Jewish Military Chaplains' Manual

Robert Paul Friedman, 2019

This six-chapter capstone project looks to explore the space and potential for Jewish ritual in the military. The goals of this project are to explore the scholarship of various ritual theorists for the purpose of understanding how they conceptualize ritual creation and assessment and upon identifying the various central moments of the military's "lifecycle", create a selection of Jewish rituals for the identified moments.

Paralleling the lifecycle that we know and ritualize in Judaism – from birth to death and including moments like baby namings, b'nai mitzvah, and weddings in between – the military's lifecycle is equally filled with shared experiences. This capstone covers the military's lifecycle beginning with one's commissioning or enlisting through leaving by retirement, separation, or discharge and covering moments like moving duty stations, deploying around the world, and facing life after sustaining a serious injury.

The study of various ritual theorists provides significant information in showing just how these moments can be ritualized. The process of the ritual creation follows a pattern: identify the various lifecycle events through exploring liminal moments in the military, identify the points of anxiety inherent in these moments, and use the various ritual theories to identify meaningful Jewish ritual objects that can be used in new ways to help create Jewish rituals for this environment. Following the study of ritual theorists, I engage in providing examples of the various rituals one could create for use in these various settings.

JEWISH MILITARY CHAPLAINS' MANUAL

A Manual for Jewish Chaplains for the Lifecycle of the Armed Forces of the United States

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Ordination

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2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was a work of passion, dedication, and excitement. It came about during a conversation with a classmate and dear friend at the beginning of my fourth year of study, as I strove to come up with a topic that would allow me to blend the knowledge I have gained over my course of study with what I hope to do upon ordination: military chaplaincy. Identifying that such a manual ritualizing the military's lifecycle does not currently exist, I immediately became intrigued by the prospect of exploring what it would mean to create rituals for the military community. Throughout my time as a Navy Chaplain Candidate Program Officer, I have met many passionate and dedicated Jewish Military Chaplains, and I became enamored at the thought of helping them in their (and hopefully someday my) work.

I immediately reached out to Rabbi Dr. Rachel Adler, an incredibly talented professor and ritual innovator on campus, and she agreed to become my capstone advisor and guide me through the process, over time becoming a dear mentor. This project would have been impossible without her, and my most sincere and deepest thanks goes to her for her patience, guidance, and most helpful feedback. I did not begin this project alone, as I had the great pleasure to study ritual theory at Dr. Adler's table with Hilly Haber and Ira Rosenberg, two deeply talented friends and colleagues who are about to become excellent rabbis themselves.

I must also thank Rabbis and Chaplains Joshua Sherwin LCDR, USN, CHC and CPT Michael G. Cohen, USA and Rabbi Irving Elson, CAPT, USN (Ret.), CHC, the head of the Jewish Welfare Board. All three have been incredible mentors in all aspects of my pursuit of military chaplaincy and have served as wonderful sources of inspiration and sounding boards as I have come up with ideas on how to create these rituals. I must also thank all the Navy

Chaplains and Chaplain Candidates I met during my time at Chaplain School in June 2018 for the same reason. One fellow Chaplain Candidate – Samantha Hatch, ENS, USN, CCPO – has provided me with equally valuable insight into the lives of enlisted servicemembers as the wife of an enlisted sailor and a Navy Chaplain Candidate herself. It has been a blessing and honor to call her a friend.

I must also thank my all of my friends and classmates over the last five years, with and from whom I have spent countless hours learning. They heard me babble on incessantly about the military, Judaism, and Jews in the military over these years and listened with patience as I explored what it means to be a Jewish Chaplain.

Finally, I dedicate this work to all those who have ever, do, and will continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces. I undertook this project to support every servicemember who has willingly put their lives on the line and risked giving what Abraham Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion." They will always have my utmost respect. And for those who serve these servicemembers, the men and women of all faiths who have been called twice – to become clergy and to become military chaplains – I only hope to earn the right to serve alongside of you in support of our servicemembers. May this capstone help you in your holy work, and may we all pursue a life and world where military chaplains and militaries will become unnecessary through the achievement of peace.

With deepest gratitude and pride,

Robert Friedman

February 2019

CHAPTER ONE: RITUAL THEORY

Ritual, along with law, is one of the key genres of Judaism. Jewish identity and Jewish practice both find their footing in ritual. Since its inception, Jews have marked the important moments in their lives through ritual. Whether biblical moments of transition or the Jewish lifecycle established throughout the rabbinic period, major life moments are often associated with and marked by Jewish ritual.

In biblical times, Abraham circumcising himself as a mark of his name changing from Abram and entering into the covenant with God (Gen. 17:5-15), the anointing of a new High Priest (Lev. 8), and Moses appointing Joshua his successor (Deu. 31:7, 23, Jos. 1:1-2) are all examples of ritual.

Beginning in the early rabbinic period, Judaism began to develop a much more codified and standardized set of practices, especially around the Jewish lifecycle. *Brit milah*, *bar mitzvah*, weddings, death, and mourning practices also represent moments associated with specific rituals. Such moments are still relevant in today's Judaism.

In many instances, liminality – the moment where one crosses a threshold – is the catalyst for ritual creation. Moving from one status to another is a powerful, and often anxiety-filled, moment. In the previously-mentioned examples, a *brit milah* (and now also a girl's *brit bat*) marks a baby entering into the covenant, a *bar* (and now *bat*) *mitzvah* marks the transition from childhood to adulthood in Judaism, weddings mark the joining of two lives into one, and death marks the transition from life in this world to life in the world to come.

While these examples are all meaningful and relevant to how one uses ritual, and specifically how a Jew uses ritual, they are far from all-encompassing. In modern and

contemporary times, Jews must acknowledge that there are many liminal moments that biblical and rabbinic Judaism fail to address. As Jews have gained more rights and acceptance in the secular world, the tensions of the secular world have forced answers from a Jewish perspective. For instance, the rituals marking the rabbinic Jewish lifecycle mainly addressed the lifecycle of Jewish males. Except for marriage and death, women were not included. It has only been in the modern and contemporary world that women have gained equality in the secular world as well as in the progressive Jewish world. More recently, there has been a push by Orthodox women to create rituals for themselves. Ritual creations such as the *brit bat* and *bat mitzvah* were created in reflection of these tensions. While these advancements and modern-era creations are worthy of acknowledgement, the rituals are still based on the long-established lifecycle.

But there are many liminal moments in the Jewish and secular life that do not have adequate rituals assigned to them. What do we do with those moments? For example, what about a person graduating school, leaving home for the first time to go to college, facing divorce, or moving for a new job? All of these moments have the same type of liminality that the already-existing Jewish rituals seek to address. While individuals may not feel the need to use these rituals, there are others who might. We owe it to them to create these rituals for those who do desire them.

This project seeks to address such moments, but not for the Jewish or secular worlds. In the military, these liminal moments exist as well. Put together, they create a "military lifecycle" – a repetitive pattern of liminal moments that most, if not all, servicemembers experience at one point or another. These shared moments are what create the feeling of community throughout the military, but that does not mean that such moments should

continue to be un-ritualized. In fact, because each servicemember experiences them, regardless of branch, it is even more appropriate that they be ritualized so that servicemembers can better acknowledge and navigate through the uncertainty that comes with such liminality to achieve a sense of completion and peace.

Creating these rituals, while they must be pluralistic to reflect the nature of the military, can and should still come from the perspective of Judaism. Jewish tradition provides a wonderful blueprint on how to ritualize liminal moments and serves as the basis for this project. Creating ritual based on Jewish tradition for the military creates, in a sense, a Jewish Military Chaplains' Manual, paralleling the clergy manuals found in the civilian, Jewish world across the various denominations.

SURVEY OF RITUAL THEORY AND THEORISTS

Delving into the creation of new ritual is a complex process that must be done deliberately and logically. Thus, while the primary goal of this project is to create a Jewish Military Chaplains' Manual, such an undertaking necessitates an exploration of ritual theory. This exploration includes studying and surveying the work of Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, J.L. Austin, Barbara Myerhoff, Ronald Grimes, and Vanessa Ochs. It is their work which I discuss over the following pages before presenting the manual itself.

CLIFFORD GEERTZ

The approach of scholars like Ronald Grimes and Vanessa Ochs (see below) is based, in part, on the theories of scholars like Clifford Geertz. In his collection of essays titled *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz discusses cultural issues revolving around what he calls the

"thick description" of culture and anthropology. He explains this concept of "thick description" in his essay "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture."[1] For Geertz, culture is a series of webs of significance spun by individuals and society, and his study of culture is a search for the meaning of these webs.[2] The concept of "thick description", which he borrows from philosopher Gilbert Ryle, is meant to aid in this search for meaning by looking not just at the actions of an individual, but the context in which those actions take place. Ryle describes two boys doing the same action (contracting their eyelids), but with two different meanings – one is an involuntary twitch and the other is a conspiratorial wink. A third boy, Ryle continues, might parody the wink or the twitch by overexaggerating, and might even rehearse such a parody in private in front of a mirror. In all of these scenarios, the action might be the same, but the context greatly changes its meaning.[3]

For Geertz and his anthropological study of culture, "thick description" is applied to a story he recounts involving three different cultures (Jewish, French, and Berber Moroccan) in Morocco in 1912 recounted in 1968. The thick description of this narrative begins with determining what is unique about the story – the three different cultures all interacting at this one moment – and therefore the "thick description" of the story deals with studying how these cultures' differences created the event.[4] Geertz pushes to see behavior (and therefore stories like the one he recounts) as symbolic action and to focus inquiry on what we as humans are trying to express by using such actions.[5] Geertz's study of such behavior is not to

[1] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation Of Cultures*, F First Edition edition (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

[2] Geertz, 5.

[3] Geertz, 6–7.

[4] Geertz, 9–10.

[5] Geertz, 10.

copy it or impersonate it, but to discuss it with those acting in that manner. The goal is, in other words, to expand human knowledge through sharing of culture.[6] These cultures are, to him, "interworked systems of construable signs (what, ignoring provincial usages, I would call symbols)…it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described."[7] To understand a culture, therefore, is to understand its symbols.

This point is key to his work "Religion as a Cultural System" as symbols are integral in Geertz's definition of religion.[8] To him, religion is: "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."[9]

Explaining what this definition means, Geertz begins by stating that a symbol "is used for any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for conception."[10] Continuing his notion of "thick description," he argues the value of a symbol depends on what it serves to conceptualize.[11] These symbols, in turn, affect the people using and experiencing them. They shape the world around them depending on how they are used. Their usage elicits certain tendencies or dispositions within an individual that in turn affect individual might feel or act.[12] This is a powerful and important chain reaction. By understanding the symbols' impact on us, we can figure out new ways to use them.

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[6] Geertz, 13–14.

[7] Geertz, 14.

[8] Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation Of Cultures*, F First Edition edition (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

[9] Geertz, 90.

[10] Geertz, 91.

[11] Geertz, 91.

[12] Geertz, 95.

