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PROJECT

GATES OF IDENTITY

An Adult Study Course Based on
Gates of Repentance

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

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For David Olman,
loving father and gifted teacher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
FORWARD	1
I THE TRADITIONAL <u>MAHZOR</u>	9
II THE <u>CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE</u>	81
III <u>GATES OF REPENTANCE</u>	128
IV EDUCATION FOR ADULTS	185
V GATES OF IDENTITY	220
RESOURCES	308

FORWARD

Purpose and Approach

During the course of a year, most Reform Jews read only one book of Jewish thought from cover to cover. This book is the High Holiday mahzor. For a significant number of Reform Jewish adults, the High Holiday prayerbook is more than a handbook for prayer. It is the only serious, sustained and repeated contact that they have with statements concerning the nature of Jewish identity and belief.

This paper builds on the singularity of the mahzor in Reform Jewish experience by proposing to use Gates of Repentance as a text for a five session adult course on Jewish identity.

Why Gates of Repentance?

Gates of Repentance is a particularly appropriate starting point for a course on Jewish identity. Like any of our prayerbooks, Gates of Repentance is a distillation and definition of what Jews believe. In Man's Search for God, Abraham Joshua Heschel asks, "What is our liturgy as a whole trying to express, if not the basic realities and attitudes of Jewish faith? The liturgy," says Heschel, "is our creed in the form of a spiritual pilgrimage."¹

Liturgy can in fact be a very powerful representation of the beliefs that shape Jewish identity. One of its sources of power is the fact that liturgy is designed to be a shared experience. Words are composed to be read or sung in unison. People participate actively,

rising and sitting together, their group attention directed at the pageantry on the bimah. One's reading with the group becomes a kind of tacit assent, the message supported by the flow of surrounding voices. In addition, prayer concepts and prayer vocabulary, rhythmically and poetically phrased, have high affect and long staying power. Prayer vocabulary, repeated over the years, eventually becomes a verbal shorthand for articulating complex religious ideas.²

The second source of liturgy's power is its uniqueness in a Jew's experience. While there are countless expositions of Judaism by theologians and historians, there is only one prayerbook used at a time in any synagogue. To the worshipper, the prayerbook is the book through which institutionalized Judaism addresses the individual, and through which the individual addresses God. The prayerbook is therefore official.³ Its truths represent a distillation of the message of Judaism through the lense of that book's institutional auspices. For these reasons, any prayerbook, regularly used, strongly influences the way in which individuals articulate their Jewish identity.

While either Gates of Prayer or Gates of Repentance might be studied to see how this identity shaping is done for Reform Jews, Gates of Repentance offers certain distinct advantages. First of all, while Gates of Prayer is read more often, Gates of Repentance is read by more people. The book's wider audience makes it worthy of special attention. Not everyone who attends Adult Education courses is part of the regular Friday night congregation, but almost every self-identifying Jew goes to High Holiday services. For some members of the class, the mahzor may be their only prayerbook.

In addition, Gates of Repentance is more manageable as a course text. It is shorter and structurally less complicated. While Gates of Prayer offers ten Friday night services, Gates of Repentance has only two options for the evening and morning services of Rosh Hashanah, and only one service for each facet of the Yom Kippur schedule. While Gates of Prayer has services written from a variety of points of view along the liberal spectrum, Gates of Repentance can be perceived as a more cohesive whole. Its services are longer than those of Gates of Prayer, and recurring themes are treated in depth. Therefore, Gates of Repentance is both appropriate and manageable as a text for study.

Gates of Repentance is also a book about how it feels to be Jewish in the twentieth century. If worshippers were able to retain the messages they received from Gates of Repentance during all High Holiday services, and if they had the time to analyse these messages, they would have the answers to many questions crucial to their understanding of what Judaism is and how it relates to their own lives. How for instance, does Judaism, through the prism of Gates of Repentance, speak of God, of human life, and of the community of Israel? How does Judaism define the good in life for contemporary individuals and for the modern world? According to Judaism, what is the nature of evil, of free will and of human frailty, and how can people who feel they have erred regain their sense of balance and well-being? What is the people Israel's sacred story? How does Israel view its destiny as a people, and how do individual Jews figure in Israel's relationship to God? Ideally, worshippers might examine the liturgy's answers to all of these questions, and integrate those answers, where possible, into their own private systems of belief.

Why Formal Study?

However, it is very difficult to assemble a complete and coherent view of the High Holiday liturgy while attending services. While certain parts of this liturgy, repeated over the years, do have a lasting impact, the service as a whole does not make a consistent claim on the worshipper's attention.

People do not come to High Holiday services expecting or wanting to synthesize and retain information from the prayerbook. Instead, and among other things, High Holiday services are occasions for family and community reunion. The meeting and greeting of friends and the re-establishment of interpersonal ties form a major agenda for the holiday season. The larger than usual attendance distracts those in the habit of praying, both because of the loss of more intimate space and group size, and because of the frequent interruptions in the service as people leave and enter the sanctuary. Various appeals punctuate the services, and the sermons make heavy claims on the worshipper's attention and retention. After a service, people are more apt to discuss the sermon than the worship service.

Even if people were to come to the mahzor in search of clarifying statements about Judaism, the book's message is complex. The mahzor's poetry, its conviction, and the sublime range of its concerns far exceed our normal use of language or habits of thought. Heschel expresses this problem with great feeling:

The trouble with the prayerbook is: it is too great for us, it is too lofty. Since we have failed to introduce our minds to its greatness, our souls are often lost in its sublime wilderness. The liturgy has become a foreign language even to those of us who know Hebrew.

It is not enough to know the vocabulary; what is necessary is to understand the categories, the way of thinking of the liturgy. . .⁴

Heschel goes on to raise an imposing challenge for Jewish educators:

Our prayerbook is going to remain obscure unless Jewish teachers will realize that one of their foremost tasks is to discover, to explain and to interpret the words of the prayerbook.⁵

This paper will take up Heschel's challenge: an adult course on Gates of Repentance is needed. The aims of such a course should be first to help adults use the categories of liturgical thought developed in the High Holiday services as a framework for organizing their perceptions of Judaism, and then to give adults opportunities to determine how deeply they actually identify with these perceptions.

Organization

The analysis of Gates of Repentance as an expression of Reform Jewish identity appears as Chapter III of this paper, supported by two preliminary chapters. Chapter I presents a study of the traditional High Holiday liturgy.⁶ Because Gates of Repentance cannot be fully understood as an isolated phenomenon, the investigation of High Holiday liturgy begins with the traditional mahzor. From Siddur Rav Amram to the inception of the Reform movement, prayerbooks changed little except to admit additions. The legitimacy of Gates of Repentance as a Jewish prayerbook depends on its maintenance of continuity with this tradition. In his introduction to Gates of Repentance, editor Chaim Stern acknowledges the book's debt "most to the traditional Mahzor, the pattern upon which all modern liturgies for the Days of Awe are fashioned."⁷

This paper's examination of the traditional mahzor is shaped by a heuristic model particularly suited to the study of liturgy. This model is drama. A brief introduction to Chapter I explains and justifies the application of the dramatic or theatrical model to liturgy. The mahzor's content is then organized and analysed within five basic rubrics derived from the model: God and Israel (as two main characters in the drama) the audience, the plot and the subplot. This pattern of organization, established in Chapter I, is crucial to the development of the course of study proposed in Chapter V, which allocates its five class sessions according to these same rubrics.

Chapter II examines the creed and the current priorities of the Reform Jewish community as these are defined by a single document, the Centenary Perspective, published by the CCAR in 1975. After a summary of the background and history of this document, the chapter outlines the basic themes of contemporary concern that have influenced the creation of a revised Reform liturgy.

In Chapter III, these two strands of investigation, the themes of traditional liturgy and the overriding concerns of 20th century Jewry are brought together in a systematic investigation of Gates of Repentance. Using the rubrics established in Chapter I for the examination of traditional liturgy, this chapter shows how Gates of Repentance either altered or reinforced traditional liturgy's treatment of God, Israel, the High Holiday congregation (audience) and the Plot and Subplot.

Because no body of information, no matter how well understood or organized, can be communicated to students unless the curricular plan and teacher's approach are appropriate for the age level and needs of

the students, Chapter IV provides a comprehensive description of the characteristics and needs of adult students, as well as one possible model for adult education. In accordance with the recommendations in Chapter IV, Chapter V presents in full detail a five session course of study designed to meet the general goals stated above: "first, to help adults use the categories of liturgical thought developed in the High Holiday services as a framework for organizing their perceptions of Judaism, and then to give adults opportunities to determine how deeply they actually identify with these perceptions."

Notes

1. Abraham Joshua Heschel, Man's Quest for God (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 82; see also Lawrence Hoffman, Gates of Understanding (New York: UAHC, 1977), p. 133.
2. Compare Hoffman, p. 146.
3. Compare Hoffman, p. 133.
4. Heschel, p. 82.
5. Ibid.
6. The text used is Philip Birnbaum, High Holy Day Prayer Book (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1951). Subsequent citations to this volume will appear in the text, enclosed in parenthesis. The page numbers in these citations will be preceded by the letter B, i.e. (B240).
7. Chaim Stern, ed., "Introduction," Gates of Repentance (New York: CCAR, 1978), x.

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONAL MAHZORThe Need for a Heuristic Model

In approaching the traditional mahzor, this paper heeds Heschel's advice: the essential task for teachers of liturgy is to "understand the categories, the way of thinking of the liturgy."

Categories, of course, vary according to the discipline of the student. A historian looking at the prayerbook might slot the prayers according to author, place and date of composition. A literary scholar might hunt out examples of the liturgy's debt to other works like the Talmud and Midrash, or might categorize prayers according to their poetic forms. An anthropologist might view the printed text as an adjunct of ritual, and might therefore examine prayers only in the context of the ritual actions they accompany (standing or sitting with closed or open ark, shofar blowing, commemorating the dead, confessional).

This paper adopts a point of view less specialized than any of these. The questions implied here are: if worshippers could read the mahzor all at one sitting in a situation ideal for concentration and reflection, how might they perceive the High Holiday liturgy? Given the cumulative impact of repeated images, what overall impression would a worshipper form about this liturgy's themes and message?

To answer these questions, this paper takes the mahzor's imagery seriously. As the worshipper continually confronts the idea that God is "King," the paper addresses the concept of "Kingship" directly,

without immediately translating that term into the more abstract notion of "authority." Similarly, God is discussed as "Father" and as "Judge." Thus, the paper tries to discover and deal with the liturgy's own categories and catch-words.

Because the mahzor is so complex and the categories of images and ideas contained therein so numerous, it is helpful for a teacher or student to be able to study this material in terms of an organizing metaphor. Two factors have suggested the selection of a dramatic or theatrical experience as a metaphor for a religious service. First, the structure of a formal worship service (contrasted with an informal personal worship experience) is similar to that of a dramatic performance. Both theater and worship take place in spaces that differentiate between audience and performers, and both experiences result from the dynamic interaction of text, props, costume, performers, audience and choreography. Secondly, the mahzor, when read as a whole, does tell a story. In fact, it tells two stories. The metaphor of a drama's plot and subplot makes it possible for one to formulate this deeply sensed mahzor "story."

The Mahzor as Sacred Theater

Despite the structural similarities, it isn't easy at first for the casual observer to see the High Holidays as theater. Visible on-stage action is scant, repetitive and divorced from the real action of the plot. Intermissions between acts are long, some lasting overnight, and one extending for ten days.

Yet the theater metaphor works well as an overall organizing principle for sorting out the themes of the High Holiday services. The play, as will be demonstrated in detail in pages 14-73 of this chapter, is a kind of courtroom drama with two main characters; God and Israel. The plot brings Israel, as a people and as an assemblage of individuals, before the bar of justice. As the defendants confess their failings and plead for forgiveness and salvation, a subplot emerges: the account of a long-standing close relationship between the defendants and the Judge. Will Israel's remorse and pleading suffice? Will the Judge remember that this is a special case? The last act is suspenseful until the final few minutes. Then special sound effects signal the verdict, and the tension is broken. The spectators file out into the invigorating autumn air. Some, who have attended all the acts and understood all their lines, will have experienced the strong sense of release, renewal and wholeness that is associated with dramatic catharsis.

The model of a courtroom drama is only an analogy, but it is potent and not unprecedented. The stage, the place of worship, and the courtroom have long been used as metaphors for each other, for all three institutions spring from a common ground of faith.

First, they all depend on the belief in the existence of ultimate truth, however unknowable from the limited perspective of individual human beings. As the exposition progresses, and the masks fall, the audience glimpses the underlying reality: Oedipus discovers the truth of his life. The jury sorts out the testimony uncovered by the defender and prosecutor. The worshipper is humbled and exalted by the insight that rationalizations and half-truths fall before the Eternal.

Secondly, theater, worship and jurisprudence require the faith that life can be ordered, and that our mental constructs of logic and sequence are valid bases for action. Dramas have a beginning, a development, and an end. Cause precedes effect. Memory follows incident. Prayerbooks present worship as an ordered and structured activity. Their contents affirm the order in the world around us. In The Trial, Franz Kafka let the world see what judicial procedure would be like if it were conducted without commonly accepted order. The result is a prototype for nihilism and madness.

Finally, trials, theater and worship all assert that humanity is vitally interconnected, and that the bonds between human beings are worth exploring and maintaining. Disruption and disharmony may provide the plot for a drama or the occasion for a trial, but in the end, "justice must be done" and stability restored. In the sanctuary, we pray constantly for shalom, or shelemut, the ideal state of human and cosmic interrelatedness. Our worship is communal, affirming by its very form the societal bond.

Beyond these underlying assumptions held in common, theater, sanctuary and courtroom depend on the comprehension and manipulation of symbols. For the action in any of these places to be meaningful, it must evoke a larger and more complex world than can actually be compressed into a stage, a courtroom or a two hour worship service. A few soldiers crossing a stage represent an army. Twelve people in a jury box represent society, while prosecutor, advocate and judge epitomize interlocking dynamic principles of law, individual rights and society's interests. Single items in a sanctuary, such as a prayer, a shofar, or a kiddush cup, evoke history, culture, and theology.

Moreover, the language of all three places is charged, compressed, artful and structured according to specific rules. In a courtroom, testimony in response to an improperly phrased question is inadmissible as evidence. In a theater, the vagueness, silences and meanderings of everyday conversation would elicit cat calls. In a sanctuary, the right combination of words is considered to be so important that every participant holds a copy of the script.

The one element of the theater analogy that does not parallel the worship experience is the profound difference between an audience and a congregation. An audience gathers for one occasion and is bound by sharing a single experience. Members of a congregation have a long term bond, come together regularly, and think of their commitment to the group as part of their identity.

Because the High Holiday audience is a congregation, it does something that few audiences are called upon to do. It transcends conventional audience/actor/character distinctions. The High Holiday congregation must be seen as functioning on several levels simultaneously. They are an audience, watching a dramatic action that takes place outside of themselves on the bimah and in the text of the liturgy. They are actors, reading the lines of a script, and inhabiting, if only for a time, roles that are different from their everyday consciousness. Finally, they are the main dramatic characters, being at times collectively the people Israel, and at other times simply a group of individuals, each of whom must find redemption through teshuvah. The drama unfolds, therefore, not at an esthetic distance, but in the audience's living experience.

So deeply tangled is the audience-participant relationship that the theater analogy might not spring immediately to a worshipper's mind. Yet the model is sufficiently acceptable to the general Jewish public to have been used in a lead article for a popular Jewish magazine. The first sentence of this article reads as follows: "The liturgy of the Jewish High Holy Days is probably the longest running drama in history; it's been packing the house every year for twenty centuries."¹

Analysis of the Traditional Mahzor Via the Rubrics of the Model

Overview

Three aspects of drama, character, plot and audience, lend themselves as organizing rubrics for an analysis of the High Holiday liturgy.

This section of Chapter I will first present a detailed description of each of the main characters, God and Israel. The character of God is a composite of complementary and conflicting attributes. The character of Israel functions on two levels of meaning. On one level, Israel represents all humanity, composed of dust but possessing the capacity for ennoblement. On another level, Israel is a definitive community with a particular historical destiny. Following the character descriptions, an attempt is made to establish the characters' relationship. As with any piece of theater, one needs to ask why these particular characters are in tension with one another.

The chapter will then outline the drama's plot and subplot. The plot is the annual process of God's judgment of Israel, which coincides with the time of the world's rebirth and renewal. Sins

are confessed. In petitionary prayers, the repentance of the congregation is laid before the Judge. Ultimately some inner balance is reestablished, and the future is reopened. The subplot takes up the theme of Remembrance. The sacred history of the God-Israel relationship is outlined. The story culminates in a vision of future redemption from Exile, and universal gathering in Jerusalem in a Messianic future. The chapter then deals with the shofar, the unique sound effect of the High Holiday drama. Finally, the chapter discusses the passive and active spectator and participant roles of the audience.

God as a Main Character in the High Holiday Drama

God as a Character: In the script of the High Holy Day services, God has not one line of dialogue. Yet God's active and contributing presence as a main character in the drama can be felt at all times. It is God who hears and evaluates Israel's prayers. It is God who waits longingly for Israel's true teshuvah. God functions not just passively as an objective standard against which worshippers measure the adequacy of their own behavior, but actively as an addressed and responding personality.

In liturgy, God is addressed by many names which enumerate God's component attributes. In using these names, the rabbis did not intend to qualify God's unchanging, indivisible and eternal Oneness. The feeling that God is manifest differently at different times is simply a function of human limitations of comprehension and language. Using many names for God, our liturgy is not dealing with God's essence, which is beyond language, but is attempting to express the many ways in which Israel stands in relation to God, or in which a perception of

God touches human life. Examining the traditional liturgy, one finds God presented as Creator, as King and Father, as Giver of Light and Torah, as Judge, as the Sponsor of History, and as Shome'a Tefilah, the Responder to Prayer. In the paragraphs below, each of these categories is explored to discover how the liturgy pictures God as an active participant in the High Holiday drama.

God as Creator: The most awe-inspiring quality of God's dramatis persona--and the quality that establishes the authority for all the other roles that God plays--is the fact that God is the Creator.

The images most often used in the traditional mahzor to depict God as Creator are the cosmic events of the first four days of creation, particularly the separation of light from dark and water from dry land. It is important to note that the traditional liturgy does not elaborate on God's creating a multiplicity of things. There is no sense in these prayers of a wondrous world of nature filled with oddities and marvels. Rather, the creative acts to which the liturgy refers represent the establishment of a binary system of categories through which the world could be known: dark/light, above/below, day/night, time/infinity, liquid/solid, chaos/control.

In all of the creation images in the liturgy, God functions as a force for control and light, prevailing over turbulence, emptiness and darkness. R. Simeon ben Isaac ben Abun's kerovah, melech elyon, pictures God quelling the uncontrollable energies of ocean and storm:

Pure in his heavens, wondrous mid his angels.
There's none to compare to him to do like him,
Who set the sand as a bound for the raging sea.
He shall reign forever and ever.
He gathers the waters of the sea, stills the waves
Stirs up tempests threatening the entire world,
Calms them by force till they abate and are gone. (B254)

The amits koach of Rabbi Meshullam ben Kalonymus, read during the Yom Kippur musaf, begins with a similar depiction of creation as the establishment of order amidst the chaos of water:

Thou art strong and powerful; who can perform
mighty acts like thine? Thou didst build lofty
chambers above cold waters, and set the world
over empty space. When deep black darkness
enveloped the world, thou didst brighten it
with morning light. Thou didst divide the
rampant waters by an awe-inspiring crystal-
like sky, and gather them into the deep, so
that they should not cover the world again.
(B812)

Yet despite the impression of overwhelming force implicit in these images, the actual moment of creation is imagined with restraint. There is no struggle portrayed between opposing powers, and no suggestion of divine pyrotechnics. The anonymous kerovah, Atah Hu Eloheinu, one of the oldest elements in synagogue poetry, is exquisitely terse:

He spoke and the world began.
He commanded and all was formed. (B217)

This was the first form of creation, the creation bereshit. However, the liturgy also celebrates another form of creation, the creation lechol yom: God maintains the world by ever renewing life. The twin prayers of the daily liturgy, yotser or and maariv aravim, carry the message of continuous creation as they embrace the span of the day with their parentheses of praise. The gevurot blessing of the Amidah carries the same message: the persistence and renewal of life in nature is a manifestation of God's gevurot, or extraordinary powers.² The birchot ha shachar blessings, also recited daily, express thanksgiving for God's daily blessing of life with continuity. The

individual, "upon rising, expresses gratitude for the renewal of his mental and physical capacities."³

Thus, not only the existence of the world, but also our minute by minute continuity of being belong to God. "Standing before the creator God, the Jew recognizes his dependence upon Him for life and all its blessings."⁴

As sole creator and sustainer of life,

God has the power to do in His world whatever He wills, and He has the right of the creator to deal as He wills with His creatures. But nothing is more firmly established in the Jewish thought of God than that He does not use this power willfully like some almighty tyrant, but with wisdom and justice for a supremely good end.⁵

For this reason, God's creative aspect is not exclusively concerned with manipulation of the cosmos: God, the Creator, always has an ethical dimension. In imru l'Elohim, in the reader's repetition of the Amidah of Yom Kippur, Rabbi Meshullam ben Kalonymos couples an exalted vision of the remote Creator with a portrait of a caring Protector imbued with purpose:

Say of God. . .
 . . .He has spread out the earth over the waters
 . . .He measured out the dust of the earth
 . . .His throne is a blaze of flames
 . . .His servants are flashing fire
 . . .He knows what is in mysterious darkness,
 . . .He has established his throne for justice
 . . .He sustains the heavenly and the earthly worlds
 . . .He listens to the needy, he is attentive to all
 appeals for help. (B645)

Another expression of this link between God's creative power and God's ethical intent occurs in the selicha poem, shomea tefilah:

Thy throne rests on equity and justice; love and truth serve thee. Let us take sweet counsel together; let us walk in fellowship to the house of God.

His is the sea, for he made it; his hands formed the dry land. In thy hand is the soul of every living being, and the whole life of man. (B526)

In sum, God as Creator is much more than merely the Maker of the world. God is like an artist who designs and shapes a work of art. Caring for and maintaining it, God carries or guides the work to its ultimate destination: even as the critics carp and rage at its flaws, God proclaims that the work has meaning.

God as Giver of Light: The imagery of light, connected initially with God the Creator, permeates the entire drama as a recurring theme. Light, especially in the yotzrot additions to the morning services, links the theme of Creation with the idea of God's good purpose.

Light was God's first creation, and is used as a symbol for the entire creative sequence. The yotser or prayer praises God "Who formest light and createst darkness, Who makest peace and createst all things." (B171) The yotser or is followed immediately by or olam, a fragment of a piyyut possibly by Yose ben Yose, one of the earliest Palestinian poets (ca 5th century).⁶ The text of this verse, in Birnbaum's translation, reads:

In God's life-treasure there's light eternal,
He spoke, and out of darkness there was light. (B172)

Max Arzt emends the Hebrew of the verse, and translates the resulting prayer as follows:

The everlasting light, the source of life
Commanded the lights to emerge out of darkness
And so it came to pass. (Arzt, 49-50)

Either translation associates light with God's own energy and life essence.

But the term or olam is also an allusion to the or ganuz, the light created on the first day of creation, which, unneeded after the

creation of the actual celestial bodies on the fourth day, was stored for the righteous in the world to come.⁷ Thus from the first moment of creation, the purposed end was planned: the initial light of creation is destined to illuminate a vision of righteousness to come.

The identification of light with God's purpose is further expanded in the prayer sim shalom, in which God's own light is equated with the moral and intellectual illumination given to Israel in the form of Torah:

Bless us all alike, our Father, with the light of
thy countenance; indeed by the light of thy countenance
thou hast given us, Lord our God, a Torah of life,
loving kindness, charity, blessing, mercy, life
and peace. . . (B269)

Light can also function as inner illumination conducive to righteousness.⁸ This moral light that occurs only as we struggle out of our own darkness of spirit, permeates the Yom Kippur yotser poem, az bayom kippur:

Make the light of forgiveness sweet for me
Answer thou this time and say 'I forgive.'
Lighten our eyes and pass transgression by,
. . . Guide us with thy light, let us not be shamed.
We pour out our hearts of stone like water;
Searcher of hearts, bring forth the morning light,
Cleanse us that we be pure this day of pardon;
Hearken and forgive and say, 'I forgive.' (B586-590)

The yotser or prayer itself for Yom Kippur morning is transformed into a prayer for inner illumination by the special insertion of

who dost open the gates of mercy for us
and give light to the eyes of those who
wait for thy pardon. (B584)

In the penultimate line to the yotser, the light/purpose image attains its most emphatic form, as the light of God's intimate concern for human beings becomes the light of hope for redemption:

O cause a new light to shine upon Zion
And may we all be worthy soon to enjoy
its brightness. (B194)

Light is thus the beginning of creation and its destination.

It is also the symbol of God's daily renewal of life, the image of God's energy and presence, the model for inner clarity of insight, and the metaphor for Torah's instruction.

God as the Ideal King: God is King for a scattered people who have seen earthly kings and kingdoms come and go. Israel has had extensive and bruising experience with kings, even as it knows experientially a king's power to stave off disaster. The overwhelming emphasis on God's kingship in the liturgy is thus as much a political statement as it is an attempt to make a statement through metaphor about God's status and power. No matter what government rules Israel at the moment, Israel has only one King.

While other ancient near eastern peoples regarded their kings as gods, Israel always rejected the deification of mortal kings. Instead, from the creation of the Pentateuch on, Israel has used the image of the king as a mask or persona for God, so that God, the Ineffable, could be conceived and imagined by human beings. Using this imagery, many Torah passages as well as additional citations from Prophets and Psalms have been taken into the liturgy. Augmented by prayers and piyyutim composed over many centuries, these passages create a composite portrait that could never be matched by any earthly king bound by the strictures of realpolitik. Thus, in its liturgy, Israel, living as best it could in an inhospitable world, gave its wholehearted allegiance to the One King worth worshipping, and prayed for a Kingdom that the world did not yet deserve.

The malchuyot, one of the three major theme-setting portions of the Rosh Hashanah musaf service, begins with the Alenu, Israel's particularistic oath of allegiance to the Creator, their king:

We bend the knee and bow and acknowledge before the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, that it is He who stretched forth the heavens and founded the earth. His seat of glory is in the heavens above; His abode of majesty is in the lofty heights. (B334)

Hamelech, culmination of the Pesuke de zimra of the Rosh Hashanah Shaharit service, and the very point where the cantor assumes control of the service, paints a picture of God enthroned and worshipped by the entire house of Israel:

O KING

Thou art seated upon a high and lofty throne. . . In the assemblies of the tens of thousands of thy people, the house of Israel, with ringing song shall thy name, our King be glorified in every generation. (B169)

So far is Israel from the deification of mortal kings, that King David, the only king that Israel really venerated,⁹ appears in this prayer only as a praise singer and as God's "anointed servant":

. . . for this is the duty of all creatures towards Thee, Lord our God and God of our fathers: to thank and praise, laud and glorify, extol and honor, bless and exalt and acclaim Thee, even beyond all the songs of praise by David, son of Jesse, Thy anointed servant. (B169)

The liturgy of the merkavah mystics, now incorporated in prayers like the yotser or of Rosh Hashanah morning, is particularly rich in kingly imagery. In this prayer, the image of God enthroned is elaborated to include a heavenly chariot and a retinue of celestial luminaries:

He is exalted above the celestial beings
and adorned in glory above the chariot
Purity and justice stand before his throne;

Kindness and mercy are in His glorious presence
 Good are the luminaries which our God has created
 He made them with knowledge, wisdom and insight
 He placed in them energy and power
 To have dominion over the world.
 Full of splendor, they radiate brightness. (B186)

In further elaboration of the kingship image, the Rosh Hashanah morning piyyutim depict God "robed in majesty and glory," (kevodo ihel, B190), "girded with power," "in tenfold garments," "arrayed in splendor. . .in crimson garments. . .with robes white as snow." (molech azur gevurah, B174-176) As an earthly King's robe demonstrates his position and royal function while it conceals his person, so God's garments of zeal, light and majesty tentatively indicate a dazzle of attributes while concealing the Divine mystery.

God, the King, placed so far above human comprehension as to be approachable only through a haze of redundant praise words, is perfect, all powerful and everlasting. Ein kemocha, the kingdom prayer of the Torah service, says, "Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, Thy dominion endures through all generations." (B277) Later in the Torah service, al hakol yitgadal, a Geonic piyyut very much like a Hebrew version of the kaddish, extends God's eternity beyond the time of this world:

Magnified and hallowed and praised and glorified,
 exalted and extolled above all be the name of the
 Supreme King of kings, in the worlds which He has
 created--this world and the world to come. (B282)

The extent of God's dominion on the earth itself is established in one of the malchuyot passages taken from Psalm 22:29: "Sovereignty is the Lord's and He governs the nations." (B336)

To express God's ultimate control of world history, battle imagery from the songs of ancient warrior Israel, recorded in the Psalms, found

a place in the mahzor. Not only was a "double edged sword" in Israel's hand raised to "execute vengeance upon the nations, punishment upon the peoples. . ." (Psalm 49: B160), but also the imagery of warfare extended to characterize Israel's supporter and sponsor:

Who is the King of Glory?
The Lord strong and mighty.
The Lord strong in battle.
(Psalm 24:7-10: B366)

Never disinterested, but always fighting on the side of Israel, God was "a mighty King to champion their cause." (ezrat avotenu, B199) "Uplift thy own tribes, grant them dominion," (B242) says one stanza of shemo mefaarim, a kerovah for the second day of Rosh Hashanah. In melech azur gevurah, the yotser prayer for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Eliezer ha Kalir adopts the Biblical image of a warrior God to create a breathtaking description of God's power in the service of justice and of Israel:

King girded with power
Great is Thy name in might,
Powerful is Thy arm.
King in garments of zeal,
on the day of vengeance,
Thou shalt requite thy foe. . .
King who commands all winds,
The arrogant tyrants
He shall destroy by blast,
King gathering earth's kings,
Shall inflict punishment
On Edom's haughty hosts. (B176)

Yet, for all of God's partisan defense of Israel, the theme of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy is not that God is King of Israel alone, but that the Kingship of God implies ultimate acceptance of God's sovereignty by all beings. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day shall the Lord be One and his name One." (B486) In melech azur gevurah, Kalir paints God's defense of Israel

as a historical phase through which the world must pass while God judges the nations. At the end of that process, "All shall worship the King, who comes to rule the world." (B176) The classic expression of this idea is found at the end of the Alenu:

We hope therefore, Lord our God, soon to behold the majestic glory. . .when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the almighty; and all mankind will call upon Thy name. . .may they all accept the yoke of Thy kingdom, and do Thou reign over them speedily forever and ever. (B336)

Thus the particularistic image of a warrior God is transformed into a great universal vision of trans-national union in God's kingdom.

Imagery of power, force and grandeur might be expected in descriptions of God as King. Had the liturgists wanted merely to draw on their experiences with human kings, they might have stopped there. But because God's Kingship is ideal, it is also protective and nurturing. God is the model of the social activist king who not only fights for righteousness and the establishment of His kingdom throughout the earth, but also anticipates and provides for all kinds of human needs: "He is a warrior who sows justice, produced triumphs and creates healing." (B193) The nishmat prayer (B166) is a praise of God the eternal King who saves, ransoms, rescues, sustains, and shows mercy in all times of stress. The prayer presents a gentle and compassionate God, guiding the world and all creatures: "He enables the speechless to speak and sets the captives free, He supports all who fall. . ." (B166) The gevurot blessing of the Tefilah, using some of the same wording as nishmat, adds the idea of techiyat hametim: "Who is like Thee Lord of power? Who resembles Thee O King? Thou bringest death and restoreth life, and causest salvation to flourish." (B202) The ultimate act of kingly power is to heal and to renew life.

In a startling blend of battle imagery and tenderness, Rabbi Simeon ben Isaac ben Abun wrote in eten lefoali tsedek:

God who is Almighty will never despise
One who is humble and despised in his own eyes.
Glorified is He who dwells in the heavens,
Light blazes before Him, flashing flames of fire.
With glittering swords He carves retribution
On behalf of the fatherless and widows. . . (B250)

God the warrior King, no less than God the Creator, functions with ethical intent.

By describing God as King, the liturgy makes two important political statements. First, whatever the temporal situation, Israel can acknowledge the ultimate authority of no other King but God. Second, by portraying God as an ideal king, the liturgy sets a standard for all human government to emulate.

On a psychological level, the declaration that God is King may be interpreted as a statement that our life is committed to the supreme authority of our moral and spiritual imperatives.¹⁰ As earthly kings ought to follow God's model, protecting the weak, uplifting the fallen and protecting the principles of justice and righteousness, so should we all in our daily lives:

To acknowledge God as King means to make all our inner drives and impulses, as well as all external claims on our loyalty, subservient to His sovereignty and His will. It means to repudiate and resist attitudes and actions which contradict or compromise our manifest duty.¹¹

God as a Tender Father: Frequently in drama, a character will demonstrate contradictory qualities. Hamlet, for instance, is both impetuous and a procrastinator. In the High Holiday drama, the portrayal of God as King is often coupled with the designation of God as Father.

Because the phrase "Avinu Malkenu" is repeated so often during the High Holy Days, it might be thought that the imagery of God as Father would be as important and as complexly elaborated as the imagery of God as King. But this is not the case. The liturgy in general is discreet and non-presumptuous in referring to God as Father, and the use of the term in those prayers specific to the High Holidays is even more limited.

The term Father appears most often in prayers that also occur in the daily or Sabbath liturgy. Ahavah rabah ("Our father our King, for the sake of our forebears who trusted in Thee, be gracious to us. . .," B194), sim shalom ("Bless us alike, our Father, with the light of Thy countenance," B270), the gevurot ("Who is like Thee merciful Father?", B202), and av harachamim from the Torah service ("May the merciful Father have compassion on the people who have been upheld by Him", B284) are all from the basic liturgy. The kaddish carries a reference to the acceptance of Israel's prayers by "their Father who is in heaven," (B276), and the kedushah de sidre states, "He is our God, He is our Father, He is our King, He is our Deliverer." (B366) This latter listing indicates some parity among the terms used to describe God. One can therefore infer that God's role as Father is not an unimportant concept, but perhaps a relationship kept under restraint, especially on the High Holy Days where the dominant theme is Kingship after all.

