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AN INQUIRY INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIGH HOLYDAYS FOR REFORM JEWS

Joseph Goldman

Thesis submitted in partial fullfillment
of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters Degree
and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Cincinnati, Ohio

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Referee: Professor Robert L. Katz

DIGEST OF THESIS

This thesis is devoted to the study of,1) the impulses which motivate the Reform Jew to attend worship services on the High Holydays, 2) the meaning that the Reform Jew derives from the Holyday experience. Involved in this study were, 1) a reading of selected texts dealing with the patterns of Judaism in America; a text on personal religion; selected readings in secondary sources dealing with the major themes and ideas of the High Holydays as reflected in rabbinic literature, 2) research conducted on a sample of 23 individuals, and 3) an interpretation of the findings of the research.

The literature available that discussed the patterns of Jewish religious observance is chiefly concerned with the group. No literature is available that is concerned with the Jewish individual. Guide lines and hypotheses were developed from the readings, from the writer's casual observations, and from a recorded interview of a local respondent.

A completion test type of projective technique was developed from the hypotheses. This instrument was the keystone of the interview. It was the only standard aspect to the interview. The interviews were conducted in depth. The respondents were permitted to freely associate and discuss the reponses aroused by the completion test. The interviews were recorded on tape, and a transcript of each interview prepared.

The data was classified under two main headlines: The Psychology of the High Holyday Experience, and the Sociology of the High

Holyday Experience. Two other groupings were also utilized: The Family Orientation to Religious Life, and Symbols and Institutions. The most significant of the findings of the study are the following:

1. The most significant motivations to attend services are derived from the society.

   a. It is the thing that Jews do because they are Jews.

   b. It is done to gain approval of non-Jews.

   c. It is done because of conditioning through happy childhood associations. Negative childhood associations are negated by the effects of society.

   d. It is done to set an example for one's children.

2. The second area of motivation is derived from the inner experiences of the individual.

   a. It is the time for individual self-scrutiny.

   b. It is an occasion when Jewishly derived guilt can be alleviated.

   c. It is an occasion when guilt feelings derived from the parental relationships can be alleviated, or lessened.

"to Helen"

For Being my Wife

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Particular gratitude is due the referee, Dr. Robert L. Katz, Professor of Human Relations. His interest, his advice and counsel were of continuing support. He has been both teacher and friend.

To Mrs. Mack Singer, for her careful typing of this manuscript, for her unusual patience and warm understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rabbis and laymen alike are aware that the High Holydays possess a special significance for the Jew. In the Fall of every year, Holyday worshippers become overflow crowds at divine services that are conducted in temples, synagogues, and in halls and buildings, rented just for that occasion. Jews who do not attend any other worship during the year would not consider being absent from services on those days. What is the attraction of this moment in the religious calendar of the Jew? What are the impulses that brings the Jew to the House of Worship at this time?

There is no body of literature which explains this phenomenon. The biblical and post-biblical literature contains no sections dealing with the "High Holyday Jew". We believe that the answer lies in the examination of contemporary Jewish life. We recognize that the modern Jew derives meaning from the Holyday experience. We want to understand something of the sociological and psychological forces, which we believe contribute to this meaning. We are interested in, so far as it is possible to observe, the total Jewish personality. We believe that his tradition, his history, his family life, his social, and his economic position are aspects of this problem -- that hey each contribute to the significance derived from this yearly exposure to the institutions of his religion.

This thesis is a report of a study of the significance of the High Holydays to American Reform Jews. It is not concerned with conclusive proofs or generalizations, although occasionally some generalizations are made. Our aim is to produce some threads of

knowledge, which may, at a later time, be woven into a fabric of understanding.

Our anchor for the present is the happenings of the past. In the following pages we shall review the important themes and practices that have traditionally been a part of the Holyday observance. We shall indicate the effect these themes and practices have on contemporary observance. We shall note the influence of family, and the presence of particular sociological and psychological factors. To the extent that particular religious symbols and institutions play a role, this role will be discussed. Our concluding chapter will contain a summary of our findings along with our interpretations and suggestions.

CHAPTER II

THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

The Beginnings

The latest addition to the calendar of Jewish Religious holidays is the combined holy period of Rosh Hashanoh and Yom Kippur. These days are known in Jewish life as "Days of Awe". They came into being sometime during that hazy period of Jewish History known as the Early Rabbinic period. By the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, in the year 70 C.E., their skeletal structure had been well defined.

We are not certain of either the origin of Rosh Hashanoh, or of Yom Kippur. We know that they have existed in some form for several thousand years. The Jews of old, began their year in the fall. T. Gaster believes that the First of Tishri, "was simply the beginning of a preliminary festal period." This period began in a spirit of austerity. "This was expressed by various abstinences and taboos, and by a partial suspension of the normal order of life".[1] At some moment in history, a new conception was added. This was the idea of purification and of atonement. "The tenth of Tishri was set aside as the "Yom Ha-Kippurim". It was distinguished by ceremonies designed to cleanse the community of sin, and contagion — to remove evil influences".[2] Only a suggestion of these ceremonies, is given by the biblical literature.

The bible speaks of holy convocations. "A memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns;" "a day when atonement shall be made to cleanse you. From all your sins shall you be clean from before the Lord".[3] What did the Jew do on these Holy Days? How did he worship? The bible describes a variety of sacrificial rites. The talmudic

literature is more specific. In the pages of this ancient record, the reader may see how a people assembled for the purpose of confrontation with the Divine.

The days of the Holyday period were days "set aside". No work was permitted. The individual was expected to "afflict his soul". The community participated in an elaborate ritual, conducted by members of the priesthood. The most exhalted moment of the ten day period came on the afternoon of Yom Kippur. It was then that the High Priest made atonement for himself, and for the members of the community. Prayers and sacrifices were part of the ceremony, but the major vehicle of atonement was the scaregoat. A goat was placed before the High Priest, and the sins of the community were figuratively, bundled upon his back. The animal was then driven into the wilderness, or over a steep cliff to his death. This rite was not intended to symbolize a vicarious atonement. T. Gaster has pointed out that the intent was not to transfer blame or responsibility to the goat. "The issue was one of getting rid of the miasma of transgression"[4] which the individual and the community freely acknowledged.

When the goat had vanished from the scene, the High Priest entered the "Holy of Holies", intoned the ineffable Name, and came forth to offer an animal sacrifice. Only at that moment did the congregation feel relief from their transgressions.

During the long years of Jewish life, the meaning and significance of these holy days, sprouted beyond their primitive conceptions to engulf the ideas and aspirations of a people seeking an ethical Monotheism. These aspirations were expressed through yearning for the brotherhood

of the entire human family; for the acknowledgement of the Divine sovereignty over earthly creatures. These themes however, never became more than secondary. The essence of the days was a striving by man, with God's help, to alleviate sinfullness from the human soul. Many of the rites and practices, were retained in the spiritual economy, by a people convinced of their efficacy. We are concerned with sketching some of these significant rites, and lasting ideas.

Rosh Hashanoh

Rosh Hashanoh is regarded as the Yom Ha-Din. "On this day, all who enter the world pass before the Heavenly Judge like troops in review, or like sheep beneath the shepherds's crook. God opens the great book, and records the fate of each, according to his deserts. Who is to live, and who is to die"?[5] This was the great question of the day. One came to worship with a sense of foreboding. How could the individual be certain of what was in store for him? Yet, with the sense of foreboding, there was a great feeling of hope. The Heavenly Father was a God of Mercy. Redemption was possible for all. This belief is expressed through the tradition that on Rosh Hashanoh, three books were opened by the Divine Judge. "One for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly pious, and the third for the large intermediate class. The fate of the wicked, and the pious are decided on the spot. The former for death, and the latter for life. The destiny of the intermediate class is suspended until the Day of Atonement. Then the fate of every man is sealed."[6]

Obviously, no member of any congregation was ever included among the thoroughly pious or thoroughly wicked. Therefore, every man, no matter his sinfulness, possessed an opportunity to be inscribed in the book of life. If he would repent, he could be restored to God. The day of Judgement held forth the promise of rebirth.

While the Rosh Hashanoh is considered as the Yom Ha-Din, it is also a Yom Ha-B're-shes. It is the anniversary of the creation of the world, and of it's yearly renewal. Gaster phrases it well:

> "The world is reborn from year to year, even, in an extended sense, from day to day, and from minute to minute. The primary message of the festival, is that the process of creation is continuous, that the breath of God moves constantly upon the face of the waters, and that light is continually being brought out of darkness". [7]

Mankind was not merely to make note of this anniversary. His task was to learn that the process of creation, is implicitly, a process of regeneration. During the ten days, life would be renewed, for the third book is not sealed until Yom. Kippur.

The Liturgy -- Rosh Hashanoh

The liturgy of the Day is longer than the normal Sabbath Service. The distinguishing feature of the ritual is the sounding of the Shofar. This occurs at three intervals during the service. Each occurence follows the recitation of a significant liturgical insertion. These excerpts are known as "Malkioth" (Kingship-verses) Zichronoth (Memorial verses) and Shofaroth (Shofar verses). They are respectively, associated with the kingship of God, the recollection of past sins and transgressions, and the remembrances of past deliverances. Idelsohn points out the reasons that Sadia gave for the blowing of the Shofar:

> "1. To proclaim the sovereignty of God on the anniversary of creation.
> 2. To stir the people to repentance.
> 3. To remind the people of the revelation on Mt. Sinai.
> 4. To remind us of the messages of the prophets..

5. To remind us of the destruction of the Temple.
6. To remind us of Isaac's sacrifice.
7. The sound of the shofar causes the human heart to tremble.
8. To remind us of the Day of Judgement.
9. To remind us of the blasts of the shofar of redemption, which the Messiah will sound.
10. To remind us of the resurrection".[6]

Interspersed through the services are a number of hymns and prayers. These reflect the ideas expressed in the Shofar service, and tend to reinforce them. The most famous of these poems is the Unsanneh Tokef. This poem "recites the grandeur and majesty of the great day of Judgement, when the sovereignty of God is reasserted from year to year, and when He sits upon his heavenly throne to judge both the host on high and the families of mankind on earth".[9] Another theme which is constantly expressed is that of the immutability of God and the mortality of man.

The Kittel

"It was customary, during the morning services of the festival, for all of the adult males to wear a long white outer garment, known as the kittel".[10] This garment symbolized purity. It was hoped, that while one's sins before the holydays were "as scarlet", they would be "as snow" at the end of the Holyday period. The kittel was also the attire in which the pious Jew was buried. Accordingly, the association with death, at a moment when life was desired, added to the solemnity of the moment. It helped to point up the theme of divine judgement, which is emphasized on Rosh Hashonah. The kittel was used homiletically, by the rabbis. Many sermons point out that all Jews wear this garment because all men stand on equal footing before God.

Tashlich

Uppermost in the minds of the Jew, as the holydays began, was the alleviation of sin. Many rites and ceremonies evolved to further this aim. Tashlich, is one of the most popular of these. It took place usually on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanoh. The entire community would gather at the bank of a nearby river, then recite the prayers of the Tashlich. These prayers derive their name from the passage in the Book of Micah, which begins with the words, V'sashlich, (And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea).[11] The recitation of prayers was followed by the shaking or brushing of one's pockets into the stream. This shaking was equated with the casting off of one's sins into the stream. It was a practice whereby one rid himself of his sins. Many rabbis objected to this mode of worship. They argued that it was a form of idolatry. Yet, the practice continued, with attempts to re-invest it's primitive origins with some more lasting religious value.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish Religious Calendar. Jewish literature abounds with expressions which speak of the significance and import of the day. Dr. M. Gaster, quoted by Idelsohn, gathers this significance in one terse comment:

> "It has been established for the purpose of bringing home to us the consciousness of human weakness and frailty, of sins and transgressions, and by means of self imposed afflictions and repentance, to turn us from the evil ways which we have pursued in the course of the year, and to lead us, through prayers and confessions to the gates of heaven, there to obtain mercy and forgiveness. It is thus a day which begins with physical mortification and ends with spiritual exhaltation. For can there be a greater spiritual joy....than to have left behind the pangs and remorse of sin, and to have

> reached the haven of rest, the calm of purification and of spiritual contentment."[12]

Thus, the central theme of Yom Kippur deals with the atonement of sin. This includes the atonement of the sin of the individual and the sin of the community. Dr. T. Gaster, asserts that the essential aspect of the Holyday was the fact that the Atonement had to be performed in the presence of God. "The people had to be cleansed, not for themselves, but for God".[13] For the individual, it was a dredging up from one's bowels the fact of his estrangement from God. During the rabbinic period the whole idea of sin deepened. "It was no longer regarded as a breaking away from the original sinless state of man, as the child of God, which state must be restored."[14]

The restoration of this state was effected through atonement. Atonement was achieved through an expiation of thought, and a reparation of deed. Tradition held that sin was of a two fold character. There were transgressions which were committed against God. There were sinful acts committed against men. These later transgressions required the forgiveness of the injured party before atonement was possible. The stress was upon the undoing of the sinful act. Thus the Talmud demandingly asserts:

> "If a man steals a beam, and uses it in a building, he must tear down the building in order to restore the stolen thing to its owner".[15]

While the ethical implications of sinfulness against man are delineated, the emphasis of the day speaks of the relationship between man and God. It was believed that the regeneration of man, in terms of his relationship between himself and God, could be achieved by earnest petition through an expiation of thought. This was achieved

by means of a dialogue between man and God. It required an awareness of the sinful act, or at least an understanding that man was capable of sinfulness. The individual had to probe his innards. He had to call his sinful acts to mind, and then expiate them.

The Widdui

The recitation of the "Widdui," the great outward confession of sin, was the vehicle through which this was accomplished. The "Widdui" is deeply serious. It is an expression of "self-reproach, shame, and contrition".[16] It is intended to assist the individual in his self-examination. It compels a sense of humility and remorse. Its "essential purpose is to regret the past, and commit oneself not to return to that folly again in the future. 'For even if a man fast frequently, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and perform every known type of chastisement, if he has not taken it upon himself not to return to his sin - behold, he is as one who takes a ritual bath while holding an unclean reptile in his hands'".[17]

The Penitential Deed

The confessional dialogue serves as a catharsis. The individual would show himself wherein he had erred, and rid himself of his feelings of guilt. However, the mere confession was not sufficient to make the individual feel that he had fully appeased his Creator. Man had to come to this confessional with a certain state of mind. Man had to do something, give up something, punish himself in some manner. In this way one's prayers might be certain of being heard.

It might be plausible to relate this need for deed, to the ancient practice of animal sacrifice. It might also be associated with the early conception of the scapegoat - the desire to rid oneself and one's

community of the miasma of transgressions. Then too, there was the great biblical tradition which demanded that one should afflict one's soul.

Accordingly, the rigorous fast, Makkos, Kapporos, were concrete tangible forms - an attempt to flay the conscience, to bring one's mind and body to that condition when absolution could be granted. In the less primitive communities, charity became the deed. It was considered to hold an efficacy greater than the other modes. Tradition concretizes the meaning of Yom Kippur with the phrase:

> "Prayer, penitence, and charity serve to avert the severe decree".[18]

Prayer is the confession, the bringing to awareness. Penitence is the determination to change one's ways so as not to fall again into error. Charity is the deed. The affirmation of one's guilt. The visible symbol of the desire to regain the original sinless state. These are the external processes. "God is portrayed as working upon us".[19]

The Liturgy

Yom Kippur

The services of the Yom Kippur has been considered by Idelsohn as "the climax of Jewish Worship".[20] In the center of the older liturgy is the confession of sins. "For we are not so bold and stiff-necked to say to Thee, We are righteous and have not sinned. For verily we have sinned...May it be Thy will that we sin no more; be pleased to purge away my past sins, according to Thy great mercy".[21] This idea of renouncing one's sins, seeking forgiveness, and vowing to lead a clean life is emphasized on Yom Kippur. On these days the Jew puts

aside the mundane aspects of life, and attempts to elevate himself and draw near to God. Thus the day was entirely devoted to prayer and meditation. The services were interrupted only for the reading of portions from the Torah and the prophetic literature. Special symbols, the shofar on Rosh Hashanoh, Kol Nidre, and the Un'saneh Tokef contributed substantially to the emotional impact of the day.

The liturgy reflects the yearning and the strivings of the Jew. As such it speaks of his ideals, and of the modes and means by which he would sanctify life:

> "The sovereignty of God over all creatures, the brotherhood of the human family, the revelation of the Divine spirit to man, the providence of God, the concept of reward and punishment, the restoration of the Jewish People, and the sanctuary in Zion, where a center of enlightenment for mankind shall be created".[22]

The traditional melodies with their plaintive tones, create the awesome mood in which the individual and the community must stand, in the uncertainty of its fate. Foremost among these melodies is the Kol Nidre.