VICTOR TURNER

In his work *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Victor Turner discusses the concepts of liminality and communitas, regarding ritual and rites of passage.[13] Turner describes liminality as being inherently ambiguous because of its transitional nature: "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[14] For Turner, liminality is the space between two places. Liminal people, those who are inhabiting a liminal space, are without status as they move between the two places. "It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew…"[15]

The liminality that we find in rites of passage take on three different phases, as identified by Arnold van Gennep. These phases are Separation, Margin, and Aggregation. Separation refers to the individual or group leaving their current social status, the Margin phase describes the ambiguity of the individual or group being between states, and the Aggregation phase marks the finalizing of the passage as they achieve a new status.[16]

Communitas is experienced in these liminal moments as a social bond distinct to the moment among the participants. This bond, unorganized by class or hierarchy, is "as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together, to the general authority of the ritual elders."[17] Communitas comes into being not just in situations where

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[13] Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," in *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes, 1 edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995).

[14] Turner, 512.

[15] Turner, 511–12.

[16] Turner, 512.

[17] Turner, 513.

structured society does not exist, such as in various cult or extreme minority groups[18] or where social structure is broken down in liminal moments, but can transcend the limits of societal structure.

Such is the perspective of Martin Buber who, using "community" instead of "communitas" states that it "is the being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but *with* one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from *I* to *Thou*. Community is where community happens."[19] This joining together, of being with the other in an *I-Thou* moment transcends the imposed limits and hierarchy determined by society, and it is in these moments that one finds communitas. The uncertainty found in liminal moments, in which the boundaries of society are temporarily broken down in order to allow for an individual or group to achieve a new status, greatly assists in cultivating communitas between individuals. One cannot force the feeling of kinship and with-ness that communitas brings, but rituals can assist in guiding a group toward that by encouraging a shared feeling (of sacredness, pride, joy, sadness, etc.) in the moment.

J.L. AUSTIN

[18] Turner, 514–16. discusses various such examples of this, like the Western Christian Rule of St. Benedict which provides everything that a follower would need in order to keep them in a permanent liminal state or the Millenarian movements which survive in a state of uprootedness.

[19] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (Mansfield Centre: Martino Fine Books, 2014), 51. cited in Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 517–18.

Though not a book focused on ritual, the philosopher J.L. Austin's work *How to Do Things with Words* has had a lasting impact on ritual and ritual theory.[20] In his work, Austin explores various ways we use words, including differentiating between performative and constative speech acts. Constative speech acts, which consist of descriptive words or actions, say something about things. Performative speech acts, on the other hand, have an effect on things and do something.[21] Uttering these sentences does not merely describe what one should do in saying it or describe the act of doing it; uttering these types of sentences is to actually do the act.[22]

There are three aspects of Austin's performative utterances – locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.[23] As Michael Marmur summarizes, locutionary acts are speech acts we think of in a standard sense, illocutionary acts have a normative force such as to warn or promise, and "perlocutionary acts constitute "what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something.""[24] In other words, the locutionary act is the recitation and meaning of the words, the illocutionary depends on what the reciter hopes to achieve through its recitation, and the perlocutionary is made up of both otherworldly and this-worldly social aspects.[25]

Speech, being one of the most common and important ways humans communicate, is necessary in ritual, whether in planning, guiding and explaining what is going on, or in other various aspects. These constative speech acts are a requirement in order to teach and guide

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[20] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Harvard University Press, 1975).

[21] Michael Marmur, "The Kaddish as a Speech Act," in *Kaddish by David Birnbaum and Martin S. Cohen*, ed. David Birnbaum and Martin S. Cohen (New York: New Paradigm Matrix, 2016), 481.

[22] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 6.

[23] Austin, 94.

[24] Marmur, "The Kaddish as a Speech Act," 481–82.

[25] Marmur, 482.

participants and witnesses through the rituals. But speech itself can be a key part of a ritual through these performative utterances that Austin describes.

BARBARA MYERHOFF

In anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff's *Death in Due Time: Construction of Self and Culture in Ritual Drama*, Myerhoff explores the connection between the secular and religious in ritual.[26] Using the story of the death of a Jewish man at his ninety-fifth birthday party,

> Myerhoff's discussion of ritual and her analysis of these events illuminate a number of aspects of ritual: the distinction, yet interconnection, between secular and sacred ritual; the oscillation between planned aspects of ritual and improvised ones; the impact of ritual on time and continuity; the power of ritual to change experience and transform lives; and the capacity of ritual to demonstrate the continuity between one human being and all humanity.[27]

Throughout her recounting of the man's death, Myerhoff explores not just the events, but also the participants' responses to his death and the changes that occurred. The party itself was a ritual, planned to blend "fixed sacred elements alternated with more open, secular aspects, as if to lend authenticity, certainty, and propriety to the open, more optional sections."[28] But when the honoree unexpectedly died, the ceremony changed from a planned ritual blurring the secular and religious aspects of a birthday party to an improvised ritual incorporating traditional Jewish responses to death.[29]

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[26] Barbara G. Myerhoff, "Death in Due Time: Construction of Self and Culture in Ritual Drama," in *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes, 1 edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995).

[27] Myerhoff, 393.

[28] Myerhoff, 399.

[29] Myerhoff, 404–5.

In all of her discussion and retelling of the events surrounding the birthday party and death, Myerhoff maintains her focus on discussing how people construct ritual.

> Ritual is prominent in all areas of uncertainty, anxiety, impotence, and disorder. By its repetitive character it provides a message of pattern and predictability. In requiring enactments involving symbols, it bids us to participate in its messages, even enacting meanings we cannot conceive or believe; our actions lull our critical faculties, persuading us with evidence from our own physiological experience until we are convinced. In ritual, doing is believing.[30]

Because ritual occurs in these areas of doubt and chaos, it is natural that they try to bring order through predictability. Rituals, therefore, strive to create "enduring and underlying patterns, thus connecting past, present, and future, abrogating history and time."[31] Constructing this ritualized order in the midst of chaos is not an easy task, and rituals contain potential for failure, especially if they are "seen through, not properly attended, or experienced as arbitrary invention." [32]However, "because we know the outcome of a ritual beforehand, we find the courage within it to enact our symbols, which would otherwise be preposterous."[33] Rituals, in this sense, allow us a framework and guide to enter into uncertain moments because we know what is supposed to happen after we pass through the liminal space. To do this, we make use of symbols.

For Myerhoff, symbols are integral to ritual and ritual performance. "Symbols carry implicit messages, distinguishable from the overt ingredients intended by the designers of a ritual; they are part of its creation but not clearly planned or controlled. When they are well chosen and understood, they do their work unnoticed."[34]

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[30] Myerhoff, 395.

[31] Myerhoff, 395.

[32] Myerhoff, 407.

[33] Myerhoff, 395.

[34] Myerhoff, 400.

EMILE DURKHEIM

In his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*, Emile Durkheim states that religion is made up of two things: beliefs (thoughts) and rites (actions). Not to be confused with non-rite actions, Durkheim distinguishes that there is a special nature of the object of the rite. This special nature, however, comes not from the rite, but from the associated belief. Grounding the rite in belief is what gives the rite its special nature. This religious belief is what Durkheim calls "sacred" and paints it in polarized opposition to "profane."[35] Giving sacredness to these rites and ritual objects is what makes them distinct.

However, Durkheim is key to point out that sacredness is not bestowed simply by hierarchy. Rather, sacredness can exist at any level and humans can ascribe sacredness to objects that might otherwise be unexceptional, such as amulets. Instead of hierarchy, Durkheim argues that difference, or "heterogeneity", itself is all that is needed to determine sacredness. While Durkheim argues that the opposition of "sacred" and "profane" is a distinction between "two worlds between which there is nothing in common,"[36] this is only partially accurate in Judaism. For although the distinction between "sacred" and "profane" seemingly parallels Judaism's distinction between קודש and חול, doing so distorts some of the nuance of the word חול, which would be better translated as "not yet sacred."[37]

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[35] Emile Durkheim, "Ritual, Magic, and the Sacred," in *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes, 1 edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995), 188.

[36] Durkheim, 189.

[37] The word חול derives from the Hebrew root ח.ל.ל, meaning "pollute, defile, profane" in the biblical context. While one can clearly see the relation to "profane", therefore, biblical verses such as Lev. 22:9 and 22:15 show that sacredness and profanity are fluid states, in which one can pass into the other. Modern connotations and

This nuance is more reflected in Durkheim's commentary that a being can indeed pass from one realm to the other through things such as initiation rites. However, such an initiation mandates leaving one world for the other – the border is porous, but firmly defined and enforced. One cannot straddle it. Passing from one side to another means leaving the first completely behind.[38]

This firm but passable division is what Durkheim labels as the first criterion of religious beliefs – that there always be "a bipartite division of the whole universe, known and knowable, into two classes which embrace all that exists, but which radically exclude each other." On one side are sacred things, beliefs, and objects; on the other are the profane items. It is through combining a series of these sacred into a unified system that religion comes to exist.[39]

However, religion is not alone in possessing this dichotomy and system of sacred beliefs and rites; magic possesses them as well. The difference between the two arises not just from their negative attitudes towards each other. What Durkheim states distinguishes religion from magic is the unifying nature of religion. While both magic and religion have rites and beliefs, religion does so with a definite and determined group making a commitment of adhering to and practicing them with the only universal common ground being the shared faith. With magic, however, Durkheim states that its practice does not cultivate the same depth of cohesion and group formation as religion. And even in the rare occasion that

associations of irreverence with the word "profane" color its nuanced meaning, and I therefore choose to define חול not as "profane" but as "not sacred".

[38] Durkheim, "Ritual, Magic, and the Sacred," 189–90.

[39] Durkheim, 190.

practitioners and followers of magic do form that deep level of group unity, doing so is the exception, whereas it is a necessity with religion.[40]

RONALD GRIMES

As discussed in the beginning pages of this section, Judaism (and other religions) created a collection of rituals many generations ago for their lifecycle events; but have not always kept up to date with new opportunities for rituals. The ritual studies scholar Ronald Grimes, in *Deeply into the Bone*, discusses new ways in which effective rituals might be created. For Grimes, "without rites that engage our imaginations, communities, and bodies, we lose touch with the rhythms of human life course…"[41] "Effective rites depend on inheriting, discovering, or inventing value-laden images that are drive deeply, by repeated practice and performance, into the marrow. The images proffered by ineffective rites remain skin-deep."[42]

For Grimes, the act of creating ritual comes with the moments that are treacherous or difficult.[43] Some are life passages that rites have already been created for such as birth, coming of age, marriage, or death, while others like illness or the start of school do not have traditional rites. The role of rites in these moments are to help the users and participants negotiate these precarious moments.[44] Rites used for dealing with these treacherous moments go through three phases: "separation from the community, transition into an especially

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[40] Durkheim, 192.

[41] Ronald L. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 3.

[42] Grimes, 5.

[43] This is the same thing that Victor Turner calls a "liminal moment" in Turner, "Liminality and Communitas."

[44] Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*, 5.

formative time and space, and reincorporation back into the community. The effect of ritual passage is to transform both the individuals who undergo them and the communities that design and perpetuate them."[45]

In the process of creating rites, Grimes uses two words – "imagining" and "inventing". Imagining has a more creative and spontaneous ring to it, while inventing connotes something more practical. This practical aspect of inventing is more primary as one may imagine without inventing, but it is in inventing that the ritual comes into being.[46] Everyone who creates ritual must imagine and then invent. But not everyone creates ritual in the same way, and Grimes identifies two distinct methods – the ritual plumber and ritual diviner.[47]

The ritual plumber looks to fix something which does not work; it is a practical method and without high expectations. More comfortable with inventing than imagining, the plumber creates a ritual based around the desired end-goal. It is "a crude but perfectly workable tool that will do the work…"[48]

The ritual diviner, on the other hand, draws greatly upon circumspection and allusion. Results take a backseat to making sure that the ritual does not feel forced. Waiting, contemplating, and following impulses, one hopes to "divine" or decipher the correct tone

[45] Grimes, 6. Once more, this parallels the points addressed by Victor Turner in Turner, "Liminality and Communitas."

