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Towards a Program of Experimental Holiday Worship  
for the Reform High School and Adults

Ronald H. Goff

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for Ordination  
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Referee, Rabbi Schwartzman

### General Synopsis of Thesis

The task of this thesis is to create experimental holiday worship services for Reform High School and adults.

Starting from the assumption that our holiday worship services lack esthetic, dramatic, and thematic unity, and that, to a large extent, they have become perfunctory duties, rather than meaningful religious experiences, we have tried to examine some of the essential components of the worship service and apply these principles to new creative services.

This task is not completed here, nor will it be finished within a single lifetime. Rather, it is conceived as an on-going and necessary quest for holiday worship services that will speak to the hearts of modern, Reform Jews in a Twentieth Century society. It is a quest to devise forms and themes that will involve the worshiper and strike at the heart of man's deepest and most basic concerns.

The Hanukah service is an example of a worship service that attempts to involve the worshiper by providing a developing drama centered around the Hanukah theme. Since the central Hanukah theme is "rededication," the service begins in an empty sanctuary. During the course of the service the sanctuary is literally rededicated. On a spiritual and psychological level, the worshipers are ill-prepared at the outset for a worship experience. But as

the service progresses, conflict and doubt, humor and satire are exploited to enable the individual to be caught up in the drama of the religious experience and achieve prayer.

The Passover reading, Once Upon a Passover, is designed to be used at a youth group Seder or, possibly, an adult community Seder. It operates on the principles that dramatic and didactic narrative, essential and traditional elements in the Passover Seder, can be used to heighten the esthetic value of a Seder experience, and induce real involvement through drama and theme.

The service for Sukkot deals with the theme of death, one of man's major and ultimate concerns. It is a service in poetic form, to be conducted out of doors and at night. Through the manipulation of sound, sight, and symbol, the congregant is led through a life-cycle of seasons to joy in his mortality and then to affirm life at the last.

The task of writing creative services has just begun. The proper form and framework for each service must be found, as well as a relevant and consistent theme. It is hoped that this attempt at creative holiday worship services will be the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in the development of Jewish liturgy.



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## INTRODUCTION

Time was when public worship held top billing in the "Events About Town" column. Long before the advent of theatre, motion pictures, and Ed Sullivan, a religious ceremony constituted an event of great excitement and import. And little wonder. The avid devotee of religion was served up an impressive bill of fare: pageantry, music, choral singing - a sacrificial meal from soup to nuts. Often he would travel for days, weeks, or even months, in order to attend the holiday festivities at the Temple in Jerusalem. Each worshiper felt personally involved in these annual festivities, for each man had a great deal at stake. Worshipping God involved making a personal sacrifice. This generally took the form of an animal of one kind or another, well cooked to the satisfaction of Deity, priesthood, and worshiper. In addition, the farmer contributed a tithe of his produce as a visible token of his commitment to the Deity and to the priestly cult.

We moderns, so terribly insurance conscious, have to tip our hats to these early ancestors of ours. Long before Blue Cross, or a cross of any color, for that matter, our forefathers were sold on the value of taking the appropriate life and property insurance with the Deity, Inc. For it was well known and acknowledged that fat sheep and festivities went a long way toward warding off Philistines and flies, and other dangerous enemies to life, limb, and prop-

erty. In those days, men and gods had business to transact and transact it they did with great pomp and fanfare.

With the demise of the Temple and the rise of the synagogue as the dominant religious institution, Jewish worship lost little appeal. To be sure, animal sacrifice had been a colorful and central part of holiday worship, not to mention the Levites and the Kohanim, who now found themselves out of vogue and unemployed. But in spite of those losses, synagogue worship developed and prospered. In going to the synagogue the Jew got both exercise and education, and inspiration. He gave his vocal chords a good workout, loudly intoning the prayers and humns in a sing-song rhythm, tinting the tones with whatever degree of exultation or sadness the particular time or moment had invested him with. In other words, he was able to get all the vinegar out of his system. Or, if it was honey, he could express all the sweetness and love that he felt in his heart, blessing God, man and even the Goyim.

This kind of vocal exercise - in which each man vied for God's attention by shouting just a little louder than his neighbor - had a cathartic effect on the worshiper. Whatever miseries beset him at the moment, he felt immeasurably better after getting it off his chest. When the Jew went to pray, he worked at it. He davened, swaying back and forth to the rhythm of the chanting, getting into the swing of things; cranking himself up, so to speak, before

his spiritual engine could turn over and start to really run. Then there were always trips up to the Ark and the Bemah; lifting the Torah, rolling it, dressing it, holding it, marching around the synagogue with it so that, as though it were a revered and sainted grandfather, each child might give him the homage of a reverential kiss. And when Simchas Torah rolled around, the action really began. Round and round the congregation would dance with the Torah, making the Hakafot, and having a grand time to boot.

The Jewish worshiper was appealed to on an intellectual level as well. There was always the reading of the weekly portion of Torah, often followed by a Drash or homiletical exposition of the portion read, relating the point of the Chumash to the life situation of the community and its individual members. As the liturgy developed, the worshiper was also educated by the repetition of prayers dealing with common historical origins, goals, values, all of which were under Divine guidance and scrutiny. The salvation of the group and the individual were at stake and were worked out with devotion, piety, and often fanaticism, within the confines of the worship service.

A lot of water and other fast-moving commodities have gone over the dam since then. First came the enlightenment and the emancipation of Jewry from the confines of its ghettos and its oh-so-ethnic ways. With the privilege of citizen-

ship in the secular state came the need for secular education and the value of getting ahead. More than anything else, the Jew wanted to be one of the boys, and whether the boys were Kosher or not made little difference to most. As circumstances shifted the major Jewish community to the United States and the quest for prosperity set the people's hearts on other than religious concerns, the old ways suffered a considerable setback. The slaughter of Europe's Jews by Hitler and the rising tide of scepticism and materialism have sealed the fate of the "old time Jew", wrapped in the extasy of tallis and tifillin. More recently, T.V., Cinerama, and Hootnanny have captured the fancy and attention of all our people. True, our services are more dignified, our Temples more magnificent (though often lacking in taste), and our pews padded with air-foam cushions. But all this grandeur, representing the accumulated wealth of an immigrant community, reflects a pale image in the mirror of Twentieth Century American society.

There was a time when churches and synagogues were great patrons of the arts, encouraging creative talent in music, art, liturgy and architecture. The arts were harnessed to beautify and deepen the significance and value of the religious setting and the religious service. Unfortunately most of our religious institutions and worship services go without the talents of the most gifted members of the community. Religion and creativity seem to be two con-

cepts in total contradiction to one another. Many Reform Jews are untouched by the services in the Union Prayer Book and demonstrate their unconcern by rarely showing up. When they do, they expect the same old familiar interaction between the untouching and the untouchable. Creativity and innovation are all right in the real world, but not in the synagogue.

We go to concerts and are thrilled by the beauty of music that expresses the multi-dimensional. We sit in rapt attention at the theatre as tears and laughter are alternately evoked from our inmost being. We are touched by the expression of human vice and folly in all of its stark reality. We weep over it or laugh at it. We ridicule and admire the worst and the best in our natures. We watch ourselves being exposed - all the greed, envy, hatred, and lust that is in the hearts of all of us. And we see that courage has not taken flight; that nobility and sublimity are still ours if we but make the attempt. We leave the theatre feeling clean and good and reborn and just a little more human for our experience.

We thrill to the beauty of an art exhibition or of a ballet; we clap our hands and join the latest folk singers singing songs of social concern, and of folk legend. But when we go to Temple, to a worship service, we feel little involvement or interaction with the service itself. Dumped into soft-cushioned seats that slide down so that



he's practically flat on his back before the Lord, and far removed from the "stage" where the on-going entertainment is often second-rate, the worshiper slouches sleepily through the service waiting for the sermon. Unless the rabbi is particularly gifted in oratory and well versed in nearly everything, his weekly offerings deal even more harshly with the already delicate digestion of the modern worshiper. The congregant then utters his first fervent prayer of the evening: "Let it end, dear God, schein genug, already. Amen." And yet, if the congregant is a parent, he will justify a repetition of this tiresome folly on the ground that it is good for the children.

To be sure, not all worship is meaningless, nor do all people remain untouched by many of the prayers and responsive readings. But in the main, for the majority of Reform Jews, going to Temple is last on their list of things to do. There are reasons why people are not getting excited about their spiritual life and the Temple which is said to specialize in such matters. I hardly think it fair to blame this lack of interest totally on vain strivings after mink coats and more finely tuned component parts. It is true that regular attendance at religious services demands a commitment and a resolve on the part of the congregant. It also involves a sacrifice of time, pleasure and profit. But most people make these kinds of sacrifices and



commitments every day of their lives for things they consider important. People seek out recreational and social experiences from which they derive great benefit in either pleasure or pain. At the Human Relations Laboratory held in Bethel, Maine, the summer of 1964 and run by National Training Laboratories, I saw men and women who rarely went out of their way to attend religious services, yet who were vitally concerned with the perplexing questions of the individual's relation and interaction with society, his identity, and the quest for an overall cosmic purpose-- areas well within the concern of any modern, progressive religion. Many of these highly intelligent, above average professional people had either been alienated by their religious training or were indifferent to it. To be honest, they had fled the institutionalized faith they knew to more promising areas of self help in secular fields. Religion and public worship were just so much humbug and phoniness from which one had to escape.

Making services more dignified has not really effected a change in this basic attitude. We are not dealing with straw men in three-button suits and country-club tans. We are dealing with highly educated, sensitive human beings whose demands on other men and institutions are tremendous. True, we have modernized. We have made adjustments. But they are mostly on the surface of things. We are cleaner, calmer, more decorous in our worship habits than any pre-

vious Jewish group. We have changed and shortened the format of our services, introduced the organ, and have added choirs of beautiful voices. To many the prayers we utter and the hymns we sing are so many anachronisms. They do not speak to the heart of the problems of the modern Jew in an affluent society. They still ramble on about crops and harvest and some vague platitudes about Israel's mission. But nothing about man's isolation in a world of increasing technology. Nothing about the problem of identity on an individual and a group level. And nothing specific of what our mission really consists of, or how to implement it - or if there is such a thing, after all.

Everything is so sweet and decorous that we sweep all the vice and folly and grandeur of our human existence under a rug and never dip into the well-springs of real feelings and emotions that charge the existence of every human being. Instead we tiptoe about on the surface, admitting that, of course we have faults and problems, but with God's help we shall overcome all and witness the ushering in of the Messianic Age. Little wonder that people stay away from public worship when this kind of insipid and shallow dialogue goes on week after week. To place all the blame on our people or the age in which we live is to beg the question. If our worship services meet few basic needs or, at least, not enough of them, what then must be our response? Cling in blind obstinacy to our Union Prayer Book,

Newly revised and initiate more bingo parties to compensate? Extravaganzas, Zionism, and antisemitism raise money and interest as long as they last, but in the final analysis the prime function of the Temple remains and must remain the spiritual elevation and enrichment of a community joined together for prayer, meditation and self scrutiny.

No one will deny that matters of the spirit are the concern of the Temple. To many people, however, the word "spiritual" has taken on a meaning of the flimsy and inconsequential; not a valid dimension of the real knockdown, dragout reality of a world in which we live. In short, the province of the Temple is the unreal and the irrational. As a result, it is not to be taken seriously as an institution fulfilling the vital demands of adults but must be supported for social reasons, reasons of survival and, of course, the children. If the continuing function and support of the synagogue depend on the sociological fad of the moment and nothing less capricious and time-bound as this, it does not deserve to survive. And our services, the utterance of our values and ideology are not now equal to the task of rejuvenation. Not only do they lack depth of content, but they lack that esthetic beauty, charm and drama that stirs the mind and prepares the human heart for dynamic soul-stirring and spiritual refreshment. They lack a clear-cut program of action, and a message for modern man. This should be the

"specialty of the HOUSE" and it is poor food indeed for those who seek nourishment at its gates.

This lack of appeal and vitality is particularly evident in our holiday liturgy. A holiday service distinguishes itself by the insertion of special prayers in the regular service, by a change in sermon topic and the exchange of flowers for fruit in altar decoration. The congregation reads of past glories in our history without ever feeling a powerful connection between the past, present and future. The holiday services have no beginning, no middle and no climax on which to end. They lack a unity of theme and vital message while asking the congregation to thank God for a harvest that has long since been gathered in. The choir sings for the worshipers, the Rabbi prays for them, preaches for them. The congregation remains from start to finish, dispassionate observers with no real function; no part to play in acting out a drama which is at best hinted at but never invoked.

Instead of maudlin sentimentality, let there be services of steel. Instead of evasion and the smoothing over of both the humor and the despair of human existence, let there be cries from concrete; from those who dwell between heaven and hell somewhere on the fourteenth floor of a skyscraper. Let the expression of a Pickwickian faith from the padded pew and the polished pulpit be replaced with the enactment of the human drama driving for divinity. Let no

bush burn for us, no sun stand still this side of darkness. But let there be an honest expression of our doubts and fears as well as the transcendency of our aspirations and dreams. Then and then only can a holiday don the cloak of distinction and meaning for our people. For only what the people live and experience, even vicariously, can possibly be of any lasting value to them. And it is precisely things of lasting value which the Temple services must offer its people...vital and significant religious experiences. Anything short of this would spell disaster and defeat - the maintenance of an institutional facade whose religious activities are mere puppetry and drab repetition.

The development of an imaginative and creative holiday liturgy is one way in which to begin the task of reinjecting sense and sensibility, reason and reality, strength and excitement into the veins and arteries of synagogue worship. To create for the changing needs and yearnings of the people is in the best tradition of reform. Therefore, in the finest tradition of Reform Judaism, with great respect for the tradition and what has gone before, and in answer to the needs of our age, it is the task of this project to attempt to spell out some of the possibilities, and to attempt their implementation in the fashioning of several creative holiday services for Reform adults.

Like the proverbial fledgling with salt on its tail and chagrin in its heart, creative services have been taken

with more than a few salty grains. As a rule, their longevity extends through one performance, with an encore in the back end of someone's filing cabinet, usually the author's. The remaining copies are left stranded on the pews by the congregation. The children, who generally display more imagination about such things in mimeo, convert the valiant efforts of would-be liturgical revolutionaries into paper airplanes. They are then left to the tender ministrations of the janitor who is the last one to see them and who disposes of them in short order.

This reaction to creative attempts at changing the liturgy stem from several important factors. In the first place there is very little creativity in the structure of the creative service. For the most part, the traditional pattern is followed, omitting something here or adding something there. But usually, there appears nothing very startling in the way of real innovation.

Heretofore, creative services have attempted innovation in exchanging one set of words for another; or more precisely, another man's version of the prayers in the Union Prayer Book. The result has been the exchange of one bouquet of flowers for another. To the average worshiper, who has little use for flowers, except on special occasions, a slight variation in scent or color doesn't seem to make a significant difference. Other services of the creative variety have utilized the traditional method of drawing material



from various Jewish sources. They may even include some quotations from non-Jewish sources, just to exhibit a lack of prejudice. This too often ends in just another man's concoction of anecdotes, prayers and parables. In the final analysis, it is of little consequence. To the worshiper subjected to the rigors of creative brainstormers, one anthology of moralisms is as good as the next. And at that point, the published prayerbook takes on new appeal and vigor when compared with upstart stapled sheets of mimeographed paper. As a result, creative services have been abandoned for the most part to the province of NFTY committees, or to youthful idealists cranking out new versions of the Ten Commandments in the ramshackle, mosquito-bitten offices of their summer camps!

Past liturgical attempts at reform and renovation have also failed to explore new means of carrying the service forward. We have that bad habit of dropping the needle onto the well worn grooves of responsive readings, readings in unison and solo readings. The methods of verbal diversity have not yet been fully explored. In most Reform congregations the services consist of the following components: the Rabbi (plus or minus a Cantor), the choir (mostly hired professionals) and the Congregation (largely uninvolved).