Kol Nidre

The Kol Nidre has been a great force in the liturgy of the High Holydays.[23] The familiar plaintive melody dates back to about 1500. It is entwined historically with both legend and law. Tradition ascribes its meaning to the Marranos, who voiced this petition in earnest desire to free themselves from the vows of their conversion to Christianity. It has been a passage against which the rabbis of old preached, and made stern interdiction. It is as T. Gaster writes; "the first movement of a devotional symphony which increases in momentum from minute to minute throughout the day".[24] Its essence is an abjuration of vows. Its mood, one of exalted solemnity, generating

"warmth and tenderness, and arousing all the hidden religious feelings and longings of man".[25]

The Days of Awe

One need not question the uniqueness of Rosh Hashanoh and Yom Kippur. There is much that can distinguish them. Yet, they speak so clearly of a single mood, that they are grouped in tradition, as the Days of Awe, or the Ten Great Days. Because of the absence of all pleasure and amusements, the individual can more easily concentrate on self scrutiny and introspection. A sense of solemnity is introduced. The individual questions his actions and ponders his fate. This feeling is not suddenly imposed. It builds up slowly moving to a crescendo of emotional fervor. Schauss captures this fervor in his description of Jewish Life in a small community:

> "The life of the town goes on as ordinarily. But it is easy to see that the Jews are more pious. Certain petty sins, common the year around are now closely guarded against. People pray more carefully, and those with more time remain in the Bes Hamidrash to recite Psalms, to study a chapter of Mishnah, or other religious or devotional books".[26]

The climax of the pre-Holyday fervor is reached on the week when S'lichos are said. The practice varies from community to community. It is common to have them begin shortly after midnight on the Saturday before Rosh Hashanoh. They may also begin at dawn. They consist of special supplicatory psalms and prayers. "The grace of God is always besought by virtue of his express assurance to Moses that He is a Lord merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and ready to acquit the guilty. The repetition of these words, as a prelude to the formal confession of sin, is, in fact, a statutory element of the services in all of its many recensions".[27]

High Holydays Differ From Other Festivals

Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur differ in mood and in atmosphere from other Jewish festivals. They possess only a trace of joy. The mood conveys a suggestion of heavy moral responsibility. The particular tone of the Holydays reflects the life experiences of the Jew, throughout history. This was the yearly moment when he confronted his Maker and sought to be spiritually at one with Him. Essentially, the cause of this difference was idealogical. Yet the practice of the Holydays was also a contributing factor. They were not home festivals. To be sure, there was the festive meal on Rosh Hashonah, perhaps the bread and honey for the children. Yet the environment of the Holydays was the synagogue. The event is to effect the individual, but only as he was a part of the community. The liturgy reflects this, through the constant phrasing of the prayers in the first person plural. Accordingly, it was through the media of the synagogue, the prayerbook and the worship service, that the grand aims and ideas of the holiday were most clearly expressed.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

At the beginning of this investigation, letters were sent to a group of prominent rabbis, sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Our purpose was to obtain certain guide lines for our research. While certain works, such as those by Sklare, Glazer, and Herberg[1] deal with the religion of the American Jew, their emphasis is on the group, rather than on the individual. Accordingly, we believe that a sense of direction could be obtained from these men who possessed a wealth of personal knowledge and experience. Their replies were of limited value. Their general observations added nothing that our own speculation had not provided. An exception to this was the excellent article by Rabbi Henry Kagan.[2]

Our second step was to delve into the standard literature dealing with the themes and practices of Rosh Hashanoh and Yom Kippur. Our reading of this material had two purposes. First, to weigh these traditional themes and practices in the light of our speculations regarding their contemporary application. Second, for the purpose of sketching a broad picture of the most significant ideas and practices. This sketch forms one of the chapters of this thesis.

We supplemented this reading with Gordon Allport's "The Individual and His Religion."[3] Then, drawing from the insights gained through our readings, and some speculations derived from our experience as a student rabbi, we prepared a list of hypotheses. In order to complete this list of hypotheses, we arranged for a pilot interview with one of the residents of the community. The interview was recorded on tape,

and a transcript made. This transcript was then studied, and appropriate adjustment of the hypotheses was made.

The Completion Test

We decided to make use of a formal testing instrument. A questionaire was too direct. We desired some type of projective technique. Accordingly, we made use of a completion test. We formulated an instrument with twenty eight items. The outline of the areas included as follows:

A. Identification with the Jewish Community

B. Identification with the Family

C. Psychological Factors

D. Sociological Factors

E. Religious symbols and institutions

We anticipated that certain of the completion items would stimulate responses that would not be related to these areas. However, we were not interested in a statistical analysis, but in some pattern of response. A copy of the completion test instrument is in Appendix A. This instrument did not require any standard procedure in terms of application. And it was not so long as to be a burden to the respondent. The instrument was administered to twenty three responents. The average time for the completion of the test was twenty two minutes. With the exception of respondent (A-21-M), the interview followed immediately upon the completion of the test.

The Interview

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents.

Generally two hours were allowed for each interview. (This included the time spent on the completion test). On several occasions (respondents A-2-F and A-19-M) this period of time was extended to three hours. We believed that important nuances of speech would be lost if we attempted to write up the interview at home after the actual session. Yet, note taking during the session seemed equally inadequate. Therefore, each interview was recorded on tape, and transcripts of the sessions made. In only a few of the sessions did it appear that the recorder acted to inhibit conversation. Generally speaking, after the opening few minutes, the respondents became unmindful of the microphone.

The procedure during the interview was as follows. We would spend about five or ten minutes in a "warm up" session. Then we administered the completion test. While the respondents were engaged with the test, I would set up the recorder. When the test was completed, we would scan the answers. Our aim was to initiate the conversation with a discussion of one of the statements that had not evoked any deep response. We would read the statement and his response, For example, "A High Holyday sermon usually". Frequently, this recitation, followed by a pause and an inquiring expression by the writer would be sufficient to induce the respondent to speak. At other times, more direction would be required.

We attempted to maintain a relatively unstructured interview setting. The respondents would frequently begin the interview on one question, and then recall associations which would lead into other areas. If these other areas appeared to possess some relevance, we

would make no effort to direct the respondent to a specific question. At times the discussion would cover material that had no connection with the Holydays. However, since we believed that the true feelings of the respondent could be revealed, the process of free association was allowed to continue. There were occasions, when due to the shortage of time, or the wanderings of the associations, that direction was given.

The major disadvantage of this technique was a mechanical one. It required a considerable expenditure of time to compare the material from the interview, with the material from the completion test. Then too, since the hour of time was controlled by the size of the tape, we would frequently be unable to complete a discussion of the completion statements. The loss here was not apparent until we had reached the analysis of the material. However, these disadvantages may have been overshadowed by the additional freedom of expression the respondents obtained.

The interviews were begun six days after the end of Yom Kippur. The last interview was completed seven weeks after the end of Yom Kippur. This time lapse may account for the lack of specific liturgical references on the part of the respondents. Since this lapse cannot be measured in terms of effect, we would suggest that a tighter interview schedule would have been better from the standpoint of procedure.

The Sample

The respondents were selected on a random basis. Half of them were known personally by the writer. The remainder were known to the

advisor, at least by name. We attempted to obtain an equal ratio of males and females. The age distribution included samples from seventeen to seventy five years. All of the respondents were member s of a Reform Temple. In several instances they also held memberships in a Conservative Synagogue. The respondents were business and professional people. Several were housewives, and one was a high school student. The majority of them were second generation Reform Jews. None had been affiliated with a temple for less than ten years. Most of the respondents were graduates of colleges, and, or , of professional schools. They resided in middle or upper middle class neighborhoods. They had all resided in this Mid-Western community of 25,000 Jews, for a minimum period of fifteen years.

Analysis of Materials

The transcripts of the interviews were typed on "ditto" sheets. Several copies of each interview were made. The interviews were read at least twice. On the second, or later reading, the writer would codify any pertinent information on the margin of the transcript. The transcripts were then cut into sections. Each coded section was filed in an appropriate file. The main categories of this file provided the materials in the four chapters of the thesis entitled, Family Orientation to Religion, Psychology of the High Holydays, Sociology of the High Holydays, and Symbols and Institutions of the High Holydays. Each category was then re-examined in comparison with a tentative outline of the category. Certain sub-divisions were combined. Others were held in abeyance for lack of relevance to the

subject. (An example of this is the discussion of the religious school. This discussion was felt by the writer to be beyond the scope of this thesis).

Throughout the pages of the thesis, we shall attempt to analyze certain of the reactions of the respondents. The selections that are presented are not intended to be typical. As we shall repeatedly state, our aim is not to pronounce generalizations. It is to gain insight. Frequently, the analysis of the selections will appear subjective, and inconclusive. It is to be remembered that this paper is to be an inquiry into the problem.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY ORIENTATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religious training begins at home. A child learns his theology while lying next his mother's bosom. This thought sums up the value that the Jew has historically placed upon the home environment in the raising of his children. For "if one will train up a child on the way that he should go, then even when he is old, he will not depart from it".[1]

Contemporary Jewish homelife in America no longer follows the biblical proverb in the area of precise and quantitative religious instruction. However, the role of the parents as teachers, and the concept of the home as the vineyard of attitudes and ideas, stimuli and habit forming experiences, has not been totally assigned to some third party. Therefore, we can expect to find in the home, as indeed we do find, a rich variety of experience. Childhood associations point to the parents and the home as a prime force in the motivation of that meaning that the liberal Jew derives from the High Holydays.

The Childhood Associations

"Children love the ceremonies and the customs of religion. It paints a picture for them".[2] This is the voice of an adult recalling the pleasant experiences of the High Holydays when she was a child. She remembered that "anyone coming into the house was always greeted with a Happy New Year".[3] She thrilled when her "father would come out and sing some of the songs appropriate to that particular holiday".[4]

She was one of the fifteen respondents who anticipated the approach of Rosh Hashonah. This was to be a "happy day". A day when

a child might share the warm awesomeness of the temple, by cuddling close to her mother in the family pew. Occasionally sending up proud smiles to her father "who always sat on the pulpit".[5] A day when an active child, might "have his greatest fun, playing with friends and cousins in vacant Sunday School rooms".[6] Happy children, secure in the knowledge that their parents were "inside doing what adults are supposed to do".[7] To be sure, every happy experience did not consist of listening to father sing, nor to "wiping little hands which had become encrusted with sticky honey".[8] Others were often less dramatic, reflecting perhaps the only two days in the year "when there was a specific technical or mechanical religious linkage",[9] between the parents and the child. Yet even this "mechanical linkage" made "this" day different - better. For it was a time that a family was together. It was a time of oneness. It was a time that all trials, all differences were put aside. "It was an entirely different time for the entire family".[10]

Several of the respondents recalled Holyday happenings which were specifically unhappy ones. This sadness appears to have endowed the holydays with particular significance. "For Yom Kippur was not a Holy Day for me until the time when my father was sick. Then I was so sorry that I couldn't touch food at all".[11] Describing this example as sad is to convey our awareness that many adults possess strong holiday associations that were not so glowingly happy. This particular association does in fact possess a feeling of personal guilt. The guilt having been evoked by a failure on the part of the respondent to

confess and seek forgiveness for some other minor sin. His sorrow is in reality his feeling that he was to blame for his father's illness. Such guilt feelings will be more thoroughly investigated in the chapter on the Psychology of the Holydays. Another example of this guilt feeling and this sadness is found in respondent A-3-F, p.1.

Several of the respondents recalled holyday associations which reflected conflict between parents in terms of the mode of observation. The fathers were educated in the cult of intellectual Socialism - agnostics who viewed the ritual as meaningless and sectarian. They preferred the universal attitude as prescribed by the quotation of Micah.[12]

Only for two of the respondents were the recollections of the Holydays established through non-observance. The parents belonged to temple but they never attended. "Mother did not like to go, and father always said that he was too busy".[13] This particular respondent had no formal religious training. His parents were long established in this country. He lived in a neighborhood which contained a sprinkling of Jewish families, and he went to school on both Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. It may be significant that in his own home, his family attend Temple on the Holydays, and occasionally during the year. An almost perfect parallel to this mode of observance was respondent A-5-M. "As a child, Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur meant nothing. I didn't even know what they were".[14] This respondent was not able to explain how his parents had "gotten away from religion"[15] "They had the training, and the family tradition". The grandfather had been an officer in one of the institutions of the Reform movement.

Presently, this respondent and his family are affiliated with one of the local temples, where his children "are getting religious training which is something that"[16] he has come to feel is necessary.

The stimulus which scores a child's memory may be one of spiritual depth. It may also be one that appears superficial. This is the case of A-13-M. He recalls that the Holydays were filled with fasting, restrictions, and "abstinence of food, water, and all forms of pleasure".[17] For him the Holydays were devoid of meaning. He felt this way because he believes that the exhalted values of which the Holydays speak, are too difficult for the child to remember. He recalls, too, that "in his parents home Rosh Hashonah was the time for the new fall outfits. Everyone had to dress up in order to look nicer than their neighbor whom they might meet in schul or temple".[18]

Rosh Hashonah is considered to be a Holyday, but a happy one. Yom Kippur is conceived as a day of considerable solemnity. For most of the respondents, this additional solemnity did not eliminate the happiness of the occasion. Nevertheless, it was a day that was more holy. This additional holiness can be attributed to three factors. The liturgy for the day is longer. There is a recollection of fasting, and associations of seriousness with this fasting. Most vivid, however, is the impact of the memorial services. "This was the time for the major ritual over the dead, and the section with the memorial book, whereas on Rosh Hashonah, it was just the regular Kaddish".[19] These associations with the memorial services, or just "The presence of the Yahrzeit[20] candle made Yom Kippur more somber".

Emotional Investment in Parental Religion

Parental attitudes are not absorbed by children just during the period of the High Holydays. This is an ongoing process, constantly at work, constantly shaping future values and future aspirations. This process is well reflected in the religious attitudes and values that growing children acquire from their parents. A single parent may exert a negative or a positive influence over a child's development in many areas of activity. Often a child is caught in conflict between two opposing points of influence. One parent represents greater strength of will than the second, and the child is swept along by what it becomes persuaded is the right way. We are not concerned here as to the direction of the child's affections. We are only concerned with the impact that one personality has had over another. This impact has provided a considerable emotional investment in the religious mode of the parent.

One daughter felt that "she and her family had derived an exceptionally deep religious feeling from her father"[21]. "He was a reform Jew who kept kosher, who said his prayers every morning and every night". Another daughter experiences "the spiritual feeling during this time of the year, that subconsciously came from parents"[22]. For one respondent the Kol Nidre evoked memories of his father who had always taken him to synagogue. His own words portray well the depths of his feelings:

> "It might well be that what I thought or think of my father has something to do with what I think of Kol Nidre, or with some other things that I associate with those experiences with which my father had a part. He was a sweet person, and a kindly person, and I have always had sentimental feelings about him. He was a good father.

> To the extent that I might think of him in the image of God, or God in the image of my father, I would be associating Kol Nidre with a good God. My feelings in this sequence would be all on the positive side".[23]

Some respondents were unable to articulate the link that the Holydays represented between themselves and their parents. They possessed a special reverence for the day and they described this reverence as "something that they had always done". Their parents took them to temple, and their grandparents took their parents to temple. This was a time when "they felt an alignment with the forces of Judaism".[24]

Several of the respondents held an investment in the religious mode of their parents which could be more fittingly called a compulsion. For one of these, the Holydays appeared to be a duty which he happily fulfilled "because they wanted you to".[25] For another, a mother figure was projected in a manner to suggest divinity. "My mother was a fabulous believer. My mother said my brother would never see military service. My mother fasted the day my brother was due to enter the army. At the last minute he was rejected".[26] Three additional examples were given by this respondent to illustrate the efficacy of her mother's prayers. Then she admitted, that she "conforms to the pattern of High Holyday observance pretty much out of fear. Why, when my mother told me to 'do something', she didn't ask any questions".[27]

Another respondent was able to articulate a childhood condition against which she was certain that she no longer struggled. Her choice

of language indicated that this struggle had been a considerable one - a rebellion against too confining an authority. A powerful mother who insisted "you must attend services".[28]

This feeling of nostalgia for the religion of the parents, along with other "mixed feelings" is evoked by a combination of time, place, references. The Holydays awaken the recollections of years past, which have become fused in the pattern of emotional attitude. This occurs because this is a period of the year, when the congregant has the opportunity to think and to meditate upon that which is past. When one contemplates that which has gone before, he calls to mind specific experiences. The nature of this reverie may be that of a soothing balm. Something akin to the reminiscences of the "good old days", which suggest a warm snug parental protection and shelter. The "good feeling" evoked by the compliment of a grandparent upon the occasion of one's Bar Mitzvah. Or, as in the example above, the secure companionship of a loving father whose presence gives assurance that all is well.

On the other hand, it may be a recollection that produces anxiety. The calling to mind of an overly-demanding mother - a mother whose tone was of command, do. The anxiety would then be derived out of the ambivalent recollections, and perhaps the sense of guilt that this association has produced.

Differences Between The Religion of the Parents And the Religion of the Respondents

In their essays on Jewish Religious Life in America, Will Herberg

and Nathan Glazer have described the aculterative forces that have influenced and altered the mode of Judaism on the contemporary scene. They have both demonstrated the effects that the changing economic and social status have had on the various generations of American Jews. They have suggested that the American Judaism is striving to develop a mode of being, that will be in consonance with the position of religion in America. Herberg defines this mode of religion as one that will give expression to "Ethics, the Good Life, and Social Reform, rather than to any particular creed".[29]

The evidence derived from the interviews does not support this position. Respondents who have been reared in a traditional or neo-traditional atmosphere reflect a religious mode that is considerably different from the mode of their parents. It is not necessarily a rejection of the religious mode of the parents. Consider the comment of a second generation liberal Jew who admits his tendency to Reform, but defines himself as a Reconstructionist:

> "When we were kids my father was very stern. He used religion as a club, kind of a weapon. He beat us with it. He didn't believe in children playing. He came from a European background where he never played. So instead of encouraging us to play and join organizations, he felt that to be a waste of time. He would call us in and say 'take a book'. Always religion. It became punishment. Friday night was a time when there was much weeping and wailing".[30]

This respondent is certainly not alone. He is representative of countless numbers for whom religion "was punishment". We might expect this individual to rebel against the religion of his parents - to disavow the synagogue, and the particularly synagogal aspects of Jewish life. During the period of early manhood, this was exactly what had

taken place. He disavowed the religion of his parents. However, as he entered upon maturity, he returned to the form of his parent's religion, even though he was not able to recapture its theological foundations. Herberg has stated Hansen's Law, to the effect "that what the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember. That which he remembers is his grandfather's religion, suitably Americanized, and suitably retraditionalized."[31]

This respondent has combined the last two stages of this law. In effect he was passed through the stage of being a son, in that he rejected the religion of his father, and at the same time, entered upon the stage of the grandson. He has "Americanized" and retraditionalized the religion of his father, giving to it the American secular color.

To suggest, however, that the religious pattern which has emerged is merely the religious pattern of the grandfather, or as, in this instance, the pattern of the father, is to create an erroneous impression. Evidence exists of Jews who were reared without any religious orientation, and who have begun to establish a religious mode for themselves and their families.[32] Their new religious orientation is no "hand me down" from any previous generation. It differs greatly from that of the parents, and has no resemblance to that of the grandparents. Its impulse appears to be derived out of the desire to put on a label of identification in American Society. (Herberg and Glazer both point to this impulse).