While a creator, a judge, and a king have freedom of action, a father is bound to his children by an enormous self-investment. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God admits to this attachment in a passage found in the zichronot paragraphs of the Rosh Hashanah musaf:

Is it because Ephriam is my favorite son,
my beloved child? As often as I speak of him
I remember him fondly. (Jer 31:19; B342)

A few appeals for mercy are recited on the basis of this relationship. The Shofar services are punctuated with the poignant appeal of the hayom harat olam:

Today all mankind is judged whether as children
or as servants. If as children, have mercy on
us as a father has mercy on his children. . .
(B384)

Before the Yom Kippur confessional, in ki anu amecha, we say "We are Thy people and Thou art our God, we are Thy children, and Thou art our father." (B546) In Az beyom kippur, a yotser piyyut for Yom Kippur, we plead, "Mercifully forgive Thy children's faults; Let us walk in the light of Thy favor." (B588) Finally, in the evening service of Yom Kippur, we put together the phrase "our Father, our King" with the "salach lanu, machal lanu" of the confessional, and say, "Forgive us (salach lanu) Father; for we have sinned; pardon us (machal lanu) our King, for we have transgressed. Look upon our affliction, and champion our cause." (B1030) The main function of God as Father is therefore to be merciful, to empathize, feel compassion and forgive.

During the Yom Kippur services, four other brief requests are addressed to God as Father. In the anenu, God is asked to "answer us." (B562) In Av harachamim, we ask God to "remember those saintly and blameless sould who gave their lives. . ." (B734) Finally, in the musaf, we ask "Our Father our King" to "speedily reveal [His] glorious majesty to us" (B750) and to "remember [His] compassion and suppress [His] anger; end all pestilence and war, famine and plundering. . ." (B868) The idea that ties these requests together is still pity,

compassion, the parental urge to save a child from further pain. God as Father is loving, but one-dimensional.

In sum, the worshipper's high retention of the designation of God as Father is not a function of the theme's extensive development in the High Holy Day liturgy. Rather, the term is familiar because of its place in Sabbath and daily prayers, and its dramatic locations in the High Holy Day services. It is frequently repeated in the Avinu Malkenu, which is recited with the ark open, and the yom Harat Olam which accompanies the shofar blowing.

The constant coupling of the word Father with the term "merciful" or "mercy" may obscure the full resonance of the idea of God as Father. A father is merciful because he feels his children's problems as his own, and because he is on their side, trying to see events from their point of view. To quote Max Arzt again,

To feel the friendship of the Creator of the universe while accepting personal responsibility for the quality of our life as the dual meaning of the concept that God is both Father and King.¹²

God as Merciful Judge: The role of God as Judge dominates the main plot of the drama in which all God's creatures are arrayed for judgment. It is not a one-dimensional role, but a portrayal of a character who carefully balances contradictory impulses.

On the one hand, God is supremely just and righteous. The Amidah insertion, kadosh atah venora shemecha places the idea of justice in the center of the special additions for the High Holy Days:

Holy art Thou, awe inspiring is Thy name, and
there is no God but Thee, as it is written:
'The Lord of hosts is exalted through justice,
the holy God is sanctified through righteousness.'
(B34)

These mutually reinforcing concepts, justice and righteousness, frequently accompany references to God's power. "God's justice," writes George Foote Moore, "is. . .man's assurance that God will not use His almighty power over His creatures without regard to right."¹³ Judgment will therefore take place according to known and revealed standards: the rules will not change capriciously. In addition, God's justice pertains equally to the individual worshipper and to the nations of the world:

The exalted King rules nations with justice;
ascending His throne, He probes and examines
their cause.

He has established His throne for justice.
The Almighty King alone is hallowed through
righteousness;
The Eternal is extolled and glorified by
justice.

He upholds the cause of His worshipper.
(melech amun ma'amrach, B182)

He rules. . .the nations with equity. . .
He requites according to the deeds of man. . .
The earthly rulers are as nothing to Him,
They are overcome with panic before Him.
(eten lefoali tsedek, B250)

On the other hand, absolute justice is not the sole criterion controlling the judgment process. To use the liturgical image: the seat of justice is also the throne of mercy. El melech yoshev al kise rachamim from the evening service for Yom Kippur is among those prayers that characterize God as a merciful Judge:

Almighty king, who art sitting on the throne of mercy,
Thou dost act graciously, pardoning the sins of Thy
people and making them pass away one by one; Thou
dost often grant pardon to sinners. . .dealing
generously with all mortals and not treating them
according to their wickedness. . . (B528)

As often as it is alluded to as a certainty, even as an essential attribute of God's nature, however, mercy is neither automatically nor

passively granted. God's mercy is active, engaged and fine-tuned to the subtleties of the plaintiff's inner life. "God probes the thoughts of both low and high. . .The King who knows all their acts will acquit." (kevodo ihel, B190)

One important limitation that God takes into account when rendering this judgment is human mortality. Since their time is limited, human beings might not have the years or hours left to accumulate merit sufficient to outweigh their sins:

Endless are the offerings required of us,
countless our guilt sacrifices, but thou
knowest that our ultimate end is the worm,
hence thou hast abundantly provided us with
means of pardon. (B1004)

Mercy, as it appears in the High Holy Day liturgy, is both an integral part of the process of judgment (God "shows kindness on the day of judgment" and "suppresses His anger in judgment") (le'El orech din, B261), and a counterbalancing force to the strict application of justice. According to the Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 12:15, God intended originally to create the world according to the principle of justice (din) alone, but saw that a finite and fallible world could not endure the application of such a rigorous standard. Nor could the world continue securely on its course if only the standard of mercy (rachamim) were applied to its governance. Therefore, God determined to combine the attributes of justice and mercy, and to establish the world under their joint auspices.¹⁴

While superficially it might appear that justice and mercy are opposites between which God is somehow torn, this is not the case.¹⁵ Instead, justice and mercy are "complementary aspects of God's character"¹⁶ that work together harmoniously in the judgment process.

God must apply a clear and strict standard of righteousness in judgment because humans need to know that their acts have measurable consequences. Otherwise, choice and freedom would be meaningless. But when God judges human behavior, mercy is always potentially present, activated instantly upon the occurrence of teshuvah. "The Rabbis never forfeited an opportunity," writes Max Arzt, "to express the belief that God is merciful in judgment, and that, for the repentant sinner, the Day of Judgment can become a day of spiritual regeneration when he becomes, as the Rabbis phrase it, a 'new creature'."¹⁷

God as Sponsor of History: As Sponsor of history, God participates in the subplot of the drama. While the plot occurs on an annual cycle, the subplot takes place in historical time. Jewish liturgy derives its urgency from the idea that God acts purposefully in history.¹⁸ The New Year festival is important in Judaism as a reminder of creation (the cosmogony) and as an opportunity for the restoration of purity. Both are cyclical events.¹⁹ However, the New Year also marks the occasion for God's judgment of the nations, a linear event. In both the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services we read:

This day, the anniversary of the first day of thy creation is indeed a statute for Israel. . . On it sentence is pronounced upon countries for war or peace, for famine or abundance. (B386)

Kalir's melech azur gevurah is extravagant in its depiction of God's carrying out this judgment:

King, dread of earth's tyrants,
The world shall writhe with pangs,
Quake before God enthroned.
King gathering earth's kings
Shall inflict punishment
On Edom's haughty hosts. . . (B176)

Yet, the actual mechanics of God's sponsorship of history, or intervention into history are left unclear. Is there an annual review of the international status quo? Is Kalir, in melech azur, writing about a judgment carried out in historical time on a regular basis, or is his prayer a dream of judgement to come at the end of time, with each Rosh Hashanah until then being only a dress rehearsal? In aderet mamlachah, another Rosh Hashanah kerovah, Kalir points to one clear instance of God's intervention in history: the overthrow of Judea, which the Bible, and therefore traditional Judaism, view as the carrying out of God's judgment:

The glorious kingdom of Judea--
 Why was it overthrown and not restored?
 Because they acknowledged and worshipped Bel,
 And followed his dictates with lawlessness. (B220)

However, God's next intervention on Israel's behalf, according to Kalir, will not occur until the end of history:

The mistress of realms will reign over them
 Until the kingdom of God shall appear. (B220)

What does the annual "sentence pronounced upon countries for war or peace" have to do with the appearance--someday--of God's kingdom? Having acted within history to allow the overthrow of Judea, has God continued to so act moving history forward according to design, or is God simply waiting to pronounce a final judgment?

Two prayers that might shed light on the question of whether the traditional mahzor regards God's intervention in history as an ongoing process or as an event reserved for the end of days, are the "Prayer for the Government," and the more modern "Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel" (by the chief Rabbinate of Israel). The "Prayer for the Government" begins, "He who granted victory to kings and dominion

to princes, his kingdom is a kingdom of all ages. . ." (B422) This preamble implies God's ongoing involvement in human history, with the reservation that God is really beyond the fluctuations of earthly fortune. Mortal kings rule by God's sufferance, but God's rule endures outside of history. The prayer goes on to establish precedents for God's intervention when necessary:

He who delivered his servant David from the evil sword,
He who opened a road through the sea, a path amid the
mighty waters--may He bless and protect, help and exalt

THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT
AND ALL THE OFFICERS OF THIS COUNTRY

May the supreme King of kings, in his mercy, sustain
them and deliver them from all distress and misfortune.
(B422-424)

The prayer then swings to a particularistic concern: the welfare of Jews within the state:

May the supreme King of Kings, in his mercy,
inspire them and all their counselors and aides
to deal kindly with us and with all Israel.

Finally, the prayer leaps into a future that suggests Isaiah's vision:

In their days and in our days Judah shall be saved,
Israel shall dwell in security, and a redeemer shall
come to Zion. May this be the will of God; and let
us say, Amen. (B424)

In a similar vein, the "Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel" asks for protection of the State, guidance and good counsel for Israel's leaders, strength and victory for its defenders, peace and joy for its inhabitants. But then the prayer turns to the ingathering of exiles, and its tone becomes eschatological. Instead of noting that many members of the house of Israel have returned from exile, the prayer asks that the "whole house of Israel. . .walk upright to Zion." The prayer concludes

Unite our heart to love and revere thy name, and to observe all the precepts of thy Torah. Shine forth in thy glorious majesty over all the inhabitants of thy world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: 'The Lord God of Israel is King; his majesty rules over all.' Amen. (B424)

The vision is that of the end of the Alenu prayer, the culmination of God's plan for humanity, with Zion as its focal point.

What these prayers seem to say about God as sponsor of history is that God has intervened in history, God can intervene (even though we cannot explain exactly how), and most importantly, someday God will bring history to its planned destination. This destination includes not only the coming of God's universal kingdom, but the restoration of Jerusalem and the return of Israel from its sojourn among the nations. In the Tefilah insertion, uvechen ten kavod, we pray for this culmination:

Now O Lord, grant honor to thy people, glory to those who revere thee, hope to those who seek thee, free speech to those who yearn for thee, joy to thy land and gladness to thy city, rising strength to David thy servant, a shining light to the son of Jesse, thy chosen one, speedily in our days. (B203)

The mechanics of how God is involved in history are more clear when the focus narrows to Israel's history. Here, the Tanach provides a record of interventions--a record that is cited again and again in the mahzor. "Answer us, Thou who didst help the tribes," we pray in the anenu (B562). And in the mi sheanah, Erev Yom Kippur, we say:

May He who answered Joshua in Gilgal, Samuel in Mizpah,
David and his son Solomon in Jerusalem,
Elijah on Carmel, and Elisha in Jericho,
Answer us. (B564)

Among all of God's interventions, however, the redemption from Egypt stands out as the most significant. The language of the geulah

reveals the centrality of the Exodus as a model and symbol for all of God's subsequent interventions in history:

From Egypt Thou didst redeem us, Lord our God, and from the house of slavery Thou didst deliver us, all their first born Thou didst slay, but Thy first born thou didst redeem. . . For this the beloved people praised and extolled God. . . He is high and exalted, great and revered; He brings low the arrogant and raises up the lowly; He frees the captives and delivers the afflicted; He helps the poor, and answers his people whenever they cry to Him. (B200)

Indeed, the list of God's favors, beginning with the redemption from Egypt, cause us such gratitude that adequate praise and thanks would be impossible "even if our mouth were filled with song as the sea." (nishmat, Bl68)

But God's involvement in the history of Israel is more than a story of redemptions and rescues. It is a long relationship of approach and withdrawal, spurning and embrace. When we allude to this relationship in the traditional mahzor, we do not itemize episodes, nor do we trace the patterns of faithfulness and backsliding that developed over the centuries. Instead, we affirm identification with the whole historic experience of Israel simply by tracing our origin back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When we mention "our fathers," or appeal to "God of our fathers," we evoke the entire living tradition of our people.²⁰ By identifying ourselves with those at the beginning of the story, we undertake their mission, and continue their journey toward the purposed culmination.

God as Responder to Prayer: Weighing on the entire High Holiday drama is the tension and anxiety of the fervently petitioning Israel. Will God listen? Will God respond? There is no way to ascertain the response of a character who exists as a Presence, speaking no lines

and giving no sign. Yet the High Holiday liturgy is filled with assurances. God's responsiveness to prayer is necessary to the drama: Shomea Tefilah is one of God's essential names.

The petitionary prayers in the shaharit services of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur ask God for five things. God is asked to listen: "Open the gate, let our prayer ascend," (B588) "May our prayer reach Thee, do not ignore our plea," (B614) "Be stirred for those who hope in Thee," (B192), and "Close not Thy ear to my supplication." (B642) God is asked to guide and inspire: "May Thy work and Thy splendor be visible to the faithful," (B182) "Have pity on us and inspire us to understand and discern, to perceive learn and teach. . .," (B194) "Guide us with Thy light," (B586) "Guard my tongue from falsehood. . .open my heart to Torah," (B622) "Bend our will to submit to Thee," (B678) and "Fix Thy just precepts in our hearts." (B238) God is asked to forgive our sins: "Hold us guiltless of unconscious faults," (238) "purify us from our sins," (238) "Cleanse us in Thy fountain. . .let pardon's light shine upon distressed souls," (588) and "Incline the scale of justice in our favor." (588) God is asked to give favors and benefits in areas that we cannot completely control ourselves: "Remember those who seek Thee and raise them to life," (B180) "Inscribe for life those who cling to Thee," (B642) "Renew us for a good year," (272) "Inscribe us in the book of a happy life, of maintenance and sustenance. . .fill our hands with Thy blessings. . .our storehouses with plenty," (B238) and "Send a perfect healing." (B272) Finally, God is asked to do with the world what we cannot bring about by our power alone: "Speed the day of deliverance," (180) "May the righteous see this. . .when Thou wilt abolish the rule of tyranny on earth," (204) "O destroy the chains of

bondage; gather Thy dispersed people and redeem them," (B246) "May our far exiles reach His holy land," (B242) "Abolish all evil decrees. . . remove pestilence, sword, famine, captivity, destruction. . . avenge the split blood of Thy servants." (B272)

If written assurances constitute an adequate response to these prayers, then the liturgy holds all the answers within the text. "God hears supplications and heeds the pleas set before Him." (B654) God is "near to those who call upon Him." As an inspiration, God "tells His law to His people" (B596), and "appears on the lofty mountain." (B596) In response to our repentance, "The Holy One forgives upon repentance, purifies all the unclean, pardons those who long for Him." (B596) When we seek life and parnassah, "The Holy One is good to those who fear Him. . ." (B596) "He sustains the heavenly and the earthly worlds." (B650) With respect to our situation in the world, "He has established His throne for justice," (B648) and "He keeps kindness to the thousandth generation," but "He has war with His foes from age to age." (B650)

Can written assurances like these suffice? Are they felt as response? Perhaps direct response is not crucial. Some of our petitions are self-fulfilling. A prayer for inspiration can only be satisfied by the responsiveness and openness of the petitioner. Prayers that God listen and forgive are repeated until we listen to ourselves and begin to forgive ourselves. It is easy then to feel that God has listened and forgiven. As for our prayers for life, peace, redemption and protection--these we fling outward as signs of our own continued hope and refusal to despair. We cannot really expect to receive confirming telegrams.

The fact that our High Holy Day petitions do not really demand concrete external answers supports A. J. Heschel's observations about the nature of Jewish prayer:

The idea of prayer is based upon the assumption of man's ability to accost God, to lay our hopes, sorrows, and wishes before Him. . . Before the words of prayer come to the lips, the mind must believe in God's willingness to draw near to us, and in our ability to clear the path for His approach.

Yet, it is incorrect, Heschel writes,

To describe prayer by analogy with human conversation; we do not communicate with God. We only make ourselves communicable to Him. Prayer is an emanation of what is most precious in us toward Him, the outpouring of the heart before Him.²¹

Perhaps prayers can best be answered in the praying, through the comfort, humility, greater clarity of mind, greater resolve, courage and enhanced respect for life that praying can bring.

Max Arzt, commenting on the prayer modim anachnu lach in the Amidah, arrived at a conclusion similar to Heschel's:

God owes us nothing. We own Him everything. Every living moment is a free gift from Him. . . When in our prayers we place before God our needs, our anxieties, and our hopes, we do not presume to make demands on Him, for what we already have is beyond our true desert. We simply give expression to that which surges forth from our hearts and rely on Him to do what is in accordance with His will.²²

For this reason, we ask God to pardon us not because of our righteousness, but because of God's mercy and goodness. (B530) "O Lord," we pray, "though we lack worthy-deeds; May Thy own name stand by us." (B352) "Our Father, Our King, deal with us kindly for the sake of Thy name." (B272)

Yet, despite all our proper humility and lack of presumption or expectation, two points in the mahzor stand out as moments when

worshippers can feel the grace of God's response, freely given for mercy's sake. Theological niceties are submerged as liturgical experience holds sway.

The first is dramatic and obvious. Immediately after the recital of Kol Nidre, the reader and congregation say three times:

May all the people of Israel be forgiven,
and all the strangers who live in their midst,
for all the people are in fault.

The reader interjects:

O pardon the iniquity of this people, according
to thy abundant kindness, even as thou hast
forgiven this people ever since they left Egypt.

The ark is still open, Torah scrolls are still being held, the congregants are standing, the mood is solemn. Then, the congregation recites three times:

Va'yomer Adonai, salachti kidvarecha.
The Lord said, "I pardon them as you have
asked." (B491)

The text of the mahzor contains no more direct response to petition. The theatrical quality of the moment almost ensures that it will be felt.

The second moment is magical only for those who know the midrash that explains the secret formula. At the beginning of the Torah service for all holidays except those that fall on Shabbat, just after the ark is opened, we recite "Adonai, Adonai, El rachum vechanun".

The Lord, the Lord is a merciful and gracious God,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness and truth.
He keeps kindness to the thousandth generation,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and
acquitting the penitent. (B278)

The passage is taken from Exodus 34:6-7. Moses has said to God, "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory," and God has answered, "I will make all my

goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee." So God places Moses in the cleft of a rock, and passes before him in a cloud, proclaiming the passage quoted above. Rabbi Yohanan, in Rosh Hashanah 17b said of this passage that it was an order of prayer that God taught to Moses, saying, "Whenever Israel sins, let them recite this same order of prayer and I shall forgive them."²³ Rabbi Judah concurred that "whenever the Thirteen Attributes are invoked, that prayer will not be in vain." Again, the forgiveness will not be granted because Israel is especially deserving, but because of God's gracious and responsive attitude.

In sum, according to the mahzor, response to prayer is certainly an inner event. But, it is also an attribute of God--a key element in God's self-definition before Israel at the very beginning of their relationship.

Israel as a Main Character in the High Holiday Drama

Israel as a Character: When the members of the congregation of Israel gather to partake of the High Holiday drama, they, like God, play several roles. First, each enacts a private drama as an individual human being, symbolizing thereby the representative drama of all humanity. Second, all are part of a community which has a unique history, character and sense of mission. Therefore, this section of Chapter I, describing "Israel", will discuss both the mahzor's universalist portrayal of humanity, and its treatment of particularistic Israel.

A Dual Concept of Humankind: Classical Judaism understands the nature of humanity in two dimensions: with deepest humility and with

exalting pride. As "Dust" (B274 and elsewhere) or, similarly, as a "passing shadow", grass that "florishes and grows in the morning" and "fades and withers in the evening," (B730) mortal humankind is "as nothing before God."²⁴ Death, the great equalizer "places all mortals on the same level." (B728) No earthly power or wealth exempts a human being from this finite condition.

Mortal King decays and descends to the grave,
 Weary and restless, how long shall this one reign?
 Mortal King is overcome by deep slumber,
 Struck by things of naught; how long shall this
 one reign? (amitz koach, B256)

Limited in life span, human beings are also "limited in strength and wisdom."²⁵ A strict accounting of humanity's accomplishments set against its overwhelming failures would be devastating.

How can man be clear? The heavenly hosts are
 not clear in Thy sight! Fire consumes fresh trees.
 So much more the dry grass. . . Essentially impure,
 man defiles himself during his lifetime. . . the
 days of his life are worthless, his nights are
 meaningless and his affairs are vain. . . (enosh mah
yizkeh, B630)

At best, from this stance of deep humility, humanity can regard itself simply as the raw material which God can shape, destroy, or leave alone:

As clay in the hand of the potter,
 Who expands or contracts it at will
 So are we in Thy hand, gracious God. . . (B538)

On the other hand, humanity is also seen as the pinnacle and goal of creation.²⁶ "Yet from the first," the Neilah service says, "Thou didst single our mortal man and consider him worthy to stand in Thy presence." (B1006)

These two attitudes to human nature, the humble and the exalted, are accompanied by a binary concept of human motivation. Rabbinic

thinkers conceived of the human spirit as essentially dominated by twin impulses, the yetser tov and the yetser hara, the good and the evil inclinations:

Judaism conceives a man as a creature in whom two personalities both capable of actualization, are concealed. . . Every person is obligated to restrain the brute and to educate the saint within him."²⁷

Because human nature combines these contradictory impulses, human action is the result of choices for which people must be held accountable.²⁸ This moral freedom provides the link between the humble and the exalted view of humanity. Despite their mortal frailty and dependence on God for life and sustenance, human beings stand free, capable of rejecting or choosing God's path. In the Unetaneh tokef, people are portrayed as having full responsibility for their lives, and for the judgment that will take place regarding them: "Thou openest the book of records and it reads itself: Every man's signature is contained in it." (B362) Free and righteous choices that turn aside the yetser hara and embrace the direction of the yetser tov shape "dust" and "clay" into the image of God.

Human freedom and responsibility²⁹ are the main themes of two highlights of the High Holiday services: Kol Nidre and Unetaneh Tokef. Kol Nidre is a legal formula over 1000 years old, that annuls vows regarding the self for the coming year. So concerned were the Talmudic rabbis about the sacredness of the spoken word³⁰ that they developed a process whereby carelessly voiced oaths about what a person intended to do could be considered technically null and void prior to their utterance. According to Max Arzt, recitation of Kol Nidre is a symbolic reminder of all resolutions made and broken:

A feeling of discontent may, in a solemn moment of self-examination, prompt a person to resolve to change his ways. But too often he lacks the tenacity needed for effecting a radical break with strongly entrenched habits.³¹

By reciting Kol Nidre, an individual retains control of the relationship between intent and outcome. Improper intents, oaths that should not have been voiced and cannot be fulfilled, are cancelled in advance, leaving the individual responsible for all remaining oaths and declared intentions.

Unetaneh tokef deals with the interplay between God's control and human control, the power of destiny or circumstance vs. human freedom and responsibility. God "reads" in the "book of life" only what human beings have written with their own deeds. However, the judgment and sentencing are God's to inscribe. It is God who determines who shall live and who shall die, and it is God who writes the universe's story in one day. Yet even as the span of their lives is being calculated, human beings can regain control of their fate by assuming responsibility for past and future action. "Repentance, prayer and charity cancel the severe decree." (B362) God only waits for them to do so. "Thou dost wait for him until his dying day." (B364)

Particularistic Israel: "Israel" is an abstract role superimposed upon the collective sum of individual identities sitting in the synagogue. As individuals, the congregation of Israel may be merchants, doctors, tailors, scholars, married or unmarried, parents or childless. But in the role of Israel, they are the bearers of God's message to the world, potentially the living embodiment of God's will on earth.

The role of Israel is defined by its origin, the formative moments of its history, its identification with the land of Israel, its past and present worship system, and its relationship with God through Torah. Israel's designated origin is the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "Long before God formed any act of creation, he designed the rock of Abraham." (B214) Retroactively seen, Israel's origin is linked with its projected destiny as the vehicle of God's purpose.

The two formative moments that shaped the role of Israel were the Exodus:

From Egypt Thou didst redeem us. . .
And from the house of slavery
Thou didst deliver us. (B200)

and the giving of the Torah at Sinai:

Remember a people that follows Thee
and tenderly implores Thee:
They are sustained by the delight
of Thy fiery Law. (B180)

At Sinai, God

didst choose us from among all peoples. . .
love and favor us. . .
exalt us above all tongues and sanctify us
with. . .commandments

There,

Our King didst draw us near to. . .service. (B203)

In its natal moment, Israel became the chosen people, "a prophet among the nations," God's "servant,"³² sanctified by the way of life ordained by the mitzvot, and expected by the terms of the covenant to exemplify holiness and integrity.³³ Therefore, the Alenu prayer celebrates Israel's uniqueness among the nations, and thanks God for the gift of special responsibility:

It is our duty to praise the Master of all,
to exalt the Creator of the universe who has not
made us like the families of the earth; who has not
designed our destiny to be like theirs, nor our lot
like that of all their multitude. (B334)

Israel's role was further defined by Israel's having dwelled in the land of Israel and having established a Temple in Jerusalem where God was worshipped according to the mandates of the Torah. "God has granted serene beauty to His people; He taught them to recount their offerings." (B180) Even dispersed, Israel retains its unique identity by remembering its Temple and land, and by praying for a restoration:

O bring us home in peace from the four
corners of the earth, and make us walk
upright to our land. (B194)

May our exiles reach His holy land
That we may ever praise Him in His Temple. (B246)

Awaiting redemption from "the chains of bondage," (B246) Israel is a paradigmatic community, representing unrepentant humankind. Exiled, scattered, lost and sinning, Israel, like all humanity, is destined someday to be redeemed.

Points of Intersection: The Characters' Relationship

Passengers in a railroad car do not relate to one another as do characters in a drama about passengers in a railway car. In the drama, the author has predetermined certain points of intersection in the lives and problems of several characters. Perhaps separated lovers discover one another, or a businessperson, long ago wronged, meets a now successful former partner. As the characters each speak their opening lines, the audience strains to discover why these seemingly unrelated people happen to be in the same play. In the High Holiday

drama, one might also seek the point of intersection between the two main characters.

In imru l'Elohim, the kerovah for Yom Kippur morning, God is portrayed as utterly exalted:

He is slow to anger and great in power. . .
 He has built his chambers high in heaven. . .
 He is supreme over all the holy myriads. . .
 His splendor covers the heavens. . .
 His throne is a blaze of flames
 His sight is pure. . .
 He knows what is in mysterious darkness. . .
 Dominion is His due. . . (B646-652)

But, if God is transcendent, how can God be immanent and accessible for a dramatic relationship with Israel? From the point of view of traditional High Holiday liturgy, the question is artificial. Even in the earliest sections of the liturgy, the simultaneity of God's transcendence and immanence is taken for granted. God acts both in an insular transcendent fashion, as well as in relating and responsive fashion. The plea, "Act for the sake of Thy name. . .truth. . .majesty. . . goodness. . .eternal mystery" is directly followed by, "Act for the sake of both Moses and Aaron. . .for the spilt blood of thy servants." (B560-562)

The point of intersection for both God and Israel is their mutual need for one another. While only God can "pardon Israel's misdeeds," only Israel can seat God on the throne of Judgment.³⁴ In isolation, God cannot fulfill His dramatic role. God waits for and needs Israel's repentance and praise. Israel is the witness, ultimately, to God's reality.³⁵

His majesty is within my assembled people;
 My belief in Him is glorification of Him. (B596)

At the same time, Israel needs God:

Forsake us not, our Father; abandon us not our
 Creator: relinquish us not, our Maker; consume
 us not on account of our sins. . . Thy own people
 hunger for Thy goodness, thirst for Thy kindness,
 and long for Thy deliverance. (B560)

By having some relationship with God's eternity, Israel transcends mortality and becomes part of a purpose more long-range than the span of one generation.³⁶ God's "everlastingness validates the sacrifices of those who dedicate their lives to His service and to the service of the welfare of humanity."³⁷

Plot and Subplot

Two story lines intertwine in the High Holiday drama. The first is the story of the immediate occasion, God's judgment of Israel at the start of the New Year. The second is an extended recounting of Israel's relationship with God, calling forth remembrance on the part of both parties, and culminating in a vision of God's redemptive purpose.

Yom Harat Olam and Yom Din: The Plot. "This day was of old planned for judgment," wrote Eliezer Kalir in upad meaz:

For the probing of all daily actions,
 For men's pleading before the Reverend One
 To make them t'is day clear of all guilt. (B350-2)

The Day of Judgment's occurrence on the New Year is accounted for by a midrash. On this day, "the birthday of the world," (B384) Adam was created and immediately sinned, failing to keep the one law given to him. On the same day, God judged and absolved Adam, saving him "from distress." (B350) Because Adam is a symbol for universal humanity, New Year's day, the anniversary of Adam's creation, became a judgment day "for all time."

According to the prayer Unetaneh tokef, the day of judgment begins in heaven with a moment of pageantry:

The great sofar is sounded; a gentle whisper is heard; the angels, quaking with fear, declare:
 "The day of judgment is here to bring the hosts of heaven to justice!" (B362)

The book recording human deeds is opened for examination. Each soul passes before God for judgment, and each creature's lifetime and destiny are set down in this book of records: "On Rosh Hashanah their destiny is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed." (Ibid.)

Elsewhere in the liturgy, one reads that the tension of the moment of judgment is exacerbated by the presence of a kind of prosecuting attorney: "the accuser." Foe of humankind, the accuser, or Satan, is not developed as a character in his own right, but serves the function of illuminating those deeds done under the influence of the yetser hara: for this reason the congregation prays, "Cast scorn on the informer, reject his report. . . Silence the accuser, let pleader take his place." (B536) "Heed thy pact," an unknown 12th century poet wrote in ki hineh kahomer, "heed not the accuser." (B538) Even more passionate, is Kalir's "O cast the accuser into chains, proclaim the fulfillment of the captives' hopes. . . ." (B778) The accuser has no existence independent of the human evil that evokes his comment: "May/God/ blot out the pernicious impulse, that Satan my foe shall not mock me; then shall my mouth be filled with laughter." (B774)

Unable to deny the record of deeds already written and sealed by their own hands, the members of Israel have no choice but to confess their sins and throw themselves on the mercy of their Judge in heaven. Unetaneh tokef's graphic description of the judgment procedure likens

the process to the passing of sheep under the rod of a careful shepherd, each one receiving a scrupulous examination as the group is counted.

(B362)

Aside from the phrase, "Our Father Our King, we have sinned before thee" (B272) in Avinu Malkenu, there is no formal confession of sins on Rosh Hashanah. Israel has the full span of the Yamim Noraim, from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, to devote to self-examination and repentance. Formal confession first takes place with the recitation of the alphabetical viddui zuta (ashamnu, bagadnu. . .) and the viddui raba (al het shechatanu. . .) on Erev Yom Kippur. (B512) The sins that are confessed in these prayers catalogue nuances of actual daily conduct. Yet these sins are not so specific as to apply to select individuals alone. The confessional is collective, and the confessions are formulaic, "speaking of sins of which the individual may or may not be guilty."³⁸ The collective confession has two effects. It emphasizes collective responsibility for the moral tone of the community. It also provides the widest range of potential sins to which individuals may confess. No aspect of ordinary human interaction, neither business nor love, friendship nor citizenship, filial feeling nor parenthood is free from pitfalls.

This comprehensive confessional is both humbling and elevating to the spirit. On the one hand, enumeration of so many sins that have escaped timely reckoning undercuts the pride of even the most self-esteeming:

Thou art aware of conscious or unconscious sins, whether committed willingly or forcibly, openly or secretly; they are thoroughly known to you. What are we? What is our life? What is our goodness? What is our virtue? What our help? What our strength? What our might? What can we say to Thee, Lord our God and God of our fathers? . . . man is not far above beast, for all is vanity. (550)

On the other hand, a simple inversion of the confessional's terms yields an impressive catalog of Judaism's expectations. As the al het is worded, we confess to callousness, idle talk, insincerity, scoffing, immoderate eating and drinking, haughtiness, wanton glances, casting off responsibility, obstinacy and talebearing: all are departures from the behavior that constitutes a human being's best, most God-like nature. Sin is a distortion, a "turning away from God's good precepts and laws," (B512) a denial of the divine image inherent in humanity's creation. "Sin is an estrangement of man from God, a breaking of the link between man and his Maker."³⁹ By reversing the terms of the confession, however, one discovers the qualities that characterize a whole human being who is in harmony with the gift of the divine image: a generous spirit, modesty, moderation, truthfulness, sincerity, humility, discretion and kindness in self expression, tolerance and respect for other human beings. Thus, the confessional statements function only partly as a technique for unburdening guilty hearts. By clarifying Judaism's behavioral expectations for even the smallest human interaction, the confessions also function as an educational force.

This dual function of the confessional process fits exactly the plot line of the High Holiday drama. In order for confession to be meaningful, it must lead to teshuvah or "turning back" toward the positive attributes that characterize human beings as divinely created creatures.

From the beginning of creation, thou didst establish
the law of repentance. (B354)

Thou, Merciful One, doest receive those who repent;
Thou didst promise us in days of old concerning
repentance, and because we repent we hopefully look
to Thee. (B558)

The opportunity to repent is always open:

Until the dying day of man
Thou dost wait for his repentance,
That he may be turned unto life. (B632)

However, although God waits, God cannot control the outcome: repentance must be self-initiated. As an option always open, a decision that can be made at any time, the opportunity to "return to God" is the essence of human freedom.⁴⁰ It is a means of release from the "bondage of circumstance and the shackles of habit."⁴¹ The liturgy has no illusions about the ease with which repentance can be accomplished:

Assembled on the day of battle we are here
To fight against the evil in ourselves. (B352)

The imagery promises a protracted struggle. Yet the goal is nothing less than "to reopen the future."⁴² In its climactic declaration: "But Repentance, Prayer and Charity avert the severe decree," the Unetaneh tokef prayer affirms that human beings can change their future by changing themselves.⁴³ The New Year can indeed bring renewal and a cleansing re-direction of energy.