In constructing creative holiday services, one must consider and explore the possibility of the addition of new

elements to this familiar list. Ordinarily the dialogue which keeps the service moving is carried on between the Rabbi and the congregation. The uniqueness of this give and take situation wears a bit thin in a very short time. There should be other specialized groups to pick up the ball and run in forward. For example, a select group of male congregants seated somewhere in the congregation, speaking to a particular theme and responding in a particular way to the progression of the holiday drama. A group of female congregants to balance their male counterparts, with their own special intonations and attitudes to express as the service develops. There might be a children's group as well, assigned to a specific role in moving the entire congregation through the experience of the holiday service. These three groups, or however many of them one might choose to use in any given service, would then act as separate units with respectively distinct characters and at the same time, interact with the Rabbi and the congregation at large. Also, certain individuals with aggressive tendencies and given to extroversion might be assigned certain roles in the reliving of the religious drama. One such individual might be used to interrupt a particular sequence which was rapidly being overworked by suddenly entering the sanctuary with a startling announcement that throws a whole new perspective on the proceedings.



In a service, as in life, perception and reality coexist on a multi-dimensional level. Each new turn in the service should be an unfolding, a peeling away, if you will, of what was thought to be, for what now appears to be the case in contradistinction. The unfolding and development should continue until a climax is reached; until the theme of the service and the religious situation have been drilled to their bedrock and we are striking sparks.

In addition to the choruses and the individuals acting out their respective roles, a device well known to students of Greek, Roman, and Elizabethan drama could be employed. The voice of God, the deus ex machina so brilliantly used in the play J.B., by Archibald MacLeish. There are always a few people in the congregation who like to play God. Why not give them the chance. This aberration might as well be utilized for some constructive purpose. People do it all the time anyway, nearly always unconsciously. Let it be a conscious act. In the service one should make use of every asset and defect in the congregation towards the betterment of the worship experience. The service must actively involve the greatest number of people interacting with as diverse a verbalization as possible.

One of the problems in an average Reform service is that there is too little physical movement. Aside from

involving more members of the congregation in concrete participation during the course of the service, there is a need to provide the kind of introduction to the worship that will jolt the people out of their somnambulence, force them to shift gears and tune themselves in on a higher-than-everyday frequency. Such a device might be the congregation rising as a portable ark is carried into the synagogue by a special corps of congregational members; perhaps fathers or elders, preceded by a procession of congregants carrying as many Torah scrolls as the congregation has. While this processional is proceeding in its ascent to the platform or pedestal on which the ark is to be enthroned, the congregation should be standing and singing a hymn that is grand and brilliant in tone and style.

This pageantry could be expanded to include the furnishing of the sanctuary with all the important symbols. The Ten Commandments could be carried in; the American and Jewish flags and the Menoroth. In the working out of this ceremony, a group of confirmation students could lower and light the eternal light with oil and wick. Electric light bulbs and switches should never be used with ceremonial objects. The light of the Ner Tamid and the Menoroth should be candle flame, for the flickering flame is far more esthetic and fraught with meaning

than a misplaced Christmas bulb. A delegation of the Hadassah or women's club should follow with the Sabbath Licht and handmade cover on which to place them. More often than not, the Sabbath or Holiday candles end up on a makeshift table dragged in from somewhere in the back room and appearing somehow out of place, put in front of the Bemah. The ideal synagogue would have a special niche built into the decor of the sanctuary in which to place these candles. In performing the candle-lighting ceremony, the woman should ascend to the niche where the candles have been placed, cover her head with a white kerchief and recite the blessings while all the women in the congregation rise. At the completion of the lighting of the Menoroth, Ner Tamid and Sabat Licht, the congregation should rise and sing with the choir a song of pride and triumph, such as Mul Har Sinai (lo agada rai lo agada rai, v'lo chalom over).

After the song is over, the Rabbi should rise from a seat in the congregation, indicating that he is of the congregation, and is acknowledged as Rabbi by virtue of his years of education and study. The Rabbi should play the role of the educated layman, and not some kind of overfed prophet. He should be identified with the people, for surely his place is with the people, and his origin is of the people. As he rises, the electric lights should be slowly dimmed. He should proceed to a pulpit which is

not in front of the ark, but which is situated on some level below the ark or possibly in an area well removed from it. At this point the congregation should be in a totally different mood from the one with which they entered. Everyone should now be ready and receptive to begin the drama of the worship in earnest. Admittedly this ceremony has many aspects to it and it is possible that it might be more effective if it were spread out during the course of the entire service.

At this point we have a choir, a chorus or two and a congregation. Now let us take a look at another and very important component part, the instrumental section. One of the pride and joys of Reform apologetics is the fact that we brought the organ into the Temple. And indeed, organ accompaniment and organ solos add much to the beauty of the service. But what ever happened to the rest of those magnificent sounds and expressions by which human aspiration takes wing? If our Biblical ancestors were deficient in technology, they certainly had the edge on us in the realm of imagination. In their praise of the divine and in their sanctification of life they embraced depth and dimension of expression through the use of the lute, the lyre, timbrels, the Tof and the Challil. In order for a service to plumb the depths and scale the heights of aspiration an ensemble of instru-

mental voices is highly desirable. If man is to truly glorify God, then he must perforce employ every worthwhile means of expression at his command. And we have a whole orchestra of instruments to choose from, each one with its own unique character and tone; each one singly and in conjunction with its fellows, capable of creating moods and evoking feelings of a profound and soul-stirring nature.

For example, in a holiday Passover service, instrumental themes could add a new and meaningful dimension to the beauty and sensitivity of the service. There is the voice of the Pharaoh, the voice of oppression, slavery, and the utter contempt for the sanctity of human life. There are instruments whose character and tone express, more surely than entire verbal chapters, that which is ruthless, crass and pagan. There is the theme of the oppressed...the Israelite slaves, human machines, the robots of antiquity dedicating their lives to the building of greater and grander tombs for the dead.

Moses has his theme too. The man of uncertain origin, discovering that the Egyptian he appears to be is no more real than the Egyptian in all of us. There is a musical theme to express his search for identity and his amazement and fright when he discovers the god within him and without. There is the music of the plagues - eerie,

frightening, horrifying notes that strike terror into the hearts of those who allow themselves to be Egyptians, Helots and Philistines. And finally, there is the music of redemption; of triumph at the Red Sea when God is discovered in the human will and struggle for liberty. What grandeur such themes could add to a holiday service. What a distinct character the day and the event can assume in the hearts and minds of those who are swept along by its musical expression. The author of this thesis doesn't pretend to have the musical ability to develop such themes. Nevertheless, our deficiency in this area of worshipful expression needs to be pointed out with the hope that those who are musically gifted might focus their talents on this problem.

Another illustration of how the use of an instrumental ensemble in the worship service can heighten the religious experience can be seen in the holiday of Purim. The music of Persia; the abandon and swirl of the Mardi Gras; the voice of Esther, expressed perhaps through the Challil; the theme song of the headstrong and easily swayed king; and the music of Fascism - Haman's music; the tune that is brassy and arrogant and overpowering like the strains of Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles, the music of the Third Reich, the music that all the Hitlers and Hamans march to; the music with which they seek



to pied-piper an entire society to the perversion of tyranny and to the disregard of the individual's talents and opinions.

Numerous other illustrations might be given but the purpose at this point is merely to put across the general idea. For too long now musical talent has been fleeing the synagogue for secular areas which are more profitable, and more flexible. Too often we are left holding the bag in which cantorial operatics or a professional non-Jewish choir are called upon to do a job which is beyond the capacity and function of both. Professional choirs can be beautiful but too often they tend to intimidate the congregation who has neither the nerve nor gall to chime in.

The other alternative is a congregational choir of volunteers squeaking thinly through the musical responses of the service with all the bravado and assurance of a trapped mouse. Better no choir at all than alternatives such as these. Better that the congregation be given the responsibility and the function of singing its own music and participating in a total way, than continually being assaulted instead of inspired. There is much that is good and significant in Jewish music. There is also much that is shallow and trashy. And there is much that needs to be written if we are ever to raise the mus-

ical and overall esthetic standards of our holiday services. But the job of attracting talented people and encouraging them in this expressional adventure of the spirit sits squarely on the shoulders of the Temple. Let our religious institutions make it known that they are calling for a renaissance; that they are open and willing to give our people with musical talent and ability a chance to enrich their own lives and the spiritual life of their people as well. Let us make it abundantly clear that the static and the stuffy is none of ours; and that the search for purpose and meaning in life requires all talent and all forms of expression.

Creative services demand new and imaginative musical interpretation to elevate the worship and the worshipping, storm the walls of their ramparts and conquer them, heart and soul. Without the revitalization and imaginative use of the musical factor, creative services will only soar as high as the nearest curbstone. It is the job of a religious leader interested in creative worship to indicate the kind of mood or feeling he wants the music to express, and then seek out those who are qualified and motivated to attempt their creation. As soon as people see that they have an important place and function in the working out of the religious services affecting the spiritual lives of all the community, there will be no



lack of interest in the service and worship. One of the greatest factors in the present lack of interest is that the services are not of the people. They are for the people. And here lies a significant distinction. No one can do for the people what they can do for themselves. No one can mobilize the interest and concern of the people without actively involving them as totally as possible.

Nothing interests a man as much as a reflection of his own self image and effort. Look at the attendance at Temple when there is a Bar-Mitzvah or a Confirmation and ask yourself why the sudden interest. Of course there are many factors involved. But the major factor as far as this project is concerned is the involvement and self interest of people. If Suzy holds the Kiddush cup on a Friday night the whole family is there to cheer her on. Suddenly the service takes on new meaning. There is a Simcha, an occasion for joy and Naches. And this holds true for all the Bar-Mitzvahs, funerals, weddings, and brotherhood services. The people like to see themselves up there on the stage. They want to feel a part of what is going on. And they must believe they have a stake in what is happening for them to take any note of it. The time has come for an end of bitter recriminations and empty pews. The time has come when we need not make do with, and muddle through with grandfather's prayer book newly

revised. We live in an age of new demands and the same old questions. Have we the flexibility to meet these demands and deal honestly and loftily with these questions?

Some time ago, on a Sunday morning television program sponsored by a national church organization, the problem of man's estrangement from God was dealt with in a most beautiful and unusual way. A New York dance group presented their choreographical representation of Friedrich Nietzsche's Death of God. This performance, interspersed with comments from a narrator, was highly effective in driving home the human emotions and feelings of oblivion, hollowness, shock and loneliness. There is no question but that creative choreography has a place in the holiday worship service and in the edification of worship in general. Dancing is one of the oldest forms of human expression. We tend to associate dancing with a strictly social situation. But long before Guy Lombardo and Glen Miller, men were using the dance in their religious ceremonies. Did not David dance before the Ark when it was brought into Jerusalem? Of course, there were people who didn't approve even then; namely, David's wife, Michael. But she was a bit of a royal prig, in any case, and her notions of what was proper and judicious were ineffectual in inhibiting David's joy and exultation as he danced before the Lord.

One doesn't have to be a king to be allowed the privilege of expressing religious feeling in dance. One could be the poorest, meanest schlepper on the block, a scheiderel or even a Bala-Gula. But if one belongs to the Chassidic movement, poor as he is he can dance for joy with his Rebbe and his fellow Chassids at the frabreng-en. Sometimes the highest kind of religious feeling can not be expressed verbally, but rather finds its medium in the steps and movements of the dance. We are not suggesting here that we hold rock-and-roll parties in the sanctuaries of our Temples and Synagogues. But we are suggesting that choreographic expression has a rightful and proper place within the creative holiday service. Physical movement, costumes, colors and lighting all have a place in creating or building moods and feelings in a religious service. To those who take religion in its broadest terms, the expression of man's deepest needs and aspirations through artistic media is truly a religious act. If the creative expression of the concert halls and theatres could be subordinated within a religious framework it would, in effect, be harnessing all of man's creative ability in the quest for cosmic purpose and significance.

A service must delight the eye as well as exercise the mouth. It must make an appeal to every sensible quality available to the human organism. The Midrash takes

great care to emphasize the fact that when Israel received the Revelation and the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, it was in the full light of day; there were no mysteries about it. In a world where mystery and superstition abounded, this was a good and proper point to make. But the world has changed just a little since Israel chose the side of light. The electric lightbulb is a good example of one of these changes and while a well-lit room is advantageous for turning night into day or reading late into the night, something is lost rather than gained in a brilliantly lighted sanctuary. In a world where street lamps on every corner are taken for granted and a great deal more besides, mystery is becoming a scarce commodity. With the rise and dominance of science and the rational schools of thought, all darkness and superstition are being lit out of existence, even the darkness that is beauty and fear and from which we can learn so much. The time has come to dim the lights just a little. To remind people that after all we are still in the dark about a lot of things; that we must face the darkness as well as the light; and if we are afraid, then we must learn to face our fears and the darkness within each and every one of us.

In a dimly lighted sanctuary, when the hard lines of labor and striving are softened in a cosmetic dusky powder; when a man is less conscious of his neighbors

and even of himself, then he begins to open up. Then he becomes receptive to the what of things out there. He feels his humanity, his smallness in a world of dark and shadows. And he prays. After all, even clams open up once in a while and while we cannot force pearls out of swine, it is the job of the worship service to provide the atmosphere and the motivation in which a man can emerge ever so slightly from the barnacle-encrusted shell which is his prison and his home. The words of the plasmist speak of fear of the Lord, terror and awe. The trouble with our services is that we do not get this awesome feeling across. The world and all life that inhabits it is shot through with terror and wonder and greed. One of the problems of modern man is that he has so barricaded himself against hurt and harm, he has unwittingly become insensitive to all the wonder, sorrow and pain which is born in the suffering of all living things. Psychiatrists are fine if they are needed. But there are many people who can and want to help themselves become more whole again; become more fully human, which is to approach the divine. Our religious institutions and their worship services have a valuable contribution to make in this area.

In fact, it is in making this contribution that these institutions justify their existence and prove themselves fit vehicles of man's loftiest expressions. We are not

suggesting that lighting and the use of colored spotlights in particular sequences and situations are the whole service or even a large part of it. But they are part of an atmosphere and a mood which can help to create those conditions under which a worshiper can loosen the mask that wears him; can free himself from himself and the chains of his own forging; can achieve a state of quiet and serenity which calls for the quality of detachment and the out-of-self feeling. Then and only then will he truly hear the meditations of his heart as well as the words of his mouth. Then and only then can he appreciate the fallibility and frailty of his existence and empathize with every living being, finding himself in the same human condition. Human sympathy and compassion have never come easily to man. Yet these feelings are natural and do exist as surely as the existence of anything at all can be assented to. Our task is to tap the wellsprings of these feelings so that they might be given expression and transform the lives of those bodies through which they course.

There is yet another medium of communication which we have just begun to explore - the medium of silence. For many congregants, one of the most meaningful moments in the Friday night service is the silent meditation; moments when each man can search his heart and voice his silent prayers for friends, family, and personal good for-



tune. But silence can speak in many ways and say many things as well or better than voiced words or music. Silence can express discomfort and uneasiness. It can express unbounded joy and exultation. It can express the depths of despair and sorrow. And if given the chance, it can express the peace and serenity for which we all strive.

Our strivings are often to little purpose, resulting in the opposite qualities from those for which we seek. We try so hard to be happy, or to feel at peace, that we are continually at war with ourselves and the world. If we could only be quiet long enough; if we could have the patience to sit and listen to beating and pounding of our bodies, and by an act of will, still and calm the perturbations of our physical organisms, then we might experience the understanding for which we seek so desperately. As the worship service develops, periods of silence can heighten and intensify moods and thoughts more surely and with louder voice than an additional dose of verbiage. There is a time to talk and a time to be talked to; a time to be loud and a time to be quiet. And there should be time for all of these times in the creative holiday worship service.

Appeal to all the senses of the human organism and they in turn shall relay the message to the appropriate

control centers. A response of one kind or another is certain. Whether or not it will be favorable will depend upon the quality and the delicacy of the appeal made. But one thing is certain. There will be a response. It may be violently unfavorable. It may be an expression of outrage and indignation at what the congregant feels to be a violation of what he understands a worship service to be. But under no circumstances will an apathetic response be evoked as a result of the suggestions mentioned above. A service or a series of services bearing the characteristics suggested in this preface may evoke a chorus of resignations. It may also evoke some real commitments to a spiritual adventure upon which we wish to embark. Keeping this in mind, and fully cognizant of the controversial nature of what we are suggesting here, let us pause a moment to discuss an appeal to another of the senses, thus far ignored: the sense of smell, and taste.

