RUNNING ON TIME:
HOW JEWISH STANDARD TIME BECOMES SACRED

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Summary Page

This thesis focuses on the cultural construct of time, and goes into detail about the unique construct of Jewish Time. Whereas most literature on the subject focuses on the structure of the annual Jewish calendar, this thesis focuses on an overarching structure of Jewish time and its characteristics.

Chapter 1 focuses on the various cultural, physical, group and individual constructs of time that one might experience throughout his or her life time. Chapter two focuses on characteristics specific to Jewish time such as the simultaneous experiences of cyclical time and linear time, the existence of "Temporal Anchors," and the three-fold division of time into Eras. Additionally, the case is made for the uniquely human role in the creation of Jewish time, which draws on the divine component inherent in every individual. Chapter 3 employs a close reading of sections of Jewish liturgy (Shofar service of Rosh Hashanah, Maggid section of the Passover Seder, Shabbat Evening Kiddush and the Havdalah Ceremony) to extrapolate and present a comprehensive picture of Jewish Time.

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Introduction

What is time? Is it a system of measurement, like meters and inches, that remains constant regardless of circumstances? Is it an experience that depending on your mood can speed up or slow down? Is it a grand system of meaning applied to the seemingly random events of our lives? Is it different and specific for every individual? Every society and culture? Does time even exist?

The more a person thinks about time, the more it becomes clear that time does not have one single definition. It is both an interval, a system, an experience, and a cultural construct simultaneously. And yet, somehow, we subconsciously tend to know what someone means when he or she talks about time. How is that? It seems that the various concepts of time are built into our cultural knowledge that we gain simply by existing in a culture. Like knowing a "New York City Minute" is not a measurement of sixty seconds, but instead is a rapid succession of events and tasks. Or knowing that Japanese culture requires punctuality to avoid the appearance of rudeness.

Even for experts of time, it "is famously difficult to define; various proposed definitions are offered by physicists, philosophers, and psychologists, but none is conclusive."[1] In fact, the first explorations of philosophical study of time took place in Ancient Greece. Prior to that, ancient cultures thought time to be more about process and chronology, than a way to objectively measure the passage of event. In fact, "ethnographers have established that in many ['non-modern'] societies, the general concept of time is completely unknown...in these 'non-modern' societies, the key concept is thus not time but

[1] Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 2015, p. 17

process."[2] This process was understood to be a never ending cycle of "objects engaged in certain relations which we call 'events.'"[3] Each of these processes was really a sequence of events that predictably lead back to the beginning. In fact, the concept of the progress of history barely registered for our ancient ancestors.

However, by the age of Aristotle, time became a tool with which to measure events. For him, time was immutable, unchangeable regardless of observer, location or intention. This meant that an object falling from a height of four feet would be experienced the same way by any person, anywhere in the universe, in any mood or preoccupation. For Aristotle, time was constant and predictable, just as much as length and width. If an inch is the same length in Los Angeles as it is on Mount Everest, then the same will be true for a second.

Aristotelian time became the accepted theory of time through the middle ages and even into the modern era. It was even picked up on by Isaac Newton in the 17th-18th centuries. Many people are aware of Newton's work with gravity and the legend of an apple hitting him on his head. However, few laypeople realize that the study of gravity also requires the study of time. Since gravitational constants are measured in meters by kilograms per second squared ($kg*m/s^2$), or weight times distance per time squared, we know distance, weight and time to be eternally in relationship with each other. However, Newton understood both distance and time to be absolute, in relation but not affecting each

[2] Sacha Stern, *Time and Process in Ancient Judaism*, (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), 2003, p. 2
[3] Ibid., p. 2

other.[4] Like Aristotle, Newton believed in "absolute time. That is, they believed that one could unambiguously measure the interval of time between two events and that this time would be the same whoever measured it, provided they use a good clock."[5] Absolute time exists outside of changes in distance. No event, no force, no action could change the span of a second.

It was not until the first half of the twentieth century that Aristotle's and Newton's claims of time as an immutable constant was challenged. A physicist by the name of Albert Einstein "challenged the Newtonian concept of absolute, objective time by claiming that the objective observation of time is impossible. That is because we cannot escape observations of time based on our position in space, we are able only to observe the appearance of time. Due to this condition, time can only be determined in the relationship between the observer and the universe."[6] In his theory of General Relativity, Einstein posited that gravity is a distortion of space and time. This meant that an observer closer to a massive object, such as a planet, will experience time differently than an observer floating in the vast emptiness of space.

For example, imagine a blanket, representing space and time, to be floating in mid-air. Here, without any objects, the relationship between space and time is constant, as there is nothing to influence the blanket. If we mark Point A and Point B half a meter apart, than

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[4] Rynasiewicz, Robert. "Newton's Views on Space, Time, and Motion." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. August 12, 2004. Accessed January 24, 2017. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/newton-stm/.

[5] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, (Toronto: Bantam Books), 1988, p. 18

[6] O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, p. 17-18

an ant traveling at a velocity of .1 m/s would take 5 seconds to traverse the distance. Points A and B could be anywhere on the blanket, and it would always take the ant 5 seconds, no matter what. However, if you were to place a massive object like a bowling ball in the middle of the blanket, between Point A and Point B, the fabric would become distorted. Now, the ant would have to travel over the distorted fabric, stretched and misshapen, in order to get from one point to another. A and B are still half a meter apart, but the ant's experience of the distance is now different.

In accepting Einstein's theories of General and Special Relativity, one begins to understand that an observer's experience of time is very much dependent on the situation of that individual. Yes, time can be measured, but it now becomes important to take a number of variables into consideration when measuring. The way we understand time and measure it now needs to become subjective. As anthropologist Edward Hall asserted, "in Albert Einstein's terms, time is simply what a clock says and the clock can be anything – the drift of a continent, one's stomach at noon, a chronometer, a calendar of religious ceremonies, or a schedule of instruction or production. The clock one is using focuses on different relationships in our personal lives."[7]

In this way, time becomes much more of an experience rather than a measurement. It is a concept studied by physicists, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, and theologians. The more they study time and our experience of it, the more it becomes clear

[7] Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1983, p. 15

that time is "a cluster of concepts, events, and rhythms covering an extremely wide range of phenomena."[8]

More than anything, as scholars continue to study time it seems as though time is an experience with which societies, cultures, and ideologies have imbued meaning, protocols, ethics and purpose. Sometimes time is subtle, happening without our awareness, and influencing our perception of the world around us. Sometimes our awareness of time is more acute, usually when something takes us by surprise or shocks us.

In order to truly study time, one must accept the elusiveness of a fully rational or scientific definition of time. Rather, a true student of time must look at the many definitions that have existed throughout human history, from the ancient to the modern, and compile them into one conceptual structure. This structure must remain culturally specific, in order to show the development of the concept and its experiences and to remain aware of the ancient vestiges or modern innovations within the structure.

In this thesis, I intend to study various anthropological and sociological ideas of time and apply them to a Jewish experience of time as described in three specific discrete liturgical units: *Maggid* of Passover, *Shofar* of the High Holy Days, and the Shabbat Kiddush and Havdalah ceremonies. I chose these examples for three reasons. First, they are familiar to many Jews. They also communicate the experience of Jewish time by explicitly or subtly mentioning the characteristic of Jewish time, such as its cyclical nature, or the importance of a primordial event. Lastly, there is a considerable amount of modern interpretive liturgy and commentary that editors of various progressive siddurim have

[8] Ibid., p. 13

chosen to include alongside the traditional liturgy. Using this information, I intend to propose a conceptual structure of experienced non-halachic Jewish time.[9] This concept of Jewish time is at its core a sacred experienced based on three main characteristics:

1- circumscribed cycles in which numerous cycles of varying sizes exist simultaneously;
2- 2- a three-fold era division of *T'kufat Avar* (the Era of the Past), *T'kufat Hoveh* (The Era of the Present) and *T'kufat Atid* (The Era of the Future); and
3- 3- Temporal anchors that mark monumental pivot points in the Jewish sense of its history.

[9] For more on a halachic view of Jewish time see chapter 2, the summary of Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman's description of a rabbinic concept of Jewish time.

Chapter 1 – Categories of Time

In his book, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, anthropologist Edward Hall identifies and defines eight (or really nine) different categories of time. These categories are based upon the varying systems that people experience as they go through life. Together, the eight categories coalesce into one overall sense of time, what he calls Meta Time. According to Hall, Meta time, as the comprehensive collection of all the categories of time "is made up of all those things that philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, and others have said and written about time: the innumerable theories, discussions, and preoccupations concerning the nature of time. It is not time in the true sense but an abstraction from different temporal events."[10] As seen in Figure 1,[11] Meta time exists at the intersection of the other eight categories: Personal, Biological, Physical, Micro, Profane, Metaphysical, Sacred and Mythical. While all of these categories are important to understand individually in order to grasp fully the impact of time on personal experience, Liberal Judaism[12] as a culture and worldwide community exists primarily at the intersection of Profane, Metaphysical, Sacred and Mythical time.

The most individualistic category of time is Personal, which "has as its primary focus the experience of time."[13] Personal time exists mostly in our unconscious, as we

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[10] Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1983, p. 27

[11] See Appendix 1, Figure 1 - "A Map of Time" p. 69

[12] For purposes of this thesis, I am defining Liberal Judaism as meaning a practice of Judaism not bound by adherence to Jewish law (*halacha*). Rather, Liberal Judaism focuses on meaningful traditions and humanistic values. It also encourages extensive participation in the secular world. Liberal Judaism is not relegated to a single movement or denomination of Judaism.

[13] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p.19

collect memories from our various experiences. These memories mark the important events in our lifespans, creating a roadmap of the different stages in our lives and putting them into chronological context. In this system, time is entirely dependent on the individual and is not affected by other people or systems around him or her. National history, regional culture, and collective memory play little to no role in how Personal time is created for the individual. However, sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel emphasizes that Personal time is only one piece of Meta time, the sum-total of all the categories of time. Just as "collective memory is more than just an aggregate of individuals' personal memories, such inevitably personal relief maps cannot possibly capture what an entire nation, for example, *collectively* considers historically eventful or uneventful."[14]

Related to Personal time is Biological time, the system based on an individual's biology and physiology and how it interacts with the physical world. An example of Biological time is how an individual's circadian rhythm guides an internal clock that determines wakefulness and sleep based on the individual's natural biological cycles. Biological time, despite being in sync with the external world, is usually innate in the natural process of a person's body. This can be seen in a 2013 study[15] of the circadian rhythms of roosters in Japan, which determined that roosters crow regardless of the cycle of light and dark. However, Biological time can, at times, be influenced by external factors. For example, a cell's natural timeline of division and multiplication can be interrupted by large doses of radiation. "Without intervention from the outside, these

[14] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the past*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2004, p. 28

[15] Shimmura, Tsuyoshi, and Takashi Yoshimura. "Circadian clock determines the timing of rooster crowing." Current Biology 23, no. 6 (2013): R231-R233.

biological clocks will ordinarily stay in sync with the normal rhythms and cycles of the external environment. What happens inside is congruent with the outside world, so that while there are two kinds of time mechanisms, physical and biological, they behave as one."[16] In this way, scientists and individuals can measure the progress of time, not by charting an individual's memories, but by measuring the predictable cycles and processes in an individual's body.

Physical time focuses on time outside of an individual's experiences or body. It measures the flow of events on a global, galactic and even universal level. Here, time is not affected by the relative importance of events as compared to the intervals between them. Rather, "as a strictly mathematical entity, time is homogeneous, with every minute essentially identical to every other minute, as demonstrated by the ways they are conventionally measured by a clock."[17] Throughout much of history, philosophers and physicists studied Physical time rather than experienced time, the unbiased unfolding of the universe since its creation. "Some of the greatest minds on this planet have focused their attention on Physical time. Isaac Newton treated time as an absolute – one of the basic absolutes of the universe. Newton and his followers conceived of time as fixed and immutable, which meant that time could be used as a standard for measuring events."[18] It is also important to note, that our understanding of Physical time is still evolving based on new theories and evidence as we explore the galaxy. In fact, certain components of Physical time that were taken for granted even a century ago are being challenged, such as the possibility of multiple timelines and universes, or "the fact that physicists now see

[16] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 18
[17] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 26
[18] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 21

nothing sacrosanct about the directionality of time."[19] This could mean that time may or may not flow "forward" as we are used to thinking.

With regard to culture specific experiences, Micro time is the system that focuses on a person's day-to-day experience of time as it is influenced by the culture in which he or she lives. Micro time differs from Personal time because it is based on cultural expectations of how citizens spend their time, rather than the events and memories that an individual accumulates in a lifetime. According to Hall, "Micro time is that system of time that is congruent with and a product of primary level culture. Its rules are almost entirely outside of conscious awareness. It is culture specific...Monochronic and polychronic times are examples of major patterns of this type."[20] Like their names suggest, monochronic and polychronic times are distinctions between the ability to "multitask" experiences of time. Monochronic cultures, usually North American and European, prioritize one event at a time and encourage clear distinctions between tasks and experiences. Cultures guided by monochromatic time tend to be "low-involvement peoples, who compartmentalize time; they schedule one thing at a time and become disoriented if they have to deal with too many things at once."[21] Furthermore, as a method of organization, Monochronic cultures tend to closely relate the experience with the location, meaning that once a person leaves a space, he or she also leaves the experience. "The monochrome person often finds it easier to function if he can separate activities in space."[22] Polychronic cultures, on the other hand, are usually seen in Eastern

[19] Ibid., p. 22
[20] Ibid., p. 24
[21] Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 1966, p. 173
[22] Ibid., p. 173

or Native cultures and emphasize human interaction over tasks. In this way, Polychronic cultures allow people to participate in multiple tasks, events, and experiences simultaneously, such as traveling to work while bonding with a child on the way to school. Though stopping at a child's school on the way to work is a less efficient use of travel time, it helps to foster an emotional connection between parent and child. As Hall asserts, "Polychrome people, possibly because they are so much involved with each other, then to keep several operations going at once."[23]

Despite its tendency to be found as a subset of in Monochronic cultures, Liberal Judaism tends to share characteristics with both Monochronic and Polychronic cultures. There are many occasions where Judaism seeks to closely relate experience and location, emphasizing one experience at a time, such as the rituals of Mikveh or Sukkot. There are also many occasions where Judaism invokes a level of symbolism that requires people to not only connect with themselves but also with generations of ancestors and community. This symbolism happens in locations that evoke feelings of other meaningful places simultaneously, such as the holidays of Simchat Torah and Passover. Another way Judaism functions as a Monochronic culture is its insistence on the separation between Profane time and Metaphysical, Sacred or Mythical time.

