of Gamoran's appointment as "chaotic with little systemization or organization."[50] Gamoran brought Reform Jewish education from the model of catechism, which imitated the Christian Protestant Sunday School, to a reflection of the curricular goals of the American public school. Olitzky explains that these goals mirrored the new American ideology of cultural pluralism rather than the melting pot theory of the previous generation.[51]

Gamoran represented a different kind of Reform leader. He was a member of the laity, born in Russia, and an avowed Zionist. He grew up in New York and attended Teachers College of Columbia University, where he became a disciple of John Dewey's philosophy of education. Dewey taught that the function of education was to guide the adjustment of the child to society. Dewey's educational philosophy and the practical results that flowed from it were "child-centered."[52] He advocated an activist approach to education. Children were to do, not just listen. Activities and projects were as important as absorbing subject matter.

At the Jewish Theological Seminary, Gamoran enriched his Jewish knowledge and was influenced by the school's dean, Mordecai Kaplan. From Kaplan he learned that Judaism was more than just a religion. At the time that Gamoran

studied with him, Kaplan had not yet published his influential *Judaism as a Civilization* (1934), but he had articulated his vision of Jewish life as embracing art, music, and literature.[53]

Before his appointment at the UAHC, Gamoran worked for ten years under Samson Benderly at the New York Bureau of Jewish Education. Benderly is often called the father of American Jewish education, since he introduced the idea of an intensive Jewish supplemental school. Benderly was the first American Jewish educator to create a standardized curriculum and bring classroom teaching instruction in accord with modern educational practice and theory. Gamoran was influenced by Benderly's vision of creating "a system of Jewish training . . . that would transmit the best of the Jewish tradition in a way that would make it possible for the community to perpetuate its Jewish life in harmony with the American environment." Gamoran also shared Benderly's belief that it was possible to live a full Jewish life and a full American life, and looked to education to show Jews how.[54]

Gamoran applied the philosophies of Dewey, Kaplan, and Benderly to his work at the UAHC. Surveys taken during his tenure bear witness to the profound impact he had on Reform Jewish education. A survey taken in 1924, one year after he assumed the post of educational director, reflects the persistence of classical Reform values after World War I. In most of the schools, children received one-and-a-half

hours of actual instruction, with another half hour for assembly. Instruction was generally once a week, except for confirmation classes. Students mainly studied Bible and Jewish history in order to gain morals for daily life. Less than 28 percent of the students studied Hebrew.[55]

By 1948, much had changed. A survey published by Richard C. Hertz showed that while 85 percent of the schools still met once a week, the duration had extended to about two hours, and in the larger schools, two and a half. Hebrew continued to be an optional course, but nearly all congregations offered it, and the proportion of students enrolled in Hebrew classes had nearly doubled. The age of confirmation steadily rose from thirteen or fourteen to fifteen or sixteen, reflecting a longer duration of religious studies for Jewish youth. Another sign of a revival in Reform education was that about half of the congregations now had adult education programs.[56]

The most remarkable development of the Gamoran revolution, historian Michael Meyer observes, was the enrichment and refocus of the curriculum. In a little more than twenty years, the UAHC published over 300 textbooks, adult education volumes, plays, teachers' guides, resources for youth groups, and similar literature. Gamoran's tenure witnessed a change in the goal of Reform Jewish education. No longer was the goal simply to make Jewish young people into better human beings. Now the goal was to make them into dedicated members of the Jewish people.[57]

Gamoran's vision was to teach Jewish children to survive positively as Jews while helping them create a viable Jewish community in America.[58] His idea of focusing on those aspects particular to Judaism rather than universal ethics was new to Reform Jewish education. He stated, "If we are going to teach theology to little tots of seven or eight, we are going to fail." Gamoran felt that religion had to be taught within a larger context, that ethical values would emerge naturally after building a broader identification with the living, changing, Jewish people. This meant less moralizing, what he termed "the Sunday School atmosphere," and more attention to customs and ceremonies, to modern Hebrew and current events in the Jewish world.[59]

Gamoran believed that in addition to teaching ethical values, the religious school must also stress survival values, the particularistic ideas and observances that would preserve the Jewish people. One area was ritual and ceremony. Jewish customs and ceremonies offered the student concrete opportunities to identify with the Jewish people in a way that more literary or intellectual subjects could not. The student could gain an appreciation of Shabbat by saying the *Kiddush* and by performing other rituals, whereas it was more difficult to comprehend the concept of the Messianic Era. Similarly, he proposed the singing of *zemirot* (songs) and the kindling of Shabbat lights on Friday evening as two

activities which would help the Jew assimilate Jewish values.[60]

Gamoran also worked to further education about the establishment of Jewish life in Palestine and Jewish culture in the Diaspora. His support of Zionism created tension with the joint UAHC-CCAR Commission on Jewish Education, especially over the inclusion of Zionist motifs in educational literature. Although the Commission was headed in the early twenties by an implacable anti-Zionist, Rabbi David Philipson, the disagreements usually ended in a compromise or a Gamoran victory.[61]

Gamoran scored many achievements. He commissioned and edited new textbooks, produced a religious school curriculum, and co-authored a series of primers in modern Hebrew. He founded and edited a quarterly magazine called *The Jewish Teacher*, and traveled around the country visiting schools in order to improve their level of education. Michael Meyer identifies Gamoran's textbooks as his greatest achievement. He published series on holidays, heroes, history, literature, and the Jewish community. The UAHC also published books for adults written by HUC professors. The quality of the typography, illustrations, and high quality paper brought the UAHC textbooks up to the standard set by the public schools.[62]

Perhaps no area better illustrates Gamoran's vision of education as his views on Hebrew study. He effectively communicated the importance of Hebrew study in religious

school and by 1940 Gamoran reported an increased interest in Hebrew. He saw the change as an acceptance of Zionism within Reform Judaism and a step away from religious minimalism. Gamoran shared his ten reasons for studying Hebrew:

1. Hebrew is the language of the Bible.
2. Hebrew is the language of the prayer book.
3. The ability to participate intelligently in synagogue service depends upon a knowledge of Hebrew.
4. Hebrew serves as a bond of union among Jews throughout the world.
5. The study of Hebrew pursued intensively, opens such sources of Jewish literature as the Mishnah, medieval writings, poetry, and philosophy.
6. Modern Hebrew is the spoken tongue of the Jews living in Israel, and of a great many others around the world.
7. Every Jewish group should provide a Hebrew education for its children sufficiently intensive to develop a number who will be be prepared for leadership in the Jewish community.
8. Hebrew is the means of helping Jewish people survive.
9. In every language there are certain concepts that are untranslatable, and can be appreciated only by those who know the language. This applies even more to Hebrew, for our literature concerns itself with many religious and ethical ideals, and thus reflects the noble spirit of our people.
10. The emotional values derived from the study of Hebrew cannot be attained any other way. They serve most effectively to integrate the child into the Jewish group.

Olitzky observed that although Gamoran appeared to be giving intellectual reasons for studying Hebrew, his primary reasons imply more of an emotional attachment to Judaism rather than a strictly intellectual one.[63] His ten reasons capture the essence of the neo-Reform trend in American Reform Judaism during the middle of the twentieth century. The sense of Jewish peoplehood, the emotional aspect of Judaism, and the return to traditional sources of Jewish learning are in direct contrast with classical Reform Judaism as it was articulated in 1885. Educational philosophies would continue to develop after Gamoran left the UAHC, and the emphasis on ethnic education would continue to the present.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES

A number of developments in America created a climate in which neo-Reform would become popular. These developments, led Reform Jews to reject the universal posture of Reform Judaism in favor of a more particularistic world-view which emphasized what made them unique as Jews. In this environment, a return to tradition was a natural consequence.

In 1922, Zionist leader and Reform rabbi, Stephen S. Wise, created the Jewish Institute of Religion (JIR) in New York. Born in Hungary in 1872, Wise was brought to America when he was just one year old and developed at a young age

an attachment to *kelal Yisrael*, the community of Israel. Wise possessed great gifts. His impressive appearance, eloquent speech, ambition, and great intelligence provided him with the self-confidence and drive to create his own institutions. Wise founded the Free Synagogue in New York to be a contrast to New York's classical Reform Temple Emanu-El. Disturbed by the anti-Zionism that dominated HUC, he established a new rabbinical seminary for training rabbis for all three denominations of American Jewry in the spirit of progressive Judaism, Zionism and political liberalism.[64]

The students of Wise became known as Wise's "boys." Historian Michael Meyer explains that "Like him, they conceived the rabbinate as committed to Zion, to the people of Israel, and to social justice; some of them even imitated the gestures and mannerisms that he employed on the pulpit."[65] Wise's embrace of Zionism was in direct contrast to HUC, which was markedly anti-Zionist. Meyer explains that Kaufmann Kohler was convinced that HUC could not tolerate the public expression of views contradictory to what he considered the principles of Reform Judaism.[66] In 1942, HUC President Julian Morgenstern acknowledged that during the Kohler administration there existed a "definite, aggressive anti-Zionist policy governing the administration of the College and an attempt to control the students."[67] In his advocacy of Zionism, Wise rejected the anti-Zionist, acculturated version of Judaism practiced by classical reformers.