On the other hand, consideration must be given to those of our sample who were reared in Reform homes. The evidence suggests a

distinct and perhaps a significant pattern. This is the pattern of "sameness" in mode of practice. Where the practice had been to attend religious services on the High Holydays, and occasionally throughout the remainder of the year, this practice was maintained. Families did attempt greater use of ceremonies, but in a haphazard and half-hearted way. Parents explained that "when they would remember they would light the Sabbath candles, and make kiddush. However, often they would be away from home on Friday or sometimes, even the kids would forget".[33] This attempt at more ceremony was done usually at the request of the younger children who had learned of the practice in religious school.

It has been alleged that "Reform Judaism is going back". This "going back" is explained as a going back toward Orthodoxy. This indictment is not interpreted to mean a return to the philosophy of orthodoxy, but rather a return to some of the traditional ritual. The evidence would not justify such a conclusion. At best, we might generalize that Reform Jews are not unwilling to consider the use of certain ceremonies. This would be that category of home ceremonies whose value would lie in their pedagogical character rather than in their religious nature. Although the ceremonies, where successfully initiated, have the effect of adding to the religious feeling of the participants, They add to their feelings of Jewishness.

Differences in form and in practice are easily discernible. Accordingly, we are able to depict those modes of practice in which some of the respondents differed from their parents. Therefore, if a parent walks to schul or synagogue and fasts on Yom Kippur, and the

son and daughter do not, the difference is an obvious one. Similarly, if the parent has no striking mode of practice, other than Temple attendance on the Holydays, and on infrequent other occasions during the year, and the children follow the same practice, the lack of difference is also obvious.

This is not the case when one pursues the question of fundamental beliefs. Respondents may have some recollections of acts of personal piety, and although it may be possible to derive some conception of the belief from these acts of piety, the evidence is not sufficient to allow any definitive statements. Accordingly, while we have considerable material reflecting the beliefs of our respondents, we are unable to offer any comparison between these beliefs and those of their parents.

Motivation to Instruct Children

We have considered the childhood associations of the respondents in terms of their emotional investment in the parental religion. We have examined the manner in which the respondents' mode of religious practice has differed from that of the parent. Much of this parental religion has meaning for the individual only because it has permeated the subconscious. It consists of specific feelings which the respondents find difficult and at times impossible to articulate. It is observed in the "symbolic functions" that the respondents perform during particular religious occasions. Thus, for example, the mother having a special family dinner may do so because overtly her mother did so, and it is a "family tradition" she wants to continue. The same mother is rarely able to express to her own child the particular recollection that this family dinner has for her. It would be the

same with the ritual of bread and honey. The desire is to transmit more than a ritual symbol. It appears to be a desire to recover a specific feeling or meaning that is associated with something that she did during her own childhood.

These intimate personal associations and experiences are not something that lend themselves to an easy transmittance to a third generation. It is not that these symbolic representations cannot be reproduced. Often they are. That which makes the essential difference is the thinking which motivates their presentation. This thinking or conditioning is only derived in part from the parental relationships. The greater aspect appears to have been absorbed from the life situation. There is an unquestionable residue of nostalgia and sentiment, but these are overshadowed by the non-familial stimuli. These stimuli are derived out of the life experience of the individual. Their particular importance for this investigation is found in the manner in which they have become meaningful in the religious patterns of the individual. We have attempted to capture this meaning on the basis of the following assumption: That which man deems valuable, he desires to transmit to his children. Accordingly, we have examined the reasons that have motivated our respondents in the religious education of their children. These motivations can be divided into two classifications. Those which emphasize the negative, and those which emphasize the positive.

The major aspect of negative motivation emphasises the need for identification in a group, security in being a Jew, and survival. The following composite quotation illustrates only the choice expression of our respondents:

"A child has to know who he is, and what he is and to what he belongs. I think that it is imperative that they learn about being a Jew, that they are proud of being a Jew. I don't think that there is anything more miserable than for one to have a self-hatred, and a hatred of his heritage".[34] "After all, we are Jews. We have a religion of our own, and customs of our own. I think that the most you can do is to expose them to this. If they take it, fine. If they don't, well you can't lose your Jewishness".[35] "It's not that I feel that you should make them strongly religious believers. Just let them know that there are certain aspects of the Jewish religion in which they should be proud, and should, under no circumstances, ever be ashamed".[36] "For if a Jew ducks, he can't duck very far, so you may as well be forewarned, and know that you are a Jew, because that is the only way that you will be able to answer your own questions, and the questions of those all around you."[37]

There was a period in American Jewish history when, if the Reform Jew was concerned with anti-semitism, he became less a Jew. He attempted to play hide-and-seek with himself, thinking like the ostrich, that if he hid his head, he would not be seen.

This feeling is not apparent here. Parents want their children to be Jews. Judaism is something that has value for them. Still, they are only able to articulate this value in terms of increased personal identification as Jews. "They still choose to be Jews".[38]

Nathan Glazer, in his essay "American Judaism", has described this negative characteristic as "the strongest and potentially, the most significant religious reality among American Jews".[39] The adult generation feels that they have missed something. They do not know what this something is. They look to the temple and to the religious school as if these institutions possess meaningful secrets, which can only be passed on to their children. The so-called "godless" generation, for whom intellectualism was the only succor, are self-conscious

when they attempt religious ceremonies. Yet they are persuaded that these ceremonies have meaning, and that this meaning can be transmitted to their children.

This negative characteristic expresses the contemporary conflict between secularism and religion in which the liberal Jew finds himself. It appears to be the majority position. However, the minority position is not to be discounted. This position is held by the group who evidenced positive motivation in the religious education of their children. The following quotations illustrate the maturity of this position:

> "For the child, religion should be the beginning of his understanding of the mysteries of life. The mystery of being born. The mystery of dying, the mystery of living.. I don't say that there isn't a God, and I don't know what there is. I am satisfied to ponder on it. I don't know what else except a religious concept could explain this to a child". 40

> "I think that the individual should have a chance to develop some relationships with a feeling about God and religion that are consistant with his own needs, his own philosophies, and would therefore be an integral part of him, and have developed as an integral part of his own development as opposed to something that he takes on that somebody says he should."41

This sentiment does not forsake the institution of Jewish life. It expressed what I think is a universal religious core. I would suspect that it is present in the thoughts of all liberal religionists. It reflects doubts, and at the same time it speaks of a continued searching. It rejects authoritarianism, and insists upon the right to ponder. It epitomizes the non-institutional religious type. Paradoxically, it seeks a merger with the institutions of religion. Perhaps this paradox is in consonance with the social forces which

Herberg asserts has created three religious sub-cultures in American Life.

A combination of these two sentiments suggests the religious ideal that parents would have developed in their children. It would contain a greater emphasis on the understanding of the ways of the "Supreme Being". It would encompass the participation in more ritual, for ritual speaks when words fail. It would clearly express the identification as Jew.

We do not want to undervalue the effect of the parental religion, and assume that these motivations of the respondents could only have been derived from stimuli other than their parents. In effect, saying that it doesn't matter what the parents did, the social forces have created the attitudes of the respondents. However, the conclusion suggests itself. The influence of the parent has been important. It appears to have been overshadowed by the influence of society.

CHAPTER V

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HIGH HOLYDAY EXPERIENCE

The term "Religious experience" is a loosely defined concept. It is, in effect, a catch-all phrase, used to describe a type of human experience that does not easily fit into a more scientific category. To the individual, the religious experience is a highly personal thing that evades articulation. A mixture of emotions so thoroughly blended that they escape easy identification. Jews attend High Holyday services, at times express a feeling of religion. This feeling constitutes part of the meaning that is derived from these services. Our aim in this chapter is to analyze this feeling and examine its various components.

William James depicts the extent of this emotional mixture:

> "There is religious fear, religious love, religious awe, religious joy, and so forth. But religious love, is only man's natural emotion of love directed to a religious object; religious fear is only the ordinary fear of commerce, so to speak, the common quaking in the human breast, in so far as the notion of divine retribution may arouse it; religious awe is the same organic thrill which we feel in a forest at twilight, or in a mountain gorge; only this time it comes over us at the thought of our supernatural relations; and similarly of all of the various sentiments which may be called into play in the lives of religious persons". [1]

Allport, commenting upon James' depiction, asserts that he is "somewhat supreme in his pluralism". [2] He prefers a more minimum pluralism in definition, and relates this pluralism to organic desire:

> "Customarily it is in the critical periods of life, when desire is more intense, that religious consciousness is acute. Many people are religious only in crisis; the rest of the time, they run along comfortably and godlessly, content to let their religious sentiment lie dormant". [3]

This conception of Allport's would encompass those Jews who are able to derive a "religious feeling" from services during the High Holyday period. This feeling has considerable meaning for them, yet, frequently, it is not in itself a sufficient force to draw them back to the temple service until the following year. The High Holydays are then a time of religious crisis. A cyclical crisis determined by the calendar. A date in time, to which tradition has ascribed awe - the awe of confrontation with one's Maker.

Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, are a time for confrontation with God and self. They are also understood as the occasion for the alleviation of many of the burdens that life has wrought, both sinful and non-sinful burdens. They are the force that promotes the strengthening of character. And, perhaps, because of the traditional theme of Man's judgement, or because of the incident of the memorial service, they are associated with concern for death and for the dead.

These three areas, alleviation, will-strengthening, and concern with death and the dead, make up the main divisions which we will discuss in this chapter of the Psychology of the High Holydays. The writer believes that a more critical evaluation of the data, making use of more specialized psychological interpretation, will yield a greater understanding of the phenomena of the religious feeling.

Alleviation of Fear, Guilt, Anxiety

A majority of the respondents state that the Holydays were a time for comtemplation and for self-examination. They were a time "when the individual should be cognizant of his shortcomings, and have a desire to correct them".[4] Another respondent felt that they

should make the individual "contemplative and humble, and when they are over, refreshed and revitalized".[5] Another respondent, felt that their effect should make the individual "a better person, if he is honest with himself, instead of just trying to square himself for the day".[6] One respondent felt that their effect was to "rededicate the individual to his own essential purpose, and goal in life".[7] Still another believed that the impulse of the Holyday period should stress the re-evaluation of the past year, with the resolve to live a more dedicated and inspired life.[8]

We understand this concern for the individual and for his self-improvement. The time spent in services is considerable. The mood of solemnity that envelops the days, particularly Yom Kippur, is an aid in turning the thought of the individual toward himself. However, these responses were too general. The writer was interested in determining the nature of the shortcomings. For this purpose the completion test was of little value. The major part of the data was derived through direct interaction between the writer and the respondents. Frequently the respondent would utter a word, that appeared to be out of context with the immediate discussion. This would be reflected back, and often it would assist in breaking through the barrier of social language. It was only the rare occasion that real feelings were exposed.

One of the respondents (A-11-M) was discussing the prayers in the prayerbook. His emphasis was on their literary quality. I asked him if he had any feeling for the confessional, (the Widdui). I recited the opening lines: "For the sins that I have committed". His response was, "Very definitely it evokes a feeling in me. I think back as I

hear that. I know that I have done some of these things. Maybe it was a simple thing like getting up in the morning and snapping at my wife, or maybe there was something that was a bit dishonest in a business sense, a sharp practice that doesn't sit well".[9] This respondent admitted that he was aware that the effect of the confessional diminished with the passage of time. Yet, he felt that it had some lasting effect for him. These two associations that were evoked created some feeling of guilt. There was no indication that the respondent followed the traditional demand, and sought the forgiveness of either his wife, or the party injured in the "sharp business practice". The feeling of guilt was annoying, but it was not sufficiently disturbing that it generated an atoning action. It perhaps bothered his self-image. It was expiated merely by bringing it to the conscious level of remembrance.

The frequency of this practice is spoken of by respondent (A-20-M). He felt that "most pople were unwilling to admit they were living the wrong kind of life". The common attitude as he phrased it was, "Basically, I'm a pretty good man, so of course I'll go to Temple and admit my sins, but I don't see where I need change".[10] He gave an example of this type of thinking by adding that a man might be having extra-marital relationships. Yet, he would not give up his girl friend, "just because he had been to temple on Yom Kippur".[11] This respondent believed that most people did not feel that Yom Kippur possessed any unusual healing power for sinfulness. Phrased negatively, Yom Kippur would not produce any fear in the individual, for his failure to make atonement for his

sinfulness. It was a day given over to prayer"and the confession of one's errors", but it possessed no greater efficacy than any other day on which sins were admitted.

This was clearly illustrated by the comment of A-16-F:

> "I think that there are very few of us that don't make errors - mistakes for which we are sorry. I sincerely believe that a devout person and a thinking person repents long before Yom Kippur comes around. To me it signifies a reminder that I must review the things that I do that are wrong, or unkind, or unjustified, and when I do make these mistakes, try to make amends".[12]

This was typical of the overtly expressed opinion of most of the respondents. Sin was equated with mistakes and errors in judgement. The little foibles of which humans are continuously susceptable. "Big sin" was a subject about which the respondents were reluctant to speak. The word may have evoked specific emotions, yet the respondents refused to grapple with the concept. Their evasions were couched in the following manner:

> "Sin seems not to loom too large in Judaism; it never throws me".
> "No one sins willingly, much that we do may be in error, but so long as there is life, there is error".
> "Sin, in my opinion, is a word that means ill-feeling, disregard of integrity".
> "To most people it usually means extreme sins, not the sins of which we may be guilty every day".
> "Is repugnant. Strikes me as something very ugly".
> "Does not mean very much to me".[13]

This common attitude could exist for several reasons. One, an unwillingness to communicate their true thoughts to the interviewer. A more likely reason, is their inability to articulate a feeling of guilt. The word sin, might be anxiety producing, and this would account for their withdrawal. Then too, the respondents could very well be correct in their assertions that "real sin" was something with which they had little contact. Their feelings of conscious

guilt would be limited. It would be something that they could expiate, like the above example, by bringing it to mind.

There were two clear examples of guilt feelings expressed by the respondents. Both of them were directly involved with the Holyday observance. Both of them were involved with parents. The first of these was recalled by a respondent (A-4-M) when he was a child. He had always been resentful of having to fast on Yom Kippur. He could not see the reason for his fasting, because he had been told that one fasted in order to be forgiven for some act of sinfulness. He felt that he had not committed any sinful act. One Yom Kippur, the respondent's father became seriously ill. Then, as he recalled, "I knew what it was like to be so sorry that I couldn't eat".[14] As a youngster, he felt that his refusal to fast had somehow been connected with the illness of his father. He loved his father, and for him at that moment, fasting was his sacrifice to God, which he hoped would be sufficient to restore his father's health. For him, fasting became associated with a deed that he had to perform out of a sense of obligation to his father. The memory of this parent is still very dear to him. He no longer feels the obligation to fast, yet this early sense of guilt is part of his motivation to attend services. He stated that on a Yahrzeit, he once was called to participate in the services. Afterward, he made a contribution to the Temple. He felt that "this was something that my parents would have wanted me to do."[15]

This feeling of guilt, recalled to the conscious level was, to this individual, something greater than the mistake in judgement, which

he might normally define as sin. As a youngster, he expiated part of this guilt by being unable to eat. In his adult years, this overtone remained, with other tinges of guilt feeling involving his parents. This was brought to annual expiation through his involvement in the Temple service.

The second example had it s origin in the youth of the respondent. It was derived from a conflict situation which existed between the respondent and her mother. This conflict situation has a long history. The respondent at times feels that her mother was too demanding of her. At other times, she feels that she has been an unloving daughter. This conflict situation became apparent early in the interview. She indicated then, that she had been bothered by a particular incident that had taken place on the holidays.

It was customary, during her youth, for children her age to visit their parents in schule on Yom Kippur. She recalled that she did not like this custom. It seemed to her, that it was "bringing flowers to the dead sins". She remembered that she had not brought her mother flowers and felt herself to be a bad child. Her words, "I'm not a very good daughter". It is likely that the conflict situation had been firmly rooted before this Holyday experience. Yet, thoughts of her mother in association with Yom Kippur, brought the feelings of guilt to mind. Her first comment following in place of her statement that she was not a good daughter was that Yom Kippur was a serious holiday:

> "Deep inside me I am aware that this is a holiday for repentence, contemplation, meditation. Don't let me repeat the same mistakes this year that I made last year. My sins, my errors, please God forgive me.

> Let there be growth, let there be a step forward. Let me go on to bigger, finer, better things".[16]

These associations, assuming that the writer has given them a correct interpretation, indicate a level of guilt that is brought to consciousness by the incident of the Holydays. In part, this may occur because they possessed a significant point of contact with the Holydays. This example reflects more than mere mistake in judgement to the respondent. It is a burden for which relief is desired. This is indicated by her statement later in the interview. She had commented that while she prays every day, she is not as aware of her shortcomings as on Yom Kippur. "It is a day set aside. There is a difference to that day, no question about it. It's certainly not a happy day, because it is spent in so much contemplation. It's actually a day of prayer. Please God, help me make this year different....your will, all right, your will be done, so make it your will, show us the way".[17] When she had completed this sentence, she paused, and then asked herself out loud "Am I fighting against a childhood condition? And now, I need no longer fight. Nobody's making me do these things like I had to do them then. I don't go, because my mother says 'Go. You must'. Now I go (to services) because I want to go".[18]

This last soliloqy was significant to the respondent. She was able to connect her strands of associations, and gain some insight into that which "bothered" her.

One of the respondents, a psychiatrist, felt that some people attend High Holyday services "because of the need for reassurance, and some to expiate guilt".[19] I questioned him about the type of guilt. He felt that all forms of guilt were involved, although he

didn't believe that people understood this guilt. He felt that many Jews possess a sense of guilt because they do not attend services throughout the year, or because "they didn't stand up for Jews or Jewishness, when these things were being attacked".[20] He added that "important guilt" is derived from the same sources that supply guilt for everyone.