Profane time is the system that encompasses all of the mundane, non-religious (meaning not culturally meaningful, though it could be personally meaningful) experiences. "Profane time now dominates daily life and that part of life which is explicit, talked about, and formulated."[24] In modern American life, Profane time guides the

[23] Ibid., p. 173
[24] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 26

majority of our waking moments – when tasks are mundane and absent-minded (such as daily hygiene rituals, work-related tasks, or ways and kinds of food we eat), they exist within the framework of Profane time. These experiences are guided by cultural norms and attitudes rather than cultural meaning. They are necessities in order to sustain life, not the actions taken to reach self-actualization. In this way, much of American life is "passed in profane time, which is without meaning."[25] However, Hall notes: "possibly because the [Profane] time system is linked to the sacred in a complementary way, some of the sacredness rubs off and therefore people generally do not tolerate changes in it."[26] This happens through a ritualization of activities and tasks that would usually be defined as governed by Profane time. For example, brushing one's teeth could be considered a part of a person's profane existence, a necessity to life but lacking in spiritual meaning. However, some people that the habit of teeth brushing and consecrate it to the point that it is imbued with meaning, where one would feel a significant loss if one were to change or remove the ritual in the daily routine. In other words, the habits that we create around and within Profane time border on meaningful rituals in order to give life meaning, even for those who define themselves as among the growing non-religious[27] communities.

Despite our conscious or subconscious efforts to force Profane time to become meaningful, Judaism and Jewish rituals transform time into an experience that is already

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[25] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, (New York: Harper), 1959, p. 35

[26] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 26

[27] Lipka, Michael. "A Closer Look at America's Rapidly Growing Religious 'nones'." Pew Research Center. May 13, 2015. Accessed January 24, 2017. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/13/a-closer-look-at-americas-rapidly-growing-religious-nones/.

imbued with meaning. One such system is Metaphysical time which structures time along "a *methodological* concept which we give ourselves, a concept showing a *tendency* or attracting pole characteristic of Western thought since the Greeks."[28] Metaphysical time is hard to measure, and virtually impossible to measure without bias and therefore "there is no generally accepted theory of [scientific or] Physical time to account for metaphysical time."[29] It is foundationally connected within the culture in which it resides. So much so that it can be difficult for a cultural outsider to fully see its effect on how a person or community uses Metaphysical time in identity creation. However, "the fact is that all over the world, regardless of culture or station in life, human beings keep reporting these rather extraordinary occurrences...The metaphysical plays an important role in many people's lives, and it is comforting for them to know that it is there."[30] Individuals and people who subscribe to Metaphysical beliefs and systems are heavily influenced by its structure and ability to organize their lives. It is a large scale category of time that becomes an integral component of the identity of an individual and the major or minor choices he or she makes throughout a lifespan. As one studies Metaphysical time, the clearer it becomes that "for those who have experienced it, the metaphysical has always been intimate and personal."[31]

In essence, Metaphysical time is the application of a grand narrative onto cultural events. This happens in various religions which "provide metanarratives that shape the

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[28] Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 2015, p. 157
[29] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 23
[30] Ibid., p. 24
[31] Ibid., p. 23

way that one's experience in the world is interpreted, and this interpretation is ingrained through religious ritual, from the simplest rituals of daily life to the most complex rituals of liturgical performance."[32] Therefore, Metaphysical time serves as a story and structure for events that is built into the unfolding of present events, rituals, and decisions. Accordingly, history and identity become intertwined and imbued with meaning and values beyond their singular existence. "We normally view past events as episodes in a story...and it is basically such "stories" that make these events historically meaningful...And although actual reality may never "unfold" in such a neat formulaic manner, those script-like *plotlines* are nevertheless the form in which we often remember it, as we habitually reduce highly complex event sequences to inevitably simplistic, one-dimensional visions of the past."[33] In order for Metaphysical time to create a metanarrative, it must minimize the inherent complexity of history. Just as Julius Caesar's military campaigns were much more complicated than the statement "Veni, Vidi, Vici" suggests, the phrase points to a metanarrative of easy conquering.

Similarly, Judaism and its various rituals have developed based on a metanarrative that guides the views of its own history, present, and future. Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg sees this metanarrative manifest in holiday observance and the sub-narratives ascribed to each one: Underlying Judaism's ritual system is a metaphysical statement about the nature of reality – specifically, of time. For instance, the Exodus teaches us that history is not an eternal recurrence – ever repeating but never progressing – but a time stream with direction. History is not a meaningless cycle but the path along

[32] O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, p. 4
[33] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 13

which the Divine-human partnership is operating to perfect the world. Time is linear, not merely circular; all humans are walking toward the end time when the final peace and dignity for humankind will be accomplished.[34]

As Greenberg suggests, the Jewish metanarrative of slavery and exodus point to a Metaphysical system that sees time as a cyclical process with the possibility of momentous events that thrust time into a linear progress before settling back into a cycle waiting for the next momentous event. Jewish Metaphysical time is therefore created and defined by Divine acts and events. In this way, Jewish Metaphysical time becomes an "inherently teleological, *unilinear [narrative* that often attributes] some purposeful design to history. As such, [it] usually also regards the overall direction of the historical trajectories [it] describes as largely predetermined."[35] Thus, just as Judaism understands God to have created space and location with the primary primordial act as described in Genesis, so too did God simultaneously create the system of time that guides it. With that intentional Divine creative act, Jewish time, guided by the Jewish Metaphysical narrative, has an inherent purpose and plan. A plan which, possibly, only the Creator knows.

Yet, as with many other religious traditions, most Jewish rituals are founded on an insistence of transforming Profane time into Sacred time. Unlike Profane time, Sacred time is charged with meaning and purpose. However, "modern AE people – peoples of American-European heritage – have some difficulty understanding sacred or mythic time, because this type of time is imaginary – one is *in* the time. It is repeatable and reversible,

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[34] Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster), 1993, p. 38-39

[35] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 21

and it does not change."[36] Sacred time is not measured by a clock or with personal memories. Rather, Sacred time is a system measured by spiritual meaning, and can only be fully understood on the level of a communal experience. As such, Sacred time is within the control of those who experience it far more than any other system of time. Individuals and communities can pause, replay and rewind Sacred time in ways that would be impossible for those systems not imbued with meaning. Therefore, "Sacred time [becomes] indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable,"[37] through human-created ritual – rituals that create meaning by invoking the Metaphysical purpose of time and creation. As in the words of philosopher of religion, Mircea Eliade, "*By its very nature sacred time is reversible* in the sense that, properly speaking it is *a primordial mythical time made present*. Every religious festival, any liturgical time, represents the reactualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, 'in the beginning.'"[38] Thus, any culture that has holidays inherently has a sense of Sacred and Metaphysical time. They may be subtle, but they become important parts to defining who, and what, that culture is. And so "[Sacred] time is infused with a presence so powerful that it thrusts aside the presence of the mundane...Just as a wall built across a field cannot be overlooked because if it is disregarded one will certainly and painfully collide with it, so time that has been sanctified cannot be overlooked otherwise one will [inevitably collide] with it."[39]

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[36] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 25
[37] Mircea Eliade and Willard R. Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World), 1959, p. 69
[38] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 68-69
[39] Eliezer Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time: Philosophical Dimensions of the Jewish Holy Days*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 2000, p. 28

However, Sacred time does not only affect the way time is experienced. It also affects the identity and self-awareness person who experiences Sacred time. Because "[Sacred] time is time that is charged with a godly presence. Its essence is charged with holiness."[40] Therefore, the person who experiences it is also charged with holiness. Since the rituals that mark Sacred time are human created, humans now take partial ownership of creating time, just as God created time with the primordial act. Hence, a "religious [person] feels the need to plunge periodically into this sacred and indestructible time. For [this person] it is sacred time that makes possible the other time, [Profane] time, the [ordinary] duration in which every human life takes its course. It is the *eternal present* of the mythical event that makes possible the profane duration of historical events."[41]

By observing holidays individuals experience Sacred time and their creative power. For instance, observing Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, is not simply marking the anniversary of creation, nor is it a reenactment of creation. At its core, observing Rosh Hashanah invites a person to *participate* in creation, to become a partner in creation, which in turn makes the experience of creation in the inevitable return to Profane time more meaningful. It is through the experience of, and the participation in, Sacred time that **all** time becomes more meaningful. "Hence religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites."[42]

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[40] Ibid., p. 29
[41] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 89
[42] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 70

It is Sacred time, and sacred ritual, that enable all people to be lifted out of the mundanity of Profane time, out of the passive experiences of Biological and Physical times, and out of the particularity of Personal and Micro times. Sacred time enables a life to be lived with purpose and meaning. Not because it is more genuine or superior to other systems of time, but because "by putting themselves in sacred time, people subconsciously reaffirm and acknowledge their own divinity, but by raising consciousness they are acknowledging the divine in life."[43] Acknowledging the connection to the divine, and the possibility of participating in divine acts opens a person up to a larger purpose and new Metaphysical experiences. Sacred time enables a person to become an active participant in their experiences of time, history and narrative.

It is through the combination of Sacred and Metaphysical time that a Mythical time comes into being. The metanarrative of Metaphysical time, and the ritualization of its beginning, creates and codifies a Mythical time – a time essential to the narrative which exists pre-history, or even before time itself. "The sacred time periodically reactualized...is a *mythical time*, that is, a primordial time, not to be found in the historical past, an *original time*, in the sense that it came into existence all at once, that it was not preceded by another time, because no time could exist *before the appearance of the reality narrated in the myth*."[44] In Judaism, Mythical time takes place during the original Divine act of creation. That primordial event gives rise to the narrative of the Jewish people that cannot exist before creation. Even today, modern Liberal Judaism relies on Mythical time as an essential vestige of the ancient Israelite tribes and society. It

[43] Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 26
[44] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 72

is that "myth" that orients Jews to their sacred role and their place in time. The ancient, primitive, beginnings of the Jewish people act as a beacon or signpost that point towards divine power, intention, and actions. That act is the first thing to exist in our world, and Mythical time is the beginning of our ideal reality. In fact, Yosef Yerushalmi, historian and rabbi, asserts that this is common among cultures with primitive origins: "Out of a mass of ethnographic materials from around the world anthropologists and historians of religion have gradually clarified the extent to which, in primitive societies, only mythic rather than historical time is "real," the time of primeval beginnings and paradigmatic first acts, the dream-time when the world was new, suffering unknown, and men consorted with the gods."[45]

Therefore, Mythical time is distinctly separate from any concept of history. History, though subjective, is an attempt to remember, recount, and make meaning of actual events in their chronological order. Contrarily, Mythical time is a created memory of a period that was likely only experienced through the human powers of imagination. This leads one to the conclusion that it is "not history, as is commonly supposed, but only mythic time [that] repeats itself."[46] Sacred time's religious and cultural rituals create and recreate Mythical time in the present, transfiguring imagination into reality, and the passive experience of time into active participation. It is for this reason that Eliade states: "if viewed in its proper perspective, the life of [a person who experiences Mythical time and its unceasing rehearsal of the same primordial myths], although it takes place in time, does not bear the burden of time, does not record time's irreversibility; in other words,

[45] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 1996, p. 6
[46] Ibid., p. 10

completely ignores what is especially characteristic and decisive in a consciousness of time. Like the mystic, like the religious man in general, the primitive lives in a continual present."[47]

Judaism's grand concept of time emerges through the interactions between Profane, Metaphysical, Sacred and Mythical times. Jewish time, which traces its roots back to a primitive nomadic culture, began to be codified in the writings of the ancient rabbis. As they wrote the guidelines and liturgies that became the foundation for Jewish life, they established an ideology of time specific to the Jewish people. This ideology ignores chronology [through] the rabbis' redrawing of the sacred myth. The chronological succession of individual years is relatively insignificant; the normal constraints of time are absent; for the rabbis, Jewish sacred myth could draw on the enormous richness of biblical and post-biblical personalities and events, juxtaposing them according to legend and will rather than actual chronological facts."[48]

Close examination shows that Jewish time is woven throughout Jewish liturgy and rituals as they serve as the acts that force time into conscious awareness. "Under the influence of rabbinic liturgical legislation, a unique view of history was popularized, particularly in the holiday lectionaries… [with which] the rabbinic sacred myth goes hand in hand."[49] As liturgy and holidays bring Jews out of Profane time and into Sacred time, they are reminded of the Jewish metanarrative that mythical ideal of the divine primordial event. Again and again, holiday after holiday, Jews are reoriented to the meaning and

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[47] Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, p. 86
[48] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1987, p. 83
[49] Ibid., p. 84

purpose that is asserted in ritual, providing a subtle but foundational experience to guide every generation's experience of Jewish time.

Chapter 2 – Characteristics of Jewish Time

When we acknowledge that Jewish time exists at the intersection of Profane, Metaphysical, Sacred and Mythic time, we begin to understand what makes Jewish time unique. But what does Jewish time look like? What are its qualities and eccentricities? What does Judaism tell its followers about the structure and functionality of time? When we explore the subtleties of Jewish time, we see that it contains three foundational components: cycles, linear progress and decline, and eras. These three components come together to form an experience of time that seeks to transform the Profane into the Sacred, into an experience imbued with meaning, narrative and mythic power. In this way, Judaism and Jewish ritual becomes not only about physical religious acts, but about creating a reality that influences one's perceptions of the present world, history and future.