At JIR, Wise set the pattern in Reform Judaism of attracting Eastern European youth to the rabbinate. By 1927, the Jews of America were probably 80 percent or more of East European origin, even higher in the big cities like New York.[68] His early students came from mixed backgrounds. About half were born abroad and most came from families of east European origin and of humble means. Also in contrast to HUC, JIR required a college degree for entrance. Religiously, views of JIR students ran the spectrum from moderately traditional to radical. Wise claimed that his school was non-partisan but chapel services at JIR were usually conducted with the Reform movement's Union Prayer Book (although psalms were added for variety) and most JIR graduates went on to serve Reform congregations. Meyer observes that the principle ideological difference that separated JIR from HUC was JIR's commitment to Jewish peoplehood rather than religious belief or practice. The impact that JIR had on the Reform movement was to produce a steady stream of East European Reform rabbis who appealed to East European Jews and who nurtured a sense of *kelal Yisrael* in Reform Jews. Further, Wise attracted the East European youth to liberal Judaism. Later, Maurice Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) followed in Wise's footsteps by endeavoring to attract East European Jews.

The 1920's and 1930's witnessed a rise in anti-Semitism, and as a reaction to it, Reform Jews tended to

retreat from their universal world-view and to replace it with a more ethno-centered form of Judaism. Anti-Semitism manifested itself in a number of ways.

The change in America's approach to foreigners after the conclusion of World War One contributed to the inward-turn within Reform Judaism. After the war, the United States not only turned from international responsibility to narrow self-interest, it also virtually shut its gates to immigrants and became obsessed with the alleged dangers of foreign influence. The wave of Jewish immigrants from Europe met stingy immigration requirements initially in 1921, and further legislation in 1924 saw Jewish immigration grind to a halt.[69] In 1921, nearly 120,000 Jewish immigrants entered the United States, but after the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, Jewish immigration fell to 10,000. Thereafter, only a marginal number of Jews came to the United States from Europe.[70] Michael Meyer analyzes the situation this way: "America was to be for the Americans alone, and not everyone even agreed that Jews already on its shores qualified fully."[71] Historian Rufus Learsi explains the anti-immigration legislation as racist:

> For it was frankly racist in intent and effect. The Johnson Act (1924) resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of immigrants from Southern Europe, principally Italians and Greeks, and from Eastern Europe, principally the Jews, and it favored Britain and the countries of Northern Europe. . . In the propaganda that preceded the adoption of the Johnson Bill, the "Nordics," as the happy people of more

> favored lands were called, were found to be a superior race, possessing every virtue, while the others were inferior and tainted with an assortment of vices, including the gravest of them all: a leaning towards radicalism.[72]

A number of unfortunate stereotypes fueled the passion of many Americans against the Jews. During the two decades between the wars, anti-Semitism was propagated by individual hatemongers and groups of people united by their collective hate. The Klu Klux Klan (KKK) belongs in the latter category. The KKK, the order of sheeted and hooded nightriders of the South in the post-Civil War years, was thought to have vanished from the scene, but the group re-emerged in the 1920's and spread beyond the South. The revived KKK summed up its expanded program in the slogan "native, white Protestant supremacy," which damned immigrants, Jews, and Catholics, along with African-Americans.[73]

The Klan adopted the fiery cross as its chief symbol and the masked riders appointed themselves guardians of racial purity and morality. Their acts of terror included the murder of African-Americans and whites who they abhorred. Most portentous was the Klan's entry into politics. Members of the KKK triumphed in elections not only in the South, but in Maine, Oregon, and Indiana. The organization elected or controlled members of Congress and state officials, including governors, and in the South, nearly every political aspirant found it essential to join the Klan. The KKK's anti-Semitism was expressed not only in

its literature, where Jews are described as an unblendable element, and in its anti-immigration propaganda, but in such terrorist acts as breaking Jewish store windows and burning fiery crosses in front of synagogues.[74]

The Klan did not enjoy popular support for long, however. Although in 1928 it helped defeat Democratic presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith, a Catholic, the organization fell into public disapproval by the end of the decade due to the conviction and imprisonment of many of its members, including the governor of Indiana. Klan activity lingered throughout the 1930's and enjoyed a short rebirth in 1945, but its earlier momentum was gone.[75]

Most conspicuous among individual hatemongers was the most distinguished and admired tycoon in America, Henry Ford. The "Seven Years War" Ford waged against the Jews was even more sensational than the antics of the Klan and gave American Jewry even greater concern. Ford's anti-Semitism, unlike the KKK's, was undiluted, and his vast resources of money and prestige as the country's foremost industrial magnate stood at his command. The war began in May 1920 when Ford's widely circulated *Dearborn Independent* began publishing a series of violent attacks against the Jews, and it ended abruptly in 1927 when Ford issued an abject and public apology.

The inspiration for Ford's crusade was the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forgery which first appeared in Russia at the beginning of the century. The book appeared in many

languages and became the handbook of international anti-Semitism. The *Protocols* portrays a vast conspiracy by the "elders of Zion," presumably the leaders of the Zionist movement, to bring about the downfall of all governments and set up a world empire with the "elders" as rulers. The result would be accomplished by means of terror, subornation, class strife and general demoralization, along with the help of corrupt politicians, Free Masons, liberals, and atheists. Even though a Swiss court in 1935 pronounced the *Protocols* a forgery, the *Dearborn Independent* made it the basis of Ford's anti-Semitic campaign. The articles it printed were assembled and circulated under the general title *The International Jew*.[76] The scurrilous publication was circulated in the millions until Ford was forced by a 1927 lawsuit to cease from his anti-Semitic activity.[77] The blight of anti-Semitic sentiment that Ford had set in motion was felt long after Ford's public apology. As late as 1941, *The International Jew* was reprinted an circulated by the KKK and fascist groups, and in 1953 a large reprint of the *Protocols* was circulated by the publisher of the anti-Semitic bi-weekly *Common Sense*.[78] Ford left America's Jews with a deep wound. For the living symbol of American industry to smear Jewry left the bitter taste that Jews were not truly at home in the United States and made Reform Judaism's assertion that Jews were no longer a people difficult to defend.

Then, the stock market crash in the fall of 1929 again fanned the flames of anti-Semitic agitation. The repercussions of the economic disaster were world wide, the suffering it inflicted was acute, and millions of victims were inclined to listen to demagogues and charlatans. Historian Learsi sees the Depression as a factor in the rise of Nazism in Europe and the growth of Fascist organizations in America, all of which made anti-Semitism the principle plank in their platforms.[79]

The ground for charging the Jews with responsibility for the economic disaster was the canard that Jews controlled American finance and the general economy of the country, and thus engineered the Depression. No less than a congressman from Pennsylvania explained the ruse in the U.S. House of Representatives in May 1933, and in 1939 the House heard the same views from a Montana congressman. Anti-Semites also charged that Jews controlled international finance and conspired against all Christendom. Learsi writes that so often was the charge repeated that in the minds of many the term "international banker" became synonymous with Jew. The myth was given such wide currency that the editors of *Fortune* magazine responded by publishing a survey called, *The Jews in America*, in February, 1936. The article revealed that Jews played a decidedly minor role in both national and international finance.[80]

The facts did nothing to dispel the myths, however. From the rise of Nazism in Germany in 1933 until the attack

on Pearl Harbor, peddlers of anti-Semitism asserted that President Franklin D. Roosevelt's support of the democracies against Nazi and Fascist aggression was not in the best interest of America. Rather, it was what the Jewish interventionists ordered. Another charge they levelled was that the New Deal was a Jewish concoction. The presence of Jews among the President's advisors, among them Benjamin V. Cohen, Sidney Hillman, and Samuel I. Rosenman, was offered as sufficient proof for the contentions.[81]

The hatemonger with the largest following was the Catholic priest Charles E. Coughlin. His radio show was broadcast weekly from Detroit to an audience that reached the millions. His "sanctimonious venom," as Learsi describes it, was augmented by his publication of *Social Justice*, which was peddled on the busiest streets of America by the priest's Christian Front, which became the largest and most sinister of the anti-Semitic fraternities. In the first two issues were reprinted the *Protocals of the Elders of Zion*.[82]

The twin developments of the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel heightened the ethnic awareness of Reform Jews. The atrocities committed by Nazi Germany aroused anguish and desperation not only because of a sense of *kelal Yisrael* but because so many of the victims were relatives of American Jews. The physical dimensions of the crime were staggering. An estimated 6,000,000 Jews were killed in concentration camps and by special units of the

German army. The pattern of annihilation included psychological as well as physical torture, and as a result, not only were the Jews of East Europe murdered, but along with them, an ancient culture and way of life.[83]

After enduring the waves of anti-Semitism within the United States since the 1920's, the Holocaust acted as yet another sign that despite their efforts, Jews were not a safe and accepted minority group in modern societies. As a consequence, Jews once again became aware that for better or for worse, the world regarded Jews as a people, an ethnic group, not just one of the world's religions. This feeling would be augmented by the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Many writers and historians point to the Holocaust and founding of the State of Israel as major impetuses for American Reform to recapture some of its abandoned ties to the Jewish people. In 1973, Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, then president of the CCAR, wrote:

> These two events produced in the Jewish community a determination, unprecedented in recent history, not only to survive but to survive as Jews. And whatever could express that determination, including religious practice and religious symbols, was authorized, by spontaneous consensus, to lay claims and impose obligations on the contemporary Reform Jew.[84]

In addition to rekindling a sense of what made Jews a unique people, the Holocaust also led Reform Jews to doubt the inevitable progress of humanity and optimistic universalism, themes which ran throughout the Pittsburgh Platform. After learning about the horrors which Germany,

an enlightened, modern, and cultured country had perpetrated, Reform Jews could no longer accept the sovereignty of reason. What would attract Reform Jews after the 1940's would be a Reform that evoked emotion and a prayerbook that spoke to the heart.