There was no evidence in the data to support his statement that people derive guilt from non-attendance at temple on the Sabbath. However, our sample might have been too small to have provided this evidence. His second statement that Jews may possess guilt which was derived from their being Jews is correct. There is considerable evidence in the next chapter to support this statement. The ambivalence that the Jew feels toward himself was illustrated by an almost unanimous response to one of the items in the completion test. The respondents were asked, "The least that a Jew can do". The response suggested a greater identification with things Jewish. This identification emphasized the ethical, the eternal value, and the pride of Jewishness. This insistence that the Jew approach perfection would indicate some negative feeling toward other Jews. It may be self-projection, appearing as a concommitant of ones personal guilt feelings. It points to an unusual awareness of the opinion of the non-Jew.[21] At the same time it defines a behavior mode for the Jew. This is observed in many illustrations provided by the respondents in which they articulated "Jewish self-sacrifices". These are the occasions when they maintained their Jewishness at the cost of some social or economic advantage. One respondent feels compelled

to make certain that all new business associates are aware that he is a Jew. "I sort of slip it into the conversation right after we meet".[22] Another respondent spoke of his election to an honorary scholastic fraternity, and of the surprised discovery that he was Jewish, which he would not deny.[23]

Fear of retribution, perhaps by a divine authority, or by a sublimated parental figure, is frequently associated with personal guilt feelings. Concern with divine retribution was surprising to the writer. We had assumed, because of the sophisticated level of our respondents that this fear would be absent. This was not the case. One of our respondents clearly enunciated her equation of religion with fear. Several others hinted at the conception. The largest group suggested that "others felt concern for what might happen to them, if they did not come to services".

Typical of this response was the statement by A-14-M that "Some people attend High Holyday services because of fear of what might happen to them. After all, Yom Kippur is the occasion to ask forgiveness, and they ask forgiveness because something will happen if they don't".[24]

Another respondent (A-4-M) felt that many people go to temple in the belief that they will be singled out from other people who do not attend, and receive some special benefit. This respondent explained that he "didn't see it that way". However, he admitted that one sentence in the Holyday liturgy appealed to him. This was the sentence that stated that "all of us are born with immortal life (his quotes). We all dream of meeting those whom we have lost."[25]

Frequently, it was difficult to distinguish the projections of the individual from his opinions. The tenor of the allusions dealing with divine retribution may best be described as a whimsical pondering of a great unknown. Yet, its significance cannot be discounted, because of its great role in motivating the meaning of the memorial service.

A-1-F, was the respondent who clearly equated religion with fear. She explained that when she heard the Kol Nidre, she felt religious. I asked her to explain what she meant by religious. She answered that she felt her future to be at stake. "This is the period when what is going to happen to me and my family is going to be decided".[26] The thought of this decision evoked a feeling of fear in her. "Fear of what could happen". This was the time of the year when she reviewed past events in order to see if she has injured anyone. The respondent believed that her feeling of fear had been transmitted to her by her mother. Her mother had feared the Holydays, "because that was the day when the book was closed".[27]

The respondent correctly perceived that her mother had been the influence that had created this conception of religion. However, it was not just the concern of her mother, but rather the mother's aid in several severe family crises. The respondent had a son for whom medical science did little during a period of great emotional illness. The boy had been unable to communicate. The grandmother rejected the prognosis of the doctors, and sent a donation of money to a religious institution in Israel. The men of this institution promised to offer

daily prayers for the boy. The day the letter was received, telling of this promise to pray, the boy began to speak. To the respondent it appeared as if her mother knew how to motivate God's action. Accordingly, if her mother had God on her side, and still she feared him, the respondent was not going to take any chances at incurring the Divine displeasure.

There are several modes of alleviation reflected in the associations of the respondents. The catharsis was given the greatest emphasis. This would be related to the feeling that the Holydays are the time to "expiate one's sins, to wash clean oneself of what had occured during the past year, and to come out a better human being".[28] The writer was not able to determine the extent of this need for psychic outpouring. It was frequently in evidence but in varying degrees. The respondents generally felt "relieved" or "better" when the Holydays were over. The individual may have felt a sense of absolution, but it appears that this feeling of absolution is acquired merely by attending. In many instances, the burden from which the respondents felt relieved was probably not the burden of sinfulness or error. It was more likely, the unaccustomed habit of day-long attendance in temple. However, for individuals who possess certain strands of guilt, or fear, as in the above illustration, the Holydays serve to lessen this fear, and to remove the feelings of guilt.

Modern writers in the field of American religion have speculated that the great new activity in the Synagogue and the Church

is derived out a need for support and emotional security. Because of the unique position that the High Holydays hold in Jewish life, the writer felt that this need would be reflected by the respondents. However, no evidence was found to associate this need with particular aspects of contemporary living. More complete investigation will be necessary to establish this thesis. This writer questions this contention. We believe that the need for security is derived from an inability to cope with the stress of contemporary life.

The respondents were asked to complete the statement: "What many people want from religion is". Six of the replies suggested a "crutch", a panacea, or some type of restorative. Two of the respondents answered that the individual should give to the religion, and not expect to "get". The remaining fifteen felt that religion should give warmth, security, relief, and peace of mind.[29]

One respondent (A-22-M) who was among the fifteen, was asked to explain the benefits he derived from attending services. He felt that there were "many ramifications to the question".

> "I think that going to temple is a time when you can quietly look at yourself, and see which direction you are going. And maybe, because of the prayers, you can get an idea of whether it's the right direction or not. I think a lot of people use it as a time to look at themselves".[30]

This respondent amplified this statement when he was asked if the Holyday service were different to him than the Sabbath services. He felt that they were not. He explained that he has gone into temple on occasions when he was disturbed about specific problems.

He frequently came out "much calmer, quieter, more peaceful, possibly having found a solution". He did not believe that "the degree of peace or comfort" that he derived from services was different than that which he felt during the High Holydays. This height of feeling, he repeated was "peace and comfort".

The temple service, with its quiet atmosphere, permitted him to reflect on his problems. He admitted that he would frequently sit in the pews during an afternoon, alone, and think. He admitted that he could have chosen a "park bench". Somehow, he preferred the temple.

Another respondent (A-19-M) commented similarly that the brief period between the children's service and the Afternoon service on Yom Kippur, was "His favorite time for the whole year as far as the temple goes".

> "Various people read selections, and if I want to pay attention to them I do, and if I don't, I go through the prayer book and I think. It's quiet and empty, and there's nobody that wants to be noticed...I have s sense of communication or certainly of meditation".[32]

The respondent felt that he experienced a "feeling of something beyond himself". However, he was not able to articulate this feeling.

One respondent (A-2-F) replied that people want "security and trust from religion, with the feeling that things are happening for the best".[33] She felt that it was a mistake for people to expect this of religion in moments of stress, unless they had given something of themselves to a religious way of life. She admitted, however, that in moments of personal stress, when she was unable to

think of what to do, she would turn to God, with a feeling, "God get me out of this and I'll do anything".[34] She recalled that it was because of a crisis situation that she and her husband had joined the temple. Her son had been exposed to spinal meningitis. Her husband had literally stated, that if the boy "gets out of this, we'll join the temple".[35] She recalled that she told her husband that they were making a bargain with God. However, when the boy did not contract the disease, she and her husband joined the temple, and he served as a member of the temple board.

Clearly this respondent was speaking of herself when she advanced the belief that many people want a sense of security from religion. The tone of her interview was clearly of a belief in a non-institutionalized personal religion. Yet, at a moment of crisis, she joined the temple. She admitted too, that while she did not attend weekly services, "Nothing pulls me to the, whereas if I were in Timbuctoo, I'd find a temple on the Holydays".

I asked her is she could explain the pull of the Holydays. She replied:

> "Well, I can't answer that. All I can say is that I feel a tremendous pull from every fibre of me. And I feel it begin to work on me a couple of weeks before the Holyday time starts...The ten days are solemn, and when they are over, there is a sort of a sigh, and now let's pitch into the year".[36]

Religion to this respondent affords a sense of security and the High Holydays provides a feeling of relief from the chaotic endings and burdens associated with the end of a calendar year. This feeling

of relief and "fresh start" may be typical of all New Year celebrations, which combine a trsdition of resolution with the turning over of a "new leaf". However, for this respondent, and for others, the fact that the New Year, takes place in a house of Worship provides additional meaning.

In the above selection, we made note that the respondent expressed a feeling of relief when the Holydays were over. This particular feeling was expressed by the vast majority of the respondents. The writer felt, that part of this relief feeling was attributed to the intrusion that the Holyday observance made on the life pattern. However, several of the respondents indicated that the feeling of relief was associated with the belief that God will remove the burdens of life. She (A-1-F) declared:

> "Religion is relief, relief that God will take care of you. He will give you what you want, and by that I don't mean material things. It is not that whatever happens you should accept it. You have to accept it. Religion being relief, I feel that when I leave temple on Yom Kippur, everything is going to be all right for the New Year".[37]

For this respondent, her attendance at services was the purchase price of a Happy New Year. She rarely attended services on other occasions. Yet, because of the significance for the day that her mother had instilled in her, she attended - with a sure belief that God for her was her guardian, "who neither sleeps nor slumbers".

Another respondent (A-5-M) felt that "the temple and the services have something that you can't get outside."[38] They provide him with a desire to go out and live a better life - to appreciate more fully the members of his family. They place him in a communication with "something greater than himself". This power was important to the

respondent, although he didn't feel that it was for Him that he wanted to live a better life. The service provided him with a "feeling of warmth, and of awe" that was inspired by the building, and the mood.

For this respondent, institutionalized Judaism was something to which he had come late in life. His family had only a limited association with the temple. He, earlier in the interview, indicated certain pangs of conscience because of his ambivalent feeling toward Jewishness, and Judaism. The writer would interpret his feeling of warmth as a feeling of security. He felt that he belonged. He had a place in the temple. The Holydays were his yearly affirmation of his new position. He affirmed that he was a Jew. His participation in the services was his evidence that he belonged.

Summary

The primary concern exhibited by the respondents, as reflected in the preceeding pages, was with the alleviation of anxiety. The specific sources of this anxiety were derived from guilt feelings that the respondents have had with being identified as Jews. More precisely, from a failure on their part in fulfilling certain expectations that the label Jew incurred in their minds. There was a residual feeling of guilt about non-attendance at religious services during the year. However, to the extent that the individual suffers no social penalty from non-attendance, this guilt did not appear to be significant.

A second area of guilt-producing activity stemmed from a relationship with the parents of the respondents. There were certain associations recalled which clearly had an effect on the present action of the respondents. Yet, the place where this parentally derived guilt is most apparent, is in the relationship of the respondent toward the dead parent. This will be more fully examined in the following pages.

Guilt feelings about sinful acts is the third large category. The respondents were not concerned with sin. They equated sin with mistakes in judgement, thoughtless acts, and instances of petty conduct. Toward these acts, a general mild concern was evidenced. No indications were given that the individuals were going to do other than make resolutions to bring these practices to an end. For convenience, the writer has called this area of sinful acts, guilt producing. It would be more accurate to say that they were "concern" producing. Concern producing, because the acts were not in keeping with the desired individual self-image.

One source of anxiety, directly associated with the Holydays, but one whose depths cannot be easily plumbed, was that derived from fear of divine retribution. The evidence clearly indicated that this fear exists. It is connected with parental fear - doing something that will not make the parent angry. From a point of superstitious origin it produces a feeling that if one attends, the attendance will be an assurance that God will not punish. It removes the doubt, and keeps the individual from taking any chances.

The desire for will-strenthening and aspiration toward personal fulfillment was universally expressed. The respondents wanted to be "better people", to achieve the "good life". The Holyday temple service was the place where these hopes could be expressed. The atmosphere of the temple was generally felt to be conducive to personal meditation. It gave the individual a feeling of tranquility and warmth. It was an atmosphere free from animosity, competitiveness or general tension. This atmosphere was characteristic of the temple service. In effect, the service was a respite from the hurried activity of life outside, providing warmth and protection - the shelter of the womb. This quality was not unique for the Holydays. It could be found on other occasions. However, only a few of the respondents indicated that this"feeling" served as an incentive to bring them to services on days other than Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.

For a few of the respondents, the temple service on the Holydays was their link with religion, and the benefits that one could derive from religion. By attending on these days, they make themselves eligible for the feelings of comfort and relief that religion provides. It renewed their relationship with the Father God, who was a help in times of trouble, a support and stay in times of need. For these people, prayer was good on all days, but particularly so on the High Holydays.

Concern for Death and the Dead

The memorial services on the afternoon of Yom Kippur clearly possess more meaning for the Jew than any other worship service. (Limited to those Jews who have suffered a personal and close loss). This service attracts worshippers who would never attend on any other occasion. Its primary hold appears to be derived out of sentiment for parents, or other close relatives.

The respondents were asked to complete the statement "at memorial services, Jews". Seventy five per cent of the respondents responded in terms of praying for the dead, or thinking of the departed. During the interview proper the majority of the associations referred to parents or to spouses. Mothers were the individuals most frequently recalled. The sentiments expressed were of love and of reverence. It was felt that the service had the effect of reviving grief that had lain dormant. It facilitated the recollections of experiences and associations that went back in time to childhood. Several of the respondents thought of the possibility of their own dying. One viewed the occasion as the time when the individual links himself with all generations.

The aspect of parental loss provided perhaps the most significant pattern of both responses and associations. Several of the associations were quite moving. They spoke of a relationship that was a full one, and perhaps, too, a dependent one.

It would appear natural that a close parental relationship with the deceased might produce an irrational mode of action during the memorial service. This is true. Many of the respondents who scoff at superstition, who question God's existence, have themselves been confronted with a different type of religious need at the moment of memorial service. This is the time when rational religion assumes the trappings of mysticism. "Men stand up when the names of the deceased are announced, because they feel compelled to glorify God". Others pray for a continuity of life. They speak to God in behalf of those who are gone. Newly arrived Reform Jews, who can recall the tradition of the synagogue and the schul, often attend memorial services in those institutions, because they feel that "the schul is the place of 'real religion'".[39] This is the place to which God's ear is more closely attuned. Those Jews, reared in a traditional surrounding, are aware of the legendary value of having a son who will recite the Kaddish for his father.

This communion with someone beyond oneself is at time mystical. It borders on that which would be called superstitious on a less serious occasion. One respondent (A-14-M) explained this mystical feeling in connection with thoughts of one's mother. He explained that if the mother is dead the service has greater meaning. He attributed this meaning to the belief that the individual has concerning his mother. "She is closer to God than anyone he knows. When he goes to the synagogue he feels that he is speaking to his dead mother. His dead mother is carrying it on to God".[40]

Another respondent emphasized the aspect of communion. She expressed no direct concern that the message be transmitted to Go

> "My mother told me that if you want to speak to me, to ask me about something, forget about mother's day, or my birthday, but be at services on Yom Kippur. I'll be there".[41]

The respondent rationally, didn't believe this. Yet she explained that she was always in attendance during Yiskor services. It is significant that although a member of a Reform Temple, she attended memorial services at the Conservative Synagogue to which her mother belonged.

This sense of communion is not only mystical. The mourner recalls pleasant and sometimes unpleasant associations with the departed. For one suffering a close loss, there is always the longing for communication - to re-establish the tie that death has broken - to share again some conversation, some experience, some aspiration. Then too, a beloved parent is often the root to which life is attached. Parental guidance and protection is frequently desired. They are the support to which the child ran in moments of distress. A moment of distress can at times transcend the finality of death.

Love and pleasant remembrance is a strong motivation to the memorial service. Guilt feelings may provide a more powerful one. It is likely that in the relationship of the respondent to his parents, or to other dear departed, the respondent is able to recall

some unkind act, or harsh treatment. One respondent (A-1-F) described the "hell" in which her brother felt himself. The brother had been in disagreement with his mother. His mother was ill, and he decided to become reconciled with her. An older sister asked that he wait until he returned from a business trip. The mother would be well, and the family could celebrate the reunion. He accepted this advice, but on the day before his return, the mother had an unexpected heart attack and died. The brother has experienced great feelings of guilt. He has done penance in many ways - yet always aware that she died before their reconciliation.

This brother would be a powerful illustration of a situation in which many mourners find themselves. For them, the Yiskor service is their opportunity to be forgiven. Many mourners give donations to charity at this season. Some have ascribed this action as a means by which payment is made to make the final comfort of the parents more certain. This belief is probably derived out of the belief that the recitation of Kaddish was necessary to facilitate placement of a parent in heaven. However, while this latter motivation still is to be considered, we believe that the giving of charity is a form of sacrificial deed, through which the mourner gains expiation.

The writer recalls visiting a cemetary with his own father. Together they visited the grave of the grandfather. The father insisted on hiring an individual to recite the prayer at the graveside. The writer could have performed this task. His father

explained that the men who plied the cemetary during this Holyday period needed the money. He paid the professional prayer-giver three times that which would have been considered a fair rate. He may have thought that he was doing this in memory of his father. We believe that it was performed as an act to expiate some guilt feeling, derived from their relationship.

One of therespondents (A-9-M) believed that self pity was the force that caused people to attend. He explained that since "There is nothing that can be done for the dead, the sorrow that is expressed is a sorrow for one's self".[42]

Another respondent (A-23-M) felt that the main emotion was a feeling of regret that the mourners themselves will one day be dead. "They're mourning the dead, and also themselves, because some day they are going to be one of that group".[43]

Both of these respondents admitted that seme of the mourners sincerely feel regret for the deceased, yet their religious philosophy (both would call themselves agnostic) insists that they look elsewhere for the motivation. The writer includes their observation because he believes that self pity and fear of one's future death are important motives. Clearly, at this occasion, dormant grief is revived. Components of grief are self-pity, and fear of death.

The liturgy is significant in that it contains a specific ritual. The mourner recites kaddish for his departed. The name of the departed is announced. In one congregation, it was the custom

for the mourner to rise at the announcement of the name. This simple act engendered a feeling of personal participation. This was movingly indicated by the comment of A-20-M:

> "The prayer is rather meaningless. I've said it many times since my mother passed away. I think the the standing up is moving. Immediately, you conjure up the thought of your mother as she was. Immmediately you wish she was here. You wish you could talk to her. And the longer she is gone, the more you miss her...you look at the person standing next to you, and you know that this person has lost a father or a mother, and all of you are thinking of your parents at that moment. It has a kind of magnetic effect. Everyone vibrates on the same idea".[44]

This respondent expressed the dynamics of the group action. The memorial is not entirely individual. Comfort is derived from the realization that the individual is a part of a group that is sharing an intimate experience. Possibly part of the pain of the experience is lessened by the presence of the group.

For one respondent (A-2-F) the act of standing up had considerable significance. She explained that on one occasion her husband had seen to the burial of an employee whose family resided in another city. At the memorial the name of this deceased was announced. The husband jumped to his feet. When his wife questioned him about this, he explained, "I had that sudden feeling that the kaddish meant that when someone has fallen by the wayside, someone else should stand and glorify God in his place. I realized that no one was standing in his place, and I just felt like grabbing the sword, and I got up before I knew it".[45]

Whatever a critical analysis of this action might suggest, one thing is clear. One of the values derived from the memorial service

is the distinct feeling on the part of the individual mourner that he is doing something. The special rites, and ceremonies, add to the feeling, or perhaps even create the feeling that this is "real religion".