[46] Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*, 4.

[47] Grimes, 12.

[48] Grimes, 12.

that will achieve the right goal with the right tone.[49] Diviners do not "make" or "create" rites and rituals, so they are more comfortable with actual invention.[50]

VANESSA OCHS

Jewish ritual innovator and scholar of ritual studies Vanessa Ochs has developed her skills as a ritual innovator over many years and has documented some of her growth in *Inventing Jewish Ritual*.[51] In one example of her rituals (a home dedication), she talks about speaking from her heart as opposed to preparing something – a skill she says she learned from Protestant friends offering spontaneous prayers at various places. In the same ritual, she found space to incorporate traditions from the non-Jewish attendees and make space for it to be interactive and help foster community as opposed to them simply being witnesses to an unfamiliar ritual.[52] In another ritual, Ochs talks about taking the same ceremony – home dedication – and adapting it for her professor husband's office, allowing her husband's students to help shape the space through including their own blessings as an addendum onto the mezuzah.[53]

Explaining how these ideas came to be, Ochs discusses what she calls her "Jewish Ritual Toolbox," comprised of three sections: texts, ritual objects and actions, and core Jewish understandings. In the first, Ochs places things such as Biblical passages, rabbinic teachings, folktales, prayers, and legal documents. Each of them can be used directly or

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[49] Grimes, 12.

[50] Grimes, 13.

[51] Vanessa L. Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2007).

[52] Ochs, 3.

[53] Ochs, 4.

adapted to fit various needs. In the second, actions such as blessing, praying, building temporary dwellings, and the various actions related to Havdallah can be found alongside objects such as Torah scrolls, the shofar, a lulav and etrog, and ritual food like challah or matzah. The third compartment of core Jewish understandings includes overarching Jewish values like the presence of God, leading a sanctified life, the blessing of Israel, and preserving Jewish memory help frame and guide Jewish innovation.[54]

The reason for this toolbox is that using these various things "can symbolically connect the new ritual to the past and do its necessary work in the present."[55] Creating this balance can assuage concerns about forcing new rituals into existence. For someone like Ochs, this uncertainty came from growing up in an environment where "you lived and performed Judaism—you did not invent it."[56] If the Judaism that she knew did not fit a particular scenario for her, she simply moved into her secular mindset instead of trying to blur the two. And if there was an existing ritual but it was not meaningful for the user, they either rejected the ritual or went along with it because it was expected.[57]

This was the Judaism I grew up with as well, mainly because my family did not know any better and simply went by the standard practice regarding the life cycle. Apart from the common life cycle events celebrated in Judaism like birth, baby naming, bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, and death, every other moment in my life was marked by secular celebration. My experience in non-standard Jewish ritual has only developed over the last few years, and even more so over the last few months as I have undertaken this project.

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[54] Ochs, 5–6.

[55] Ochs, 6.

[56] Ochs, 12.

[57] Ochs, 13.

Talking about her history as a ritual innovator, Ochs describes how she used to feel when a ritual she created didn't go the way she wanted. Whether it was because something in the ritual was rough or awkward, or that it was difficult to establish a new practice, such innovation could feel uncomfortable. But she learned that this discomfort could be modulated and reduced by accepting that discomfort is not reason enough to avoid ritual innovation.[58]

As she grew more comfortable with ritual innovation, Ochs began thinking about ritual in broader terms and focused on the goals and uses of rituals. Her rubric for an effective ritual became based on criteria such as:

"Rituals establish new communities and sustain existing ones;

- They give us things to do and ways of being that help us to give sense and order to life;
- They carry us through changes and crises in life that might otherwise be unendurable;
- They coordinate our expectations of what we think is going to happen and how we are supposed to react;
- They create boundaries and necessary separations;
- They create bonds and links between people that can transcend time and space;
- They allow us to recognize, experience, and be sustained through life's great joys and sorrows, and all the hard-to-categorize emotions in between;
- They allow us to remember, to mark time, to synchronize our psyches with natural cycles;

[58] Ochs, 28.

- They confirm a sacred presence in the world, and move us to live in ways that are more moral and more righteous."[59]

By using these as her rubric to judge an innovated ritual's effectiveness, Ochs created a shift that allowed her to be more comfortable with new rituals and not just the ones commanded in tradition. It is with these same goals in mind that I have opened my own ritual toolbox and worked to create these rituals for Jewish chaplains to use in an interfaith military setting.

WHY REVIEW THE THEORISTS?

As someone new to ritual theory and ritual innovation, it is important to make sure that I had some grounding in ritual theory before engaging in ritual innovation. The collection of theorists covered have had a great impact on me both from a theoretical and practical perspective. Each of them has given me a perspective that provides some level of usefulness throughout this project.

Geertz's theories on symbols and culture are fundamental in understanding how we as society use words, objects, and gestures to give meaning to various moments in our lives. By combining such theories with the practices of ritual innovators like Vanessa Ochs or Ronald Grimes, we are able to create rites and rituals that are more meaningful due to a better use of symbols. In my work, the thick description comes in two cultural frameworks: First, the Jewish framework from which comes my "Jewish Ritual Toolbox." I draw on it in the same way as Ochs, sharing her understanding of how various Jewish rituals and ritual objects are typically used. The second framework is of military culture, in which military chaplains

[59] Ochs, 30–31.

serve. By seeking to understand each of these cultures independently, I can hope to identify commonalities between them and create viable rituals.

For each culture, I must look to understand not just the culture, but the *symbols* that elicit the shared dispositions I hope to identify. By identifying the uncertainties that occur in the military during certain life-cycle events, I can hope to identify similar uncertainties in Jewish ritual and look at how various rituals and symbols are used to create countering and assuaging dispositions.

Victor Turner's discussion on liminality and communitas in ritual was instrumental in conceptualizing and identifying how to go about this project. Intuitively and through my rabbinical school studies, I have experienced liminal moments as natural moments for ritual creation. In the Jewish lifecycle, such are the moments we ritualize – joining the community as a baby, joining as an adult (b'nei mitzvah or conversion), marriage, and departing the community (death), as well as cyclic events in the Jewish calendar like Havdallah, Rosh Chodesh, and Rosh Hashanah. Identifying similar liminal moments in the military's lifecycle was the first step in creating this project.

Additionally, Turner's discussion on communitas and the role it takes in transcending and unifying individuals is a key goal. His application of Martin Buber's *I-Thou* moment and how it exists in juxtaposition to standard society is another instrumental goal in this work.[60] Throughout the manual, it is the hope that the liminal moments inherent in the military's lifecycle can serve not just as moments to transform individuals, but to create a sense of communitas among those present.

[60] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 517–18.

J.L. Austin shows that speech itself is a powerful action in and of itself. While typically we might use speech to guide, explain, and instruct ritual and the use of symbols, Austin proves that speech can be a symbol on its own through performative speech-acts. There are moments where this can become a key part of ritual, especially in moments where ritual objects may be hard to come by in various military settings.

Barbara Myerhoff speaks about various aspects of concern in ritual formation. She argues that ritual provides order in moments of uncertainty, and that the symbols we choose to use should help create such feelings. However, symbols and ritual only work if they are utilized seamlessly. Furthermore, Myerhoff states that we must be aware of how the secular and sacred can interact. As I seek to create ritual in what is a pluralistic, if not secular, environment (the military), I am drawing on my Judaism and its sacred rituals, being aware of this interaction is crucial to my work.

Emile Durkheim discusses differences between religion and magic, and spends much time talking about the rigidity of the boundary between "sacred" and what he calls "profane" in these settings. However, much of what Durkheim says finds pushback in Judaism. While there are some firm boundaries between things like Jewish/non-Jewish, much of what Judaism focuses on, especially from the ritual side, is about blurring the "sacred" and "not yet sacred". Every week, for instance, Jews move into sacred time with Shabbat and leave it through Havdallah, and there is no lasting change. This boundary is not nearly as firm as Durkheim claims and easily crossed in some instances. Similarly, the boundary between military and civilian is explored in this project. While leaving and joining are boundaries, everyone must join, and everyone must leave at a certain point, meaning that the boundaries are porous. One does not permanently lose the status of "civil citizen" or "civilian". Rather,

the title of "servicemember" is added onto it, and this addition takes precedence while it is borne.

Durkheim assigns solely to religion the role of unification and preservation of tradition and values in primitive communities, but in more complex societies, many institutions (such as the military) transmit particular behaviors and beliefs and instill a particular bond in its members. While the military is not a religion, it does share beliefs and rituals that do make ritualizing a distinct possibility, as this capstone works to show. It is neither religion nor magic, in Durkheim's categorizations, but still maintains a level of sacredness according to his distinction of separateness as sacredness.

Ronald Grimes discusses the various ways in which one can create ritual, as a "plumber" or "diviner". While there are these two styles, Grimes (and I agree with his perspective) advocates drawing from both, stating that creating ritual necessitates both acknowledging the nuts and bolts as well as the mystery within it.[61] Throughout this manual, I strive to look at both aspects. In various times throughout the process, I started both as a plumber and a diviner. When I found myself either forcing a ritual that did not *feel* as if it completely fit the desired goal or found myself twirling my thumbs waiting for inspiration, I knew to balance with the other approach. Balancing created more effective rituals and allowed me not just to create a ritual that checked off the section, but to feel good about how it might be used.

Vanessa Ochs advocates that when creating Jewish ritual, one should draw from their "Jewish Ritual Toolbox" in order to innovate authentically. It was reading this piece which gave me the confidence in my knowledge of Judaism necessary to engage in this work. While

[61] Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone*, 13.

I am very aware that my toolbox is not yet full and is not as big as others, I am confident that it is sufficiently large to engage in this work. Of all the ritual theorists and innovators that I have studied in preparation for this capstone, it is Ochs who most adeptly summarizes how I have approached this project, both in terms of my anxieties with potential discomfort as well as the methods I have adopted in striving to create effective rituals.

All of these various ritual theorists and innovators, though they have different approaches and theories regarding ritual, have one thing in common – they are all engaged in the work of how to create ritual meaningful for individuals and communities. It is only through incorporating the various approaches and acknowledging that each has a use that I have been able to move into the heart of this project – the Jewish Chaplains' Manual.

CHAPTER TWO: ENLISTMENT AND COMMISSIONING

The life of a servicemember begins unofficially the moment they first talk to a recruiter. For both enlisted and officers, there is a process they must complete to join the military that consists of conversations with various recruiters and officials, background checks, sharing various medical and financial records, and undergoing medical and psychological evaluations. Upon completing and passing these various steps, the recruits earn the right to enter officially into the military through taking their oath and signing their contract at an enlistment or commissioning ceremony.