The struggle within human beings to understand how far they have turned from God, and to refocus their lives toward fulfillment of their highest potential, is one strand of the Judgment Day plot. It is complemented by an equally ferocious struggle to be heard and believed. Enormous prayer energy is spent convincing God of the sincerity of this hard-won return, and inducing God to respond mercifully:

Answer thou my prayer
Do thou accept my cry
Thou who art Holy God.
Lord, when thy people calls
Remember thy mercy
Revered and Holy One. (B780)

Prayers of this type, so fervently repeated throughout the Yom Kippur

service, are directed partly toward God and partly toward the worshipper. The repetition is clearly intended as support for the worshipper's kavanah or sincere intention.

A great many prayers implore God only to "heed our supplication." Other prayers project some kind of hoped for response. The anonymous yaaleh (B522), sung before the open ark on Yom Kippur morning, describes the entire time span of the day from sunset of Erev Yom Kippur to the following sunset. Each period in the day is marked by a different phase in the plot: at sunset, Israel approaches God; in the morning Israel's confession and repentance process is underway; in the evening, God responds.

In the concluding, or Ne'ilah service, God is called the "Pardoner of Israel, the Forgiver of the tribes of Yeshurun in every generation." (B974)

Thou dost reach out Thy hand to transgressors:
Thy right hand is extended to revive repentant
sinners. (B972)

Pleading for a compassionate response does not cease until the last moment on Yom Kippur. Time and again, during the Ne'ilah service, the Thirteen Attributes of God are recited, and God is reminded of the promise to forgive Israel whenever the attributes are extolled: "O God, Who didst instruct us to recite the Thirteen Divine qualities, remember Thou in our favor the covenant of the thirteen qualities." (B996) "I rely," we pray in Rabbi Amittai ben Sheptiah's ezkerah elohim, "on God's thirteen qualities/ And on repentant tears that are not stemmed." (B1000) Repeatedly, God is begged to open the gates of heaven to receive the prayers of Israel and to redeem a fallible people. The Ne'ilah service builds to a final recitation of the Avinu Malkenu before the open

ark. The congregation then recites the Shema, repeating the second line three times, and proclaiming seven times "The Lord is One." Sin is transcended at last, in contemplation and celebration of God's Oneness. This elevating climax is reinforced by the kaddish titkabal, with its resonant and reassuring series of Amens:

May the prayers and supplications of the whole
household of Israel be accepted by their Father
Who is in heaven; and say Amen. (B108)

Finally, as the Yom Harat Olam, Yom Din plot began in the Unetaheh tokef with the sounding of a heavenly shofar, so the living enactment of the plot in the synagogue concludes with the sound of the earthly shofar. It is a sweet, forgiving blast that summons the worshippers to renewed life in the New Year.

Yom Hazikaron: The Subplot. Sometimes one encounters a drama in which a sequence of action must be pieced together from flashbacks and other evidence scattered through the play. Just so, the subplot of the High Holiday drama must be assembled by the audience from data presented out of sequence. The difference is that the audience watching any other drama is discovering this concealed story for the first time, while the worshippers at High Holiday services know the subplot by heart. In fact, a mention of just one part of the story evokes an awareness of all the rest, its pattern, its rhythm and its meaning.

The out of sequence Biblical episodes recounted or alluded to in the subplot's passages are organized around a general theme of remembrance. God is asked to remember Israel with kindness, just as various Biblical characters were once remembered to their benefit. Israel claims to remember both its history and its Covenant. God's memory of the extraordinary merits of Israel's founding parents is appealed to as

a counterbalance to Israel's present sins. God is also asked to remember all promises regarding Messiah and Redemption.

Faith in God's memory has helped Jews to feel that their experiences are part of a meaningful pattern. They have not been abandoned to chance or fate, for God did not abdicate care after completing the initial work of creation.⁴⁴

Thou dost remember Thy ancient work and art mindful of all that was formed in days of old. All secrets and countless mysteries from the beginning of time are open to Thee. There is no forgetting before Thy throne of glory; there is not a thing hidden from Thy eyes. Thou dost remember every deed and nobody is kept out of Thy sight. All things are well known to Thee, Lord our God, who dost look to the end of all generations. (B338)

At the same time, Jewish memory has constituted a major component of Jewish identity. As long as Jews have remembered their history and Covenant, they have remained Jews. Their remembrances are offered in prayer the way sacrifices were offered in the Temple of old, as signals of Israel's enduring fidelity:

Our God and God of our fathers, may the remembrance of us, of our fathers, of Messiah the son of David Thy servant, of Jerusalem Thy holy city, and of all Thy people the house of Israel ascend and come and be accepted before Thee for deliverance and happiness, for grace, kindness and mercy, for life and peace, on this Day of Remembrance. . . (B205)

The remembrance that "ascends" in this passage is not only God's but Israel's. "Implicit in this prayer," writes Max Arzt, "is the belief that God remembers what man resolves to bring to remembrance before Him."⁴⁵

Implicit also is the link between memory of Israel's past and hope for its future. In the passage above, the "remembrance of. . .our fathers" and the remembrance of "Messiah, the son of David" are offered

to God simultaneously and without differentiation. Israel "remembers" the whole story: that which has happened and that which is still only promised. The number and order of episodes in this unbroken continuum from creation to redemption are less important than the perception that all of history is unified by God's purpose. In remembering any part of its history, Israel is really remembering its role in God's total plan.

With the exception of the Avodah prayer of the Yom Kippur afternoon musaf, the subplot, or "whole story" which Israel remembers, is given no sequentially organized articulation in the mahzor. The task of this section of Chapter I is therefore to set forth the story in an organized fashion to show how the episodes in God's long relationship with Israel have been selected and edited by the liturgy.

(1) Bereshit 1-4. The liturgy's treatment of the beginnings of this world, the olam hazeh, is both like and unlike the story's Biblical origin. The difference is the profoundly judgmental nature of the liturgy's account, which views each incident from the perspective of the olam haba.

Creation, wherein God brought forth a multitude of fish and fowl, produced as well the Lev athan, "reserved for the feast of saintly scholars." The behemoth, "dwelling amidst water willows" also awaits "the feast of Thy guests." (B812) There being "no one then to feast," God created "man out of clay." Human life was thus designed, ab initio, for the purpose of being redeemed in the end of days.

Regarding Adam, prototype of humanity, the yotser piyyut, melech amun maamrah makes two important statements. Adam was formed in God's own likeness, and delivered "from unmerciful judgment." The rabbinic concept attached to Adam and carried through in the liturgy was not

"original sin", but "original forgiveness."⁴⁶ Like the Christian notion of original sin, original forgiveness also transmits itself to subsequent generations. God's mercy toward Adam is an enduring symbol of the mercy that would be extended forever to Adam's descendants on each subsequent Day of Judgment.

Regarding humanity's other early progenitors, the language of the liturgy is consistently judgmental. Adam "foolishly broke" the command; Cain "mercilessly slew his brother;" later generations began to confuse God's name with idolatry, and so were "swept away"; and "those who counseled to build a tower reaching the sky were ensnared and scattered by a whirlwind." (B814)

(2) The Generations of the Avot and Imahot. According to the liturgy, the very existence of the patriarchs is regarded as the expression of divine purpose:

Long before God formed any act of creation, He designed the rock of Abraham; between past and future generations, in the middle, Abraham was formed to sustain them all. (B212)

Not only was Abraham's existence pre-determined, but the conceptions of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph resulted from Divine guidance of the natural process of increase:

Sarah, his share of bliss, was this day endowed with youthful strength to conceive and bear a son at the age of ninety; this has been a symbol for Israel's pleading before God on Rosh Hashanah. (B212)

At this season, Isaac prayed on behalf of his wife until she was set free from childlessness; May God accept my prayer just as He did accept the prayer of Isaac and Rebekkah. (B216)

The lofty mother Rachel, when still childless, was on this day encircled by Leah's four sons; as she burst into tears, she heard a voice, "Cease, mother of children." (B216)

It was not a coincidence that these assists to procreation all occurred on the first of Tishri, the anniversary of creation.

Whereas in Biblical accounts of their lives, the patriarchs shared the failings of all humankind, in the liturgy, they are idealized. Everywhere in the liturgy, Abraham appears as the model of "ideal humanity."⁴⁷

The mighty champion, Abraham, discerned thy truth
In an age when all failed to know how to please Thee.
Rejoicing in Thee, he taught them to revere Thee,
And cheerfully he proclaimed Thy grandeur to all.
Those who had gone astray he led back to Thy path
Hence he bears the name of father of Thy people. (B918)

Similarly, the Avodah prayer's treatment of Jacob illustrates how far the liturgy embroiders Biblical narrative in order to endow a patriarch with exemplary merit:

Like a lamb without blemish was perfect Jacob,
chosen because he delighted to dwell in the tents
of Torah and follow Thee. . . Thou didst cause him
to beget upright and beautiful children, true and
right without defect. (B814)

Jacob's merit is so great, wrote Eliezer Kalir in one extravagant passage, that it sustains the very structure of the universe:

The vault of heaven and the foundation of earth,
the vase abyss and the roaring ocean are altogether
sustained by the first born son of Rachel the third
matriarch. (B216)

Like his predecessors among the patriarchs, Joseph also accumulated sufficient merit to become an effective advocate for subsequent generations:

Remember the deeds of Joseph who was freed from
slavery and relieved of tormenting chains. If his
descendants have been led astray by history, let
his words win grace for them in a life of vanity. (B354)

The spiritual accounting system of zechut avot, or the merit of the patriarchs, allows for a kind of "original virtue" deriving from the

lives of the patriarchs, to operate in redemptive fashion on behalf of their descendants.⁴⁸ Within this system, the Akedah is the single act of merit most often recalled. Abraham was willing "to suppress his compassion that he might do [God's] will wholeheartedly." (B342) At the same time, Isaac, in his physical passivity, gave active spiritual assent: he "did submit to be offered as a sacrifice." (B920) In memory of Abraham's selfless obedience and Isaac's willingness to participate, God is urged to be ever gracious to Israel:

Regard him as if offered in the Temple today,
Remember his binding and pity his people. (B920)

The merit of these patriarchs is of such a singular nature that it outweighs forever the sins of Abraham's and Isaac's descendants, and insures the acceptability of their prayers before God.⁴⁹ Not only Abraham and Isaac have this power in perpetuity, but also the countless Jewish martyrs who endured actual sacrifice for the Sanctification of God's name. (B274-6) Throughout the mahzor, God is urged to be compassionate to worshippers, supplementing their individual atonement with special regard for the sake of those patriarchs, matriarchs and martyrs whose lives were wholly spent or lost in carrying out God's purpose or in defending their faith. However, zechut avot can be counted on to secure a hearing for prayer only after individual atonement has been undertaken. The theme of zechut avot thus acts as a link between the High Holiday drama's plot of individual repentance and the subplot of communal remembrance.

(3) Moses at Sinai and in the Cleft of the Rock. The name of Moses echoes through the liturgy: in the third paragraph of the Shema (B498), in the Torah service (B438, 432), and in Yigdal (B56), for

instance. In such places, Moses is not characterized. His presence as the pivotal figure in Israel's history is so deeply felt that spare historical references amply tell his story: "Moses and the children of Israel sang a song to thee. . .as Thou didst part the sea before Moses."

(B28) Those adjectives that do characterize Moses are restrained.

Moses is God's "servant," (B346) a "gentle" (B528) "faithful shepherd of long ago," (B786) the "lawgiver," (B946) and "humblest man. . .who prayed. . .for us." (B688) Whatever can be known about Moses from the Bible, is, in the liturgy, essentially reduced to two dramatic episodes: Moses spoke to God and was answered at Sinai (Ex. 19:19), and Moses, having asked God to reveal Himself, hid in the cleft of a rock while God passed before him. (Ex. 34:6) The revelation at Sinai appears in the Shofar service, beginning with the paragraph atah nigleita: (B341)

Thou didst reveal thyself in thy cloud of glory to
speak to thy holy people. . .Amid thunder and
lightening didst Thou reveal Thyself to them. . .
The shofar blast grew louder and louder; Moses spoke.
and God answered him." (B344)

Referring to this passage, Max Arzt remarks on the "extraordinary nature of that revelation. . .the stunning originality of the idea" that a revelation of God's presence and will occurred not to or through a particular prophet, but directly to a whole people.⁵⁰ The content of this public Sinaitic revelation was law, and the divine attribute most obviously established therein was din, or justice.

In contrast and balance, the revelation that took place while Moses hid "in the cave" (B212) was a singular and intimate ecstatic experience. Whereas the people gathered at Sinai at God's command, the private revelation granted to Moses in the cleft of the rock occurred in response to Moses' request, and in answer to Moses' personal need to know God.

Therefore the content of this revelation was love, and the divine attribute most clearly established therein was rachamim, or mercy:

. . .remember Thou in our favor, the covenant of the thirteen qualities; as Thou didst reveal them to gentle Moses, as it is written: "The Lord came down in the cloud, and Moses placed himself there beside Him and proclaimed the name of the Lord. Then the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in kindness and truth; he keeps mercy for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and clearing those who repent. (B530)

Moses as the preeminent Jewish historical personality, a towering figure presiding over a watershed in human history, is not extolled in the mahzor. In fact, in amitz koach, which provides a narrative of Biblical history from the creation to the time of Aaron the High Priest, Moses is not mentioned at all. The prayer mentions in succession only "beloved Abraham," "perfect Jacob," and then "faithful Levi" (Aaron) and "his tribe." (B814) Moses' appearance in the mahzor is used instead to highlight the two complementary aspects of God's nature that relate to the plot of the High Holiday drama: justice and mercy.

(4) A Sanctuary in Israel. Time and events are telescoped and drastically edited in the mahzor's version of Israel's story: after Israel received the revelation of Torah at Sinai the people settled in the Land and conducted sacrificial worship at the Temple Sanctuary. To highlight the centrality of the Temple and its cult in the liturgical scheme of Israel's history, the amitz koach, or Avodah prayer, provides a careful, almost minute by minute account of the High Priest's behavior before, during and after his entering the Holy Of Holies to make atonement for Israel. Based closely on the account given in the Mishnah, (Yoma, B812) this long unrhymed poem by Rabbi Meshullam b. Kalonymus (10th c,

Italy) describes the preparation of the High Priest, the various offerings that had to be made during the ritual, the rite of the scapegoat, Azazel, the baths, ablutions and changes of garments that the High Priest had to undergo. The physical survival of the High Priest and the secure continuity of the community depended on the punctilious observance of all procedures:

Before entering the most holy place, the high priest was addressed by the eldest priest in terms of admonition and exhortation: "Consider whose presence you are about to enter; know that if you fail to concentrate your mind on what you are about to do, you will at once fall dead and the atonement of Israel will not be attained. The eyes of all Israel are upon you!" (B820)

In the Avodah, and elsewhere in the mahzor, the service of the cult is not presented as a way-station along the path to theological sophistication, nor as an historical phenomenon explainable by the conditions of the time. Instead, the period of the Temple's existence is portrayed as a Golden age, a time when the connection between God and Israel was right, whole and direct, as it has never been since.

The mahzor's description of Temple ritual establishes the cult's importance to the people in two dimensions. First, this account of Yom Kippur sacrifice depicts the profound feeling of harmony with the rhythm of the earth which accompanied performance of the cultic ritual. This feeling is richly expressed near the conclusion of the Avodah where the high priest, radiant with exaltation at having successfully completed the atonement rites, is conducted home by the people:

Then the people conducted their faithful messenger to his home, in the knowledge that the crimson thread of wool had turned white and their sins were washed away. The soaring clouds distilled their dew; the watered fields yielded their produce. Those who gathered the harvest in peace gave thanks. . .The nethermost parts of the fair land burst into song. . .Indeed the faithful

messenger fulfilled the hope of the people who sent him, the hope that was pleasing to them who sent him, the hope that was pleasing to them as a cooling breeze on the day of harvest. (B824)

The agricultural focus of the Temple cult is evident from this passage. Performance of the rite assured "a year of dew, rain and warmth; a year of delicious fruits." (B826)

In addition, the mahzor, particularly in the Avodah, depicts the Temple cult as serving a deep psychological need. The entire process of introspection, guilt and shame, repentance, reconciliation and renewal of self-image which is now played out in prayer, was, in the time of the Temple, projected onto the symbolic processes of sacrificial worship. The completion of the Yom Kippur service brought relief, satisfaction, and a convincing sense of purification:

The people were now washed and purified; their hands cleansed, they were made guiltless and innocent to declare that the Fountain of living water cleanses them. . . They now felt perfectly pure and wholly renewed. . . (B824)

The pinnacle of the long Avodah poem, which forms the most extensive and detailed continuous narrative in the mahzor, is the description of the High Priest as he appeared to the people when he left the Holy of Holies. This highly figurative passage differs stylistically from the preceding descriptions and narration by virtue of its tight alphabetical acrostic, its repetitive two word refrain, and its poetic reiteration in eleven parallel stanzas of a single idea:

Like the clearest canopy of heaven,
Was the dazzling countenance of the priest.
Like lightnings flashing from benign angels,
Was the smiling countenance of the priest.
Like the purest blue of the four fringes,
Was the gracious countenance of the priest.
Like the wondrous rainbow in the bright cloud,
Was the cheerful countenance of the priest. (B828)

Immediately following this picture of splendor, however, a bitter wind of loss and regret sweeps over the liturgy:

All this took place when the sanctuary was firmly established. The high priest ministered, his generation watched and rejoiced.

Happy the eye that saw all this; our soul grieves at the mere mention of it. (B828)

Important as the Temple cult once was, however, worshippers cannot be allowed to rest overlong in contemplating a vanished past. Reality, and Israel's responsibility for transforming that reality through faith and deeds remains the primary focus of the mahzor.

(5) Loss of the Temple: Israel's Historical Sins. Reality is Exile, the theater in which the High Holiday drama is played out each year. The pivotal event that cast Israel out of its comfortable direct cultic relationship with God was the destruction of the Temple. Not only did the cult become a treasure lost, but also the land itself became inaccessible. Israel was thrust into its historical role of a wandering people, continually seeking redemption and restoration.

The liturgy is very direct about attributing blame for the debacle: it was Israel itself that caused Jerusalem's downfall.

Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and banished far from our land. We cannot perform our duties in thy chosen House, the great and Holy Temple which was called by Thy name on account of the hand that was let loose in Thy sanctuary. (B375, also 331-2)

In the kerovah, aderet mamlachah, (B220) the historical sins of Israel are alluded to more specifically. Lawlessness and faithlessness caused God to withdraw protection and favor, and to allow Israel to become subject to a brutal sovereign.

The glorious kingdom of Judea
 Why was it overthrown and not restored?
 Because they acknowledged and worshipped Bel
 And followed his dictates with lawlessness.
 The mistress of realms will reign over them
 Until the kingdom of God shall appear.
 . . .Lacking in wisdom, extremely haughty,
 She excercises ruthless sovereignty. (B220)

Restoration is promised only within the context of the appearance of God's kingdom. Since this will not happen until Israel has made complete teshuvah, Israel carries the ultimate responsibility for the continuance of its exile. The Talmud talks about the ongoing corporate guilt of Israel: "Every generation during which the Temple is not rebuilt is to be considered as blameworthy as if it had caused its destruction."⁵¹

The crucial passage which sets forth Israel's historical problem and establishes Yom Kippur's importance as the potential fulcrum of history occurs near the end of the Avodah:

Indeed, the iniquities of our fathers destroyed our sacred home, and our own sins retard its restoration. Yet, may the mention of these things bring us forgiveness; may our self-affliction attain our pardon. (B830)

This passage establishes fully the terms of the subplot of the High Holy Day drama. Both God and Israel remember their relationship and the promises made on both sides. Because at one point, Israel forgot its promise and turned from Torah and God, the Temple, symbol of the direct expression of Israel's obedience to God, we lost. Israel then wandered in a terrible exile, trying each year, especially on Yom Kippur, to achieve a degree of atonement worthy of pardon, so that the Messianic pledge could be redeemed and Israel could be returned to its homeland and true worship. Yom Kippur is a symbolic occasion, reminding us each year of the possibility of return, both for individuals and for Israel.

This day comes only once a year to make atonement for the transgressions of Israel, as it is written in Thy Torah: "This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for all the sins of Israel once a year. (B860)

The very urgency of the High Holiday drama derives from the compression of the atonement process within the strict temporal confines of a single day.

(6) The Suffering of Exile. In countless passages, the mahzor portrays Israel in an adversary relationship with the world. Given over to the rule of heartless tyrants, Israel prays in the avinu malkenu that God:

deal with us kindly. . .
abolish evil decrees against us,
annul the plans of our enemies,
frustrate the counsel of our foes,
close the mouths of our adversaries
and accusers. (B272)

In the Rosh Hashanah musaf service, God is asked to alleviate or end a list of afflictions:

Our Father, our King, remember thy compassion and suppress Thy anger; remove pestilence and sword, famine and plunder, destruction and iniquity, plague and misfortune, all disease and obstruction, all persecution and baseless enmity, from us and from all thy people of the covenant. (B398)

Evil, injustice, violence, repression and wanton cruelty are the facts of Israel's Exile--the background against which Israel's spiritual and cultural accomplishments shine.

The most extreme of Jewish sufferings has been that of martyrdom. Amnan ken by Rabbi Yom Tov ben Isaac of York, who was martyred in 1190, is a direct record of the spiritual torment endured by a sensitive and scholarly soul as he responded to the conditions of persecution to which he ultimately succumbed:

Heal my wound, deeply conceal my iniquity. . .
 Look at our disgrace, count it as our punishment. . .
 (B534-6)

Rabbi Yom Tov died, and convinced others to die, rather than be forced to apostasize during the third Crusade.

The av harachamim of the Yizkor service, and the martyrology eleh ezkerah are related by Arzt to the First Crusade massacres in the Rhineland. The eleh ezkerah is a "pathetic search for an explanation of the absence of supernatural intervention in behalf of those done to death by the. . . mobs."⁵² In order to understand the massacres without blaming the victims,⁵³ the poet resorted to a midrashic tradition from the geonic period which recounted the martyrdom of ten rabbis, Ishmael, Simeon ben Gamaliel, Akiba, Hananya Ben Teradyon, Hutspith the Interpreter, Hanina ben Hakinai, Elazar ben Shamua, Yeshevav the Scribe, Judah ben Dama, and Judah ben Bava, who refused to heed the Hadrianic prohibition against teaching Torah. According to the legend of their persecution, these martyrs died not for their own sins, but "in expiation for the sins of previous generations,"⁵⁴ particularly the sins of the sons of Jacob who sold their brother into slavery. The richness of the reference is enhanced by the fact that, according to the Book of Jubilees, Joseph was sold on Yom Kippur. (B838)

As the martyrology draws to a heavy hearted close, God is summoned by the congregation to witness the blood of these martyrs, and, for their sake, to exercise forbearance toward Israel:

This has befallen us; we narrate it with a heart full of grief. Thou O Lord art a merciful and gracious God. Gracious One, look down from heaven, see the blood of the saintly martyrs and remove all stains of guilt. (B844)

Immediately thereafter the congregation makes a simple confessional statement:

We have sinned against Thee, our God;
Forgive us, Our Creator. (Ibid.)

The next line reads:

Remember in our favor thy covenant with our
fathers. . . (B845)

Confession is thus a bridge between the two enduring truisms of Israel's exile: Israel suffers, but God's promise abides. Whenever Israel confesses, reaching out to acknowledge God's sovereignty and judgment, Israel and God stand in their covenant relationship, a relationship which has obligations on both sides.

(7) Promises of Deliverance and Justice. Were the Yom Kippur service really a scene in a courtroom drama, the musaf service immediately following the martyrology would provide some of the drama's most telling explosive moments. Bit by bit, in flashback as well as in textual references, the long relationship between Israel and the Judge has been exposed through the liturgy. Now Israel, pleading on its own behalf, cites verbatim the Judge's own promises, and insists that they be honored:

Remember in our favor Thy covenant with our fathers,
as Thou didst promise, I will remember my covenant
with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. . .

Treat us as Thou didst promise, Even when they are
in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them. . .

Restore us and have compassion on us, as it is
written: The Lord Your God will restore you. . . (B846)

Fourteen demands are made (twice seven), each substantiated, chapter and verse, with the recorded words of the Judge to whom Israel now appeals for mercy. Then in tumbling, impassioned succession as if overwhelmed

by the daring they have just exhibited, the congregation of Israel
throws itself on the Judge's mercy,

Lord, hear our cry. Spare us. Have mercy and
accept our prayer. (B848)

declares its willingness to embrace Torah,

Bring us near to Thy Torah; teach us Thy
commandments. . . Open our mind to loving
Thee (B850)

identifies itself as linked indissolubly to God in multiple dimensions,

We are thy people; Thou art Our God;
. . . We are thy possession, and Thou art
our Destiny. (B850),

and finally reiterates the confessional prayers.

(8) A Steadfast Hope: The Messianic Vision. The overcoming of
evil and the triumph of righteousness within Israel as well as the
triumph of God's righteousness over Israel's oppressors is a thematic
undercurrent traceable throughout the High Holiday drama.

On Rosh Hashanah, among the special holiday insertions in the
Amidah, we read:

May now the righteous see this and rejoice, the
upright exult, and the godly thrill with delight.
Iniquity shall shut its mouth, wickedness shall
vanish like smoke, when Thou wilt abolish the
rule of tyranny on earth. (B204)

In the Reader's Amidah for the Rosh Hashanah musaf, the theme is echoed:

Let the designated month arrive, when all wickedness
shall flash up as a thorn and perish! At that time,
Hearts bent on evil shall be swept away; in our favor
thou wilt remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (B354)

The liturgy's stance is uncompromising. We do not ask for amelioration;
we beg for genuine deliverance. Unlike Bontsche Schweig who appears
before a heavenly court of judgment much like the court that convenes on
Yom Kippur for all of Israel, our liturgy does not ask merely for a hot

battered roll every day. We ask for nothing less than fulfillment of the messianic vision.

The terms of this vision are both universal and particular. With the extirpation of evil, both tyranny in general and Israel's long exile will be terminated. Israel's scattered members will be free to be united:

Our God and God of our fathers, sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the signal to bring our exiles together; draw our scattered people together from among the nations, assemble our dispersed from the uttermost parts of the earth.
(B344-6)

The place of their assembly will be Jerusalem, and as a sign of Israel's restoration, God's Temple will once more stand on Zion:

Our mirthful city with its Temple and court, altar and sacred vessels He will restore. (B248)

Yet Jerusalem will be more than the locus for a national restoration. It will become a universal center for God's dominion over all nations, with the forms of the national religion of Israel internationalized.⁵⁵

Thou shalt reign over all whom Thou hast made,
Thou alone, O Lord, on Mt. Zion, the abode of Thy majesty, in Jerusalem, Thy holy city, as it is written in Thy holy scriptures: The Lord shall reign forever, Your God, O Zion, for all generations. (B203)

The 7th century poem, veye'etayu, in the Rosh Hashanah musaf, contains a vision of God crowned King and celebrated by every nation:

Hills and isles shall burst into song when Thou art King,
Taking upon themselves the yoke of Thy Kingship
And extolling Thee in assemblies of people.
Nations in far-off lands will hear of this and come
To crown Thee, to pledge their loyalty to Thee. (B374)

Of veye'etayu, Bernard Martin wrote with admiration, "In the early middle

ages (7th c), when fanaticism and intolerance stalked the earth, the author of this poem envisioned the day when all men would be united in the worship of the universal Lord."⁵⁶ The veye'etayu is thought to be a poetic version of the second paragraph of the Alenu, crown of the Rosh Hashanah malchuyot passages. According to the Alenu, the "world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty. . .abominations and false gods will be removed from the earth." (B336)

The Kingdom of God promised by the Alenu and the veye'etayu is not heavenly otherness to be superimposed upon earth at some time beyond history, but rather a "purification and completion of this world."⁵⁷ The simplest expression of what the coming of God's Kingdom will mean is to be found in the Rosh Hashanah prayer meloch al kol haolam in the Reader's Repetition of the Amidah:

May every existing being know that thou hast made it;
may every creature realize that thou hast created it;
may every breathing thing proclaim: The Lord God of
Israel is King, and his kingdom rules overall. (B266)

The single irreducible characteristic of the messianic era will not be peace, prosperity, or universal health--although peace will certainly be a side-effect. The essence of the messianic era will be simply the universal acknowledgement of God's sovereignty. The full-hearted proclamation that "the Lord God of Israel is King" combines and encompasses all the particularistic and universalistic elements of the messianic vision.

(9) The Plot and Subplot are Resolved. In daily life, sequences of action stop unceremoniously: friendships diminish and drift irresolutely, conversations are interrupted and discontinued, attention shifts to new crises in the news--as unresolved issues move to the back

pages. In drama, however, action comes to an end, and some resolution is demanded.

The terms of the plot of the High Holiday drama evoke ample tension:

This day, the anniversary of the first day of thy creation, is indeed a statute for Israel. . . On it sentence is pronounced upon countries for war or peace, for famine or abundance. On this day mortals are recorded for life or death. . . (B338-40)

The two main characters are urged with increasing fervor to fulfill their appointed roles:

This day life and death, shall be recorded, O Israel, awake! Arise and pray! Plead for life before God who dwells on high. (B644)

O God we implore Thee, forgive us!
Pardon and spare us, grant us mercy;
Clear us and suppress iniquity. (B988)

The crucial nature of the drama is clear: it is for life itself that Israel prays: "Let ransom be found to save us from the grave." (B992) Yet despite the tension built during the hours of passionate pleading, the end result is never in doubt. Seated on the throne of mercy, acting graciously, pardoning sins even for transgressors, dealing generously with all mortals, (B966) God, self-revealed in the Thirteen Attributes, waits only for humanity's return:

Until the dying day of man
Thou dost wait for his repentance
That he may be turned unto life. (B630)

While the breath of life is yet in man,
God looks for his creature to repent
To grant man life and to prosper him.

God is the King "who delights in life," (B32) the "Merciful Father" who "remembers all creatures to life." (Ibid.) In the Ne'ilah service, as the final prayers become ever more fervent, assurances of God's mercy

multiply. Whatever the failings of humankind, God is reliable.

We are insolent, but Thou art gracious;
We are obstinate, but Thou art longsuffering;
We are sinful, but Thou art merciful. (B1004)

The ultimate outcome, of a world to be perfected through enlightened human effort, was destined from the moment of creation. To this end, we have been "taught to confess all our iniquities. . .and cease to do violence. . ." so that we may be graciously received into God's presence as promised. (B1004) Plot and subplot reinforce each other in their resolution, as the national promise of the messianic vision lends purpose to annual individual teshuvah:

Those who keep his laws will again be safe;
When the faithful speak of Torah precepts,
The Lord listens and records in a book.
Mind your deeds, do not break the covenant!
Heaven's Creator shall heed your prayer
Which pleases Him better than offerings. (B242)

Pragmatism and dreams mingle in the resolution of the High Holiday drama. Having contemplated a world hanging in the balance, Israel is turned back to life, to Torah, to deeds. The day after Yom Kippur will be a work day: a practical everyday philosophy will take hold:

. . .Why should a living man complain? Let him be content that he is alive. He is born for trouble and toil, let him be happy if he devotes his work to the true faith. His end will prove what he was at the beginning, so why should he feign to be what he is not. Besides, his own seal bears witness of his work, so why should he deceive? If he performs righteous deeds, they will follow him to his eternal home. If he is in quest of wisdom, it will be his companion in old age. (B630)

Yet the Ne'ilah service concludes with the Shofar's call and the words "Next Year in Jerusalem," a summons to hope that sets all daily life firmly in the context of the messianic dream.

Sound Effects. Few dramas are able to boast of a single sound effect as rich and complex in meaning as the shofar. Punctuating the Rosh Hashanah service just after the Torah readings and during the musaf Amidah, the shofar's call is elucidated by the accompanying shofarot verses. These verses call to mind the three historical settings on which the shofar has been or will be sounded. First, at Sinai, "the shofar blast grew louder and louder; Moses spoke, and God answered him." (B392) Later, the shofar became incorporated into the Temple service. Among cymbals, lute, trumpets, flute, strings and harp, the shofar was used in the sanctuary to mark the new moon and festival days. Finally, in the time that the prophets have foretold, "a great shofar shall be sounded" and all the lost and wandering tribes of Israel will be gathered again in Jerusalem. (cf. B394)

The Rosh Hashanah yotser poem, melech amun maamarach alludes to still another meaning of the shofar's blast. The shofar, cut from a ram's horn, is an abiding symbol of the Akedah. As Abraham's faith was tested on Mt. Moriah, so Israel is tested annually on the High Holidays:

The time for sounding the shofar in the manner prescribed has arrived; may thy tested people be favorably remembered through the sounding of the ram's horn.

Abraham saw behind him a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. (P180)

The Birnbaum mahzor supplements the liturgy's own references to the shofar's significance by including passages from Maimonides' Mishneh Torah (Teshuvah 3:4, 5:1-2, 4, B313; and De'oth 1-6b, B314) in the introduction to the Shofar Service," and with an extensive footnote listing Saadiah Gaon's ten reasons for the sounding of the shofar. (B318-18) The same footnote recapitulates a Talmudic discussion involving

interpretations of the shofar's several notes. These supplements relate the shofar sounding to the subplot of the drama (Sinai, the destruction of the Temple, the Day of Judgment, the restoration of Israel, resurrection), and also to the plot (the effort by individuals to gain insight and accomplish teshuvah). "The shofar," said Saadiah, "warns the people and stirs them to amend their life." (B317) Thus the shofar's notes run like a leitmotif through both the plot and subplot of the High Holiday drama. Played in a limited pattern of tones, the shofar can be heard differently, and can reveal a different meaning whenever it is heard.

The Audience. In some sense, the audience of a play is never divorced from the action on stage. While certain conventions of space, light and focussed attention separate the characters from the audience, the effectiveness of any drama depends on its capacity to transcend its characters' particularity, and to reflect some universal human truth with which the audience can identify. There are even instances, like Verdi's Falstaff and Brecht's Three Penny Opera, where the houselights go up at the end, and the stage characters laugh at the convention of the character-audience separation.