Summary

The impact of the memorial service is derived in part from tradition. This is something that Jews do. Its particular significance to Reform Jews stem from its substantial emphasis on Yom Kippur as the memorial day of the year. (Yiskor services on other holidays are not of great significance in Reform Judaism). The individual feels a sense of communion with the departed. He may seek some overt form of communication. He may be satisfied with specific remembrances. Part of his feeling is motivated by love. Part of this feeling is motivated from specific recollections of unkind actions toward the deceased which have produced guilt feelings in the individual. Their presence at services, and some outward gesture of charity are means by which this guilt is expiated. Self pity and projection of one's own death are feelings that are present. The distinctiveness of the liturgy and the special rites of the kaddish add to the meaning that this occasion possesses for the individual. Of special importance is the feeling that one is a participant as a member of a group - sharing the sorrow of others - at the same time deriving comfort in the knowledge that others share one's own sorrow.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE HIGH HOLYDAYS

This chapter deals with the influence of the social environment upon the respondents. The Jew is sensitive to the pulls and pushes of the social forces. He reacts to the negative and positive pressures of both Jews and non-Jews. He may, at one time, express a strong identification with "tradition" and with "Jewishness". At another moment he may reject them. He may express the desire to be at one with the non-Jew. He may prefer to hold himself aloof - to be separate. He possesses these attitudes as a n individual, and as a member of a group.

In the ensuing pages we will discuss and attempt to analyze certain of these reactions. The selections that are presented are not intended to be typical. Our aim is not to pronounce generalizations. It is to gain insight. For convenience, we shall divide the discussion into three catagories. Overt Attitudes Toward Non-Jews, Attitudes Toward Jewishness, and The Holydays as a Mirror of Economic Mobility.

Overt Attitude Toward Non-Jews

What is the attitude that the Jew feels and expressed toward the non-Jew? Is it indifference, concern, anxiety? Does the Jew feel that he is a part of the general society - that his affiliation with his religious institutions earns him status position in the general culture? Is the Jew comfortable with the non-Jew? The associations of our respondents answered these questions at least in part. They

were asked to complete the statement, "Non-Jews think the Holydays". The responses were varied. Two were left blank. One person did not know. The remainder all felt that the non-Jew possessed some awareness of these days. This awareness was one of degree. At one extreme, it was felt that the Holydays were holidays, providing "fun and time off from work and school". The opposite extreme held them to be sacred. No indication was given by the respondents that the non-Jew understood the significance of the days, other than "they were important".

The outstanding example of self-hate was given in the response of A-20-M. He felt that "non-Jews think the High Holydays are strange and exotic foreign customs. Few gentiles take time to investigate the matter".[1] The unusual adjectives of his response suggested that he was transferring his own feelings into the conceptions of his non-Jewish friends. In the interview, I asked him what he thought the reasons were which gave the non-Jew this opinion. His immediate reaction was one of denial. "I don't think that all gentiles do, but I think, by and large, that they are extremely ignorant about what Judaism is all about".[2] He explained that he enjoyed many opportunities to discuss Judaism and the bible with non-Jews. He felt that it was the duty of the Jew to "get them indoctrinated". Through his discussion he became amazed that the non-Jew knew so little of Judaism and of Jewish practice. On one occasion when he had taken a group to a synagogue, he was questioned concerning the use of Hebrew in the services. He explained the practice on the basis

that Hebrew was a universal language, comparable to the use of Latin by the Church.

This respondent felt that he had a mission. This was to alter the conceptions that Christians have of Jewish practices. He appears to require the universalizing of Jewish practice, so that he can participate. He is not concerned with the ideas of the practice. He was concerned with making them palatable to the non-Jew. In this way, they became more palatable to himself.

Another respondent (A-4-M) felt that "most non-Jews respect you if you keep your religion and do not make excuses for it".[3] He strengthened this idea through his repetition.

> "I think that there is nothing that will gain the disrespect of the Jew, by the non-Jew, faster than if the Jew tries to deny his religion or make excuses for it."[4]

This respondent equated the observance of the High Holydays as the affirmation of one's Jewishness, in the eyes of the non-Jew. Therefore, failure to observe the Holyday would be interpreted, by the Christian, as a negation of one's religion. This point of view was not unique with this respondent. It was reflected in many of the interviews.

Respondent A-6-F expressed it in terms of a specific experience that she recalled. She had made the terse statement that the High Holydays should be observed. During the interview, she explained that it had been her practice to send her children to school on the Holydays. Last year when she went to pick up her children at the school, she was confronted by the teacher who inquired why the children were

in school. "You are Jewish"?, the teacher asked. The respondent answered affirmatively. She then explained that it was her practice to send her children to school on the Holydays, because they were too young to attend services. She did not want them to play ball on the streets, and thought it a form of punishment to keep her youngsters in the house, while the neighboring children were at play.

The respondent made quite a point of explaining that the teacher understood her position. However, during the Holyday season this year, she altered her practice. "I kept them home because I knew that there was to be a children's service". During the morning of the Holydays, when her children asked to be allowed to play in the street with the neighboring youngsters, she refused. She explained to her children that they were not being kept in the house as a punishment. They were being kept in because it was a religious holiday.

The respondent seemed uanaware that her reason for keeping the children home from school was so that they might attend services, which they did not do. She appeared annoyed that a non-Jew could influence her actions. Particularly, when she lived in a neighborhood that was so predominately Jewish. Yet her annoyance dissolved into resolution when she spoke of her contemplated moving to a neighborhood that was predominately Christian.

> "Let me put it this way. Then there will be no question that the children will remain home from school. Because gentiles respect those Jews who respect their own religion".[6]

The attitude suggested by this respondent is that the actions of a Jew are at times determined as much by non-Jews as by Jews. The emphasis of her statements was upon the external form through which

the society makes judgements. A good Jew attends services. The respondent wanted her non-Jewish neighbors to view her as a good Jew.

The response of A-2-F was similar in overtone to A-6-F. This respondent considered "it quite an affront that Jews do not attend services on the Holydays". She was annoyed at the "Jewish kids in her car shift who go to school on Yom Kippur." She explained that she "didn't keep her own children home from school just in order to gain the respect of her non-Jewish friends". She added emphatically, however, "that if you had no other reason to keep your children home, that reason would be sufficient".[7] Your non-Jewish neighbors would not think ill of you.

Her annoyance was not based on any dee-seated religious conviction regarding observance on the Holydays. At the time she made her discovery that Jewish children attended school on these days, she was taking her turn diriving a car shift. Thus she held a double standard. One for the children, which would be visible to their non-Jewish teachers in school, and one for herself, which was her duty to take her turn driving. Of course, she attended services, even on the day that she drove. This was "something that one does, because it is the time of the year to go to temple".[8] Failure to attend irritates to the same degree as failure to rise and salute a passing flag.[9] Thus, if you are a Jewish parent, your child may not attend public school on the High Holydays. He need not attend services, but he must not attend school.

Another respondent equated attendance at temple on the Holydays

with self-respect. He felt that "if one does not respect himself, one cannot expect respect from others".[10] He went on to explain that his customers do not expect to see or hear from him on the Holydays, and that they respect him for his observance. This is attested by his belief that he does not "lose one dollar's worth of business" by not being in his office.

This respondent did not feel that proper Holyday observance required him to close his office. His non-Jewish employees worked. He merely absented himself. This was the culturally approved practice. It never occured to him that his religion might demand that he shut down entirely. He was doing that of which the culture approved. Accordingly, he respected himself, and earned respect from others.

One respondent(A-19-M) felt that the non-Jew holds the High Holydays to be sacred to the Jew. During his interview, I glossed over this response. I felt that his attitude toward the non-Jew was significantly demonstrated by his remarks concerning a neighborhood custom. This custom took place on Christmas Eve. Every year at that time, he would gather with his non-Jewish neighbors and walk through his neighborhood singing Christmas carols. He felt that this was a beautiful practice. It was one in which he delighted to participate.

> "We stop at each home, and sing a Christmas carol. And very respectfully, when we get to one of the Jewish homes, we sing something that is not offensive. The Jewish family and their children open their doors, are most gracious . Everyone joins in. Either you sing, or you are sung to".[12]

This respondent was aware of Christmas symbols. Yet, he longed to share in this festive celebration. He believed that his active participation would allow him increased status in his community. His desire was for camaraderie. He wanted to belong. He wanted not to feel different. He understood the difference between being one of the singers, and being one to whom the songs were sung. Yet to him there was no difference. He could be a part of the group, merely by singing carols.

At the same time, the non-Jewish opinion about the High Holydays was also important. They thought that the days were sacred. He could not possess a lesser opinion. Membership in this group, might be dependent upon his positive acceptance of his own religion.

Another respondent (A-3-F) manifested her attitude toward the non-Jew by her response to the statement, "The least that a Jew can do". She answered, "Is to live nobly".[13] In an effort to elicit a further response, I suggested that her statement represented a maximal mode of action. She explained her answer by stating that if a Jew lives nobly, he will not "discredit his people or himself".[14]

> "Half the things that we do, or don't do, we do because of what it will mean to the people whom we represent, or who represent us. When you say JEW, you say it with either condescension, and with a sneer in your tone, or with great affection and respect".[15]

This attitude is not an uncommon one. The respondent has feelings of insecurity about living as a member of a minority group in a majority culture. By "noble living", she assures herself that no non-Jew will ever point a "sneering finger" at her. She is aware of a

watchful Christian eye on her. She is determined to do nothing that will bring home her shame. She has not attained the stage in her development where she feels the Jew to be a natural part of the culture. (How many Jews do?) Therefore, if being a good Jew means that one must attend worship services on the High Holydays, this will be her course of action.

Summary

These selections share an important motif. The Jew is particularly conscious of the opinion of the non-Jew. He wants to solicit his approval. He desires to do that which is right in his neighbor's eyes. The Jew is becoming persuaded of the growing enlightenment of the Christian community. He feels, that in part, he must aid in furthering this enlightenment. Thus if the Christian demands religious observance as a sine qua non, of acceptance, and of respect, the Jew will follow the demand, even though, from a purely "religious" point of view, he is not motivated to observe.

The opinion of the non-Jew affects the High Holyday observance in the following manner. The High Holydays are the most publicized festival days of the Jewish religious calendar. The non-Jew is aware that they possess some significance. (He probably does not know what this significance is). He respects the Jew who observes them as the symbol of his Judaism. The Jew wants the respect of the non-Jew. He observes these days in a manner that will merit this respect.

Attitude Toward Jewishness

Jewishness can be defined apart from Judaism. Judaism is the religion of Jews. Jewishness is the sum total of cultural, philanthropic, historical and folk practices, which do not directly impinge on the religious mode, but which serve to identify the "non-religious" Jew as a Jew. It does not exclude the religious Jew who may appropriate some of these practices.

Glazer point to this demarcation between the "Religion of the Jew and the Peoplehood of the Jew".[16] He asserts that in 1940 they were two separate forces affecting American Jewish life. He feels that it would have been difficult then to have distinguished them. Today he believes that "Jewishness" is dying out, and that "Judaism" is "showing a remarkable, if ambiguous strength among American Jews".[17]

It is difficult to distinguish "Jewishness" from "Judaism". Our respondents, when they were able to make this distinction, viewed "Jewishness" in terms of folk practice, and "Judaism" as the ethical religion. However, the respondents who could articulate this distinction were unable to speak with total clarity. For example, one respondent (A-2-F) rejected Hebrew because it "was too Jewish".[18] Yet she felt that "she was a Jewish Jew". She like this feeling. She preferred being a "white Jew to a white Protestant". She felt that Hebrew was a badge that somehow weakened her identification as "an American Jew". Her ambivalence, however, was clearly expressed

by her desire to have her children exposed "to a more tangible form of Jewish observance".[19]

The basic yearning of this individual was for an ethical religion, divorced from the traditional handicaps of being a Jew. Yet, she clearly accepted the handicaps. She felt that "Judaism was more ennobling than other religions".[20] She believed that observance and knowledge were the "armor and security that made you know why being different from other people was good". She could not appropriate this observance for herself, but she desired them for her children.

Throughout the interviews, the respondents indicated difficulty in formulating a definition of a Jew. Their conceptions, like our example above, intertwined and interfused the "people" and the "religion".

This intertwining of Jewishness and Judaism was reflected in their attitude toward Jewish identification. For many of the respondents, the emphasis was on a cultural identification, by way of the temple. For others it was a religious identification, that included the activities of the Jewish Community. In all of the attitudes expressed, it is possible to see the effects of the social environment.

The attitudes of the respondents were derived primarily through answers to items on the completion instrument. Items 18 and 21 had been formulated in the hope of attaining these attitudes. Item 10 had been included in the hope that the general response would be, attend services on the High Holydays. No one gave this answer to this

last response. I was surprised to see how the responses reflected instead Jewish identification, and awareness of interaction with the non-Jew.

To the statement "The least that a Jew can do" one respondent (A-19-M) replied, "The least that a Jew can do is to feel like, as, and comfortable as a Jew". I questioned him on what he meant by the word, comfortable. He explained that it meant feeling "Unself-conscious in the broader sense".[21] The Jew should be neither proud, nor ashamed. He should accept his status, and be comfortable in it, just as does an individual who is born with, and who is comfortable in his blond hair". He explained further, that for himself, he did not feel that the Jew had any special role or task in history, as a specific Jewish role. "The Jew has only a human role, a grand human role. A preChristian human role".[22]

There is a temptation to judge this respondent as an individual running away from "Jewish" identification. It would seem that he would prefer being identified as a "man", in order to escape the discriminatory identification as a Jew. He expressed his awareness of the discrimination that Jews frequently have in eyes of Christians. He felt that this was "something that the individual Jew must rise above".[23] If we can dismiss, momentarily, his motivation, being a Jew, for this respondent, is to be a man, associated with the "great Jewish historical strivings for man". It is something that he is because of an accident of birth, not by choice. A label that

he wears because others insist he wear it. Accordingly, he has defined this label for himself. It has become synonymous with all the great universal aspirations of man for man.

Many of therespondents expressed the opposite viewpoint. Their attitudes reflected a limited quantity of religiousity. Their religious committment was in being part of the "Jewish Heritage". Respondent A-18-F expressed it clearly:

> "I don't think that religion per se is a very dominant part of my life. I have said at times that I am a cultural and philanthropic Jew. Many Jews that I know, who are in the same situation that I am in, constantly identify themselves with cultural and philanthropic organizations. There is a religious implication to this type of Jew. No other phase of Judaism is entered into as much as this, with the feeling that I am a Jew, because my religion is Jewish."[24]

For this respondent, and for others like herself, "actual observance", in terms of ritual observance, has little meaning. She has definite positive feelings about being identified as a Jew. Intellectually, she has found problems with the mode of religious observance. Therefore, as a Jew she seeks to put herself in relationship with other Jews, through cultural and philanthropic means, rather than through the religious means of the synagogal service. She feels that the ethical teachings of Judaism have influenced her thinking, and her practices. She attends temple on the High Holydays, "Because it is a time when a Jew can allign himself with other Jews, throughout the world, who are going to temple on this day too".[25]

Pride in being Jewish was frequently expressed in the attitudes toward Jewish identification. Respondent A-6-F had been humble and

ashamed of being Jewish. The tortures that the Jews suffered under Hitler altered her feelings. It was during that period that she and her friends started to "take pride in their Jewishness". Another respondent (A-9-M) felt that "there was no point in temple attendance". Yet, simultaneously, he felt "that the least that a Jew can do is admit his heritage when it is questioned and admire historical values of his forbears." This institutionally irreligious person insisted, "if you are born a Jew you have certain feelings of actually being proud of being a Jew".[26]

This pride in being Jewish was manifested in identification with some Jewish group. It could be a Jewish Center, the B'nai B'rith, a Jewish lodge. In addition, one was expected to transmit this heritage to one's children. Therefore, if in the last analysis, the non-believing Jew could only transmit this pride in heritage by affiliating with a temple, or through sending one's children to religious school, this was done. By the same token, one would demonstrate their allegiance to the "Jewish Group" by attending temple on the High Holydays.

These positive attitudes toward Jewish identification are unquestionably related to the existence of the state of Israel. The tremendous impact that the State of Israel has made on the American Jewish Community is difficult to measure. The great financial outpourings of the American Jewish community are a visible proof of the pride that American Jews possess for the accomplishments, both economically and militarily of this little state. The American Jew need

not reside in Israel to feel a part of it, as indeed he does. This was strikingly illustrated by a chance remark of one of the respondents.

He (A-4-M) was discussing the competition that the modern rabbi has with radio and television, and comparing it to the rabbinate of thirty years past. He was speaking of current events as possible sermon topics when he said:

> "No matter how well a rabbi is trained, today, he can hardly talk about Palestine like —Who's our ambassador with the United Nations?--EBAN".[27]

This was no slip of the tongue. Abba Eban, for him, was not only the Israeli Ambassador, he is "our" ambassador. Had this respondent been of recent eastern European extraction, his response would not have been so impressive. This is not the case. Quite to the contrary, he is a second generation Reform Jew. He and his family have been of decided influence on the affairs of one of the temples in the community. For this man, the Jew owes

> "an obligation to the Jewish community to attend services.. for if the temples weren't attended, and we didn't have them, why Jewry would naturally disappear...If the people don't support the Jewish religion - attending temple - if they don't support that, why the Jewish people will be non-existent".[28]

Pride in Jewishness is derived from certain communaly Jewish practices. In part too, it is influenced by a renaissance of Jewish nationalism. These are aspects of Jewishness which relate to the Jewish Group. Indeed, all evidence of pride in Jewishness redounds to a feeling which the individual possesses for membership

in this"special club". Certain religious symbols evoke the same feeling of pride in the heritage of the Jewish community. Foremost among these in the opinion of one of the respondents (A-13-M) is the Kol Nidre:

> "I think that is one of the biggest factors in holding the religion together, the fact that on Yom Kippur Eve everybody goes to temple to hear the Kol Nidre sung. Perhaps they don't even know what they are here for, but it brings them together. We're community livers, family and community livers. Probably one of the finest things that ever happened to the Jewish people is that we teach and live and socialize in groups...Kol Nidre is one of the things that pulls us together".[29]

This respondent indicated throughout his interview, his considerable knowledge of Jewish history and traditional lore, customs and ceremonies. He has a great feeling of pride in his Jewish Intellectualism. In a sense, he is aware that this sets him apart from less learned Jews. His identification with Judaism is on a cultural mode, and not on a more primary religious one. He is aware of the aesthetic qualities of the Kol Nidre. He is proud of its liturgical value. Yet, his associations impell him to speak of the Jewish community - of the Jewish group. The High Holydays for him are a force that unites and maintains the Jewish group, more than a "religious force".