Since Judaism has its roots in ancient society, it is logical to see components of the ancient understanding of time in the Jewish concept. That foundational vestige of a concept of time, is distinctly different than the way modern Western societies view time. "Only in the last couple of millennia, in fact, did our uncompromisingly linear view of the past – symbolically captured in the modern relegation of 'time travel' to science fiction – actually come into being."[50] Circular time, also known as cyclical time, meant that no time, no event, was unique. Ancient civilizations believed that everything that had happened, had already happened, every event was part of a predictable and paradigmatic pattern that guided human existence since the beginning of time. "For the ancients… [linear] time as

[50] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the past*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2004, p. 24

we think of it was unreal; the Real was what was heavenly and archetypal."[51] Time and history were set by the gods, and completely outside of human control.

In the biblical period, the ancient Israelite people drew on this concept of divine cyclical time. As one reads the TaNaCh it becomes clear that "the historical events of the biblical period remain unique and irreversible. Psychologically, however, those events are **experienced** cyclically, repetitively, and to that extend at least atemporally."[52] Character development, plot lines and symbols are used in such a way that their repetition becomes the tool used to determine divine intentions and actions. The ancient Israelites, like their contemporary neighbors, thus saw individual events and moments to be history repeating itself, making sure that "the future was always to be a replay of the past, as the past was simply an earthly replay of the drama of the heavens: "History repeats itself" – that is, false history, the history that is not history but myth."[53]

Though the concept of time has evolved in Jewish thought, cyclical time remains a dominant experience. This can be seen in the concept that Shabbat is a replay of the seventh day of creation, or the statement during Passover that "*b'chol dor va'dor chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mi-Mitzrayim*" (In each and every generation a person must see himself as if he came out of Egypt). Though modern day Judaism might not see history as repeating itself exactly, it does, in the words of Mark Twain, rhyme – where every repetition is not a perfect copy of the one preceding it, but does show a deliberate and clear similarity between the two. In this way, "*historical* '*rhyming*' is what actually enables us

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[51] Thomas Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, (New York, Nan A Talese, 1998), p. 126
[52] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 1996, p. 42
[53] Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, p. 103

to envision cycles...Such "rhyming" implies that, while clearly distinct, the past and present are nonetheless fundamentally similar, to the point of evoking a deja-vu sense of "there we go *again*."[54]

Thus, Jewish rituals are enacted, in part, to remember the Jewish past and, in essence become a recreation of the past in the present day. This "*periodic fusion with the past* is the very essence of [religious and nonreligious] annual and other *anniversaries*. And this fusion is even more evocative when synchrony is combined with constancy of place."[55] Though, constancy of place is difficult for Jews living outside of the Middle East, there are nonetheless symbolic recreations of place that make Jewish rituals more powerful, such as the Torah Ark representing Mount Sinai, or the Sukkah representing the temporary dwellings of the desert wanderings. These objects and rituals become more meaningful and "real only insofar as they imitate or repeat an archetype. Thus, reality is acquired solely through repetition or participation; [a ritual or ritual object] which lacks an exemplary model is "meaningless," i.e. it lacks reality."[56]

Furthermore, cyclical time and the rituals that reenact the past bring the sanctity ascribed to ancient archetypal events into the present experience. This can be seen in the importance and meaning ascribed to each ritual and return to the cycle, such as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Jewish holidays the mark the new year. "For religious man of the [ancient] cultures, *the world is renewed annually*; in other words, *with each new year it recovers* its original sanctity, the sanctity that it possessed when it came from the

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[54] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 28
[55] Ibid., p. 46
[56] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, (New York: Harper), 1959, p. 34

Creator's hands."[57] Like other ancient cultures, the Jewish concept of time finds its origins in cyclical time.

In this way, religious rituals and holidays become a way for human beings to remind themselves of their place in the cycle of time. Since most, if not all, Jewish holidays commemorate a mythical divine act or event, they serve not only as an anchor for people to orient themselves in time, but also as a reminder of the divine component in sacred time. Each holiday, each ritual, reopens our awareness of the sanctity of the paradigmatic events – recreating the event and creating a continuity of sanctity. Hence, with every holiday and ritual we try to "approximate actual physical contact between the past and the present, we also try to generate various iconic representations of the past that would at least *resemble* it...Our attempts to *imitate* the past and thereby "reproduce" it, are also expressed through our appearance and behavior. Indeed, much of what we call "tradition" consists of various ritualized efforts to become more fully integrated into our collective past through imitation...such revivals are designed to create the illusion of historical continuity since time immemorial."[58]

Therefore, cyclical time only becomes "real" when it recreates the past. In fact, in many cyclical time based cultures "the present historical moment possesses little independent value. It achieves meaning and reality only by subverting itself, when, through the repetition of a ritual or the recitation or re-enactment of a myth, historical time is periodically shattered and one can experience again, if only briefly, the true time of the

[57] Mircea Eliade and Willard R. Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World), 1959, p. 75
[58] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 45

origins and archetypes."[59] Thus, ritual re-enactment sends a person to the earliest moments of time, even if those moments exist only in myth: "religious rituals are defined by their enactments of memory, hope, and the marking of time...In the recollection of religious or primordial history, ritual also contemplates historical time, experienced as the imagined ancient past."[60] It is through the invocation of mythical time and events that time itself becomes sacred, and every generation of humanity is able to experience it.

By sanctifying time in this manner, profane time is forced to relinquish its hold on a person and his or her identity that is specific to those profane moments. As a person lets go of their profane identity, their sacred identity is strengthened, or as Mircea Eliade puts it, a person becomes a more real version of him or herself: "The abolition of profane time and the individual's projection into mythical time do not occur, of course, except at essential periods – those, that is, when the individual is truly himself: on the occasion of rituals or of important acts."[61] The power of this experience becomes provocative and tempting, encouraging people to perpetually evoke mythical time in their own lives through ritual. "Since [sacred] time is the *time of origins*, the stupendous instant in which a reality was created, was for the first time fully manifested, man will seek periodically to return to that original time."[62]

Indeed, the myth evoked in sacred time is not just any myth, but **the** myth, the first myth, when space and time were created in a single, transcendent divine act: the act of

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[59] Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 6-7
[60] Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 2015, p. 5
[61] Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, p. 35
[62] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 81

Creation. Here, the cosmogony, the creation of the universe, becomes the ultimate anchor for time, ritual and identity, consistently and repetitively invoking that sacred action in the present day. "Collective or individual, periodic or spontaneous, [ritual always includes] an element of regeneration through repetition of an archetypal act, usually of the cosomogonic act."[63] Each and every ritual, in its own way, conjures the power of the cosmogonic act, ensuring the existence of divine power in the unfolding cycle of creation. "*The cosmogony is the supreme divine manifestation*, the paradigmatic act of strength, superabundance, and creativity. Religious man thirsts for the real. By every means at his disposal, he seeks to reside at the very source of primordial reality, when the world was *in statu nascendi*."[64]

No other holiday typifies this more than Rosh Hashanah – a holiday which symbolizes not only the start of a new annual cycle but also the rebirth of the universe, of space and time and all that they encompass. "Since the New Year is a reactualization of the cosmogony, it implies *starting time over again at its beginning*, that is, restoration of the primordial time, the pure time, that existed at the moment of Creation."[65] But the rituals of cyclical time do not exist only for the purpose of sanctifying time, they exist for the purpose of sanctifying people. As a person takes an active role in marking time and its holiness, they are acting in a manner that is analogous to God and the primordial action of Creation. In the primordial event of Creation, the act of sanctifying time and the act of creating time were one and the same, any person who performs a ritual for the sake of sanctifying time also participates in the act of creating time, and perhaps, even leads a person to better understand God. "To reintegrate the sacred time of origin is equivalent to

[63] Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, p. 85
[64] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 80
[65] Ibid., p.77-78

becoming contemporary with the gods, hence to living in their presence – even if their presence is mysterious in the sense that it is not always visible."[66]

In this sense, rituals are created not simply to mark time and anniversary, but to give humanity a role in and understanding of creation, to have a glimpse of the possibilities that were set forth at the universe's formation and to provide the chance for humanity to have a part in ensuring those possibilities. "For to wish to reintegrate the *time of origin* is also to wish to return to the *presence of the gods*, to recover the *strong, fresh, pure world* that existed *in illo tempore*. It is at once thirst for the *sacred* and nostalgia for *being*."[67] In cyclical time, religious ritual pushes every individual to see the divine component of Creator in themselves and to act with it with that component in mind. In these moments "religious man periodically becomes the contemporary of the gods in the measure in which he reactualized the primordial time in which the divine works were accomplished."[68]

Despite having its foundations in Cyclical time, Jewish time is not exclusively circular. Jewish thought acknowledges that time and history do not perfectly repeat themselves over and over without end. There is, in fact, a linear progression to history, outside of cyclical time. Jewish time, is a combination of both cyclical and linear models in which we try "to somehow "synchronize" our annual holidays with the historical events whose memory they are designed to evoke."[69] These two models are layered on top of each other to create a unique experience of sacred time. As shown in Figure 2,[70] time can be

[66] Ibid., p. 91
[67] Ibid., p. 94
[68] Ibid., p. 87
[69] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 47
[70] See Appendix 1, Figure 2 – "Linear and Circular versions of time" p. 70.

simultaneously "graphically represented by a straight arrow… [while also taking into account that] we sometimes also experience things as moving 'in circles.'"[71] For example, a new secular year is different from the one proceeding it, and yet it always begins on January 1st. Or, a day is different from the one after it, and yet both still include lunchtime at noon. Thus, cycles become a part or partner of linear time, allowing for the repetition of actions and events, while also allowing for change within a cycle.

It is virtually impossible to say whether time itself is a line, or a circle, or something else entirely. Rather, it is our perception of time that shapes it. "The idea of time as a linear progression relies on a particular mental state. Time is measured in relation to space and motion. The past and the future appear in the domain of the imagination held into two distinct camps not by any rigid laws of temporality but by our perception."[72] Linear time assumes that there is little connection between past, present and future events, that each is unique unto itself. However, meaning is applied to those disconnected events through a variety of narratives that one might tell to make sense of history.

One such narrative is a decline narrative. This narrative is guided primarily by nostalgia, as can be seen in Figure 3.[73] Here, the past is seen as better, purer and more purposeful. Similar to cyclical time, past events carry more weight than the present. However, unlike cyclical time, in a decline narrative the more-perfect past is lost forever, un-reclaimable except in memory. The experience of a narrative such as this is found to be "inherently pessimistic, [an] unmistakable backward-clinging historical stance [that]

[71] Ibid., p. 23-24
[72] O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, p. 18
[73] See Appendix 1, Figure 3 – "Decline Narrative" p. 71

typically includes an inevitably tragic vision of some glorious past that, unfortunately, is lost forever."[74]

Of course, the opposite of a decline narrative in linear time is a progress narrative. This is the narrative most common to modern Western thinkers since it comes out of the Enlightenment and became a "hallmark of modernity" reflective of late 19th C. ideas that "basically envisioned human history as a progressive ascent from savagery to civilization."[75] In a progress narrative, history, time and circumstance are seen as constantly improving, bettering what once was until a goal is reached sometime in the future. Progressionism such as this can be seen depicted in Figure 4,[76] where the future is understood to be a betterment of the past, a narrative that has a perpetual optimistic outlook.

Human experience tells us that historical narratives are neither purely one of decline nor progress. Usually narratives look more like a "zig-zag," which include narrative reversals. "As one might expect, such "*zigzag" narratives* assume one (or some combination) of two basic forms...Both rise-and-fall, and fall-and-rise narratives, however share an important formal feature, which is that they always involve some dramatic *change of course*...*Turning points* are the mental road signs marking such perceived transitions."[77] In Jewish time, major turning points not only serve as signs marking major transitions (e.g. Creation, Abraham's "*Lech-Lecha*," the Exodus from Egypt, the Revelation at Sinai, Destruction of the Temple, etc) but also as temporal anchors. These anchors, like in cyclical time, help Jews to orient themselves within the Jewish narrative and to use the Jewish

[74] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 16
[75] Ibid., p. 15
[76] See Appendix 1, Figure 4 – "Progress Narrative" p. 72
[77] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 18-19

experience as a model for continued progress. In this way, Jewish time relies on both reliving major temporal anchors *and* on believing that they serve as a turning point for the developing Jewish narrative.

In the linear component of Jewish time, the past and history become important not only "because it can be mined for exemplars but because it has brought us to the present: it is the first part of our journey, the journey of our ancestors."[78] Hence, the study of the Jewish past through ritual becomes an important component of reaching towards the future, using the lessons of ancient texts and practices as guides for approaching the unknown. As such, linear time adds the essential positive value of newness to Jewish time, where an action, event or idea, previously unheard of, is embraced and can have the possibility of providing another anchor in time. New anchors thus become "indicators of time ... that are highlighted by specific acts in order to remind, experience, and interpret changes in Nature, in the individual's course of life, or in the biography of a people."[79]

In this sense, the future becomes more important than it could ever be in a time that is based solely in cycles. Every moment has the potential to become something new, something that can add to the progress or the decline of the Jewish narrative. In this way, the Jewish past is overflowing "moral lessons. [The] moral is not that history repeats itself but that it is always something new: a process unfolding through time, whose direction and end we cannot know, except insofar as God gives some hint of what is to come."[80] Jews

[78] Thomas Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, (New York, Nan A Talese, 1998), p. 129
[79] Eliezer Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time: Philosophical Dimensions of the Jewish Holy Days*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 2000, p. 25
[80] Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, p. 130-131

get a sense of the unknown future by relying on the knowledge of the trends of their history, and gaining wisdom through the rituals that bring those trends and events to life.