It is abundantly clear that when celebrating a harvest festival like the Feast of Booths, one must attempt to communicate the sense of Sukkos. What is less clear and totally ignored is that we also have the obligation of communicating the scent of Sukkos. Write novels on the virtues of a lemon. Publish encyclopedias on the flavor and tang of citrus fruit and its health-giving qualities. Dangle a banana in front of the congregant's nose. All to no



avail unless the congregant can get a taste of what you're talking about. What a difference. With the first bite the eyes light up in recognition and understanding. So that's what he's talking about. Why didn't he say so? There is no substitute for actual experience. A bit of one apple is worth a thousand words of description.

Thus, during a Sukkos service, the smell of the fruit and of the fields should permeate the sanctuary, entering the mouths and noses of the congregants until they can taste the things they are talking about. Ideally speaking the Sukkos service should be held outdoors, under a sukkah. For holiday services with which various kinds of foods are associated, the congregation should be admonished to eat very lightly before coming to Temple. Let them come with their bellies half empty and their taste buds reasonably alive. A full stomach and a sated appetite make for drowsy worshipers, a longing for the soft chair, the T.V., and the overpowering feeling that one wants to be left alone. Taking these factors into account, on a strictly physical basis, one can see that little can enter a non-vacuous area. Or to state it more precisely, the more stuffed and bloated the human organism becomes, the less willing and able it is to respond in any significant and meaningful way to matters of mental or spiritual concern.

Let the smell and taste sensations, then, be the bridge between the service proper and the Oneg to follow. The Oneg should become more fully a part of the entire religious experience and its link with the service in the sanctuary should be unmistakable. When weather conditions allow, a Sukkos service should be held out on the lawn under a bower of harvest fruits, the sky its ceiling and the ground its floor. Let us not extoll the virtues of the great outdoors while we huddle in the stuffiness of our structure of concrete and glass. Let us be outdoors whenever possible on such appropriate occasions, so that in speaking of God's bounty and the wonders of nature we might feel physically closer to it. Let us make the attempt at last to bring worship to reality; that by the physical structuring and location of the service, it may, in fact, be real and invigorating.

When the ceremonial part of the service is over, let a holiday repast be served, made by the people for the people, so that the taste of the holiday may reinforce its significance and linger in their mouths long after the evening's festivities are done. The appeal to the senses of smell and taste can be artfully used to emphasize and communicate particular situations and ideas which the service is attempting to get across. For example, during a Purim service, the smell of the harem and the smells of

the carnival motif can be usefully employed; let the congregation experience the perfume of Esther and the popcorn, hamantaschen smell of Shushan Haberah. Let the smell of Hanukah latkes permeate the sanctuary at the climax of the holiday service. The appeal to the sense of taste and smell is just another appeal to the responsiveness of the worshiper and if employed with sense and "good taste", can add its share to the overall success of creative worship.

It is now in order to discuss briefly the language of the service. One of the elements that characterize a Jewish service is the use of the Hebrew language. The Biblical Hebrew which the prayer book draws upon is some of the finest language written anywhere, and at any time. It is an idiom which has clarity, simplicity and beauty, thus constituting an essential element in the Jewish worship service. Unfortunately, one must be less enthusiastic about the English translations of these exalted passages. There are English prayers in the Union Prayer Book which are both simple and beautiful. But too much of the prayer-book English is preachy and flowery. It tends to be maudlin, sentimental and flat, devoid of any fire or spark. Most of us have been brainwashed by Sunday school teachers and force of habit, into thinking that the language of prayer must be liberally sprinkled with thithers

and thous, that the more Middle English with which we season our prayers, the more noble and exalted they become. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As the Revised Standard Version and new Jewish Publication Society translations of the Bible have indicated, people are fed up with using someone else's language to express their profoundest and inmost thoughts and aspirations. Neither Saul, David, nor Solomon "thee'd" or "thou'd" his way though history and there is no good reason why we should feel compelled to. King James may have been an expert in autocracy but he was not much of a theologian. Whether his English was considered good or adequate according to the standard of his day is little concern of ours and very much beside the point. What is to the point is that it is not good or adequate according to the language standards of our day.

The most exalted kind of speech is the simplest, and the simplest kind of language for Twentieth Century Americans is colloquial American usage. It is the language of a Hemingway, a Faulkner, or a Frost. Could we achieve a language as lucid and as exalted as theirs, we would be doing well indeed. As long as there is no specific Jewish way of constructing good literature, (and by no stretch of the imagination would King James qualify for those who would have Jews inventing everything), let us strive to emulate the best in contemporary English and American language style

in our creative services. The age of the Baroque and the Victorian are no longer with us. So let us not have any ghostly verbiage haunting our worship service.

Language is a great camouflage. It can be seductive and coy as well as clear and unmistakable. Too often it winds up in the former category. The wording of many of many of our prayers tends to throw dust in the eyes of the congregation, hinting at meanings that may or may not be there. These prayers are scrupulously careful not to be so specific as to commit themselves to one distinct notion or another. Keep the prayers vague enough, so the theory goes, and you will always leave yourselves an out. This "play-it-safe" kind of preaching may be politic and expedient, but in the final analysis it tends to undermine the integrity of the service and the worshipers. Little wonder that many are weary of the wishy-washy insipid language of the prayer book - whose pretense at piety is thin veneer indeed. It is language which does not speak to the people. It puts roses in our teeth instead of some real meat on which to chew. Let us leave the deception of language and its manipulation to the politicians in election years. The language and concepts of our prayers must be spelled out in clear and unmistakable details. It must express our fears and doubts as well as our hopes and dreams. It must employ satire and dialogue, ask questions and even offer

sarcasm at times.

Above all, the language of our prayers must not be so awfully flat and humorless. Pretended piety always wears a dour expression, and is a sure indication that the mask is only paper-thin. Being human, we have a terrible time being honest with ourselves. A man may kid himself in his business dealings with others. He may fool himself about his wife and children, and his own honest opinion of himself. But when he comes to a religious service expecting a modicum of frankness and finds only more of the same humbug that exists everywhere else, it is little wonder that he feels he is wasting his time.

According to some opinions, religious services are on the horns of a dilemma. Either they can be frank and honest in their expression, or they can be transcendent, but never both at the same time. Nothing could be in greater error. Transcendancy is an end result of climbing and toiling up the slopes of the spirit. One achieves transcendancy when one has something to transcend. The trouble is that too many want to be dropped on the peaks of spirituality by helicopter. They are too lazy to climb and struggle their way to the top by their own honest labor and difficulty. But it is precisely in overcoming doubt and difficulty that one can transcend at all.

In a creative worship service the worshiper must be



motivated to climb, to want to struggle in a frank and honest way without any guarantees of salvation or heaven or pie-in-the-sky; only the honest assurance that, fail or succeed, he will become a finer human being for having made the attempt. The language and sentiment of the service should be at least as honest as some of our franker sermons. It would also make for a little more congruity. As it stands now, we pray through a service of absolute truths and irrefutable doctrines only to bloody our heads against the sermon in which a worried Rabbi expresses some of his doubts. We must seek to draw the connection between all the aspects of our service. We are too prone to be like the man who went to church on Sunday and committed rape on Monday. If there is an essential unity and connection to all things in this universe of ours, then the sooner we make the attempt to spell out some of the unities, the firmer the leg we will have to stand on. We must be exalted but we must be honest. Our services should be the best expression of our own age and the best of what our tradition has expressed. The Book of Job may have been doctored up, but they did not leave it out of the canon because the poor fellow had the colossal nerve to express a little pain and indignation over his boils. If the answers given in Job are not quite as convincing as the questions the book suffers no loss in grandeur or exultation. We must



stop behaving like Nineteenth Century English clerics, zealous to please the rich and protect the interests of the privileged, whatever their class, and start acting like Jews once again --- let us resume our religious adventure.

This project does not pretend to be a final product or provide final solutions. Our liturgical problems are too deep and too complicated for any such pretensions or assertions. This represents an attempt to formulate some guidelines along which creative holiday worship might develop. In the creative services offered here as examples, some of these guidelines are incorporated; others are not. To fully implement all the facets that go into the creation of new holiday worship services, a variety of talents and skills are called for - talents and skills which are far beyond the reach of this thesis. Nevertheless, this writer felt that an attempt had to be made. It is hoped that this will be the genesis of greater and grander things to come.

A HANUKAH SERVICE

## An Introduction

The central theme of any Hanukah service is rededication. This service is no exception. What makes this service different from all other Hanukah services in the synagogue is that the congregant is actually taken through a rededication process. The service begins with an empty sanctuary. It is soon made very clear that the human element that enters the sanctuary for the service is a spiritually stripped as the physical surroundings. The service is carried forward by the introduction and incorporation of the physical symbols which decorate the sanctuary. Simultaneously, the spiritual re-clothing of the congregants is carried forward as a parallel process. Thus, each and every worshiper is carried through a process of physical and psychological rededication.

The essential meaning of the English term "service", is often lost in the rush to complete the sentence or thought. But the Hebrew word for service is less susceptible to misunderstanding; avodah means "work", and any service to any master involves a physical exertion. If the master one is serving, or working for, happens to be the Rebono Shel Olam - the Master of the Universe - then a spiritual labor is demanded.

The labor or task, is to experience or apprehend and address a consciousness that is distinctly other than "self". This means that the aspect of self which inhibits and shies away from this task, must be overcome. It is apparent that

there is a distinct tension within human beings vis-a-vis divine worship. One part of man naturally yearns to the transcendent - the supra-human. This yearning is intuitive by description; its expression is the feelings and the emotions which come from the viscera and the kidneys (Kilayot) as opposed to the mind or the rational faculties. This aspect of the human nature is characterized by immediate response and un-thought reaction. It is the impulse that reacts to any given phenomenon, before the mind can be brought in to mull it over and examine it.

The other aspect of human nature is skeptical by training. It receives the immediate experiences of the perceptive faculties and examines them, measuring them against the yardsticks of logic, consistency, and reasonableness. The mind measures all the data received and judges their validity by determining cause, effect, and the resulting predictability of any given phenomenon. It is empirical by description and rational in expression. It is not feeling, or impulsive. It is not the action of immediate response. It is the thinking, the testing, the objective consideration of given data. The rational faculty does not first ask "how" in the matter of divine worship. It asks "why." Only on the basis of the provability of the hypothesis that there is a God which one can communicate with, will it ever deal with the problem of "how" one is to worship God.

Thus, it is clear that any person coming to a worship

situation is an entity fraught with tension and conflict. Too often the worship service forces the person turned congregant to bury those conflicting elements which war within him. Instead of capitalizing on these deep-seated and basic antagonisms in the human psyche and channelling their force into a positive mode of expression, the service forces the individual to forget them, to choke them down, and it is a bitter pill that the individual is forced to swallow. It keeps repeating on him throughout the service, giving his mind no peace for clarity, nor his emotions true freedom for expression. The result is that the service takes on an air of unreality and unreasonableness. It begins, operates and ends in across-the-board affirmation. Although there are prayers of thanksgiving, praise, petition and meditation, the basic tone of the service remains flaccid and sirupy. And that is basically why the best of the services in the Union Prayer Book fail as worship experiences. They are not flesh and blood. They ignore all the problems and plaster them over, hoping that the cracks will not show through. In the areas of theme and unity of structure it is the rare service that makes a specific point and carries it through to a climax and a conclusion.

If there is tension and conflict within the individual worshiper, then it must be overcome and transcended. If there is nothing to transcend, or if the obstacles are ignored, the service can build little momentum with which to

gather steam and intensity. For the reluctant worshiper, a religious service must be a journey. It must lead him on a journey into himself, his people, and his world. During the early stages of this exploration he will have to overcome his repressed self, his inhibitions. He will have to pass through humor, sarcasm, confusions of language, and purpose. His ambivalence to worship, his mistrust of religion and his skepticism concerning the "goodness of things" must be dredged up and examined in the context of the worship experience. All these human variables must be taken into account and acknowledged. Then and only then is transcendence a possibility. Only then can the labor of worship bear fruit; only then can the average worshiper become involved in the process and have a truly "religious" experience. But even more important than the success of the transcendent moment is the realization on the part of the worshiper that prayer and the search for communication with God are not comfortable or easy tasks, nor are they routine or matter-of-fact. The reach, and the hesitation, with regard to the divine, is a human drama which must be incorporated into the process of any service if it is to do its job and function.

One of the devices of this particular service is the element of shock and surprise. It functions to jolt the sleepy congregant out of his "ho-hum" state of mind and quickly involve him on an emotional as well as verbal level.



To keep the element of surprise intact, the congregation will have only the Union Prayer Book. The full script with the dialogues leading to actual prayer and service will be available only to the Rabbi, Readers I and II, the Choir and the Instrumental group. These elements serve as the motor for the vehicle of the service, and carry the process forward. They will have to rehearse their lines and familiarize themselves with the cues. But even here the service should be rehearsed in disconnected sections, so that familiarity will be achieved, but not the experience of the total effect of the service in its proper order.

It must be further noted that this service is not meant to be given each and every year in the same Temple. It should not be done frequently in any one place, but should be done in every Temple at least once. In this way, it is hoped that the imprint made by the drama of this religious service can transfer itself to the regular Hanukah worship. The insights and dramatic effect achieved through the experiencing of this experimental service can have a significant effect on the workability of the regular service during successive years. For the worshiper will have a greater awareness to bring to the Hanukah experience after having participated in this service. In a very real sense, this experimental service is a pioneer - a frontier figure pointing the way towards a new conception of religious worship.

### A Note About Performance of the Service

In our regular services, much of the effect is lost because they are poorly executed. This Hanukah service demands rehearsal on the part of those people who are involved in its dramatic elements. In order for any service to succeed, rehearsal and co-ordination are essential. This is doubly true for an experimental service of this nature. However, aside from the Rabbi, Readers I and II, and the Choir which is composed of groups I and II, the congregation will be responsible for passages in the regular prayer book. In this way, the dramatic elements leading up to the prayers of the regular service will function as an element of surprise and will involve the congregation in an emotional participation. Thus, when the congregants come to the familiar prayers of the regular service, they will bring to the prayers a heightened awareness of their import, and essential meaning. It is hoped that this involvement will be achieved by juxtaposing the drama of the human conflict and the drama of the fixed liturgy.

(The sanctuary is bare, stripped of all religious symbols, flags, ornaments, etc. It is empty, inanimated, and dimly lit. It projects an air of desolation and abandonment.) A place of worship that suffers disuse is ravaged without the human element. Without man, a sanctuary is a ruin, a Jerusalem ploughed under, belonging to neither God nor man. But as any no-man's-land on the borders of the earth, it bears an expectation of redemption...rededication at the hand of man. (Then a man appears. He is wrapped in a Tallis, his head covered with a Yarmulke. He ascends the Bemah and takes his position at a reading stand to the left of the main pulpit. He is Reader I. A group of instrumentalists straggle into the sanctuary, taking their places at the foot of the Bemah, somewhat to one side of center. There is a Tof, a Chalil, a Tambourine, and some kind of stringed instrument. The Reader opens a Bible to Psalm 118:19 and calls out in a sing-song chant:)

Peat-chu li sha-a-ray tzedek, a-vo vum

o-de-ya;

Open the gates of righteousness for me.

I shall enter them and give thanks to God.

(He is accompanied by the instrumental group. The doors of the sanctuary swing open as he chants, and the congregation enters two abreast and silent. They file quietly into their

respective seats on either side of the aisle. A smaller segment of the congregation forms verbal choruses, in which capacity they will function during the service. Each group has one or more designated leaders who will be thoroughly familiar with the cues and will set the example for their respective groups throughout the service. The Reader concludes his chanting and the congregation begins reading Psalm 118:19-27 responsively, with Group I leading off. The instrumental group continues to provide a musical background until the responsive reading is concluded.)

Open to me the gates of righteousness;  
I will enter into them, I will give thanks  
unto the Lord.  
This is the gate of the Lord;  
The righteous shall enter into it.  
I will give thanks unto Thee, for  
Thou hast answered me,  
And art become my salvation.  
The stone which the builders rejected  
Is become the chief corner-stone.  
This is the Lord's doing;  
It is marvellous in our eyes.  
This is the day which the Lord hath made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, save now!  
We beseech Thee, O Lord, make us now  
to prosper!  
Blessed be he that cometh in the name  
of the Lord;  
We bless you out of the house of the  
Lord.  
The Lord is God, and hath given us  
light;  
Order the festival procession with boughs,  
even unto the horns of the altar.