In the High Holiday drama, this separation is even more blurred because the members of the audience have lines to read, and comprehend themselves to be characters in the plot and subplot: they are both individuals in need of redemption through prayer and teshuvah, and members of the House of Israel. Yet in several places, the mahzor provides the congregation with a formal bridge between the passive role of audience and the active role of being a main character. This bridge is the congregation's identification with the part played by the chazzan

or sheliach tsibur at sensitive points in the service, particularly in the reshut passages before the Reader's Repetition of the Amidah, before the musaf, and at the beginning of the malchuyot, zichronot and shofarot verses. These sections of the services are especially demanding in that they are long and complex. The Reader's Repetitions of the Amidah contain the insertion of the kerovoth, or poetic approaches composed specifically for inclusion in the Amidah. The High Holiday musaf has nine instead of seven blessings, as well as the malchuyot, zichronot and shofarot verses. Therefore, even learned congregants may depend upon listening to the sheliach tsibur to fulfill the mitzvah of participating in these prayers.⁵⁸

Technically, the reshut passages ask God's permission to insert extra readings between the verses of the Amidah. But these prayers carry another burden as well. They are the occasions for the sheliach tsibur to give voice to a personal sense of awe and humility. The role carries great responsibility, for the sheliach tsibur is the emblem and voice of the entire community. The chazzan is the congregation's representative in the heavenly courtroom, the attention directed toward the bimah involves both projection and identification. "Poor in worthy deeds," sings the chazzan, "I am horribly frightened in Thy presence. . . I have come to plead before Thee on behalf of Thy people Israel, who have made me messenger. . ." (B326)

Jewish prayer is typically "We-Thou;" the Jew stands before God as a member of the community.⁵⁹ Yet in these reshut passages, yarati biftsoti and atiti lechanenach before the Rosh Hashanah Amidah, (B211, 229) hineni he'ani mimaash (B325) before the recital of the Rosh Hashanah musaf, ohilah lael (B379) before the malchuyot zichronot and

shofarot verses, and emeicha nashati (B623) before the Yom Kippur Amidah, the sheliach tsibur prays in the first person. These prayers are the outpourings of an individual soul with whom congregants can identify. Paradoxically, it is just as the congregation is about to slip into the role of audience, just as they are about to disengage and relax while the sheliach tsibur takes over as their representative, that the liturgy offers this opportunity so intensely to identify with main character utterances. The theatrical impact of these moments is typical of a worship experience designed by brilliant dramatists.

CHAPTER I

Footnotes

1. Irving Greenberg, "Plays of Awe" Jewish Living, Sept/Oct 1979, p. 13.
2. Max Arzt, Justice and Mercy: Commentary on the Liturgy of The New Year and the Day of Atonement, (New York: Halt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 91.
3. Ibid., p. 38.
4. Bernard Martin, Prayer in Judaism, (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 13.
5. George Foote Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of the Tannaim, Volume I, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 379.
6. Arzt, p. 49.
7. Gen. Rabbah, 3:1, cited by Arzt, p. 50.
8. Arzt, p. 222.
9. Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1962), p. 477.
10. Arzt, p. 41.
11. Ibid., p. 41-42.
12. Ibid., p. 174.
13. Moore, Volume I, pp. 387-8.
14. Martin, pp. 198-9.
15. Moore, Volume I, p. 393.
16. Ibid.
17. Arzt, p. 56.
18. Compare Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion, (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 110.
19. Compare Eliade, pp. 68-69, 73, 75, 77-78.

20. Arzt, p. 85.
21. Abraham Joshua Heschel, Man's Quest for God (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1954), pp. 9-10.
22. Arzt, p. 114.
23. Ibid., pp. 126-7.
24. Martin, p. 228.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Arzt, p. 158-9.
28. Ibid.
29. See Arzt, pp. 80, 110, 158-9, 160.
30. Arzt, p. 203.
31. Ibid., p. 201.
32. Moore, Volume I, p. 228.
33. Arzt, p. 66.
34. "Israel first sets the date of Rosh Hashanah and only then God ascends the Throne of Judgment." R.H. 8b, quoted in Arzt, p. 30.
35. Arzt, p. 46.
36. Compare Arzt, p. 160.
37. Ibid., p. 88.
38. Martin, p. 225.
39. Arzt, p. 216.
40. Ibid., p. 163.
41. Ibid., p. 54-55.
42. Ibid., p. 166.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 184.
45. Ibid., p. 108.

46. Ibid., p. 56.
47. Ibid., p. 83.
48. Martin, p. 199.
49. Ibid.
50. Arzt, p. 185.
51. TP Yoma 38c, quoted in Arzt, p. 206.
52. Arzt, pp. 254-5.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 255.
55. Moore, Volume I, p. 230.
56. Martin, p. 213.
57. Ibid., p. 190.
58. Arzt, pp. 161-2; (reference to Talmud Rosh Hashanah 34b).
59. Heschel, Man's Quest for God, p. 45.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTENARY PERSPECTIVELiturgy and the Social Context

"Prayerbooks," Lawrence Hoffman has written, "are social documents. New prayerbooks represent a new social context."¹ Especially in the Reform movement, with its stress on the use of the vernacular and on meaningful worship, any significant shift in social context will affect the way that worshippers relate to the manifest content of prayer.² Thus, a prayerbook, once the authentic expression of a large number of congregations, can eventually seem out of tune with the worshippers' values and sense of the world.

One such shift occurred for the Reform movement in the 1950's and 60's, as the effects of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel gradually permeated every corner of Reform awareness. Not only did these events have to be mentioned in the liturgy, but all prayer had to be reexamined. The loss of six million Jews, and the almost simultaneous achievement of a Jewish homeland so powerfully touched the Jewish heart that nothing thereafter could be the same.

It would be impossible in the scope of one thesis to trace all of the documentary evidence for this change in the Reform world view and sense of identity. I have therefore elected to analyse the background and substance of a single document that offers an authoritative capsule summary of Reform Judaism in transition. This document is the Centenary Perspective.

Published in 1976, the Centenary Perspective corresponds chronologically to the composition of the revised liturgy. Both were responses, in different genres, to the dramatic events and to the social and technological changes of the last forty years. In its section on "What We Have Learned," the Centenary Perspective enumerates the events and pressures that made a new understanding of Reform Judaism so urgent an undertaking:

We continue to probe the extraordinary events of the past generation, seeking to understand their meaning and to incorporate their significance in our lives. The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress. The State of Israel, through its many accomplishments raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion. The widespread threats to freedom, the problems inherent in the explosion of new knowledge and of ever more powerful technologies, and the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture, have taught us to be less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching.³

Chaim Stern's list of the forces that mandated the creation of a contemporary liturgy is strikingly similar to the Centenary statement:

Ours has been a time of almost perpetual strife. By reason of our technological prowess in the art of warfare, the very continuance of human life on this planet is by no means assured. Our civilization is unstable; information has grown exponentially, without an equivalent growth in wisdom, we have experienced tremendous changes, material and intellectual. Some have been harmful, others beneficial, but all of them have had their impact upon us. And we Jews have also experienced the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel--events that loom large in our consciousness. To these, in particular have we attempted a response.⁴

It is clear that both the liturgy and the Centenary document have had to struggle with the same set of external historical circumstances.

Just as clearly, both the revised liturgy and the Centenary Perspective have tried to express Reform's internal perceptions and priorities.

The Centenary Perspective was, by express intent and execution, a stock-taking exercise. Based on their knowledge of the Reform movement, its authors were commissioned to determine just what could be affirmed by the movement as a whole. Equally as real, though perhaps less explicit was the liturgy committee's mandate to tailor its undertaking to the nature of contemporary Reform congregations. Chaim Stern's "Introduction" to Gates of Prayer expresses great sensitivity to the mood of Reform in the 1970's:

We are a diversified people. Within our Reform community are proponents of many viewpoints. There is disagreement among us on many issues. It is our hope that Gates of Prayer will unite us all in worship. We do not assume that all controversy is harmful; we do not presume to judge which controversy is not 'for the sake of heaven': still less do we wish to stifle the expression of views sincerely held. Therefore in this prayerbook we have followed the principle that there are many paths to heaven's gates, that this prayer and that one, this service and that one,⁵ may both have the power to lead us to the living God.

While the liturgy committee, working somewhat earlier, could not have kept a copy of the Centenary Perspective on their own conference table, the Perspective is significant and authoritative evidence of the state of the movement at the time when the new liturgy was being composed and edited. The Centenary Perspective was accepted at the annual meeting of the CCAR in San Francisco on June 24, 1976 by approximately 80% of the membership.⁶ Both this high rate of acceptance, which surpassed the expectations of the committee, and the democratic process used in the composition and revision of the draft document,⁷ allow the Perspective to be viewed as an accurate pulse-taking of the spirit of Reform Judaism in the 1970's. The historical moment, the lessons of recent history, some of the boundaries of Reform Jewish identity, and the channels

through which Reform Jews felt their aspirations and energies ought to flow were all defined in the Centenary document.

My purpose in examining the Centenary Perspective is to highlight those contemporary attitudes toward identity, belief and responsibility that had to be reflected in the revised liturgy if it was to be "accepted as a valid communal self-portrait."⁸

In studying the Centenary Perspective, I have utilized the following small group of supplementary sources:

(1) After the CCAR approved and published the Centenary Perspective, the committee members arranged with the CCAR Journal to publish a forum issue incorporating their personal commentaries on the basic document. Each committee member focused his remarks on a different section of the Perspective. These articles, published in Spring, 1977, were written by the committee members as individuals, and are not uniform in style or approach. While these articles do not aspire to official status, they do represent the considered reactions of men who were very close to the Centenary Perspective for the six months of its creation.

(2) Eugene Borowitz's three volume commentary on the Centenary Perspective. Reform Jewish Thought, published in 1977 and 1978, expands and clarifies a document that was necessarily compressed and lacking in background information. My outline of the development of Reform until the 1960's, the spiritual discontent experienced during that period, and the ways in which the Centenary Perspective articulates an altered balance of symbolic language and group priorities depends heavily on Borowitz's explication.

(3) To temper this reliance on an exposition written by the Centenary Perspective's editor, I interviewed Joseph Glaser, Executive

Vice-President of the CCAR. A part of Glaser's informal critique of the Centenary Perspective is recorded herein as a signal that the Centenary Perspective, while generally acknowledged to be a fair representation of the current state of Reform, did not receive unqualified universal acclaim.

Reform Judaism in Transition

After a very brief outline of the universalist ideology of Classical Reform Judaism, this section of Chapter II will indicate the factors that undermined that ideology, and the specific problems that emerged as Reform tried to hold on to this world view in the face of strong challenges to its validity.

The accomplishments of early or "Classical" Reform Judaism provided a way for Jews to remain Jewish while adapting comfortably to modern life. Exclusively a religion, Reform was able to fit into an appropriate social category, comparable to the churches of the Western world. Reform allowed Jews to see their religion as a source of prophetic teaching that could motivate them to contribute to the general improvement of society. This emphasis on ethics and universal goals gave them a palatable rationale for divesting themselves of non-adaptive customs and restrictive halacha. At the same time, Reform justified these changes by making change itself an article of faith. Since Jews had been forced to let go of corporate self-government, Reform established individual autonomy as its central regulating principle. The fact that autonomous self-regulating Jews could continue to subscribe to a rational, ethics-centered, liberal faith, reinforced by society's great march forward, hardly seemed in doubt.

However, if there was any truth to the liberal world view to which early Reform had so neatly adapted, it was a partial truth. All too soon, Jewry had to face a side of reality repressed or ignored by liberalism. The Holocaust, the creation of the State of Israel, and the failure of modern culture to provide discernible positive values undermined the foundations of Reform ideology. The rational progressive Reform package that had functioned so well to help Jews accommodate to the modern world at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was inadequate to help with the trauma and complexities that followed.

Part of the liberal faith of Reform Judaism had been the "tenet that a morally progressing mankind will increasingly accept Jews as fellow citizens. . .the Holocaust demonstrated the weakness in this faith."⁹ Everything that Jews had done to accommodate themselves to the modern world,

Jewish participation in every area of national service and advancement, and the purposeful and calculated adjustment of Jewish life and Jewish priorities to the views of fellow citizens. . .these proved fruitless and empty gestures in the face of the unparalleled hatred evidenced by the Holocaust.¹⁰

Not only was the value of Jewish effort to become a contributing part of general society called into question, the very idea that society was perfectable could no longer be defended.

The reality of the Holocaust shattered any facile optimism in the essential goodness and inevitable perfectability of mankind....After the Holocaust it is difficult to believe that merely by adjusting or replacing the political machinery of the modern state and by supporting education and cultural endeavors, one can with certainty produce human beings, "mentschen."¹¹

Particularly stinging was the realization that it was during the administration of a liberal Democratic President supported and championed by Jews, that the St. Louis was turned away from the coast of Florida, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff could find no way to bomb and thus to inactivate Hitler's death camps. Even in America, where the liberal dream had seemed closest to realization, friends had failed:

Almost all the institutions in which we placed our trust, the very human nature on which we counted eventually to bring justice into the world--these have betrayed us.¹²

The establishment of the State of Israel called Reform's assumptions into question in other ways. Early Reform Judaism had supported the idea that Jews differed from their fellow citizens only in religion. Yet the stirring of Jewish pride attendant on the birth of Medinat Yisrael could not be denied. Jews wanted to be part of an "unassimilable peoplehood" whose will was creating a state "that set them apart--proudly--from their fellow citizens."¹³

Furthermore, early Reform theory had portrayed Jews acting in world history only as idea bearers, carrying the universal concept of ethical monotheism. The State Of Israel returned Jews as a people to the role of performers in the conflicts of history, and as builders of a coherent national culture. In supporting their Israeli sisters and brothers through times of triumph and peril, Reform Jews observed with pride Israel's development of a special style of dress, food, and music. Because of the Israeli revival of the Hebrew, and the use of that language to create a vital modern literature, mastery of Hebrew by non-Israelis became an act of ethnic and cultural identification. Gradually, the extant Reform prayerbooks, the Union Prayerbook I and II, were judged

to have too little Hebrew, and because of that--to seem not quite "Jewish" enough. Jewish particularism became attractive and popular. The ways of being Jewish extended far beyond the reach of religion alone. Many who could not relate to the Jewish religion found in their support of Israel and their appreciation of secular Israeli culture a valid way of expressing their Jewish identity. However, "Reform, having cast the Jewish people in the ahistorical role of bearers of the religious idea, made no room in its formulations for the secular Jew."¹⁴ The 1937 Columbus Platform, after all, had stated that:

Though we recognize in the group loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition a bond which still unites them with us, we maintain that it is by its religion and for its religion that the Jewish people has lived.¹⁵

The final factor that undercut the basic premises of early Reform is less easy to pinpoint than the above mentioned historical events. When they entered modern society, Jews found abundant intellectual and spiritual riches to explore. Their confrontation with Western culture was heady and exhilarating, and they embraced the congenial worlds of the university, the arts, literature, science and the professions with a fervent application of talent and industry. So many paths outside of Judaism seemed to lead to truth. Compared to the surrounding attractions, Judaism was like a familiar cousin acting as an escort at a party attended by glittering and fascinating celebrities. "As long as we put our trust in high culture, we had doubts about Judaism."¹⁶ Then, in the 1940's, as shock and horror washed over us, we protested that the Germans had been the most "cultured" nation in Europe. How could such bestiality arise from a cultured nation? Moreover, even in our own society, the

promises of high culture began to fall short of fulfillment:

. . .we have increasingly begun to doubt culture. We have been shocked by a science which wanted to know about things but set aside questions of right and wrong, by a technology which used science for profit yet at great human cost, by a psychiatry which rarely cured, by writers and artists who exposed but could not exalt the human condition.¹⁷

In the political arena as in the laboratories, museums and lecture halls, liberal dreams faded. In the chaotic decade of the 1960's, Vietnam, Watergate, assassinations, riot and corruption fueled the headlines. Eugene Borowitz expressed dismay at "a society going pagan" as he wrote that "We have been shaken by what we have seen happen in human history."¹⁸

The Reform message of tsedek tsedek tirdof that had impelled Jews in numbers far out of proportion to their percentage in the population to initiate and support programs of social justice began to sound quixotic in the face of problems that proved overwhelming:

So much has failed that we once counted on that we are increasingly skeptical of all nearly utopian proposals. We have come to see old problems--ignorance, prejudice, exploitation--as far more complex than we thought. Wherever we turn, new and disturbing problems face us--Jewish survival despite democracy, world hunger despite productivity, overpopulation, the depletion of resources and ecological disaster.¹⁹

It is not that Reform Jews ceased to value culture as a source of joy and enrichment or technological progress as a source of hope for future survival. But these things alone could not provide direction and guidance. Nor did Reform Jews lose all hope that social action could achieve beneficent goals. But secular social action was no longer an adequate substitute for a religious tradition.

By the late 1960's, certainly by the early 1970's, it was time to strike a new balance. The very principles that had made Reform an effective vehicle for carrying Judaism into the modern world were working against Reform in the post-modern world.

The result of the Reform commitment to autonomy was an exaggerated diversity of opinions, especially among the most highly educated and deeply committed Reform Jews, the rabbinic, teaching and leadership strata:

A hundred years ago our leaders may have worried about 'agnostic tendencies.' We must deal with the theological spectrum from mysticism to atheism, from halakhic Judaism to 'polydoxy.'

Now our movement itself is being polarized. The contrasts are crass. Unlike earlier controversies over Zionism and various aspects of social action, they deal with the very foundations of our religious fellowship.²⁰

On the congregational level, the sophisticated exercise of autonomy required of Reform Jews was misunderstood to be a laissez faire permissiveness.

Although we have officially left behind the position of 1885,

wrote Jack Stern, one of the authors of the Centenary Perspective,

I believe we are still wounded by the low image of Reform as a Judaism of minimalism and convenience. In response to the question 'What is a Reform Jew?', a confirmation student wrote the following: 'A Reform Jew is someone who doesn't wear a yarmulke, who doesn't light candles on Friday night, and who goes to Temple when he feels like it.'²¹

Arnold Wolf, another Perspective author, wrote wryly that Reform had been "too successful":

too many people identify themselves as Reform Jews. What they really mean is that they are non-practicing, unaffiliated individuals who are Jews in name only.²²

In addition, Reform's once proud commitment to universalism had had two undesirable outcomes. In the 1960's, other American ethnic groups heard in the slogan "black is beautiful" encouragement to preserve and assert the beauty and pain of their own particularity. Reform Jews were momentarily hurt and confused by the turn of events. It was no longer enough that Jews had marched in Selma, Alabama. Exclusive concentration on universalism was out of date, and those who clung to it did so with a certain defensiveness:

Those who grew up in and loved a Reform Judaism that subordinated particularism to universalism and those who were attracted to the movement by its refusal to be parochial naturally tried to defend the old ideological priorities. They saw in every effort to promote or encourage particularism a threat to their basic faith.²³

Secondly, as society's reinforcement for Reform's universalist ideology diminished, the liturgy voicing that theme began to sound dated. The need for increased particularism in liturgy, precipitated by the Holocaust and by the establishment of the State Of Israel, was thus intensified by a more generalized sense that our words no longer fit our experience. Not only synagogue services, but all Reform observance came under fire. Some thought Reform's concentration on a limited selection of Jewish themes and modes of celebration too restrictive:

Many people who grew up in the Reform movement and had found it too cerebral, uncelebrative, and other-directed now wanted a Reform that was emotive, ritual minded and Jewish community oriented.²⁴

These individuals, brought up in Reform, received support from an ever increasing number of Reform Jews from Eastern European backgrounds brought up in Conservative, Orthodox or unaffiliated homes that had retained some flavor of "Yiddishkeit." The newcomers either changed the

style of classical Reform synagogues or they formed their own congregations, thus diversifying the Movement.

As Reform grew and opened to change, its very strength in encouraging individual and local autonomy threatened its stability and survival. Living through successive generations in a mobile society, Reform developed an authority vacuum. Synagogue affiliation being voluntary, the relationship of members with the community ranged from deep involvement to tenuous association. No minhag America evolved, in the sense that community approval or disapproval might be authoritative in regulating Jewish behavior:

The neighborhoods to which we moved were less cohesively Jewish. Observance decreased, commitment was low, ignorance and apathy were the rule. What one could do and still be accepted among Jews widely increased. Within ourselves we were no longer sure of what a "good Jew" was.²⁵

Even if the sense of community were strong enough to encourage conformity, on what basis could a purposefully changing and diverse community exercise its authority?

Unable to draw on the authority of community standards, Reform still negated the commanding power of traditional standards of authority: Torah, halacha and God. For Reform, Torah was the product of a human process. Halacha was a human institution, and its strictures were considered non-binding. And while ethics were commanded by God, it wasn't really necessary to believe in God, since, following Kant's example, the primacy of moral law could be established by the exercise of human reason.²⁶ "No special experience or act of faith was involved. To have a mind and use it entailed the command to be ethical."²⁷

From what principle then, could the autonomous Reform Jew derive the "ought", the should, and the "must" that a human being needs to

keep behavior consistent, serious and committed? Why would any Reform Jew say, "I can't do that because I am Jewish," or "I must do that because I am Jewish"?

The 1937 Columbus Platform indicated that customs, symbols and ceremonies should be retained if they possessed "inspirational value"--that is, if they reinforced the desire to behave ethically and to work to improve society. These were indeed principles of selection and potential sources of motivation. However, as many Reform Jews discovered, the connection between lighting Shabbat candles and considering oneself an "ethical person" was rather thin. By the 1960's and 70's, even these limited principles had lost their broad power to energize and compel Jewish decision making.

Crisis and Resolution

This section of Chapter II will describe the circumstances of the Centenary Perspective's composition, and will characterize rather broadly the two dominant tendencies in Reform that had to be considered by platform writers and the liturgy committee alike.

In the spring of 1975, while the liturgy committee of the CCAR was finishing the manuscript of Gates of Prayer, the CCAR itself was undergoing a severe crisis. Although in its surface manifestation, the crisis involved only the catalytic question of officiating at mixed marriages, the members realized that the issue was symptomatic of many other problems. Groundwork for the crisis had actually been laid over a period of twenty years. The real issues were authority vs. freedom, and the very closely related issue of universalism vs. particularism.

For about twenty years, there had been "agitation" to produce a Reform guide to religious practice. Those who favored production of the guide hoped that it would accomplish three goals: the reduction of anything-goes "anarchy" in Reform practice, the restoration in modern guise of Jewish interest in halacha ("detailed instruction for action"), and the opening of some form of communication with K'lal Yisrael, especially the traditional rabbinate in Israel.²⁸ The opponents of the guide denounced any action that would intimate a willingness to make "spineless concessions" to orthodoxy.²⁹ Insisting on freedom as a primary value, they objected to any form of "official guidance". Their fear was that recommended options "would quickly turn into expected norms of behavior."³⁰ Extending this fear, they worried that a revival of halacha would lead to sanctions, and thus to the end of intellectual and spiritual autonomy in Reform.

The underlying question, then, in the mixed marriage controversy, was one of authority: "By what right did any group of Reform Jews tell any other groups of Reform Jews what they ought to do?"³¹ This question, being unanswerable, could have paralysed the Reform rabbinate. However, there was general agreement among Reform rabbis that there were serious needs within the community that had to be attended to. Reform Jewry could not afford to have its leadership become mired in a single problem.

In the early 1970's, two sociological studies of the Reform movement, one commissioned by the CCAR (Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism, Theodore I. Lenn, 1972), and one by the UAHC Long Range Planning Commission (Reform Is a Verb, Leonard J. Fein et al., 1972) had pointed to major flaws in the Reform picture.

According to both the Lenn and Fein studies, the Reform Jewish population of the early 1970's constituted a well educated, largely professional and executive group.³² It was a population that might be expected to demand sophisticated and high quality intellectual experiences in any context. Yet the studies showed that the adults surveyed had minimal Jewish educations,³³ and that they had been unsuccessful in communicating basic Jewish values to the younger generation.³⁴ Moreover, while both studies revealed a strong general impulse to affirm Jewish identity,³⁵ Jewish identity itself was shown to be an undefined concept for most Reform Jews.³⁶ The Fein study sought and did not find any evidence of a coherent articulated Reform Jewish ideology. "If there is an ideology of Reform Judaism, the evidence suggests that it is largely irrelevant as a shaper of the values and opinions of Reform Jews."³⁷ While both studies showed that approximately 80% of the populations surveyed considered a positive feeling of Jewish identity to be extremely important, Fein commented that "people with very potent Jewish instincts felt that they [had] no way of supporting those instincts intellectually."³⁸ Not only was this contradiction painful, it had a profoundly negative effect on Judaism's survival into the next generation. "It is extremely difficult to transmit instincts to the young when the justification for those instincts has been lost or is uncertain."³⁹ Another factor limiting Reform Judaism's transmissability was its low level of affect in the realm of substantive, sensory, expressive Jewish experience.⁴⁰

In sum, both studies drew the picture of a highly educated community expecting little from Judaism on either the intellectual or experiential level.⁴¹ It was a community that did not define itself as

"religious,"⁴² and that did not equate Jewish identity with belief in God.⁴³ It gathered in congregational groups largely for the purpose of educating the young so that they would retain Jewish identity⁴⁴--yet it had not committed itself to the necessary intellectual or experiential probing that would make Judaism communicable to a new generation. Reform Jewry as depicted by both Fein and Lenn was a community in dire need of active guidance and support.

In a time of spiritual confusion and search, what Reform Jews needed more than an emphasis on their freedom was some counsel as to what their leaders thought they ought to be doing with it to live their Judaism.⁴⁵

When the vote on mixed marriage came up in 1973, the problem of authority vs. freedom was still unsettled. Aside from judging the mixed marriage issue on its own merits, those who voted against the resolution feared it was the opening wedge of a Reform turn to halacha. "They were fearful lest the CCAR now move into other realms of practice such as Shabbat observance or keeping kosher, overriding individual autonomy, and, in this instance, the autonomy of rabbis to do what seemed right to them."⁴⁶

Aside from confusion about sanctions--who would apply them and on the basis of what authority--antagonism to any hint of halacha in Reform was related to another issue: what direction should Reform take in the future? There were two camps--those who favored an increase in particularistic Jewish expression in Reform, and those who wanted to retain the primacy of universalistic concerns. The pro-particularism group feared that Reform would continue to inspire only token Jewish observance and responsibility, thus continuing its isolation from other Jewish groups and promoting slow assimilation. This "spiritual Holocaust," they

thought, was the "unthinkable act for a modern Jew."⁴⁷ On the other hand, the pro-universalism group remained proud of the accomplishments of Reform in bring Jews into modern society. They feared the approach of a "new parochialism" and the encroachment of "self-ghettoization" of thought and behavior.⁴⁸

One can see most of the Reform rifts of the past four decades or more as skirmishes over this fundamental issue of revising the place of our specific Jewish duties in our religious life. Thus the tensions over Zionism, ritual, the use of Hebrew, the State of Israel, the cantor, the maintenance of a rabbinic school in New York, the introduction of the Sefardic pronunciation of Hebrew, the possibility of prayerbooks opening from right to left, and, climactically, rabbis performing intermarriage all might be considered part of an effort to change our movement from being essentially devoted, as it were, to Reform rather than to Judaism.⁴⁹

The rabbinic argument over whether to perform mixed marriages was therefore, in large part, an argument over whether the Reform community would be closed or open, particularistic or universalistic in its stance.

For all of these interrelated and long-standing reasons, the vote on mixed marriage seemed for a time to threaten the corporate continuity of the CCAR. President Robert Kahn's address to the June 1975 Centennial convention was an attempt to reconcile opposing factions by setting the controversy in the widest possible perspective. Beginning with an analysis of the divisions within Jewry as a whole, Kahn then narrowed his focus to the divisions in Reform. "We need," he said, "to find a definition of our movement which can pull together its disparate factions."⁵⁰ The strongest statement in Kahn's address was its brief manifesto on Jewish survival: "We pledge ourselves to the survival of the Jewish people. We will share the responsibility for that survival with all our hearts and all our might. We affirm the priority of every

Jewish need."⁵¹ The thrust of this statement was to become the cornerstone of the Centenary Perspective. As he completed his remarks, Kahn justified and encouraged diversity as long as differing approaches could be maintained with mutual respect:

. . .we affirm the right of Rabbis and congregations to continue the process of interpreting the Jewish faith by the varied responses of intellect, emotion and temperament which characterize all human life, and to continue to search as individuals and as congregations for more light and more love, seeking not in mutually exclusive nor competitive ways, but with mutual respect, to foster the growing values of our faith.⁵²

By the end of the convention, a committee had been appointed to examine Kahn's speech, and to move from it to a more official, democratically developed expression of Reform unity. The committee appointed was "reasonably representative."⁵³ By March, 1976, a draft, circulated to all Conference members, had evoked 200 written responses. The chairman of the committee then telephoned 5% of the membership, and the committee discussed the draft with groups of colleagues and lay people to get more extended feedback. In June, 1976, the finished document was accepted by approximately 80% of the CCAR's members. President Kahn's diffusion of the crisis had been effective. In working out a statement that expressed their areas of agreement and tolerance, the CCAR had decided that a nominally cohesive Reform movement still had a message to impart. They found themselves able to agree to disagree without rending the existing structure of Reform.

Although the Centenary Perspective is being used here as an indicator of the state of Reform Judaism at the time of the composition of the revised liturgy, the significance of this document should not be thereby blown out of proportion. To accomplish their purpose of stating

"the unity underlying our movement," the committee produced a "minimalist statement,"⁵⁴ held in check by a keen awareness of the factions it was intended to yoke together. "It is not a trail-blazing document, nor was it intended to be. It is, rather, a boundary marking document, descriptive rather than prescriptive."⁵⁵ [A full reprinting of the Centenary Perspective in this paper can be found on pp. 272-278 of Chapter V.]

The Centenary Perspective: an Adaptation to the Post-Modern World

The foregoing sections of Chapter II have described rather carefully the background of the Centenary Perspective. The remainder of this chapter will analyse the document itself, pinpointing at the end the themes that required expression in the revised liturgy.

The Centenary Perspective sits uneasily astride past and future. It tries to hold on to the positive and creative accomplishments of classical Reform, while tentatively adjusting to a problem-ridden present and an uncertain future. Accordingly, the Centenary Perspective retains and tempers the principles of universalism and autonomy, but asserts two balancing terms, survival and peoplehood, to create a dialectic that mirrors the current diversity of the movement. Eugene Borowitz describes the dialectic nature of the document as follows:

If I had to characterize the fundamental thrust of this document, I would say that it is rigorously dialectical. An older Reform Judaism could be satisfied to stress the individual-ethical-universal theme alone. We certainly do not want to give up that faith. Indeed, I think there is no more forthright statement of the commitment of Reform Judaism to personal autonomy than is to be found in this document. But we have learned that

we are also concerned with the communal--traditional--particular side of being a Jew. Our predecessors thoroughly subordinated these values to their universal concerns. We cannot in good conscience easily do that. Our task, then, is to find a way to balance the one set of commitments against the other. Our movement and thus this document are struggling to learn to hold these diverse beliefs in steady tension with one another.⁵⁶

Retaining and Tempering Two Basic Principles of Classical Reform:

Universalism and Autonomy.

The Centenary Perspective continues the Reform tradition of universalist teaching. The word universalism is one of Reform Judaism's symbolic terms. One may define "universalism" as a level of concern that is not parochial, (ie) not limited to the affairs, aspirations, sufferings and satisfactions of Jews alone. The Centenary Perspective expresses such non-parochial attitudes and concerns in several places. "It now seems self-evident" says the document, "that our tradition should interact with modern culture, that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic. . ."⁵⁷ Our religion carries the "Messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed."⁵⁸ And, through the actions that are "the primary expression of a religious life," Jews "strive to achieve universal justice and peace."⁵⁹ In these phrases, the Centenary Perspective upholds a 100 year old Reform tradition of universalism.

However, several qualifications have been made. It is noted that the rest of humanity. . ."remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals."⁶⁰ For this reason, our obligations to the Jewish people and our obligation to all humanity, which until the recent past appeared congruent, now sometimes conflict.⁶¹ While "substantial numbers. . . have accepted our teachings that the ethics of universalism

implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty. . . "some still disagree."⁶² Untempered enthusiasm for universal goals is no longer an adequate response to contemporary Jewish realities. In redefining Judaism's mission, "we no longer speak of Jewish purpose essentially in terms of Jewry's service to humanity."⁶³ "A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us."⁶⁴

The second Reform doctrine salvaged and given new life in the Centenary Perspective is the principle of individual autonomy. Eugene Borowitz claims that no Reform document expresses "the Reform commitment to individual freedom this plainly and this positively."⁶⁵ He counts ten "affirmations" of autonomy: First, there is an explicit "commitment to personal freedom." "Reform Jews respond to change in various ways, according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual." Then there is Reform's "inclination to foster diversity." An "understanding of the complexity of our times" leads to an "acceptance of the diversity" that results as individuals find their own personal solutions to life's problems. "A belief in process". . . and "a broad stance". . . enable Reform to remain "open to any position advocated in the spirit of Reform belief."⁶⁶ The Centenary Perspective itself allows for differing "interpretation and application of the ideas enunciated" therein.⁶⁷ Not only does the Centenary Perspective accept this diversity, but it accepts "such differences as precious" and values diversity as preeminently adaptive. "We see in [such differences] Judaism's best hope for confronting what ever the future holds for us."⁶⁸ Maintenance of a diversified idea pool seems to be this generation's equivalent of our

ancestors' keeping gold jewelery sewn into their coats so they'd be ready to travel. With respectable Reform positions occupying a broad spectrum, Jews are still ready to "travel" in any direction.

However, no matter how precious individual freedom, the exercise of autonomy must meet certain conditions. The risk always inherent in Reform Judaism is that it "treats people with full personal dignity, and they may then act irresponsibly."⁶⁹ Many Jews have taken Reform's teaching about the right of individual choice as a sanction to do only what is personally convenient. "For Reform Judaism that is the primal sin, for making one's basic choices frivolously is using one's unique human power in a way that demeans it and thus lessens oneself."⁷⁰

Therefore, three conditions guide the exercise of autonomy. First, Reform Jews must have full knowledge of Jewish tradition, because autonomy exercised in ignorance is not real choice.

Within each area of Jewish observance, Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.⁷¹

Second, while Reform Jews are encouraged to act and to advocate positions freely, they should do so "in the spirit of Reform Jewish beliefs."⁷² While Reform Jews are genuinely committed to personal autonomy,

we are also committed to continuity of Jewish tradition, and we see the former limited by the latter even as Reform has always stressed that the latter is limited by the former.⁷³

Finally, limits are set on uninformed or frivolous debate by setting up expectations of learning, thoughtfulness, and conscientious advocacy.⁷⁴

With these guidelines, the writers of the Centenary Perspective hoped

to keep the diversity engendered by intellectual autonomy within bounds:

in all our diversity we perceive a certain unity, and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together.⁷⁵

Introducing Balance: The Principle of Peoplehood.