In fact, one could even go so far to say that that Jewish time exists almost exclusively in its focus on re-living and learning from the past through rituals. This can be seen not only in the sheer amount of rituals that a Jew might do in a cycle, but also by an analysis of the linear Jewish calendar. "Essentially housing annual cycles of commemorative holidays, calendars normally entail seismogram-like narratives encapsulating groups' histories in the form of some highly memorable sacred peaks sporadically protruding from wide, commemoratively barren valleys of virtually unmarked profane time. By highlighting the pronouncedly variable mnemonic density of different stretches of history, these *commemograms* thus capture the uneven chronological distribution of historical 'eventfulness.'"[81] Figure 5[82] is an example of this commemogram – a diagram of historical events marked by a ritual or holiday. Each of these events becomes not only re-lived in the present, but also becomes an anchor for Jewish time, giving those who experience it a way to orient themselves within the greater narrative.

Within the Jewish commemogram there are periods densely packed with significant events such as the years leading up to and beginning Moses' leadership of the Israelite people, and periods with only a few scattered events such as the remaining thirty-eight years of wandering in the desert. This gives a sense of a sense of connectedness in the dense sections, and disconnectedness in the sparse one. Drawing on musical terms Eviatar Zerubavel calls these periods legato and staccato. He notes:

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[81] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 31

[82] See Appendix 1, Figure 5 – "National Commemograms" p. 73

> Regardless of the specific form of historical narrative we use to help us impose some retrospective structure on the past, there are two basic modes of envisioning the actual progression of time within it. While one of them features essentially contiguous stretches of history smoothly flowing into one another like the successive musical notes that for *legato* phrases, the other tends to highlight unmistakable discontinuous breaks separating one seemingly discrete historical episode from the next, like the successive notes that form *staccato* phrases.[83]

The presence of legato and staccato phrases, such as the ones depicted in Figure 6,[84] within Jewish time adds another dimension to structure of Jewish time.

Here, time becomes defined by its cycles, progresses and declines, anchors *and* by its historical phrasing. Legato periods give the sense of a distinct time period whereas staccato periods give the sense of a disconnection between time periods, perhaps even the cutting off of one period and the beginning of another resulting in the creation of eras within the continuum of Jewish time. In this way, legato and staccato moments for a sort of Jewish historical "relief map, on the mnemonic hills and dales of which memorable and forgettable events from the past are respectively featured. Its general shape is thus formed by a handful of historically "eventful" mountains interspersed among wide, seemingly empty valleys in which nothing of any historical significance seems to have happened."[85] These "mountains" of Jewish time become the periods of densely packed events separated by periods of seeming inactivity, in essence they become eras.

Within the concept of eras in Jewish time is the understanding that, regardless of any cycle that may exist within time, there is still a distinct feeling of movement in time. "This

[83] Ibid., p. 34
[84] See Appendix 1, Figure 6 – "Historical Phrasing" p. 74
[85] Ibid., p. 27

great, overwhelming movement...makes history real to human consciousness for the first time – with the future really dependent on what I do in the present. This movement is the movement of time, which, once past, becomes history. But the movement is not like the movement of a wheel, as all other societies has imagined; it is not cyclical, coming around again and again. Each moment, like each destiny, is unique and unrepeatable".[86] It becomes impossible to travel in time, forwards or backwards, except for in ritual when psychology and narrative come together to alter one's perception of time. This becomes the Jewish experience to such a degree that experience of sacred time, which can mentally and emotionally teleport a person to another time and place, exists only within rituals. In contrast, the experience of profane time is simply the experience of one's own era, without the added depth of ritual time travel.

Yet, unlike in the secular sense of time where past, present and future are subjective to one's own location on the timeline, Jewish time clearly defines the beginning and end of each era, even if scholars do not. For example, Yerushalmi notes that Medieval Jews described these as being: "the Era of Creation, the era of destruction of the Second Temple, and the Seleucid Era (the so-called *minyan shetarot*, or 'era of contracts,' also known as *minyan yevani*, or 'Greek era'). By its very nature each era not only conjured up a very different quantitative span of time; it has qualitatively different historical resonances".[87] Contrarily, Lawrence Hoffman, liturgist and rabbi, sees the eras as based in the ancient rabbis' view of adherence to Jewish law, thus "the sins of Time-Past resulted in the destruction of the Temple [which resulted in] the onset of Time-Now, and the relationship

[86] Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, p. 239
[8787] Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 41

between sin and punishment that that event revealed, becomes paradigmatic for each and every historical episode thereafter. But keeping the commandments guarantees that some day, Time-Now will end, and the grandeur of Time-Past will be reinstated at Time-to-Come".[88]

My approach to the eras of Jewish time is based on major temporal anchors, the events that are evoked in ritual and provide orientation within the Jewish narrative. These anchors – Creation, Redemption from Egypt and Revelation at Sinai, and the foretold arrival of Messiah – separate Jewish time into three eras: *T'kufat ha'Avar* (the Era of the Past), *T'kufat ha'Hoveh* (The Era of the Present) and *T'kufat ha'Atid* (The Era of the Future). However, unlike Yerushalmi's eras based thematically or Hoffman's eras based on observance of *halacha* (Jewish law), the eras that I propose are based in an overall concept of Jewish time itself and its representation in Jewish ritual.

T'kufat ha'Avar, the era between Creation and Redemption/Revelation, is described in Genesis and the first half of Exodus. This era is invoked in almost every Jewish ritual, from naming God as the creator of the universe, to reminding Jews of their former status as slaves in Egypt, to believing that the chain of tradition (*Shalshelet ha'Kabbala*) which began at Sinai gives *T'kufat ha'Hoveh* interpretive authority. Each of these ritualized invocations mentally, emotionally and psychology transports a person to a temporal anchor, so that he or she may feel the power of the moment and bring it into their own era. Yet, Redemption and Revelation also serve as a breaking off point between past and present eras. In the ancient Israelite's newfound freedom and adoption of divine law, Jewish time

[88] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1987, p. 85

reminds us say to ourselves: "live in the present, in the here and now. What I have done in the past is past mending; what I will do in the future is a worry not worth the candle, for there is no way I can know what will happen next. But in this moment – and only in this moment. I am in control...this is the moment when the past can be transformed and the future lit with radiance".[89]

Anyone who lives in *T'kufat ha'Hoveh*, the era between Redemption/Revelation and the arrival of the Messiah, is keenly aware that *T'kufat ha'Avar* is both profoundly connected and inherently disconnected from the present. Rituals in *T'kufat ha'Hoveh* focus on the previous era's power and meaning, and understand that once the ritual is over, so too is the experience of the past. Instead, *T'kufat ha'Hoveh* seeks to teach its inhabitants the moral and spiritual lessons of *T'kufat ha'Avar* in order to make it into the "pulsing, white-hot center of all the subsequent narrative, the unlikely intersection of time and eternity, the moment where God is always to be found".[90]

Perhaps, it is the focus on *T'kufat ha'Avar* that makes *T'kufat ha'Atid* such a mystery. Over and over text and ritual mention *T'kufat ha'Atid* without going into much detail, only that its beginning will be marked by the coming of the Messiah. It is this mystery that tells liberal Jews that "we do not control the future; in a profound sense, even God does not control the future...For this reason, the concept of the future – for the first time – holds out promise, rather than just the same old thing. We are not doomed, not bound to some predetermined fate; we are free".[91] Because the people living in *T'kufat ha'Hoveh*

[89] Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, p. 146
[90] Ibid., p. 132
[91] Ibid., p. 131

have little to no control or sense of the future era, it is left shrouded in mystery, particularly by liberal Jews who believe that waiting for *T'kufat ha'Atid* detracts from the responsibilities of *T'kufat ha'Hoveh*. Perhaps this is most clearly stated in the 1999 statement from the Central Conference of American Rabbis: "We strive to fulfill the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God's creation. Partners with God in *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age."[92]

It may be that liberal Jews take such care and attention to their responsibilities to the past and future in *T'kufat ha'Hoveh* because of the profound connection between time and space. In order to sanctify time, space must also be sanctified through action. Many, including Zerubavel, understand the connection between sacred time and sacred space to be a function of memory. So that when we are in the same place or recreate it through symbolism or ritual we are able to "virtually 'see' the people who once occupied the space we do now".[93] In doing so, we are given another tool to remind us of the temporal anchor that we wish to re-experience. In this way, a real or imagined "constancy of place is a formidable basis for establishing a sense of sameness. Even as we ourselves undergo dramatic changes both individually and collectively, our physical surroundings usually remain relatively stable. As a result, they constitute a reliable locus of memories and often serve as major foci of personal as well as group nostalgia".[94]

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[92] "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism - CCAR." A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism - CCAR. Accessed January 24, 2017. http://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/platforms/statement-principles-reform-judaism/.
[93] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 42
[94] Ibid., p. 41

However, as theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking tells us, "an event is something that happens at a particular point in space and at a particular time. So one can specify it by four numbers or coordinates. Again, the choice of coordinates is arbitrary; one can use any three well defined spatial coordinates and any measure of time. In relativity, there is no real distinction between the space and time coordinates, just as there is no difference between any two space coordinates".[95] Since, space and time are essentially one and the same, both components of a larger system that helps people orient themselves in the universe, creating sacred space is equally as important as creating sacred time. And, considering it is far easier for a person to see his or her effect on the physical rather than the temporal, an effort to sanctify space, to better it and thereby those who live in it, is also an effort to create meaning and purpose. After all, "space and time [are] dynamic quantities...Space and time not only affect but also are affected by everything that happens in the universe."[96]

This connection between sacred space and sacred time can be seen both when people seek to better their surroundings, and also in their vocabulary. For example, the Hebrew word "*olam*" can mean both world and eternity, or "*Ha'Makom*" can mean both place or serve as a divine name. In this way it becomes clear that "the intimate connection between the cosmos and time is religious in nature: the cosmos is homologizable to cosmic time (=the Year) because they are both sacred realities, divine creations".[97] Jewish rituals seek to influence both time and space, through action as well as through language. They play on

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[95] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, (Toronto: Bantam Books), 1988, p. 24

[96] Ibid., p. 33

[97] Eliade and Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 73

the intersection between time and space in order to change our experience of both. Truly it is only when both our temporal and spatial senses are engaged that we are able to be transported to a temporal anchor and transform a profane experience into a sacred one. In fact, "the intention that can be read in the experience of sacred space and sacred time reveals a desire to reintegrate a primordial situation – that in which the gods and the mythical ancestors were *present*, that is, were engaged in creating the world, or in organizing it, or in revealing the foundations of civilization to man".[98] Through ritual, Jews are not only transported "back" to the time of their ancestors, but their ancestors are transported into the present moment, creating a complex sense of overlap and continuity that does not, that cannot exist in a profane experience of time.

[98] Ibid., p. 91-92

Chapter 3 – Examples of Jewish Time in Liturgy

One of the clearest indicators of what Jewish time looks like is the rituals and liturgy within ritual, that is used to mark time. These rituals are adopted, and passed from generation to generation, not only for the spiritual meaning, but for the way they subtly craft the Jewish sense of time. Through liturgy and ritual, Judaism communicates a sense of time on a deep level, so deep that Jews themselves might not even realize it is happening. As "the great theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote '[Judaism is a religion] of time aiming at the sanctification of time.' It is equally correct to say that Judaism seeks the transformation of time – the realm of history is to be perfected."[99] In the case of Judaism, history and narrative are communicated not in textbooks, but in prayer books filled with liturgy passed from one generation to the next.

Close reading of the liturgy reveals that "segments of Jewish time...are not all the same. Times of year are not neutral vessels in which anything might happen, but recapitulations of recurrent themes and paradigmatic events that mark human existence."[100] In this way, Jewish time is not measured by an unbiased clock, ticking away the seconds and minutes with little regard as to what happens in those moments. Rather, Jewish time is measured by observance of the holidays, the traditions, the rituals and their liturgies. To fully understand Jewish time would require an exhaustive study of Jewish texts throughout history, in which the researcher must pick up on both minute clues and grand statements about an overarching concept of time. Indeed, "to fully probe the memory-banks available

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[99] Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster), 1993, p. 157

[100] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1987, p. 84

to [any Jew] nothing less would suffice than a thorough re-examination of the entire range of Jewish liturgy and ritual, so heavily charged with the intricate associations to past and future, and indeed of the entire gamut of Rabbinic law and custom as well."[101]

Hence, Jewish time, and all its intricacies, becomes a lived experience, something that Jews craft and experience simultaneously, rather than a measuring tool that exists independent of human experience. Jewish time relies on "the thin line between the sacred and the secular,"[102] encouraging its adherents to go back and forth continuously. This means that "[Jewish time can be] sensed by means of the day, week, month, and year, through many ascents and descents, changes and varieties."[103] Each segment of time, no matter how small or large, comes imbued with its own rituals and liturgy, communicating to Jews the grand sense of Jewish time as well as calling out a message specific to that moment's needs.

Before attempting to understand how each piece of liturgy communicates time, it is first important to understand the texts that composers of liturgy draw upon to reflect the view of time they hope to convey. This means having a sense of both biblical and rabbinic concepts of Jewish time. It is important to note that "the Hebrew bible tells a story bound by time, beginning with the creation of time and continuing with the development of a people through time."[104] Most likely, it is the biblical narrative that accounts for Jewish

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[101] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 1996, p. 42
[102] Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*, p. 38
[103] Eliezer Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time: Philosophical Dimensions of the Jewish Holy Days*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 2000, p. 26
[104] Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 2015, p. 6

time's linear component. Here, events are consecutive and discrete. Overlapping and cyclical time do not exist in biblical Jewish time, only pointed reminders of three major temporal anchors – creation, redemption and revelation – used as a justification for law and prophecy.

In the biblical narrative it becomes clear that time is not seen "as an endless cycle, mirroring the cycles of the seasons. Nor is it seen as simply a meaningless stream of events moving forward in a linear motion, each moment disappearing into the past without leaving a mark. Rather, in the biblical landscape, the progression of time [leads to the creation of] shape and meaning."[105] In fact, shape and meaning is given by the intervention of divine action. Events ranging in importance occur because of divine intention and acts, nothing happens without reason.