For many enlisted service members, the setting for this ceremony occurs at the Military Entry Process Station (MEPS), where recruits receive their medical examination. Assuming they pass the exam, recruits then sign their contracts and take their oaths, with their recruiters and families allowed to witness. This is a significant moment in their lives, not just because it marks when they officially join the military, but because it also marks the last time that they will see their families for two to three months. Barring any special circumstances, recruits leave within one day from MEPS to go to basic training which lasts eight to twelve weeks, depending on the branch. During that time, there is no face-to-face contact with the outside world, and only limited contact via letters. Taking this oath, therefore, is a moment filled with many emotions, including joy at passing the final tests, anxiety about what awaits, and sadness at leaving family and friends behind for an extended period of time. For officers, the ceremony can occur at MEPS or in varied settings. For example, my own commissioning ceremony occurred at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Los Angeles campus in March 2016 when I was a student there.

Performing any type of religious ritual in the context of a secular state organization like the military necessitates an interesting balance. Military chaplains who perform such rituals must both honor their own faith and traditions while catering to the needs of all, including those who are of different faiths. I originally believed that this meant avoiding direct references and citations of Jewish text to create a homogenized, generic ceremony; however, a Jewish chaplain friend with a decade of experience corrected me, saying that he consistently directly quotes Jewish texts in ritual settings, including using Hebrew, and that he has received zero complaints over his military career. Therefore, there are indeed direct quotations from Jewish tradition.

In the ritual I created, I focused on the liminal moment in the enlistment/ commissioning process – the moment when individuals raise their hand, take the oath, and lower their hand. Looking at this moment, it is clear that this ritual includes all three phases of a rite of passage and liminal moment as described by Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep.[1] The first phase, that which marks the separation from the individual or group, is marked in the raising of the hand. This act is the conventional choreography for oath-taking, seen in courts and by government officials outside of the military. In this moment, on the cusp of taking the oath, the person swearing into the military is separating themselves from the civilian populace.

The second phase, the "liminal" period in between the two different statuses, is the taking of the oath itself. The sentences which make up the oath are more than typical statement sentences; they are what J.L. Austin calls "performative utterances." Such utterances do not merely describe what one does but are integral to the action itself. In his

[1] Description of the various phases can be found in Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 512.

example, an individual says "I do" in the context of a wedding to commit to marriage.[2] Once these words are said, only legal action can undo the commitment. Austin acknowledges that there are often actions which must accompany these performative utterances, but that these utterances are still a necessary part of the act.[3] Austin identifies three aspects of performative utterances – locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.[4] As Michael Marmur describes, locutionary acts are speech acts we think of in a standard sense, illocutionary acts have a normative force such as to warn or promise, and "perlocutionary acts constitute "what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something.""[5] Using the Kaddish as his example, Marmur explains that the locutionary dimension is the recitation and meaning of the words, the illocutionary depends on what the reciter hopes to achieve through its recitation, and the perlocutionary is made up of both otherworldly and this-worldly social aspects.[6]

Saying the words of the oath of enlistment and/or commissioning also fulfills Austin's three dimensions of performative utterances. The locutionary dimension is the text of the oath itself, the illocutionary is the desire to join the military through saying it, and the perlocutionary comes from the individual oath-taker's personal goals and motivations for joining the military. Having experienced this moment personally, I can say that in the moment I took my oath, I felt the weight of the commissioning process lift from my shoulders and replaced with the honor of joining my grandfathers who served. And although I do not know what everyone who witnessed the oath experienced internally, I do know that

[2] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 6.

[3] Austin, 8.

[4] Austin, 94.

[5] Marmur, "The Kaddish as a Speech Act," 481–82.

[6] Marmur, 482.

the few who shared their thoughts with me expressed feelings of pride, honor, and privilege at the opportunity to witness this moment.

In lowering the hand, the oath-taker moves into the third phase of reincorporation, back as a member of the community but also changed and with a new status.[7] In that moment, the person taking the oath transitions from a civilian to a servicemember. The metamorphosis that occurs in joining the military is not completed in the enlistment/commissioning ceremony, but the ceremony does mark the beginning of such a change. The ceremony is the initiation rite.[8]

This change into military service is a separation into a smaller and more exclusive category. For Emile Durkheim, such a change and separation might even be labeled as sacred. In his work, "sacred" is not merely a notion of hierarchy, proclaiming one thing superior to another; rather, distinguishing between the "sacred" and "profane" is characterized solely through their distinctness and separateness. Just as the concepts of "good" and "bad" are radical opposites of morality and "sickness" and "health" are radical opposites of liveliness, so too are "sacred" and "profane" radical opposites of holiness, set apart in their distinction.[9] Durkheim's views, while somewhat relevant in this discussion, are also inadequate in a Jewish context, where the difference is not between "sacred" and "profane" but "sacred" and "not-yet-sacred." This language works even better in the parallel between "military" and "civilian." Just as sacredness is added to the identity of the not-yet-sacred object, so too is the label "servicemember" added onto the identity of the civilian. And

[7] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 512.

[8] Durkheim, "Ritual, Magic, and the Sacred," 189.

[9] Durkheim, 189. "Sacred" here is not meant to imply a hierarchy, but rather a radical change in status and lifestyle.

just as one enters from the not-yet-sacred to the sacred through various rituals – such as by lighting candles at the beginning of Jewish holidays – so does the commissioning and enlistment ritual mark an individual moving from the civilian to military world in the moments between an individual raising and lowering their hand.

The changes in lifestyle and priorities that one undergoes in joining the military further demarcate the separation. The special clothing (military uniforms), the different communal structures and hierarchies (i.e. ranks, units, and command structures), unique living arrangements (i.e. barracks, bases, or ships), and the importance a servicemember places on new and different objects (i.e. dog tags and weapons) all highlight the differences between military and civilian cultures. Perhaps nothing exemplifies this more clearly than servicemembers' relationships with their weapons, often analogized to interdependence with significant others. One need only listen to the Rifleman's Creed of the Marine Corps (also depicted in Stanley Kubrick's movie *Full Metal Jacket*), to see this analogy spelled out: "This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. Without me my rifle is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless." As Durkheim writes, "if it is true that man depends upon his gods, this dependence is reciprocal. The gods also have need of man; without offerings and sacrifices they would die."[10] This is not to say that servicemembers hold an idolatrous relationship with their weapons, but rather to emphasize the importance of the weapon in a servicemember's life and how servicemembers assign greater weight to their weapon than we do in civilian life

[10] Durkheim, 189. A similar expressions of interdependence between God/gods and humans can be found in the poem *Without Jews* by Jacob Glatshteyn. The opening line of the poem "Without Jews there will be no Jewish God" speaks to the fact that followers of a faith or world-view must exist in order for that faith or world-view to exist.

due to the life-and-death circumstances in which they will have to use it. In the military, the interdependence of servicemember and weapon is essential for survival.

With the liminal moment of oath-taking as the natural center, I worked to build the rest of the ritual around it, drawing inspiration from a Jewish ritual in which a community welcomes someone new into the community: a baby's *Brit Milah* or *Brit Bat*. The *Brit Milah* ceremony for newborn boys, centered on the acts of circumcision and giving a Hebrew name, and the more modern *Brit Bat* ceremony for newborn girls mark the newborn's joining the covenant between Abraham and God. By welcoming the newborn into the covenant, the ceremony also serves to connect the newborn to every member of the covenant who has preceded them. Similarly, the enlistment/commissioning ceremony marks the covenant of the military ("to support and defend the Constitution of the United States…") while also bringing them into the group of servicemembers past and present who have served for over two-hundred years.

The first piece in this enlistment ritual is a welcoming of all who are in the room – both the individual(s) taking the oath and those who are there to support them such as friends, family, and recruiters. Knowing that this will be the last time for several months that the oath-takers will see their families and friends, I want to make sure to acknowledge all who are present and to help sustain these relationships in this time of transition. Desiring to create a more inclusive ritual and strike the balance between Jewish particularism and secular state pluralism, I carefully selected the epithets I used for God. From the beginning of the ritual, I wanted to validate and reassure the uncertainty that the recruits and their families often experience: dying in uniform. I chose "Guardian of Life" to acknowledge the aspirational desire for protection that everyone in the room shares.

Secondly, we turn to framing the ritual. It is my hope in this instance to provide a framing both for those taking the oath and those family and friends who might witness it. Additionally, it is in this moment that best fits a prayer. In addition to a prayer for safety and protection for those about to swear into the military, I also offer a prayer for a world at peace which will no longer need militaries.

Following this framing and prayer, we come to the heart of the ritual – the oath itself. The oath for commissioned officers is different than the oath for enlisted servicemembers, and therefore I included both. Finally, we come to the closing benedictions. Here, I turn to two classic benedictions in Judaism – the Shecheyanu and the Birkat Kohanim. In this order, the ritual congratulates them for what they just did and then, ending on the same note as a Brit ceremony, blesses them with favor and protection going forward through the Birkat Kohanim.

ENSLITMENT AND COMMISSIONING RITUAL

WELCOMING:
Blessed is he/she who comes in the presence of the Guardian of Life

FRAMING THE RITUAL:
Taking an oath is a momentous occasion. It is not something done lightly, but rather a binding commitment to a greater purpose. You promise by that which you hold sacred to fulfill that which you swear or affirm. Those around you bear witness to your commitment, your passion, and your eagerness. Today, as you take your oath, we rejoice as we welcome you into this special covenant. You have chosen to join this exclusive group and enter into its ranks. Every person who raises their right hand to take the oath of {office/enlistment} does so of their own accord. In just a moment, you will do the same. When you raise your hand, you will still be a civilian. But when you lower it, you will be something more. You will be one of the 1.5 million currently serving, one of the less than one percent who has made the same choice, said the same words, and become part of the United States Military. When you lower your hand, you will now be able to state your name in its new form, with your rank preceding it.

We pray for the day when, as it says in the Book of Isaiah "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they study war anymore." But until that day arrives, we pray that your service may be like that of the Psalmist David, who writes "I lie down and sleep and wake again for God sustains me. I have no fear of the myriad forces arrayed against me on every side."

OATHS:
The Oath that you are about to take is an oath which traces throughout the history of our country. Countless men and women have said these exact words, and when we say them, we join not just our brothers and sisters currently serving, but all who have done so before.

Call everyone to rise, those swearing in to Attention, and to raise their right hand

Please repeat after me:

Oath of Enlistment
I, _____ (SSAN), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

Oath of Office
"I, _____ (SSAN), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true

faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; So help me God."

CLOSING BENEDICTION:

Shecheyanu

Congratulations on joining the ranks. We take a moment to rejoice as we welcome you (back) into our midst, for you have willingly joined the military community and taken a step that so few do. And as we mark this occasion, we offer a blessing, thanking the Source of Life for giving us life, for sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this moment.

Priestly Blessing

And so too do we take a moment to ask the Guardian of Life for light and kindness, quoting the words of Scripture:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ׃

May God bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ׃

May God's light shine upon you and may God be gracious to you.

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם׃

May you feel God's Presence within you always and may God grant you peace.

CHAPTER THREE: PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION

Moving is rarely easy. Having to pack up your life, say goodbye to friends and colleagues and move to somewhere new is understandably an experience filled with a large amount of emotion and anxiety. In the military, such experiences are incredibly common. Based on the structure of the military, each assignment a servicemember (both officer and enlisted) receives lasts between two or three years. After this allotted period of time, the servicemember receives a new duty assignment and must move. This could be to a different base in the same city, across the country, or across the world. As one of the most common things that servicemembers experience, this Permanent Change of Station (PCS) is the next section of this Chaplains' Manual.