Some measure of the underlying unity of the movement was actually present in the debate on mixed marriage, as each side tried to demonstrate how its position would better insure the ultimate survival and welfare of the Jewish people:

A consensus did emerge from that protracted debate among both those who performed and those who did not perform interfaith marriages. . . the appropriate litmus in arriving at one's own course of action was the best interests of the people. Other considerations seemed adjudged secondary.⁷⁶

In using peoplehood as one of the parameters of their debate, the rabbis simply extended the widespread revival of peoplehood-consciousness that pervaded their movement. Because of the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel, and because of the perceived limitations of a strongly universalistic stance, most Reform Jews today have a far greater communal and historical sense of authority.⁷⁷ The first paragraph of the Centenary Perspective, assessing "what we have taught for 100 years," focuses primarily on "Reform Judaism as part of the Jewish people, rather than a particular society or humanity as a whole."⁷⁸

This assertion of peoplehood is used throughout the Centenary Perspective as a balance for the principles of universalism and autonomy.

Peoplehood and universalism are held in dynamic tension:

We have come to understand that a concern with the needs of all humanity without an equal concern for our own people leads to a denial of the priority of our own

continued existence. . . But, to deny our service to humanity denigrates the call at Sinai and the prophetic emphasis.⁷⁹

At the same time, the notion that Jewish peoplehood is a category of mandatory concern limits the absolute exercise of autonomy:

If our membership in the Jewish people is so much a part of our being, then it legitimately may make claims on us. Our basic Reform principle of personal autonomy now has another premise with which to share power in our lives: Jewish responsibility.⁸⁰

For all of the document's protestations that it encourages diversity, the emphasis on peoplehood established a clear boundary that cannot be transgressed without spiritually leaving Reform.⁸¹ Reform Jews can no longer insist that Judaism is a private matter--experienced solo as they say "We are Jews inside." "To be a Jew is to be part of a people."⁸²

Yet peoplehood is not conceived of as a purely ethnic category: it is also a religious category. Abraham's family of Near Eastern wanderers became a people only after Abraham and others in the family developed a relationship with God. The Centenary Perspective calls Judaism an "uncommon union of faith and peoplehood."⁸³

Already in biblical times the Jews believed that there was One God in all the world and that God was the God of their people in a very special and intimate way. Even when the Jews left their native land through exile and dispersion, they retained this faith. Losing the normal attributes of nationality, they did not give up their ethnicity.⁸⁴

For the Centenary Perspective, the dominant God-experience is that which the Jews encountered as a people. Little is said about individual religious experience, or about the relationship that humanity as a whole might have with God. The concentration is on the connection between the "affirmation of God" and "our people's will to survive."⁸⁵

As consciousness of God once made the Jews a people, consciousness of God-shaped peoplehood may now keep Jews religious:

If one sees one's personal relation to God as part of the Jewish people's historic Covenant relation with God, a more richly traditional sense of authority emerges.⁸⁶

This sense of authority reposing in peoplehood is used to support the obligation of religious practice:

While ethical obligations are validated by the divine authority who commands the ethical deed, religious practice as Reform perceives it originates not with the divine but with the Jewish people in the course of its historic encounter with the divine.⁸⁷

Another Balancing Element: Survival.

In order to perpetuate themselves as a people, and in order to perpetuate their people's receptiveness to God, Reform Jews are called on here to select and to maintain some of the religious practices that have uniquely characterized historic Jewish identity. The task they undertake as a people is not merely to assure physical survival, but to assure their survival as Jews.

The obligation to survive has two implications. First, in the face of continued commitment to universal values which urge Jews to keep working for general human betterment, a comparable commitment to Jewish survival forces Reform Jews to reconsider priorities. With resources increasingly limited, Jews have to confront even harder choices: how much time and money can be devoted to universal causes while important Jewish needs are understaffed and underbudgeted? The Centenary Perspective registers keen awareness of this dilemma, but offers no solution.

The second implication of the obligation to survive is that healthy diversity necessarily has limits. Good survival instincts urge Reform Jews to avoid endless dissension or radical discontinuities of behavior and ideology. Like the term peoplehood, survival is used in the Centenary Perspective to offset the concept of absolute autonomy.

However, survival is used in the Centenary Perspective as much more than a balancing element. It is understood in a "highly symbolic as well as in a literal way."⁸⁸ Jewish survival is first of all a sign that God is real.

Unique among all peoples on earth, Jews have had a continuous collective experience since the beginning of recorded history.⁸⁹

Some see in this survival evidence of God's steadfast purpose and power over history. Others turn the equation around, and see Jewry's continued openness to "new experiences and conceptions of the Divine" as the root of that survival.⁹⁰

While for Reform, the symbolic connotation of Jewish survival may be a post-Holocaust phenomenon, the concept is not new to Judaism:

Jews have always known that their existence had more than tribal worth. So they took courage from knowing that their struggle to exist and to do so in decency was substantially for God's sake. And they hoped that as they put forth their effort so God would, in the mysterious ways that God affects human affairs help them. We today are far less likely to await God's active providence. Yet we also believe that as we work for our people, we work for what is most precious and significant in the universe and draw its power to ourselves.⁹¹

In sum, the Centenary Perspective attempted to fill the authority vacuum by balancing the comfortably familiar Reform code-words, universalism and autonomy with two powerfully symbolic concepts, peoplehood and survival. The Centenary Perspective could now require ritual

observance, tsedakah, and the maintenance of a Jewish home enriched by family devotion--if not for their intrinsic merit and delight--at least for the sake of Jewish survival. Yet because all four terms are held in balance, the idea of survival is not limited to maintenance of a gene pool or preservation of accumulated folkways. Jewish survival remains the continuation of an ancient story of God-seeking and revelation leading to an ultimate messianic culmination. The Jewish people, God-touched, must survive in history as a testament, and as a potential conduit for ongoing revelation. The next section of this chapter will examine the Centenary Perspective's treatment of the two traditional sources of authority: God and Torah.

The Authority of Ongoing Experience: God.

Doing something "for the sake of" a principle implies one kind of authority. However, there is another kind of authority possible in religious life - that is the existential authority of ongoing experience. In its paragraph on God, the Centenary Perspective refers to Judaism's "struggle through the centuries to preserve. . .faith." In the course of this struggle, "we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways."⁹² The implication is that Jewish theology has not been an abstract invention, but a genuine response to living situations. The eternal truths of one generation have sufficed until subsequent generations encountered problems to which inherited revelations proved unresponsive:

As we now study the record of the way Jews historically have talked about God, it seems quite clear that time and temperament, culture and personality have always had a part in shaping Jewish views about God.⁹³

Reform Judaism itself is a case in point. The 1875 Pittsburgh Platform referred to a "God-idea." In 1937, the Columbus Platform spoke in liturgical phrases of the "One Living God who rules the world. . . Lord of the Universe. . . our merciful Father." The Centenary Perspective avoids both the astringency of an intellectual label and the security of familiar prayer terminology. Aside from references to God's "reality" and God's "eternality", the focus of the God paragraph in the Centenary Perspective is on the receiving human spirit. The keynote for Reform in the 1970's is "encounter."

The present generation, while not denying the validity or value of the intellectual approach to God, recognizes that Judaism has been and today should be equally hospitable to those whose relation to God is of that more personal, inexpressible, varied sort we call experience.⁹⁴

The move from "strict rationalism to a tone of existential encounter"⁹⁵ is a necessary change for a movement that can no longer agree on descriptions, categories, or definitions.

The language of the Perspective, in speaking of God, as in all matters is intentionally general. . . The intent was to point to the centrality of God in our religious life, not to dictate which of that spectrum of Jewish understandings should be appropriated as one's own. Relation to God is held up as normative, not any one way of thinking of God.⁹⁶

Some members of the CCAR, among them Joseph Glaser (conversation, March 9, 1980) regret that the Centenary Perspective did not explicitly call for a "profounder faith in God on the part of Reform's adherents." Glaser's concern, which itself points to the continuing post-Centenary Perspective diversity in Reform, runs on two levels. In the course of visits with congregations around the country, Glaser has recognized "a real hunger. . . an awful thirst for spiritual sustenance"

among Reform Jews. . . "People are becoming aware that they really are children of God: they're looking toward their transcendental roots to find meaning in life." In contrast to this yearning among congregants for some guidance in extending their spiritual reach, Glaser sees the Centenary Perspective as merely a "theological statement of condition."

Downplaying the potential power of the encounter idea, Glaser sees the actual text of the Centenary Perspective's God paragraph as tentative, even reticent. The paragraph begins by noting the historical connection between Judaism's "affirmation of God" and the Jewish people's "will to survive." It then refers to the many ways in which Jews have conceived of God through the centuries, and to the current difficulty of maintaining "steady belief and clear understanding" in the light of the "trials of our time." The paragraph asserts, however, that God's reality is the foundation of a Jew's personal life. It therefore expresses Reform's willingness to experience further growth in the way that the Divine can be conceived.⁹⁷ The paragraph's emphasis is on human change rather than on affirming God's enduring power to give meaning, sanctity and value to life. In creating a platform that would be acceptable to all vocal factions of the rabbinic community, the committee perhaps failed to create the rallying cry and inspiration what would have met the needs of average Jews as Joseph Glaser perceives them.

The second level of Glaser's concern is with the authority question. The Centenary Perspective's paragraph on God speaks of "affirmation" of God, "experiences" of God, "conceptions" of God, and of grounding "our lives, personally and communally, on God's reality." Response and obedience to God as M'tzaveh are not explicitly mentioned. The

closest the Centenary Perspective comes to the notion that God "commands" the mitzvot is in the paragraph on Obligations:

Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations, but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living. . . .⁹⁸

The reader is free to determine how to read these two sentences. If the sentences are to be read as separate units, the "claims made upon us" today stand apart from the ethical responsibilities which our founders stressed in that the former are not necessarily commanded by God. But if the sentences are to be connected, God is the agent for both the ethical and the "other" claims. Joseph Glaser asserts firmly that for Reform Jews to feel called upon to change their life styles and to undertake the obligations listed in the Centenary Perspective, the authority of peoplehood and its survival is not enough. "The Obligor must be a 'M'tzaveh'," he says.

Glaser's critique of the Centenary Perspective is important to note in that it signifies an ongoing dialogue within the movement. Despite broad acceptance, the Centenary Perspective did not claim to solve all problems or settle all issues, particularly in the area of faith. In matters of theology, the Centenary Perspective committee found, all that can bind us together is "our unashamed admission of uncertainty."⁹⁹

Without condemning or repudiating, we admit that the answers of the past do not always satisfy our mental search and emotional outreach.¹⁰⁰

Authority and authenticity in the area of theology come only from wholehearted participation in the process of search.

The Authority of Ongoing Experience: Torah.

The same emphasis on process pervades the paragraph on Torah. Uniquely vivid in the chain of Jewish creativity, the Torah testifies to the continuity of the human spiritual process:

The Bible is important then, not because it records the first time people ever came into relationship with God; but it is the earliest record which testifies to a continuity of such experience with God and which discloses an unprecedented freshness of contact with God over centuries.¹⁰¹

From this organic beginning, Torah, or teaching, came to be "produced in every age."¹⁰² The Centenary Perspective says that "gifted Jews in every age amplified the Torah tradition."¹⁰³ Whether their legacy - Talmud, Codes, Commentaries, midrash, theology liturgy or mystical writings, is simply a record of human aspiration to understand God, or whether these writings were actually produced by Divine inspiration working through spiritually sensitive people, "all share in common the recognition that Torah is found at the conjunction of the realm of the human with the realm of the divine."¹⁰⁴ Reform Judaism sees a spiritual quality in much Jewish creativity beyond the Oral Torah¹⁰⁵ even in modern times.

The existential nature of Torah's authority, that is, authority authenticated by a continuous process verifiable by our own living experience of creativity and inspiration, has several implications.

First, since "what happened at Sinai. . . was only one of a series of historic occurrences continuing into the present. . . how Jews should serve God could not be restricted to one pattern authorized by one group, but had to come more directly from the people itself."¹⁰⁶

Responding to God's reality with a sense that we must reflect it in our lives, "we alone fill in the details of what we must do. We thus create religion, its institutions, and its practice."¹⁰⁷ Reform differs with

Conservative and Reconstructionist thought on this point only in the allocation of the people's power to respond and create. Conservative Judaism channels the ongoing process of Torah's divine/human creativity through established rabbinic structures. Reconstructionism envisions some sort of democratic council to regulate change. Reform stresses the primacy of individual conscience. "The individual Jew must be the final arbiter of what is living Torah."¹⁰⁸ Thus one effect of process rather than product's being authoritative in Torah is the validation of autonomy.

The second implication of the ongoing process of Torah creation is that Torah in its broadest sense has acquired the status of durable truth. A core of definable value, dependable and tested over time, has served as "elevation, inspiration - direction, central to Judaism's religious affirmation" throughout its history.¹⁰⁹ Jews can therefore rely on Torah's essential teaching to guide them through the vagaries of current confusion. While contemporary teaching continues to grow and change as part of the ongoing existential process, Torah as a whole commands respect, attention and loyalty. It represents the "log" of a spiritual journey.¹¹⁰ Born of a living experience, Torah and the ongoing chain of Jewish teaching continues to speak to contemporary life as it guides the current selection of Jewish obligations.

The New Dialectic in Action: Three Applications.

The foregoing has been an analysis of the Centenary Perspective's ideological stance. On the basis of this stance, which carefully balances universalism and particularism, autonomy and authority, and experiential process and recorded tradition, the Centenary Perspective addresses the following three questions: How shall Jews live as Jews? How can a comfortable and firmly rooted Diaspora community relate to an embattled Israel?

What does Judaism despite its many changes and diverse variations continue to say about the general human condition, and how shall Jews relate to a non-Jewish world?

How Shall Jews Live as Jews? For earlier generations of Reform, the question of how Jews should live as Jews would have been answered with ethical precepts. However, the new ideological thrust of the Centenary Perspective causes the question to be asked somewhat differently: "what do we need to do? what conception of Jewish life do we require in order for our people to survive?

In order for Reform Judaism to be effectively transmitted from generation to generation, it must become richer in concrete behavior. "Non-practicing, unaffiliated individuals" who identify themselves as Reform Jews but are really "Jews in name only" have little to transmit.¹¹¹ Reform cannot survive for many more generations as a "Judaism of minimalism and convenience."¹¹² Therefore, the Centenary Perspective took a firm stand against the misconception that Reform Judaism is the least "religious" of the variant forms of Judaism because its members are the least observant: "Reform Judaism understands itself fully to continue traditional Judaism's emphasis on action."¹¹³

Moreover, the values that Judaism can teach to contemporary Jews and to society are particularly important now. These are survival values: "responsibility to family, sanctity in marriage, respect for parents, admiration for learning, involvement in the community."¹¹⁴ However. . .

We have realized, too, that Jewish values do not exist by themselves. They grow from the soil of Jewish life: from prayer, study, Shabbat and holiday observance. . .with the growing acceptance of religious expression, Reform Judaism has been called upon to reconsider the place of religious observance in the life of the Reform Jew.¹¹⁵

In doing so, the Centenary Perspective carefully adheres to its role

of consensus document serving diverse and divergent autonomous individuals.

Categories of observance are listed:

creating a Jewish home. . .lifelong study. . .private prayer and public worship; daily religious observances; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence.¹¹⁶

But, specific practices are neither recommended nor even suggested. Instead, Reform Jews are "called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived and to exercise their individual autonomy choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge."¹¹⁷

How Shall the Diaspora Relate to Israel? The second question that the Centenary Perspective confronts with its new ideology is: "How can a comfortable and firmly rooted Diaspora relate to embattled Israel?" The Centenary Perspective describes a delicate balance of obligations. First, Reform Jews have "a responsibility in building the State of Israel and assuring its security. . . ." However, Reform Judaism also continues its firm commitment to all existing Jewish communities, wherever they are located. "A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land. . . ." The operant principle maintaining the tension of this double commitment is "survival." At the present time, the Jewish people's best chance for overall survival seems to be the maintenance of several vital centers.

These centers of Jewish life are not comparable in structure. While the State of Israel functions as a national entity, with a full complement of national institutions, the Diaspora communities are organized primarily in communal units. Although not downgrading the importance of international Jewish voluntary associations such as ORT, Hadassah and B'nai Brith, or benefit associations such as Federation, the Centenary Perspective makes a strong statement about the true focus of Jewish community life. "The

foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue."¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the Diaspora communities are conceived of as essentially autonomous: "each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities."¹¹⁹

The principle that binds the State of Israel and this structurally diffuse Diaspora together is peoplehood interpreted in its widest sense as both a "religious and ethnic" tie. Israel is important to the Diaspora as the Zionist dream of a safe place where Jews can always go. It is also important as one of the three major Jewish communities in the world. It is a source of culture, an inspiring example of "indomitable spirit," a forum providing "unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression."¹²⁰ The Diaspora, looking at the State of Israel, sees more than a political state filled with fellow Jews who must do what they can to survive among the world's nations. The Diaspora also sees a reflection of itself--the whole Jewish people in microcosm. (Tel Aviv, not New York, is the location of the Museum of the Diaspora.) For this reason the Centenary Perspective insists on Reform Jewry's responsibility in defining the State of Israel's "Jewish character." In order that the microcosm will more accurately reflect the present nature of the macrocosm, the Centenary Perspective demands that "Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized in the State of Israel."¹²¹

The principle of peoplehood in action--bridging the structurally incompatible entities of a national state and a related but autonomous Diaspora--is offered as a model for transcending nationalism. If the dialogue between Israel and the Diaspora remains fruitful, if numerous autonomous units can continue to care for and contribute to each other according to their fullest capacity, then the Jewish people as a whole will set "an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals."¹²²

A Tentative Hope: Messianism Revised. The final question to which the Centenary Perspective applies its new ideological principles is: what does Judaism say about the human condition, and how shall Jews relate to the world as a whole. These are really two questions: the answer to one is religious, the answer to the other is partly religious and partly political.

The Centenary Perspective retains a view of human life that rests on a traditional Jewish paradox. Human beings are both images of God and free to do great evil. More than a "complex configuration of chemicals,"¹²³ human beings participate in "God's purpose and power" through the phenomena of. . .consciousness. . .intellect. . .will and personhood."¹²⁴ The scientific vision of electrical and biochemical organization is wholly inadequate to explain the "immediate personal experience" of consciousness. Hence, human life is a "mystery built into creation."¹²⁵ The added dimension that cannot be attributed to chemicals, the mental and spiritual energy that cannot be accounted for in matter, however finely organized, is what Jews have called God's image. Because God is eternal, the Centenary Perspective takes a leap of faith to assert that the God image in human beings is somehow also eternal. "We cannot believe that having shared so intimately in God's reality in life we do not continue to share it beyond the grave."¹²⁶ As befits a movement that stresses diversity, the actual language of the passage "share in God's eternality despite the mystery we call death" lends itself to many interpretations. Nevertheless, the statement is striking for Reform, which worked so hard in the past to distance itself from older Jewish concepts of life after death and tehiyat ha maytim.

However, the same concept of imago dei which ennobles human life and justifies hope that human beings share in God's eternality has a darker implication. Full consciousness, intellect, will and personhood are inconceivable without freedom. Autonomy requires full freedom to choose - even to choose evil:

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbounded confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have lived the terrible tragedy and been compelled to reappropriate our tradition's realism about the human capacity for evil.¹²⁷

The Centenary Perspective's statement of Jewry's relation to the world as a whole must be seen in the context of this fresh realization of humanity's potential for both good and evil. Judaism's enduring faith has always been directed toward "a messianic vision of sin overcome and God's will as the inner law of every human heart."¹²⁸ The messianic vision has never been exclusively particularistic, but has always expressed hope for all humanity. In the classical Reform formulation, "education, culture and social welfare politics would transform human life."¹²⁹ Through human activism, steady human progress would achieve the realization of Messianic Era.

The Centenary Perspective remains true to the traditional affirmation of a universal messianic dream. The phrases "messianic expectations," "humanity will be redeemed," "messianic fulfillment," and "universal justice and peace" indicate the constancy of Reform's faith in the moral goal and purpose of history. Post Holocaust, however, this is a faith without naivete, a faith held fast despite all counterblows, a deeply religious statement. Contemporary Jews know that humanity's potential for good must overcome a real propensity for evil.

Where the Centenary statement differs from the Classical Reform position is in the accompanying political statement of how Jewry can work best to bring about the messianic future. The particularist themes developed throughout the Perspective, "peoplehood," and "survival" shape Reform's new messianic mission.

"What the Jews now offer humankind is not an idea; but their 'existence. . . survival. . . witness.' The emphasis on peoplehood has become the ground of a new universalism."¹³⁰

Judaism's contribution toward humanity's messianic destiny will no longer be so bold as "application of [Judaism's] teachings to the economic order, to industry and commerce, and to national and international affairs". . . or "the elimination of manmade misery and suffering, of poverty and degradation, of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife."¹³¹ What Jews have to offer now is more modest in scale:

The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope. . . We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny.¹³²

Israel brings its message to humanity not by teaching and preaching, but by living as an example--by continuing to survive:

The mission of Israel today is to be the best Jewish people before God that we can be. That will give the world whatever lesson we have to teach them in what is presently the most effective way of doing so.¹³³

Implications for Liturgy Revision

In summary, the Centenary Perspective presents a dialectic argument, its central message being that Reform Judaism as a movement, and Reform Jews as individuals, must juggle and balance contrasting values. The old

Reform message of universalism and autonomy remains valid for Reform today. But, these concepts must be balanced and qualified by a new appreciation of peoplehood and survival.

(1) Retaining their universalist commitments, Reform Jews are urged to continue their work on behalf of all humanity. However, they are also obliged to focus on particularistic Jewish activities, and even to reexamine universalist commitments when such involvement might threaten Jewish survival interests. Concern for the Jewish group, and pride in the Jewish experience are important values in post-Centenary Perspective thought which must be expressed in Reform liturgy.

(2) The longevity of the Jewish people results from its ability to balance the conservative principle of group continuity with the dynamic principle of adaptation to changing conditions. The historic experience of the Jewish people has been like the growth of an individual: despite development and change, maturation and response to outside influences, essential identity has remained constant. The Centenary Perspective sees the changes in Judaism's approach to God and to Torah as part of a process. While the answers of one generation may be different from the answers of another generation in a different set of circumstances, a core of value and feeling remains constant. Both preservation and adaptation take place simultaneously. Reform Jews affirm the Covenant at Sinai, and, at the same time, remain open "to new experiences of the divine." Accordingly, a revised liturgy must draw on the entire library of Jewish creativity.

(3) Acceptance of historical diversity is echoed by Reform's openness to contemporary diversity. Retaining full personal autonomy, Reform Jews are encouraged to explore Jewish tradition and to respond

to the call of that tradition creatively. But when diversity threatens the fabric of the Reform community, the Centenary Perspective reminds us of the value of group survival. Our liturgy must allow ample expressions of diversity, while, at the same time, providing a clearly identifiable structure for common worship.

(4) Given the inevitability of change in Jewish life, the Centenary Perspective tries to find some principle by which Reform Jews can regulate the direction and pace of that change. What is offered is the moral imperative of Jewish survival. The concept of survival delineated by the Centenary Perspective is twofold, and any appeal to one aspect of this principle is inadequate without consideration of the other part.

In a post-Holocaust world, Jewish survival is first of all a physical issue. With Jews trapped in the Soviet Union, in Iran and in Syria, concern for Jewish life and freedom is a major agenda. Likewise, the safety and wellbeing of Jews in Israel requires constant vigilance. Even in North America, Jewish survival is threatened. A low Jewish birthrate and a growing rate of divorce and mixed marriages chip away at the Jewish population. Scholarship, museums, publishers, synagogues and schools require both financial support and a clientele. Jewry's first survival obligation is to make sure that its population does not dip below a critical mass.

However, physical survival is only half of the obligation: Jewish survival means that we must survive as Jews. In order to perpetuate Jewish survival in more than the barest physical terms, Reform Jews must turn again to religious roots, undertaking obligations for religious practice as well as ethical obligations.

Why is distinctive Jewish survival so important? All organisms struggle to survive. What gives Jewish survival its unique meaning and its right to be regarded as a principle of authority for Reform decision making? The survival imperative is justified, first of all, by the past: we will survive to refute the evil that has touched us. We will refuse to let righteousness and gentleness of spirit be blown away in ashes. But the future also calls for Jewish survival: "Jewish survival," the Centenary Perspective says, "is a message to all humanity, a beacon of the indomitability of human will, evidence that God may indeed be involved in human history."

Many factors militate against Jewish survival. While Jews struggle to endure as a living testimonial to God's involvement in human history, the contemporary audience for their achievement is scarcely applauding. Accordingly, the Centenary Perspective's concluding paragraph on "Hope," in contrast with Reform's utopian pronouncements of 1937, is a modest but moving statement: "We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny." The liturgy that carries this message must be realistic about the world, and about Jewry's place in it. Yet at the same time, a modern liturgy must offer comfort, continual challenge, and reinforcement for whatever fragments of faith and courage a contemporary worshipper can muster.

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39. Fein, p. 144-5.
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42. Lenn, p. 396.
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61. Centenary Perspective, p. xxiv.
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63. Borowitz, Book III, pp. 109-110.
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65. Borowitz, Book I, p. 114.
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87. Jack Stern, p. 59.
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89. Polish, p. 43.
90. Centenary Perspective, p. xxi.
91. Borowitz, Book II, pp. 16-17.
92. Centenary Perspective, p. xxi.
93. Borowitz, Book II, p. 22
94. Ibid., pp. 24-5.
95. Polish, p. 41.

96. Ibid.
97. Centenary Perspective, p. xxi.
98. Centenary Perspective, pp. xxii-xxiii.
99. Elliot D. Rosenstock, "Diversity Within Unity, the Hallmark of Reform," CCAR Journal XXIV (Spring, 1977), p. 34.
100. Ibid.
101. Borowitz, Book II, p. 139.
102. Borowitz, Book II, p. 116.
103. Centenary Perspective, p. xxii.
104. Polish, p. 43.
105. Borowitz, Book II, p. 145.
106. Ibid., p. 105.
107. Borowitz, Book III, p. 34.
108. Borowitz, Book II, pp. 113-14.
109. Robert A. Rathman, "III. Torah," CCAR Journal XXIV (Spring, 1977), p. 54.
110. Polish, p. 43.
111. Wolf, p. 22.
112. Jack Stern, p. 59.
113. Borowitz, Book III, p. 18.
114. Goldman, p. 29.
115. Ibid.
116. Centenary Perspective, p. xxiii.
117. Ibid.
118. Centenary Perspective, p. xxiv.
119. Ibid.
120. Centenary Perspective, p. xxiii.
121. Ibid.

122. Centenary Perspective, p. xiv.
123. Borowitz, Book II, p. 48.
124. Ibid., p. 47.
125. Ibid., p. 47.
126. Borowitz, Book II, pp. 48-9.
127. Centenary Perspective, p. xxv.
128. Borowitz, Book II, p. 95.
129. Borowitz, Book III, p. 177.
130. Borowitz, Book III, p. 183.
131. CCAR, Columbus Platform of 1937: Borowitz, Book III, "Supplement."
132. Centenary Perspective, p. xxv.
133. Borowitz, Book III, p. 183.

CHAPTER III

GATES OF REPENTANCEIntroduction

In the additional prayers of Yom Kippur afternoon, Gates of Repentance adapts a quotation from Abraham Joshua Heschel:

When you pray, know before whom you stand. To be able to pray is to know how to stand still and to dwell upon a word. This is how some worshippers of the past would act. They would repeat the same word many times, because they loved and cherished it so much that could not part with it.¹

This chapter will examine Gates of Repentance to find the catch words and concepts that this new work of liturgy repeats and upon which it dwells. Recurrent words, phrases and poetic themes are clues to the ideas and attitudes that the authors and users of this prayerbook cherish. The passages to be discussed will be the prayer texts of the High Holiday services. Torah portions and the selected meditations that precede services have not been included in the analysis.

Throughout its pages, Gates of Repentance embraces a number of contemporary quests: the quest for spirituality, the quest for rootedness in the identity of peoplehood, the quest for personal wholeness and fulfillment, the quest for clear values and vision, and the quest for some justification for hope about the future of the world.

The most striking characteristic of the texture of Gates of Repentance is that these present day concerns are contained within or juxtaposed immediately next to traditional rubrics. Traditional passages

are set like jewels in a new matrix that explicitly articulates twentieth century anxieties and insights. The mix is thought provoking and somewhat poignant. It recalls the vast extent of time and circumstance within which Jews have been asking and answering spiritual questions. By composing but not homogenizing elements from every period of Jewish literature, Gates of Repentance exemplifies the Centenary Perspective's vision of the ongoing creation of Torah:

For millenia, the creation of Torah has not ceased,
and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the
chain of tradition.²

For orderliness, and for the sake of comparison, this chapter will follow the same organizational plan as Chapter I. Within each section: God, Israel, plot and subplot, this chapter will compare and contrast Gates of Repentance with the traditional mahzor, seeking the language and concepts wherein Gates of Repentance responds to present day needs.

God

Our Ambivalence

"In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith," says the Centenary Perspective,

we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways.
The trials of our own time and the challenges of modern
culture have made steady belief and clear understanding
difficult for some.³

Confusion rather than clarity, doubt rather than certainty, ambivalence rather than wholeheartedness characterize an unknown but large proportion of the High Holiday audience. For people who feel these emotions to have exposed themselves to the High Holiday worship experience

is effort enough. It would be unthinkable for a modern liturgy not to help them express their spiritual condition.

What do we serve here?
To what end is our effort?
Why do we assemble?
To whose voice do we hearken?
Here we are,
Our presence a question,
Yet every word a hope.
Challenged by this time,
Let each begin response. (GOR163)

The present High Holiday audience is painfully aware of the loss of religiosity that has occurred in the past several generations.

Judaism is no longer an island of spiritual security:

Lord, today we turn to You, uncertainly proclaiming
Your glory with scarce remembered words of a half
forgotten faith. (GOR446)

But the modern mind has set obstacles in the path of its own belief,
"Love us," we say to God, "as much as we will let You." (GOR22) Among
other factors, the lure of secular humanism has caused modern Jews to
draw back from total commitment:

So, endlessly revealed amid Your concealments,
You stand awaiting our search, to lead us, with
many a fall, upward to heights we tremble to
climb. (GOR215)

Part of the difficulty that moderns have with emunah shelemah is,
of course, the Holocaust which poses a problem for belief that has not
been resolved. Added to this problem is the nagging awareness of messianic
promises unfulfilled, creation woefully incomplete. "We see imperfection,
disorder and evil all about us." (GOR102) In the tradition of Rabbi Levi
Yitzhak of Berditchev,⁴ Gates of Repentance dares to suggest that it might
be God Who needs to be forgiven for the conditions of life that drain
one's strength and sap one's faith:

For all we sought and missed, or left unclaimed,
 for all the dreams we had and lost. . .
 for love denied, or seen with too much truth. . .
 for all adventure, before the quest is ended,
 abandoned or betrayed, for beauty misted by the
 half-lights of vision. . .for heavens, that had
 they been accessible were heavens only by the
 side of hell,
 for all of us who die before we live. . .
 for all the crippled feet on the long road You
 made for angels,
 we forgive You, God. (GOR379)

This ambivalence towards God is a major departure from the traditional mahzor's firm expressions of faith in God's goodness and power. Yet, as despair was not a part of Levi Yitzhak's bold Yom Kippur address, it is not a part of the message of Gates of Repentance either. The same passage that refers to "imperfection, disorder and evil" also says, "But before our eyes is a vision of perfection, order and goodness. These too we have known in some measure." (GOR102)

Mystery and Metaphor

The attempt to integrate both kinds of experience, of evil and of good, into "one great harmony" (GOR102) leads the modern mind to a mystery that cannot be analysed or logically verified. The traditional mahzor confronted the mystery of God by presenting God robed and arrayed in metaphoric roles as Creator, King, Father and Judge. While Gates of Repentance continues to cherish this terminology, it also strives to articulate an awareness that God is beyond such attempts at comprehension.

You are just beyond the horizon of the mind, a
 vision new to us yet seen before, like a memory
 of the future, a promise already kept. (GOR212)

When Gates of Repentance does assay original metaphor to convey the "mystery of a Presence," (GOR118) its effort is quite different from

that of the traditional liturgy. Traditional liturgy's imagery displays a faith that God has the power to prevent or to make things happen in the world. As a sovereign, God rules the nations and acts as the sponsor of history. As a judge, God pronounces sentence on groups or on individuals. The Holocaust has changed this perception. How, in view of the six million, can a new liturgy express the contemporary meaning of God's righteous judgment and merciful protection? In what way does God oversee pattern and event, weaving the fortunes of humankind into a fabric of purpose? Gates of Repentance does not eliminate traditional liturgy's emphasis on the gevurot, but Gates of Repentance adds through a new kind of metaphor, an alternate approach to understanding how God becomes manifest in the world. This new metaphoric framework is a list of the attributes of the human soul, with God now referred to as mind, will, heart and power:

Praised be the Mind that unifies all creation.
 Praised be the will that gives us power to choose
 our way
 Praise be the Heart that inspires in us a vision
 of justice and love,
 Praised be the Power that brings healing to the
 sick.
 Praised be the One who is present in the miracle
 of prayer. (GOR185)

The parallelism of God's attributes and human attributes, Mind and mind, Will and will, allows the worshipper to envision God's protection and guidance as an inner process:

We remember what You mean to us,
 as signs appear
 when paths diverge.
 We remember what You mean to us
 when empty days
 are now fulfilled. (GOR213)

Rather than being a separable external phenomenon, God is perceived within

the human spirit as an inner voice, an impulse toward goodness, or a sensation of peace and certainty:

You are with us in our prayer, in our love and our doubt, in our longing to feel Your presence and to do Your will. You are the still clear voice within us. . .Therefore, O God, when doubt troubles us, when anxiety makes us tremble, and pain clouds the mind, we look inward for the answer to our prayers. There may we find You, and there find courage and endurance. (GOR320)

God can be the "source of joy within us." (GOR29) When one prays or lives well, one allows the God within to sing: "May I sing because I love, not afraid to waste my sweetness upon the void, but reflecting in my soul's flight the universal God who sings through me." (GOR406) The High Holiday service becomes an occasion to strengthen the consciousness of Divinity within, a time to recapture one's awareness of purity and strength:

May this be such a moment, a time of deeper attachments to the godlike in us and in our world, for which we shall give thanks and praise. (GOR363)

Of course, this awareness of God within comes only to those who see- and welcome it. The traditional image of God's accepting prayer is thus transformed into a vision of the worshippers' accepting God, and finding, in that moment of openness, the blessing of feeling loved and protected: "There are moments when we hear the call of our higher selves, the call that links us to the divine. Then we know how blessed we are with life and love." (GOR363) While God is not completely identical with our best selves, God's power to help and to be with us is limited until we identify ourselves with God: "Within and beyond us, O God of Life, You are there. You dwell whenever we let You in. When we flee from You, we flee from ourselves." (GOR368)

The first two parts of this section have indicated how modern ambivalence toward God and the religious implications of the Holocaust have caused significant departures in Gates of Repentance from the concepts and language of the traditional liturgy. The remainder of this section of Chapter III will explore the changes that Gates of Repentance worked even on the traditional metaphoric roles of God in the High Holiday drama.