(Reader II arises from the congregation and makes his way to the Bemah. He takes his position at a lectern to the right of the main pulpit. He is dressed in contemporary clothes of the latest fashion. He is smooth looking, and in contrast to Reader I, not at all to be taken for a Jew. He gives the appearance of the typically successful professional "man-about-town.")

Reader II: As a member of the Board of Trustees,  
it is my pleasure to announce a most unusual  
service this evening. At the suggestion of  
the Rabbi and with the approval of the Board,  
we are going to conduct an experimental Han-  
ukah service; that is, we are about to experience

the central Hanukah theme..rededication. As we work this service through, we will not only re-dedicate the sanctuary, but rededicate ourselves with respect to Almighty God. As a member of the legal profession, I was chosen for the role of antagonist; the prosecutor as it were, the anti-thesis of our theme of rededication. As a loyal Jew, I accept no responsibility for the views I state during this service. I will not necessarily be expressing my own views, but rather the perspectives which the script has ordained for me.

Group I: Let's begin the service.

Group II: Yes. Yes. Enough explanation. Let's get started.

Reader I: We have begun, haven't we?

Reader II: Very well. (He clears his throat) If it please the court, er, the congregation, rather, I must begin by stating some of my reservations about the way this service began this evening. The prosecutor is never the executor. Nevertheless, we are striving to be particularly creative and truthful this evening. That is at the heart of this experimental service...the truth. Therefore, I must object to several statements made in the opening prayer; statements that are totally unsubstantiated. What proof, I ask you, what evidence can



you show that this is in fact the "House of the Lord?" The truth is, that this sentiment is not only unsubstantiated...it is wishful thinking... pure hearsay.

Group I: (in rhythmic chant) Here-say, here-say. Say what you like in here-say. What does it matter what you say? Anything goes in here-say.

Group II: (the same rhythmic chant) Heresy, Heresy. Heresy even in here-say. Say what you mean. Say what you mean. Say what you mean in here-say...

Reader I: Chilul Ha-shem, Chilul Ha-shem. That's what it sounds like to me...say...

Reader II: (pointing to the Psalm) Here! You glibly say that the "Lord is God." A nice tautology. But where is your evidence? And what kind of evidence do you have that would allow you to make that statement?

Group I: (in rhythm) Cir-cum-stan-tial e-vi-dence. That's what it is in here-say. While we're in here, say 'the Lord is God!' It's so, 'cause it's in the script, say...

Group II: (in rhythm) Per-ju-ry, per-ju-ry. Script or

no, we're under oath. Where-ever we are,  
what-ever we say...

Reader I: Rachem al amcho Yisroel. The auction's begun.  
We're up for sale. Without any thunder, or  
lightning, or hail. Rachem al amcho Yisroel.

Reader II: (imperiously) And where is the light that  
"the Lord has given us?" If we have gone so  
far as to be creative, we might as well be  
honest. The fact is, the light is so bad in  
here...I'm having difficulty reading my script.

(He adjusts his horn-rimmed glasses with annoyance as  
if searching for a lost line. He begins again in a stentor-  
ious and oratorical tone:)

You have begun a service and "ordered a festival  
procession." But frankly, I see little purpose  
in coming here to do it. We could have rented  
a hall somewhere. (slyly) Is this indeed the  
"house of the Lord?" Isn't all the world God's  
house?

Group I: (with mock piety) "All the world shall come to  
serve thee and praise...(the music ends abruptly)

Group II: Why are we haggling over evidence? Is this a  
test-tube or a Temple? What do you want? Verifi-  
cation on litmus paper?

Reader I: Chas V'chalila! (God forbid.)

Reader II: If this is the Lord's House, and there are those who still persist in thinking so, (he glances haughtily at Reader I) then where are the symbols? And where is the Rabbi?

Group I: The symbols! The symbols! Where are the symbols?

Group II: Never mind the symbols...where is the Rabbi?

Group I: Yes, where is the Rabbi?

Reader I: (in an unnaturally loud voice) He's the biggest symbol of all. (his voice softens) You should pardon me for interrupting.

Group I: Such a Rabbi! He lives in a Jewish Wonderland... never on time for tea...a real Mad Hatter...

Reader I: (sarcastically) Without the hat...

(At that moment the doors open once again and the Rabbi enters. He is wearing a white robe with a large blue star of David sewn between his shoulderblades. In place of a Tallis he wears an ermine stole around the collar of his robe. He gives the appearance of a cross between a college football fan and the Holy Father in Rome. His head is bare and he carries a large edition of the Union Prayer Book. The Rabbi

ascends the Bimah and takes his place between Readers I and II, who flank him on either side like two horns of a dilemma. He majestically opens his Union Prayer Book and begins...)

Rabbi: We will begin our Hanukah Service this evening on page 85 of our prayer books.

(He announces this fact with great feeling, his voice laden with strained emotion as if he had proclaimed a profundity that had emotionally shattered everyone about him, including himself. Looking about the sanctuary, he notices for the first time that it is devoid of symbols and very poorly lit.

Rabbi: Before we begin reading our services, I must say that it strikes me as rather unusual... (He clears his throat) it seems that...that the room is... is stripped.

Reader I: (in a loud whisper) The experiment. Have you forgotten?

Rabbi: (not seeming to hear) It's stripped bare! Why, the Menoroth, they're gone. The Star of David, the Torah...they've disappeared.

Group I: (anxiously) Our beautiful Star of David. Where has it gone?

Reader I: (sardonically) To work for the wine companies,  
no doubt.

Rabbi: And the Ten Commandments? Where have they  
gone? Would someone please go out and find them  
for us? (he pauses, perplexed) Most irregular,  
I must say. How can we put on, er, conduct a  
service without the commandments? They are like...  
~~like~~ our credentials.

Group I: (in rhythm, to tune of "The Blue Tail Fly":)  
Where have both the tablets gone? Gone, gone,  
tablets gone?  
Where have both the tablets gone? The prophet's  
gone away.  
Tablets are gone, now do I care?  
Tablets are gone, now do I care? (instrumental  
accompaniment)  
Tablets are gone, now do I care?  
The Master He's gone too.  
The Master He's gone too...(last line sung with  
less zest and more sadness)

Group II: The services haven't even begun yet, and already  
we've lost our credential.

Reader I: (half to himself and half aloud) Lo Kam b'Yisroel,  
K'mosheh od, navee u'mabeet et te-munato...

(During this exchange several children run out of the

sanctuary to search for the missing commandments)

Rabbi: This is highly irregular. On the very night of our Hanukah service, to come here and find the place ransacked. As if like thieves in the night, they came and caught us napping. Did anyone see the Night Watchman? At least he should have been awake. That's his job.

Group I: (hysterically) Fire the Night Watchman. If we've been robbed, it's all his fault.

Group II: (responding with a verbal ditty) (to the tune of "Merrily We Roll Along":) The Temple Watchman was fast asleep, fast asleep, fast asleep. The Temple Watchman was fast asleep. Sleeping on the job.

Reader I: (begins chanting to the music of "Shomer Yisroel.")

Reader II: Don't get so excited! Just like a bunch of Jews. The insurance will take care of it. Now, can we get on with this service? (in exasperation)  
At this rate, we'll be here all night.

(As if on cue, the Rabbi begins reading on page 85 of the Union Prayer Book, in a matter-of-fact, job-to-be-done tone of voice:)



Rabbi: I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast raised me up, and hast not suffered mine enemies to rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou didst heal me; sing praise unto the Lord, O ye His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. Now I had said in my security: I shall never be moved. Thou hadst established, O Lord, in Thy favor my mountain as a stronghold --Thou didst hide Thy face; I was affrighted. Unto Thee, O Lord, did I call, and unto the Lord I made supplication: Shall the dust praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth? (Here he pauses, reflects for a moment, then repeats the lines with greater and more genuine feeling. Something hard and artificial is going out of his voice.) --Shall the dust praise Thee Shall it declare Thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and be gracious unto me; Lord, be Thou my helper. Thou didst turn for me my mourning into dancing; Thou didst loose my sackcloth, and gird me with gladness; so that my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent; O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.<sup>1</sup>

(The choir hums in the background.)

Reader I: (Begins to chant softly, "Ani Ma-amin." Through the doors of the synagogue come two groups of congregants bearing two large menoroth. As the Reader chants, these menoroth proceed to opposite ends of the Bimah and are placed on the empty platform. They remain unlit.

Ani ma-amin, ani ma-amin, ani --- ma-amin.

Be-e-mu-na sh'ley-ma

B'vi-at ha-ma-shi-ach

Ani ma-amin, ani ma-amin.

Ani ma-amin, ani ma-amin

V'af al pi she-yit-ma-mey-a

Im-kol-ze-ani ma-amin.

V'af al pi she-yit-ma-mey-a

Im-kol-ze-ani ma-amin.<sup>2</sup>

Group I: Shall the dust praise Thee?

Group II: Shall it declare Thy truth?

Reader I: (Sings to the music of "V'kol ha-chayim yodukah, V'halaylu et she-emcha b'emet." He continues to chant in a soft tone during the next speech.)

Reader II: Well, wouldn't you know it. Just like a bunch of Jews. Put them in a million-dollar building and they foul it up in no-time flat. Why aren't the lamps plugged in? Where are the lightbulbs?

Group I: Where have all the light bulbs gone, gone, gone,  
gone, gone...

Where have all the light bulbs gone?

The dark is hurting our eyes...

Reader II: What is wrong with the electricity? If the  
utilities in this city can't be counted on to  
function properly, how can we expect to...

Rabbi: (Begins to pray:)

Light is the symbol of the divine. The Lord  
is my light and my salvation. Light is the sym-  
bol of the divine in man. The spirit of man is  
the light of the Lord.

Group I: There he goes again. As if praying will bring  
the electrician.

Rabbi: (struggling on) Light is the symbol of the  
divine law. For the Commandment is a lamp and  
the law is a light.

(Both groups are now utterly confused.)

Group I: The law...

Group II: ...is a light?

Group I: Not a tablet?

Group II: ...but a lamp?

Group I: Not lost...

Group II: ...but a light???

Reader II: (triumphantly) Well, what did you expect him to say? He tries to be one of the boys...but he is still the Rabbi. (He speaks as if he has just pronounced sentence.) As far as I can see, we've lost the Ten Commandments and our electrical wiring for the evening.

Group I: On Hanukah? No lights on Hanukah?

Group II: A dark Hanukah...a stripped Hanukah.

Reader I: (sarcastically) That's what comes from not being traditional. We should have taken a tip from the Macabees and used oil.

Reader II: Does anyone here have a match? I mean...let's get this show on the road. Religious ceremonies are great for the kids, but I've got an appointment to keep. Look here, someone must have a match?

Groups I

and II: A match! A match! Who has a match?

Reader I: (pensively) I knew someone who had a match;  
-a young girl, a resistance fighter...it was

during the War. Her name was Hannah Senesh.  
The Nazis killed her. But they couldn't quench  
the flame. Hers was a blessed match. (his tone  
becomes pleading and hopeful) It must still be  
burning...somewhere. Does anyone have a match?

(The doors open and a young girl in her teens appears.  
She is dressed in the clothes of a resistance fighter. She  
carries a slim white taper. Its wick is aglow with a bright  
flame.)

(The congregation rises as the young girl proceeds down  
the center aisle, followed by the choir, robed and hooded.)

Everyone: Blessed is the Match that burned and ignited flames.

Blessed be the flame that blazed up in the secret  
places of the heart.

Blessed be the heart that throbbed its last beat  
in honor.

Blessed is the match that burned and ignited  
flames.

Choir: (Sings the poem in Hebrew: "Ashray Ha-gafrur")

(While the choir sings, the girl ascends the Bimah.  
She kindles the lights of the Menoroth. The sanctuary bright-  
ens.)

Ash-ray Ha-gaf-rur, she-nis-raf v'hi-tsit l'ha-vat.

Ash-rey ha-le-ha-va, she-ba-a-ra b'sit-rey l'va-vot.

Ash-ray hal-va-vot, she-yad-vo la-cha-dol b'cha-vod  
Ash-ray ha-gaf-rur, she-nis-raf u-hi-tsit l'ha-vot.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi: Our services will continue on page 119 with the  
Borchu. The congregation will please rise.

Reader: (solemnly) They are already on their feet, Rabbi.  
They have risen.

Rabbi: (as if coming out of a reverie) So they have...

(He reads the Borchu in Hebrew and English; the congregation respond, with the choir, with Baruch Adonai.)

Borchu et Adonai ha-m'vo-rach.

Praise ye the Lord to whom all praise is due.

Congregation:

Baruch Adonai ha-m'vo-rach l'o-lom vo-ed.

Praised be the Lord to whom all praise is due  
forever and ever.

Reader I: Baruch ata Adonai, Elohanu Melech ha-olam.

Yotzer Or u'vorah cho-scheh, o-seh shalom u'vorah  
et ha-kol.

Rabbi: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the  
universe, Creator of light and darkness, peace-  
maker and Author of every thing.

Congregation: Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of

the world, who in Thy mercy makest light to shine over the earth and all its inhabitants, and renewest daily the work of creation. How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The heavens declare Thy glory. The earth reveals Thy creative power. Thou formest light and darkness, ordainest good out of evil, bringest harmony into nature and peace to the heart of man.

Great has been Thy love for us and Thy compassion boundless. Our fathers put their trust in Thee and Thou didst teach them the law of life. Be gracious also unto us that we may understand and fulfil the teachings of Thy word. Enlighten our eyes in Thy law that we may cling unto Thy commandments. Unite our hearts to love and revere Thee. We trust in Thee and rejoice in Thy saving power, for from Thee cometh our help. Thou hast called us and drawn us nigh unto Thee to serve Thee in faithfulness. Joyfully do we lift up our voices and proclaim Thy unity. Praised be Thou, O God, who in Thy love hast called Thy people Israel to serve Thee.<sup>4</sup>

Reader I: (concludes) Baruch ata Adonai, Yotzer ham'orot.



Rabbi: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for You have created  
the light.

Choir: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for creating the dark  
and the light.

Blessed is the Match that burned and ignited flames.

(The doors open once again and two small boys enter carrying a Torah scroll. As they carry the scroll up the aisle, the congregation rises. They hand the scroll to the Rabbi who brings it to Reader I. He unrolls it and begins reading silently. The Rabbi reads the Torah passage in English translation:)

Rabbi: And thou shalt command the children of Israel,  
that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten  
for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually.<sup>5</sup>

(Over the opened and empty ark, an unlit Ner Tamid is hanging. When the Rabbi concludes his reading from Exodus, Reader I and the Choir begin singing "Ma Tovv." While they sing, two choir members, robed and hooded, approach the opened ark. One lowers the Ner Tamid which is a bowl of oil set in wrought iron. The other borrows a flame from the white taper of Hannah Senesh, and lights the Ner Tamid. The light is raised, the singing concluded, and the congregation take their seats. Reader I closes the Ark.

Rabbi: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, your dwelling  
places, O Israel. Through thy great mercy, O God,

I come to Thy house and...

Reader II: Just a minute, Rabbi. Excuse me for interrupting you, but something is wrong. Someone isn't following the script. Hanukah hasn't been mentioned yet. Aside from that, we're spending too much time on these symbols. As far as I'm concerned, and I consider myself a reasonable individual, I cannot continue to participate any longer. I'm going to have to bow out. I'm sorry, but...

Rabbi: But that was the plan. You agreed to go through this. I explained it in detail to you. You said you understood.

Reader II: I'm sorry, Rabbi. I just can't go through with it. These candles, all this paraphernalia...what do we need it for? Haven't we outgrown our narrow ways by now? This is so...so ethnic. These symbols...a pack of cards. Props! That's what they are. God doesn't want props! He wants the real thing. Now why don't you make some appropriate remarks about the Maccabees and the value of freedom so we can all go home. I'm getting tired of this. It's a waste of time. (He fidgets with his glasses and rustles his sheets.)

Rabbi: If you will just be patient, uh, co-operative,

I'm sure everything will turn out as planned.  
(He pauses.) Hasn't anyone found the Command-  
ments? I can't understand it. They used to be  
there. I KNOW they were there - on the wall...  
(he points, clearly perplexed)

Group I: (in rhythm) Command the Israelites to ask: where  
have the Commandments gone? Gone...gone...gone...  
gone. Where have the Commandments gone?