With every move, both military and civilian, much of the energy gets spent on the physical, logistical aspects of the move – making sure everything is packed properly, that the moving trucks come on time, that the movers properly handle the possessions in transport, that it is delivered appropriately, and that they unpack properly. But beyond the physical logistics there are emotional ones that do not always get acknowledged, especially in the military. In addition to the physical tolls of moving are the tolls of leaving behind friends and coworkers, not just for the servicemember but for their families as well. If the spouse or partner had a job, they must leave it with uncertainty about what awaits them in the new location. If children are in school, they must leave their friends and classmates and move to a new school, forced to make such connections over again. For a family that goes through this every two or three years, this can take a significant toll on their happiness and the health of relationships. And it is not just in the leaving that such emotions are felt, but also in the arrival to the new location. The goodbyes are indeed difficult, but so too is the arrival to the

new place without knowing anyone and facing the stark reality of temporary loneliness. Servicemembers benefit in this transition in that the unit they are joining provides an easily accessible social and peer group, but spouses and children are not guaranteed such ease of accessibility.

This section seeks to address both aspects of this PCS process – the departure of one place and the arrival at a new location. There are therefore two parts to this section depending on where the chaplain finds themselves in this process: one for if they are the chaplain at the duty station the servicemember is leaving and one for if they are at the station the servicemember is arriving at. In the first scenario (where the chaplain is at the outgoing duty station), there is a natural ceremony to serve as the basis of the ritual. At the end of one's tour of duty at the station, it is common for there to be some form of an "End of Tour Award." However, due to the rate at which such turnover occurs, there is very rarely an official ceremony for anyone other than a senior officer such as the overall commanding officer. More typically, especially for enlisted, the senior officer simply gives a brief, private, congratulatory message and an award that is more along the lines of a certificate.

I find this process overly curt and failing to acknowledge the gravity and weight of the moving process. To counter this, I propose a ritual focusing on the separation and farewell of the PCS process. However, I also know that performing this ritual a dozen times a month would limit a chaplain's ability to tend to the rest of the obligations. Therefore, I propose a group ritual for every servicemember and their family who is set to leave the unit that month. I propose doing this at the beginning of the month so that all of those who are preparing to leave will have the ability to attend should they desire.

The ritual I created for departing a duty station is based on Havdalah, but with some changes. The Havdalah ritual occurs as two distinct categories threaten to break down (i.e. Shabbat into the normal week).[1] This liminal breakdown is similar to that of the PCS move as a servicemember moves from that station to another. The PCS move is not as stark as the leaving the military entirely, but it does represent the close of an entire chapter in one's life as they move to another location. This change makes Havdalah a fitting ritual. Furthermore, as Hoffman describes, the Havdalah liturgy derives its origins from Talmudic discussions. In such discussions, there is a question as to how many *havdalot*, or separations, one is permitted to say; the answer that they decide upon is given by Rava that one should state no less than three but no more than seven separations. When pushed that he said four and not three or seven, Rava replies that his last separation (between the seventh day and the six days of work) is not a separation but instead is a synopsis of what is to come in the separation.[2] Through this, we can see that one can apply the Havdalah ritual in different settings if one changes the text to acknowledge what is breaking down. However, one should not add separations onto the standard blessing. However, as I am orchestrating this ritual as a Havdalah that would normally occur on a Saturday evening, I am going to include both the traditional fourth blessing of Havdalah so that the ritual is complete. Following that, there will be the additional blessing for the military-family separation.

While the final blessing of the Havdalah ritual, the blessing that talks about separations, is the heart of the ritual, there are three blessings which proceed it as well as choreography to tie it together, such as the lifting up of the various things being blessed: the

[1] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington, Ind. .: Indiana University Press, 1987), 22. The Talmudic discussion can be found in Peshaim 103b-104a.

[2] Hoffman, 33.

wine, the spices, and the candle. Part of the beauty of the ceremony, in my opinion at least, is the symbolism of entering the new week with all our senses – the taste of the wine, the smell of the spices, feeling the warmth of the fire, seeing the candle's light, and hearing the sound as the flame is extinguished. It is this part which I hope to bring into the ceremony – to bring together all of the senses of those leaving.

My inspiration for this ritual comes from Vanessa Ochs and a portion of her book *Inventing Jewish Ritual*.[3] Describing her process as a ritual innovator, she describes an experience of taking a mezuzah-hanging ceremony and adapting it to fit with a predominately non-Jewish community. In her first adaptation, she focused on the mezuzah-hanging's purpose: to provide blessings and protection for a Jewish home. With this as her focus, she asked her non-Jewish guests to bring something that can serve as a blessing for a home from their culture.[4] Doing it in this way allowed for both a Jewish and pluralistic ritual, and it is this balance that I am trying to achieve in this and other rituals. But it is her second iteration of such a ritual which I think is even more relevant. In the second iteration of her ritual, this time designed for graduate students working with her husband, she gave space for these students to write their own blessings for their study of text after hanging the mezuzah with the traditional blessing.[5] Once more, she continues the traditional Jewish ritual (saying the proper blessing) while allowing for expansion and inclusion of non-Jewish perspectives within the context of the ritual. Drawing from what she calls her "Ritual Toolbox", she uses the mezuzah-hanging ritual to "symbolically connect the new ritual to the past and do its

[3] Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual*.

[4] Ochs, 3.

[5] Ochs, 4.

necessary work in the present."[6] With this as my inspiration, my ritual allows for both the traditional Havdalah but also allows the family to separate in their own way, using the tastes, smells, and visual cues of their time at the unit.

The second ritual for this section – the ritual for arriving at a new duty station – is also inspired by Vanessa Ochs' work. Elsewhere in the Ritual Toolbox we described above, she says that one compartment we can draw from is that which holds texts. These texts, she says "can be quoted whole, but they can also be reworded, given new emphases, or be transformed altogether to reflect contemporary sensibilities and situations."[7] Looking at the compendium of Jewish text, I find the heart of this ritual to center on the welcoming this new community of servicemembers and their families to the unit. It is based on this that I start the ritual by including our commandments to both welcome and love the stranger. From here, as I frame the ritual, I end the ritual by welcoming the servicemembers and their families with the traditional Jewish expression – "ברוכים הבאים בשם ה'." It is my hope through doing this to begin the transition away from servicemembers and to welcome them into our midst.

However, neither of these are the heart of the ritual. For that, I draw directly from Ochs' ritual. In two of her examples which she describes in her article, the mezuzah and hanging it are the focal point of her ceremonies. While it would be improper to hang a mezuzah for non-Jewish servicemembers, the concept and symbolism of the mezuzah is something that we can transpose. In Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mezuzah 6:13, Rambam writesוכל זמן שיכנס ויצא, יפגע ביחוד השם, שמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, ויזכור אהבתו – "whenever a person enters or leaves, he will encounter the unity of the name of the Holy Blessed One and

[6] Ochs, 6. This comes from the second compartment of her toolbox which she describes as holding "familiar and resonant Jewish ritual actions and objects."

[7] Ochs, 5.

remember his love for God."[8] It is this act of continued remembrance which Ochs cultivates in her ritual when she allows for an "interactive mezuzah" which permitted the students participating in the ritual to add blessings throughout the year, reminding them of their intentions throughout the year.[9] Such is also the hope in this ritual – that it may serve as an opportunity for the servicemembers and their families to set intentions and blessings for their time in this unit, whether professionally or personally. With this goal and hope, I plan to draw upon this notion of the "interactive mezuzah" as the focal point of this ritual.

Logistically, this second ritual (like the first one) should occur as a group. Doing so will provide a more social setting that allows for servicemembers and families to interact and to know that they are not the only new servicemembers/families in the unit. Holding the ritual at the end of each month and inviting all who have arrived at the unit over the course of the month provides a natural way for this socializing and networking to occur and allows an implicit acknowledgment that they are not alone in their transitory experience.

[8] Eliyahu Touger, trans., *Rambam: Mishneh Torah - Hilchot Tefillin Umezuzah v'Sefer Torah; Hilchot Tzitzit*, vol. 2 (Moznaim, 1990), 128.

[9] Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual*, 4.

PCS RITUAL
ARRIVING AT A NEW LOCATION

Explanation of the ritual for the chaplain: This ritual is meant to serve as a way to help families go through the separation of PCS-ing and to allow the family unit as a whole to experience and acknowledge the upcoming changes together by saying goodbye to their time at this unit. The Chaplain will lead a traditional set of Havdalah blessings while the families supplement the ritual with their own separations. There is an additional Havdalah blessing specifically written for the service-members after the traditional Havdalah blessing.

Before the ritual: invite all the servicemembers and their families who are leaving the unit in the coming month to attend a small, brief ceremony on the first Saturday night of the month. In the invitation, ask them to bring something representative of the taste, smells, sights, sounds, and touch that they and their family most strongly associate with this Tour of Duty.

The Ritual:

Chaplain: We come together to say goodbye. To acknowledge the time that we have spent at [insert unit name] and bid farewell to our friends, fellow [soldiers/sailors/marines/airmen/coast guardsmen], and the life that we have built. We know that all goodbyes can be a challenge, but we look back with fond memories and experiences as we move onto our next assignment. We usually come together for Havdalah to say goodbye to our week, but tonight we also say goodbye to our time together, as over the next month we will leave and move to our next stations.

Saying goodbye to what we have experienced is something that requires our entire presence. We experience our lives with all our senses, and so to do we remember with all our senses. We therefore say goodbye tonight with all our senses.

We begin with our sense of taste. We say our blessing over grape juice or wine in the hopes that the week ahead will be a sweet one; and we hope that your next duty stations will be even sweeter than this one. And so as I say the blessing, I encourage you all to take a taste of what you brought to remember the taste of this place.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.
Blessed are you Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

We next move to our sense of smell. We pray over the spices in the hopes that the boldness of our spices wakes us up in preparation of what is to come as we move to the next week. As we say this prayer, we smell that which will remind us of our time here, something which can wake us up to the memories of this tour and the transition we are about to undergo:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי בְשָׂמִים.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, borei minei v'samim.
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of varied spices.

Our third prayer is that which kindles our sense of sight and touch. The candle that lights our way and warms us. We use this special candle so that the flame is bright enough and big enough to allow us to benefit from it. It is what lights our path forward and brings us warmth in what otherwise might be spiritually cold times. Look at and touch what you brought for these senses and think about the path you have moving forward as we say this blessing.

בָּרְ ךָ אַתָּה ה׳ אֵ ֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, borei m'orei ha-eish.
Blessed are you, Adonai our God Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of the lights of fire.

We come now to our final blessing, our blessing of separation. First, I will do the traditional Havdalah blessing. Following this I will do a special blessing that represents the Havdalah, the separation, of you from this community. As we distinguish between the holiness of service in this unit with the holiness of service in the next unit, of darkness and light, of the military and civilian lives, and between this unit and others, we remember that the change from one unit to another is a separation and a change, but it is not a decrease in the holiness of the work that we do in service of our country. When we finish this prayer, we will extinguish our candle in the juice, and hear the sound of this chapter closing. As I extinguish the candle, I invite you to play your sound.

בָּרְ ךָ אַתָּה ה׳ אֵ ֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל, בֵּ ן אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לָעַמִּים,בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בָּרְ ךָ אַתָּה ה׳ הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinum Melech Ha-olam, ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or l'choshech, bein Yisrael l'Amim, bein yom hashvi-i l'sheshet yamei ha-ma-aseh. Baruch atah Adonai, ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'chol.