However, the rabbinic view of time, in which much of liturgy became codified, is distinctly different than the biblical view. "The rabbinic conception of history avoids recourse to temporal accident. For the rabbis, God has established a grand plan in which history as we moderns know it is incidental. They measured historical time not by years, which are amenable to infinite successive numbering, but by [eras], which are not."[106] For the rabbis, chronology of events became less important than the era to which they belong and understood that time within each era could be summarized by the phrase " אין מוקדם ואין מאוחר בתורה,"[107] idiomatically translated as "there is no chronology in the time of the Torah." Therefore, it did not matter that it would be biologically impossible that a ram

[105] Ibid., p. 8
[106] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1987, p. 82
[107] Rashi on Exodus 31:18

would survive from creation to the *akedah* (Binding of Isaac); they exist in the same era and therefore existed simultaneously.

A defining theme of the age of the rabbis was the codification of the Jewish legal tradition into volumes and codes. For this reason, their concept of time and its eras was also guided by a sense of Jewish law and its upholding. Accordingly, "it is not surprising that rabbinic literature has relatively little to say about the picayune details of this or that historical event...They simply do not seem to have cared enough about Time-Now to have recorded its day-to-day events that we call history. Rather, they fixed their gaze on Time-to-Come, working out the minute details of the obligations inherent in Time-Now upon which the successful arrival of Time-to-Come depended."[108] In the rabbis' eyes, "Time-Now," or *T'kufat HaHoveh*, was important only for the purpose of reaching "Time-to-Come," of *T'kufat HaAtid*. Just like the era of "Time-Past" was ended by the sinfulness of the people, "Time-to-Come" will be initiated by the piousness of the people. For the rabbis, "Time-Now," the era in which they lived, existed only for the purpose of reaching the goal of "Time-to-Come."

Consequently, the rabbinic influence on liturgy can be seen in how the "specificity of historical event was blurred into a series of general statements about the quality of time as such...The macrocosmic message of Time-Past, Time-Now, and Time-to-Come is reduced to the specificity of the worshipers' own personal lives [where] the relationship between sin and punishment...becomes paradigmatic for each and every historical episode thereafter."[109] As they wrote, the rabbis imbued the liturgy with a sense of hope and fate

[108] Ibid., p. 83
[109] Ibid., p. 85

rather than a sense of chronology. They balanced the biblical concept of linear time with their own ahistorical sense, leading to a sense of Jewish time that was an amalgam of ancient cycles, biblical lines, and medieval overlaps. It is this amalgamation that informs the modern sense of Jewish time where "the historical narratives of religious tradition are performed liturgically [leading to] the temporal cycles and schedules of prayer, measured by cosmic motion, interact with the historical notion of time, which is fed by the narratives of religious tradition and brought to life through memory and hope."[110]

In modern liturgy, the Jewish metanarrative is arranged into "a pattern, with an existential message of hope...Jewish history appears in our texts as a continual return of the cycle of Jewish suffering and miraculous recovery."[111] This is, in turn, communicated through the ways we mark linear and cyclical time – the holidays. Each holiday serves as a reliable reminder of where we are in a much larger narrative, and the intricacies of that narrative. In essence, each holiday serves as "the one separate day [which is] formulated as a different presence of time, an *objective* presence which cannot be overlooked."[112]

By looking closely at ritual and liturgy, we notice that there is a close association between word, act and thought, as if acting out an idea of history or time inherently creates history and time. This, in turn, makes the "performed act [of liturgy and ritual, which] is comprised of actions set apart from other actions, [distinguishable] from the mundane."[113] Even the basic use of liturgy sanctifies time, and makes it different from the profane time that guides our secular lives. This is echoed in the works of sociologist and philosopher

[110] O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, p. 15
[111] Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, p. 138
[112] Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, p. 28
[113] O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, p. 155

Emile Durkheim who stated that liturgy and rituals work in two specific ways: "(1) they differentiate between the sacred and the profane; and (2) they integrate those involved in the rites into a sense of solidarity."[114] In essence it is because of liturgy and ritual that Jewish time exists at all. Without them Jews might intellectually know the Jewish metanarrative, but they would not become a part of it as wholly as they do when they act out and participate in it. In this way, liturgy "has the capacity to influence the way its participants formulate even the most fundamental elements of human experience, such as the experience of time."[115]

To serve as examples of how Jewish time functions in liturgy, I have chosen liturgical units within three separate holidays: the Shabbat Kiddush and Havdalah, the Shofar service on Rosh Hashanah, and the Maggid section of the Passover Seder. These units not only serve as major moments in the Jewish annual cycle but also are "replete with symbolic deeds and their interpretations, [that] are not intended to [be] interpret[ed] themselves alone but to give meaning to [a Jew's] actions in general. The Sabbath symbolizes and bestows significance on the week; Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur give meaning to the annual cycle; the pilgrimages, [such as Passover,] illuminate the significance of activity throughout the seasons."[116] Each unit, and the thematic texts provided by the editors, hint at the components of Jewish time such as cyclical time and overlapping time, Linear time and decline or progress narratives, temporal anchors, eras, Humanity's role as partners with God, and using ritual to create a sense of Jewish time.

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[114] Ibid., p. 158
[115] Ibid., p. 4
[116] Schweid, *The Jewish Experience of Time*, p. 33

The sources of the texts analyzed in this chapter in one way or another align with a liberal Jewish experience: they do not expect their readers to be stringent about their *halachic* adherence. Rather, they prefer a Jewish mentality based on ethics and meaningful traditions. Additionally, liberal Jewish sources push liturgy further than traditional ones in the ways that they approach interpretation and application to a person's life. Interpretive translations, editorial comments and/or thematically connected piece of poetry that replace or supplement traditional liturgy, are designed to deepen the prayer experience. In this way, liberal Jewish liturgy admits that most anything can be used as "liturgy," so long as it stays true to the message of the service. It is my belief, that these pieces of liberal Jewish liturgy are also chosen because they stay true both to the larger message of Judaism and Jewish time and the message of the specific ritual. It becomes the task of readers to probe into liberal liturgy to ascertaining those messages. Individuals then may decide whether or not those messages align with they believe to be true about their own experience of Judaism. In this way, liberal liturgy provides a multitude of options. And yet, despite the shear amount, the options still somehow point to very similar views of the larger Jewish message and concept of Jewish time.

As described in chapter two, cyclical time is one of the most ancient components of Jewish time. In cyclical time, not event is unique, it is only a recurrence of a past event at the same point in the cycle. This idea is particularly expressed in the phrase "היום הרת עולם" from the Rosh Hashanah Shofar service, translated as either "Today is the day of the

world's birth."[117] or “Today the world is born anew.”[118] Rosh Hashanah, as the first day of the Jewish new year also serves as a recurrence of the first day of the world’s existence. It is an opportunity to celebrate new beginnings, to cherish the world as if it were created that same day, as is emphasized in the words:

“זה היום תחלת מעשיך, זכרון ליום רשאון,”

“This is the day of the world's beginning; now we recall creation's first day.”[119]

In the shofar service Jews are pushed – liturgically as well as auditorily – to wake up, to take a hard look at themselves and the world around them and to know that "Beginning again, re-newing the old, re-membering the sounds, re-calling the words, re-creating the world – this is the stuff of Torah, the business of the Jew."[120] In the same way, hearing the call of the shofar pushes Jews to take the opportunity for their own recreation – to wipe the slate clean of their previous misdeeds and to start out with renewed good intentions. Just as the world and creation are renewed on Rosh Hashanah, so too are those who celebrate the holiday. The liturgical line,

“Blessed are hearts that respond to the majestic music of the shofar.

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[117] Chaim Stern, *Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe*. (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis), 1978, p. 143

[118] Edwin Goldberg, Janet Marder, Sheldon Marder, and Leon Morris. *Mishkan Hanefesh: Machzor for the Days of Awe, Rosh Hashanah*. (New York: CCAR Press), 2015, p. 207

[119] Stern, *Gates of Repentance*, p. 144

[120] Kol Hanshama (David A. Teutsch, Micah Becker-Klein, Judith Gary Brown, Jeremy A. Schwartz, and Rena Spicehandler. *Kol Haneshamah: Prayerbook for the Days of Awe*. (Elkins Park, Pennsylvania: The Reconstructionist Press), 1999,p. 585

Blessed is the gift of life, the power of renewal that brings us to this day."[121]

communicates this idea, emphasizing that renewal is not just for the world, but for the individual as well.

The resounding sound of the shofar announces the coexistence of the primordial moment. When a person hears its call, they are to know that

"the ancients of Israel live within us

and God remembers the covenant."[122]

Even the human act of blowing the shofar brings together a multitude of moments and memories, molding them into one cosmic event:

"In sounding the horn, we summon them back –

zichronot: memories of those who saw signs of Your Presence."[123]

Furthermore, the shofar service adds an extra layer of re-experience to the Rosh Hashanah ritual, as it purportedly was one of the cacophonous sounds heard during the revelation at Mount Sinai, a moment that serves as such a large temporal anchor that it is said that all Jews were there. As this piece of liturgy recounts in the first person:

"אתה נגלית כבודך, על עם קדשך לדבר עמם...גם כל-העולם כלו חל מפניך ובריות בראשית חרדו ממך"

[121] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 205
[122] Ibid., p. 266
[123] Ibid., p. 263

"In a cloud of glory You spoke in holy address to Your people. We felt Your presence, a luminous mist, Your voice resounding from the very heavens. As all creation trembled, You revealed Your Torah to us at Sinai."[124]

The Passover Seder also shows cyclical time in its liturgy. In fact, much of the liturgy is phrased in the first person, plural, such as

"עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים..."

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim, and then Adonai our God brought us out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."[125]

In liturgy such as this, miracles are recalled as if the speaker were there to witness them. The liturgy of the Maggid, the retelling of the story of the Exodus, places the speaker and Seder attendees in the story, recreating the experiences of slavery and redemption in their own memories. More so, this becomes true for all Jews, in every generation who have their own contemporary redemption story:

"שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותינו. אלא שבכל-דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו. והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם,"

"For more than one enemy has risen against us to destroy us. In every generation, in every age, some rise up to plot our annihilation. But a divine Power sustains and delivers us."[126]

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[124] Stern, *Gates of Repentance*, p. 148
[125] Richard N. Levy, *On Wings of Freedom: The Hillel Haggadah for the Nights of Passover*. (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, Inc.), 1989, p. 28
[126] Herbert Bronstein, and Leonard Baskin. *A Passover Haggadah*. (New York: Grossman Publishers), 1974, p. 45

Like in the Shofar service, Passover's Maggid invokes divine participation as an important part of cyclical time. Nothing happens without God's approval and participation, regardless of which generation, or revolution of the cycle, one might be in.

Additionally, the Maggid section of the Seder encourages a sense of overlapping time through symbolism. The matzah on the table is not only for that night, but becomes the same "bread" that was eaten during the Exodus, as it says in Aramaic:

"הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים…,"

"This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim."[127]

Here, matzah is a symbol whose taste, texture and lack of leavening is a multisensory experience that transports the Seder goers back to the moment that all Jews were fleeing from Pharaoh. This sense of symbolism is further driven home by the symbol of Egypt, or in Hebrew, Mitzrayim. It is a place that the Seder leader reminds everyone at the table, especially the "wicked child," that

"בעבור זה עשה יי לי בצאתי ממצרים: לי ולא לו,"

"'Because of what Adonai did for me when I went out of Mitzrayim.' For me and not for them."[128]

[127] Sue Levi Elwell, *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*. (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis). 2002, p. 27
[128] Levy, *On Wings of Freedom*, p.32

But more than that, Mitzrayim becomes a symbol for all the times, in any cycle, that Jews have experiences dramatic hardship:

"Mitzrayim is not just a place on an ancient map

Where a narrow strait blocks the way between two sea,

Mitzrayim is a place in us

Where a narrow strait blocks the sea which is our soul

From reaching the Sea which is its source."[129]

Similarly, in the weekly cycle, Shabbat serves as a marker in time that is both a reexperience of what once was (i.e. the seventh day of creation) and what will be (i.e. *T'kufat HaAtid*). Within the liturgical Shabbat experience, linear and profane time cease to have meaning, essentially putting both on pause until the end of Havdalah, the ceremony marking the end of Shabbat and the return to the rest of the week. This is conveyed in this liturgical *kavanah* (intention): "Time has stood still, but now the Sabbath is ending. Soon everyday life will start again…But the resumption of the daily round also raises fresh hope. Perhaps the coming week will bring us nearer to the time of which the Sabbath is a foretaste…the time when the process of redemption will be complete."[130]

Also present in liturgy, are clues to the rabbis' concept of linear time. This can be seen primarily in the liturgical understand of history or an individual's potential for change, something that would not be possible in cyclical time. For example, in the Shofar service,

[129] Ibid., p. 23

[130] Chaim Stern and John D. Rayner. *Siddur Lev Chadash*. (London: Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues). 1995, p. 567

Jews are encouraged to turn away from their more sinful nature to one that is guided by righteousness. This change is encouraged by the shocking sound of the shofar and the lofty language of the prayer, as is expressed in this piece of liturgy:

"When we speak about Your glory,

when we praise You for Your might –

those who hear will feel Your presence,

turn from darkness to the light."[131]

Likewise, within the Passover Seder there are overt themes of changing the slope of linear time from decline to assent. In the Haggadah, Seder goers hear in a variety of ways how the Exodus changed the course of Jewish history –

"מעבדות לחרות

מגנות לשבח

ממלכות הרשעה למלכות שמים,"

"Our history moves from slavery toward freedom.

Our narration begins with degradation and rises to dignity.

Our service opens with the rule of evil and advances toward the kingdom of God."[132]

Within the historical change of slavery to freedom a person is able to understand that Jewish time does not only exist in never ending cycles of events. In both the Shofar service

[131] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 201
[132] Bronstein and Baskin. *A Passover Haggadah*, p. 34

and the Maggid of Passover, Jews are able to reexperience an event as part of a cycle, *as well as* take the opportunity for significant change. As one Haggadah states:

"אנחנו גבורים!