Group II: Gone from the space where they always hung; emp-  
ty fixture, naked rung...out of a cloud...off a  
wall...in Adam's fall we...

(A little boy runs into the synagogue, shouting:)  
I found one. I found one. I found a Commandment!)  
(He hands the Rabbi a broken fragment from one of the  
tables of the law. The Rabbi gives it a puzzled glance and  
hands it to Reader I, who deciphers it...)

Reader I: Ani...!

Rabbi: I am...?

Group I: We are...?

Group II: (antagonistically) No! We are...

Choir: (tests it out in several keys) I am...

Rabbi: (slowly) To be assured of one's existence - that is something---all things being so questionable these days. So, "I am," am I? That is fine. But WHO am I? It is not enough to exist.

Reader II: Frankly, I resent that piece of information. As if God's assurance made everything all right again.

Rabbi: (praying) We thank you, God. For you have commanded us to exist.

Choir: ...that we live not a dream of death; that the nightmare and the pounding of our hearts will end.

Rabbi: ...that the wild racing of our blood will be stilled.

Choir: ...that the shadows of the night will melt away to light.

Rabbi: ...that we are alive and well.

Choir: ...that the match is truly blessed.

Rabbi: Thank God for the match, the blessed match, and for the splutter and flicker of existence. But tell us, for the sake of your Holy Name...

Reader I: Al Kiddush Ha-shem...

Rabbi: For the "sanctification of Your Name..."

Rabbi, Readers, Choir:

WHO are we??? Tell us who we are.

(The door opens and two men enter carrying a basket. The basket is filled with the remaining fragments of the law. They are dressed in workmen's clothes and carry a small ladder. They ascend the Bemah, take the first fragment from Reader I, and place it on the wall, where it is fixed magnetically. They proceed to affix all the fragments to the wall in an indiscriminate jumble.)

Group I: Who dropped the Ten Commandments?

Group II: Moses, of course.

Reader I: First Moses, now us. And he was a prophet yet.

Group I: But what do the fragments mean?

Rabbi: They are our credentials. They give us our identity. They tell us who we are.

Groups I and II: (in a shocked tone of voice, and slightly insulted) Fragments? We are fragments? O Rabbi, are we as fragile as all that? (there is a pleading in that last question)

Rabbi: (with a sigh of relief) I am the Lord your God.

Groups I and II: (spellbound) You are the Lord our God.

Rabbi: (excitedly) I think ~~we~~'re on the right track.  
It's not only that I am the Lord your God. Every  
"I" is the Lord; every "I am", everything that  
proclaims its existence is the Lord, your Guide.

Reader I: (corrects him) ...your God.

Groups I and II: (emphasizing the "your") ...your God.

Rabbi: I am the Lord your God and Guide.

(The Choir picks up this refrain, trying it out in several keys and tunes. Meanwhile, fragments are being constantly shifted on the east wall, by the men on the ladder. The wall is beginning to resemble a casino table at which the human stakes are always too high. The men manage to finally arrange the pieces in the shape of two tablets, although they are still disjointed and out of shape.)

Rabbi: (Stands up and begins to read:) I am the Lord  
Your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
out of the house of bondage.

Group II: I am the Lord Your God, who calls each man from  
Egypt - from the tortuous and dark labyrinths of  
his mental bondage. Breaker of chains and shackles,  
I am the Lord.

Choir: You shall not make a graven image, nor bow down and

serve them.

Reader I: You shall not worship any man, or any nation of men; men are clay, nations, the moisture of cement, adhering and evaporating on the wheel of existence. I spin them into life and on to death and fragments as before. The clay is Mine; the vessels of the great experiment are Mine; and the bits and pieces return to the House of the Potter, whom alone you serve in reverence.

Rabbi: You shall not worship any good, whether social or political, lest by so doing you create a new and greater evil.

Reader I: You shall not worship before the idol of violence. Its thighs are brass, its belly, steel, its head is iron and its heart is stone. But the feet thereof are feet on clay. For the day will come when, kneeling before the Violence, you will hear a rumble. And it shall totter and fall upon you. And in its ruins will you be crushed. For the idol of violence is death to the human spirit and destruction to the nations of the earth. I am the Lord.

Rabbi: You shall not worship before the degradation of the human spirit. Have I not created all things?



Can the least of my creations be unworthy?  
Therefore, let nothing human put you off. Nor  
shall you look down upon the least of my crea-  
tures. For only the violent and the unkind have  
I not created. I am the Lord.

Choir: Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

Rabbi: Remember that I the Lord rested from My work on  
the seventh day. Therefore, be not overzealous in  
your rush to make a living, lest you die before  
the day of your death and never perceive the differ-  
ence.

Reader I: Let you, who are but flesh and blood, take the ad-  
vice of the Eternal One, your God. Take time from  
your work. Be aware of yourselves and look with  
wonder upon My universe. For every day I create the  
mystery anew; the wonder of a blade of grass.

Rabbi: I have created time. You have created time clocks.  
Truly you are the work of My hands. But I also  
created the Sabbath that man might transcend the  
limits of time; that he might steal a glimpse of  
what it means to "be"; that he might perceive di-  
mensions of existence undreamed of, unconquered,  
and waiting.

Choir: You shall not murder.

Reader I: Like hired assassins, each man stalks his brother in the dead of night. Soul-smothering...life-denying...every man a prey unto himself; mutilating his mind with guilt and fear of soul. Deal not so harshly with yourselves, for all of you are precious in My sight. I gave you life that you might live it, not strangle it. Have confidence and trust in that which I have made. For he who destroys My creations, murders his own well being.

Rabbi: You shall not murder my handiwork by the wanton stuffing of your bodies. Corruptor by your will and choice; destroyer by a sly consent; you sully a divine image and insult your own good sense.

Choir: You shall not take a human life and slay the human conscience.  
You shall not murder My good name with yours.  
I am the Lord.

Reader I: You shall not steal, nor shall you rob a man of his goods or of his reputation; for the acquisition of either is costly. But beware of stealing the reputation of your neighbor, lest you forfeit your own good name.

Rabbi: You shall not steal the bread out of the mouths of your fellowmen, making them dependent on your benevolence. You may give them handouts, and think yourselves charitable. But though your name be on the Donor's List, it has also found its way to Mine. And I know the proper page on which to place it. I am the Lord.

Reader I: You shall not steal a man's hope, nor rob him of his faith and confidence in life. You shall not steal the faith of any one of My creatures; for I will revisit his distrust and disillusionment on you and your children and your children's children, unto a thousand generations.

Rabbi: You shall not steal your neighbor's good will, for his hate will shadow you by day and haunt your sleepless nights. You shall not degrade a human soul nor rob a human spirit for I the Lord am poorer for all the hatred you create when the reflection of My divinity is distorted.

Choir: You shall not steal My thunder, nor shall you play God among your fellow-men. I am the Lord.

Group I: You shall not covet.

Rabbi: Why are you so greedy for gain, for the power of

possession? The more goods, the greater the fear of losing them; the more objects the more worry; the more machines, the more blindness. Spend your life in collecting THINGS, and one day you will have to pawn all you own for that which you know not of. You will not redeem your goods on that day, nor will you redeem yourselves. But only I the Lord will ransom your indebtedness.

Group II: Honor your father and your mother.

Reader I: Have your parents made mistakes? Have you inherited their neuroses and their instability? Did they blunder badly? Do not judge them harshly, lest you condemn yourself and perpetrate the same crimes on your children. It is rarely conscious and never intentional. Therefore, honor your father and your mother. For their good intentions in the blunders of their love shall you honor them. I am the Lord.

Group I: I am the Lord, author of life and death, source of salvation.

Group II: I am the Lord your God, teacher of the universe, who instructs man in the art of living and dying.

Group I: I am the Lord, starved with the hungry, beaten

with the tormented.

Group II: I am the Lord, liberator of the repressed.  
Bread, meat and drink to those who hunger to  
"be."

Rabbi: You shall not swear falsely by the name of the  
Lord our God; For the Lord will not clear one  
who swears falsely by His Name.

Group I: We will not swear falsely by the Name of the  
Lord our God; our mouths full of faith...our  
hearts full of fear...

Group II: We will test the great hypothesis. We will stop  
the falsity of our lives with Trust. We will be-  
lieve, because we are dust.

Rabbi: Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare  
thy truth?

Group I: We are the dust. We are the cosmic motes. We  
are the stuff that stars are made of.

Group II: We are the rushing of wind. We are the refuse  
of the world...and its hope.

Group I: I...

Group II: I am...

Both Groups: I am the Lord.

Rabbi: Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. And the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm...

Reader I: Remember that we are still enslaved in Egypt, each man selling his freedom - his birthright to be; his right to declare, "I am." Remember that each of us has prostituted himself; sold his goodness, raped his pity, corrupted his love, and sought his happiness without. But I the Lord can free you from the oppression of your meanness and your greed. If you only will it...  
It is not a dream...

Rabbi: With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Both Groups: With a greater love, a stronger trust, a surer hope...

Reader I: El Ma-lay Rachamim...

Reader II: Stop it! Listen here. What kind of mummary is this? Have we all gone mad? Will God save us from Egypt? Will He spare us the horror of living out a crippling journey to the grave?

Will He spare us from the concentration camps of our minds; the prison compounds of our bodies? LISTEN. I am full of hate and bitterness. Fear and violence, the evil of the universe spews forth from me. Beneath my clean clothes and white shirt, I am a sewer. I am the Lord your sewer! Not a drop of goodness flows out of me. I am a well of bitter waters, going down and dry; choking back every human emotion of love and pity; trampling on compassion, mocking my very existence...LISTEN. Listen to me. What fond foolishness...what flying in the face of hopelessness...listen...listen...

Rabbi: Listen, Israel, listen. The Lord our God the Lord is One. (trumpets<sup>6</sup>)

(The congregation rises and repeats the Shema in English and Hebrew. They join the choir and sing. They then seat themselves and recite the V'ohavta. Reader I chants Me-cho-mo-cho while the Choir hums.)

Congregation: Shema Yisrael Adonai elohanu, Adonai Echad.  
Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.  
Baruch shem k'vod mal-chu-to l-olam va-ed.  
Praised be His name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.



V'ohavta, ayt Adonai elohe-cha, b'chol l'vav-cha,  
u-v'chol naf-she-cha u-v'chol m'o-de-cha. V'ha-yu  
ha'd'vo-rim ha-ele asher A-no-chi m'tzav-cha ha-  
yom Al-l'vo-ve-cha. V'she-non-tom l'va-necha u'de-  
barta bam, b'shev-t'cha va-de-rech, u-v'shach-  
b'cha u-v'ku-mecha. U-k'shar-tom l'ot al-ya-  
decha. V'ha-yu l'to-ta-fot bayn ay-necha. U-  
k'tav-tom al me-zu-zot ba-techa u-vish-a-recha.  
L'ma-an tis-k'ru, v'a-se-tem et kol mitz-vo-ta,  
v'y'he-tem k'do-shim la'lo-hay-chem. Ani Adonai  
elo-hay-chem.

Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy  
heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.  
And these words, which I command thee this day,  
shall be upon thy heart. Thou shalt teach them  
diligently unto thy children, and shalt speak of  
them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou  
walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when  
thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign  
upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets  
between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon  
the doerposts of thy house and upon thy gates:  
That ye may remember and do all My commandments  
and be holy unto your God.

Reader I and Choir:

Me-cha-mo-cha ba-ay-lim Adonai,  
Me-ka-mo-cha ne-dor ba-ko-desh,  
No-ra t'hi-lot,  
O-say fe-le.

Rabbi: Who can compare with You, O Lord, among the gods of our imagining? Who can attain Your measure, O sanctifier of life who bids His children free themselves from the lesser gods that enslave them; who warns His creatures not to worship those who dehumanize a living soul; the blessed match of the human spirit. Who can attain Your measure, O Lord, devoid of the lie, whether small or great? Who can stand up to You, a free, creative spirit expressing its essence beyond the shackles of time and space? Who can approach You, God of life, glorious in holiness, awe inspiring, working wonders?

Rabbi: Let us continue together on page 224 of the Prayer Book.

Rabbi and Congregation:

Praised be Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers,  
God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, great mighty,  
and exalted. Thou bestowest lovingkindness upon

all Thy children. Thou rememberest the devotion of the fathers, and, in love, bringest redemption to their descendants for the sake of Thy name. Thou art our King and Helper, Savior and Protector. Praised be Thou, O Lord, Shield of Abraham.

Eternal is Thy power, O Lord, Thou art mighty to save. In lovingkindness Thou sustainest the living; in the multitude of Thy mercies, Thou preservest all. Thou upholdest the falling, healest the sick; bringest freedom to the captives and keepest faith with Thy children in death as in life. Who is like unto Thee, Almighty God, Author of life and death, Source of salvation? Praised be Thou, O Lord, who hast implanted within us immortal life.

Thou art holy, Thy name is holy and Thy worshipers proclaim Thy holiness. Praised be Thou, O Lord, the holy God.

Reader II: Rubbish! I protest this worship service. We've gone too far. All this emotionalism...it's wrong! It's evil! It's not dignified! As a member of the Board of Trustees of this congregation, I denounce this entire procedure. It is not only highly irregular...it's unorthodox...too orthodox

...dangerous. We're not keeping to the script.

Reader II: We came here to read a simple Hanukah service

with a few creative prayers thrown in; just to please the Rabbi and a small element in the congregation. And what has happened? We have all gone mad. I feel that it is my duty to warn the Rabbi and those in the congregation who secretly support him, that there will be severe repercussions if this mockery of worship continues. Don't you see what he's made us do? He's forced us to expose ourselves.

Groups I,II: Oh, no. Good God...are we exposed? Are we naked? As naked as the walls were when we first began?

Rabbi: But the walls are not naked now. We are clothing them. They are being rededicated...with the fragments of our selves...we are...

Groups I,II: (in a wail) But we are naked. We have stripped ourselves...of clothes, of flesh...O God, now what?

Reader II: Will God shield you now? Will he piece the fragments back together again? Will he make us whole? He may have done some patch-work on Abraham and

some on Job. He even glued the Maccabees back together for a few more orgies of slaughter. But not any more. He's given up. He's working for the opposition now. He's been bought off. Here we are, miserable, bloodless creatures, stripped of everything but our outrage...God has exposed us.

Reader I: We have exposed ourselves...

Reader II: (paying no attention) What fools we are. These laws, these words, these symbols...look what they have gotten us into. What will our non-Jewish friends think? To see or hear of us carrying on like this...the shame...think of the shame...the embarrassment of these forms and rituals-

Rabbi: O God, keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking guile. Be their support when grief silences their voices, and their comfort when woe bends their spirit. Implant humility in their souls, and strengthen their hearts with perfect faith in Thee. Help them to be strong in temptation and trial and to be patient and forgiving when others wrong them. Guide them by the light of Thy counsel, that they may ever find strength in Thee, their Rock and their Redeem-

er. Amen. 7

Reader II: They have always gotten us into trouble, and they are still making fools of us. Down with differences.

Group II: Down with differences. Down...down...down...

Reader II: We have jobs and families to protect. We have our security to think about...

Group I: Security. Security. Security at any price...

Reader II: Does God need our cultural aberrations? He'll get His due in any case. We can give it to Him by being just like everyone else. There has been enough blood and agony...there are no more walls to wail at. The odds are always with the majority...history has run out on us. Give up! Give up the fight...

Group I: (They parody II Maccabees, 14:6-10, in a dull and listless voice:)

Those Jews who follow the Rabbi are guilty of spreading animosity towards us; they are further guilty of marking us as DIFFERENT from the rest of the population and thereby painting us into a ghetto of social and cultural alienation. They

are bringing down upon our heads the wrath of those who plot against us. It is this small but fanatical group that persists in keeping up the struggle within this congregation. Unless they are permanently silenced we will never have peace; we nor our children, nor our children's children.

Choir: (with drum beats; chanting in a football cadence:)  
We want peace. We want peace. Grant us peace...  
a piece of non-being...a piece of unthought...a  
care-less piece. Grant us peace...(gradually  
fading out)

Group II: We therefore renounce our identity as a kingdom of priests and a holy people. We submit to the government that our loyalties and highest interests are in service to the State and its great society to which we pledge allegiance.