בָּרְ ךָ אַתָּה ה׳ אֵ ֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ, בֵּ ן אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין צָבָא לְאֵזָרָח, בֵּין הַיְחִידָה הַזֹּאת לְיְחִידוֹת אֲחֵרוֹת. בָּרְ ךָ אַתָּה ה׳ הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh, bein or l'choshech, bein tzava l'ezrach, bein ha-y'chidah ha-zot l'y'chidot acherot. Baruch atah Adonai, ha-mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.

Blessed are you Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who separates sacred times from sacred times, between lights and darkness, between the military and civilian, and between this unit and others. Blessed are you Adonai, who distinguishes between sacred and sacred.

ARRIVING AT A NEW LOCATION

Before the Ritual: Invite all the servicemembers and families that have arrived over the previous month to attend the ritual. For each servicemember and their family, provide a legal sized envelope that they can use to store their blessings as well as paper and writing utensils for them to create their blessings.

The Ritual:

Chaplain: Welcome, all of you, to [insert unit or base]. Over the last few weeks, you have come from across the globe to [insert location] to support our unit's mission as part of the larger military. Whether this is your first duty station or your last, these moves are always a challenge. Saying goodbye to the lives we have built and the friends we have made is never easy, and it is all too easy to feel like a stranger in a new place. But Jewish tradition commands that we welcome the stranger, for it was with eagerness and joy that Abraham welcomed the three travelers into his tent. And yet, while we may be new to this place, we are not complete strangers. For from the uniforms we wear to the places we have been to the reasons we serve and support those who serve, there is a shared experience that can unite us all and provide a sense of comfort and familiarity, even in this new place. And so, while you may be new, you are not entirely foreign. And to welcome all of you into our midst, we say:

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה׳

Baruch ha-ba b'shem Adonai
May you who have come in the name of Guardian of Life be blessed

There is a notion in Judaism that when we come to live in a new place, we are to dedicate our homes with a blessing that will protect and remind us of our commitment. We affix an object to our doorposts so that when we pass by it, we are reminded of the life we are to live as well as that this home is a safe place for us. Today, we will use this for ourselves. Each family should have an envelope. This envelope will serve as your reminder. Whatever blessings you hope for yourselves and your family, whatever goals you wish to set for yourself, whatever it is that you need to remind yourself throughout your time here, they can go into this envelope. And so, when you leave each morning and come home each night, this envelope can serve as a reminder. Attach it when you go home to the doorpost of your house and let it serve as a reminder before your eyes. But before you go and put it up, I want to take a moment so that you can begin to fill it with blessings. Blessings that you may think of as an individual or as a family.

[take time to let them write a couple of blessings and put it in the envelope]

As you go home, as you depart from here and continue to settle into your new lives here, we offer a blessing, thanking the Source of Life for giving us life, for sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this moment.

Priestly Blessing

And so too do we take a moment to ask the Guardian of Life for light and kindness, quoting the words of Scripture:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ׃

May God bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ׃

May God's light shine upon you and may God be gracious to you.

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם׃

May you feel God's Presence within you always and may God grant you peace

CHAPTER FOUR: DEPLOYMENT

One of the most stressful, but also most common, experiences that servicemembers go through is deploying. Deploying is a very particular term. A servicemember can be stationed anywhere for approximately three years. But depending on where they are stationed and with what type of unit one is assigned, they might be "deployable" or "operational", meaning that they may move for a period of time to another location, typically one nearer to a combat zone or with higher likelihood of experiencing combat. For instance, one might be *stationed* at the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejune in North Carolina and *deploy* to Afghanistan for nine months or a year or be *stationed* at Naval Base San Diego and *deploy* on an aircraft carrier to the Pacific Ocean for six months. Deployment happens to most servicemembers and at various times throughout their career. In a single tour of duty (a three-year timeframe), one could deploy several times depending on the unit and what military conflicts are going on in the world.

Deployments themselves are broken down into various aspects. There is the larger deployment itself that often lasts six months to a full year, but within that are often various missions and objectives that the unit is assigned to accomplish. These could be combat missions, patrolling various areas of land or water, relief and humanitarian aid to places recovering from natural disasters (i.e. Haiti in 2010), or community relations projects such as what ships do when they pull into various ports (things like building or painting buildings or distributing medical supplies). Mission preparation is incredibly variable depending on the service branch, the responsibilities of the particular units, and the details of the mission itself. Because of this, there is no single ritual for going out on missions; instead, I encourage each chaplain to address the needs of the particular mission individually through various blessings

and ad hoc ritual creation. The ritual for deployment, therefore, is broken down into two separate parts – leaving for deployment and returning home from deployment.

In the first, there are two needs to address: the anxiety of the servicemember leaving their life – their family and friends (and potentially even packing everything into storage if they live alone) – behind for an extended, albeit temporary, amount of time; and preparing for the increased danger they face while deployed. According to the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, there are seven emotional stages to a deployment. The first two stages – Anticipation of Loss; Detachment and Withdrawal – occur in the leadup to deployment. In the first stage, as servicemembers prepare for deployment and spend more time and energy on that preparation, they tend to spend less energy at home, leading to resentment and anger in the rest of the family. In the second, as the anticipation of loss builds, servicemembers often appear detached and withdrawn from their families as preparations continue to increase, often leading to fights.[1] In these pre-deployment stages, the anxiety and fears of the servicemember leading up to the deployment overpower and have a negative effect on the entire family. Preparing to say goodbye can be a treacherous time and what should be moments of closeness and togetherness may often be tarnished by bitterness and anger. Because the liminality of the moment affects both the servicemembers and those who care about them, I am conscious about making sure that whatever amount of Victor Turner's "communitas"[2] exists in this space includes both the servicemember and their family and friends. Therefore, this ritual works to address some of this by consciously redirecting some of the pre-deployment emotion into acknowledging the mutual difficulty of the impending

[1] Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, "Lesson 9.6 - Cycle of Deployment," (2018), Slides 11-12.

[2] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas." For a greater analysis of Turner's "communitas", please see the relevant pages in Chapter One: Ritual Theory.

separation for everyone involved. The pre-deployment ritual is meant to be a moment of shared blessing and understanding before deployment.

This ritual takes two parts – a blessing and an action. The blessing is based primarily on two pieces of Jewish liturgy – the Traveler's Prayer and the Sabbath Prayer. The Traveler's Prayer, *Tefilat Haderech*, is a common piece of liturgy and is even included in the Jewish Welfare Board's Siddur.[3] For many Jewish Chaplains, this is a key prayer to include in moments such as leaving for deployments, going out on missions, and moving to a new duty station. Because it is widely used across the military, it makes sense Tefilat Haderech should serve as the base of the prayer. It is even possible that incorporating some of this language will be familiar for those who have encountered Jewish chaplains in previous duty stations. After all, going on a deployment is an extended trip of sorts, and the potential peril faced during deployment is greater, making that prayer even more relevant. However, the Traveler's Prayer focuses solely on the traveler, and yet the ritual must also consider what happens to those who the servicemember loves but must leave over the deployment. Therefore, the prayer also draws from the Sabbath Prayer from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. This song, which seemingly combines aspects from Shabbat prayers such as *Shalom Aleichem* and *Birkat Ha-Banim*, focuses on aspirational blessings for protection, success, and growth. I feel that this second part of the prayer is quite important, because it permits the servicemember to acknowledge that they are not forgetting or ignoring the family in the midst of the preparation for and build-up to deployment. I find myself looking at the meanings of these prayers and attempting to stitch them together in a way that offers

[3] JWB Jewish Chaplains Council, ed., *Siddur: Prayer Book for Jewish Personnel in the Armed Forces of the United States*, Second Edition (Italy: KTAV Publishers & Distributors, Inc., 2017), 709.

protection, hope, and blessing for all, much in the way that Vanessa Ochs might draw on them from her "Jewish Ritual Toolbox."[4]

The second aspect of the ritual allows for the servicemember to maintain a connection back to their friends and family while deployed. Oftentimes, deploying servicemembers are permitted to bring a box or bag of non-required items, usually consisting of photographs, a computer or DVD player, movies, video games, etc. For those who desire, this is a key aspect to allow them to connect back home. Some may even keep a photo album. The second part of the ritual ties into this. Deriving inspiration from Vanessa Ochs' rituals regarding the creation of an interactive mezuzah[5] as well as my own experiences in various Jewish rituals, this ritual consists of those dining with the deploying servicemember to write their own personal blessings for the servicemember to keep with them while deployed. This will allow the servicemember to maintain a connection back to their home as well as let their family and friends feel like they are not forgotten by the servicemember during deployment. The mezuzah is a proper inspiration for this because of its protective nature and the fact that these blessings may serve as a spiritual protection.

The ritual itself is brief and uncomplicated, mainly because there are so many other things leading up to deployment that must occur that I did not want to add what might feel like an undue burden onto the servicemembers and their families. Rather, I opted to simply add a blessing and draw conscious attention to what many already do: a last, farewell meal together. Meals hold important significance as communal gathering points in numerous cultures, whether it is a Jewish holiday *seudah*, a secular wedding feast, or a birthday

[4] Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual*, 5–6.

[5] Ochs, 3–4. Also referenced and discussed in the Theory Section as well as the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Ritual.

celebration like the one which was the planned ritual studied by Barbara Myerhoff,[6] and often holding a meal gives one final touch of normalcy to what might otherwise be an isolating time.

The second ritual in this section marks the return from deployment. Returning from deployment does not merely entail moving back to the duty station where one is stationed and immediately picking up the same life one had before deploying. There is a significant reintegration and adjusting process that one needs to go through in order to settle back into life. Regarding the seven emotional stages of deployment, returning from deployment makes up three of the stages, nearly half of the entire cycle. The anticipation of the homecoming in the month before the return, post-deployment seminars, worrying about how everyone has changed over the deployment, renegotiating responsibilities and becoming reacclimated to reduced independence, and reintegrating into a comfortable balance of "my" and "ours" are all relevant and standard aspects of returning from the deployment.[7]

Over the months of deployment, it is common for the servicemember and their family and friends all adjust to the new normal. Though they may miss the life they were living before the deployment, the servicemember does adjust to living life on deployment with their fellow servicemembers, and the family and friends they left behind learn to live life without them. Coming back from deployment requires a similar adjustment period as servicemembers, friends, and families must figure out how they have grown as individuals over the past months and how best to reintegrate their lives back together. It cannot and should not be expected that they can live the exact same life that they had before the

[6] Myerhoff, "Death in Due Time: Construction of Self and Culture in Ritual Drama."

[7] Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, "Lesson 9.6 - Cycle of Deployment," Slides 15-19.

deployment. However, many do have that expectations and there are numerous disappointments when reality does not meet expectation. Therefore, this ritual hopes to address this concern by guiding the servicemember and their friends and family through different stages, acknowledging the process of readjustment and reintegration.

In the first part of the ritual, the servicemembers have the opportunity to acknowledge the stress they have gone through by reciting *Birkat HaGomel*, a blessing one recites after surviving an illness, accident, or dangerous journey. This prayer is meant to be communal and has a call-and-response style to it. Using this prayer allows both for the servicemembers to state (without going into what might be traumatic details) that they have survived something difficult, challenging, and treacherous and for their loved ones to acknowledge that they acknowledge and understand the stress that the servicemembers experienced.