Of course, the changes were not immediate, and the intensity felt by Reform Jews in the wake of 1948 would begin to flag in the 1950's. Michael Meyer writes that although Holocaust awareness and Israel consciousness declined in the 1950's, the two world events raised Jewish consciousness and created a sense of American Jewry's special responsibility to sustain Jewish survival.[85] The changes in perception for many Reform Jews began to develop in the post-war period, and the tendency to view their religion in a more broad and self-demanding way would continue and intensify in the future.

Just as Stephen S. Wise found many supporters for his brand of liberal Judaism throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Reform leaders in the 1940's and 1950's decided to strengthen their branch by attracting the second and third generation East European immigrants. This effort was made during a propitious time, for religion in America enjoyed a rebirth in popularity after World War II.

As Michael Meyer observes in *Response to Modernity*, "The generation after World War II witnessed American Reform Judaism's greatest expansion in numbers and in program." During an age in which Americans felt they separated

themselves from the atheistic communists by their belief in God and Congress added "Under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, religion enjoyed a religious revival. In this environment, belonging to a church and believing in God became hallmarks of Americanism.[86]

For Judaism, the surge was felt most in the suburbs. Following the war, Jews flocked to the areas outside the big cities, and the first institution they built was usually the synagogue. Unlike in the city, where Jewish life centered around ethnic neighborhoods, Jewish life in the suburbs centered around the synagogue. Another impetus for synagogue affiliation was Jewish education for children. Most of the new suburban dwellers were young couples who sought a Jewish education for their children.[87] Rabbi Solomon Freehof noticed that the new expansion was transforming Reform Judaism into a body composed mainly of new adherents whose parents or grandparents were Orthodox or who had grown up in observant homes.[88]

At the same time that a transformation was occurring within the membership of Reform Judaism, the Reform leadership was making an effort to attract East Europeans to Reform Judaism. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath assumed the position of executive director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) in 1943 at a time when the UAHC's prestige in the movement was low. He took charge of an underfunded, barely visible organization and succeeded in raising the Union's profile and establishing it as the most

important of Reform's three national institutions. One of Eisendrath's early objectives was to move the UAHC from Cincinnati to New York, the largest center of America's Jewish population. Eisendrath conveyed this message to the Union's board:

> We must come out of our provincial shell and accept this challenge rather than leave these masses, by our default, to others who do dwell closer to them. We need also, in this dynamic day, the momentum which comes from being in close proximity with these vibrant multitudes of our people.[89]

Eisendrath's suggestion initially met a ground swell of opposition at the UAHC Biennial Assembly of 1948. For many of the delegates, Cincinnati symbolized Reform Judaism: classical, German in lineage, and a minimum of ritual. The delegates perceived Reform in Middle America as genteel, middle-class, and proper; they perceived that if based in New York, Reform would become contaminated by the eastern metropolis and lose the distinguishing features which the second- and third-generation Reform Jews held dear. After stormy discussions and a close vote, the move to New York was approved.[90]

During the years shortly after World War Two, Rabbi Louis Finkelstein was building a strong Conservative movement that was especially appealing to East Europeans, in large part because it was seen as a centrist position between Reform and Orthodoxy. In order to compete with the Conservative movement, Reform had to enjoy a presence on the

east coast, where most East Europeans lived. Historian Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus explains that leaders of the Reform movement tried to woo East European Jews to Reform by heightening Reform's sense of ritual, ethnicity, and Zionism.[91]

While none of the above factors would have instigated the rise of neo-Reform by itself, combined, they established an ambience in which a return to previously discarded modes of worship and observance became a natural phenomenon. The virulent anti-Semitism of the 1920's through 1940's caused many Reform Jews to retreat to the familiar ambit in which they were raised. While some Jews responded to anti-Semitism by abandoning Judaism all together, the majority responded by clinging to their faith more dearly. They found comfort, community, and warmth by turning to the synagogue, and often that meant returning to Jewish tradition.

ENDNOTES

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[4]. *CCARY*, vol. 45 (1935), 277.

[5]. *CCARY*, vol. 46 (1936), 106.

[6]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 317-318.

[7]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 320.

[8]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 318.

[9]. M. Meyer, Response to Modernity, 317.

[10]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 318-319.

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[12]. David Meyer, "Elements of the Return to Tradition in American Reform Judaism from 1885-1976" (rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1986), 81.

[13]. Arthur L. Reinhart, *The Voice of the Jewish Laity: A Survey of the Jewish Layman's Religious Attitudes and Practices* (Cincinnati: National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, 1928), iii.

[14]. Reinhart, *Voice of the Jewish Laity*, v.

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21. Reinhart, *Voice of the Jewish Laity*, 61-62.

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29. The inference is based on the introduction, which refers to the initial study made "several years ago," and one respondent's reference to Hitler on page 2. Hitler came to power in 1933.

30. Arthur L. Reinhart, *The Findings of an Inquiry on The Layman's Attitude toward the Reform Synagogue Service* (Cincinnati: National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, 193_), 19.

31. Reinhart, *Reform Synagogue Service*, 19.

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33. Reinhart, *Reform Synagogue Service*, 12-13.

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37. For text of the 1937 resolution, see Morton M. Berman, "Report of the Committee on Reform Practice," delivered at the 41st General Assembly, UAHC, November 13, 1950, 2.

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43. Berman, "Current Reform Practice," 5.

44. Berman, "Current Reform Practice," 5-6.

45. Berman, "Current Reform Practice," 7.

46. Berman, "Current Reform Practice," 10.

47. Reinhart, "Voice of the Jewish Laity," 19.

48. Berman, "Current Reform Practice," 9.

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79. Learsi, *The Jews in America*, 293.

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81. Learsi, *The Jews in America*, 294.

82. Learsi, The Jews in America, 295.

[83]. Learsi, *The Jews of America*, 304-305.

[84]. Robert I. Kahn, "We Were Mandated," *CCAR Journal* (Spring, 1973), 60.

[85]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 354.

[86]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 353.

[87]. M. Meyer, Response to Modernity, 354.

[88]. *CCARY*, vol. 73 (1963), 165.

[89]. M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 355-356.

[90]. M. Meyer, Response to Modernity, 356-357.

[91]. Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, interview conducted in Cincinnati, December 9, 1993.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AGE OF NEO-REFORM

THE CHANGING MOOD OF AMERICAN REFORM

The decades after World War II were a period of remarkable expansion for Reform Judaism. The conducive social situation and religious atmosphere of the late forties and fifties, coupled with the skillful leadership of President Maurice Eisendrath, yielded rich results for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). In the twenty-one years between 1943 and 1964, the Union more than doubled its number of congregations, from 300 to 656, and more than tripled its family membership from 60,000 to 200,000. The period of growth, however, was followed by a period of malaise. Historian Michael Meyer contends that Reform in America was gripped by "severe self-doubt and anxiety about the future" in the late sixties. Membership lists in congregations either remained static or declined, and only a handful of new congregations joined each year.[1]

Two studies, one commissioned by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and the other by the UAHC, illustrate the funk in which Reform Judaism found itself. Theodore Lenn's *Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism*, published in 1972, reported that 42 percent of the American Reform rabbinate said there was a crisis in Reform Judaism

and 71 percent perceived a "Jewish distance" between themselves and the congregation.[2]

Along with exposing the malaise, the survey revealed the strength of neo-Reform in the rabbinate. Of the respondents, 43 percent were in favor of incorporating more of traditional Judaism in Reform's beliefs and practices, and 22 percent favored a merger with the Conservative movement. At the other extreme, though, 29 percent were in favor of moving away from traditionalism toward humanism.[3]

The Reform rabbinate's dissatisfaction with the *Union Prayer Book* (*UPB*) is an example of the traditional leanings of many rabbis. Only 38 percent of Reform rabbis reported using the *UPB* without some modifications, leading Lenn to deduce that the Reform prayer book "is not meeting the complete needs of Reform rabbis and their congregations."[4] In 1972, Leonard Fein published an extensive survey of UAHC membership that showed apathy rather than a high level of dissatisfaction. Two-fifths indicated they liked services very much, and the remainder was mostly neutral. Fein reported:

> Indeed, in reviewing the responses regarding the services, one is impressed at the low level of dissatisfaction. In rabbinic circles, and among intellectual critics, the typical Reform worship service comes in for more than its fair share of lumps. But here, though we find no great enthusiasm in endorsement, we find still less a massive groundswell of discontent. Is there too little participation in the service, as is so commonly alleged? Not in the view of eight of ten respondents. Should more Hebrew be used? Eighty-two percent find the present pattern about right. Even the Union prayerbook, traditional

> target of much criticism, is endorsed in its present form by almost half of all respondents, and most of the rest think it could use relatively modest revision. Indeed, slightly over a third of our respondents find worship services 'inspiring,' while only nine percent find them 'meaningless and dull.'[5]

While Fein's report could lead one to believe that the state of Reform Judaism was not as bad as rumored, the very lack of criticism and ferment suggests how minimal people's expectations were. The majority of respondents, old and young, did not regard the synagogue as an object of significant emotional investment. Over a third of the respondents reported that the synagogue was an unimportant institution in their lives, and most attended the temple quite infrequently. Most people were not disappointed in their congregations, according to Fein, because their demands and expectations were too minimal to experience disappointment. They were neither greatly disturbed nor enthusiastic about the status quo; they were just indifferent to it.[6]

Yet Fein did not offer a pessimistic prognosis about the Reform movement. "It is perfectly possible to initiate a revolution of rising Judaic aspirations," said Fein. In order to do so, Reform Judaism would need to provide a sense of community for its congregants. Fein wrote that "no single conclusion registered as strongly as our sense that there is, among the people we have come to know, a powerful, perhaps even desperate, longing for community." The single best way to foster a feeling of community, Fein observed,

would be "to provide its members richer opportunities in the . . . areas of intellectual, or cognitive, Judaism, and in the area of experiential, or affective, Judaism." Cultural trends in America, Fein suggested, were likely to increase in the seventies as was people's "freedom to deviate and go one's own idiosyncratic way." The author was encouraged by the energy and purpose that existed in the movement. It simply needed to be tapped.[7]

Fein's prognosis was accurate. As Reform Judaism progressed from the early 1970's through the present, many people found community in the synagogue. The elements of tradition that were incorporated in the worship, life-cycle, and holiday rituals, touched Reform Jews on an emotional level. As ethnic culture became a focus of interest on a general national level, many Jews became more interested in their own ethnic traditions and felt freer to explore them because ethnicity was more broadly accepted by society than in previous generations.

Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr., a member of the committee which composed the 1976 Centenary Perspective, wrote that "Contemporary culture highlights ethnicity and a self-assertive return to ethnic roots, the very kind of ethnicity that is expressed in the traditional practice which emerges out of the Jewish historic experience."[8] Lawrence Hoffman, professor of liturgy at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), expressed a similar point:

> If one can talk of Hispano-Americans, Black-Americans, Italian-Americans, and so on, one can surely talk of Jewish Americans, where the definition of 'Jewish' is not limited to religion. So without in any way denying an essential religious component of Judaism, American Reform Jews have expanded their sense of self to include also a group ethnicity, a family tie that makes all Jews responsible for each other.9

While Reform Jews were becoming more interested in their religion in an ethnic sense, Reform rabbis were awakening to the power of symbols. Taking a cue from Marshall McLuhan, the American sociologist and media expert who asserted in the late 1960's that visual-print media were no longer the primary means of communication in an increasingly "electrified" world, Rabbi Michael Stroh realized the impact of tactile experiences on a new generation of Reform Jews:

> It would seem that a great need for the visual no longer exists, and that a boy who wears beads around his neck wants a *Talit* around his neck . . . Judaism is filled with the possiblity of tactile experiences. The whole Torah ceremony -- *hakafa*, *aliyot*, *havdala*, the *lulav* and *etrog*, the *shofar* -- provides all we need if we make use of them in services which are participatory.[10]

The changing composition of the Reform rabbinate explains in part the more receptive attitude toward traditional observances. Lenn's 1972 study showed that Reform's present-day rabbis came from backgrounds significantly different than earlier generations of Reform rabbis. Only recently had the Reform rabbinate stopped recruiting mainly first-generation Americans. Also, prior

to 1941, only 24 percent of Reform rabbis were raised in Reform households, and more than half of the rabbis came from Orthodoxy. By 1972, though, the percentage of traditionally raised rabbis had dwindled to 9 percent, with 50 percent growing up in Reform congregations.[11]

Fein's survey from 1972 indicated that Reform's laity followed a similar pattern of steadily diminishing numbers of first-generation Americans. According to Fein, the Reform population at the time was drawn largely from second- and third-generation Americans, although just 34 percent of the respondents were raised in Reform households.[12]

The figures suggest that prior to 1941, the majority of Reform rabbis had rejected the religious upbringing that had been imposed on them during childhood and had decided to adjust their lifestyles to a society different from that of their parents. By 1972, a generation of Reform rabbis were embracing rituals and traditions that they had never been exposed to and were rejecting the cold formalism of their parent's religious life.[13]

For the majority of Reform laity, the interest in tradition stems from the different social climate they lived in as compared to previous generations. By the 1970's, Americanization and social acceptance was no longer a primary concern, so many Reform Jews felt freer to embrace traditional modes of observance. Rabbi Herbert S. Rutman explained, "Part of the experimentation is in the area of ritual and custom, often a 'playing at' being traditional

without accepting the assumptions and beliefs of the tradition, often a sincere expression of a desire to identify with Jews who have been or are traditional."[14]

The changing composition of the Reform movement led to some dramatic changes in 1970's. In a span of two years, Reform Judaism would have a new prayer book and a new platform. The introduction of a new prayer book to replace the venerated *Union Prayer Book* (*UPB*) that had lasted for eighty years, and the adoption of a new platform represent the rise and dominance of a new phase in Reform Judaism: neo-Reform.

GATES OF PRAYER

During the 1900's, the *UPB*, originally published in the early 1890's, went through two revisions. Part I was revised in 1918 and again in 1940, while and Part II was revised in 1922 and 1945. While the first revisions cannot be seen as heralding a widespread return to tradition, several changes do indicate a renewed interest in traditional elements of the service. The most significant change, though not a sign of neo-Reform, created more congregational involvement in the service. The revised *UPB* began to answer the complaint of congregants that there was too much of a spectacle aspect to the service and that there were not enough opportunities for them to participate. The

revisions added more responsive readings to the *UPB*, allowing for more congregational participation.[15]

One sign of the return to tradition was the addition of the Hebrew texts of the concluding three blessings in the *Amidah* of the Shabbat morning service.[16] Previously, only the Festival morning *Amidah* included them, while the Shabbat morning *Amidah* contained them only in English. With the revised editions, all services, except the service at the House of Mourning and the week-day morning service, had at least the first two blessings of the Amidah in the Hebrew text.[17] In addition, the revised *UPB* featured new responsive readings and prayers to be read on various thematic Shabbatot of the Jewish year which had been disregarded in the 1894 edition.[18]

The addition of traditional motifs is even more pronounced in Part II of the revised *UPB*. Whereas the 1894 edition presented an exclusively English *Avinu Malkeinu* litany for the evenings of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the second edition added the Hebrew text.[19] The theme of remembrance is sounded more clearly in the revised volume,[20] and reading selections from Jewish literature outside the Bible are provided, including selections from Maimonides and the Talmud. [21]

The 1940 and 1945 editions of the *UPB* went further in bringing the Reform movement closer to the traditional prayer book. In his doctoral dissertation "The Historical and Theological Development of the Non-Orthodox Prayerbooks

in the United States," Eric Friedland attributes the "ongoing hebraization and judaization of the UPB" to "growing folk sentiment and historical consciousness."[22]

The 1940 edition features a few more Hebrew passages than its predecessor, but the most noticeable addition was the increase in ritual activity. New to the newly revised edition were ceremonies for the lighting of Shabbat candles in the synagogue and for the public recitation of the Shabbat and festival *Kiddush*. The new ceremonies were well-received by congregations, as is demonstrated by a 1956 survey showing 94 percent of the congregations surveyed held a candlelighting service, and 90 percent recited the Kiddush.[23] In addition, a special Torah service for Shemini Atzeret that included *hakafot*, was introduced, followed by the new ceremony of Consecration for children beginning religious school.[24] Another traditional element that appeared for the first time was a Yizkor service for the seventh day of Passover.[25]

Whereas Part I of the newly revised edition contains more ritual elements, Part II includes significantly more Hebrew than the earlier edition. The UPB features expanded versions of *Avinu Malkeinu* for Rosh Hashanah[26] and Yom Kippur,[27] and a considerably lengthened *shofar* service.[28] Other changes include expanded Hebrew in the Amidah,[29] Hebrew blessings before and after the Haftarah reading,[30] a short version of the *Birkhot Hashachar* on Yom Kippur Morning,[31] and a *Kiddush* for Erev Rosh Hashanah.[32]

Another indication that Reform rabbis were increasingly accepting previously discarded elements of tradition is the debate over whether to include the chant *Kol Nidre* in the Yom Kippur evening service. HUC-JIR Professor Lawrence Hoffman explains the embattled history of the prayer in *Shaarei Binah 2--Gates of Understanding 2*. Hoffman noted that *Kol Nidre* had troubled Reform rabbis since the nineteenth century because the prayer consists of a legal formula whereby the worshippers declare that they should not be held liable for oaths made under such unusual circumstances as anger or duress. Early Reform rabbis in Europe and the United States were embarrassed by the text and noted that it had led to centuries of misinterpretation of the prayer by the non-Jewish community. Non-Jews had interpreted it to mean that promises made by Jews would be nullified by recitation of the prayer. As a result of these concerns, *Kol Nidre* was not included in the first edition of the *UPB*. The rabbis tried to substitute alternative lyrics, such as psalms, to which the tune could be fitted, but cantors remained faithful to the original lyrics. Hoffman concludes, "officially, the *Kol Nidre* disappeared from most Reform liturgies, while, unofficially, it remained."[33]

Many Reform Jews throughout the classical Reform period voiced their preference for the prayer's reinstitution in the Reform prayerbook, largely due to their emotional attachment to the prayer's haunting melody. The committee which worked on the 1922 revisions was divided on whether to

include the Aramaic text and ultimately did not include *Kol Nidre* in the prayer book. The first printing of the 1945 newly revised edition contained it, but subsequent to the printing, a disagreement within the committee emerged over whether they had decided to omit or include the prayer. In the end, a compromise was made. The entire first printing of the prayer book was withdrawn from the market, but rather than go to the expense of reprinting the entire book, only the page that had included Kol Nidre was altered. Thus, the compromise that was reached, led to the words "*Kol Nidre*" appearing in Hebrew letters, and the words "The *Kol Nidre* chant" appearing in English. Neither the text of *Kol Nidre* nor a translation were included, leaving a blank space at the bottom of the page. Thus, the 1945 edition represented a compromise: *Kol Nidre* was to be chanted or played, but the text and translation would not be included.[34]

The survey reports by Lenn and Fein indicate that the laity was more or less content with the newly revised edition of the *UPB*, but by the late sixties most rabbis were unhappy with it. The push to compile a new prayer book gained momentum in 1966, when a symposium on liturgy was planned for the *CCAR Journal*.