דור אחרון לשעבור וראשון לגאלה אנחנו!"

"We are the mighty!

The last generation of slaves and the first generation of free men!"[133]

In this way, it is not only the past events of an individual's life that inform a moment of significant change, but the whole of the Jewish past informs the moment, allowing for a graceful interplay of cyclical and linear time concepts.

But what does the liturgy tell Jews where to find major moments that hold a potential for change? It points to significant temporal anchors, the moments that are both re-lived and serve as an opportunity for reflection and readjustment. The first temporal anchor is the moment of Creation, the primordial act that is invoked, in one way or another in the majority of liturgical rubrics. For example, the Shofar service uses Creation as a moment of awareness, one which is recreated upon hearing the sound of the shofar:

"Hear now the Shofar; acclaim the world's creation!...

Hear now the Shofar, you who stand at Sinai."[134]

In this liturgical unit, Creation serves as a reminder to look at oneself and actions for the sake of evaluation. Shabbat, on the other hand, understands the invocation of the Creation

[133] Ibid., p. 44
[134] Stern, *Gates of Repentance*, p. 138

anchor to be a tool of appreciation. In the Shabbat liturgy, mentions of Creation are accompanied with mentions of increased holiness and sanctity, like in the Kiddush, which says:

> "באהבה וברצון הנחילנו זכרון למעשה בראשית,"
>
> "In love and favor, You make the holy Shabbat our heritage as a reminder of the work of Creation."[135]

Creation as a temporal anchor thus becomes a mention of one of the earliest moments in Jewish history, one which echoes into the rest of Jewish time and its temporal anchors. In this way, holidays like Shabbat serve as symbols not only of Creation, but also of the Redemption of the Exodus, as it says, "…the holy Shabbat with love and favor made our possession, a remembrance of the work of Creation. For it is the first of all the holy days proclaimed, a symbol of the Exodus from Egypt."[136]

The second temporal anchor is Redemption/Revelation, the combination of two successive historical events of Exodus from Egypt and Revelation at Sinai, into one powerful temporal anchor. This idea is expressed in an explanatory comment for the Shabbat Kiddush: "The Kiddush recalls two reasons for the celebration of Shabbat – the rhythm of creation, when God rested on the seventh day; and the going forth from Egypt, when human observance of Shabbat began [with the receiving of the Ten Commandments]. Shabbat is part of nature and of history, of the cycle and the unfolding of time. The Kiddush thus illustrates how Jews discover the essence of nature through their experience of

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[135] Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan Tefila: A Reform Siddur*. (New York: CCAR Press), 2007, p. 123

[136] Teutsch and Spicehandler. *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim*, p. 118

history."[137] In this comment it becomes clear that "going forth from Egypt" was not simply a matter of physically leaving, but rather is was a matter of mental and behavioral change. Change which did not truly occur until arrival at Revelation at Sinai. This becomes one of the reasons for the shofar, as it mimics the environment that surrounded the Jews in that moment of mental change as is explained in the new Reform movement Machzor: "Prayers for the third and final sounding of the shofar evoke the Revelation at Mount Sinai, when the people experienced God amidst "thunder and lighting, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn (*kol shofar chazak m'od*)" (Exodus 19:16). The shofar's blast – a sound conveying warning, triumph, and celebration – here marks a moment of intense spiritual elevation when a band of newly liberated slaves entered a sacred covenant with the Divine."[138]

The anchor that is perhaps invoked the most but explained the least, is the third anchor, that of the arrival of Messiah. Since this anchor exists at a point in time that Jews have not yet reached, the Messiah anchor is imagined to look like a recapitulation of the second anchor since it seems that true "Redemption is not yet complete."[139] In this way, the arrival of the Messiah is thought to be a more perfect and permanent experience of Redemption/Revelation, where each anchor serves as an link in the Jewish narrative which eventually moves from history to prophetic hope as is expressed in the lines:

"Goodness of the World – *Tuvo shel Olam*,

today we stand before the shofar

[137] Ibid., p. 117
[138] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 278
[139] Bronstein and Baskin. *A Passover Haggadah*, p. 34

to hear in its voice the broken notes of our history, the unbroken quest from Moriah and Sinai to the End of Days."[140,141]

Unlike the other two temporal anchors, which focus on God's ultimate power and a need for positive change, arrival of the Messiah relies almost entirely on feelings of hope and certainty. Though it is not clear when, where, or how, the Messiah will arrive, Jewish liturgy never doubts that it will happen and commentary around the liturgy echoes that sentiment. One example is the story by Rabbi David Moshe inserted into the Shofar service: "The year my father died, he could no longer go to the synagogue on Rosh HaShanah. I prayed with him in his room. His service was more powerful than ever before. When he had ended, he said to me, 'Today I heard the Messiah blow the ram's horn.' This story teaches us that the theme of Shofarot is hope: the messianic hope for redemption."[142]

Furthermore, the liturgy around the third temporal anchor reinforces the certainty of its eventual occurrence with the recognition of its heralds – Elijah and Miriam. Every week Jews invoke the names and roles of these two people (Miriam only in particularly egalitarian communities) during Havdalah with the liturgy:

"אליהו הנביא, אליהו התשבי, אליהו הגלעדי.

במהרה בימינו יבוא אלינו, עם משיח בן-דוד,"

[140] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 280
[141] "End of Days": A phrase commonly understood to mean the coming of the Messiah and the messianic age.
[142] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 281, below the line

"May Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah of Gilead, quickly in our day come to us heralding redemption."[143]

or

"מירם תרקד אתנו לתקן את העולם. במהרה בימינו היא תביאנו אל מי הישועה,"

"Miriam will dance with us to redeem the world. Soon, in our day, she will bring us to the waters of redemption."[144]

In liturgy Elijah and Miriam serve as the legendary harbingers of hope, the individuals to be on constant alert for, who will announce the occurrence of the third anchor.

Each of the three temporal anchors serves multiple roles. They are invoked at specific moments in a variety of cycles, they remind us of the important moments in Jewish time, and they appeal to different emotional states of Jews. hey also do another important thing: they separate between eras. Each anchor serves as both an end to the proceeding era and as a beginning to the next one. Between the anchors of Creation and Redemption/Revelation is the era of *T'kufat HaAvar*, in which the Jewish narrative is not burdened by any system of dating other than a sense of being far in the past. In the Haggadah phrases like

"ארמי אבד אבי וירד מצרימה ויגר שם במתי מעט ויהי שם לגוי גדול עצום ורב,"

[143] Frishman, *Mishkan Tefila*, p. 616
[144] Ibid., p. 617

"My ancestors, wandering Arameans, went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number,"[145]

inspire Seder attendees to consider a period of time long gone. *T'kufat HaAvar* is distinctly separate from right now, and is held with a sense of reverence and nostalgia that is absent in reflections on *T'kufat HaHoveh*, as is expressed in this piece of the Shofar service: "Buried even deeper in us than our childhood is the childhood of our people, when we were wandering and laying at the foot of Sinai, full of wonder and confusion, as the cloud appeared, and holy fire, and thunder voices out of heaven, and the sounds of a shofar. Each year when the shofar sounds for us again, the cloud appears above the riverbed of memory, and we know that if sufficient wonder and confusion fill our minds, the holy fire will burn once more, and voices from our modest shofar will thunder out of heaven once again."[146]

In this way, rituals performed in *T'kufat HaHoveh* reflect and respond to the liturgical impression of *T'kufat HaAvar*. Those feelings of nostalgia for *T'kufat HaAvar* inspire a desire to act in *T'kufat HaHoveh*. For example, in response to the call of the Shofar, a person is encouraged to know

"that when we awaken to our origins

and become truly human

we bring hope to the children

and to the earth…

[145] Elwell, *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*, p. 46
[146] *Kol Haneshamah: Prayerbook for the Days of Awe*, p. 586

I feel called today

to be a mystic in action,

aligned to the dynamics of the universe…

I feel called today

to celebrate the wonder of creation

and respond to sacredness and the

challenges of time."[147]

Similarly, reflections on *T'kufat HaHoveh* inspire hope for *T'kufat HaAtid*, the period of time after the arrival of the Messiah. Like *T'kufat HaAvar*, *T'kufat HaAtid* exists outside of chronological history. It is a period defined only by a vague sense of the future, when all the troubles of *T'kufat HaHoveh* will be gone. As part of a sense of hopefulness, the Haggadah invokes *T'kufat HaAtid* as if it were around the corner, merely a year away. This can be seen in the closing line of many Seders which states,

"This year we are here,

In the coming year may we be in the Land of Israel.

This year we are slaves

In the coming year may we all be free."[148]

[147] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 283
[148] Elwell, *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*, p. 23

Yet, despite the anticipated closeness of *T'kufat HaAtid*, liturgy holds the understanding that it will always be sometime in the future, perpetually on the horizon of time. Without fail, every day and every year, Messiah and *T'kufat HaAtid* are prayed for, like in one Shofar service which states, "tradition imbues the final sounding of the shofar with overtones of messianic hope – a yearning for the day when, according to the prophet Zechariah, "Adonai will be one and God's name will be one" (Zechariah 14:9)."[149]

In addition to how liturgy includes clues as to the structure of Jewish time, it also conveys a strong sense of human participation in the establishment of Jewish time. This happens in two different ways – suggesting that each person has within them a divine component that influences creation, and acknowledging that by participating in rituals people influence their own perception of Jewish time. Within the assumption of humans having the divine-like power to influence creation, liturgy gives people agency to affect change within creation whether it be through acting out divine intentions or imbuing creation with a sense of sanctity with their presence. This can happen by alluding to connections between humanity and Jewish symbols, such as a shofar in the line:

"The prophet said:

'Cry aloud;

Lift up your voice like a shofar!'

This is the meaning of the verse:

See yourself as a shofar,

[149] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 278

an instrument of the Divine."[150]

Or it might happen more explicitly in an explanatory comment, such as this one: "God's power – and ours. This reading, which centers on the theme of Malchuyot (God's sovereignty), sets forth a model of power shared between divine and human authorities."[151] Either way, the liturgy makes it clear that humanity is both a tool and an agent of divine influence. In this way, humanity is seen to be in partnership with God, adding to creation and the qualities of Jewish time that guide it.

Primarily, the liturgy sees humanity as able to imbue creation and time with a level of sanctity, such as when we light Shabbat candles: "As we kindle these lights, we begin a holy time. May we and all Israel find in it refreshment of body and spirit, and a renewed sense of God's presence."[152] Sanctifying time is a conscious action, done through ritual, and must be done intentionally. While God might add holiness to creation naturally, humanity needs forethought and strength, as is prayed for in the Havdalah service:

> "May God give us understanding to reject the unholy and to choose the way of holiness.
>
> May God who separates the holy from the profane
>
> inspire us to perform these acts of Havdalah."[153]

[150] Ibid., p. 268
[151] Ibid., p. 203, below the line
[152] Stern Rayner. *Siddur Lev Chadash*, p. 562
[153] Frishman, *Mishkan Tefila*, p. 615

Humanity is able to make this choice because of God's choice to imbue us with the same spirit of holiness that we put out into the world. As the Shabbat Kiddush state:

> "כי בנו בחרת, ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים. ושבת קדשך באהבה ורצון הנחלתנו"
>
> "You chose us and set us apart for the peoples. In love and favor You have given us Your holy Shabbat as an inheritance."[154]

Through God's sanctification of humanity, humanity is in turn able to sanctify Shabbat that the Jewish time in which Shabbat exists.

More than that however, Jewish liturgy is able to take a wider look at how Jewish time came into existence. It does not say that Jewish time is a natural occurrence, something that happens with or without our participation. Rather, many times throughout the liturgy, it states that the act of participating in a ritual is what creates Jewish time. Like in the Passover Seder which states, "Tonight, we tell the story of an ancient relationship between God and our people. Tonight we tell the story of a link that is renewed in every generation,"[155] the act of reciting liturgy creates a link with time and history, which would not otherwise be there. Many times, liturgy is paired with a physical act, which enhances this connection, such as the act of removing wine from each glass during the recitation of the ten plagues as is described in a comment stating: "The medieval custom of removing drops of wine from our cups reminds us of the misery the Egyptian people endured until Pharaoh released the Israelites from bondage. In this way, we diminish our joy as we recount the suffering of the Egyptians."[156] Jewish liturgy understands that sacred time,

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[154] Ibid., p. 123
[155] Elwell, *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*, p. 43
[156] Ibid., p. 53

Jewish time, does not happen on its own. It needs human input to be able to form the strong bond between *T'kufat HaAvar* and *T'kufat HaHoveh*. It needs the use of symbols such as the matzah to strengthen that bond and communicate to each generation the emotional nature of the lives lived so long ago, "When we lift the matzah, then becomes now and we recognize our ancestor's physical hunger as the universal curse of poverty."[157] More than that, liturgy knows its own limitations. It knows that a sense of overlapping time does not really make us into time travelers, that we never actually leave our seats when "remembering" the events of the past. But liturgy knows that physically experiencing an event is not what makes it memorable, it is the story, and the emotions evoked by the story, that makes each one of us feel **as if** we, too, stood at the Sea of Reeds. This level of honesty comes through in statements such as, "We are unlikely in our time to behold a sea splitting in two, but when we feel 'great awe,' when we feel surrounded by exultant life, when we feel a sudden rush of liberation – these can be signs that the Divine Presence is appearing to us as well."[158]

Liturgy also gives Jews words to express a knowledge of their own divine-like power, words that they might not have otherwise had. Interpretive liturgy such as "My favorite of the talmudic names for God is *HaMakom*, 'the Place.' God is the Place of the universe, but the universe is not God's place. That is, God is not contained within the universe. It is just the locus of our rendezvous. Just as the universe is the place where I meet God, so I am the place where God meets me,"[159] encourages a person to understand his or herself as a divine vessel, which creates both time and space by putting one person's

[157] Ibid., p. 27
[158] Levy, *On Wings of Freedom*, p. 48
[159] Elwell, *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*, p. 37

anonymous story into the mouths of the reader. What's more is that though the liturgy never seems to doubt this truth, it knows that sometimes people do. In this way, liturgy also takes on the role of reminding those who recite it of their important role as creators, as sanctifiers and as people who have a mission in the world. Statements such as

> "The commandment to bless this wine
>
> is a commandment to bless life and to love deeply.
>
> It is a commandment to remember with Shabbat heart,
>
> to act with Shabbat hands,
>
> to see the world with Shabbat eyes,"[160]

express the human mission in a way poetry or prose could not.