Groups I,II: (They rise.) We pledge allegiance to the State, dispenser of security. We renounce this rededication and pledge ourselves never to experiment again. We pay homage to the nameless, faceless herd into which we will gladly be driven. In the name of the Almighty State...whom alone we serve in reverence...



(The sanctuary has been getting darker by the minute. It is now as dark as when the service first began. One section of the Bemah is illuminated by the candle glow. In this light the dance group is expressing man's glorification of the State. They wear red costumes on which are sewn hammer and sickle. Their movements are mechanical, machine-like. The dull beat of the Tof is heard and the shink, chink of the Tambourine.)

Group I: (While the dance continues, they rise and, lead by Reader II, recite their new catechism:)

Hear, O Israel, Mindlessness is your God. Mindlessness is the One. Blessed be conformity whose glorious tyranny is forever and ever.

And you shall love conformity with all your fight, with all your fright and with all your fear. And these words of indoctrination approved by our glorious State will eradicate your hearts. And we shall broadcast them, by spying on our neighbors, by brainwashing our children, by lying and by never rising up. And we shall nail these words upon our altars, and they shall be for billboards before our eyes. We will burn them in our flesh and brand them on our children. That we might bow down to security and be faithful to our hates.

Reader II: Here is your God, O Israel, the one god of us all, the universal one. It will not tell you lies, nor will it ever abandon you. And it shall be listening to you, when you're sitting in your house, when you're walking by the way, when you're lying down and when you're rising up. And it shall be a mark on you forever...a covenant of death between it and thee...Arise, O Israel and meet your God.

(He unveils a large tape-recorder on a small table. He turns it on. For several minutes nothing is heard but a dull, rasping and irritating static. Then the loud blare of American military marching music is broadcasted. Either in the choir loft or in front of the tape-recorder the dance group begins its expression of conformity, behind a sheet on which a square of light is projected. This is called the Shadow Screen Dance, producing to the viewer the figures of silhouettes moving, as it were, inside the frame of a slide. Various slides could be projected on the screen, appropriate to the proclamation to follow. After several minutes, the music is lowered so as to provide a background for the following proclamation. The dancers interpret the speech behind the Shadow Screen:)

Reader II: By order of the government, in the interests

of expediency and civilization, and in the name of progress, we hereby order you out of existence. Your pernicious doctrine of laws and ethics with which you have anesthetized the civilized world will be henceforth obliterated. Your Torah scroll, from which sprang all manner of barbarisms, will be taken out of your synagogues and burned. Those of you who still persist in the evil and superstitious practices of your ancestors will be executed without interference from pity, outrage, or compassion. Those of you who no longer practice these antiquated evils, but who insist on thinking for yourselves, will be subjected to the PROPAGANDA MINISTRY OF BUSINESS AND ADVERTISING, for purification and rededication. You will have the pleasure of experiencing the blissful but firm-handed benevolence of THE NEW ORDER. You will experience the greatest pleasure attainable by any loyal citizen of the State: THE STATE OF COMPLETE AGREEMENT. Just think! You will never have to think for yourselves again. WE will tell you what to think. How to act. And how to react. With a flip of a centrally controlled switch we will tune you in to the truths of our GREAT SOCIETY. INSTANT TRUTH! And it is all yours without

the slightest exertion on your part. When the buzzer pierces your consciousness, and the flicker of the T.V. screen calls you to attention, you will be free of all independent thinking...forever. You need never be afraid of error again. We will see to it that you always buy the RIGHT brands and copy the official styles in hair and clothes. To be different will no longer be merely unfashionable...it will be FORBIDDEN. You will strive for one thing and one thing only...COMPLETE UNIFORMITY! COMPLETE EQUALITY! The final triumph of scientific progress, civilization and culture. You will never again be disturbed or upset by anyone who looks, acts or talks differently than you. Nor will you ever be upset with yourselves again. For all men shall enjoy the anonymity of being totally indistinguishable, one from the other. In our NEW ORDER, all destinies, dreams and superstitious cravings will be tranquilized and laid to rest everlasting. All human striving, all god-seeking will cease. We will be one nation...one god...indivisible...with obedience and discipline for all. The Government will strive for you...think for you and give you peace. Only guard yourselves that you slip not back into your old

ways of diversity and divergence. In THE NEW ORDER it is death to be different! A capital offense of which you people have so often been guilty. This is the greatest revelation. The NEWEST TESTAMENT. LONG LIVE PROGRESSIVE CULTURE! LONG LIVE THE NEW ORDER!

(As the signatures are read there are drum rolls and flourishes.)

Signed,

Antiochus Emphiphenes	Joe McCarthy	John Doe
Karl Mark	Huey Long	The Joneses
Joe Stalin	Nikita Khrushchev	Uncle Sam

(The music is turned off. The lights go out. There is a period of three to five minutes' silence.)

Rabbi: Page twenty-four of our prayerbooks: let us all pray...

All: O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Be my support when grief silences my voice, and my comfort when woe bends my spirit. Implant humility in my soul, and strengthen my heart with perfect faith in Thee. Help me to be strong in temptation and trial and to be patient and forgiving when others wrong me. Guide me by the light of Thy counsel, that I may ever

find strength in Thee, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

Choir: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Rabbi: Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? (in a desperate tone of voice)  
God in Heaven! It's dark. But the match? It's still burning. It hasn't gone out. We've still got a flame. Is there a man in this house? Are there men who will yet accept the challenge of the divine? the quest to rededicate? Are there men of courage who still dare...who will stand up for the individual and collective differences...for the sanctity of the human spirit? For the privilege of struggle and striving...for the suffering and the transcendence of suffering...for the acceptance of our human folly and its conquest. Must we not be human before we can be divine? Must we not be foolish before we can be wise? Must we not be weak before we can be strong? Must we not accept our humanity, our foolishness, our weakness, before we may transcend them? For the sake of our father, no for

our own sakes, shall we not affirm our humanity? Rededicate our bodies, rehabilitate our minds and hearts; tell and retell by our very example and existence the human struggle? Shall we not recount the inheritance of our fathers? Shall we not grope onward toward the light? ...and forge a new alloy in the development of the human mettle? That our children may rise up, take courage from our example, and call us blessed? Who will remember? Who will retell?

Reader I: (softly begins to chant) Mi y'malel g'vu-rot yisrael, otan mi yim-ne? (He chants this one line several times until he is joined by one member of the choir, then another and another, until Reader I and the Choir are singing that line with gathering conviction and strength.)

Rabbi: Let those members of this congregation who will recall and who will proclaim, rise and join us. For only they who remember the struggle of our people can continue that same struggle today; the battle for the sanctity of every man, and the right of every group to pursue privately and publicly, its destiny and its differences.

(Congregation, Choir and Rabbi join and sing Mi Yim-



alel in full voice. They rise to their feet. The lights get brighter and brighter.)

Rabbi: The service will continue on page eighty-seven, as we recall together:

It was on the fifteenth day of the month of Kislev, that the messengers of King Antiochus set up an idol on the altar of God, and had incense burnt in its honor. And they gave orders that the people of Judea should forsake the law and the covenant, profane the Sabbath and pollute the sanctuary. And many chose rather to die than to forsake the holy covenant. And the king's officers came to the city of Modin, and said to Mattathias, the son of John, the son of Simon the Hasmonean, a priest of the sons of Joarib who dwelt in Modin: Thou art a great man and strengthened with sons and brethren in this city. Come, then, and fulfil the king's command as all the heathen have done, and the men of Judah and they that remained in Jerusalem. And thou shalt be in the number of the king's friends. But Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice: Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him and fall away each one from the religion

of his fathers, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the Law to depart from our faith either to the right hand or the left. And when in the sight of all one of the Jews came to sacrifice to the idol, Mattathias was inflamed with zeal, neither could he forbear to show his anger, and he slew him, and also the king's officer, and the altar he pulled down. And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying: Whosoever is zealous of the law and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me. So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and they went about pulling down the heathen altars, and they rescued the law out of the hands of the Gentiles.

And the days of Mattathias drew near that he should die and he said to his sons: Be ye zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. Remember what our fathers did in their generations. Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was accounted to him for righteousness? Phineas, our father, for that he was zealous exceedingly, obtained the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. David, for being faithful, inherited the throne of a king-

dom forever and ever. Throughout all the ages none that put their trust in God were overcome. Therefore be strong, my sons, and show yourselves men in behalf of the law;; for therein shall ye obtain glory. And he blessed them and was gathered to his fathers.

Then Judah, called Maccabee, rose up in his stead, and all his brethren aided him, and they fought with gladness the battle of Israel. He battled like a lion and the lawless shrunk for fear of him. He cheered Jacob by his mighty acts, and his memorial is blessed forever. And when all the people feared and trembled at the sight of the great number of the enemy, and said: What? Shall we be able, being a small company, to fight against so great and so strong a multitude? Judah answered: With the God of heaven it is all one to save by many or by few. And all the people shall know that there is One who redeemeth and saveth Israel. And Judah led them into battle, and behold the hosts of the enemy were discomfited before them. And Israel had a great deliverance. And they sang songs of thanksgiving, and praised the Lord of heaven for His goodness, because His mercy endureth forever.

And on the five and twentieth day of Kislev, the same day when three years before the altar of God had been profaned by the heathen, the sanctuary of God was dedicated anew with songs and music, and the people praised the God of heaven who had given them great victory, and they celebrated the Dedication of the Altar for eight days, and there was great rejoicing among the people. Moreover, Judah and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained that the days of the Dedication of the Altar should be celebrated, from year to year, for eight days in gladness and thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup>

Rabbi: Then will Judah be established forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

Group I: As long as we respect our differences...

Group II: As long as governments serve the needs of their peoples;  
As long as the State accomodates itself to diverse states of mind...

Choir: As long as men care to seek the Transcendent...  
to liberate themselves from their chains and shackles..."Judah will be established and Jeru-

salem from generation to generation.

(Choir and Congregation sing V'yehuda L'olam Tasha-  
ve V'yerushalayim L'dor Va-dor. The dancers dance for joy  
to the music in free expression to the Divine.)

Rabbi: Let us rise for the Adoration, on page seventy-  
one.

All: Let us adore the ever-living God and render  
praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and  
established the earth, whose glory is revealed  
in the heavens above and whose greatness is man-  
ifest throughout the world. He is our God; there  
is none else.

We bow the head in reverence, and worship the  
King of kings, the Holy One, praised be He.

Reader I, Choir, and Congregation:

Va-anachnu Korim u-mishta-cha-vim u-modim,  
Lif-nay Melech mal-chay ham'lo-chim  
Ha-kadosh baruch hu.

Ba-yom ha-hu, yi'ye Adonai echad,  
U-sh'mo echad.

Rabbi: Will you join me now on page ninety...

All: On this festival of Hanukah, we rededicate

ourselves to Thee and Thy service. As we kindle the Hanukah lights in our homes and temples, may the light of Thy presence and Thy truth shine forth to dispel all darkness and lead all men unto Thee. Amen.

(There is a short pause. Everyone checks his script.)

Reader I: Nu? Who has the Hanukah Menorah?

Reader II: (in a tone of shocked surprise)

I've got the Menorah. I've had it all along.

(voice full of suspicion)

Wait a minute. These can't be my lines...

Reader I: Of course they're your lines. Check the script.

Reader II: But...but it's impossible. It's not consistent.  
It's not logical.

Reader I: So who's consistent? And who, tell me, is logical. You're a human being, aren't you?

Reader II: But why? I mean why do I have to discover the last bit of rededication - the Hanukah Menorah?

Reader I: Because the reality of Hanukah is to found in the lighting of the Menorah. In asking "how," not "why;" in acting out something until it

becomes so real that the "why" of it may answer itself. And maybe the "why" of it isn't so important after all. Perhaps the answer lies in the doing of a thing; over and over again until it comes to life for you, and you come to life for it. When that happens, the "why" of it becomes fully apparent...and need never be asked.

Reader II: There must be some mistake.

Rabbi: How many rehearsals? How many mistakes? As if this were the first time we Jews had ever made a mistake. The Cantor is right. The trick is to read the lines, get involved in them and open yourself to receive all the possibilities. It's an effort at first. An act against all the evidence. I'll grant you that. But all the evidence isn't in yet. Meanwhile we have these ideas, these words to deal with. Words which our fathers lived by and often died for. Words hal-  
lowed in the smoke of burning parchment; words consecrated through the smear of the censor's ink. And yet, they survived; old as they are they survived because a people had faith in them. And because Israel kept the words, the words guar-



ded Israel, and will continue to enliven our people, so long as they are not abandoned.

We've fought for this script so long now...  
for the sake of our rededication...READ THE  
LINES!

Groups I and II:

Let us not abandon the script. The lines. The  
lines. Read the lines.

Reader II: The Menorah. I've got the Hanukah Menorah.  
I've had it all along.

(The congregation rises as the Rabbi takes the Han-  
ukah Menorah to the main pulpit. He is joined on either  
side by Readers I and II. Reader II seizes the white ta-  
per of Hannah Senesh and while Reader I chants the bless-  
ings, he lights the Hanukah lights.)

Rabbi: Blessed is the match that burned and ignited  
flames.

Reader I: Blessed be the flame that blazed up in the secret  
places of the heart.

Reader II: Blessed be the heart that throbbed its last  
beat in honor.

Everyone: Blessed is the match that burned and ignited flames.

Rabbi: Let us praise the Name of God with the Kaddish,  
on page seventy-seven.

All: Yis-gad-dal v'yis-kad-dash sh'meh rab-bo,  
b'ol-mo di'v-ro kif'u-seh v'yam-lich mal-chu-seh,  
b'cha-ye-chon u-v'yo me-chon u-v'chayeh d'chol  
bes yis-ro-el, ba-a-go-lo u-viz-man ko-riv,  
v'im-ru O-men.

Y'heh sh'meh rab-bo m'vo-rach, l'o-lam ul'  
ol'meh ol-ma-yo:

Yis-bo-rach v'yish-tab-bach, v'yis-po-ar,  
v'yis-ro-mam, v'yis-nas-seh, v'yis-had-dor,  
v'yis-al-leh, v'yis-hal-lol, sh'meh d'kud'sho,  
b'rich hu. L'e-lo min kol bir-cho-so v'shi-ro-so,  
tush-b'cho-so v'ne-cho-mo-so, da-a-mi-ron b'ol-mo,  
v'im-ru O-men:

Y'heh sh'lo-mo rab-bo min sh'ma-yo v'cha-yim,  
o-le-nu b'al kol yis-ro-el, v'imru O-men:

O-seh sho-lom bim'ro-mov, hu ya-a-seh sho-  
lom, o-le-nu v'al kol yis-ro-el, v'imru O-men.

Extolled and hallowed be the name of God  
throughout the world which He has created accor-  
ding to His will. And may he speedily establish  
His kingdom of righteousness on earth. Amen.

Praised be His glorious name unto all etern-

ity.

Praised and glorified be the name of the Holy One, though He be above all the praises which we can utter. Our guide is He in life and our redeemer through all eternity.

Our help cometh from Him, the creator of heaven and earth.

May the Father of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort all the bereaved among us.

Amen.

Reader I: Join me now, as we conclude our rededication with the singing of Rock of Ages.

All:      Rock of Ages, let our song  
             Praise Thy saving power;  
             Thou amidst the raging foe  
             Wast our shelt'ring tower.  
  
             Furious they assailed us  
             But Thine arm availed us,  
             And Thy word broke their sword,  
             When our own strength failed us.

(Everyone sings the hymn through once. As they begin to sing it a second time, the Rabbi, Reader II, and

Reader I leave the sanctuary, followed by the choir, the dance group, and the instrumental group. The congregation then begins leaving the sanctuary by rows until the Temple is empty once again, waiting for redemption at the hand of man.)

ONCE UPON A PASSOVER

### An Introduction

Once Upon a Passover is a dramatic reading, a reading designed to be presented at a youth group Seder, or possibly, as a dramatic presentation at an adult community Seder. In terms of theme and the holiday for which it was written, it attempts to up-date a message for Passover that can be relevant and meaningful for modern Reform Jews.