More than any other publication of the CCAR, *Shaarei Tefilah--Gates of Prayer*, published in 1975, represents the establishment of neo-Reform as the dominant trend in the Reform movement. The differences between the *UPB* and *Gates of Prayer* are evident on both the inside and outside.

First, the *Gates of Prayer* contains a Hebrew title and opens from right to left. Further, *Gates of Prayer* is a large book, nearly 800 pages long. The book features seven weekday services, ten Shabbat evening services, six Shabbat morning services, five services for the reading of the Torah, four versions of the *Aleinu*, and thirteen introductory readings for the *Kaddish*. The large number of options for the service leader is partly explained by the remarkable diversity within the rabbinate and the laity. Some were opposed to the growing favor shown to tradition and yearned for the heyday of classical Reform. Others wished for an increase of traditional elements in the worship service. Diversity existed with regard to theology as well. Some subscribed to deism, others theism, and still others humanism or polydoxy. All of these religious views are reflected in the *New Union Prayer Book*.

Gates of Prayer also exhibits an appreciation for a wide body of Jewish literature and wisdom. The prayer book begins with thirteen pages of meditations and readings for worship, collected from Scriptures, Midrash, the Talmud, and Jewish thinkers and philosophers from all ages. The meditations and readings are followed by lengthy excerpts from *Pirkei Avot*, Chapters of the Fathers, a collection of ethical maxims contained in the Mishnah. The *UPB* was criticized as a poor pedagogic tool, since citations to Scriptures or other Jewish texts were not included. In contrast, *Gates of Prayer* provides an opportunity for the

worshipper to gain exposure to the breadth of Jewish learning. Another aspect of *Gates of Prayer* which makes it a better teaching instrument than its predecessor is the use of markers between rubrics of the liturgy. The *Birkhot Hashachar* are separated from the *Shema* and its blessings, which are separated from the *Amidah*. The Torah service, *Aleinu*, and *Kaddish* are all separated as well. Further, the prayers for the donning of the *tallit* and *tefillin* are separated from the body of the morning service. The very inclusion of those prayers illustrates the changed attitude toward ritual.

Contemporary world history contributed to several aspects of the new prayerbook. The birth of the modern Israel, Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, and the existence of Hebrew as the spoken language of a contemporary country, all gave rise to an increased appreciation of Hebrew, Israel, Jewish history, and Jewish particularism.

Rabbis were aware that Hebrew can help create an emotional bond to prayer and community, as Rabbi Louis J. Sigel expressed in 1959: "A book that purports to be a seder *t'filot yisrael* should not minimize that very tool which can make for a feeling of *k'lal yisrael*."[35] Rabbi Joseph Klein, nearly a decade later, argued that the Hebrew aspect of the prayer book should enjoy primacy: "To have validity and meaning the *Union Prayerbook* must be basically a Hebrew prayer book with English translation rather than a

vernacular creation with some Hebrew prayers thrown in for sentimental reasons."[36]

Indeed, *Gates of Prayer* reads like a prayer book in which Hebrew and English are co-partners in the liturgy. Many items which were absent, abbreviated, or substantially altered in previous editions were included in the new prayer book. Some of those items are *Ma'ariv Aravim*, *Hoda'ah*, most of *Ahavah Rabbah*, Tzur Yisrael for morning services, *Hashkiveinu*, *Veshamru*, *Vezot Hatorah*, a fuller *Hallel* with its blessing, and two Havdalah services.

Gates of Prayer shows an increased sense of Jewish peoplehood, as exhibited in services for Yom Hashoah, Tisha B'av, and meditations on Jewish suffering. Also included are services for Yom Ha'atsmaut, Israel's Independence Day, prayers for the State of Israel, and the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*. The increased comfort with particularism is evident in the traditional Hebrew and English *Aleinu*, which praises God, "who has set us apart from the other families of earth, giving us a destiny unique among the nations."[37] Other traditional elements of the liturgy also are present, such as the fully restored version of *L'khah Dodi*, with its stanza on the Davidic Messiah. As historian Michael Meyer, observes, "In fact, in one form or another, in one place or another, the new prayerbook contained nearly every classical theme except for the messianic hope of reestablishing the ancient sacrificial service."[38]

Other innovations in *Gates of Prayer* include the reintroduction of the Aramaic *Chatzi Kaddish* separating elements of the liturgy, a partial attempt to eliminate the male-dominated language of the earlier editions of the *UPB*, and the liberal use of English responsive readings. While the increase in Hebrew limited the ability of some to participate in congregational readings, the greater use of responsive readings made it possible for all congregants to become more actively involved in the worship service.

The High Holy Day prayerbook, *Gates of Repentance*, published in 1978, was consistent with *Gates of Prayer* in asserting the primacy of neo-Reform. Probably the most significant inclusion is the Aramaic and English (it is a free translation) text of *Kol Nidre*. The inclusion is an apt symbol for neo-Reform, since the classical reformers disregarded the emotional pull of that prayer. As Hoffman notes:

> What the Reform rabbis did not count on is the power of music and the will of the average congregants, who cared little about the theological or moral consequence of the *Kol Nidrei's* words relative to their fondness for the traditional melody, which obviously spoke very deeply to them of the mood and message of Yom Kippur.[39]

Traditional elements in *Gates of Repentance* abound. Some examples include *Hineni*, which immediately follows the candlelighting ceremony in the first service for Erev Rosh Hashanah. The seventeenth-century poem, written in Eastern Europe, was intended as the cantor's opening supplication in

the *Musaf* service. The prayer captures the inadequacy of the cantor's task: "Behold me, of little merit, trembling and afraid, as I stand before You to plead for Your people, O gracious God." Hoffman explains that when the *UPB* Part II was published in 1894, few congregations had cantors, so *Hineni* was not included. A Rabbi's prayer, said before the open Ark on Erev Yom Kippur, however, expressed a plea equivalent in every regard to the Hineni prayer. "So our return to the traditional *Hineni*, illustrates our continuity with both Reform and pre-reform traditions," Hoffman writes.[40]

Another traditional component of *Gates of Repentance* is the lengthier *Unetaneh Tokef* in the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Morning Services.[41] Earlier Reform Jews, Hoffman notes, "were sometimes uncomfortable with the explicit anthropomorphic imagery of a zealous judging God, the inclusion of angels (in whom modern people do not generally believe), and the precise list of fateful ends awaiting sinners who fail to repent."[42] A fuller *Unetaneh Tokef* was included in the new prayer book because of the emotional impact of the prayer on modern worshippers. The poetry and grandeur of the text continues to appeal to the Reform Jew because it captures the awesome nature of the High Holy Days.[43]

Gates of Prayer and *Gates of Repentance* represent the broad acceptance of neo-Reform in American Reform Judaism. The new prayer books attempted to fuse the modern needs of

the worshipper, like warmth, emotional and intellectual appeal of the liturgy and services, and participation, along with the traditional elements of worship and ritual. Perhaps the most surprising inclusion of all in the *New Union Prayer Books* is prayers in Yiddish, a language which classical reformers frowned upon. In the Shabbat evening service and the Avodah service for Yom Kippur, the Yiddish poem *Zog Nit* is included. The new liturgy pulled together various aspects of Judaism, including traditional Hebrew prayers, folk sentiment, and a connection to Jewish sources.

THE CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE

In 1976, one year after the publication of the *Gates of Prayer*, the Reform movement issued a new platform. Called the Centenary Perspective, because it coincided with the centenaries of the founding of the UAHC (1973) and HUC (1975), the platform reflected the major changes which had occurred in the movement since the Columbus Platform of 1937. Initially, it appeared that creating a platform to speak for all of Reform Judaism would be exceptionally difficult. HUC-JIR Professor of Education and Jewish Religious Thought Eugene Borowitz, chairman of the committee that produced the statement, wrote in the *CCAR Journal* that ideological differences impeded progress. In the wake of the CCAR decision of 1973 urging rabbis to refrain from officiating at interfaith marriages, "internal dissension

among the rabbis had risen to such a point of intensity that there seemed the possibility of the Reform movement splitting," Borowitz writes.[44]

Due to the rancorous relations in the CCAR, President Robert Kahn suggested to the committee that the rabbis try to write a statement 'of the unity of our movement today' in an effort to heal the division in their ranks.[45]

Heeding Kahn's suggestion, the statement was drafted to highlight commonalities, avoid dissension, and turn diversity in the movement into a virtue. "Reform does more than tolerate diversity," the document reads, "it engenders it." The Centenary Perspective, which was presented at the CCAR Conference in San Francisco on June 24, 1976, was readily adopted by the CCAR.[46]

Unlike the two earlier platforms, the Centenary Perspective is historically self-conscious. Its opening paragraphs are devoted to what the movement has taught and learned over that past one hundred years:

> The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress. The State of Israel, through its many accomplishments, raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion.

In contrast to the Pittsburgh Platform, the Centenary Perspective acknowledges the capacity of humankind for evil and the necessity of the Jewish people to be self-reliant. The "widespread threats to freedom" and "the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture, have taught us to be

less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching," the platform reads. It goes on to state that in response to the recent events in Jewish history, "We have learned again that the survival of the Jewish people is of highest priority." The drafters of the Centenary Perspective were acutely aware of the importance of Jewish survival. Not once is there a mention of the concept of survival in earlier platforms of the Reform movement, but the words "survive," "survivor," and "survival" appear six times in the 1976 statement.