Within the understanding of humanity's role in the world is the encouragement to turn our eyes towards the future, towards the hopeful turn from *T'kufat HaHoveh* to *T'kufat HaAtid*. At every turn in the weekly cycle Jews are reminded: "As a people called to be a kingdom of priests, we have been taught to distinguish between sacred and secular, holy and mundane. The distinction is real but not final: the commonplace can be sanctified. That is our task. As we conclude the Sabbath, we remind ourselves that the time of redemption will come, but is not yet."[161] In this way, anyone who recites the liturgy is reminded of their responsibility to work for the arrival *T'kufat HaAtid*. It is not merely enough to hope for its appearance, it is something to be invoked, reminded of, and striven for, each and

[160] Teutsch and Spicehandler. *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim*, p. 116
[161] Stern Rayner. *Siddur Lev Chadash*, p. 568-569

every day. Hope for *T'kufat HaAtid* is the reason Elijah and Miriam are invoked during the Havdalah ceremony. But as one comment tells us, it is not enough to hope for *T'kufat HaAtid* and the prophets, we must also work for them and emulate the values that they hold for us:

> As Shabbat fades, our people's centuries-old yearning for redemption is voiced through song. When we sing the traditional "Eliyahu Hanavi," we recall the saving message and leadership of Elijah the Prophet, harbinger of the messianic age. The contemporary lyrics of "*Miriam Hanevi'ah*" parallel the traditional, offering an inspiring leadership model...we strive for תיקון עולם (repair of the world) and as we pray for the coming of the messianic age, both Elijah and Miriam are inspiring prophetic figures who model leadership traits that may help to strengthen us on our journey toward redemption.[162]

In fact, every symbol of the Havdalah ritual is, in some way, a symbol of working towards *T'kufat HaAtid*. For example, the spices are blessed with their ability to shock us into action:

> "Smell the spices that awaken us,
>
> sharp as memory pushing into
>
> the week's rush of days, cacophonous and long,
>
> spices that cling, a delicate perfume
>
> scenting the week with possibilities.
>
> Blessed are the spices that awaken us."[163]

[162] Teutsch and Spicehandler. *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim*, p. 520
[163] Frishman, *Mishkan Tefila*, p. 613

Through smelling the spices of Havdalah, or eating the Matzah of Passover, or hearing the call of the shofar during the High Holy Days, Jews create their own sacred time, distinct from any other way of experience time. Jewish time has developed over centuries, and even millennia, just as the Jewish people has. But, time does not stop with us. So long as Jews and Jewish liturgy exist, Jewish time will exist and change otherwise profane experiences into something imbued with holiness and purpose. We are reminded of this every time we perform a ritual, or recite the liturgy. Every holiday gives us the ability to relive our collective past, renew our commitment to the present and change it for a better future. As we are reminded on the first day of every annual cycle:

"The blast of the horn sustains us in faith:

My God Adonai shall blow the shofar

and advance in a stormy tempest…

A mighty call that never stops,

the shofar resounds forever."[164]

[164] *Mishkan Hanefesh*, p. 281

Conclusion

So many of us are used to measuring our lives by a variety of non-Sacred time systems – by our watches or calendars, by the changes in nature, by the physical maturation of our bodies. We are used to an experience of time as being linear, and mono-directional. There are so many characteristics of time that we rarely think about, and when we do, we think that those characteristics apply to all kinds of time.

But Jewish Time is a truly unique experience. It does not run by any mechanism that can be found in the rest of the world. Jewish Time relies on the power of humanity, not the regularity of a clock. It transforms the human experience into one of meaning and connectedness. Every person who lives by Jewish Time, contributes to Jewish Time, to the Jewish narrative and the flow of Jewish history. An experience of Jewish time is an experience outside of any other kind of time, where profane acts and experience are made sacred through ritual. It is a beautifully complex construct, one which was carefully crafted and developed over millennia to become what we know today.

To make sense of the complexities of Jewish Time, I imagine it as a twisted rope. Each fiber in the rope is a different experience of time. These fibers are wound around each other to form the basic structure of the rope, strengthening it, representing the various cycles that exist within Jewish time. The length of the rope reflects the linear experience of time, getting longer with every new fiber of experience. The rope itself sits in three coils, one for each era.

Throughout the twisted rope there are markers to show where the temporal anchors land. Of course, the four largest markers show Creation, Redemption/Revelation,

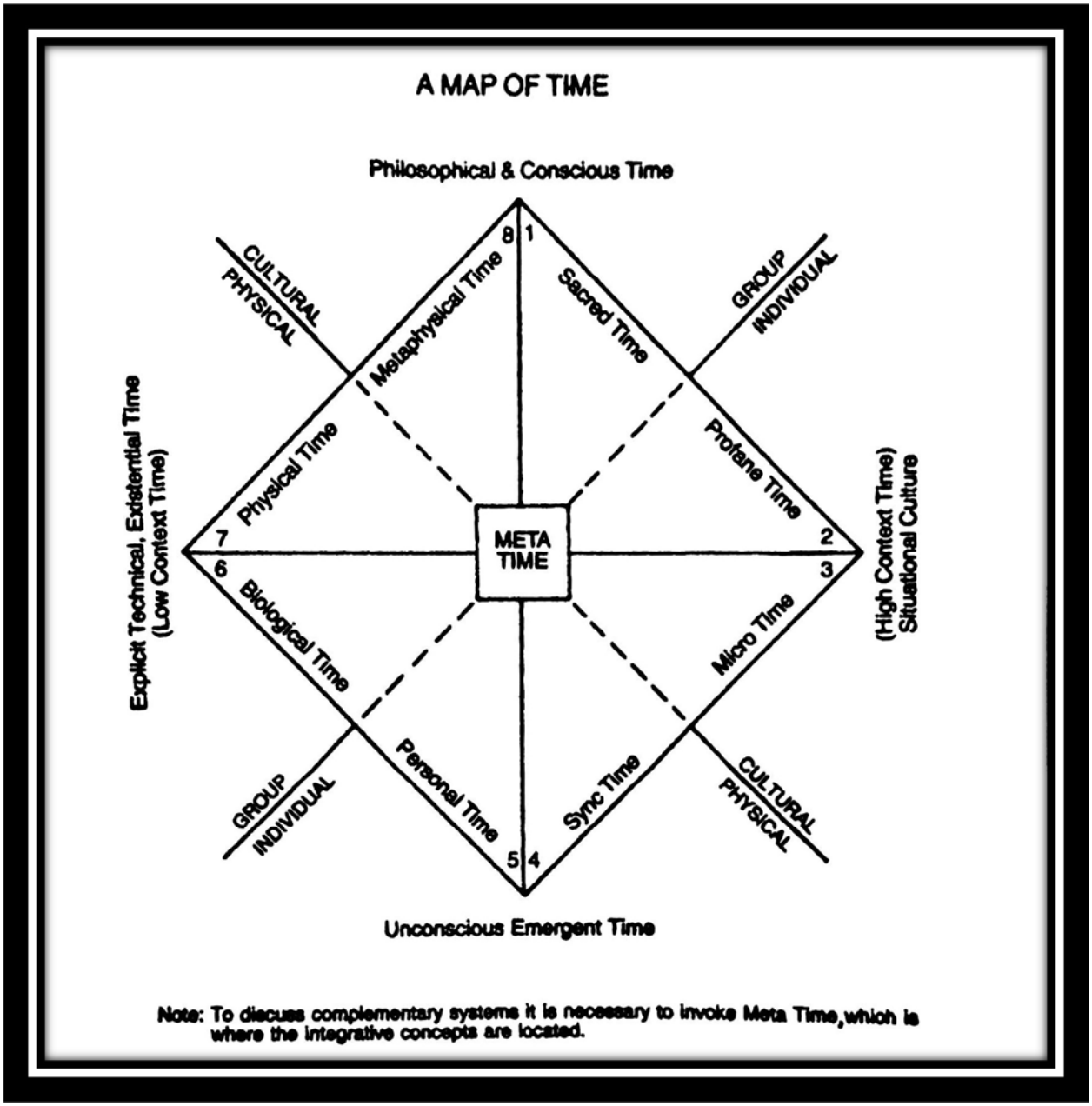
and the arrival of the Messiah. When coiled into eras these four anchors line up, showing how, though distinct in their own right, the eras have commonalities. There are also smaller markers. Some of them show up in the fibers of the annual cycle, like Rosh Hashanah and Passover. Other small markers show up in the fibers of the weekly cycle, like Shabbat and Havdalah. Still other small markers show up in the fibers marking the length of a life, showing the birth, death, coming of age, and other major moments of a person's life.

If even one of the fibers of Jewish experience were absent, Jewish Time as a whole would be different. It does not, and cannot, exist without human experience, participation and input. Just as we ask, "if a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?" we must also wonder, "if there is no one experiencing Jewish time, does it still have meaning?" I believe the answer to that question is no, Jewish time requires the people to experience. In fact, I believe that time and human experience are intimately linked. I hope that the concept of Jewish time helps others to make meaning in their lives through the experience of Jewish ritual and recitation of liturgy. Though our personal experiences of time might feel small and out of our control, Jewish time tells us that we do in fact control our past, present and future. When we see the whole picture, the entire Jewish rope and not only our tiny fiber, new worlds are opened. Suddenly, each our lives become essential to time and history – an indispensable link an unbroken chain Judaism.

By living in Jewish time, we give all time purpose and meaning. By transforming profane time into Jewish time, we connect ourselves to those who came before us and to those who will come after. By sanctifying our lives through ritual, we sanctify ourselves, our lives, and our contribution to the entire twisted rope of Jewish time.

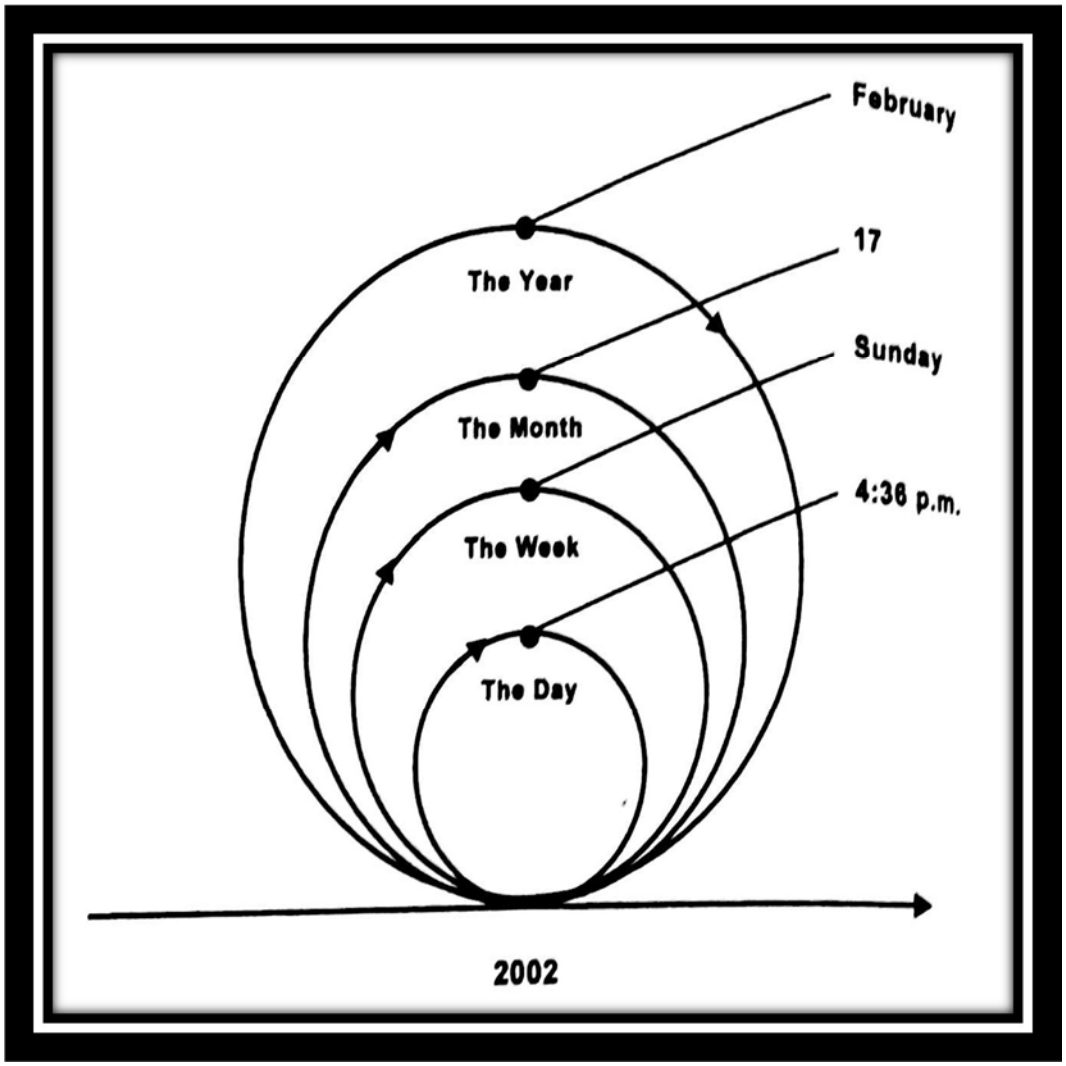
Appendix 1 – Figures

Figure 1 - "A Map of Time"[165]