"There's a kinship in being Jewish together".[30] This is how one of the respondents (A-10-F) expresses her association with Jews in the synagogue. She felt "that there was something very warming about being in the synagogue with fellow Jews".[31] This "kinship"

among Jews is not limited to the synagogue. The respondent feels that the same feeling exists no matter where one is. It is possible to experience the warm feeling "even when one is on a trip, where you meet a group of strangers. Yet, you sort of gravitate toward the strangers who are Jews".[32]

This "warm feeling of kinship" is a feeling of security. The respondent is stating that in certain social situations, she is more secure in the company of fellow-Jews. The temple is the place where this feeling of security is accentuated. Thus, for her, belonging to a Jewish institution, the epitome of which is the temple, is synonymous with achieving a sense of personal security.

I do not intend that this judgement be viewed as a hasty one, which would preclude the "religious" motive of temple attendance. However, the respondent has stated that frequently, the prayer book has greater meaning for her when she reads it at home, alone.[33] This, the, suggests that some combination of social, or historical forces, or perhaps some personal experience, has stimulated in her the need for the feeling of security that company in a Jewish group provides. The desire for this security is not unique with this respondent. It reflects, possibly, a feeling that is derived from living as a member of a minority group in a majority culture.

Summary

The attitude of the respondents express a desire to be more closely identified with a Jewish group, or Jewish institution. The people want to be known as Jews. Even with the one instance where

the respondent (A-19-M) would prefer no special identifying characteristics, he has not chosen, not, to be identified as a Jew. In what manner is this identification taking place? The evidence is not in any way conclusive. However, a particular direction is suggested. It is not through an increased committment to abstract religiousity, to an increase of temple attendance, or to personal piety. Nor does the Jew differentiate himself through ethical behavior. Instead, the contemporary Jew percieved some misty value in a vague concept known as Jewish tradition, and heritage. I believe that this heritage could be more aptly described as a sense or feeling of belonging. I believe that the evidence indicates this and for the following reasons:

First, the label "Jew" enjoys status in the General American Community. This is not to suggest that it possesses a distinctiveness that every non-Jew desires to share. Rather, it is no longer a label of shame. The Jew, because of the events of the past twenty years has developed a sense of pride in himself as an entity.

Secondly, the non-Jew in America has indicated to the Jew, that he will grant him a measure of respect, if he will but respect himself. This self-respect is made manifest by a willingness to participate in visible modes of self identification - Jewish foods, ceremonial practices, attendance at important holiday religious services.

If, as I assume, this thesis is true, then the sense of belonging or membership in a group, requires a badge of identification, and evokes a feeling of obligation. Again, the visible mode of self-

identification, the food, the practice and the attendance at significant religious services, are both the badge and the means by which the obligation is paid.

In this sense, then, the High Holydays are assuming a meaning that differs from that expressed in the traditional literature. They are still, as pointed out in the preceding chapter, heavily concerned with individual personal religion - with the regeneration of the spiritual values, and the alleviation of sin, and feelings of guilt. However, the new meaning might be described as the yearly reincarnation of the individual Jew as a member of the Jewish community.

As a Mirror of Economic Mobility

One of the frequent accusations made by Jews against Jews is that the High Holydays is a time when people show off their wealth. More specifically, that Jewish women utilize this occasion to show off their new fall apparel. The writer is aware, through several years of observing High Holyday congregations that something more than the "Sunday best" is worn by both the males and females of the congregation. We felt that if this accusation was true, it would add to our knowledge of the significance that the Holydays creates - not-withstanding, that this would be a superficial level.

On our completion instrument, we inserted the statement, "When they are in temple, my friends". We hoped that the respondents would project some attitude relative to the attire of their friends. Three responses out of a total of 24 indicated some concern, that

their friends were comparing new fall fashions. Two of these were women. In the interview proper, only two references were made to dress. One of these (A-13-M), asserted that Reform Jews show a vast improvement over the members of the Conservative or Orthodox synagogues, in that Reform Jewish women strive to be comfortable in the dress rather than ostentatious. They want to look nice, but they aren't out to impress people. Another respondent (A-7-F), indicated that she wore the same dress at Holyday services for the past five years. She wanted to feel clean, and this could be accomplished by wearing something in which she felt comfortable.

One lone male respondent felt that "some people attend services because they like to check their neighbors new clothing".[34] He explained, however, that this occurs because the temple "exists as a social and group center". However, during the interview he clarified his statement. He acknowledged that concern for new clothing was not primary. It was something that occurs whenever a group convenes.

It is easy to see that concern for attire exists in a community where the economic status is loosely defined. It is likely that women, and men to a lesser degree, utilize the High Holyday occasion to display their new material acquisitions. However, in the older, more stable reform congregations, family wealth and family status is known. It is no longer something which must be proved at a worship service. Accordingly, people are dressing in a mode that reflects

the need for comfort. Particularly, when the atmosphere of the temple, on a warm fall day, is stuffy.

This tendency must be weighed in terms of a specific community. The fall season, frequently represents a return from summer vacations and summer homes. The Holydays, particularly, when they come early in the month of September, are occasions when friends renew relationships that have been suspended over the summer. However, even under these circumstances, when the Holydays are employed incidentally, as an occasion to socialize, this motivation appears to be superficial. Thus, for the Reform community in which this study has been made, the indications are that there is much less concern that the Holydays are employed to mirror new economic activity or mobility than the writer had originally anticipated.

CHAPTER VII

SYMBOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

This chapter will analyze and discuss certain symbols and religious institutions that are a part of the High Holyday service. Certain of these institutions, for example, the rabbi, evoked thoughts that exceed the limitations of his role in the Holyday observance. Thus, a respondent may express an attitude toward the rabbi that has been formed through associations throughout the year. Yet, this attitude will effect his conception of the rabbi during the Holyday period. Similarly, attitudes toward the regular sabbath service may have an effect on attitudes relating directly to the Holyday service.

The Rabbinate

Four items on the completion test were related to the rabbi. Three of these four evoked responses which reflected the respondents opinion as to the aim of the rabbi both during the year and on the Holydays. The fourth item engendered reponses which were personal opinions of the rabbi. The general pattern of the responses were two fold. One pattern desired the rabbis to be better pastors, and sincere friends. The second pattern was that they should be "religious men".

One respondent (A-20-M) believed that rabbis should be better Jews.

> "more sincere Jews, less professional, less career men, more down to earth people, with a little sympathy and understanding. Not the kind who go climbing up to the

> wealthy ones in the congregations, and who neglect the poor little fellow".[1]

This respondent feels that rabbis are too concerned with teaching "peace of mind" and getting involved with psychology. He believes that "their basic function is to teach religion, teach Judaism." This respondent believed that basically rabbis are interested in their own congregation and that it is only the external pressures of the congregants that, at times, divert their attention. He is fond of rabbis. He has had the fortunate experience of being exposed to the ministry of a saintly rabbi. This man has become his standard of what the rabbi should be - gentle, warm, friendly, beloved. The assertion that this respondent makes that the rabbi should teach Judaism is, possibly, derived out of his own return to the fold. At one time this respondent had divorced himself from the Synagogue, and from Jewish life. He has expressed some attitudes of self-hatred. We believe that part of his concern for "Jewishness" is an attempt to compensate for his one-time withdrawal.

Another respondent (A-21-M) felt that religion (and the rabbis as the functionary of religion) should serve a specialized function. He feels that the clergy "is responding more to what people want, rather than what they need".[2] He believes, too, that

> "perhaps the clergy cannot find in religion and belief in God, sufficient justification for their existence. Accordingly, they have to go to other areas to find reasons for occupying leadership roles. Therefore they get into psychiatry, and political science".[3]

Respondent A-17-F felt that the rabbi shouldbe a pastor. "One who knows everyone in the congregation - knows their problems and sorrows and happiness, and is able to be a friend".[4] This respondent felt that because the size of the congregation was so large, it was impossible for the rabbi to develop a personal relationship. Her overall impression of the rabbinate was favorable. She felt herself to be fortunate that she enjoyed a warm, close relationship with one of her rabbis.

Another respondent (A-22-M) included the pastoral role in his conception of "spiritual guidance" that the rabbis should render.

> "It is very surprising how hurt people can get if the rabbi doesn't show up at the hospital, even though they themselves do not show up at services during the year".[5]

This respondent felt this pastoral role to be so important that he believed that rabbinic students should be given special training in this field of activity.

The clearest conception of religiousity that the rabbi should have, was given by A-19-M. This respondent equated religiousity with spirituality. He believed that the rabbi should be one who:

> "ponders the spirit of man - his own spirit and the spirit of others. A person with basic motivations and basic ideas as to why life, and how life, is. He should be intelligent, with a sense of humor, and this unconscious spirituality woven throughout him".[6]

This respondent, along with a majority of others, wanted their rabbi to be an examplary man. One somewhat akin to saintliness. A rabbi who sets an example of religion by the type of life that he lives. Yet, no ascetic was anticipated. What is desired is a

triple threat personality. One who is a spiritual leader in the above religious sense, a personable and inspiring teacher, and administrator, and who possesses a knowledge and technique to share in the interests of the Mens' Club, the Sisterhood, and the Youth Group.

Each of the respondents has had some association with rabbis. These rabbis have left their mark. Yet, if "their rabbi" will but be a friend, he will be excused if he should possess less capacity in other areas.

The Sermon

The rabbi has an effect with his sermon on the Holydays. If his forte is to preach, his sermon will be weighed on the basis of its message. If he is respected as a sincere person, his sermon will be well recieved regardless of its contents.

This general statement regarding the sermon is derived inductively from the evidence. One clear pattern emerged from the respondents of our sample. This pattern indicates that the sermon has little effect. The respondents frequently expressed the idea that the purpose of the Holyday sermon is to scold the congregants for their lack of attendance at services during the other weeks of the year. A-19-M resented this scolding by the rabbi:

> "I know that this bothers the rabbi, and I just wish it didn't bother him so much so that we could go on from there. I resent hearing the rabbi scold you when you are there for the times that you were not. There is no reason for a rabbi to do this". [7]

This respondent resented the idea of being scolded. He was

typical of the sample. The respondents felt some guilt for their absence but it was not something of which they desired the rabbis to remind them. This was in keeping with their conception of what the rabbi should be - a friend who is understanding - who does not moralize.

One respondent objected "to a Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashonah sermon where they take the text from Plato or Cicero".[8] He felt that the Jewish tradition was sufficiently rich to warrant its being utilized on this occasion.

Another respondent (A-9-M) felt that the rabbi should emphasize "the common purpose of well-doing by all mankind".[9] The respondent believed that the rabbi's words carry a great deal of weight with people, and that they would attempt to follow this type of message, if it were spoken. Then too, the large size of the congregation on the Holydays would enable the message to reach many ears.

This attitude was carefully stated in the response of A-11-F. She answered:

> "When the rabbi preaches, I am sometimes bored, sometimes interested, seldom stimulated. Rabbis should emphasize tolerance of others, kindness toward one another. I get tired of the six million Jews. I don't know what purpose it serves except as maybe a tear-jerker".[10]

The most negative effect of the sermon is captured in the response of A-11-M. That which he disliked most of temple was the sermon. He realized that many people want to hear a sermon, but he felt that the requirement of having to produce something sparkling fresh on every weekend was too demanding for any man. Rather than be subjected to this kind of sermon, where frequently he felt him-

self a part of a captive audience, he would prefer no sermon. In addition, he expressed the belief that the purpose of temple was to pray, and not to hear a boring oration.

It was of interest that this respondent spoke of sermons in general rather than of any specific Holyday theme which he may have heard. He was not unkind toward the rabbi. He understood the problem. Yet, this individual's statement, supported by so many other similar ones, leads to the clear conclusion, that the sermon in this community has little effect upon the individuals. The respondents have all stated that they were interested in hearing "religious themes" discussed from the pulpit. However, it is the opinion of this writer that the one quality which is generally lacking from the sermons that have been preached, is interest, not religion.

None of the respondents suggested that they wanted to be entertained. However, it seems impossible to believe that none of the High Holyday sermons spoke on a religious theme. For the most part, the respondents evidence a conditioning to sermons. This conditioning is reflected in their stereotyped description of the sermon themes. We understand the difficulty of addressing every sermon to a particularly significant current problem. Yet, we are forced to the conclusion that the lack of retention of sermon themes is caused by the lack of an impression these themes have created.

The respondents have not expressed any great demands. They seek for either a new idea, simply phrased, or an old idea, clothed in new language.

Music

The liturgy of the Holydays is supported by a choir and, at times, special musical selections. We had speculated that this music might add to the meaningfulness of the service. However, only one of the respondents was particularly moved by the choir and the musical selections. This respondent (A-16-F) was a trained musician who had been active in the choir for many years.

The only significant musical selection of the services was the Kol Nidre. The traditional composition stimulated and stirred all of the respondents. It engendered a tranquil, thoughtful mood that was particularly conducive to personal reflection. It quickened for the individual his thoughts and associations with the Jewish history, and the Jewish people. At times it brought to mind pleasant family associations. For the most part, the recollections were indistinct, yet powerful, and meaningful to the respondent. An example of this is the response of A-21-M.

"When I hear the Kol Nidre, I am moderately stirred by the grandeur and pathos I somehow associate with it". We asked this respondent if he felt that these associations were caused by the musical tones. He was not sure.

> "I have a distinct feeling that this reaction of mine is an extension of something I had as a youngster. There's something special about Kol Nidre. The music is attractive to me. When I used to hear it as a youngster, it was in a particular setting, an occasion. My elders were doing something special, so I was impressed. Then there must be something about it that has to do with the suffering of the Jews".[11]

This respondent felt inclined to associate his feeling to some childhood experience in the company of elders. Yet he believed that the meaning of the Kol Nidre was related to the suffering of the Jews. This belief could have been obtained from the experiences of World Jewry during the Hitler period. It could also be an overtone from what is described as the "sadness inherent in the schul".

Another respondent (A-11-M) was "thrilled and emotionally moved". He described the melody to be nostalgic. The "cry in the prayer" was moving. It was something that he did not want to analyze. He was satisfied with the feeling that he felt could not be duplicated from any other source. "It's a warm feeling. It's a sad feeling. All the basic emotions are there".[11a]

The "feeling" engendered by the music is a significant clue to the religious experience. The respondent stated that it was a warming feeling, derived from all the basic emotions. We understand that the phrase "all the basic emotions" is figuratively used. However, this description points to an indgredient in the "religious experience". The music stimulates something in the psychological make-up of the individual. (It need not only be this selection. Another respondent described "Eli, Eli" in the same manner). It makes him warm and comfortable. It is a thrill, and at the same time it produces a sense of security. It is sad, and yet joyfully awesome.

One respondent (A-9-M) enjoys Kol Nidre "for its mournful musical tones, and its expression of sorrow and hardship for the Jews".[12]

This respondent was particularly interested in the musical tone. It sounded to him as if someone was singing "with tears in his voice". Yet he was persuaded that the words had no meaning for him, and that the effect of the music could be reproduced by other similar music.

This respondent had no strong affiliation with the temple. He identified with Jews, and particularly with the Jewish people. He was no advocate of organized religion. He was sensitive to the historical suffering of the Jew. For this reason, perhaps, the music served to remind him of the hardships that Jews have experienced.

Another respondent (A-3-F) felt inspired when she heard the Kol Nidre. She got "very lofty feelings". She never was aware of the meaning of the words, but the musical quality was beautiful to her. She believed that she went to service only to hear the Kol Nidre.[13]

Kol Nidre has the effect of producing a contemplative mood. Part of this mood may be the result of early conditioning to the solemn moment on the Eve of Atonement Day. Part of it is derived from certain historical associations. However, it is significant that the meaning of the prayer was known only to a few of the respondents. The emotions that it arouses cannot stem from the significance of the prayer.

A clue to its importance to the Jew is derived from the setting in which the music is played. This is an impressive part of the service. There is a clear cut idea of absolution associated with

the liturgy. Yet, we believe that the major significance is attributed to the plaintiveness of the melody. The music is written in a minor key and in a Hedjaz mode. The effect of the music is felt when it is heard in the quiet of the home, on a record player, as well as in the temple.

Although it is important to stress the melody, there are two other factors which may add to its significance. First, Kol Nidre is the most familiar selection from the High Holyday liturgy. The congregants may regard it as an old friend. Secondly, the selection has been given wide publicity as the most sacred "Jewish hymn". Therefore, the congregant may bring a conditioned response to the musical stimulus.

The Shofar

The respondents were asked to complete the statement: "The Shofar sounds.." The pattern of responses indicate that the shofar produces a feeling of nostalgia, that it is associated with Jewish identification. Respondent A-12-F felt that it gave her a "thrilling feeling of being a Jew". It was a tie with Jewish tradition, similar to the manner in which the Kol Nidre was a tie.[14] It reminded people of the "ancients calling the Jews together to announce the coming of the Holydays".[15] It was a signal which emphasized "the declaration of our sins of the past year and the atonement of said sins".[16]

The tenor of the responses described the shofar ceremony in anticipatory terms. However, there was no indication that the respondents were aware of its significant place in the Rosh Hashonah liturgy. On the whole it was regarded as merely a part of the service.

People enjoyed hearing the sound. It did not convey a specific religious teaching. Negatively, it was something that Jews did on the High Holydays.

The exception to this pattern was manifest by two respondents. One of these (A-19-M) felt that it "was stunt-like".[17] This response is significant for this individual. He has steadfastly reflected an attitude of discomfort with strong Jewish Identification. He prefers the universal aspects of Judaism. For example, the Kol Nidre, for him was a powerful tie with the historicity of man, not the Jew.