Perhaps prompted by the awareness of the concept of Jewish survival, the authors of the document focus considerably more attention on the aspects of their religion that make the Jews a particular people. In addition to following the basic rubrics of the 1937 statement of God, Israel, and Torah, the Centenary Perspective devotes four sections to "Our Obligations." The first obligation is religious practice. The authors admit that Reform Judaism's past emphasis on ethics was to the detriment of ritual. The document goes further than its 1937 predecessor in spelling out the ritual and ceremonial obligations that help define Jewish life:

> The past has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; life-long study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogue and community;

> and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.

It is noteworthy that the paragraph's opening sentence is worded so that the who or what that is making the claims upon us is left out and the ultimate source of the obligations is left vague. Another peculiarity is the surprising omission of the importance of a religious school education. The message, though, is clear: our ethical demands are only one aspect of our obligations of religious practice. Other aspects of religious life we are obligated to undertake include observance of Shabbat and holy days, life cycle observance, prayer, Jewish learning, and participation in the Jewish community. Whereas in 1937 Reform Jews were enjoined to preserve customs, symbols and ceremonies that possessed inspirational value, in 1976 the purpose of Jewish practice and participation was the survival of the Jewish people.

The Centenary Perspective reiterates the traditional notion of Israel as "our people's homeland," and acknowledges the "innumerable religious and ethnic ties" that bind Reform Jews to that land. In less than forty years, the CCAR moved from vitriolic debate over the issue of Zionism to encouraging "*aliyah* for those who wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion."

The paragraph on survival and service captures the dramatic shift in the Reform movement from classical Reform to neo-Reform. The classical Reform era downplayed Jewish particularism for the sake of universalism. The Centenary Perspective admits, "In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism." In its promulgation of the new Reform emphasis on Jewish peoplehood, the obligations of religious practice, and the affirmation of Jewish particularism and ethnic identity, the Centenary Perspective codifies the values of neo-Reform.

GUIDES AND LITURGY FOR OBSERVANCE

The profusion of ritually-oriented CCAR publications began in 1972 with *Tadrikh L'Shabbat: A Shabbat Manual*. Rabbi Gunther Plaut, in the book's introduction, calls the work an "effort on the part of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to create old/new opportunities for Jewish living." While the *Tadrikh* attempted to promote traditional observance of Shabbat in a modern age, Plaut explained that it also was "a major attempt of the Reform rabbinate to deal directly with Reform Halachah in specific form, with guidelines responsive to the needs and realities of Diaspora life."[47]

The *Tadrikh* acknowledges Shabbat observance may be difficult for Jews who previously discarded it or who haye

never been exposed to Shabbat rituals and ceremony. "We can only begin where we are," the preface encourages. "To make Shabbat meaningful, observe as much as you can." Later, the *Tadrikh* adds, "Begin from where you are now, with what you presently do or do not do." The guidebook offers some traditional purposes for the observance of Shabbat: "to deepen the unique historic fellowship of the Jewish people," to enhance personal life with *kedushah* (holiness), *menuchah* (rest), and *oneg* (joy), and to "remember God's covenant (Berit) with Israel and to reaffirm our identity with, and loyalty to, the house of Israel."[48]

Most of the *Tadrikh* is devoted to presenting home rituals. A list of "What to Do (*Mitzvot Aseh*)" includes such activities as family preparation for Shabbat, blessing the candles, reciting or chanting the *Kiddush*, blessings before and after the meal, and maintaining the special quality of Shabbat through the *Havdalah* service. The *Tadrikh* lists for the reader "What Not to Do (*Mitzvot Lo ta'aseh*)" on Shabbat, including shopping, performing housework, engaging in gainful work, and partaking in public activity which violates or gives the appearance of violating Shemirat Shabbat (observance of Sabbath).

With its traditional categories of Sabbath observance, inclusion of many Hebrew words, and explanations of their concepts, the *Tadrikh* represents a valuable first step towards the intensification of Shabbat observance of rituals and ceremonies.

The *Gates of Prayer* was not the first CCAR publication to radically depart from earlier Reform liturgy. *A Passover Haggadah,* first published in 1974, represents the new mood of American Reform. Edited by Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, the work was not meant as a revision of the previous *Union Haggadah*. "It is an attempt at *renovatio ab origine*: a return to the creative beginning so as to bring forth what is utterly new from what was present in the old," Bronstein writes in the Preface.[49] Similarly, Bronstein expresses the intention of giving new life to traditional Jewish rituals and observances in an article in the *CCAR Journal*: "Indeed, one purpose (though not the only one) of this *Haggadah* is to allow the genius of the original to speak to us again."[50]

In *A Passover Haggadah*, most of the rubrics of the traditional Haggadah are included, even the ten plagues. Also indicative of the new mood in Reform are the directions for a full week of Passover observance. The text instructs the reader that thorough preparation of the home, "along with the different foods, dishes, and utensils that should be set aside and used only during Passover, will recall the sanctity of the time." While the text emphasizes the importance of dietary restrictions during Passover, it acknowledges the power of the customs to "impress themselves especially upon the imagination of our children, heightening the fascination of the festival."[51]

In 1979, the CCAR extended its guidance to the Jewish life cycle. Jack Wertheimer, professor of history at the

Jewish Theological Seminary, calls *Shaarei Mitzvah--Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Year*, "Perhaps the most pioneering volume of all."[52] Gates of Mitzvah breaks new ground in Reform Judaism because it emphasizes the role of *mitzvot* in Reform Jewish life. Editor Simeon Maslin wrote:

> *Mitzvah* is the key to authentic Jewish existence and to the sanctification of life. No English equivalent can adequately translate the term. Its root meaning is "commandment," but *mitzvah* has come to have broader meanings. It suggests the joy of doing something for the sake of others and for the sake of God, and it conveys still more: it also speaks of living Jewishly, of meeting life's challenges and opportunities in particular ways. All this is *mitzvah*. Doing one *mitzvah*, says our tradition, will lead us to do another and another.[53]

Whereas the Pittsburgh Platform accepted only the moral laws at the expense of the ritual commandments, and the Centenary Perspective referred only to "obligations," Gates of Mitzvah clarified the radical departure in neo-Reform. The dichotomy between the ethical and ritual *mitzvot* is rejected, and ritual is exalted. "Ritual, as the vehicle for confronting God and Jewish history, can shape and stimulate one's ethical impulses," Maslin notes. As a result, "The very act of doing a *mitzvah* may lead one to know the heart of the matter."[54] The volume surveys the full scope of Jewish life-cycle observances, including birth, childhood, education, marriage, the Jewish home, death, and mourning. The openness of the guide to once discarded traditions that were deemed obsolete is evidenced in the passage on Jewish dietary laws: "The fact that

kashrut was an essential feature of Jewish life for so many centuries should motivate the Jewish family to study it and to consider whether or not it may enhance the sanctity of their home."[55]

With the publication in 1983 of *Shaarei Moeid--Gates of the Seasons*, the Reform movement set out to introduce congregants to the wide breadth of Jewish holidays and to reaffirm their commitment to observe them. Edited by Peter Knobel, the 1983 publication serves as a guide to the Jewish year and includes sections on the High Holy Days, the Pilgrimage Festival, Hanukkah, and Purim. The guide also presents new observances in Reform Judaism, including Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Day) and Yom Ha'atsmaut (Israel Independence Day).

Shaarei Bayit--Gates of the House, printed in 1989, represents another effort of the Reform movement to move the laity to more ritual and ceremonial observance by introducing more innovative rituals. A companion volume to *Gates of Prayer*, *Gates of the House* includes prayers and meditations for private devotion, and services for familial and communal occasions. It creates innovative services for traditional ceremonies like the covenant of *milah* and the covenant of life, but it creates new traditions, like saying prayers at a time of disappointment or the reaching of retirement age. *Gates of the House* was a significant link in the *Gates of* series, because it makes the breadth of Jewish ritual and ceremonies available to the general

public. Further, the volume reflects the increasing comfort level of Reform Jews with prayer and traditional observances.

The 1980's witnessed other CCAR liturgical publications. *The Five Scrolls* (1983), which included services; *Songs and Hymns* (1987) accompanied *Gates of Prayer; Gates of Forgiveness-Selichot (1987)* reflected the new interest in the Saturday night service preceding Rosh Hashanah; and *Seder Tu Bishevat: The Festival of Trees* (1989) indicated the popularity of a seder that garnered just two paragraphs in *Gates of the Seasons* just six years earlier.

A second Shabbat manual, *Shaarei Shabbat--Gates of Shabbat*, by Mark Shapiro, published in 1991, reflects the increased emphasis on ritual and ceremony of Reform Judaism in the 1990's. *Gates of Shabbat* includes readings, poetry, and meditations on Shabbat; candlelighting and Havdalah services; traditional songs like *Shalom Aleichem* and *L'khah Dodi*; and the Shabbat blessings, including the Family Blessing. In its effort to pave a path for traditional observance in the modern world, *Gates of Shabbat* includes a chapter establishing definitions for work and rest on Shabbat. The guide is accessible to both those versed in Hebrew and those who are not, since it contains Hebrew, transliteration, and English versions of all of the prayers. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the work is its extensive and comprehensible explanations of the Shabbat

customs and mitzvot which provide the reader with the foundation on which to intensify Shabbat observance.