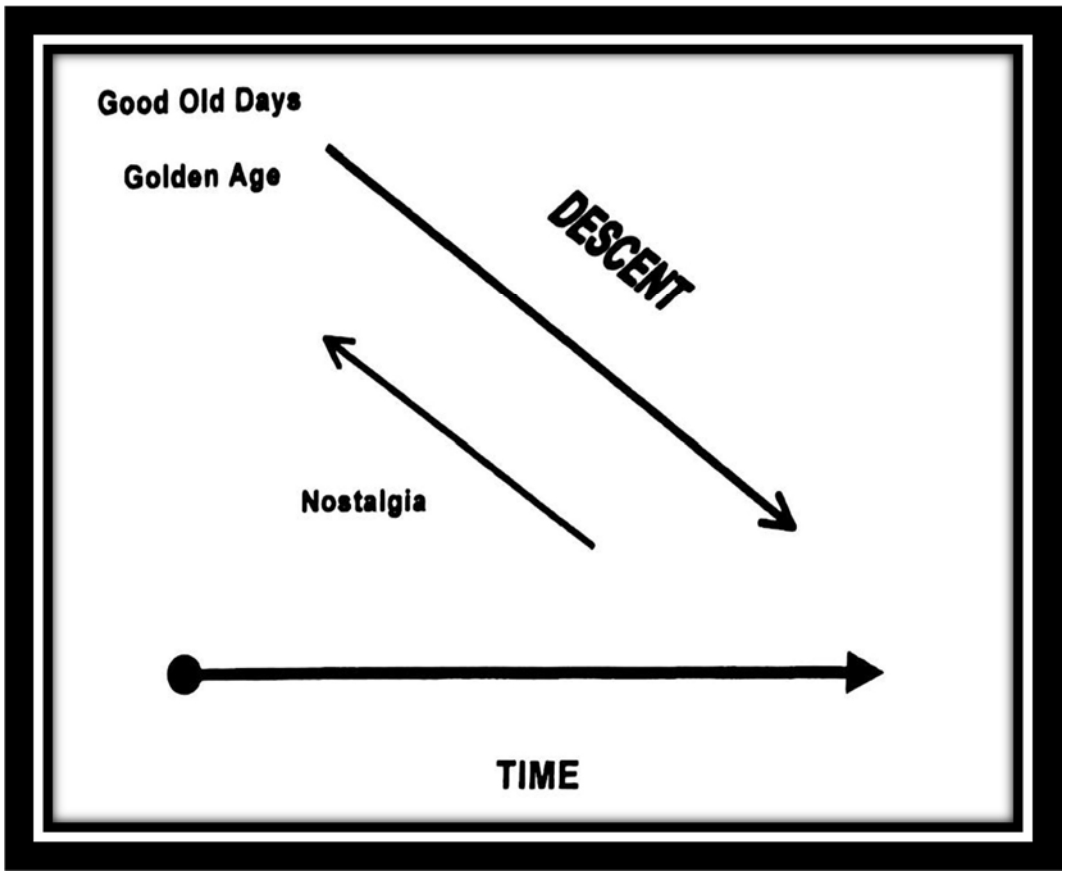
[165] Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1983, p. 17

Figure 2 – "Linear and Circular versions of time"[166]



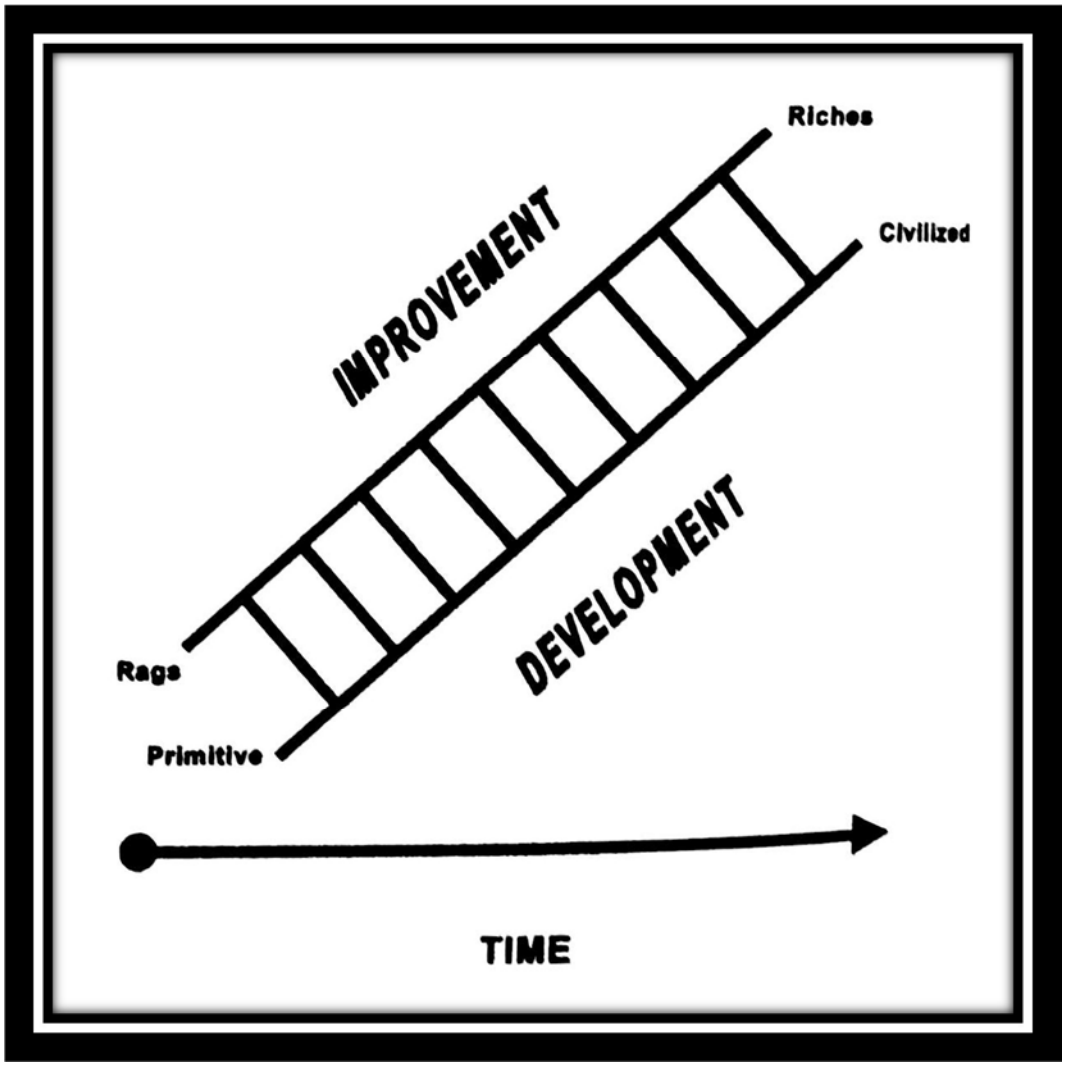
[166] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the past*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2004, p. 24

Figure 3 – "Decline Narrative"[167]



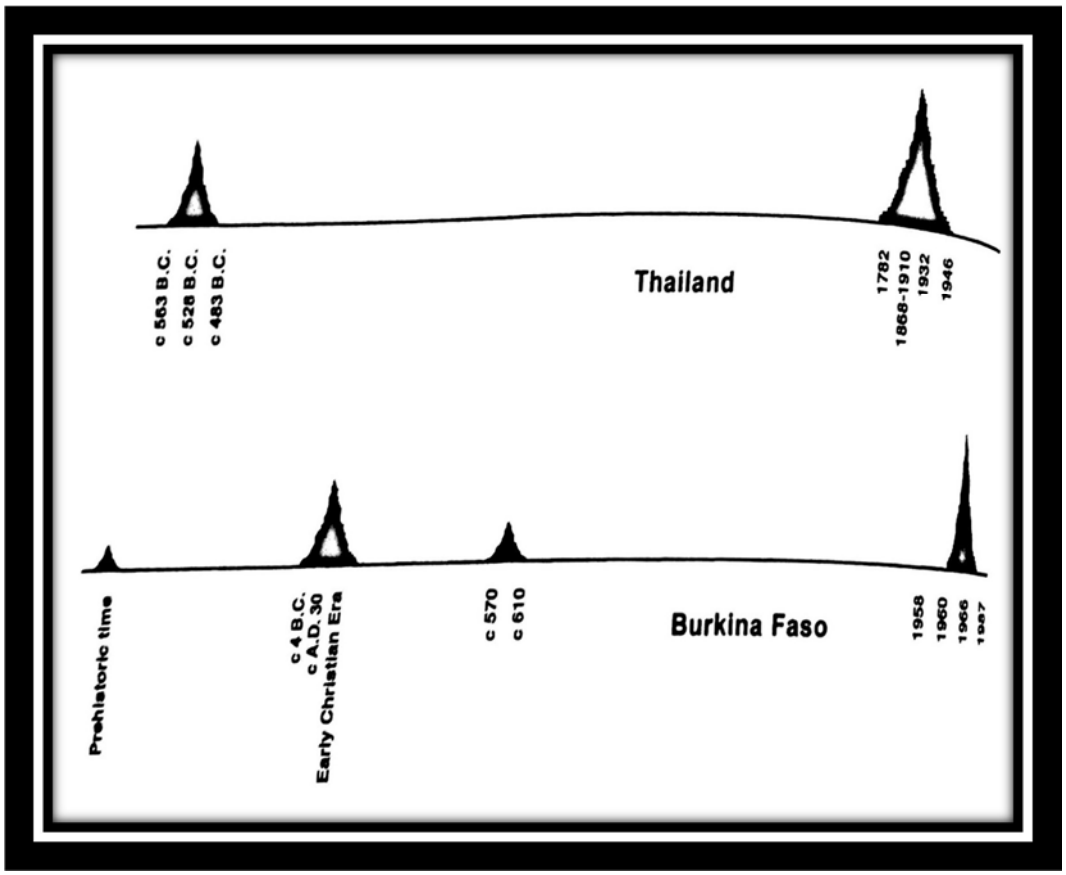
[167] Ibid., p. 17

Figure 4 – "Progress Narrative"[168]



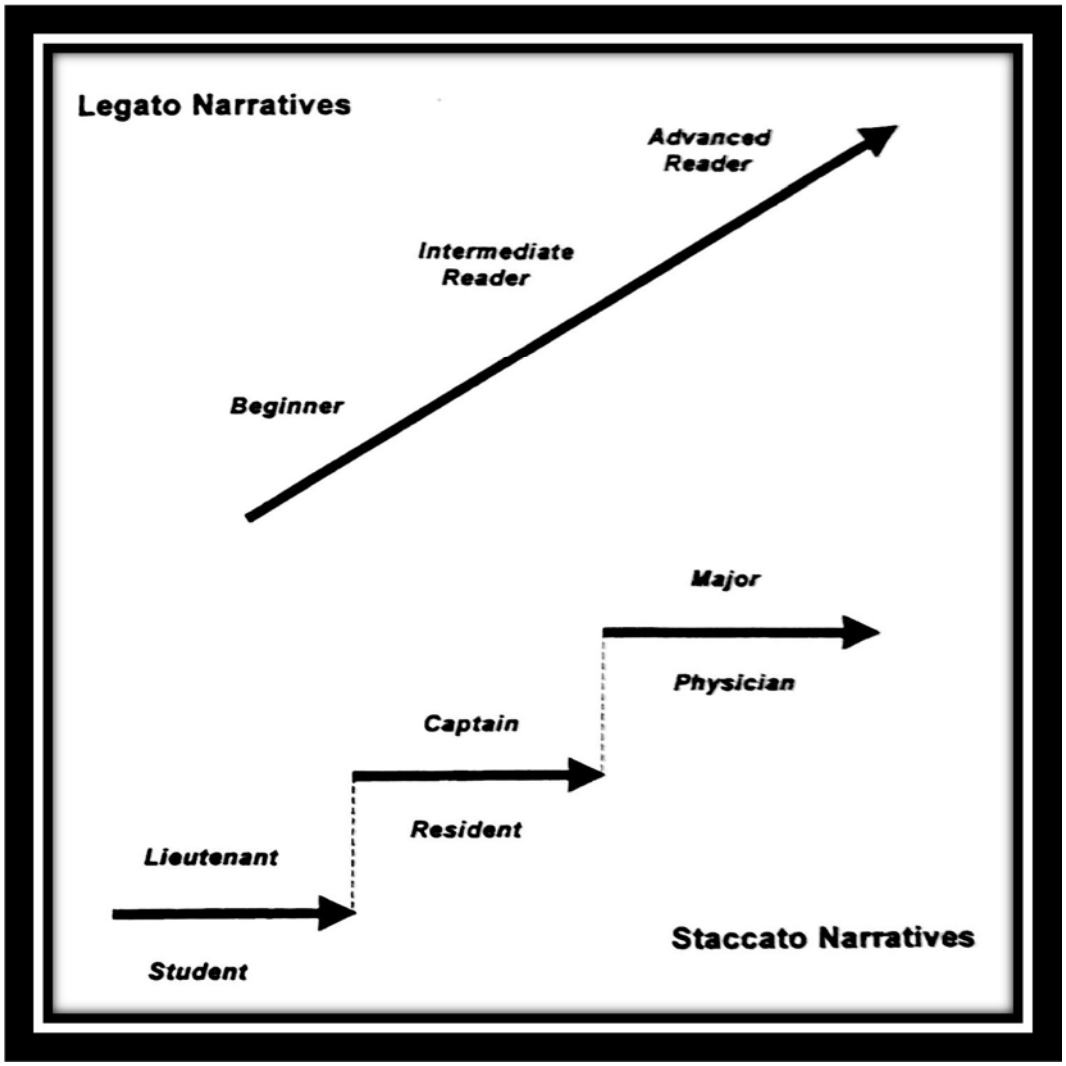
[168] Ibid., p. 16

Figure 5 – "National Commemograms"[169]



[169]Ibid., p. 32

Figure 6 – "Historical Phrasing"[170]



[170] Ibid., p. 35

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