Playing with the themes of passing from slavery to freedom, of "passing over" and "passing back", Once Upon a Passover attempts to clarify exactly what the Passover can mean for Twentieth Century man. Besides exploring the concepts of slavery and freedom it also attempts to point towards a particular notion of what significance our religion could have in a "post-Passover" era.

By using lighting and props effectively, it is hoped that this dramatic reading will succeed in thoroughly involving the Seder participants. By dealing with relevant themes and through the extensive use of humor, satire and serious dialogue and interplay between the two characters, this reading should serve to infuse the entire Seder with greater relevance and meaning.

The goal of the traditional Hagadah is clearly set forth: to make each man, woman, and child participating, feel that not only his forefathers, but he too, has gone

forth from Egypt. No one can deny that we have made our Exodus from Egypt. But it does not follow that we are necessarily free. This reading asks the question of us all: are we still in "the state of Egypt?" Are we in the desert? Or have we indeed arrived at the Promised Land?

It is also traditional that the Passover Seder emphasize the teaching element as part of the worship experience. It is hoped that Once Upon a Passover is in keeping with that tradition and that in its own way, it might add its own flavor and spark to the holiday experience of our people.



Narrator: It is a star-spangled night that stretches its anthem over the triangle of tents, babies and bonfires that indicate the Hebrew camp. The cries of infants and old men sink into the ocean of cold night air, evaporating in the white light of a rising moon. Roaring in their pits but a short while ago, fires burn low and sputter cautiously as the moon reaches its zenith, marking the profile of night with an eastern incandescence.

At the apex of the camp, a large tent of black goatskin has been fastened like a giant safety-pin holding up the diapers of the children of Israel. Inside, a welter of cushions and blankets (generously sprinkled with matzah crumbs) are made dimly visible by several large oil lamps giving out amounts of smoke and light in unequal proportions. A foggy silence slinks through the tent; brushing against its slightly sagging ceiling; sliding across its richly carpeted floor (loomed in Egypt and uncomfortably rumped in its strange surroundings.) On this royal carpet depicting the gods and goddesses of the Nile, Moses paces up and down, treading irreverently on the face of Egypt. His brother Aaron, propped up with piles of pillows (expropriated from the Pharaoh)

sucks ceremoniously on a large Nargilah (water pipe), bubbling furiously. Each puff fills the swollen tent with blue clouds of Egyptian smoke into which Moses disappears from time to time, only to emerge reluctantly like some great shy specter, unwilling to be conjured up. The silence is suddenly snapped by a most undignified sound which breaks the spell and indicated the end of Aaron's tobacco supply. Aaron removes the pipe stem from his mouth with a flourish, peers at his brother through the sifting screen of smoke and speaks:

Aaron: By the outstretched arm of the Lord God! Stop pacing up and down. You're making me nervous. And we're running out of carpets. It's our last one loomed in Egypt. Quality carpets are hard to come by these days; especially after our bacteriological warfare with the Pharaoh. I don't imagine our credit rating's very good. (Aaron grumbles and shakes his head sadly.)

Narrator: Moses begins to take shape as the smoke gradually dissipates, lingering in thin wisps at the top of the tent. He turns abruptly and faces Aaron.

Moses: Looms and labels? Carpets? Credit? Is that what

you're worried about, Aaron? I cancelled my account with Egypt a long time ago. I settled my score with the Pharaoh. But apparently he is still trying to settle with us. What a fool I've been, mesmerizing myself into thinking that we had defeated the gods of Egypt. I thought we were done with them. I thought we had won.

Aaron: What in the dust of this damn desert are you talking about?

Moses: I've been sorcerizing myself, that's what. Excited by my own eloquence; the thunderous adulation of the crowds, women banging on timbrels, soldiers blowing shofars 'til they're blue in the face. For fifteen years now I've been elaborating on our victory over the Egyptians, elaborating on a lie.

Aaron: Lie? What are you talking about? Have you gone completely mad? Of course we defeated the Egyptians and their gods. Don't you remember training those gnarled old snakes to look stiff as a staff? By the beard of the God of Israel! Were those Egyptians surprised when our staves turned into snakes. They didn't think we knew their tricks. (Aaron becomes more excited now, warm-

ing to the memory.) Ah, but the payoff came when our snakes swallowed theirs. Remember? We hadn't fed them for weeks. And did you see the Pharaoh's jaw drop? By the sacred dice of the Lord God! Those Egyptian fakers were mortified!

Narrator: Aaron is on his feet now, his face inflamed with the wine of Passover and the memory of his triumph, waving his arms wildly.

Aaron: We showed them, Moses. Yes sir, we beat them at their own game. We manufactured more vermin, blood and frogs than the Association of Egyptian Sorcerers ever dreamed of. What a show! Hail and locusts and all the rest of it. WHY, compared to our talents for gimmicks and gullibility, those Egyptian priests were pikers!

Narrator: He pauses, his figure distended as if absorbing nourishment from the banquet of words that he spreads before his brother. Moses has sunk down to a position of crossed-legged dejection.

Aaron: And that final stunt. The big bath at the Red Sea. Why it's already legendary - how you split the sea like a barbecued peacock. People's im-

aginations are truly fantastic. The way they sing about it around the camp fires - why, you'd think they forgot all about our secret route through the swamps. Pays to travel light I always say. Yes sir! We might still be stuck in the mud along with the Egyptians and their iron chariots.

Moses: (Moses replies with a soft intensity:) That's just the trouble, Aaron. We are stuck. We are still stuck in the mud of Egypt. Haven't you heard the people talk? They want to go back. Their shrunken bellies cry out for the security of three meals a day and some Egyptian herding them from one task to the next. It takes the lionhearted to be free, my brother, but our people still squawk and scramble like a bunch of chickens. Long ago in Egypt they told us: "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians. For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

Aaron: (Aaron simulates a look of shocked amusement) Gad, what a memory you have. You must have memorized that quote word for word.

Narrator: Moses clears his throat modestly, responding to the relaxed tone of his brother's remark.

Moses: Not at all, Aaron. It's part of a new book I'm writing.

Aaron: No fooling! What's it called?

Moses: Exodus. What else?

Narrator: Aaron grins with appreciation.

Aaron: Well Moses, in spite of all their fuss and feathers you can't deny that we finally got them out of Egypt.

Moses: Sure - we got them out all right - with cheap tricks and gimmicks.

Narrator: The humor of the previous moment is washed away in the bitterness of his voice.

Moses: That's the only kind of religion these people believe in - MIRACLES - SIGNS - WONDERS - HYPNOTIC SNAKES. Put the people in a trance. Make them dance. Make it rain. That they believe in. But ask them to believe in themselves - ask them to believe in a god they cannot see; a god who gives us the brains and imagination to free ourselves. Oh no! That kind of religion goes right

over their heads.

Aaron: Now hold on, Moses. You're not being fair. I understand about all that stuff. But you've got to be practical. After all, I am the High Priest. Burning incense and animals on an altar may not be according to your taste, but it sure tastes good to the people. They need it. They understand it. None of us had the opportunity to go to college in Egypt. We never studied science and astronomy, or how to read and write, or talk with God. We weren't brought up to play with Egyptian princes and princesses. We had to go out and build pyramids every day. You ought to try it sometime. It's exhausting!

Narrator: He pauses to catch his breath, as if the memory of his past hardships has momentarily knocked the wind out of him.

Aaron: Besides, I have my job to think of. I'm a High Priest, not a prophet like you. I've got my interests to protect. And let me tell you something, brother. If it wasn't for priests and pigeons and all the sacrificial bull, you prophets wouldn't stand a chance!



Narrator: Moses reflects for a moment. His face appears lined and chiseled, peering through his brambly beard.

Moses: What you say is partly true, Aaron. I can't deny it. The trouble is, you don't say enough of what's wholly true. Every nation has its gods. And Israel has its god - the Lord God of Hosts who gave us the courage and stamina to stir a people into rebellion; who reminded us to remind them that they are a distinct people with a unique destiny; and after four hundred years of slavery and Egyptian propaganda it was no mean feat. There's a miracle for you! The resurrection of a memory. That's the salvation of slaves! But do the people perpetuate the miraculous? No. They carry the mentality of Egypt with them. And when the going gets rough, they yell for a miracle. It makes me sick to think of it. Why, every moment we live and breathe is a miracle - a double miracle considering how self and quarrelsome we are; everyone slandering his friend behind his back; thinking the worst of his neighbor, as if each man was as great a fool as the next! No one thinks to operate out of the notion that whatever God has made is good. Oh no.

Every flea-bitten camel driver thinks he has the inside dope on the universe - and that it's a dirty business after all. "Send a few crummy sheep to the High Priest. God will forgive our sins." (Moses laughs bitterly,) They think they can bribe God with a roast leg of lamb. And then they eat the best parts. God gets the bones. Wouldn't you know it. And when they've burned up their entrails and nothing comes of it but a case of collective heartburn - then they're angry; then they want to go back to Egypt again. Then they think that the gods of Egypt are stronger than the God of Israel. Aaron, I tell you it's downright discouraging.

Aaron: Now look here, Moses. You can't go blaming yourself for the way people are or the way things are going. You can't take it to heart. You'll end up a nervous wreck - and we've got a long way to go before we reach the Promised Land. After all, it was God who made the heavens and the earth, not you. And God saw it was good. He said so six times, just so there'd be no mistake about it. Maybe he couldn't leave well enough alone. Maybe he built in a little contention without making such a public howl about it. After all, that's

one's privilege, if one's a god. Who are we to question it?

Moses: But what's our privilege, Aaron? What are we privileged to do as men?

Aaron: Complain! And I suppose, being a prophet, you just naturally exercise that privilege a little more than the rest of us.

Moses: That's all very well for you to say, Aaron. You don't bear the brunt of things like I do. When you're officiating at a sacrifice and people get restless, all's you have to do is throw another fistful of incense on the fire and that quiets them down right away. But I'm the leader of the crew and I'm responsible for them. It's great when things are running smoothly. But as soon as a problem comes up, boy do they squawk! As long as I get up and tell them about the Promised Land and how nice it's going to be for them - houses and vineyards and corn in the crib, and all that stuff about milk and honey - they like that fine! Oh boy, they crowd around with eager faces, licking their lips, shouting to hear more - and telling me how great I am; and that scares me more than anything else; 'cause as soon as I

stop talking about the sweet side of religion and start telling the people to wake up to what their real religion means - today - here in the desert - why they start grumbling and crying for their flesh pots.

Narrator: Aaron shoots a guilty glance at his protruding stomach.

Moses: And that's not all. I've heard what they say about my being a radical and all. They keep on making these snide remarks about my birth. "Radical?" They whisper. "Why it wouldn't be so bad considering how leaders are. But at least he should be a Jewish radical. You don't really believe that fable about his Jewish mother and her basket of pitch, do you? A bunch of nonsense! He's no Hebrew! He's Egyptian through and through! Him and his fancy education. While he was learning how to rave and rant in the school of Egyptian prophets, we had to break our backs over bricks. He's no Jew. He's not even a normal man. He's a myth. A big overgrown MYTH! And he's out to bury us all. Remember what happened to his enemies in Egypt? They're still up to their necks in swamp mud. And now he wants to drown us in

this Sinaitic Sandbox."

Aaron: Moses, you must be exaggerating. You're letting your imagination run away with you. Put these wild and unpleasant thoughts from your mind. Think about the Promised Land. It will calm your nerves.

Moses: You know as well as I do, Aaron, that these are no exaggerations. Why they've accused me of plotting to annihilate the whole bunch of them. Don't you remember some years ago when we couldn't find water? They cursed me and you and God and the whole idea of being free: "Who wants to be free to die of thirst?" they asked. As if you could accept the glories of freedom without its responsibilities! But they just don't understand. Why, I saw several of the tribal chiefs starting to pick up rocks to stone us with. I thought it was all over.

Aaron: Yeh. Lucky for us that God had Pharaoh exile you from Egypt. If you hadn't killed that taskmaster you never would have enjoyed your exile with Jethro in Midian. It was the best thing that ever happened to you. Out of every bad..., I always say. Besides picking up a wife, you

acquired a lot of desert training. I'll never forget the way you poked a hole in that rock and water came gushing out. One minute the people were about to kill you. The next minute they were slobbering all over you and kissing your feet.

Moses: That's right, Aaron. When you deal with the public there's no happy medium. It's either rocks or roses.

Narrator: Aaron leans back against the cushions and sighs deeply, brushing a few remaining matzah crumbs off his expanded paunch. Reaching into a small leather pouch at his side, he produces a plug of tobacco, sniffs at it gingerly, and proceeds to load and light his pipe which soon begins producing prodigious quantities of smoke.

Aaron: That was a fine Passover Seder, Moses. Much less hectic than the first one. (He chuckles) I must congratulate you. That was a fine idea you came up with - to celebrate our escape from Egypt each year. The idea has really caught on. I think this Passover business has a real future. After all, who doesn't like to eat?

Narrator: Moses, showing scant appreciation for the humor,

winces slightly. His face darkens as the heavily spiced Egyptian smoke winds round his head like a coiled snake. For the moment his eyes flash fire and the spark of prophetic indignation ignites his entire being.

Moses:      Passover...crumbs of unleavened freedom yet to rise. Wine-stained garments; loaded bellies shaking themselves in self-congratulation. We carry our Egypt with us, Aaron...like camels with shrunken humps. Each of us has his own private little Egypt gnawing away at his vitals. We are still crying out for rams and fat sheep: "Take us back to Egypt," the people cry.

Grow the corn  
Blow the horn  
Spin the sword  
Bang the shield  
Jab the dirt  
It will yield:  
Fine fat figs  
And skin-tight fruits  
Big-veined leaves  
And strong-boned roots.  
  
Write a curse



And Chaim dies  
Stab a scarab  
Then he writhes  
Great the pain!  
Slight the wit!  
High the sky!  
Wide the split!  
And dark...dark...dark  
And down...down...down  
And all around  
The pit...  
The pit...."

And then they all fall down in a communal fit, frothing at the mouth and having one-hell-of-a-time; rolling around in the dust and generally making themselves obnoxious. I suppose it's therapeutic. It gives them the illusion that they're acting like prophets. As if every prophet had to conform to the designation of "half-wit"! As if the hallmark of prophecy is hallucination. "Who wants to be bothered thinking?" they yell. "Who needs the aggravation? Besides, foaming and fulminating is far more effective. It gets results. Why must we forever remember? Does God command man to remember? To be ruled by a god that no one

has ever seen. PASSBACK! Not PASSOVER. Back to forgetfulness - no dream - no destiny - only let us die fat and easy in our beds, happy in the knowledge that our children will die fatter and happier than we. Look here! Every bauble and trinket that we sweated out our souls for - it was for them. We did it all for them! We did it for their good!"

Narrator: Aaron is becoming increasingly disturbed. His pipe has gone out. The Egyptian-scented smoke has vanished into the night as if fleeing the gusty words of the angry prophet. A chorus of wind and wild dogs shrieks into a crescendo. The words die on the lips of the prophet and the light goes out of his eyes. The two brothers find themselves sitting in darkness.

Aaron: Come, Moses, let's go to sleep. One shortens the darkness by sleeping. That's what they say.

Narrator: But Moses turns away from his brother and walks out into the star-spangled night that howls its anthem over the dying timbers that indicate the Hebrew camp.

A SERVICE FOR SUKKOT

### An Introduction

The Sukkot Service celebrates the autumn harvest - the gathering of the grains and fruits. But for the middle-class American, city-dwelling Jew, the celebration of an agricultural festival has lost all meaning. Even the later Rabbinic interpretation of the Sukkah in connection with forty years of wandering in the Sinai Desert is remote and does not strike to the heart of the urbanized Jewish congregant.

Given these difficulties and the observable decline of the holiday in meaning and practice, a theme was chosen for the holiday service to develop - a theme which is pertinent and of vital concern to every man - Jew or not - ancient, modern, orthodox or Reform, young or old - man's death and finality.

The service approaches this theme in the language of the seasons. Using the language of agriculture and nature as symbolic of man's growth and death, the poetic dialogue between the Reader and the Congregation is designed to carry each worshiper through the major cycles of life. It is hoped that through this process the worshiper will gain a glimpse of himself that he most often hides from or ignores. He is brought to face the fact that he is a creature with many limitations and finally, the greatest limitation of all - his death and extinction. The service

brings home the stark reality of this exportation by using the language of growth and decay as symbolic of man's own existence. The Sukkah serves as a symbol of man's frailty and temporality. Since the service is held out of doors, the entire mystique of night and sky, bonfire and Sukkah booth combine to provide both symbol and setting for this worship experience.