God as Creator

For those who cannot pray to a Divine personality, but who still wish to express their awe, delight and thanksgiving for those attributes of existence that others call divine, Gates of Repentance finds new equivocal ways to refer to God as Creator.⁵ In addition to prayers addressed to the traditional "Creator," such as, "Great and holy Maker of all the living, You create the world, Your child, anew at every moment," (GOR83) Gates of Repentance contains prayers that praise the "Power of Creation."

Blessed is the grace that crowns the sky with stars,
and keeps the planets on their ways: the law that
turns our night to day, and fills the eye with light;
the love that keeps us whole, and day by day sustains
us. (GOR99)

Praised be the Power that brings renewal to the
soul, the vital song that makes creation dance.
(GOR100)

Some of these passages may be read either as referring to God or not, as the reader chooses: "Great is the eternal power at the heart of life. . . ." (GOR175) God is seen in these passages as a sort of elan vital, the unseen motivating force that transforms matter into living tissue. God is "the source of life and power." (GOR62)

Yet even in these equivocal passages, the spark that quickens is not without a purposeful, ethical dimension:

Blessed is the gift of life, blessed the Source of life and its tasks. (GOR67)

The Power whose gift is life, who quickens those who have forgotten how to live. (GOR399)

With all its concessions to modern doubt, Gates of Repentance concurs with the traditional mahzor that creation is completed by revelation:

The heavens declare the glory of God! the arch of sky reveals His handiwork. Day after day the word pours out: night after night knowledge goes forth. (GOR92, from Ps. 19)

God's power moves directly from the physical to the moral sphere. The point of creation is ethical knowledge: "Blessed is the power of holiness that leads the world to the rule of goodness." (GOR183)

For those who must find their way gradually to this sense of holiness through experiences of awe and wonder, Gates of Repentance offers poems on "Seeking and Finding." (GOR383-388)

How does one find the Eternal God?
in heaven and earth,
In a clap of thunder, in a whisper of the soul,
In praise on yellowed parchment in an ancient tongue,
In yearning of the heart, in a child, not yet born.
Taste of tears and wine, sight of starry skies (GOR386)

The traditional mahzor does not dwell on the multiplicity of creation. Its language does not often bring the glories of the natural world into the synagogue. But Gates of Repentance consciously does so:

Let us rejoice in the light of day, in the glory and warmth of the sun, in the reawakening of life to duty and labor. In the earth with its hills and valleys, its widespread fields of grain, its fruit and hidden treasure. (GOR320-321)

Now in awe we behold the wonder of being: an awe-some pageant of shapes and forms, yet all akin, one family of life! (GOR63)

Yet, wonder at the marvels of creation is not the same as knowledge of God. ". . . These are a mere glimpse of Your ways and how faint a whisper we hear of You!" (GOR210) Therefore, Gates of Repentance augments its God-in-nature passages with claims that God is also present

In the love of fathers and mothers who have nurtured our lives, with whose blessing we have gone forth to our own work in the world.

In the children who bless our homes, whose eager minds and hearts are the promise of tomorrow. (GOR321)

God's role as Creator is completed in the human dimension:

We pray for wisdom to treasure all creation; we ask for insight to see its glory; we hope for courage to trust its goodness; we yearn for grace to fill the world with gladness; we seek the strength to help redeem it. (GOR63)

Giver of Light

As in the traditional mahzor, the imagery of light ties together many related themes: God's presence, revelation and mitzvah, the spark of faith passed from generation to generation, and inner illumination.

We ask for the blessing of God's presence in a metaphor that suggests the Eternal light of the synagogue:

Maker, Parent, Teacher Shaper bless us, bless us.
and your presence be a light.
Resting here and dwelling here,
Your Name, Torah and Teaching
be a light, a lamp, a warming flame. (GOR163)⁶

Light imagery elsewhere recalls the pillar of fire that led our ancestors through the wilderness:

May the light of the divine shine forth to lead us,
to show us the good we must do, the harmony we
must create. (GOR49)

Another image of flame ties the ancient Exodus and Sinai experiences to today's living Judaism:

Remember
 The bush You kindled once in the desert air,
 Years ago, on Horeb's lonely sand,
 That fire You lit to set the centuries aflame
 And say to us Your endless, perfect Name,
 I am what I will be--
 It burns eternally now, that light
 Upon our altars now, against the night. (GOR21)

Light is a symbol of revelation, ethical insight, mitzvot and ultimately, redemption:

So day and night, early and late, we will rejoice
 in the study of Torah, we will walk by the light
 of Mitzvot. (GOR25)

When justice burns within us like a flaming
 fire. (GOR254)

Illumine our lives with the light of Your Torah,
 for by Your light do we see light. Grant us this
 year a glimpse of the light of redemption, the
 light of healing and peace. (GOR17)

Finally, light is a symbol of inner illumination, the glow that makes human beings holy:

As in the heart of matter a flame flares unseen to
 bring us warmth, so in the human heart a spark of
 goodness glows, a portent of renewal, of life,
 of peace. (GOR184)

The inner light may be a feeling of hope, (GOR522) of clarity of vision (GOR276) or of release from guilt:

Lord of darkness and dawn, the God who opens the
 gates of mercy, who gives light to all who await
 forgiveness. (GOR305)

All of these images, though here expressed in the rhythms of modern verse, are familiar from the traditional mahzor. One instance of the imagery of light however, is so compressed in meaning, so suggestive in its context that it seems wholly new. The image occurs at the conclusion of a poem about guilt. The relevant portion is quoted here:

. . . And again we wander the wilderness
 For our transgressions
 Which are confessed in the daily papers.
 Except the Lord of hosts had left us
 A very small remnant
 We should have been as Sodom
 We should have been as Gomorrah.
 And to what purpose, as the darkness closed about,
 And the child screams in the jellied fire,
 Had best be our present concern,
 Here in this wilderness of comfort
 In which we dwell.
 Shall we now consider
 The suspicious postures of our virtue. . .
 Shall we ask,
 Where is there one
 Mad, poor and betrayed enough to find
 Forgiveness for us, saying,
 'None does offend,
 None, I say,
 None'?
 Listen, listen
 But the voices are blown away,
 And yet, this light,
 The work of thy fingers. . . . (GOR332)

There are two images of flame near the beginning of this poem. Sodom and Gomorrah are used in the context of an oblique allusion to the Holocaust. Had God not spared a remnant, the Jews would have been gone in the flames of Kristallnacht and the smoke of the chimneys as completely as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah perished in that conflagration. The child, screaming in the jellied fire of napalm, reminds those who survived the Holocaust by an accident of geography that silence during any "holocaust" is unacceptable, no matter who the victims are. Abraham was not silent about Sodom. His descendants should not be silent in modern times. Given the darkness closing all about, the poem asks whether the lesson of the Holocaust was truly learned, whether the example of Abraham was followed--or whether the "wilderness of comfort" has seduced the descendants of Abraham and of the Holocaust into indifference and silence.

The poem asks other painful questions: is it possible that choices between values are so calibrated that the choice of a good value ("I want to spend the time with my family. . .I've given to this charity, so I'll pass on that one. . .") can have bad consequences? These are disquieting questions to ask of responsible people who cannot be expected to save the world. The voices of the good, those who might say "Yes. . .try it," are "blown away."

What remains is "this light, the work of thy fingers." (GOR332) Is the light forgiveness, God's compassion for people in their all too human inadequacy? Is it the indifferent dawn that daily defies the heartbreak of the previous night with the promise of a new day? Is it the calming and elevating sense of wonder despite all pain--such as Viktor Frankl experienced in Auschwitz?⁷ Or is it the inner light of the human soul that persists despite all error and wrongdoing? The poem ends with a supplication taken from among the Selichot prayers preceding the Confessional of the traditional Arvit L'Yom Kippur:

The soul is Thine, and the body is Thy creation:
O have compassion on Thy handiwork. . . (GOR332)

Ideal King

Gates of Repentance retains intact the sovereignty theme of the traditional mahzor. "Your throne stands firm; Your sovereignty and faithfulness are everlasting." (GOR171) While references to a warrior God have been dropped, the rest of the traditional language is used with remarkable lack of self-consciousness in an age that has not only rejected monarchy, but also has been badly hurt by totalitarian authority. Coupled for so long with "Father"--the word King has lost its political overtone,

retaining from the traditional liturgy only the implication of loving protector: "You are our King, delivering us from the hand of oppressors, saving us from the fist of tyrants, doing wonders without number, marvels that pass our understanding." (GOR57) In the equivocal passages as well, wherein God becomes "the power that makes for freedom," or "the Power that shields us in every age," (GOR37) sovereignty implies benevolence.

Again paralleling the traditional mahzor, several of Gates of Repentance's references to God's sovereignty are carefully joined with and justified by references to God as the Creator "Our God and God of our ancestors, may You rule in glory over all the earth. . .Reveal the splendor of Your majesty to all who dwell on earth, that all Your works may know You as their Maker, and the living acknowledge You as their Creator." (GOR35)

Ultimately, however, it is necessary for a modern prayerbook to uncover a valid contemporary understanding of the Kingship image: this Gates of Repentance does by once more probing the soul's inner capacity. "On this day, when memory and promise are one, the song of our lives and deeds goes forth to the God enthroned within us." (GOR363)

Tender Father

In the traditional mahzor, the role of Father is one in which God exercises mercy and compassion. The role is described with great delicacy and reluctance, as if the writers did not presume to press so intimate a relationship. Gates of Repentance, in its struggle for affective language that will arouse an emotional response in modern worshippers, dares frankly anthropomorphic imagery:

We call you Avinu. As a loving parent, forgive our sins and failings and reach for us as we reach for You. (GOR121)

O Hope of Israel:
In our weakness, give us strength.
In our blindness, be our guide.
When we falter, hold our hand. (GOR250)

God of the beginning, God of the End,
God of all creatures, Lord of all generations:
With love you guide the world, with love You
walk hand in hand with all the living (GOR366)

Lord, I cry out to You,
and from Your holy mountain's summit
Your answer comes.
I lie down and sleep,
and then I am awake
safe in Your hand
and unafraid. (GOR50)

This imagery is a variant of the tendency throughout Gates of Repentance to make God real for worshippers by having them look within themselves. A merciful and protecting God may be impossible to envision. But anyone can call to mind the sensation of feeling protected and tenderly guided.

Righteous Judge

The briefest glance at the traditional mahzor will confirm that God's role on the High Holy days is to Judge all the nations, especially Israel. Again, Gates of Repentance seeks contemporary meaning in the external metaphor by converting the function of the judge's role into an internal process. Called to judgment in the traditional language, "On this day we are called to the sanctuary by a summons as exalting and enduring as the everlasting hills: Prepare to meet your God O Israel," (GOR293) Israel undertakes its own judgment: "Judge us less harshly than we can judge ourselves." (GOR295)

This is a day of judgment; today we remember our
deeds. This is a day of questioning, and we
ask; What have we done with the gift of life? (GOR362)

While the procedure of self judgment coexists in Gates of Repentance
with traditional language that externalizes judgment, locating it in
God:

In truth You are
Judge and Arbiter,
Counsel and Witness, (GOR312)

the emphasis in the new liturgy is on judgment as an internal human
process which enhances one's power over one's own behavior:

We pray for love to encompass us for no other
reason save that we are human--that we may all
blossom into persons who have gained power over
our own lives. (GOR399)

Sensitive Counselor

The traditional mahzor has been compared, in this paper, to a
courtroom drama, the plot of which brings Israel before God as Judge.
While the theatrical model remains appropriate for organizing one's
understanding of Gates of Repentance, an adjustment might be made in
the setting. Rather than a courtroom drama, the High Holiday liturgy
might be seen as a psychological drama, with God, as therapist, listening
patiently, prodding occasionally, as the patient removes mask after mask
in the search for authenticity and inner truth. To God as Judge, Israel
comes for pardon and reprieve: to God as counselor, Israel comes hoping
to talk its way through to balance and wholeness:

Lord our God, we turn now to You once more
to cry out our longing
and the longing of all men and women
for a beginning of that wholeness
we call peace. (GOR497)

A fuller exploration of God's role as the counselor to whom Israel turns to find greater meaning and satisfaction in life will follow later in this chapter.

Israel

As in the traditional mahzor, the character of Israel portrayed in Gates of Repentance is double-faceted. At one moment, the voice of this character is humanity's voice, struggling with the confessions, complaints and aspirations common to all mortals. At another moment, Israel's voice speaks of its particular peoplehood, conscious of its distinctive history and projected destiny.

The Stress on Human Dignity

The traditional Jewish paradox of comprehending simultaneously the insignificance of the human condition and the grandeur of human life defines the parameters of Gates of Repentance's portrayal of humanity. Our fragility is expressed in metaphor:

. . . a leaf in the storm, a fleeting moment
in the flow of time, a whisper lost among the
stars (GOR293)

and also in simple declaratives:

Remember how exposed we are
to the chances and terrors of life
We were afraid.
We sometimes chose to fail. (GOR371)

Our fallibility and suffering are laid out plain: the victims and victimizers, the losers and wasters of life all are noted:

My people's pains have flamed in sacrifice
Upon your altar through slow moving time.
Pain for all evil, hatred, cruelty,

For the sick of body and the sick of heart,
 For all the loneliness and all the lovelessness,
 The unmeasurable loss of those that know not You
 The pain of all the world, dear God, I place
 Before Your shrine. (GOR380)

Yet, quickly, in almost all cases when mortal frailty is mentioned, a reminder of humanity's essential worth and dignity follows:

We, dust and ashes, are endowed with divinity:
 compounded of clay, we live in dimensions clay
 cannot enter, regions where the air vibrates
 with Your presence. (GOR295)

Like the traditional mahzor, Gates of Repentance finds the glory of humanity in consciousness and in freedom of choice:

. . .and life gave birth to man and woman
 And they became conscious
 Aware that they were free
 to create or destroy
 to live or to die. (GOR249)

However, whereas the traditional mahzor deals with choice implicitly, Gates of Repentance celebrates choice per se: "The world was created for the sake of choice, For the sake of the chooser." (GOR387, cf. 215)

Our ability to choose between good and evil, our partnership with God through "creation's long unfolding," (GOR366) and our capacity for love and justice are themes familiar from the traditional mahzor's conception of humanity ennobled by having been created in God's image. But, the new liturgy works some subtle changes on this theme. First, Gates of Repentance far exceeds the traditional mahzor in its repeated stress on human dignity, and especially on the value of the human mind:

The stars of heaven, awesome in their majesty,
 are not more wonderful than one who charts their
 courses. The elements arrayed in perfection are
 not marvels greater than the mind that beholds them.
 This miracle, matter, begets a wonder: the body
 thinks; insight comes from flesh, the soul is born
 of dust to build towers of hope, to open within us
 doors of lamentation and love. (GOR367)

Second, the traditional mahzor presents the issue of choice in sharply limited terms. One either turns away from God or returns to God and Torah. One follows either the yetser hatov or the yetser harah. But Gates of Repentance presents a concept of choice more complex, in keeping with a Judaism that values personal autonomy and diversity and is not willing to build a fence around the one good life:

You set before us many paths to tread, that we might search and find the way that is true for us. We thank You for Your gift of choice. (GOR366)

Finally, Gates of Repentance goes beyond simply proclaiming human dignity, and challenges the worshipper to truly value the dignity of others:

You endowed people with freedom; we must not enslave them; You gave them judgment; we must not dictate their course. (GOR366)

Knowing our failings,
let us be patient with those of others.
Knowing our will to goodness,
may we see in others a dignity that is human,
a beauty inviolate for ever. (GOR295)

The Chosen/Choosing People

Israel's duty to be fully human and its obligation to be fully Israel, are very close. A quotation from Rabbi Akiba (M. Avot 3:18), talks about humanity's consciousness of having been created in God's image:

How greatly God must have loved us to create us in His image; yet even greater love did He show us in making us conscious that we are created in His image. (GOR366)

A second passage transforms this notion of people's being aware of the God-quality within themselves into a powerful statement of particular Jewish identity:

We look into each other's faces and we know who we are. We look up to our God, and we know eternity is in us. (GOR394)

By expressing with our lives the "eternity" that is in us as Jews, we come closer to finding God's image in all of humanity. The Centenary Perspective says that "The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth, while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic expectations. . .Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations."⁸ Just as the Centenary Perspective finds its way back to universalism through the particularism of peoplehood and Jewish survival, so the new liturgy links the individual to Jewish peoplehood, and the concept of particular peoplehood with the oneness of all humanity. It does so in five steps.

The first step in this linkage is to make the worshipper aware of K'lal Yisrael. The Rosh Hashanah service begins, "With the setting of this evening's sun, united with Jews of every place and time, we proclaim a new year of hope." (GOR49) As the congregation gathers on Yom Kippur afternoon, the service opens with the words, "At this hour, Israel stands before its God: in our prayers, in our hope, we are one with all Jews on earth." (GOR394) This emphasis on the peoplehood of Israel is far more explicit and self-conscious than the attitude of the traditional mahzor, which relates to the peoplehood of Israel as a fish relates to the water in which it swims. The traditional mahzor says simply, "we and all Israel." The new mahzor describes and defines the House of Israel and works hard to evoke feeling on its behalf:

Lord we pray to You for the whole House of Israel scattered over the earth, yet bound together by a common history and united by a common heritage of faith and hope. Be with our brothers and sisters whose lives are made hard because they are Jews.

Give them strength to endure, and lead them soon
from bondage to freedom, from darkness to light. (GOR152)

The second step is the acknowledgement of the individuality of each worshipper. In the traditional mahzor, the only first person utterances are those of the sheliach tsibur, preparing to represent the entire congregation. However, in Gates of Repentance, Jews get ample opportunity to pray for themselves:

In my individuality, I turn to You
O God, and seek Your help. For You care for
each of Your children. You are my God, and my
Redeemer. Therefore while around me others
think their own thoughts, I think mine; and as
each one of them seeks to experience Your
presence, so do I. (GOR325)

The private overtone that, for the traditional worshipper, may consist only of the kavanah which infuses the recitation of group prayer with personal meaning, has here, for the Reform worshipper, been isolated and separately articulated. In an individualistic age, and in a movement that celebrates autonomy, authentic prayer is seen as an I-Thou, not a we-Thou experience. However, like the Centenary Perspective, Gates of Repentance eventually balances individuality with the value of peoplehood. Praying separately but in concert, worshippers find themselves tied to one another:

We pause in reverence before the gift of self
The vessel shatters, the divine spark shines
through. And our solitary self becomes a link
in Israel's golden chain.
For what we are, we are by sharing. And as we
share We move toward the light. (GOR118)

The third step in moving toward universalism through a revived particularism is the reinforcement of the value of community. K'lal Yisrael is not abstract or foreign, but real and close to home. It touches our lives and meets the needs of every individual:

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted, We need one another when we are in trouble and crave help, or when we are in the deep waters of temptation and a strong hand might pull us out.

We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do this alone. (GOR388)

The fourth step in the process is the consolidation of the individual's tie with the community of Israel:

As I look into the recesses of my heart on this Day of Days, I am reminded of the sacred obligations that have been placed upon me as a member of a congregation in the Household of Israel. (GOR470)

Having been comforted by the existence of the community, each worshipper is eventually required to examine his or her own relationship to the group and to its values:

The Jewish people is only a remnant of what it was, a fragment of what it might have been. It needs strength to rebuild itself and to carry on the task entrusted to it by a hundred generations. Have I been a source of this strength? Have I enhanced its good name? Have I shared fully in its life? Have I even acquainted myself sufficiently with the best of my people and the teachings of my faith? (GOR325)

The final step is the definition of those sacred obligations that constitute the mission of Israel. The nature of this mission is one of the great themes of Gates of Repentance. It is first expressed in general terms in the geulah of Rosh Hashanah Evening Service I, in a question that no traditional prayerbook would ask, and with an answer that one might not expect from Reform Judaism. The question is, "What does it mean to be a Jew?"; the answer, "You shall be holy." (GOR27) Holiness is defined many times in this geulah as that which makes Jews special and sets them apart, because of their history:

Holy in our past is the memory of redemption from Egypt. . . Twice holy in our past are those who gave their lives to hallow this world. . . (GOR27)

because of their present effort to create order out of disorder in the world,

In the face of the many to stand for the one;
in the presence of fragments, to make them whole. . .
. . .To hold fast our vision of truth. . . (GOR27)

and because of their persistent faith in the future,

Holy in our day is the hope of a redemption we
shall await. (GOR27)

Israel's holiness consists of its enduring covenant with God:

"The House of Israel is called to holiness, to a covenant with the
Eternal for all time." (GOR64) This covenant is ancient, forged in
mystery so old that myth and memory blend in its telling:

The ancient desert dream we keep,
A people touched by God, a certain grace
That tells of You. We are
Locked with You in old identity,
Remembering the lightning of that place;
Something in us of Your awesome will,
Something of that mountain's thunder, still. (GOR22)

The memory of Sinai is kept alive by the sense that the original moment
is present in every generation. While the specifics have changed,
Israel's task within the framework of the covenant remains essentially
the same:

And there are deserts still. We are the Jews;
We do not forget. . .

And there are mountains still. We are the Jews.
We cannot forget. (GOR22)

The deserts of inner emptiness, the land of the Hollow Men in a value
free culture, the mountains of pride and obstinacy, obstacles to peace
and human cooperation, remain to challenge Israel in each era, as it
undertakes anew its work as a covenanted people. "See this people choose
the mission that chooses it," (GOR394) says our prayerbook.

In every generation since Sinai, Gates of Repentance claims, Israel has been "a kingdom of priests and a holy people. This was to be the meaning and message of their existence. . . a people pledged to do [God's] will." (GOR417) They were "pledged to play a redemptive role in the world's unfolding destiny." (GOR419) Their covenant engaged them both to serve and to bear witness. According to atah bachartanu, the traditional High Holiday insertion in the Tefilah,

Our Sovereign, You have summoned us to Your service,
that through us, Your great and holy name may become
known in all the earth. (GOR34)

Repeatedly, Gates of Repentance speaks of Israel as the witness to God's oneness and will, bound to bring the message of universal values to all humanity:

Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Eternal
Source of Peace, and give us the will to proclaim
its message to all the peoples of the earth. (GOR38)

We render thanks to You that You have called us to
Your service, to bring the knowledge of Your word to
the four corners of the earth. You have called us
Your servant, to give faithful witness even in
suffering and deprivation. (GOR264)

They shall not weaken
They shall not be broken:
at last to establish justice in the earth,
as the most distant lands respond to their teaching.
(GOR428-9)

In passages derived from traditional texts and in contemporary compositions, Gates of Repentance carries the message of universalism. The very blend of sources is expressive of Israel's long term commitment to universal teaching. The words of the prophet literally echo through this prayer,

Armies uproot vines and fig-trees,
as wars and war's alarms make all afraid. . .

where Israel's particularism finds its ultimate completion in universal concern,

Not for ourselves alone, but for all Your children
do we invoke Your love. (GOR295)

The Characters' Mutual Need

Capturing a relationship that has changed as it has endured, those passages in Gates of Repentance that probe the mutual need of God and Israel offer a provocative blend of traditional and contemporary thought and expression. There is, for example, the striking contrast of this betrothal imagery

I will betroth you to Me forever;
I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion; I will betroth you to Me in
faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord, (GOR363)

which evokes an image of passive Israel's yielding to God's courtship, and this contemporary meditation on Israel as the chosen people, which gives Israel an active autonomous role in the relationship:

God chose us. We chose God.
There is a mystery here that reason cannot solve
nor cynicism dismiss.
We can deny that mystery, or we can humbly recognize it,
each resolving to be part of it, and saying to God"
Here I am, said me. (GOR429)

There are several things to notice in this latter passage. First, there is the emphasis on human freedom. While the traditional mahzor contains ample evidence that Israel has not lived up to the covenant in the past, nowhere does it contain a passage that articulates so clearly the option of evading the covenant obligation: "we can deny that mystery or we can humbly recognize it." "For we are free," says Gates of Repentance, "free to love, free to build the Kingdom; free to hate, free to tear it down. . ." (GOR215)

Second, there is a refusal in contemporary liturgy to express the relationship between God and Israel solely in metaphors that reflect the status and structure of human relationships (ie. King/subject, Father/child, Lover/beloved). The relationship must also be seen as a mystery, not only beyond rational explanation, but also beyond analogy. What remains is a bare notion of reciprocal action: "God chose us. We chose God." With no metaphor to guide the interpretation of this line, we are left with ambiguity: were the moments of choice referred to sequential or simultaneous, coincidental or causal? If they were causal, who chose first, God or Israel? This ambiguity is central to Gates of Repentance's presentation of the God/Israel relationship. While God's independent existence is firmly established, it is not clear in several passages in Gates of Repentance whether God exists at all outside of the godliness made manifest in human behavior.

Another juxtaposition of traditional and innovative expression occurs repeatedly in the gevurot passages of the Tefilah. In the more or less traditional Reform version, which occurs in the first Rosh Hashanah evening service, God's power is

in the help that comes to the falling
in the healing that comes to the sick,
in the freedom You bring to the captive,
in the faith You keep with those who sleep in the dust. (GOR31)

Already, this is a substantial departure, in sense as well as in grammar, from the traditional wording:

Thou supportest all who fall, and healest the sick;
Thou settest the captives free, and keepest faith
with those who sleep in the dust.⁹

The traditional gevurot talks of God's acting in the world, while Gates of Repentance locates God's power in certain feelings and events.

The gevurot of the second Rosh Hashanah morning service works an even greater change on the traditional text. It is no longer God, nor even God's power, that brings healing, but human love and "acts of grace" that succor the needy:

Life's harsh winds uproot the weak; its hard rains
beat down upon our kin. Let those who stand support
the falling, keep faith with those who lie in the
dust. To the sick, we must bring healing; and to
those who are bound, release. How good to redeem
the ancient pledge, for joy to blossom in arid soil!
We give thanks for the power to live and to act. (GOR175)

This adaptation of the gevurot attempts to make sense of the figurative language that pervades the traditional mahzor: What do we really mean by God's power? How does transcendent godliness become immanent?

The gevurot passage on Yom Kippur morning alternates traditional descriptions of God with contemporary interpretations. Diversity here is neatly packaged. For worshippers who do not believe in God, humankind picks up the tasks of God's powers. But those worshippers for whom God exists independent of the manifestation of godliness through human behavior can find in this passage a satisfying interplay between God's exercise of benevolent power and humanity's need to give life to this power through its own effort:

You are the support of the falling;
Help us to lift up the fallen.
You are the Author of freedom;
Help us to set free the captive.
You are our Hope in death as in life.
Help us to keep faith with those who
sleep in the dust. (GOR310)

In the final permutation of the gevurot, on Yom Kippur afternoon, another level of imagery is penetrated. The falling, the captives and those who sleep blind in the dust are not, as in the last two passages quoted, others to whom the worshippers are bound to reach out. They are,

instead, parts of the worshippers' own personalities. The congregation must reach inside themselves to effect their own healing:

We pray to stand upright, we fallen; to be healed,
we sufferers; we pray to break the bonds that keep
us from the world of beauty; we pray for opened
eyes, we who are blind to our authentic selves. (GOR400)

As is evident from the changes wrought on the gevurot passages, there is a profound effort in Gates of Repentance to dig beneath the language and categories of the traditional mahzor to discover an authentic prayer expression for those who find "steady belief and clear understanding difficult. . . ." ¹⁰ This effort has altered the emphasis of Gates of Repentance's portrayal of the connection between the God and Israel characters in the High Holiday drama.

The traditional mahzor presents Israel's need of God and God's reciprocal need of Israel. Israel wants forgiveness, but more than that, Israel wants life to have significance. At the same time, God needs a vehicle for carrying out the divine purpose, a partner to complete the work of creation. The axis of this relationship, the point at which both characters begin to meet their needs, is the event of teshuvah. Through teshuvah, Israel turns away from meaninglessness and moves towards God, and towards a structured view of life that gives temporal existence enduring value. The irony of the traditional High Holiday drama is that while Israel is begging so passionately for God to accept its prayers, God has been waiting eagerly for that very effort. God needs Israel's teshuvah, for only through the concrete efforts of Torah-guided humanity will God's redemptive future come to pass.

The emphasis in Gates of Repentance is less on the moment of teshuvah than on the work that humanity must do - on its own - to bring

about this purposed redemption. God may function as an inspiration, an idea, the "great Enabler," (GOR315) "the vision that beckons to us," but, "we are [God's] partners in creation. . ." (GOR374) "For the kingdom of God is to be our doing, the work of women and men." (GOR375) As in several of the gevurot passages, God's power is seen as actualized only through human effort:

When will redemption come?
 When we master the violence that fills our world.
 When we look upon others as we would have them
 look upon us. When we grant to every person the
 rights we claim for ourselves. (GOR103)

God's need for the partnership of humanity is implicit in the traditional mahzor. In Gates of Repentance, it is explicit:

. . .morning, noon, and night, a task awaits us.
 The lost and hungry to be found and fed, the sick
 and sad to be healed and cheered, a peaceful world
 to be built and kept.
 Although we must wait for judgment we may not wait
 for peace to fall like rain upon us. . .Peace will
 remain a distant vision until we do the work of peace
 ourselves. If peace is to be brought into the world,
 we must bring it first to our families and communities.
 (GOR67)

It is not a matter of humanity's taking upon itself the tasks of a God
 Who has withdrawn from the world. The tasks belong to us, not to God:

We cannot pray to You, O God, to banish war,
 for You have filled the world
 with paths to peace,
 if only we would take them.
 We cannot pray to You
 to end starvation,
 for there is food enough for all,
 if only we would share it.
 . . .We must not ask of You, O God
 to take the task that You have given us.
 We cannot shirk,
 we cannot flee away,
 avoiding obligation for ever.
 Therefore we pray, O God,
 for wisdom and will, for courage to do and become. (GOR363-4)

With the shift of emphasis toward humanity's partnership with God, Gates of Repentance focuses on the consciousness of sin and the moment of repentance less intensely than does the traditional mahzor. Israel does not, in Gates of Repentance, talk endlessly and abstractly about its need and desire for repentance. Instead, Gates of Repentance probes the meaning of teshuvah: teshuvah is achieved, not just in the sensation of turning back to God in a moment of prayer, but in the ensuing commitment to changed behavior:

When justice burns within us like a flaming fire,
when love evokes willing sacrifice from us, when,
to the last full measure of selfless devotion, we
demonstrate our belief in the ultimate triumph of
truth and righteousness, then Your goodness enters
our lives; then You live within our hearts, and we
through righteousness behold Your presence. (GOR254)

One paradox offered by Gates of Repentance is that God is present in the moment after teshuvah, when the worshipper begins to make God's attributes part of his or her own life. The idea is both rabbinic and radical:

Our rabbis taught:
'I am God and you are My witnesses.
I can be God only when You are my witnesses.'
The word of God is of no avail
Unless the congregation bears witness. (GOR163)

If, as we learn from the traditional mahzor, God waits for Israel's teshuvah, it is, according to Gates of Repentance, not for the unique act of turning that God waits, but for all of the steady, cumulative, undramatic acts that will build a better world:

And how does the Holy One find us?
Through our love, friendship, and respect.
through companionship, truth, and peace;
through the service of scholars
and the discussion of students;
through decency and a good heart;
through a No that is truly No.
through a Yes that is really Yes. (GOR385)

The Plot of the Drama: Personal Renewal

The plot of the traditional mahzor brings Israel to judgment on the occasion of the New Year. Warned that the sentence to be passed will be in just correlation to the deeds of the past year, Israel undergoes a process of self-examination, confession and renewal. In language reflecting the preoccupations of contemporary western culture, Gates of Repentance adds new themes to the drama, and wrests a variety of innovative meanings from every convention of the traditional plot.

Themes Responsive to Worshippers' Needs

In most places, this paper has described Israel in abstract terms as a people or as a representative of general humanity. However, Israel is also a congregation of individual worshippers. While on one level, the plot of the High Holiday drama happens to the people Israel in its longterm relationship with God, on the most basic and essential level, the High Holiday plot happens to actual people sitting in the sanctuary. The themes that Gates of Repentance adds to the development of the plot are responses to the needs and concerns of modern Reform Jews. It is helpful here to remember the Chapter II summary of the Lenn and Fein reports on Reform Jewry in the 1970's. The people who make up Reform congregations are highly educated. One might expect them to be demanding of their experiences, sophisticated in their tastes. But, in general, they do not come to synagogue expecting much in the way of spiritual challenge or fulfillment.¹¹ What should a revised liturgy, then, do for Reform Jews? At the very least, it should try to offer them an authentic prayer experience, with some congruence between words and feeling, text and belief.