The second exception (A-20-M) described the shofar sound as the "unmusical notes of Ancient Israel. Our ancestors heard the same sound to bring them back from easy dreams of assimilation".[18] This respondent has also reflected a one-time desire to be assimilated. For a number of years he was divorced from Judaism. Today, however, he has returned, perhaps involuntarily.

The total significance of the shofar for our respondents appears to be in its value as a token of Jewishness. For those who are inclined toward more Jewishness, the shofar is one more tie. For those who seek universalism, it is a relic of a past, whose use is out of place with the solemnity of the occasion.

The Torah

We are aware that most members of the congregation cannot follow the Hebrew reading of the Torah. Yet, the Torah service is a central

part of the worship. Accordingly, we were interested in determining the reactions to the reading, and to the entire ceremony associated with it.

One respondent (A-2-F) sits quietly until the reading is over. It is meaningless to her because she doesn't understand Hebrew. She felt "A sense of awe when they take it out of the Ark". She recalled that her mother-in-law had donated one of the white satin covers. She remembered that she was delighted when her son told her that he had carried one in a Junior congregational service.[19] She would be satisfied if it was read in English. She was not concerned with the scriptural passages.

Another respondent (A-7-F) felt that the Torah was the most important part of the service:

> "I think that the Torah is the spur of the Jewish religion. The Ark and the Torah are the most sacred things...When the Ark is opened, and the Torahs are ---those beautiful things, that's it! You can do all the preparations for an operation, but when you take that knife, that's it"![20]

This respondent was not able to articulate any more specific feelings. However, it is important to note that her father was a participant in the Torah service. A layman who sat on the pulpit. More important, her father had donated one of the scrolls to the congregation. Thus, this moment was the most personalized one of the service for her. She received a feeling of honor in that she was a member of a family who was being honored. Yet, the Torah reading itself, evoked no feeling of understanding. The scroll was an object of beauty. It had some symbolic connection with mystery. It was to be venerated.

It need not be understood.

This feeling of awe was clearly articulated in the response of A-18-F. She felt that the

> "taking out of the Torah, was impressive. The ceremony induces a certain amount of solemnity and realization of the beauty of the whole situation, but when the reading itself takes place, your mind may wander". [21]

The rabbis and the lay people move to the Ark with dignity. There is a gleam from the silver ornaments as they reflect the temple lighting. The congregation is on its feet. The rabbi recites a special prologue. Then the spell is broken, because the next occurence is a prosaic reading of a text, for which there is little interest. That which engenders the interest is the special technique or ceremony associated with the Ark. The custom of raising reflects a conditioned response - something which has been taken to signify respect.

One respondent (A-15-M) felt that there was a bit of "splendor to the show". [22] He didn't derive any spiritual significance from the "show", but admitted that it probably held great significance for the individual holding the Scroll.

For the majority of the respondents, the reading of the Torah was not important. It was a time when their thoughts would wander or they would talk in low tones. They were not involved. However, when the Torah service was begun, they were generally impressed by the ceremony of taking the Scroll from the Ark. There was a feeling almost of majesty that was related to this event. This feeling vanished when the reading from the Scroll was begun.

The Prayerbook

The High Holyday liturgy is noteworthy for the inclusion of particular prayers which speak of certain Holyday themes. Prayers such as the Kol Nidre and the U'ne Sana-tokef, have a long history of being meaningful to the worshipper during this period. We did not believe that the Reform laity was aware of traditional meanings or prayer themes. At the same time, we felt it unlikely that a worshipper would be indifferent to the liturgy.

The respondents were asked to complete the sentence "As I listen to the prayers being read". Their replies were equally divided. One group found them meaningful. The other group found them meaningless.

One respondent (A-2-F) who answered positively felt "that the psalms were particularly beautiful".

> "I'm always amazed, over and over again, when I read them, how thoroughly beautiful and universally applicable they are. You wonder how in the world such tremendous principles were understood that have withstood such changes of time and history, but are still perfectly good".[23]

This respondent was a regular reader of the bible. She had a considerable literary background. Words spoke to her. Prayer was something which was a part of her daily life. She was able to complete one sentence of the Widdui that the writer had begun. She felt this prayer to be wonderful. Something "which left no loopholes, no sin unturned". She felt that it was "too much to believe that God was listening". Nevertheless, the recitation of the prayer - the confessing on the Holyday, was to her a means "of purification". She felt that by repeating her sin, one became conscious of the wrong

action, and was refrained from a future repetition. Her conception of God was a composite of a transcendent and imminent deity. She believed that He was a force that helped the individual to help himself.

For respondent A-11-M

> "most prayers seem to be a distillation of thought beautifully written. Prayers say things so beautifully without a lot of unnecessary words".[24]

He was concerned with the phraseology of the prayer language. He stated that frequently the prayers, particularly the Widdui, evoked remembrances of certain harsh actions of his against other people. He felt that he "got involved with the prayer". He claimed that he did not look down on himself, or think to himself, "what a fool you are for having been taken in by that clap trap" as others sometimes feel". This was an interesting phrase. We have the choice of assuming that he genuinely felt that others have that opinion of prayer, or that in reality, prayer to him is so much "clap trap". We are of the opinion that he possesses a real appreciation of the liturgy as literature, but holds little regard for it as a means of communication with the Allmighty.

Another respondent (A-22-M) felt that while the "High Holydays liturgy was longer, the prayers were not so repetitious". He admitted that this was due to their lack of familiarity. He could not speak of the meaning of the Holyday prayers, but he felt that this meaning was special because the prayers were associated with the Day.[25] His attitude to the liturgy was to regard it as a sopori-

fic. On different occasions particular prayers answered different needs. "There is something in each prayer that will hit each of us at one time or another. This, too, helps us to solve our problems".[26] That part of the liturgy which was most meaningful to him, as it was to most of the respondents, was the silent prayer. This was the period of quiet meditation when his thoughts could grapple with his problems. Frequently, he would extend his reverie beyond the formal period. It was at such a time that the regular liturgy was not followed.

For another respondent (A-4-M) the prayers were "meaningless and repetitious".[27] This individual objected to the idea of asking God to do anything for him.

> "I don't think that God's going to do anything for me. I don't believe that God is going to answer my prayers. It's up to me to get the most out of life myself".[28]

This respondent objects to prayers of petition. However, he thrilled to the "Shema Yisroel" and to other familiar chants. He found meaning in "Grant us Peace", because this was a petition "which was not for ourselves". He preferred that which was universal in Judaism, although he was profoundly committed to the Jewish people. At times this committment seemed alsmost beyond his own awareness. He held a strong attachment to personal religion which he defined as ethical behaviour. His particular occupation may have assisted him to disregard petition.

The negative aspect of the liturgy was bitingly expressed by our eldest respondent (A-14-M). Prayers were to him merely "the script of a play that an actor might recite, without much spiritual meaning attached to it".[29] This respondent felt himself to be a rationalist. For him, the prayerbook was a ritual that engendered boredom and weariness. A man of letters himself, he believed that the reader plagiarized the thoughts of others - that prayers were without meaning, because they belonged to someone else.

To our most Jewishly literate respondent (A-20-M) the prayer-book was his "affirmation of belonging to the Jewish family".[30] He didn't pray "for anything". However, he felt when he repeated the prayers, that he "marched with all those people in past ages". For him, they were a link with the Jewish people of the past, and of the present. He felt a sense of oneness because he understood that he was sharing in a service with other Jews all over the world. The repetition of the words cause him to think of how his father and grandfather spoke them too.

This respondent derived a sense of security that in a sense was external to the liturgy. The prayers held no intrinsic meaning for him. Their great value resided in the fact that they gave to him a sense of belonging. He savored the Hebrew. Philosophically, he was at one with Reform Judaism. Yet the liturgy of the Conservative Synagogue held more meaning for him. Through this medium he could feel the tie with his youth, and renew the relationship he had shared with his Cantor father.

In summary, the respondents derived little from the liturgy that could be called religiously meaningful. The prayers were long and frequently repetitious, sometimes boring, The great ideas and themes of the prayerbook, with the exception of the Widdui, were not recalled. The language of the prayerbook was frequently appreciated for its literary qualities. The prayers were an effective tie with Jewish history and tradition. They were important, because they represented something that Jews did at services. Yet, the most meaningful part of the service was the silent devotion. Here the individual was enabled to express a spontaneity in his prayer mood. He could voice whatever longings his heart held. He could grapple with his thoughts and problems. The prayer for Peace similarly evoked a favorable response. It was interesting that those respondents who were distraught with the idea of personal petitions found merit in a plea for peace. The reason for this may lie in the universal gain of such a plea. Then too, peace is something about which the individual may feel impotent. Concern for peace, as with health and life, can be anxiety-provoking - causing at least an emotional tension, if not an emotional crisis. At such a time, God's aid is solicited, even by those who prefer "standing on their own feet".

It is noteworthy that prayers, such as the Shema, the Kaddish, or the Kol Nidre, which are familiar and tinged with emotional impact, are considered important. These prayers possess a commonly

understood tradition. They are associated with important aspects of Jewish life. The traditionally important U'nn Sana-tokef was known only to one respondent. This one example indicates that for most Reform Jews, the prayerbook speaks of something only remotely associated with life.

Personal Prayer

The reader might anticipate by the foregoing discussion, that personal prayer held greater meaning for the respondents than the prayers of the formal liturgy. That was not so for all the respondents, but the overwhelming majority admitted of the moments when prayer was meaningful to them.

One respondent (A-2-F) prayed every night whenever her husband was out of town. Her constant quest is that "everything will hold together until he gets back".[31] This is the moment when she desires support, and this support is forthcoming from a God who has real meaning for her. She would not think of missing a night prayer, even when her husband is home, for that is the time when she "pays back her loan". She tries not to pray for "little material things". She asks for health and love and togetherness for herself and her family. Never does she ask for clothing, or a new car, (she has no need to ask) or that her children pass an examination in school.

For this respondent, prayer has real meaning. She emphasized that it is most important to her in moments of stress, or crisis. She never prays for things that she can attain by her own efforts. She is not aware of any contradiction between her stated willingness

to seek personal petition, and her strong assertion that the petitions of the prayer book are too selfish. The former is born out of particular need. The latter is a reflection of a prayer ritual. It holds no meaning unless it too seeks for love, life and peace.

"Nowadays prayer means gratitude. In other words, many thanks".[32] This was the reply of respondent A-10-F. She felt that people pray when they want something. They express their gratitude when they have been given some blessing. She believed that this practice was derived from the childhood belief that God was someone to whom all major requests were directed. She admitted that, even though she questioned the logic of defining what God was, she still followed the practice of reciting her evening prayers which she had learned from childhood. She was almost apologetic about this practice. She defended it because it held forth the idea of blessing "everyone in the family, and keeping them all safe".[33] She explained this practice on the basis of superstition.

This respondent, uncertain of logical explanation of God's existence, nevertheless prays before going to bed. She and the above example were taught their "night time prayers" by a mother who stood by the bedside and tucked them in. The mother was the source of strength and guidance. The prayer mode was associated with this gentle mother. And although the prayers were directed to God by the child, it seems likely that as an adult, the mother image, appearing as a conditioned response, took His place. We derive this explana-

tion from the following reasoning. The respondent is uncertain about her belief in God. Yet she prays. Her prayers are remembered from childhood, when her mother stood by her side. She prays for those values that a mother's presence might have assured. Thus, she is assured of the security that a mother's presence would have brought.

Another respondent (A-23-M) believes it "wrong for people to pray for help!"[34] He feels that people should pray for the "personal strength to meet situations, in a manner that reflects credit on themselves". This individual was one of the respondents who conceived of religion in terms of ethical behavior. This statement reflects that conception. For him, God is an ethical principle, which is capable of aiding people to help themselves. Prayer for him is a soliloquy, with the individual seeking strength, courage and determination to do that which is good.

Two other female respondents (A-12-F and A-17-F) made noteworthy admittances that they pursued their childhood practices of "night time prayers". They ask for the continued good health and protection of their families. It may be significant that this practice of night time prayers is so much in evidence among the female respondents. They are the ones who hold primary responsibility for the rearing of the children, and for maintaining the operation of the household.

Rabbi Jerome D. Folkman has discussed this role of the contemporary middle class mother.[35] He asserts that she is the family mem-

ber responsible for transmitting religious values to the children. Thus the mother may view herself as the defender of the family. Because of the difficulty of the task, she seeks additional security in divine assistance, and at the same time sets the pattern for the transmission of the value of prayer.

The writer is aware that this suggestion requires further testing. Prayer is a subject which touches close to the heart. The male respondents may be reluctant to admit that they follow a practice similar to that of their wives. It may seem to them as an admission of weakness.

One respondent (A-19-M) who regarded himself "as someone who isn't much of a prayer",[36] observed that people pray out of a desire for self protection, to alleviate anxiety:

> "Man fears the unknown, and if he can put his thoughts together, and ask for what he would like the unknown to be, it is one step in mastering his fear".[37]

This respondent frequently spoke of the quiet period of meditation that he enjoyed while sitting at services in the temple. He stated that services had a calming effect on him. He would take his problems to temple, and frequently leave them there. His statements described the temple service as a force which helped alleviate his own personal anxiety. His remarks pointed to his ambivalent feelings in defining prayer for himself. On one hand he doesn't pray. Yet he derives support and security from a prayer mode which can even take place while sitting in the park.

One respondent (A-14-M) felt original prayer to have meaning for

him, while the formal liturgy had none. He stated that "he liked to think that if God is looking in on his heart, he will respect his own prayer more than the one in the book".[37a]

Only two respondents (A-9-M and A-20-M) asserted that they did not pray. Both believed that good health, prosperity and happiness could only be theirs through their own effort, or else they would not attain them. The former respondent (A-9-M) could see no value in any form of prayer for himself, although he recognized that it held meaning for others. The latter respondent (A-20-M) said that he felt the formal liturgy to be very meaningful. He was not concerned for the petitionary aspect of the prayers, but for their effect in uniting him with other Jews, as we explained above.

Thus, for the majority of the respondents, personal prayer was a meaningful practice. The females particularly, prayed at a fixed hour - before retiring for the night. The respondents sought health, love, and protection. Several asked only for inner fortitude, strength, and the assistance to do what was right.

Certainly one can capture a conception of a people's God, from the mode of their prayers. Our respondents were, for the most part, questioning Jews. They felt a conflict between accepting the image of an old man with a white beard who could or would grant their petitions, and denying God entirely. They preferred to express God in terms of the force in the universe, on whom the universe depended. It was as if a stigma was attached to the use of the letters G O D.

Yet during those moments when they sought assistance from beyond themselves, their theological questioning ended. Their doubts were put aside. They prayed. We are not concerned with whether they directed their prayers to a father figure. It is enough that they made earnest and sincere petition.

Summary

The American Reform rabbi appears to be succumbing to what Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof calls, "the Protestantization". Rabbi Freehof uses this label to describe one who is a "Shepherd to his Flock, rather than a scholar-teacher". Our respondents might not agree to this definition, yet the quality they value above all in their rabbi, is that he be their friend. He should be interested in them. He should minister to their needs in times of bereavement, in sickness. He should share with them their joys. He should be a trusted confident, the epitome of sincerity, kindness, warmth, His life should be an example of the type of life to which they can aspire.

He should be an influence on the lives of the youth, and strive to communicate to the young, and to a lessor extent the old, the ethical teachings and moral values of Jewish tradition. Our respondents were not overly concerned with the preaching role of the rabbi, or of his effect on them during the High Holydays. Only a whisper of evidance suggested that he possessed special influence with the Divine, although this whisper existed. Yet we may infer

from their conception of what he should be, that little thought was given to the fact that he was only human. He represented a spiritual authority figure, yet the realm of his authority and of his activity was to be dictated by his people. The rabbi was to lead his people but only in the direction in which they had indicated they wanted to go.

The High Holyday sermons possessed but transient effect. The majority of the respondents viewed them as opportunities for the rabbi to make a bid for increased attendance. In addition, they felt that the rabbi used this time to give a large injection of Jewish teachings, so that the congregants would be supplied for the year. The sermons did not appear to stimulate or to be remembered. Of course, it is difficult to measure their lasting power. Their place in the human memory file is besieged by many outside stimuli.

The symbols of the Holyday service were viewed as unifying links with the totality of the Jewish past. The Kol Nidre evoked the greatest response. Its plaintive melody engendered a warm, good, solemn feeling. It, along with the shofar (the shofar to a much less extent) served to focus attention of the need for humans to reflect upon their existence. However, both of these were viewed externally. Few knew their historic significance, or understood the values which they represented. The "cry of the Kol Nidre" may have been viewed as the mirror of the individual's seeking for forgiveness. Yet, if this was so, it was not expressed.

The meaning of the Torah was lost. The ceremony of taking it from the Ark created a feeling of awe, and of reverence. The idolotry of this feeling was reflected in the boredom and disinterest

during the reading of the scriptural portion. It pointed to a dichotomy. The laity questioned by their actions whether the Torah was really the word of God. Yet when it was encased in its white dress, and crowned with its silver ornaments, it represented something which merited respect.

The prayerbook was dull and repetitious. The language of the prayers for a few was something of beauty. Their message to the heart missed its mark. The great aims and themes of the Holyday liturgy went unattended. The respondents were enamored by the prayer for peace, the mystical significance and respect due the Kaddish, and most of all by the quiet self searching of the silent devotion.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated, first the forces which motivates Reform Jews to attend High Holyday services and second, the response to this Holyday experience. We believed it possible to analyze the response of a group of Reform Jews to this experience. We intended to classify these responses into specific categories. Thus, for example, we might discover a respondent who lived in a predominately Christian community. The evidence might indicate that this individual attended High Holyday services to earn the respect and approval of his Christian neighbors who favor "church going people". This impulse to attend services would be classified under the category of sociological motivation. In a similar manner, a respondent might express strong guilt feelings toward his deceased parents. These feelings might impell him to attend the memorial services. Accordingly, we would classify this impulse under the heading of psychological motivation. This classification could continue by making use of various headings and sub-headings. Thus we would have a division that would reflect the influence of the family. Another division would deal with the symbols of the Holydays. A third might discuss "religious" motivation, etc.

The results of our study indicate that this belief is correct. We are able to identify a variety of impulses that motivate attendance at services. These impulses also result in the meaning that the individual derives from the services. We are able to group these impulses into two main categories.