To lighten the seriousness of the service, a humorous interlude is injected. This provides some relief from the strain of the worship experience and at the same time serves to mock the traditional notion of God, and his angels in a heavenly paradise where each man lives forever. For modern liberal Jews living in an age of science and technology, meaningful religious worship cannot be predicted on the mythology of an age gone by. For a religious service to be meaningful it must present man with his illusions and fantasies and help him to face up to the reality of his existence. In this way, it is hoped that a truer and nobler religious feeling may be evoked. For, although a man faces the calamity of his finality, he also is made aware of the goodness of life while he is privileged to live it. To be a creature of use and beauty, a force for creating a world where other generations of men will continue the spiritual evolution of the human race; to show a basic kindness and compassion for one's contemporaries

in realizing that all men travel the same road to extinction.

In glimpsing the verbal and visible levels between the human element and the symbol of booth and bonfire, man sees the greater value of a life well lived. As the fire dies, as the booth dries, the life of man reaches its end. The only reward or gift is life itself - man's task is to make it worthy of having been lived.

When a man is faced with his limitations and confronts himself, the consequences for his life can be fully significant. It is not death that one has to ultimately worry about, but the dying - the getting there - it is how we go that really counts and determining this is, after all, a religious act of the greatest significance.

(The service is held outdoors on an autumn evening. The congregation stands under a large Sukkah decorated with lulavs, esrogs, vines and fruit. Group I and Group II face a large bonfire which blazes outside the Sukkah. There are no electric lights to spoil the effect of the natural setting. For reading purposes, Groups I and II may be provided with small penlight flashlights. For this particular service, the sanctuary is the visible world of night, the flames of the bonfire, and the suggestion of security provided by the Sukkah booth.)

Group I: In the autumn of the year,  
In the tinder-twigg'd twilight of seasons  
We stand chill and withered  
Before the fire of our lives

Group II: At the bright-leaved end of summer...heat and  
health,  
Down the little-leaved decline of time and toil  
Toward the final act of death and dreams,  
We come quiet and cold,  
To reap...  
And to be reaped,  
To gather...  
And to be gathered  
In the harvest of our mortality.



Group I: Rooted in space and scattered in time,  
Each man seeks himself  
To know...to sow...to reap...to plant  
And harvest grain and groceries  
From the grit and rock,  
Husk of corn and silken shock  
And will ourselves be  
Universal crop of corn and stalk,  
Chaff and floss for the Boss  
Or the way of things  
Come some autumn

Group II: In the springtime of our lives,  
In the summer of our years,  
We swayed and sang in the sunshine,  
Stood thick and green as God  
Big-barked and fertile,  
Deep-rooted and unafraid

Group I: In the fair weather of our lives,  
We took husbands and wives  
Entwining leaf and root and branch,  
Grew tall and wide  
With the green reach of leaves,  
Til we were one as God

Groups I, II:

In the good-old desert days  
Of wind-singing and sand-storming,  
We, arabed up and turbaned  
Off on our own,  
Wagon-trained it out of sight  
(To the fright and frenzy of the old folks)  
And, shouting jokes and curses at each other;  
Turned our backs on Matriarchal Mother  
(And poor, patient Father)  
Rode...  
Rambled...  
Thistled...  
Brambled...  
And caravanned by Wadi rock,  
And reason of the rising sun

Group I: In a dangerous but dandy desert,  
Bound for green and gold and games,  
We were persistence-primed as pumps  
And proud as palm...  
Willow-wild and myrtle-mad for life  
And...  
Citrus-hearted as an Esrog  
Full of victory and vinegar,  
We drank the desert wine of dates

Group II: Bold and beautiful

By an ancient well,  
Olive-branched and blossomed  
By a sweet-silver stream  
We stood lulav-long and laughing,  
Fig-eyed and lemon-lipped with yellow,  
Wet-mouthed with orange fruit and bitter rind  
All purple-vined and pomegranate-red...  
Our citrus-soaked hearts  
Pumped heads full of fire,  
And in the spice of our years  
We dipped...  
And drugged by a desert dream,  
We slept...

Group I: It was a one to one relationship. As the Bible says: panim el panim -"face to face"- one people, one God; management and labor facing each other across the bargaining table of creation...father and child, Master and servant, God and man and... We shouted to one another: "Can't you hear? Listen closely. Can't you hear the wind or feel the rain? The Lord is God. Shema, Israel, listen carefully. God is the Lord."

Some asked why, or how we knew. (There were always a few skeptics.) "Why is God the Lord?" they asked. "The Lord is God because God is

One," was the answer. And so it was that we came to a basic agreement about God and said:

Groups I,II:

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad.

But saying it wasn't good enough, for the truth of the notion demanded other kinds of expression. So we proclaimed the connection of all things and sang:

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad.

Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam Va-ed.

And in the lusty springtime of our faith we shouted out:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

His name is Blessed, whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.

Group I: God and man in a glorious kingdom forever and ever...

With never a doubt about it

Through fair weather or fouled

When cynics howled

And the Greeks ground out their games

We had God's names, number, address  
And kingdom-come to boot,  
Who wouldn't feel blessed  
With every Sabbath's rest  
(and all the extras)  
And being so blessed  
It wasn't hard to  
Praise our God and Guard  
And even name the nations-  
Bless them too...

Group II: We were green and we were sappy,  
Puppy-proud and happy,  
Full of hope and praise and promise  
For the God of life  
In whose summer we sang and swayed,  
And made it our business  
To bless God,  
Shouting it out in the face of the sun:  
"Baruch Ata Adonai," we said. "God is a blessed  
one."

Group I: Every mother-warm sun  
Or wild whiff-of-wind,  
The sunset, dawn  
On bits of budding life

From seed to fruit...  
And cork-screwing vine to wine  
Confirmed our "Halleluyah."  
And in the noon-day of our years  
We praised God, blessed Him,  
And called Him Baruch

Group II: He was God

And God was Baruch,  
Baruch who blessed our fathers three,  
Who gave life and destiny to His people  
(who gave life and destiny to Him)  
Who promised life and land and seed  
To those who knew him personally:  
oil of corn  
bread of grain  
wine of grape  
and even more to come...

A whole world to come  
With more of the good things  
And none of the bad,  
With all the rewards,  
And none of the strife,  
With all the glories  
Of life without death...  
Life everlasting...

Group I: A beautiful story.

A fond hope.

A lovely dream.

Is there man alive that wants to die?

"God wouldn't do that to me!

It's thinking rationally that counts." said the son.

And so saying, dreamed up what amounts to be

The nicest, most fantastic

Deal on death he could devise...strictly temporary,

And for a God who is contemporary

Out of the question

And quite impossible.

Group II: Man fancied God building him a paradise where he might spend the rest of eternity. A heavenly home for the aged, in fact, for all ages. Whereupon heaven grew so crowded and uncivil that precious little of the race could find a place there and only those with special grace would be admitted. Man was addicted to property values and "the right kind of people," both upstairs and down, which addictions put grave restrictions on many a brother and sister and damned any number of unoffending ancestors.



Group I: Then there was the problem of the angels. Men thought so much about them that they began to see them, count them, and categorize them like plants or butterflies or varieties of milkweed. Bad enough when one man bleeds another out of life forever! But the angels? Neither wing nor feather saved them from the unscrupulous fantasy of men. They ran the hosts of heaven into a western union - a wireless service of the ancient world (since God had not invented a man named Marconi). Believing the old adage that he who lies most lies best, men assaulted God, dressing Him up in their image, making Him an old man with a long white beard sitting in a big chair. And all around crawled tamed Babylonian monsters in perfect submission to God, whom they encountered in a book called Genesis. So man put God to work sending messages to earth through the wireless but winged angels of heaven. (Man not having trained the pigeons as yet.) After some millenia had passed a group of angels grew tired of the whole affair and struck for better wages and fringe benefits. This heavenly walkout was written up by an Englishman named John Milton who somehow got wind of the whole business and set

it down in a book called Paradise Lost, by which title you may gather that the strike was a total failure and the Union of Angels and Other Heavenly Creatures, Associated went straight to Hell, from which they never returned.

But as it turns out, God is what He is, not what man wishes Him to be.

You can make a chest from a tree

But it won't grow after that,

And after all,

One can't expect those kinds of miracles,

Never could,

And really

Never should.

Group II: Moses asked God who He was. And perhaps he had more right than any of us. He certainly got closer than most. And because of his proximity, was curious all the more. So he asked God for a straight answer. He really tried to find a simple answer for a simple question. But the Deity (who was, after all, a Jewish God) replied: "I am that I am," and let it go at that.

So man is left alone with himself,

Left alone to devise life and law,

Rule and ethic to help him to  
More fully be himself,  
For all the cries of heaven and hell,  
Sin and salvation,  
One thing's sure...  
Man dies...  
All the rest is fantasy and lies,  
To cheat the mind  
And charm the children,  
But now that winter's on the line  
And the lure of spring is past  
(Though it may come again)  
Man trades summer's promise for autumn's truth

Group I: All things die...  
We cannot feed on fantasy  
We must not teach the lie  
That cheats the mind  
And charms the children  
But face the one thing sure...  
I die...  
All the rest is fantasy and lie.

Group II: When all the wise talk is done,  
And the sages are locked up in books and boxes,  
When each man...

barked and rooted in the soil of his season  
green-leaved and laughing in the summer of his  
days

grows stiff and still and rigorous  
And dying in a blaze of color,  
Entering the final Fall,  
The last descent to death,  
When all illusions drop away  
(immortal green to mortal brown)  
And man lies crisp and brittle,  
Fallen to the ground  
For fuel  
Before the fires  
Of a dying life...

Group I: (in the voice of a huckster eager to sell his  
product:)

Man astride a continent of concrete structures  
and steel beams,  
Builder of ships and planes,  
Farmer of the deeps,  
Invader of space and time,  
Trusting in test-tubes and television,  
IBM's and giant computers,  
What can't man do?

Group II: Man cannot live forever,  
He may regulate the weather  
And the water-courses,  
Train the horses,  
Build the waste-places  
And turn the fertile plains to stone,  
Barricade himself in bone-bleached, sprawling  
cities  
Marqueed against the dark,  
Make the wilderness a city park  
For children old and young,  
And boldly shut the lighted sky  
And endless space from sight...  
No denying man's ability,  
But there's that liability that ties us to our  
nature  
Regardless of endeavor...  
NO MAN CAN LIVE FOREVER.

Group I: For all our talk of estrangement from nature  
We're never far from it.  
The soil sings a siren's song  
And before too long  
Brings us down to earth again,  
From hospitals, highways, free-and-clear homes  
And four-room-flats

We all come back to the ground of our being  
The source from which we flow  
To which we will return...

Group II: In the burning flames,  
By the crackling fire of our lives,  
Under the Sukkah of leaves and twigs  
And ripened fruit,  
The harvest of the season  
And all our years,  
We face our fears together,  
man and hut...  
stem and nut...  
leaf and hair...  
twig and toe...  
bark and skin...  
child and fruit...  
heart and root and harvest-time  
Are one as God  
Nor will the seasons halt

Group I: I searched for myself in the lamp-lit nights on  
city streets. I looked for myself in the cars  
and subways, tobacco shops and office buildings  
of the great metropolis. I frantically snatched  
for myself in my home with its noises of wife and

children. I sought myself vacationing beside an ocean or in the thin air of mountain resorts. I wanted to find out who I was, aside from the public image, the glad hand, and the cracked smile. In all these places I found other people, other things, but never myself alone.

(Congregation joins hands)

Now, in the chill air of autumn night, before a fire crackling at the sky, under a Sukkah booth, I see myself at last. I see myself in the flames of the fire that cannot be touched; in the sparks that fly up and are extinguished; in the smoke of the fire, that drifts away in the night; in the trembling of the booth. I am the nothingness of the fire, a swift-dying spark in time present; and I am the frailty of the booth...the fading leaf, the drying branch, the ripening fruit, the growing and the dying, the something becoming nothing at all...

Group II: We are temporary...

Our hopes and fears

Our laughter and our tears

Now muffled,

Now drying on our cheeks



Or dammed up behind our eyes,  
Not wise and willful now are we  
But thoughtful,  
Quiet at our swift demise,  
Dying fire,  
Harvest booth  
And we  
Are one...

Group I: The fire dies,  
But in its dying  
Casts a heat  
And gives a glow  
That warms the body  
And the heart of man.

The fire dies,  
But in its dying  
Does what it must and can  
For beauty and for use  
And gives itself a truth to live by...

Group II: The booth is frail,  
An interweaving of things  
Plucked up from the bed of their becoming  
And drying on to die,  
But in their death they live to shelter,

One who happens by,  
Fragile though the booth may be  
In spite of temporality  
There is a glory in its shelter  
And the quiet of its mood,  
In it, our ancestors ate  
And under it they slept  
After the sweat of harvest toil,  
And praised the God that gave them  
Harvest work for sweat  
And Sukkah booth for rest...

Group I: The fire dies,  
The booth dries,  
And man completes the harvest trinity.  
  
For every one  
A use, a purpose and a good,  
The fire of a man,  
The glow of a man,  
The light in his eyes  
And the love...

Group II: And man is the booth,  
The gleanings of a harvest  
Woven together on a moral frame,

And just as any other booth,  
He has his truth to live by:  
Shelter, shade and fruit  
To those who pass his way,  
Sit awhile, and are gone.

Only for a little while,  
Laughter and tear,  
Friendship and love...  
It's never forever.  
So let us be wise, or clever, stupid or smart,  
But let us have a heart to care  
And mind to know  
That as we go  
So all men go  
The way of fire, booth and friend,  
All pointed toward the self-same end  
Which makes the going there what counts...

Man lights the fire, builds the booth  
And makes himself  
The only kind of truth he has.  
He lights a life, a wife, a friend,  
Gives shelter, shade and sense to things,  
Aware of what existence brings...  
A nothingness to face and live

Not spite the void

But cause of it.

(The following is said in silent meditation; the music of the chalice is heard in the background:)

What of it if we live to die

When through our booth

The filtered sky

Swings on and by and burning out,

There's life in it,

Without a doubt

Group II: Though stars are lit and then blown out,

The cosmic powder's swirled about;

From World to World rebounds the shout:

THERE'S LIFE IN IT WITHOUT A DOUBT

Group I: So while we're lit with life and love

Give thanks to God, below, above

And care to man before he's out,

There's life in him,

Without a doubt

Group II: We're here!

We've got a chance at living!

That's all the getting,

Now, for giving

Man a hand when we're about,  
There's life in us,  
Without a doubt

All: Then we pluck our harvest fruit  
From autumn ground and human root  
When round about the Sukkah frame  
We carve, with fortitude, our name  
Scatter lustily our seed  
And trust eternity with children  
Standing in our place,  
When harvest calls  
Another race of men  
To sow and reap  
And face themselves and hope  
That children's children build their booth  
And seizing all we know of truth  
say: "Life's a blessing after all  
and while it lasts."

So here's to life...L'CHAYIM! L'CHAYIM!  
To a fonder hope and a sweeter dream  
And through our harvest fruit  
A claim to life and love  
And blessing of the seeds we sow:  
"Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam,

Boray p'ree Ha-etz.

We bless God, Master of the Universe, creator of  
the fruit of the ground. We bless man, grand-  
child of the universe,

Who inhabits the earth,

Who reaps the fruit of his harvest...

love and life and peace for evermore...

Shalom...Shalom...Shalom."

(Fruit is distributed and eaten.)

Footnotes

1. Union Prayer Book, page 85; Service For Hanukah, Psalm XXX.
2. Song, Ani Ma-amin, from The Jewish Center Songster, published by the Jewish Welfare Board.
3. Song, Ashray Ha-gafrur from Songs of Struggle, published by Hechalutz-Hatzair Organization of America.
4. Union Prayer Book, pages 118-119.
5. New Jewish Publication Society translation of the Torah; Exodus, 27:20.
6. Music of The Shema, from Ernst Bloch's Sacred Service.
7. Adapted from page 24 of the Union Prayer Book.
8. From I, Maccabees.



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