In the second part, and the heart of the ritual, the ritual moves beyond acknowledging that there were various stresses that occurred throughout the deployment and into helping the servicemember accept that these stresses may have changed them, but not necessarily negatively. Drawing upon a ritual object that goes back to biblical times, the second part of the ritual incorporates using ritual immersion in water (what contemporary Jews often call the *mikveh*). Dating all the way back to the Hebrew Bible, the concept of immersion in water has been used in many Jewish rituals. In several instances, such as with the ritual of purification following "leprosy" (Lev 14:2-9), the ritual of the goat on Yom Kippur (Lev. 16:24-28), or for anyone who comes in contact with a dead person (Num. 19:19), immersion in water has a purifying capacity to it. Ritual immersion in water remains common in contemporary Judaism, both in recovering from impurity (such as women purifying

themselves after menstruation) and in conversion.[8] In conversion, a new Jew immerses to both purify themselves as they adopt the title of "Jew" and because it symbolizes a rebirth with a new identity. Beyond these two common uses are more contemporary rituals that reflect an expanding usage of ritual immersion. Many of these newer rituals focus on using the mikveh to help an individual celebrate or heal.[9] One such contemporary use of the mikveh is centered around using it to heal from divorce and focus on emotional healing.[10] Throughout all of the various ways that ritual immersion in water has been used throughout Jewish history, the purifying nature of water has been a common theme. Applying this "thick description"[11] of water, therefore, makes ritual immersion a natural fit for the post-deployment ritual, as it is quite understandable for a servicemember to feel either the need to be "purified" spiritually after a deployment or the desire to own their new self and incorporate the changes left by the stresses of deployment.

Having acknowledged the stress of deployment and given space for the servicemember to begin to process whatever may have occurred during the deployment, the final part of the ritual sees the agency shift to the family and friends of the servicemember – their acceptance of them returning, and as potentially changed individuals. For many servicemembers, the knowledge that friends and family continued on with their regular lives while they were gone is a treacherous realization as it can lead to feelings of worthlessness. Furthermore, there is a reticence amongst servicemembers to share what they experienced

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[8] Miriam C. Berkowitz, *Taking the Plunge: A Practical and Spiritual Guide to the Mikveh*, ed. David Golinkin, Second (Jerusalem: The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2009), 19.

[9] Berkowitz, 144.

[10] Berkowitz, 158.

[11] For more information on what the "thick description" means, see Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." or the section on Geertz's work in Chapter One: Ritual Theory.

during deployments and to keep it to themselves. This is unhealthy, and it is my hope that through this ritual the servicemember might feel more willing to share and process with friends and family. The third stage of this ritual is therefore designed to serve as an expressed welcoming back of the servicemember as well as an acknowledgement that readjusting and figuring out the new roles takes time.

Because this is not a Jewish-specific ceremony, the role of the "mikveh" in the ritual is more aptly described as immersion in water. An actual mikveh, whether due to geographic inaccessibility or halakhic limitations of non-Jews immersing in it, may not be a viable option for one to use. Natural bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, and oceans would therefore be the most desired setting, but are also limited based on geography. I would also encourage pools as a potential source, or even a private bath if that is the only option available.

Considering the uncertainty of the water source for the return as well as the differences in when an individual servicemember might feel ready for this reintegration ritual, this ceremony is designed primarily to be a ritual for individual family and friend groups and is written in such a way that it can be done with or without a chaplain present.

DEPLOYMENT RITUALS:
RITUAL FOR LEAVING

In the 24 hours leading up to a deployment, as you prepare to say goodbye to your family and/or friends, gather together for a gathering, perhaps a final meal. At some point during the meal, gather those close to you together and recite the following:

May it be Your will, O Source of Strength and Peace, to lead us on the way of peace and guide and direct our steps over these next months, so that we may arrive to our destination safe and sound; and so that we will return in peace. Save us from the hand of any enemy, from ambush, and from any disturbances that may burst into our world. Give us and all who we love good grace, kindness, and mercy, both in Your eyes and in the eyes of all whom we may meet. May we and all who we hold dear be granted the protection of safety under your wings for these many months. Bestow on us happiness and peace and grant us closeness even though we may be physically distant.

For all who we love and hold dear, we pray: May God bless you and keep you. May God's light shine upon you and may God be gracious to you. May you feel God's Presence within you always and may God grant you peace. Hear the voice of our supplication, for You are a God who listens to prayer and supplication. Blessed are You, Eternal One, who hears prayer.

Following this blessing, pass out slips of blank paper and pens/pencils for each family member and friend who has joined you at this meal. Ask them to write their own, personal, and private blessing for you as you go on this deployment. Gather them together and keep them in one envelope to bring with you while deployed.

The ritual begins with the recitation of Birkat ha-Gomel:
(The servicemember reads):

בָּר ְך אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיָּבִים טוֹבוֹת שֶׁגְּמָלַנִי כָּל טוֹב

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-gomel l'chayavim tovot, she-g'malani kol tov.
Blessed are You, Guardian of all, who deals kindly even with the unworthy, for You have shown me great favor.

(Family and friends respond):

אָמֵן. מִי שֶׁגְּמָלְךָ כָּל וֹב הוּא יִגְמָלְךָ כָּל טוּב סֶלָה

Amein. Mi she-g'malcha kol tov, hu yi-g'malcha kol tov selah.
Amen. May the One who has shown such favor to you continue to bestow all that is good upon you, *selah*.

After Reciting Gomel…Ritual Immersion Upon Returning from Deployment:
O Guardian of Life, just as You protected Daniel and his companions throughout their various tests – in the fiery furnace and in the lion's den – so did You protect me over these months. Though not without my own trials, I have survived this deployment to be here with those I love, thanks to Your protection. As the Psalmist says, "I say of God, my refuge and stronghold, my God in whom I trust, that God will save you from the fowler's trap, from the destructive plague. God will cover you with pinions; you will find refuge under Divine wings; God's fidelity is an encircling shield." (Ps. 91:2-4).

Instructions: Immerse yourself in the water. As you immerse yourself, consider the following verse and questions. Take all the time you need or wish to spend contemplating your answers. Upon completion, state the blessing and arise.

Verse: You have tried us, O God, refining us, as one refines silver. You have caught us in a net, caught us in trammels. You have let men ride over us; we have endured fire and water, and You have brought us through to prosperity. (Ps 66:12)

Meditation/Questions:
Think back on your deployment…What positive experiences did you have over deployment? What trials and tribulations did you face while deployed? What about them was difficult? How have the past few months impacted you? What are your hopes as you readjust back to non-deployed life? How can you best communicate your hopes?

Blessing: Blessed are you, O Source of Life, who sanctifies us through the act of immersion and allows us to experience spiritual rebirth.

Upon the servicemember returning or reappearing from their immersion, the family and/or friends should greet them with the following:

בָּר֥וּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה'

Baruch ha-ba b'shem Adonai
May you who have returned in the name of the Divine One be blessed.

Having returned from the purifying waters, we welcome you back into our lives. We have missed your presence and feel blessed to be with you once more. As the Guardian of Life has blessed you, we ask for continued blessing as we all reintegrate back into our shared lives. May the Source of Peace provide us and all of the returning [soldiers/sailors/marines/airmen/coast guardsmen] with the strength and peace to return to the lives we live with the ones we love. *Kein yehi ratzon*. So may it be.

CHAPTER FIVE: INJURY

The military is, in its nature, a high-risk environment. The demands of the work (high pressure situations, physically demanding work, extended travel, and little sleep) as well as the work itself (defending our country at home and abroad, handling weapons and other complex technological systems, and serving in combat) are inherently dangerous, and it is not uncommon for servicemembers to be injured while serving, either during training or in combat. Many of these injuries are similar to injuries civilians experience: illnesses, broken bones, torn ligaments, sprained joints, etc. Other injuries, like the loss of limbs, traumatic brain injury or shrapnel wounds, occur more frequently in the military than in civilian life. This second class of injuries, which are often traumatic and long-lasting, are in many cases life-altering as servicemembers must learn to live a new type of life that requires significant training and adaptation, on top of which the need for a new career due to medical discharges. The recovery process for these injuries is extensive, often taking months or years of surgery and physical therapy. For some, it is probably a lifelong process that never truly ends as they will never be able to heal back to where they were before the injury.

Because recovering from such injuries is an extensive process, the emotional healing process is also lengthy. It takes time and determination to learn to accept, emotionally and psychologically, the limitations imposed by the injury and to become comfortable with a new definition of "normal." This section hopes to address different parts of this process of acceptance, healing, and recovery.

The first ritual within this section is designed to be said early in the recovery process, typically when someone leaves the hospital. This marks the first major step in the recovery process, as they have achieved a level of stability to move beyond the constant and

immediate care hospitals provide. They have, in a sense, stabilized. Such a moment and accomplishment should not be discounted. This is not to say that they are healed – they likely will continue with outpatient therapy of one form or another. This ritual works to acknowledge and celebrate this important benchmark in the recovery process.

Liminality, according to Victor Turner, describes something that is "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[12] The betwixt and between nature of liminal spaces is perhaps best represented through the physical, spatial equivalent of betwixt and between: a doorway. Doorways are the spatial embodiment of liminality because they are the threshold through which we pass from one room or space to another. Such is the case everywhere, but perhaps even more so with the doorways of a hospital. It is not uncommon for one to feel a stark change upon entering or leaving a hospital or doctor's office. It is for this reason why the passing through the doorway out of the hospital and the journey until one enters the next location (whether a rehabilitation center, the servicemember's home, or somewhere else) are the central points of this ritual. Framing this transition from being an inpatient to not are two readings meant to bookmark leaving the hospital and arriving at the next place. For each of these readings, the action is the crossing of the literal threshold.

The threshold also holds meaning in Judaism, as it is where one affixes a mezuzah. As discussed in the "Permanent Change of Station" section, the mezuzah holds the space of serving as a blessing and reminder of what one can accomplish as they cross the threshold. Additionally, a mezuzah offers a sense of protection for the space, marking it as Jewish and special. While many hospitals, rehabilitation centers, homes, and other residential places do

[12] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 512.

not have a mezuzah, they do have doorways. Therefore, the central action of this first ritual is the crossing of the two different thresholds.

While moving out of the hospital is a big step, it is not the only one and the path to recovery will continue for quite some time and through several stages such as rehabilitation, follow-up procedures, and more. On top of that, the emotional recovery as one grapples with accepting their new limitations is also lengthy. There will likely still be many strong feelings of grief, sadness, loss, failure, and more as they work through the steps of their physical recovery. It is difficult to predict when an individual servicemember would reach a stage of emotional acceptance with their new physical status and limitations, but hopefully each servicemember will eventually reach that point of acceptance. When they do, in addition to an attitude and perspective change, they may also reach the point of peacefully saying goodbye to things that they no longer need. There is also the chance that before they get to this level of acceptance, they may wish to give away now unnecessary things so that they are not a reminder of what they have lost. For instance, someone who lost their leg may wish to get rid of now extraneous shoes. It is for this stage that the second ritual is designed – to be able to peacefully part with physical reminders of their old lifestyle.