Authenticity in worship is an important theme in Gates of Repentance. We pray that God will "lead us to take the words we shall speak into our hearts and our lives." (GOR166) We are urged to "be the same within and without. . . Become the prayer for goodness [our] lips have uttered." (GOR187)

Gates of Repentance is filled with prayers that are only gently shaped and distinguished from the flow of conversational style. They are designed to speak plainly of life experiences, to be the prayers that people would utter spontaneously if only they had the art. For this reason, Gates of Repentance stresses individual expression as the traditional mahzor never does. "This Rosh Hashanah," we read, "each of us enters this sanctuary with a different need." (GOR165) Real prayer, this prayerbook seems to say, is one on One communication. With all the support and encouragement of the group setting and the written liturgy, sincere prayer has a private dimension. In the confession, traditionally a communal prayer, the first person is used in the formal introduction to the vidui zuta, and in the silent confessional meditation. The words are very graphic, very ordinary. Poetry is laid aside as individuals are given an opportunity to pray for themselves:

Each person's abilities are limited by nature and by the circumstances we have had to face. Whether I have done better or worse with my capacities than others with theirs, I cannot judge. But I do know that I have failed in many ways to live up to my potentialities and Your demands. (GOR325)

An authentic prayer experience is only one avenue in a pervasive quest for meaning in modern life. This is a search that Gates of Repentance takes cognizance of and uses as a leitmotif: "May this day add meaning to our lives. . ." (GOR64) we read, "Noble is the mind in

search of meaning." (GOR180) For the High Holiday drama to have experiential validity, self-examination, confession and renewal must be more than exercises: they must touch the worshippers on the basic level of life's meaning:

Why be concerned with meaning? Why not be content with satisfaction of desires and needs? . . . Being human is a characteristic of a being who faces the question: After satisfaction, what? It is not enough for me to be able to say "I am;" I want to know who I am, in relation to whom I live. . . What am I here for? What is the meaning of my being? My quest is not for theoretical knowledge about myself. What I look for is not how to gain a firm hold on myself and on life, but primarily how to live a life that would deserve and evoke an eternal Amen. (GOR180-1)

According to Gates of Repentance, meaning can be approached in several ways. It can be found, first of all, in the endurance of some part of ourselves beyond the short span of years allotted. Even if the only truly lasting thing we have is a feeling of connection with God's eternity, or faith in the timelessness of the values we treasure, this is enough to set our lives into a meaningful context:

On this solemn day of the New Year, we see life as though windows that open on eternity. We see that love abides, the soul abides as You, O God, abide for ever. We see that our years are more than grass that withers, more than flowers that fade. They weave a pattern of life that is timeless and unite us with a world that is from end to end the abode of Your love and the vesture of Your glory. (GOR158)

Meaning can also be found in a vision of purpose that connects human behavior to worthy long range goals:

But Your purpose gives meaning to our fleeting days,
Your teaching guides us, and Your love sustains us. (GOR294)

We pray that we may walk in the garden of a purposeful life, our own powers in touch with the power of the world. (GOR400)

Finally, meaning can be defined by approximation of a projected ideal:

This is the vision of a great and noble life:
to endure ambiguity and to make light shine through it;
to stand fast in uncertainty;
to prove capable of unlimited love and hope. (GOR446)

Lord, help us to rise above what we have been. Imbue
us with love for all life and reverence for all being;
teach us to respond to Your greatness with awe.
Strengthen us with Your love and guide us in the
paths of righteousness. (GOR276)

The meaning that Gates of Repentance speaks about in these passages is more than intellectual. It encompasses the total personality, the affective as well as the cognitive powers.

Along with the search for meaning, Gates of Repentance reflects a contemporary quest for love,

In us, renew the love
with which our life begins,
sacred, joyful, fresh and free,
bright with fables and with song:
in us renew the life in which our love begins (GOR163-4)

and for the revival or enlargement of the capacity to love:

A new heart will I give you, a new spirit put within
you. I will remove the heart of stone from your
flesh, and give you a heart that feels. (GOR335)

With all the pressures of modern life, sensitivities can become dulled, capacities blunted, talents or generous impulses neglected or repressed:

Disfigured lies the human form divine,
estranged from its center! (GOR277)

In Gates of Repentance, Reform worshippers pray explicitly for wholeness and inner balance:

Can we reopen our eyes to wisdom,
To be, or hope to be, at one with the One.
This day, if any, can make us whole. . .
Trembling, we pray to gain a new heart,
a new spirit. (GOR249)

The principle of wholeness is presented as an ideal in Gates of

Repentance:

In the face of the many, to stand for the One;
in the presence of fragments, to make them whole.
(GOR27)

With the macrocosm of the community echoing the microcosm of the individual, the same imagery is used to indicate the ideal of wholeness or integration of the desparate elements in the community of Israel:

As You created the world on this day, uniting
fragments into a universe, so help unite our
hearts and the hearts of all Jews to serve You.
(GOR17)

We pause in reverence before the gift of self;
The vessel shatters, the divine spark shines through,
And our solitary self becomes a link
in Israel's golden chain. (GOR118)

In sum, Gates of Repentance attempts to create a climate within which the Reform worshipper can participate sincerely in the processes of self examination, confession and renewal that constitute the High Holiday plot. The new liturgy builds this climate by demonstrating concern for the authenticity of prayer, by incorporating opportunities for individual expression within the group setting, and by relating the worship experience to the contemporary search for meaning, love and personal integration.

The Conventions of the High Holiday Plot Seen Fresh

A Season of Renewal. The plot begins, in Gates of Repentance as in the traditional mahzor, with the worshipper's awareness of Rosh Hashanah as a turning point in the cycle of the year:

Now is the time for turning. The leaves are beginning
to turn from green to red and orange. The birds are
beginning to turn and are heading once more toward
the South. . . (GOR372)

The traditional mahzor's expression of the New Year's decisive importance is duplicated in Gates of Repentance:

This is the day of the world's beginning; now we recall creation's first day. On this day the fate of the nations is in the balance - for war or peace, for famine or plenty. So too with every single creature; life and death are in the balance. (GOR144)

This is the day of decision. Today we invoke You as the molder of our destiny. (GOR293)

These passages communicate Gates of Repentance's essential commitment to the seriousness of the holidays. However, the contemporary understanding of the "birthday of the world" is made plain at the beginning of the alternative evening service for Rosh Hashanah:

May Rosh Hashanah, birthday of the world, be our day of rebirth into life and peace, serenity and safety. . . .As the New Year begins, so is hope reborn in us! (GOR52)

Unlike the traditional mahzor, which treats the passage of time for the individual as a token of mortality and of humanity's insignificance in the face of God's eternity, Gates of Repentance examines the annual cycle from varying perspectives. The traditional mahzor's sharp sense of life's brevity is preserved. However, time's passage also offers opportunities for growth, as the worshipper looks back on the positive and negative experiences that filled the year. (GOR51-2) The cyclical pattern which interrupts the linear march of time holds the promise of changing one's direction, even reversing it somehow so that all that is precious, young and beautiful in the individual soul need not inevitably decay:

Breathe Your spirit into us, that we may start life afresh with childhood's unbounded promise. (GOR85)

We pray for winds to disperse the choking air of
sadness, for cleansing rains to make parched
hopes flower, and to give all of us strength to
rise up toward the sun. (GOR399)

Before us lies a new day,
and in the distance a new world
ours to create
by the strength of our faith. (GOR20)

New Life for a Legend. More than any prayer in the mahzor, the traditional Unetaneh Tokef sets the scene for the High Holiday drama, painting an unforgettable picture of Israel's approach to God in judgment. The book of our days, filled with evidence written in our own handwriting, the heavenly courtroom with its angelic masters-at-arms, the individual numbering and recording of souls, the Book of Life in which the judgment is recorded; each vivid image fixes and freezes our understanding of the process of judgment and renewal. In the traditional mahzor, the Unetaneh Tokef occurs in the Reader's repetition of the musaf Amidah on the second day of Rosh Hashanah and on the morning of Yom Kippur. In Gates of Repentance, it appears on the mornings of both holidays. As the only piyyut in Gates of Repentance interpolated in the Tefilah for the holiday mornings, Unetaneh Tokef achieves a prominence that exceeds even its focal position in the traditional Reader's repetition. The text of the Unetaneh Tokef as printed in Gates of Repentance is wholly traditional. However, the paragraphs that introduce the prayer in each of its locations play freely with the themes in Meshullam ben Kalonymus' powerful poem, and with the legend of its composition. A brief analysis of this introductory material will demonstrate how Gates of Repentance works to achieve freedom within set themes, respecting, preserving and renewing viable aspects of the traditional liturgy.

Two paragraphs introduce Unetaneh Tokef in Gates of Repentance's Rosh Hashanah services. The first paragraph alludes sketchily to the martyrdom of Rabbi Amnon of Mayence. In Birnbaum's traditional mahzor, this information is given in great detail in a footnote. But in Gates of Repentance, Rabbi Amnon enters the liturgy itself. The first paragraph also paraphrases the poem said to have been delivered by Amnon. Both Amnon's story and the poetic images of God's judgment are enriched and interpreted in the second introductory paragraph, which is linked to the first by the words, "a legend. . .and yet. . ." The two topics of the first paragraph, Amnon's martyrdom and God's writing in the Book of Life, are legends. Interwoven in paragraph two, they shed light on each other. Rabbi Amnon of Mayence was not wholly free; the situation that led to his martyrdom was structured by outside forces. Yet to the extent that he was able to choose, he acted freely to affirm his faith. He repented his having agreed, even momentarily to deaden his soul by renouncing Judaism. Amnon's particular situation speaks through every phrase of the second paragraph's interpretation of the Book of Life and teshuvah:

and yet, surely our deeds do not pass away unrecorded. Every word, every act inscribes itself in the Book of Life. Freely we choose, and what we have chosen to become stands in judgment over what we may yet hope to be. In our choices we are not always free. But if only we make the effort to turn, every force of goodness within and without, will help us, while we live, to escape that death of the heart which leads to sin. (GOR106)

Through the counterpoint of these two legends, Gates of Repentance manages to unfreeze the powerful but static imagery of the Unetaneh Tokef, giving new life to metaphors like the Book of Life, that are too ingrained to be dispensed with, but too remote from modern thought to be comfortably spoken by Reform worshippers.

The introduction to the poem in the Yom Kippur service expands yet another part of the Unetaneh Tokef imagery - the sentences that are set as judgment is pronounced. Utilizing the form of the traditional "who shall live, who shall die. . ." this new composition turns each sentence into a metaphor of inner life:

Who shall live for the sake of others,
Who, dying, shall leave a heritage of life.
Who shall burn with the fires of greed,
Who shall drown in the waters of despair. (GOR311)

In the new liturgy's Unetaneh Tokef, God's judgment, the Book of Life, the sentencing, the sealing and the revision of God's decisions all are realized for the worshipper as images of an internal process.

New Sins: A New Confession. Gates of Repentance was composed during a great explosion of popular psychology. The 1970's was the decade of "meism", of Rolfing, the Esalen Institute, Gestalt therapies, primal scream, rebirthing and EST. These therapies and others fed a sudden enormous consumer demand for treatment of psychological dis-ease. People wanted and considered it their basic human right to be "O.K.". Angst, alienation, anxiety, fear, neurosis, guilt, repression of feeling and inability to love were seen as inconsistent with the modern model of healthy adjustment. Some of the language already used in this chapter reflects this psychological model: (ie) "integration of personality," "wholeness" and "authenticity." Other features of the healthy model propounded in the popular press throughout the 1960's and 70's included the exploration and utilization of one's full potential, the unrepressed expression of emotion, the discovery and exploitation of hidden talents and interests, and the establishment of satisfying relationships in the family, workplace and social life. Both the ability to be intimate, and the ability to tolerate freedom and change in others were equally valued.

The new liturgy's revision and supplements to the traditional confession must be seen against this background. What has been achieved is a blending of contemporary perceptions of the personality with the traditional ethical and social values of Judaism. The healthy model Jew is whole and authentic to the extent that he or she responds with truth, justice and love to intimates, associates and the larger community. The full potential of the ideal Jew includes civic courage, social responsibility, generosity and self control, all traditional Jewish values. As lost opportunities for personal growth are confessed,

But there were dreams that came to naught
 . . .and times when we refused to dream,
 These with much regret, we now remember
 as the new year begins, (GOR52)

so are failures of omission in regard to one's Jewish identity,

We have given meager support to our Houses of
 worship, We have neglected our heritage of
 learning, (GOR404)

and in regard to Reform Judaism's universal commitments,

We have sinned against life by failing to work
 for peace, We have sinned against life by keeping
 silent in the face of injustice, We have sinned
 against life by ignoring those who suffer in
 distant lands. (GOR404)

As Gates of Repentance has attempted throughout the text to make the language of prayer natural and believable, so in the confessional passages, even in those alphabetical lists composed with artistry to parallel the effect of the Hebrew acrostics, a contemporary style of language has been sought for the exercise of self-examination:

We have sinned against ourselves and have not risen
 to fulfill the best that is in us. (GOR404)

I have been weak. Too often I have failed to make
 the requisite effort to do my work conscientiously,
 to give my full attention to those who needed me, to

speak the kindly word, to do the generous deed, to
 express my concern for my friends. I have not loved
 enough, not even those closest to me. (GOR325)

There is some attempt to organize the process of confession, to group the sins into categories which express the ideals from which people have departed. The Hebrew al het verses of Yom Kippur morning are preceded by a responsive reading that lists the sins that are "failures of Truth," "failures of Justice," and "failures of Love." (GOR327-9) In the silent meditation preceding that passage, thoughts are grouped to highlight the sins committed against the self:

How I wish I had learned to master myself;
 to control my impulses; to curb my craving for
 pleasure. . .I have not been true to myself. . .
 I have failed to make the requisite effort to do
 my work conscientiously,

sins against loved ones and associates:

I have failed. . .to give my full attention to
 those who needed me, to speak the kindly word,
 to do the generous deed. . .

the sins against the community:

Have I been a source of this strength?
 Have I even acquainted myself. . .with the
 history of my people. . .

and against the world:

And do I not share some responsibility for
 the social evils which I see, hear about and
 read about daily? Have I always used my
 opportunities as a citizen to relieve suffering?
 to speak out against injustice, to promote
 harmony in the life of my city, my country and
 the nations of the world? (GOR325)

Full confession is a process accomplished in the traditional mahzor by incessant repetition. In Gates of Repentance, the confession passages change with each reiteration to reveal new facets of self-inquiry. There is a restraint in these passages, a reluctance to overwhelm, an attempt to

keep the language fresh and alive. The ashamnu bagadnu passage of Yom Kippur eve is given a full alphabetic English equivalent. But in the morning, when the greater emphasis will be placed on the development of the al het, the ashamnu bagadnu passage is treated briefly in English. Its acrostic is foreshortened, and aptly summarized in a line that digs beneath the confessions' rhetorical device to suggest the meaning of the alphabetic form:

We are arrogant, brutal, careless, destructive
 egocentric, false; greedy, heartless, insolent
 and joyless.
Our sins are an alphabet of woe. (GOR327, emphasis added)

The goal of this total confession is stated at the beginning of the Yom Kippur evening service:

All pretense gone,
 naked heart revealed to the hiding self,
 We stand on holy ground,
 between the day that was
 and the one that must be. (GOR249)

This is a goal of many psychological therapies: to find the truth about the self, and to know the freedom of living truly in the immediate moment. It was suggested earlier in this chapter that the plot of the contemporary High Holiday drama resembled therapy perhaps more than the courtroom; that God's role might be more that of a caring counselor than that of a judge. The judge pronounces guilt and innocence. The counselor guides and witnesses self-education and growth.

Repentance and Forgiveness. As modern as Gates of Repentance may be in its surface features of language and tone, its structure is basically traditional. Rabbinic insight into human nature still gives form to the High Holiday plot. So, in Gates of Repentance, as in the traditional mahzor, Selichot passages follow the confessional:

While I keep silent, my heart groaned with anguish
 all day long.
 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me.
 Then I confessed my sin to You,
 concealing my guilt no more; and You
 forgave me. (GOR333, from Ps. 32-34)

What is required after confession is that we be allowed to turn ". . .from
 the hurt to its remedy." (GOR37) What we need is deliverance "from
 bondage to the past; release. . .from the stranglehold of evil habits;
 [freedom. . .] to start afresh." (GOR294) In its traditional selections,
 as in their adjacent contemporary echoes, Gates of Repentance leads the
 worshipper from the consciousness of sin to the possibility of rebirth.
 A selection from Psalm 5 says at the beginning, ". . .I know my trans-
 gressions and my sin is always before me," (GOR272) but concludes
 "create in me a clean heart, O God,. . .Then will I teach transgressors
 Your way and cause sinners to return to You." (GOR272) A similar passage
 in the same group of prayers begins with despair at the failure of
 relationships,

Who among us is righteous
 enough to say: "I have not sinned?"
 Born of love to love,
 We grow weary
 heavy with regret
 sorry for ourselves
 and afraid to know
 what might have been,

yet ends with a vision of communion and clarity:

Let us recall together,
 blessed moments when clouds parted
 and the sun appeared. We looked. We saw.
 There was healing and the hope of joy;
 we were at peace and knew the joy of hope. . . (GOR277)

The process of inner change is not automatic, nor does it take place
 neatly within the confines of the confession and Selichot prayers. It
 works continually throughout the Yom Kippur services, in supplementary

readings and meditations. There are many moments of stumbling and hesitation:

We have prayed for peace,
even as we laughed at truth
for blessing
but did not care to do Your will;
for mercy,
and have shown none to others.
We have prayed for impossible things:
peace without justice
forgiveness without restitution
love without sacrifice. (GOR498)

In Gates of Repentance as in the traditional mahzor, true teshuvah is regarded as enormously difficult:

For leaves, birds, and animals, turning comes instinctively. But for us turning does not come so easily. It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong: and this is never easy. It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful. (GOR372)

Nothing in Gates of Repentance relieves the necessary pain of changing, or allows the worshipper to back down from the challenge. But a few rabbinic quotations, pieced together among the meditations on "Turning," render assurance that the effort is worthwhile:

Great is repentance, for it brings healing to the world.

Great is repentance, for it brings near the time of redemption. . . . (GOR373)

Life's Goodness. As in the traditional mahzor, the plot's solution has been present from the first zochrenu lechayim: "Remember us unto life, O King, who delights in life. . ." (GOR30) Since God delights in life, the plot of the High Holiday drama is intended to renew and return the congregation to fuller life. Throughout the text, one comes across testimony to the goodness of life despite all pitfalls:

Grant us another year in the Book of Life
with its peril, injustice,
And the good daylight. (GOR387)

Holy is the Jew, today and tomorrow, who bears
witness to the goodness of life. (GOR27)

Life's goodness and wonder are apparent in nature:

O world, where miracles spring up to meet us along
the way, we hold you close and give thanks for
morning light, for evening calm.

Sun and moon, sea and sky, snow and mist, city
streets and country lanes; what joy to know you,
how excellent to touch you. (GOR66)

and in the human spirit:

Honor those who endure:
The seeker, the giver, the one who loves.
All those who sing and all who weep;
the one who makes his loss a gain,
the one who gives his heart to life. (GOR182)

The goodness of life discovered in the arduous process of self evaluation
and renewal that constitutes the High Holiday plot, is the answer to the
modern worshipper's search for value and meaning.

Open our eyes to the goodness of life
and its sacred opportunities for service. (GOR264)

The Subplot: From the Particular to the Universal

As in the traditional mahzor, a subplot concerning Israel's people-
hood coexists with Gates of Repentance's plot of personal renewal. But
whereas the key word of the traditional subplot is memory (Israel's
remembrance of God and God's remembrance of Israel), the key concept of
the subplot in Gates of Repentance is survival. In the traditional
mahzor, the highlights of Jewish existence were in the past, in the days
of the fathers of the tribe and in the days of the Holy Temple. God is

asked to exercise patience and to pardon Israel for the sake of Israel's ancestors. The focus of Gates of Repentance, on the other hand, is on the present moment. A remnant of Israel stands on the edge of the abyss and knows that it carries whatever is useful from the past within itself. Israel now asks God for forgiveness, help and inspiration, not for the sake of its ancestors, but for the extent to which the current members of Israel can appropriate, adapt and add to the faith of the past:

Lord, You are our God, even as You were the God of Abraham and Sarah, the God of our fathers and mothers, the God of all the ages of Israel. They are our past as we are their future. We recall their vision and pray for the strength to keep it alive; Help us, O God and shield, to keep their faith. (GOR61)

There are four major consequences to this emphasis on Israel's survival. The first is Gates of Repentance's sensitivity to the worshipper's present moment and to the modern environment. The second is the way that Gates of Repentance perceives the current generation in relation to the past. The third is the warmth with which Gates of Repentance speaks of the Jewish folk. The final consequence is the method of Gates of Repentance's approach to the past.

Awareness of the Present

Reading the traditional mahzor, the worshipper is caught in an unspecified time after the Exile but before the Redemption. The worshipper's own time frame remains uncharacterized, as if it is irrelevant to the worship experience. In contrast, Gates of Repentance frequently describes the troubles and peril of the modern condition, restating an almost prophetic analysis of society's ills in terms applicable not only to this century but to this generation:

. . .the world is dark, Lord, and cold with fear
and rage, The hammer of chaos beats loudly within
our breasts: How can we endure? (GOR445)

Here we stand, heirs of the past and makers of
the future--priestly, privileged,
but heavily burdened
with blindness, folly, unfaithfulness. (GOR249)

More than with historical circumstances, Gates of Repentance is concerned
with the decay of the spiritual environment. Given the mixed blessings
of information overload and runaway technology, the mind itself, in-
strumentality of progress and source of human pride, is flawed and
afflicted:

Knowledge grows: still we stray and in pride assault
those heavens
Lunar cold invades us
Many fail and fall.
Nothing abides.
O but some who shine as stars bear
witness to Your love. (GOR411)

Civic failure testifies to the breakdown of the social compact:

Look now to the cities:
see the broken streets,
poor and decayed,
and all are afraid.
See them and ask:
What have we done? (GOR276)

Lord, Your earth yields enough to satisfy the
needs of every living creature, but human greed
thwarts Your purpose, and countless of Your
children go hungry and naked. . . (GOR469)

Values are turned upside down, as evil triumphs and goodness assures
nothing:

Merely to have survived is not an index of excellence.
Nor, given the way things go,
Even of low cunning.
Yet I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green bay tree.
And the good as if they had never been;
Their voices are blown away on the winter wind. (GOR331)

A terrible disparity of circumstance separates the inhabitants of the global village. Misguided efforts to reach across the gap have led to disaster, drawing guilt and regret in their wake:

And to what purpose, as the darkness closes about,
And the child screams in the jellied fire
Had best be our present concern
Here is this wilderness of comfort
In which we dwell. (GOR332)

Worst of all has been the modern withdrawal from God:

Vision fades as the Presence recedes;
the voice grows still;
the search for God is over and gone!
We are alone, all alone,
our meaning unremembered. (GOR277)

Gates of Repentance's highly critical picture of the modern world prompts an immediate search for enduring values, reliable spiritual resources, and roots:

Strong was the faith of those who stood here
before us, while we are of a generation that has
sought to dethrone You. Strange to see the agonies
of our time grow more numerous and more intense
the more our worship centers on ourselves. . . For
You are with us whenever we seek Your presence. . .
(GOR120)

A Usable Past

Spiritual and intellectual resources can be found in a past that is used by the new liturgy as a vast treasury from which jewels and mementos can be drawn at will. In eclectic attitude, Gates of Repentance resembles the payetannim who pulled verses ad libitum from anywhere in Scripture. But in range and willingness to move beyond the Biblical canon, Gates of Repentance far exceeds those medieval masters. The few passages that deal directly with Israel's history bridge vast stretches of time in a few phrases, locking disparate events in fruitful communion. In the following

passage, the Exodus, First Exile and Holocaust are linked to create a message of survival:

Many are our defeats, yet how many our deliverances!
After servitude to Pharaoh, we choose service to God;
after exile in Babylon, we rebuild God's shrine;
yesterday's wounds, so nearly fatal, begin to heal;
and Israel living still, plants new seeds of
redemption. (GOR307)

In another passage, the entire Bible is suggested with the names of a few individuals and recollected incidents, and the whole pattern of their truth-seeking is connected to our own:

We remember Abraham and Isaac walking together toward their mountain; Jacob dreaming of a ladder to link heaven and earth; Moses turning aside to look at the common bush burning with a divine flame; David dancing before the Ark of Your covenant; a shepherd prophet roaring Your word like a lion; the days and years of our own lives - a search for light in a dark and dirty time. And we remember a rainbow.

While Israel's entire past and accumulated library are both available for the selection of poems, prayers, wisdom or historical allusions, one moment is set in bold relief. That moment is the Sinaitic vision, or - in its expanded version - the sequence that began with the Burning Bush and ended with the Revelation at Mt. Sinai. This singular set of episodes defined Israel forever, created its peoplehood and formulated its task:

Now we call to mind the great moment when Israel stood at Sinai and heard the voice of the Shofar. There our people entered into Your covenant, to be Your witness to the world. From there they went forth to proclaim the laws by which the free may live and the enslaved find hope. (GOR215)

Sinai was decisive not only for our ancestors, but also for ourselves; for, "This vision was seen by the founders of our people. At the Mountain they pledged themselves and us, their children." (GOR249) While Sinai is

used in Gates of Repentance as a symbol of the enduring bond between Jews and their past, it is also seen as the wellspring of Jewish diversity. Differing approaches to God and to Jewish religion have emerged because the essence of the Sinaitic moment was an encounter which is infinitely repeatable: "From that day to this have we, a people acquainted with miracle and disaster, encountered You again and again on the path of our life." (GOR215) Revelation, or encounter with God, is relived by every generation in its turn,

Each generation has its path; each a vision of its own. Yet each is linked to all; their origin and goal are one. (GOR174)

Torah is therefore an ongoing phenomenon which results, as the Centenary Perspective says, "from the relationship between God and the Jewish people. . . For millenia, the creation of Torah has not ceased and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the chain of gradition."¹²

One example of the changes that can be wrought through a creative encounter with traditional sources is the new Avodah prayer of Yom Kippur afternoon. As in the traditional mahzor, this Avodah draws together Israel's story, gathering all those elements of Israel's history referred to elsewhere in the service, and organizing them into a narrative that expresses the meaning and purpose of the Jewish experience. In the traditional Avodah, Amits Koach, the story is worked as a complete manifold alphabetical acrostic, with each five word line in every stanza beginning with the same letter. When the alphabetical acrostic ends, the work continues in acrostic style to spell out the author's name and the word HaZaK. In contrast to this unity of design, the Gates of Repentance Avodah is an anthology that speaks in many voices, from many points of view. In Hebrew and English, Torah section and Psalm, direct

translation and free retelling, modern poetry and prose, the new Avodah loosely parallels the sequence set by the original, but greatly expands it--radically changing its emphasis.

Kalonymus' focus was the glory of the service in the Holy Temple. The centerpiece of the new Avodah is Sinai, and the listing of the Ten Commandments. Six main episodes lead up to Sinai: creation of the world (here retold poetically in a manner compatible with modern science), creation of humanity unique in its gift of mind and soul; the tasting of the Tree of Knowledge (presented first in the poem, out of sequence, to emphasize the primacy of mind); Cain's murder of Abel, symbolic of all murder; the selection or inspiration of the people Israel, beginning with the person of Abraham; and finally the redemption of Abraham's descendants from slavery.

In the six episodes leading away from Sinai, the reader is figuratively brought down the mountain and into the world. The journey starts in the Promised Land, where the first Temple was constructed. The story continues with the destruction of the First Temple, tells of return and reconstruction, and of the second Temple's ritual for Yom Kippur. The passage describing the Temple rite is excerpted from the traditional Avodah, but draws several lessons from the original: "so too, do we confess our own sins, and pray on behalf of our loved ones" . . . (GOR422) "we too pray not only for ourselves but for the Jewish people as a whole. . ." (GOR424) The new Avodah's listing of the sins of the people parallels the traditional passage, "Indeed the iniquities of our fathers destroyed our sacred home, and our own sins retard its restoration."¹³ However, the modern Avodah itemizes these sins matter of factly, without open attribution of blame for the Temple's destruction.

Finally the Temple is replaced, after its downfall, with the synagogue, which becomes "the fortress. . .the place of. . .deliverance." (GOR426) Whereas the traditional Avodah ends with a concentrated appeal to God's memory of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the people of Israel, God's own mercy, and Jerusalem's Mt. Zion where God has dwelt, the new Avodah concludes with a message of survival. The covenanted people will endure to carry out the purpose revealed at Sinai:

Though bent like a reed,
they shall not be broken;
though their flame burns low,
they shall not be snuffed out;
faithfully shall they bring forth justice. (GOR428)
. . .At last to establish justice in the earth
as the most distant lands respond to their
teaching. (GOR429)

The Jewish Folk

It is natural that, feeling themselves to be survivors of the Holocaust and of other traumatic events in Jewish history, Reform Jews of the twentieth century would want both to pay homage to the generations of men and women who came before, and to celebrate the warmth and closeness of Jewish kinship among the remnants.

'Avinu Malkeinu,' we pray,
a hundred generations have stood
as we do now before the open ark. (GOR189)

K'lal Yisrael of the past and of the present is spoken of throughout Gates of Repentance with reverence and affection. "In our prayers, in our hope, we are one with all Jews on earth." (GOR394) Unlike the traditional mahzor, which uses proper names and refers to individuals sparingly, reserving those honors only for Biblical personages, primarily the Avot, Gates of Repentance's liturgical past is filled with the names of prophets and rabbis. (GOR33, 367, 373) The effect of the use of names is to

personalize the abstract past. Ordinary Jews, unremarkable in any way but in their continuing faithfulness, also appear in Gates of Repentance:

Our mothers and fathers kindled light.
To lead us to the day of shining hope,
with mercy our companion along the way. . .
Homage to the faithful who came before us. . . (GOR174)

The vision of God's purpose, the touch of spirit, can rest on any and all Jews:

You are present, O Eternal One, not on peaks of vision
alone; at any moment we may turn and find You. The
whisper of a thought, the most humble touch of being,
may lead us to You. (GOR215)

. . . turn to the ancient battered house of prayer.
There to this day, your eyes may see
Jews with faces lean and lined,
Jews of the Exile, bearing its heavy weight,
forgetting their toil in a Talmud's tattered page. (GOR429)

The use of names from the Jewish past, the continual repetition of the phrase, "our people," (GOR174) the inclusion of the mothers of our people in the free translations of the avot blessing in the Amidah, (GOR260) the reiteration of our common task (GOR264) and responsibility for each other all combine to build the sense that our High Holiday worship celebrates and values Jewish peoplehood.

At the same time, Gates of Repentance expresses solidarity with and respect for the memory of those who did not survive. The Holocaust is not uniquely remembered:

My people's pains have flamed
in sacrifice
Upon Your altar through slow moving time. (GOR380)

Nevertheless, the Holocaust was such an extraordinary occurrence that it receives special attention in references throughout the text and in the martyrology. In each instance, the lesson drawn is that of survival. Along with a physical remnant, what survived was spirit, light and value:

How unyielding is the will of our people Israel!
 After the long nights, after the days and years
 when our ashes blackened the sky, Israel endures,
 heart still turned to love, soul still to life. (GOR25)

A Jewish Message: A Jewish Method

Just as the prophetic books concluded with messages of consolation, so the method by which the subplot is conducted is aimed at uplift and consolation. Events in the subplot are used not only for their own value in building the story of the history of Israel, but for the lessons that can be extrapolated from them. It is not enough to learn that Israel was taken out of slavery: the enduring message of that redemption must be brought home:

Once we were in bondage, then we were free. In that first liberation our people saw revealed the power of the Most High. They perceived that His presence redeems time and event from the hands of tyrants. (GOR103)

Only if we understand the implications of the Exodus will its recounting move us to appropriate action:

Let the Shofar's sound awaken the voice of
 conscience, our common worship unite us in
 love, our memories of bondage impel us to
 help the oppressed. (GOR64)

For the survivors, even the memory of humanity's darkest hours is followed by a glimmer of hope:

We pause in terror before the human deed:
 The cloud of annihilation, the concentrations for death,
 The cruelly casual way of each to each.
 But in the stillness of this hour
 We find our way from darkness into light. (GOR118)

Our people has experienced untold suffering and wondrous redemptions: we await a redemption more lasting and more splendid than any of the past. (GOR102)

The traditional mahzor comes to its assurance that Exile will be followed by an ultimate redemption through God's promises of a messianic culmination. Gates of Repentance comes to its messianic assurance through the facts of Jewish suffering and survival:

See this people, exiled twice and twice surviving,
teaching in its first exile the unity of God and,
in its second, the oneness of humankind.
. . .This people Israel lives to tell God's
praise, men's hopes, women's dreams.
Congregation Israel:. . .
. . .Can you not see in your past
a story told for all peoples,
whose shining conclusion has yet to
unfold? (GOR394)

From the particular story, mission and effort of this one people will flow the lesson of universal salvation:

This twilight hour reminds us also of the day
when if we are faithful to our mission, Your
light will arise over all the world, and
Israel's spiritual descendants will be as
numerous as the stars of heaven. (GOR519)

In passages derived from the traditional mahzor, as well as in contemporary compositions, Gates of Redemption articulates a clear vision of future redemption for all humankind:

Let the time come when all the peoples will be
joined in bonds that cannot break. The nations
will yet be at peace; the earth will yield good
fruit. Mountains and waters will exult, those
who sowed in tears will reap in joy, and all will
sing with one accord. (GOR307)

A world released from sorrow to joy.
The bowed head shall be raised, the bent back
made straight. Those who dragged their chains
shall dance and sing. O may violence give way
to goodness, the land be cleansed of tyrants,
and the prophets' word redeemed: "Peace shall
rule the earth!" (GOR63)

Use us, Lord, to speed the day of reconciliation
when poverty, racial prejudice, and religious
hatred no longer threaten to destroy us; when

violence, angry conflict, and mistrust are forgotten evils;
 when our wealth is used to feed the hungry and heal the sick
 when we cherish the world and hold it in trust for our children's children. (GOR446)

Slowly, but eventually, that time will come, through a mutual reinforcement of human effort and divine inspiration. The process is painstakingly explained, but its application will be harder than the telling:

Let now an Infinite Presence teach us a gentleness that transcends force and melts our hardness of heart. Then shall we be sensitive to the needs of our neighbors, and responsive to their pleas.
 All who struggle vainly for attention,
 and those who shrink from another's touch.
 All whose faces we forget from one encounter to the next. And those who never seem to find a resting place in the family of the secure. . . (GOR403)

The messianism of Gates of Repentance is strictly and singleheartedly prophetic and rabbinic: righteousness and mercy will surely triumph at last, but only if we begin by being just and compassionate ourselves. In the "Additional Prayers" of Yom Kippur afternoon, Micah, Isaiah, Amos, Habbakuk, Akiba and Hillel are summoned to testify to this account. (GOR36809) The contemporary meditation that follows these selections only augments and strengthens the lesson, bringing the subjects of our concern to life in vivid language:

The luckless, the victims, the self-defeated; these
 Your children whom we often shut out of our lives;
 give them light and joy, and shelter from the coldness of their neighbors. And give us, O God of compassion, days when we share their failures; remove our forgetfulness and seal memory into us, that not again will we laugh at their errors or shrug at their sadness. (GOR369)

The subplot of Gates of Repentance, like the subplot of the traditional mahzor, turns us back to life and to deeds. The ultimate result of High Holiday prayer must be action in the direction of modest and achievable goals:

We have learned: say always, "the world was created for my sake," and never say "Of what concern is all this to me?" Live as if all life depended on you. Do your share to add some improvement, to supply some one thing that is missing, and to leave the world a little better for your stay on it. (GOR369)

Epilogue: Ne'ilah

In the last pages of the Ne'ilah service, plot and subplot meet, and, as at the end of a theatrical piece, the audience turns to comprehend the drama as a whole. Pleas for forgiveness, personal peace, security and meaning can now be seen in the context of Israel's long unfinished journey from particular revelation to universal redemption. Every major theme of the High Holiday drama is found in the Ne'ilah service in rapid fire dialogue. God's creativity is answered by our responsibility to complete creation with "our heart, our life, our work." (GOR522) The moral frailty of the human soul is answered by the dignity of free choice. Teshuvah is answered by forgiveness; Israel's peoplehood by God's parenthood. The mystery and majesty of God is answered by the quality of godliness that is intimately within us. The world's pain and centrifugal tensions are answered by the Oneness of God.