CHANGES IN REFORM EDUCTION

One sign of the increased emphasis on Jewish education during the 1970's is the increase in the study of Hebrew. As a result of the popularity of Benei Mitzvah and the influence of Israel, Hebrew instruction continued to expand, and by 1976 the vast majority of children in Reform religious schools received some exposure to Hebrew. In addition, by 1977 nearly all schools had raised the age of confirmation to the tenth grade, and the larger schools offered post-confirmation education as well.[56]

The best example of the renewed emphasis on Jewish learning is the rise in popularity of Reform Jewish day schools in the 1980's. Some rabbis and congregants urged the movement in the 1960's to explore the issue of Reform day schools. Rabbi Alexander Schindler, then UAHC director of education, and Rabbi Jay Kaufman, then UAHC vice-president, publicly affirmed their support for day schools within Reform Judaism in the early 1960's, yet the issue would not be resolved for more than twenty years. Finally in 1986, at the conclusion of two years of intensive task-force deliberation and heated floor debate, the UAHC recognized day schools as a valid educational alternative.

Michael Zeldin, professor of education at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, cites several factors for the popularity of Reform day schools:

> The factors are many and varied and include renewed Jewish commitment that has continuously deepened in the years following the Six-Day War, the continuing sense of the importance of ethnic roots, an upsurge in the number of school-age children due to the 'baby boomlet,' and the self-assured 'Americanness' of the third and fourth generation of American Jews.[57]

In an article in *Reform Judaism* magazine, Rabbi Janet Marder reports that in 1993, Reform day schools open their doors each weekday morning to 3,600 students. Zeldin also attributes their popularity to the growing disillusionment with supplementary Jewish education. "It became increasingly obvious that, in a few hours a week, it was impossible to instill in the children even the most rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew, an understanding of Jewish ideas, or a sense of their identities as Jews." [58]

Another aspect of the reinforcement of Jewish education is the camping movement. The UAHC camping movement began in the 1950's and increased in popularity as an increasing number of religious schools began to send their students to camps. The camps represent the continuation of educator Emanuel Gamoran's emphasis on affective, experiential learning and transmitting Jewish identity and a sense of Jewish peoplehood to students. Historian Michael Meyer noted that "during a weekend vacation period, the educators

could create a more encompassing and conducive educational environment, often teaching more, with less resistance, in a concentrated camp session than in many weeks of Sunday morning classes."[59] As of 1994, nine UAHC camps across the country and four member congregation camps provide children with Jewish education and identity through summer and weekend learning experiences.

A final measure of the increased emphasis on ritual and ceremonial observance in Reform Jewish education is the continued shift from instruction in religious and ethical principles to the fostering of an the appreciation of customs, peoplehood, and synagogue participation. Meyer observes that the educational goal "shifted further from a Reform Jewish identity to a more encompassing identification with all Jews, regardless of religious movement." In addition, he maintains, "The textbooks of this era focused even more than earlier on specifically Jewish concerns rather than on a universal message." Although theology was not absent, Reform Jewish education in the seventies was much more oriented to sociology, a focus Meyer calls geared "to learning about Jews more than to learning about Judaism." [60] It is interesting to note that earlier goal statements for Reform Jewish education emphasize God and service to God, as well as Israel's prophetic mission. The 1976 statement, however, omits reference to both God and the prophetic mission. The curriculum aimed to produce Jews who "affirm their Jewish identity and bind themselves

inseparably to their people by word and deed," who "cherish and study Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people," who "value and practice *tefila*," and who "celebrate Shabbat and the festivals and observe the Jewish ceremonies marking the significant occasions in their lives." The statement is traditional in its sprinkling of Hebrew words, its reference to the synagogue rather than temple, and in its emphasis on Jewish peoplehood. In fact, it makes no reference to Reform Judaism. By offering students a broad-based Jewish education, the movement attempted to produce a generation of Reform Jews that could make informed choices about their ritual and ceremonial practice -- a traditional value of Reform Judaism.

RITUAL ON THE RISE

A 1989 survey of worship practices of Reform congregations, conducted by Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, director of research for the UAHC, and commissioned by the UAHC-CCAR Commission on Religious Living, indicated the primacy of neo-Reform in the Reform movement. In comments about the survey which were published in *Reform Judaism*, Seltzer writes, "Where custom and ceremony were once marginalized and the use of Hebrew neglible, heightened ritual involvement will, in all likelihood, be characteristic of the Reform synagogue of the 21st century."[61] The survey of 425 UAHC congregations showed the renewed importance of

Shabbat morning services among Reform Jews. "Not only has Shabbat morning become the preferred time for conducting bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies among the overwhelming majority of reporting congregations (384), but more than half indicate that a Shabbat service is held regularly on mornings when there are no b'nai mitzvah," Seltzer writes. The renewed emphasis on the Shabbat morning service is further illustrated by the finding that 33 congregations hold an alternate service when there is a bar/bat mitzvah held in the main sanctuary. The popularity of the Shabbat Morning service has not affected the continuing centrality of the Friday evening service. The survey showed that roughly 77 percent of the respondents reported that the late Friday evening service continued to be the primary congregational service of worship.[62]

Congregational participation increased as well. Of the congregations included in the survey, 55 percent reported involving congregants by calling them up to the *bimah* for a variety of customs and rituals associated with reading the Torah, including aliyot, reading the Haftarah, lifting and dressing the Torah, and opening and closing the ark. It also is symbolic of the return to tradition that 55 percent also indicated their congregations march with the Torah.

Another traditional observance, the wearing of the *kippah,* has been established as an accoutrement of neo-Reform. The absence of the *kippah* was once a hallmark of classicity, but in the 1989 survey, *kippot* were provided by

57 percent of the congregations, and 28 congregations required that *kippot* be worn.

The increase in ritual and ceremony was present in holiday observance as well. In direct contrast to classical Reform, 34 percent of the responding congregations observed a second day of Rosh Hashanah. According to the survey, in 1990, many festivals were celebrated by congregations on their prescribed date, as opposed to the weekend closest to the occasion.[63]

In other findings, 95 percent of the congregations reported they recite the *Motzi* at all meals held under synagogue auspices, while only 27 percent recite the *Birkat Hamazon*. Of the responding congregations, 68 percent reported conducting a *Havdalah* service on special occasions and 7 percent reported observing the service whenever an evening program was held on Saturday night. The report also showed that 60 percent of the congregations held worship services as an integral part of the religious school program.

While the 1989 survey shows the increasing popularity of tradition in the Reform movement in terms of Shabbat and other rituals, another survey by Seltzer, not yet completed, will focus on synagogue patterns of observance for the Jewish holidays. Seltzer predicts that the study will show a resurgence in congregational participation and involvement in ceremonial observance throughout the Jewish year.[64]

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CONCLUSION

Although neo-Reform is commonly thought to have begun with the 1937 Columbus Platform or with the printing of Gates of Prayer in 1975, it roots can be found much earlier. Neo-Reform began during the early part of the twentieth century as a response to the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which declared the tenets of classical Reform Judaism. Even while classical Reform, with its disregard of tradition was at its height, there were voices in the Reform movement calling for more tradition and ritual. Some called for more interest in *halakhah* so as to standardize Reform practice and belief, while others decried the lack of warmth and symbol in the worship service.

With the 1923 release of the revised *Union Haggadah*, which restored some of the poetic and symbolic elements of the traditional seder, the reinstatement of previously disregarded traditions was gaining momentum. Surveys published in the 1930s registered the strong feeling among some congregants that Reform Judaism had stripped too much tradition from the religion, leaving services cold and emotionless. Many respondents urged the movement to return to traditional holiday observances, such as dancing with the Torah on Simchat Torah and the *megillah* reading on Purim, to the synagogue.

The desire among Reform Jews for increased tradition became more pronounced in the 1950's, but neo-Reform

established itself as the dominant trend in Reform Judaism with the proliferation of tradition-minded CCAR publications in the 1970's, including the *Gates of Prayer*, *A Passover Haggadah*, and *Gates of Mitzvah*.

The factors which created neo-Reform are wide and varied. Part of the increased interest in ritual and ceremony came from the influx of East Europeans into the Reform movement in the first half of the century. These Jews had been raised in observant homes and who recalled with fondness Jewish traditions. In addition, Reform Jewry turned inward in the face of anti-Semitism and found comfort in tradition and symbolism. As a result of feeling rejection from the outside world, Reform Jews turned their attention to particular Jewish concerns and explored their ethnic tradition. In the sixties and seventies, as ethnic interest heightened among all peoples, Reform Jews felt more comfortable asserting their ethnic characteristics and pride, and that manifested itself in increased interest in their distinctive traditions. Further, while a generation ago many Reform Jews were rejecting the Orthodoxy of their upbringings, today a new generation of Reform Jews who did not grow up with a knowledge of ritual and ceremony are interested in discovering the richness of their religious heritage.

Today, Reform Judaism is simultaneously strengthening its observance of traditional rituals while at the same time creating new and innovative ways for Reform Jews to express

their religious feelings. During the 109 years since the Pittsburgh Platform, Reform Judaism has consistently shown its readiness and ability to adapt to changing times and demographics, proving its viability as a living religion.

APPENDIX A

THE PITTSBURGH PLATFORM OF 1885

First. We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the infinite, and in every mode, source, or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers, in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended, midst continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation, this God-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.

Second. We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as the priest of the one God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domains of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age, and at times clothing its conception of Divine Providence and justice dealing with man in miraculous narratives.

Third. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and to-day we accept as binding only the moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

Fourth. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas all together foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

Fifth. 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.

Sixth. We recognize in Judaism a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason. We are convinced of the utmost necessity or preserving the historical identity with our great past. Christianity and Islam being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and, therefore, we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

Seventh. We reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul of man is immortal, grounding this belief on the divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject, as ideas not rooted in Judaism, the beliefs both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward.