These catagories are the psychological and sociological. All of the variety of impulses may be subsumed under these headings. Thus for example, prayer would fall in to the category of sociological motivation. However, such a strict delineation is not practical. The family influence is of sufficient importance to be viewed apart from the general category of sociological motivation. Prayer, on the other hand is discussed under the broad category of psychological motivation, and again under the specific sub-heading of religious institutions and symbols. We recognize, too, that frequently one aspect of motivation is dependent upon another, and cannot be viewed separately if a complete understanding is desired. Therefore, while we have made use of these categories, it has always been with the understanding of their relationship to each other.

We learned that the most significant motivation to attend services was derived from society. This impulse toward attendance has been called "the herd instinct". People are guided in their actions by the actions of others. Utilizing Riesman's typology,[1] we would say that the motivation to attend was "other directed". The individual attends because attendance is the "normal" practice of the group. "It's the thing that Jews do". Non-attendance may be conceived by the individual as grounds for being separated from the group. (If the individual had intentions to attend but was prevented by a valid reason, he would retain his membership because of his intention). Thus the middle class Reform Jew who does not attend Holyday Services, and who possessed no intention to attend, may be expressing his desire to disassociate himself from Jews and Judaism.

This socially derived impulse to attend has several components. There is first the conditioned response of attendance with family and friends. The Holydays evoke feelings of nostalgia toward parents, and close family relatives. There is a desire to share a common experience which is bound up with historical Jewish life. There may be remembrances of pleasant childhood associations. These positive associations are recalled during this period. There is a desire to perpetuate them. High Holydays are also a time for family togetherness. Brothers and sisters may gather under"the parents' wing". Their own children, the grandchildren, are able to come together, reunited around the dinner table of the grandparents, seated together in the temple.

We have learned that Jews, whose religious upbringing was strict - who had rebelled against religion, and against their families, are not absent from services during this Holyday period. So long as they identify themselves as Jews, they are impelled to attend. It appears that their attendance is motivated by the favorable climate for some institutional mode of religion. If the general community were not so favorably disposed toward institutional religion, these individuals would have greater opportunity to disassociate themselves from Jewish observance. Thus their rebellion from the family mode finds no fortification in the general environment. On the contrary, the general environment asserts that they must discover some grounds for furthering their identification as Jews.

We learned that this pressure for greater identification as Jews was in agreement with the viewpoint held by Herberg and Glazer. One is a more true American, by sharing in a religious subculture.

The Jew feels this pressure from the non-Jew. We learned that many Jews, whom we would consider marginal, in that they expressed a degree of self-hatred that would indicate that they might have preferred being non-Jews, have become aware that the Christian respects and approves of Jews who pursue some means of Jewish identification. The approval of the Christian community has lessened their anxiety in being Jews. It has also served as an impetus to "do that which a Jew is expected to do", in order to avoid being held in contempt by Christians.

The implication of this desire for non-Jewish approval is seen when this desire is viewed in combination with the new pride in greater Jewish identification. World events of the past fifteen years - the tragedy of Germany, and the establishment of the State of Israel have furthered this new pride in being Jewish. Together these two forces have created a striking mode in Jewish religious practice. Glazer has analyzed this mode. He distinguishes the "religious practices" which he identifies with Judaism, and the concern with "Jewish politics, culture and common life characteristics" which he defines as Jewishness.[2]

Glazer asserts that Jewishness is on the wane, and that Judaism, the religion of the Jew, is on the increase. Accordingly, practices which would tend to identify the Jew with Jewishness will wane, while practices which would tend to identify the Jew with Judaism will increase. For example, lox and bagel may pass into the general American milieu, along with Mogen David Wine. These may lose their specific

association with Jewishness. By the same token, Yiddish and Yiddishkeit will also disappear. However, certain practices will increase. These will be religious practices. They will include the family evening home celebration, with the lighting of the candles, and the making of Kiddush. The Seder will become more popular. These will be called religious practices. Glazer might call them aspects of Judaism. On this point we would differ.

We believe that the entire mode of ritual observance, which would include and emphasize attendance on the High Holydays, are the new labels of Jewishness. We believe that they will be of limited value to the individual in his religious development. Their primary purpose will be to differentiate the religious American Jew from the religious American non-Jew. We believe that these practices will not be internalized by the Jew. They will be his new badge of membership in the general American middle class community.

The totality of these impulses - approval of the non-Jew, greater pride in Jewish identification, more popular utilization of rituals - suggest the following implications: The religious environment, the home influences, and the manner in which they are manifest in the homes, are only important in terms of their positive effect on the children. This positive effect exists only if the home attitude is in consonance with the position taken by society. This position is one which will insist upon greater identification "Jewishly" with Jews. When such an attitude exists it will fortify the attitude that the child derives from the general social environment.

If this attitude does not exist the children will derive the

attitude of their peer group, and be in conflict with the attitude of the home. It has frequently occured that children have been the medium through which the parents have received the signals and cues of society. This practice will continue. Parents who have been indifferent to Jewish practice will be motivated to acquire a greater Jewish knowledge in the areas of customs and ceremonies. This tendency is presently observable. Parents who fail to maintain some minumum standard of Jewish observance may become suspect of desiring to leave the Jewish group.

We do not believe that this greater emphasis on Jewish identification will be of much value in developing increased religiosity in the individual. There will always be individuals who will possess genuine religiosity. We believe that this religiosity when manifest by individual Jews will be identical with that religiosity which is manifest by individual Christians. This core of religiosity will be a combination of traditionally exhalted human values. It will reflect the ethical aspirations of the Judeo-Christian tradition as refracted through the American middle class mode of living.

Psychological Motivations

The second category of impulses that motivates High Holyday attendance is derived from the individual. It is a composite of influences that have affected the individual's life. It begins with each individual at the moment that he becomes aware that he is a Jew. At this time he begins to associate certain events and incidents with Judaism. This is brought into focus for him when he is able to make

his associations relate to the High Holydays observance. He learns first from his family, and then from the non-familiar groups of certain modes of action and thought that are associated with Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. He comes to learn thatthe Holydays are important in Jewish life. He understands something of the function of the Holydays. This understanding may not be in agreement with the traditional conception. However, it does transmit the idea to the individual that on this occasion atonement for sin is effected. It becomes to him an occasion for a significant religious confrontation.

We have learned that much of the significance of the High Holydays for the individual is derived from what we have described as sociological motivation. Part of this motivation has effected the psychology of the individual. It has made this occasion "special". The individual may or may not approach the sanctuary with a sense of awe or foreboding. Yet, unaware of the push and pull of the social forces, he will approach the temple with reverence.

Jewish tradition defines Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur as occasions for self scrutiny. The Jew is to stand before God and man, and review his actions during the past year. For those of his actions which are sinful, he is to make atonement. The Reform Jew of our sample is not too concerned with sin. This is something which has little meaning for him. He is aware of sinful actions. However, he would define these actions as errors in judgement, as acts of thoughtlessness.

These are things which he will admit freely. Sin always produced guilt. To the extent that the Jew was a part of a milieu, where he feared God, and made sincere confession on Yom Kippur, this guilt might be relieved. The confession to a compassionate father-God figure possessed considerable efficacy. This efficacy was undoubtedly reinforced by the practice of certain deeds of repentance. These would include Teshlich, Kapporos, and the giving of charity. The fast was also a form of self punishment. The combination of the deed and the severe and sincere prayer mode gave considerable meaning to the High Holydays of tradition. They were an occasion in the religious life of the individual that provided alleviation of anxiety. This anxiety was derived from guilt, insecurity and personal inadequacy.

To a more limited extent the High Holydays continue to exercise this function. The science of psychology and psychiatry have made us aware that individuals develop guilt feelings and feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. The High Holydays possess therapeutic value similar to that of the analyst. The intrusion of the long ritual is viewed as a burden. When the Holyday period is over, the individual feels a sense of relief. He is purified. The Holyday experience alleviates some anxiety, and gives support to the individual seeking assistance with personal problems. The temple setting is one of calm. It is conducive to prayer and contemplation. The individual is enabled to take stock of himself. He can voice his aspirations, and give expression to his feelings.

We have learned that there are three areas of anxiety with which the individual is concerned. (No attempt was made to identify other areas of anxiety). (The order of presentation has no bearing on their importance). The first of these is the feeling of guilt that is related to his being Jewish. The individual may possess an ambivalence toward his Jewish identification. He may have suffered some social or economic discrimination, and have wished that he was not a Jew. He may have failed to identify himself as a Jew, at a time when a Jewish cause needed his support. These feelings of guilt may be assuaged by this minimal participation in a "Jewish activity". Since the individual would share the company of other Jews at this time, his presence would testify to his Jewishness, and alleviate this guilt.

The second is the feeling of guilt derived from the relationship that was shared with the individual's parents. This could have been directly associated with the Holydays. However, it is more likely that the individual feels guilt through his recollection of certain lacks in the relationship that he could have prevented. Thus, for example, a son might have been inconsiderate toward his mother over a period of many years. After her death, he might have recalled this lack and desired a means to eliminate it. Because of the death this was impossible. Accordingly, he would be attracted to the memorial service because it was an occasion when children publically paid homage to the memory of their dear departed. His attendance at this service would thus be motivated by a desire to please his mother. He would help assuage his own guilt feelings.

The third area of anxiety is produced by the individual interactions with other people. These may include his wife, or her husband. They may also include interactions with family and friends. The anxiety is specifically derived from feelings of insecurity and personal inadequacy. There is considerable concern for personal fulfillment, for self expression, and the fulfillment of one's particular role in life.

We are not able to measure how effective (if, indeed, the Holydays have been effective) the Holydays are in alleviating this type of anxiety. We believe that the effect is limited. There is some alleviation and support that is induced through a commitment to a personal God. This God is generally viewed as one who would not produce miracles of wealth or other material commodities. Yet the respondents direct their prayers to Him. They are willing to petition Him for peace of mind, health, and spiritual sustenance and guidance.

We learned that there was a residual anxiety directly associated with fear of Divine Retribution for non-attendance. This fear was minimal. We are unable to state its effect on the individual in so far as he is motivated to attend services.

We learned that for many of the respondents the temple service on the High Holydays was their link with religion. Attendance on those days renewed their link with the Father God, who was a help in times of trouble, a support and stay in times of need. For these people,

prayer was of value on all days. It was particularly so on the High Holydays.

The symbols of the worship service were of little value to our respondents. The only significant aspects to the Holyday services were the:

1. Shofar service
2. The Kol Nidre
3. The memorial service.

The Kaddish was always viewed with significance, although the memorial service of Yom Kippur was of particular importance. The Torah service too, produced an awe-inspiring moment until the Torah was read. It then evoked feelings of unconcern and of boredom. The liturgy went unnoticed. Occasionally the Widdui evoked some response. The sermons of the rabbis were unremembered. No mention was made of a single theme.

We are aware that there may be an emotional impact derived from the services that is unnoticed. The occasion is not one that is intended to entertain. It is important to note that the respondents felt a sense of purification and perhaps even inspiration at the conclusion of the Holyday period. The inability of the respondents to recall specific liturgical or sermonic themes may only indicate their preoccupation with their own personal concerns.

The writer is of the opinion that this omission on the part of the respondents suggests a special inadequacy of the Holydays. It must be remembered that the central theme that is presently retained by the respondents is the theme of atonement. We believe that the service does not provide individuals with enough of a sense of deed or of

doing, so that he feels genuine atonement. In addition, the catharsis that the service provides, is, as Rabbi Kagan suggests,[3] merely an intellectual acknowledgement of one's guilt, not an actual release of the suppressed emotions.

The Reactions to the High Holyday Experience of a "Typical" Reform Jew.

This typical Reform Jew is a composite figure drawn from the responses of the completion test. This "typical" Reform Jew might be either male or female. For convenience we shall make use of the masculine pronoun. The New Year begins and ends for him with the sound of the Shofar. This sound has an historical attachment for him. It is rich with sentiment, and speaks of the coming of the New Year. He is similarly thrilled by the Kol Nidre. The sound of the music evokes within him feeling s of nostalgia, reverence and inspiration. He possesses negative feelings about the Holyday sermon. It is too long for him and frequently boring. He feels that it is usually critical of him for his non-attendance at Sabbath services during the year. He is resentful of this criticism. He is uncertain of the aim of the rabbi. This uncertainty reflects his particular acquaintanceship with the rabbi. He feels that the rabbi desires to make him proud of his Jewish heritage, and at the same time aid him to live a more lofty life. He would like the rabbi to place more emphasis in his Holyday sermons on themes dealing with life and death, tolerance and kindness toward one another, and the need for self growth through continual self-analysis. He wants his rabbi to be sincere and to know him as a good friend. He would prefer, too, that his rabbi address him on his level, rather than speak as an emissary from above.

He does not understand the Torah reading. He will attempt to follow the reading, but frequently he will talk to his neighbor or wait until the reading is finished. He exhibits ambivalent feelings toward prayer. He believed that it is a cry for help at a crucial time, just as it is a plea for guidance and forgiveness. He is not fond of formal prayers, and prefers the silent prayer of the liturgy above the other liturgical selections. He is not inclined to petition for material things. Instead he seeks love, peace, and continued sustenance. When he reads the formal prayers of the liturgy, he finds them frequently boring and repetitive. Occasionally he discovers in them beauty of language and expression.

He believes that most other people pray for themselves, for the success of their children, and for peace, health and love. He admits that there are some people for whom prayer is meaningless. He believes that religion has a diversified meaning for each individual. He feels that for some it is a crutch, for others it is a way to live decently. He agrees that it is becoming more recognized in our every day life. He believes that the Holydays should make the individual more aware of his shortcomings and a better person in the year which is to come.

He recalls the Holydays experiences of his youth. Rosh Hashonah was a joyous occasion. There was frequently a family get-together. The day was treated with reverence, It was also permeated with a holiday atmosphere. Yom Kippur, on the other hand was a solemn day for him. He recalls the family practice of fasting, and remembers a long day spent in and around the synagogue. He believes that for a child, religion is important in that it gives him a sense of security.

He believes that parents should make certain that their children receive some religious training, although he feels too that it is something which the child should not be taught to follow blindly.

During the memorial services he recited Kaddish for the dead, and is deeply moved by the associations that are evoked by the experience. He remembers family and friends who have departed. He is not too conscious of the actions of his friends when they are in temple. At times he feels that they are irreligious. At other times, he is aware of their participation in the service. He feels that some Jews attend services out of habit. He feels too, that many attend because of a desire to socialize. For the most part, he feels that Jews attend because it is the thing to do. He is uncertain about Jews who don't attend services on the High Holydays. At times he feels that this non-attendance is an indication of irreligiosity. At other times he feels that it might be a sign of assimilation. He is not too concerned with making a real judgement on this question.

He is aware that the non-Jew knows about the High Holydays. He feels that the non-Jew respects the Jew who attends, because he thinks that the non-Jew feels that the Holydays should be observed. He thinks that the least that a Jew can do is to be humble, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God. He also feels that the Jew should know something about his religion and his heritage, and to lead a moral honest life. He is not concerned with the thought of sin. To him it means extreme sins, and not the sinful acts of which he is guilty each day.

When he is in attendance at services, he feels a sense of oneness with his fellow Jews. He attempts to pray and concentrates particularly

on the silent prayer. Frequently he is bored, and will doze off. When the High Holydays are over, he feels a sense of relief. It is as if he has been given a fresh start, although this feeling may not last long.

Next Steps

The writer believes that additional depth studies in the general areas covered by this study will produce new insights into the question. We believe that the two major categories of sociological and psychological motivation can be treated separately. For the latter category additional projective techniques may be of increased value. The emphasis for the study should be on the interpretation of the data by means of acceptable psychological insights. The meaning and extent of personal prayer is yet to be explored. The particular significance of religious symbols and institutions is not totally understood. We would suggest that a broad sample be utilized within the same city. This would yield evidence that could very well be of a conclusive nature for many aspects of this study. We would suggest a sociological study of the Conservative Jew. The findings of such a study could be contrasted with the findings of our study. This would indicate the direction in which religious practice is moving within American Judaism. It would also produce greater insights into the patterns of American middle class religion.

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13. J.E. pp. 277 and 278
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10. Interview A-11-M, p.2

11. Interview A-4-M, p.1

12. Interview A-9-M, p. 4

13. Interview A-6-F, p. 2

14. Interview A-5-M, p. 3

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16, Ibid, p.4

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18. Ibid, p. 13

19. Interview A-22-M, p.8

20. Interview A-12-F, p. 5

21. Interview A-7-F, p.2

22. Interview A-11-M, p.2

23. Interview A-21-M, pp. 2 and 3

24. Interview A-18-F, p. 2

25. Interview A-4-M, p. 8

26. Interview A-1-F, p.7

27. Ibid, p.8

28. Interview A-3-F, p.6

29. Herberg, op. cit., p. 96

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31. Herberg, op cit., p.273

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34. Ibid, pp. 8 and 9

35. Interview A-1-F, p. 8

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APPENDIX A

Sample Completion Test

A STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

THE HIGH HOLYDAYS

Complete each sentence in whatever way you wish. If you have trouble thinking of a completion to any sentence, put a circle around the number, and return to the sentence when you have finished your work.

1. When I hear the Kol Nidre.....

2. Nowa days prayer means.....

3. A High Holyday sermon usually.....

4. Some people attend High Holyday services because.....

5. The rabbis try.....

6. When I was a child, Yom Kippur.....

7. At memorial services, Jews.....

8. When they are in Temple, my friends.....

9. Religion today.....

10. The least a Jew can do.....

11. The shofar sounds.....

12. In my parent's home, Rosh Hashanoh.....

13. As I listen to the prayers being read.....

14. When the rabbi preaches.....

15. Non-Jews think the High Holydays.....

16. Most prayers seem.....

17. When the Torah is being read.....

18. Jews who don't attend High Holyday services at all.....

19. For the child, religion.....

20Jews crowd our temples on the High Holydays because.....

21. The High Holydays should make the individual.....

22. What rabbis should emphasize more on the High Holyday .....

23. The thought of sin.....

24. What many people want from religion.....

25. If all rabbis.....

26. When Yom Kippur is over.....

27. Many people pray for.....

28. When I am in temple I .....

APPENDIX B AND C

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