The motivation behind this ritual comes from the Jewish practices of *tashlich* and *tzedakah*. *Tashlich*, the ritual through which Jews cast away their sins on Rosh Hashanah by throwing pieces of bread into flowing water, represents one bidding farewell to their past sins through repentance and God's forgiveness.[13] Forgetting the specific symbolism of casting away sin in the *tashlich* ritual, the ability to bid farewell to one's past life and lifestyle through the casting away of symbolic memories is relevant to our ritual. While each person

[13] Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*, Reprint edition (New York: Touchstone, 1993), 199.

has the right to do with their stuff what they wish, it could be beneficial and cathartic for them to donate their no longer needed goods somewhere as opposed to simply throwing them out. This donation fits with the Jewish practice of *tzedakah*, charity. Hopefully by consciously choosing to part with whatever these items are, one may realize that there are ways to do so that benefit others, allowing an injured servicemember to still be of service, albeit in a different way.

RITUAL FOR LEAVING HOSPITAL

Said Upon Crossing the Threshold Leaving the Hospital:
I take now the next step on the road to recovery,
And as I leave this hospital, I see the journey ahead.
You who frees the captive and lift up the fallen,
Grant me the strength to achieve whatever recovery is possible,
No matter the difficulties that lie before me.
Heal me, O God, and I shall be healed,
Help me and save me, for You are the Source of Healing
Grant me this healing for my afflictions, wounds, and pains.
Blessed are You, Eternal Healer of the sick.[14]

Said Upon Crossing the Threshold Entering the Home or Rehabilitation Center:
You who formed the human body with skill,[15]
Source of Healing,
As I settle into this place and begin the next stage of my journey,
I pray that this place be a blessing of peace, safety, and security.
May the shelter of your peace extend over my friends, my family, and me,
And may I be given the space I need to heal.
O Source of Comfort, as I begin to understand my body again,
May the *shalom* (peace) you provide grant me the ability to accept this new standard of *shleimut* (completeness).
Allow me the ability to know that even in my brokenness I am perfect,[16]
And grant me the strength to strengthen myself.
Blessed are You who heals all flesh, working wondrously.[17]

[14] "Heal me…Healer of the sick" Inspired by the *Refuah* blessing of the weekday Amidah (also known as the *Sh'mone Esrei*)

[15] From the *Asher Yatzar* prayer said every morning

[16] Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*.

[17] From the *Asher Yatzar* prayer said every morning

RITUAL UPON ACCEPTING INJURY

(This ritual is meant to be performed upon achieving a personal sense of acceptance and peace at one's new limitations, whatever they might be and whenever you might feel this acceptance. For some, this may be acclimating to a new level of chronic soreness and pain. For others, this may come upon accepting more drastic lifestyle changes and getting used to not having full use of limbs, or something even more severe.)

Identify various item(s) which either represent the new limitations or item(s) no longer necessary for you because of your new limitations, and pack it/them up to be donated.

To be read upon gathering the items and preparing them for donation:
"I cried out to You, and You brought me healing.
O Source of Healing, You brought me up from the Depths,
And preserved me from going down into the Pit." (Ps. 30:3-4).
I thank you, O Source of Strength, for granting me the strength necessary to accept this life.
While I know struggles still await me, I know that I can overcome the obstacles before me.
And though I may no longer have use for these things, I am comforted by the fact that I can help others who will have uses for them.
Blessed are You, Protector of All, who allows me to be of continued service in new ways.

CHAPTER SIX: RETIREMENT, SEPARATION, AND DISCHARGE

The final ritual in this manual ritualizes one of the two potential ways someone can leave the military: through retirement, separation, or discharge.[1] While retirement, separation, and discharge have individual connotations within military culture, all three terms refer to the same general change in status: the transition from military to civilian status. Before delving into the ritual, I think it is important to clarify these three different terms and the nuances of their respective statuses.

Retirement is a special classification reserved for those who have achieved at least twenty years of service, and the majority of servicemembers do not achieve this status. What everyone does achieve, however, is separation and discharge. These two terms refer to the same action, but from two different perspectives. Separation is what happens from the perspective of the servicemember. They can either voluntarily or involuntarily separate from the military. Voluntary separation occurs when a servicemember chooses to leave active duty for whatever reason; involuntary separation occurs when there is a medical or administrative reason for the military to tell the servicemember they must leave the service. Discharge, however, is from the perspective of the military. Every person who leaves, whether they separate voluntarily or involuntarily, receives a discharge from the military. The type of discharge (honorable, general, other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable) that a servicemember receives is determined based on their record of service and whether there

[1] The other way to leave the military is through death while ser. Whether through training malfunctions, death in combat, accidents such as the circumstances surrounding the collisions of two different Navy ships in two separate incidents in 2017, or any of numerous reasons not related directly to military service, servicemembers die while in service. These moments, as with all deaths, are tragic and sad, and deaths may often lead to a variety of emotional responses and bring up various issues related both to the deceased and in general. In many cases, servicemembers are unable to attend the funeral, especially when they are on deployment. In those moments it is standard for the unit to hold a memorial service for the deceased and to allow those they served with to mourn properly.

were any behavioral, administrative, medical, or legal issues. The different types of discharge also impact the amount and type of benefits that one is eligible to receive.

These distinctions are important when it comes to this ritual not just from an educational standpoint but also because the different ways in which a servicemember leaves the service can impact how they are feeling as they leave. For instance, someone who has spent a lifetime in service and is retiring after twenty years might feel satisfied in their life's work but also uncertain about how their transition to civilian life will be after being in the military for so long and feeling like they do not want to have the title of "retiree" at only 40 years old. Someone leaving for medical reasons might experience frustration with their injury and its cause as well as the fact that they must leave the military before they planned. And someone receiving a discharge that is not "honorable" and therefore does not receive all the benefits might feel frustrated at not receiving everything they expected. Whether or not a chaplain chooses to use this or any other ritual in the moment, these uncertainties are all things that a chaplain and the friends and family of the servicemember should be cognizant of. The transition from military to civilian is one often fraught with various concerns and there are various resources that can assist in this transition.[2]

No matter how a servicemember leaves the military, there is one thing that they all share: receiving a DD-214 "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty." This document contains an entire history of an individual's service record – their final rank, history of deployments and combat service, any awards or medals received, a record of their completed training and schools, and whatever jobs they held while in service – and is integral

[2] The Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program, MilitaryOneSource.mil, and groups like the Navy's Fleet and Family Support Center, the Army Career and Alumni Program, the Airman and Family Readiness Center, the Marine Corps Career Resource Management Center, and the Coast Guard Worklife Division are all examples of these resources

to their transition into the civilian world. While there are certain exceptions, the standard form of practice is that one must pick up their DD-214 form in person so that they can review and verify all the pertinent information before finalizing their discharge. It is this action which serves as the natural heart of the ritual.

Building around the act of picking up the DD-214 are several pieces, all derived from various Jewish life-cycle events and which all relate to various aspects of the psychology related to separating. The first part of the ritual occurs just before one receives the DD-214. The DD-214 is a document which, when received, renders unto the person holding it a different legal status than without it, changing them from military to civilian status. Judaism has a similar document – a Get of divorce. In both instances, receiving the document changes one's legal status and such change is only finalized when a person possesses the document. The moments leading up to receiving the document can be tenuous and filled with anxiety, and so it is in these moments that we begin the ritual with a reading and meditation before receiving the DD-214.

After receiving the document and finalizing the paperwork, the servicemember becomes a civilian. In many instances, especially for a lower-ranked enlisted servicemember, rarely is anything done to commemorate or honor this transition apart from a pat on the back or thank you from their particular unit or peer-group. Some may simply pick up the document and leave without saying anything to anyone else on their base. Even for higher-ranked enlisted servicemembers (known as Non-Commissioned Officers) or for officers, there is little done to honor the transition besides an end-of-service award unless they are retiring after twenty-plus years of service. While some servicemembers might be okay with this, space should be provided to help them engage with this transition. Leaving the base is a

reintegration into society that they might not fully understand. Therefore, the second part of the ceremony comes from a custom at the end of shiva, the first week of mourning – to get up and walk around one's block. While there is no law requiring this, the custom has become quite common to symbolize re-entering the public sphere post-shiva and to support the mourner in making the transition back into society.[3] This walk will help mark the transition from military to civilian as well.

The final part of the ritual also comes from Jewish mourning tradition. After a funeral, the custom exists for the community to provide a meal for the mourners. Throughout the shiva process, mourners are supposed to stay at home and the community is supposed to surround them in support. One way this is done is through providing meals for the mourners, including the first meal immediately after the funeral. This meal customarily includes round foods such as eggs in order to symbolize the circle of life and the blurring of beginnings and endings.[4] Although there are rarely organized or official celebrations for servicemembers separating from the military, there are often unofficial ones, typically consisting of the newly discharged servicemember having an informal going away party with their friends. The final part of the ritual incorporates this informal celebration by combining it with the symbolism of eggs or other round foods typically included in the shiva meal.

The inspiration for basing this ritual on both the Get and Mourning rituals comes from Vanessa Ochs' Ritual Toolbox[5] as well as from the work of Clifford Geertz.[6] In his writings on "Religion as a Cultural System", Geertz talks about the power of religious

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[3] Rabbi Anne Brener, *Mourning & Mitzvah (2nd Edition): A Guided Journal for Walking the Mourner's Path Through Grief to Healing*, 2nd Edition, New edition (Woodstock, Vt: Jewish Lights, 2001), 105.

[4] Brener, 101.

[5] Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual*, 5–7.

[6] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation Of Cultures*, F First Edition edition (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

symbols in eliciting and shaping an individual's disposition towards a ritual. These dispositions describe a person's likelihood of experiencing motivations (persisting tendencies to perform certain acts and feel a certain way) or moods (feelings in a particular moment and with varying frequency) from the symbols and rituals.[7] Working backwards from this, I strove to identify the motivations and moods that servicemembers leaving the military often experience before contemplating what Jewish rituals might help relate to these dispositions. The uncertainty about next steps and fear of the unknown, the need for patience as they attempt to reintegrate into civilian society, and the desire and hopeful motivation to seek new opportunities as they begin this new stage of life are all shared tendencies that this ritual strives to address.

[7] Geertz, 95–97.

Ritual for Leaving the Military

In Preparation of Receiving a DD-214:

Guardian of Life,
You who have protected me over these years in service,
I give thanks for your protection.
As I begin this transition into civilian life,
I pray for patience as I integrate into civilian culture,
The strength to seek out new opportunities,
And the ability to apply my skills and training in whatever endeavors lie before me.
Though I may not know what the future holds,
I know that my ability to improvise, adapt, and overcome will grant me opportunities for success.
Blessed are You who guards me in my goings and comings.

Upon Leaving Base with the DD-214:

Having received my DD-214, I now enter a new stage in my life: civilian.
Though I no longer bear the title of [soldier/sailor/marine/airman/coast guardsman],
I still possess all of my memories, experiences, and skills gained over the past ____ years.
These experiences have shaped me, molded me, and helped me grow into the person I am today.
As I pass through this gate, I enter a world both known and unknown, familiar and not.
Certain things will challenge me as I learn once more what it is to be a civilian,
But I am not afraid.
I step forward with gratitude and anticipation, knowing that what lies ahead holds great promise.

Upon Eating an Egg (or other round food) after Receiving DD-214:

This egg (or other round food) symbolizes our moment of change. Just as beginning and ending blur together in this egg (or other round food), so too does this moment's beginning and ending blur together. Its circular form signifies the circular nature of our journey: as days, weeks, months, and years go around and around. And so, as we sit in this moment of transition and contemplate how the ending of our service is the beginning of our next stage, we eat this food of transition. Blessed are you, Shepherd of our lives, who speaks everything into existence.

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