Eighth. In full accordance with the spirit of Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.

APPENDIX B

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REFORM JUDAISM
(Columbus, 1937)

In view of the changes that have taken place in the modern world and the consequent need of stating anew the teachings of Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis makes the following declaration of principles. It presents them not as a fixed creed but as a guide for the progressive elements of Jewry.

A. Judaism and Its Foundations

1. Nature of Judaism. Judaism is the historical religious experience of the Jewish people. Though growing out of Jewish life, its message is universal, aiming at the union and perfection of mankind under the sovereignty of God. Reform Judaism recognizes the principle of progressive development in religion and consciously applies this principle to spiritual as well as to cultural and social life.

Judaism welcomes all truth, whether written in the pages of scripture or deciphered from the records of nature. The new discoveries of science, while replacing the older scientific views underlying our sacred literature, do not conflict with the essential spirit of religion as manifested in the consecration of man's will, heart and mind to the service of God and of humanity.

2. God. The heart of Judaism and its chief contribution to religion is the doctrine of the One, living God, who rules the world through law and love. In Him all existence has its creative source and mankind its ideal of conduct. Through transcending time and space, He is the indwelling Presence of the world. We worship Him as the Lord of the universe and as our merciful Father.

3. Man. Judaism affirms that man is created in the Divine image. His spirit is immortal. He is an active co-worker with God. As a child of God, he is endowed with moral freedom and is charged with the responsibility of overcoming evil and striving after ideal ends.

4. Torah. God reveals Himself not only in the majesty, beauty and orderliness of nature, but also in the vision and moral striving of the human spirit. Revelation is a continuous process, confined to no one group and to no one age. Yet the people of Israel, through its prophets and sages, achieved unique insight in the realm of religious truth. The Torah, both written and oral, enshrines Israel's ever-growing consciousness of God and of the moral law. It

preserves the historical precedents, sanctions and norms of Jewish life, and seeks to mould it in the patterns of goodness and of holiness. Being products of historical processes, certain of its laws have lost their binding force with the passing of the conditions that called them forth. But as a depository of permanent spiritual ideals, the Torah remains the dynamic source of the life of Israel. Each age has the obligation to adapt the teachings of the Torah to its basic needs in consonance with the genius of Judaism.

5. Israel. Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body. Living in all parts of the world, Israel has been held together by the ties of a common history, and above all, by the heritage of faith. Though we recognize in the group loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition, a bond which still unites them with us, we maintain that it is by its religion and for its religion that the Jewish people has lived. The non-Jew who accepts our faith is welcomed as a full member of the Jewish community.

In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. 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.

B. Ethics

6. Ethics and Religion. In Judaism religion and morality blend into an indissoluble unity. Seeking God means to strive after holiness, righteousness and goodness. The love of God is incomplete without the love of one's fellowmen. Judaism emphasizes the kinship of the human race, the sanctity and worth of human life and personality and the right of the individual to freedom and to the pursuit of his chosen vocation. Justice to all, irrespective of race, sect or class is the inalienable right and the inescapable obligation of all. The state and organized government exist in order to further these ends.

7. Social Justice. Judaism seeks the attainment of a just society by the application of its teachings to the economic order, to industry and commerce, and to national and international affairs. It aims at the elimination of man-made misery and suffering, of poverty and degradation, of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife. It advocates the promotion of harmonious relations between warring classes on the basis of equity and justice, and the creation of conditions under which human personality may flourish. It pleads for the safeguarding of childhood against exploitation. It champions the cause of all who work and of their right to an adequate standard of living, as prior to the rights of property. Judaism emphasizes the duty of charity, and strives for a social order which will protect men against the material disabilities of old age, sickness and unemployment.

8. Peace. Judaism, from the days of the prophets, has proclaimed to mankind the ideal of universal peace. The spiritual and physical disarmament of all nations has been one of its essential teachings. It abhors all violence and relies upon moral education, love and sympathy to secure human progress. It regards justice as the foundation of the well-being of nations and the condition of enduring peace. It urges organized international action for disarmament, collective security and world peace.

C. Religious Practice

9. The Religious Life. Jewish life is marked by consecration to these ideals of Judaism. It calls for faithful participation in the life of the Jewish community as it finds expression in home, synagog and school and in all other agencies that enrich Jewish life and promote its welfare.

The Home has been and must continue to be a stronghold of Jewish life, hallowed by the spirit of love and reverence, by moral discipline and religious observance and worship.

The Synagog is the oldest and most democratic institution in Jewish life. It is the prime communal agency by which Judaism is fostered and preserved. It links the Jews of each community and unites them with all Israel.

The perpetuation and Judaism as a living force depends upon religious knowledge and upon the Education of each new generation in our rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Prayer is the voice of religion, the language of faith and aspiration. It directs man's heart and mind Godward, voices the needs and hopes of the community, and reaches out

after goals which invest life with supreme value. To deepen the spiritual life of our people, we must cultivate the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and synagog.

Judaism as a way of life 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, in our worship and instruction.

These timeless aims and ideals of our faith we present anew to a confused and troubled world. We call upon our fellow Jews to rededicate themselves to them, and, in harmony with all men, hopefully and courageously to continue Israel's eternal quest after God and His kingdom.

APPENDIX C

REFORM JUDAISM -- A CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE
(San Francisco, 1976)

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has on special occasions described the spiritual state of Reform Judaism. The centenaries of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seem an appropriate time for another such effort. We therefore record our sense of the unity of our movement today.

One Hundred Years: What We Have Taught

We celebrate the role of Reform Judaism in North America, the growth of our movement on this free ground, the great contributions of our membership to the dreams and achievements of this society. We also feel great satisfaction at how much of our pioneering conception of Judaism has been accepted by the Household of Israel. It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; and that change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality in Jewish life. Moreover, though some still disagree, substantial numbers have also accepted our teachings: that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; that women should have full rights to practice Judaism; and that Jewish obligation begins with the informed will of every individual. Most modern Jews, within their various religious movements, are embracing Reform Jewish perspectives. We see this past century as having confirmed the essential wisdom of our movement.

One Hundred years: What We Have Learned

Obviously, much else has changed in the past century. We continue to probe the extraordinary events of the past generation, seeking to understand their meaning and to incorporate their significance in our lives. The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress. The State of Israel, through its many accomplishments, raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion. The widespread threats to freedom, the problems inherent in the explosion of new knowledge and of ever more powerful technologies, and the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture, have taught us to be less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching. We have learned again that the survival of the

Jewish people is of highest priority and that in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment.

Diversity Within Unity, The Hallmark of Reform

Reform Jews respond to change in various ways according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual. However, Reform Judaism does more than tolerate diversity; it engenders it. In our uncertain historical situations we must expect to have far greater diversity than previous generations knew. How we shall live with diversity without stifling dissent and without paralyzing our ability to take positive action will test our character and our principles. We stand open to any position thoughtfully and conscientiously advocated in the spirit of Reform Jewish beliefs. While we may differ in our interpretation and application of the ideas enunciated here, we accept such differences as precious and see in them Judaism's best hope for confronting whatever the future holds for us. Yet in all our diversity we perceive a certain unity and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together.

I. GOD

The affirmation of God has always been essential to our people's will to survive. In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways. The trials of our own time and the challenges of modern culture have made steady belief and clear understanding difficult for some. Nevertheless, we ground our lives, personally and communally, on God's reality and remain open to new experiences and conceptions of the Divine. Amid the mystery we call life, we affirm that human beings, created in God's image, share in God's eternality despite the mystery we call death.

II. 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.

III. TORAH

Torah results from the relationship between God and the Jewish people. The records of our earliest confrontations are uniquely important to us. Lawgivers and prophets, historians and poets gave us a heritage whose study is a religious imperative and whose practice is our chief mean to holiness. Rabbis and teachers, philosophers and mystics, gifted Jews in every age amplify the Torah tradition. For millenia the creation of Torah has not ceased and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the chain of tradition.

IV. OUR OBLIGATIONS: RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by which we strive to achieve universal justice and peace. Reform Judaism shares this emphasis on duty and obligation. Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; life-long study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogue and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.

V. Our Obligations: The State of Israel and The Diaspora

We are privileged to live in an extraordinary time, one in which a third Jewish commonwealth has been established in our people's ancient homeland. We are bound to that land and to the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties. We have been enriched by its culture and ennobled by its indomitable spirit. We see it providing unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression. We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security and defining its Jewish character. We encourage *aliyah* for those who wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion. We demand that Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized in the State of Israel.

At the same time we consider the State of Israel vital to the welfare of Judaism everywhere, we reaffirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities

wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue. It leads us beyond itself to cooperate with other Jews, to share their concerns, and to assume leadership in communal affairs. We are therefore committed to the full democratization of the Jewish community and to its hallowing in terms of Jewish values.

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.

VI. Our Obligations: Survival and Service

Early Reform Jews, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism, regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in terms of Jewry's service to humanity. In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism. The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic expectations.

Until the recent past our obligations to the Jewish people and to all humanity seemed congruent. At times now these two imperatives appear to conflict. We know of no simple way to resolve such tensions. We must, however, confront them without abandoning either of our commitments. A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations.

VII. Hope: Our Jewish Obligation

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbounded confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have lived through terrible tragedy and been compelled to reappropriate our tradition's realism about the human capacity for evil. Yet our people has always refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, on being granted life, seized it, nurtured it, and, rising above catastrophe, showed human kind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope.

We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny. We dedicate ourselves as did the generations of Jews who went before us, to work and wait for that day when "They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

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