To learn what Judaism has to say to the modern heart and mind, one might reasonably and legitimately begin with a close reading of Gates of Repentance.

CHAPTER III

Footnotes

1. CCAR, Gates of Repentance (New York: CCAR, 1978), p. 365. Subsequent citations to this volume will appear in the text, enclosed in parentheses. The page numbers in these citations will be preceded by the letters GOR, ie (GOR365).
2. Centenary Perspective, xxii.
3. Ibid., xxi.
4. Elie Wiesel, Souls on Fire (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp. 109-110.
5. Chaim Stern, "Guide to the Services and Their Themes," Gates of Understanding (New York: UAHC, 1977), p. 173; see also Alvin J. Reines, "Polydoxy and the Equivocal Service," Ibid., pp. 89-101.
6. See also Gates of Repentance, pp. 117, 212, 322.
7. Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Pocket Books, 1963).
8. Centenary Perspective, p. vi.
9. Philip Birnbaum, High Holy Day Prayer Book, p. 202.
10. Centenary Perspective, p. xxi.
11. Fein, p. 141, p. 145, p. 150.
12. Centenary Perspective, p. xxii.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

The Learning Adult

In Jewish legend, the first and most remarkable adult education student was Akiba ben Joseph, who began his study of the alef-bet when he was forty years old. Perhaps the first great adult educator was Rachel, Akiba's wife. Rachel did not teach Akiba, nor did she spend much time with him. But she performed the two essential functions of an adult educator. First, she projected an absolute conviction that an adult can learn. Second, she arranged conditions so that her student could learn on his own.

The lessons of Rachel were revived at an annual meeting of the American Association for Adult Education in Cleveland in 1927, when the psychologist E. L. Thorndike announced to a startled crowd that adults can indeed learn. Thorndike had established by his research that adult capacity to learn declines very slowly, at a rate of 1% a year from ages 45-70.¹ A short time later, Thorndike's colleague, Irving Lorge, did studies showing that what declined for adults was not intellectual power but speed of learning, and even that decline could be minimized by continued use of the subject matter.²

Since Thorndike's dramatic routing of negative "old dog. . . new tricks" folk wisdom, other educational psychologists have come to see adulthood as an ideal time for a particularly rich, insightful and useful kind of learning. According to Cyril Houle:

Adulthood offers to the average individual fifty years in which to learn how to solve his own problems as well as to explore the wonderfully inexhaustible realms of knowledge. . . In adulthood, the mind reaches its peak. The man or woman is far more able than the youth to know, to understand, to explore, to appreciate, to discern subtle relationships, to judge, and to look behind the surface of things to their deeper meaning.³

No longer bound by necessity to prepare for future careers, adult students are able to approach learning "lishmah," for its own sake, and for the sake of their own curiosity and fulfillment.

Education in the adult years should set out to do a notable thing. Education at this point in life should take adults and help them move beyond routines into the creative surprises of an adulthood that is truly maturing. In this type of program the adults would be seeking to follow the admonition of Socrates, 'Know thyself.' This question would lead to action.⁴

This chapter will explore some of the challenges and strategies of helping adults learn. The chapter begins with an appreciation of adult individuality as it affects approaches to learning. Adults are unique in the backgrounds they bring to study, in their reasons for coming to a classroom, in their expectations about the class situation, and in the problems that they encounter once they are involved in learning. We will therefore examine some special considerations in planning for adult learners in response to their unique approaches to learning.

The chapter then addresses the effects that adults' life circumstances have on their attitudes to classroom learning. Children are generally viewed as powerless individuals who need to be brought up to an expected level of competence in many areas. How does a teacher deal with people accustomed to power and autonomy who already believe themselves to be functioning competently in most significant areas of their lives? The effects of adult life experience must also be examined

because prior experiences can have both positive and negative consequences for adult learning.

We shall see how significant is the work of R. J. Havighurst on adult development and teachable moments. Havighurst's theories yield significant insights for Jewish educators. The stages of adult growth provide a number of definable and predictable teachable moments when adults are ready for various kinds of Jewish learning.

Finally, after summarizing adult learning needs and some of the practical considerations involved in planning for Jewish adult education, the chapter describes a teaching model that is particularly helpful in structuring adult courses.

A Group of Students, Each Unique

The adult students in a classroom are not joined, as children are, by the primary need to master common learning tasks.⁴ Nor are adults homogeneously grouped by age, ability or experience. As adults grow older, their lives become more and more specialized, and innate tastes and characteristics become more pronounced.⁵

In a Jewish educational setting, variations in Jewish background and education compound the effects of these variations. The Jewish teacher must also expect to deal with pronounced differences in attitudes, beliefs and value systems. The one factor that is likely to function as a common denominator in an adult class in a Reform congregation is the relatively high degree of secular education attained by Reform congregants. Sixty percent of the sample population studied in Reform Is A Verb were college graduates or had some post-graduate education.⁶

Adult Students Have Unique Needs

Adult students approach elective study for reasons that they might not be able to articulate. However, the six characteristic need-profiles that have been identified for adult students are recognizable to any experienced teacher of an adult education program. These need-profiles are: goal orientation, action orientation, learning orientation, the need for rationality, the need for complete self-identity, and the need to adapt to change.

The Goal Oriented Student. For a goal oriented student, elective education occurs in episodes, each of which begins with the realization of a practical need or the identification of an immediate interest. Taking courses can become characteristic of these students' lives, but no pattern can be discerned. These students tend to move from institution to institution and change their methods of learning with great flexibility if they determine that in doing so they can accomplish clear-cut objectives. Frequently the availability of a learning resource stimulates the awareness of a need or an interest.⁷ A subgroup of students in this category, particularly those who switch from interest to interest rather than from need to need, are motivated by a generalized goal of upward mobility. They want to be "intellectual."⁸

The Activity Oriented Student. Those who are activity oriented find in the circumstances of course-taking a meaning which has no necessary connection with the subject matter. "Loneliness leads many people to education."⁹ The classroom setting offers fellowship and a sense of belonging to a small natural group.¹⁰ The peer group situation offers warmth, acceptance and respect.¹¹ Other students in this activity

oriented category may attend courses to accumulate credits or to escape from unhappy job or home situations.¹² A few take courses faithfully because "they believe that they are in this way carrying on a tradition of their family or their culture." The course-joiners in this category do almost no reading.¹³

Learning Oriented Students. A certain number of students, not necessarily holders of college degrees, continue to take adult education courses because they seek knowledge for its own sake. Systematically, if course availability permits, they delineate subject matter areas and work through self-directed plans of learning. Avid readers, these people continually strive to learn.¹⁴

The Need for Rationality. What brings some students to course after course is "Not an interest in knowledge for its own sake. . .it is an interest in rationality."¹⁵ These adults desire to "talk things over. They want to clarify their own thoughts, talk out their worries and untangle their deliberations"¹⁶ in a respectable intellectual forum outside the workplace or home. These students will frequently depart from the given course of study and turn a class discussion off-course to meet their private needs.

Striving for Self-Identity. A number of individuals are more concerned with their inner life than with the manifest content of any course. The primary motivation of these people is to develop their full potentialities, and thus to achieve complete self-identity.¹⁷ While this need is consciously acknowledged by only a few students, the drive for self-realization and self mastery are generally characteristic of mature minds.¹⁸

Adaptation to Change. Life changes, such as the empty nest syndrome, approaching retirement, or young women's increased freedom when children start school can send adults into exploration of educational options. In addition, significant social or institutional change can provide interest in taking courses. Economic conditions periodically send people to investment courses; women have responded to society's new expectations of them by taking numerous self-help courses. The change that is relevant to the study unit proposed in Chapter V of this paper is that Gates of Repentance is a relatively new prayerbook which some congregations will use for the first time during the coming 1981, 5742 High Holidays.

Student Hesitations: The Emotional Overlay

While adult students tend to approach classroom learning with unique sets of conscious and unconscious needs, many adults share common hesitations about formal study.

Fear of Change. Because adults perceive their personalities to be already "shaped" and organized (this common assumption is challenged by the work of R. J. Havighurst, which will be discussed later in the chapter), they can become very threatened by any experience that forces them to change the ways in which they seek to maintain or enhance their self-organization.¹⁹ George Brown attributes this resistance to change to the "struggle to keep certain feelings from emerging into consciousness. . . .If we open ourselves to new experiences," he writes, "and thus allow changes to occur, we must in that opening give up control."²⁰

People who feel threatened by change adopt several basic strategies. They can immediately shut down inquiry and exploratory behavior and

retreat to a narrow perceptual field. For this reason, some adult students might "prefer methods which permit them to be passive; such a state arouses none of the conflicts which may be beneath the surface waiting to be mobilized by the challenge of real learning achievement."²¹ People may also behave defensively, strenuously justifying old positions. Another way in which people avoid change is by "creating with their minds imaginary catastrophies that might happen if they were to move into the unknown of new experience."²²

Fear of Failure. As Thorndike observed adult students, he discovered that they sometimes learned less than they might because they underestimated their power to learn. Self-imposed limitations result in narrowing of interests²³ and reduced expectations. People who claim that they were "never any good at poetry or philosophy" might impose these labels on a related field, like liturgy.

Memories of unpleasant classroom experiences, wherein one was not "smart," or simply not treated with respect, can also impede adult learning. Those who have this barrier to overcome "typically enter an educational activity expecting to be treated like children." However, according to Malcolm Knowles,

when adults are first exposed to a learning environment in which they are treated with respect, are involved in mutual inquiry with the teacher, and are given responsibility for their own learning, the initial reaction is usually one of shock and disorganization. Adults typically are not prepared for self-directed learning; they need to go through a process of reorientation to learning as adults. . . .²⁴

The utmost in tact would thus be required of the teacher who had to balance a student's specific felt need for direction against that student's equally strong need to be treated as an autonomous individual.

Other residual effects of the long gap between a person's youthful education and the resumption of study as an adult are the simple but frightening awareness of "how long it's been," left over defenses about grades or any formal evaluation procedures, and difficulty in adjustment to changes that have occurred in methods of teaching since former classroom experiences.²⁵ Students who remember lectures and Socratic dialogue, for instance, might be caught off guard by a teacher who relies on task groups or brainstorming. Therefore, teachers who depart from standard techniques of lecture and questioning should explain the new rules of grouping and procedure clearly to adult students. Older students might also be aware of and concerned about a decline in visual acuity, reduction in speed of reaction, and lowering of energy levels.²⁶ These factors can also be compensated for by teacher planning and sensitivity.

Concerns. Many of the responses to classroom learning that have above been termed "hesitations" can be grouped under a technical term used by theorists of confluent education. This term is "concerns," described by Weinstein and Fantini as connoting "an inner uneasiness."

Concerns may be positive, of course, rooted in aspirations and desires that are seeking outlets. But all concerns are negative in the sense that they signify disequilibrium or incomplete satisfaction--the gap between reality and an ideal.²⁷

Weinstein and Fantini identify as particularly salient three major groups of concerns: concern for self-image, concern for connectedness (the desire "to establish connection with others or with society at large, to know where one fits in the scheme of things"), and concern for control over one's life.²⁸ While Weinstein and Fantini propose a "curriculum of concerns" which turns these three categories of concern into positive behavioral goals for elementary school children, one may make the

generalization that any curriculum should enable students of any age to achieve some level of satisfaction on all three levels of basic concern.

Blockages. When the underlying pervasive concerns for security, self-worth, positive affiliation and power are unmet in students' lives, these concerns

may function as blocks to the development of higher needs and goals such as the aesthetic, the creative and the intellectual or more purely cognitive.²⁹

These factors are "ever present as concerns if not blockages in any learning situation,"³⁰ and it is not possible for a teacher to predict the point at which, for any individual in the classroom, a concern might intensify and emerge as a block to learning. In adult education, unlike pedagogy, life is not lived primarily in the classroom. The teacher typically cannot watch problems develop and work out individually prescribed long term plans of amelioration. However, an alert teacher can pinpoint and prepare for those parts of a lesson that might touch off challenges to an individual's self-concept, affiliation and sense of control. In the lesson plans presented as Chapter V, such moments are identified for the teacher, and designated "Potential Blockage."

Loadings. Whereas concerns and blockages refer to the learner's characteristics or life situation, loadings are the overtones that students apply to a specific subject or learning task.³¹

Loadings are those affective aspects of all learning tasks, stemming from basic concerns or not, which, if taken into account, may enrich personal meaning, increase relevance, and broaden understanding in a manner not possible, or only haphazardly done, by focusing on the cognitive dimensions alone.³²

The conscious acknowledgement of affective loadings - the feeling component of the curriculum - and its integration into each lesson can increase a student's involvement and desire to learn.³³ Confluent educators like

George I. Brown advocate extensive constructive exploitation of affective loadings to enhance the personal meaning of learning. However, for adult students, one caution must be noted. Loadings can render some learning processes, like categorizing, inefficient.

When the material to be conceptualized consists of familiar or feeling-evoking symbols instead of abstractions, the effectiveness of categorizing is diminished. People tend to depend on cues which have past associations if they are present rather than sticking with methods of evaluating information which are more efficient. Many of our difficulties in adult education arise out of this tendency, because adults have many more firmly entrenched associations with cues which can become misleading.³⁴

In order to overcome this deleterious effect of loading, the teacher of adults must try to create situations which permit students temporarily to consider making "otherwise risky categorizations."³⁵ The entire device in Chapter V of the theatrical model for studying liturgy is designed to enable students to break away from their preconceptions about High Holiday services. The proposed unit offers a restructuring of over-familiar and possibly over-loaded material.

Planning Consequences

Awareness of the dimensions of adult uniqueness will suggest several planning strategies to the teacher of adults. An adult classroom should be as individually based as possible, because changing the behavior of each individual is a unique process.³⁶ The lesson plans in Chapter V therefore incorporate ample opportunities for individual response to ideas and materials.

Individual involvement is enhanced if classroom materials are as relevant as possible to the life concerns of the students.³⁷ The term "concerns" is used here both technically, as described above, and

generally to indicate student interest and conscious involvement. While teachers feel responsible for designing curriculum and lesson plans, "learners really learn in response to their own needs and perceptions, not those of their teachers."³⁸ Therefore, adult learners must be given time to define their own goals for a particular course. Unless an adult can see personal meaning in the goals for instruction, it is doubtful that real learning will occur.³⁹ Accordingly, the first lesson of the course of study in Chapter V will give students an overview of the material to be covered in the course, and then will invite them to relate that material to their personal study goals.

Andragogy

Definition

Whereas a child's status and level of self esteem are measured largely by school performance, an adult's sources of fulfillment derive from non-educational responsibilities as a worker, spouse, parent and citizen. In these areas, the adult is used to making independent decisions and facing the consequences. Therefore, an adult is less amenable than a child to pedagogy's typical hierarchy of teacher at the top as knower/evaluator, and students below in a subordinate position.

Since the life circumstances of adults are so different from those of children, Malcolm Knowles proposes a theory of "andragogy" which asserts that the teaching of adults is qualitatively different from the teaching of children. In describing andragogy, Knowles does not claim that the processes by which adults learn are wholly distinctive. Rather, he maintains that an adult's self-concept, life experience and orientation

to learning are different enough from a child's to necessitate important adjustments of teacher attitude, classroom atmosphere and organization. The sections that follow summarize Knowles' theory of andragogy and consequent recommendations.

The Learner's Self-Concept

Learning Climate. As a person moves from childhood into adulthood, that person becomes a producer as well as a consumer, a self directed rather than a dependent personality. The learning climate of an adult class must therefore meet the deep need of the students to be treated as adults who are self-directing and deserving of respect.⁴⁰

Adults tend to avoid, resist and resent situations in which they feel they are being treated like children - being told what to do and what not to do, being talked down to, embarrassed, punished, judged. Adults tend to resist being under conditions that are incongruent with this self-concept as autonomous individuals.⁴¹

Adult students therefore value a "climate of adulthood" wherein they are treated as colleagues, known by name and acknowledged as individuals.⁴²

Diagnosis of Needs. "The adult's concept of self-directivity," writes Knowles, "is in direct conflict with the traditional practice of the teacher's telling [students] what [the] need [is] to know."⁴³ Accordingly, andragogy places great emphasis on self-diagnosis.

Participation in Planning. Knowles maintains that self diagnosis should be followed by substantial individual student participation in the construction of a course of study:

Every individual tends to feel committed to a decision (or an activity) to the extent that he has participated in making it (or planning it). Teachers of adults who do all the planning for their students, who come into the classroom and impose preplanned activities on them, typically experience apathy, resentment, and probably withdrawal.⁴⁴

Knowles seems to advocate that students not only plan the overall sequence of their courses of study, but also individual courses, segments of courses or even lessons under the supervision of the teacher. However, Knowles does not deal with the question of how one is to fit the time consuming process of student planning into the limited time frame of a five session mini-course such as the one proposed in Chapter V. Because of the time limitation, and because the course is designed to allow the students to explore a particular illuminating structural model that would not have arisen spontaneously as a consequence of student planning, the five sessions described in Chapter V do not use Knowles' theory of student participation in planning as an organizing principle. However, his advice in this matter has been taken into account in several ways. Autonomous student goal setting in Lesson I, and the assignment (Lesson IV) of a major paper which can be framed and written in a highly individual style are two occasions where student planning has been built into the unit. On a third occasion, in Lesson III, the teacher is advised to exercise sensitivity to the students' need for autonomy and control even though the teacher has had to arrange the class activities in advance.

Conducting Learning Experiences. "In congruence with the adult's self-concept. . ." Knowles states, "andragogical practice treats the learning-teaching transaction as the mutual responsibility of learners and teachers."⁴⁵ The full learning-teaching partnership can be expressed by the use of seminars, learning teams and project task forces. Even in a lecture situation which is occasionally the most efficient way to transmit ideas and information in compressed time, the teacher must be careful to stimulate active rather than passive listening. "Andragogy," Knowles

writes, "assumes that a teacher can't really 'teach' in the sense of 'make a person learn,' but that one person can only help another person to learn."⁴⁶

Self-Evaluation. Since testing and grading produce dependency and childlike feelings, Knowles advocates some form of self-evaluation.⁴⁷ This process should include a cross check of work accomplished against pre-set goals. However, the self-evaluation should also include an adjustment and expansion of student goals so that the student is directed toward the future. Knowles urges that teachers and students think less of evaluation and more in terms of rediagnosis to launch another cycle of learning.

The Learner's Life Experience

Adults surpass children in the volume and variety of their life experience. In addition, adults have synthesized their experiences into self-defining life stories. Adults can see patterns of response and understand connections between events. For a child, Knowles observes, "experience is what happens to him. To an adult, his experience is him."⁴⁸ Adults define their self-identity in terms of unique sets of experiences; they become the sum of what they have done. They therefore have emotional investments in the value of their experiences. In situations where their life experience is not used or its worth minimized, adults feel personally rejected.⁴⁹

Life or previous study experience that yields entry level knowledge relevant to the projected course of study can have positive and negative consequences for learning.

Foundation Experiences. Acquisition of new knowledge can be easier for individuals who possess a rich foundation of experience to which they can relate new experiences. Teachers aware of this benefit will assess and make use of relevant prior experiences early in a course.⁵⁰ They also find that analogy is a strong instructional tool for adult education.

Structure and Rigidity. Because adults will, on their own, structure their new learning according to their previous experiences,⁵¹ adults can be more rigid than children. When appropriately applied, this structuring of new experience is helpful. In other cases, the "experienced veteran who approaches each setting with a highly complicated set of expectations and a great deal of experience against which to check out what he sees"⁵² can be self-programmed to miss important insights. Potential adult rigidity flows from more than established intellectual patterns: it is also an effect of adult status. Being established, observes psychologist Kurt Lewin, "means having a well defined position and definite relations to the many regions of a highly differentiated life space." Therefore any change means a great number of readjustments. Consequently, adults are more self-protective and conservative than children.⁵³ To counter this potential impediment to creative thinking, Knowles recommends building into the beginning of a course an "unfreezing" experience which helps adults look at themselves more objectively or frees their minds from pre-conceptions.⁵⁴

A Data Bank. Not all adult life experience is consciously examined and organized. Many adults, in fact, laughingly complain about their vast funds of "trivia" - an unorganized assortment of data culled from myriad exposures to incidents in print and in real life. Even when adults

have assimilated and organized information relevant to the course, it may not be organized along lines immediately applicable to the curriculum. Yet all of this prior knowledge can provide essential data for analysis within the course's conceptual framework.⁵⁵ The adults in the classroom are a valuable resource for the teacher and for each other. Each adult can contribute in some unique way to the learning of others.⁵⁶

Because of the great potential value of adult life and study experience, Knowles recommends the use of experiential techniques that encourage adults to draw on their private data banks: small group discussion, case method, simulation or role play, student demonstrations, and seminar presentations. To enhance the process whereby new knowledge becomes an appropriate and constructive part of the pre-existing structure, Knowles advocates having students plan or rehearse how they can apply their new learning in their day to day lives.⁵⁷ In Session III of the course proposed in Chapter V, for instance, students are asked how they might explain Jewish identity to their children or to other younger people.

The Learner's Orientation to Learning

Adults have a different time perception from children, and therefore view learning differently. Children expect learning to have delayed application. They are accumulating a reservoir of knowledge that may be useful in later life. Therefore they can enter learning in a "subject-centered" frame of mind.⁵⁸ Adults on the other hand, enter learning situations either to respond to pressures from their current life situation, or to illuminate and clarify specific problems. Adults have a sense of immediacy of application.⁵⁹ McCluskey and Jensen, writing about

the work of Kurt Lewin, support and supplement Knowles' notion of the differences between a child's and an adult's perception of time. Lewin, McCluskey and Jensen write, found that

in childhood the psychological future is vague and only slightly ahead. In adolescence it is still vague but infinite. Billings, a psychiatrist, stated that middle life is a period of transition in which bodily and social role changes require a reorientation of personality, the major focus of which appears to be a new perception of time as no longer unlimited, a greater awareness of past, present and future, with the actions of the present more clearly defined as a means to a future end.⁶⁰

While for a child the future stretches on indefinitely, an adult measures the utility of activity by a complex equation that balances the "time already lived with the time yet to be lived."⁶¹ Adult learning must somehow be relevant to this equation.

Readiness to Learn

The concept of readiness is well established in pedagogy because it is easy to see a continuum of development and growth in children. Therefore, teachers of children adapt their curricula to the developmental ladders sketched by cognitive and moral development theorists, such as Piaget and Kohlberg. However, in 1961, R. J. Havighurst alerted teachers to the fact that adults have their own phases of growth and resulting developmental tasks.⁶²

According to Havighurst,

People do not launch themselves into adulthood with the momentum of their childhood and youth, and simply coast along to old age. . . .Adulthood has its transition points and its crises. It is a developmental period in almost as complete a sense as childhood and adolescence are developmental periods.⁶³

Developmental Tasks and Readiness

Each developmental period is accompanied by a number of developmental tasks which must be successfully accomplished within that period if the individual is to achieve satisfaction in life and success with later tasks. If the task is not achieved at the proper time, Havighurst warned, "it will not be achieved well and failure in this task will cause partial or complete failures in the achievement of other tasks."⁶⁴ Havighurst's caution is similar to Erik Erikson's view that the eight stages of psychosocial development "are based on critical periods of ego development and are sequential, maturational with movement to successive stages based upon the resolutions of earlier phases."⁶⁵ Havighurst's breakdown of tasks per stage is more detailed and rigid than Erickson's description of life stages, and his matching of specific tasks to specific stages should be viewed with the following reservation. Because Havighurst devised his scheme during a period of economic and social stability in the 1950's, his theory rests on the social roles and reasonable expectations of that period. In the 1980's, with patterns of delayed marriage and childbearing, two career homes, serial matrimony, new careers for mature women, second careers for men in their 40's, and general economic dislocation, many individuals are involved in life tasks that are atypical for their developmental stages as described by Havighurst. As these individuals make their adjustments and pass the secrets of their success on to others facing the same struggles, the boundaries of any scheme such as Havighurst's will have to expand to include these alternative patterns which society is ready to consider as also normal. However, if Havighurst's warning against deviation from the pattern he

describes can be seen and understood in its proper historical context, his overall organization of adulthood tasks remains a useful guide for teachers and curriculum planners.

Havighurst identifies three sources of developmental tasks. These are nature (learning to walk, starting relationships with the opposite sex, menopause), culture (learning to read, participating as a citizen in society), and the personal values and aspirations of the individual (choosing and preparing for an occupation, achieving a scale of values and a philosophy of life).⁶⁶ Adulthood is divided into three phases, early, middle and late, and the individual is viewed by Havighurst in each of ten social roles: worker, mate, parent, homemaker (male and female), son or daughter of an aging parent, citizen, friend, organization member, religious affiliate and leisure time user. As the individual moves through the three time phases and confronts the demands of nature, culture and his or her own personal values, the requirements of performing each of the ten social roles change dramatically. Havighurst identifies the different steps that need to be taken in each role during each time phase as "developmental tasks."⁶⁷ Readiness to learn is coordinated with the developmental tasks of each period. For instance, in the role of a worker, an individual in early adulthood must learn whatever is required to get a job. That individual is not ready to learn supervision. Having obtained a job, the young adult works toward mastery. His or her readiness centers on learning job skills, standards of performance and how to get along with fellow workers. In middle adulthood, secure in basic employment, the individual must work up the ladder, and now is ready to learn supervisory skills. In older adulthood, as retirement approaches, the individual is ready to learn about retirement and substitutes for work.⁶⁸

The sections that follow will summarize Havighurst's descriptions of the three phases of adulthood and will list the developmental tasks that accompany each of them.

Early Adulthood

The "most individualistic period of life and the loneliest one,"⁶⁹ early adulthood is the time when a person or a couple must tackle "the most important tasks of life." With little social attention and support, most people find these tasks to be so consuming as to get in the way of affiliation with religious institutions and the other structures that characterized the lives of the individual's parents. Early adulthood is the time for establishing an independent life style. It is also a "relatively unorganized period in life which marks the transition from an age graded to a status graded society."⁷⁰ From this point on, society will measure the adult's prestige and power not so much on the basis of age as on "skill and strength and wisdom and family connections."⁷¹ Achievement will no longer occur in the natural course of growth, as in the earlier years, but as the result of effort and application of strategy "based on an understanding of the new terrain."⁷²

The young adult's developmental tasks include:

- 1) selecting a mate
- 2) learning to live with a marriage partner
- 3) rearing children
- 4) managing a home
- 5) getting started in an occupation
- 6) taking on civic responsibility (usually postponed until people have children growing and property to care for. Delay in undertaking

this task can also be attributed to job mobility and the need for time to learn to participate.)

Middle Age

Havighurst finds that from about 30-55, adults reach "the peak of their influence upon society," and must respond to society's "maximum demands on them for social and civic responsibility."⁷⁴ During this period, people have an acute sense of the rapid passage of time. "Most people arrive at the end of middle age and the beginning of later maturity with surprise and a sense of having finished the journey while they were still preparing to commence it."⁷⁵ The developmental tasks for an adult in these years include:

- 1) achieving adult civic and social responsibility
- 2) establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living
- 3) assisting teenage children to become responsible and happy

adults

- 4) developing adult leisure time activities
- 5) relating to one's spouse as a person
- 6) accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of

middle age

- 7) adjusting to aging parents.⁷⁶

Because so many of the adults who join synagogues and take part in adult education courses are in this age group, it is important to supplement Havighurst's scheme of developmental tasks with a deeper look at the problems of the middle years. Writing for the Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research of the Synagogue Council of America, Sol Landau has produced a brief monograph that is very useful for synagogue planners and

educators. In this article, Landau pulls together classical, traditional Jewish, medical, psychological and currently popular sources that describe middle age, and in particular, the mid-life crisis. The common denominator in all of these sources is the sense that the middle years are a time of transition, a time for reexamination of goals, values and personal relationships.

Far from being a time of attainment, when quiet and achievement are realized and enjoyed, the middle years precipitate a time period of great turbulence and intense inner turmoil. The search for identity is stirred up again, and "the search for meaning" is renewed in profound ways in the individual's everyday life. Status symbols--by this time period, often achieved - are questioned. The individual is engulfed, as it were, by the existential questions of self, values, and life itself.⁷⁷

Items listed by Havighurst in terms of tasks to be accomplished, take on a different tone when encountered in Landau's assessment of them as parts of a crisis:

The realities of "an empty nest," rebelliousness in teenagers, and the crises of aging parents press for attention, boredom and feelings of entrapment bring about frustrations in the work environment. The desire for new avenues of work surfaces, and ambivalence about career change result. Technological advances often reinforce "it all" with job obsolescence.

Marriages are reassessed, and as the divorce rates would seem to validate, many are dissolved. . . . Men develop fears of impotence and inadequacy. Women become obsessed with looking for ways to escape appearing older.⁷⁸

Whereas the tasks of the younger adult involve achieving an accommodation with the outside world, the tasks of the middle aged adult seem to involve introspection and the resolution of dramatic inner changes.

Later Maturity

From the age of 55 on, Havighurst finds that adults are engaged in tasks that "require more of a defensive strategy - of holding on to life rather than of seizing more of it."⁷⁹ The tasks of later maturity include:

- 1) adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
- 2) adjusting to retirement and reduced income
- 3) adjusting if necessary to the death of a spouse
- 4) establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group
- 5) meeting social and civic obligations
- 6) establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements.⁸⁰

Teachable Moments

If, as Havighurst asserts, "education may be conceived as the effort of society, through the school, to help the individual achieve certain of his developmental tasks,"⁸¹ the educator must remain alert for those moments in which the individual is preparing to undertake the next task. These intervals, "when the body is ripe, and society requires and the self is ready to achieve a certain task,"⁸² constitute teachable moments. Efforts to impart relevant information before the arrival of a teachable moment are largely wasted. At the right time, learning can be particularly satisfying and efficient.

The concept of teachable moments for Jewish adult education needs investigation and expansion far beyond the scope of this paper. Research might be conducted by surveys of enrollment in programs of adult Jewish education, questionnaires directed to all congregants, and extensive

interviews. Lacking a research backup for my hypotheses, I can only suggest that the following might be appropriate teachable moments for a course on Jewish identity such as is proposed in Chapter V:

- 1) when a person or a couple has just joined a Temple thus making a first explicit commitment to Jewish identity,
- 2) when parents must explain their own Jewish practice and belief to their growing children,
- 3) when children move out of the parental home and parents must re-structure their Jewish family life as a couple,
- 4) when adults face the loss, by death or through a geographic move, of the parent(s) who always "kept the family together," particularly at holiday times. At such a time, the younger adults must take upon themselves the responsibility for their own Jewish identity,
- 5) when adults face the loss of a spouse or a home and must make a new independent accommodation to the Jewish community.

In addition to these teachable moments which are clearly linked to the life cycle and to the developmental tasks outlined by Havighurst, the predicament of Jewish life supplies one with an open-ended and on-going need for Jewish learning. One of the continuing roles of any adult in the Jewish community is to explain and represent Judaism to a non-Jewish society. Accordingly, an important function of Jewish adult education is always to "reaffirm a definition of Jewish identity within the larger culture."⁸³

Finally, as Landau points out, the "feelings of emptiness - often resulting in the crippling illnesses of depression and alienation" that occur during the middle years make people particularly ready for the spiritual quality of Jewish study.⁸⁴ Judaism, Landau asserts, can

provide a "means for coping," as well as a "guide in the renewal process."

Texts of deeper philosophical content need to be studied in special discussion groups, religio-psychological counseling offered in groups and on one-to-one bases. For, in Judaism, there is a primary value that learning spans the entire lifetime of the individual. . . .⁸⁵

A Useful Model for Adult Education

A dilemma arises when one scans the portrait of adult learners sketched above. On the one hand, those who write about adult education urge that "the more active and responsible a role the adult assumes in the learning experience, the more likely he is to learn."⁸⁶ Learning, in this view is an internal process involving need-meeting and goal-striving behavior.⁸⁷ The learner will invest energy in making use of available resources (including teachers and readings) to the extent that these are perceived to be relevant to self-directed goals. On the other hand, other writers, or even the same writers, have pointed out that adults are subject to many common uncertainties about pursuing serious responsible continuous study (as opposed to attending the lecture series frequently called "adult education" in synagogues). The pursuit of active study requires a considerable period of orientation. It takes time for adults to revise their old concepts of the student's role to fit their present status as fully responsible and mature people. It also takes time for people to shake their fears of failure and to put aside their fears of change. The ideal picture, proposed by Knowles and others, of the adult learner actively participating in self-diagnosis,

planning, conduct of the class periods, and self-evaluation would seem to require more lead time than would be available in the five session mini-course to be sketched out in Chapter V.

In addition, given the realities of adult education classes, especially in a synagogue setting, pure self-direction seems impractical:

Active learning processes take time, more time than many adults are willing to give, and they make demands on the energy and concentration of the student which many busy adults find impossible to meet, ⁸⁸ except under conditions of very high motivation.

Participation in adult education is almost always "a peripheral part of a busy life."⁸⁹ It is difficult to expect adults to read long assignments with analytic care. Except for those who are ready to undertake degree programs, few people are willing to commit themselves for more than five to eight successive sessions. Even with that limited commitment, business or family pressures can cause students to miss one or more classes. Therefore, adult students very much in need of autonomy and a sense of self-direction, may, in fact, lack the time and flexibility needed to conduct their own inquiry successfully.

This situation requires a model of instructional design that can short-cut some of the time and uncertainty involved in self-directed inquiry, and still leave learners feeling actively involved in the process of their own education. Educational theorist, David Ausubel's advance organizer model⁹⁰ suggests a useful blueprint for the teacher planning a course outline for a short term adult study unit.

It must be stated at the outset that Ausubel seeks optimal organization of cognitive material to facilitate learning, retention and transfer. Although the material to be learned may well have affective loadings, Ausubel does not specifically address the affective dimension.

His theory is most appropriately applied to the overall cognitive design of teacher-planned instruction. For teachers in a Jewish setting where affective goals are a primary consideration, a course organized according to Ausubel's theory would have to be supplemented by an understanding of the affective impact of the material to be learned.

Ausubel's model for teaching rests on his concept of the mind and nervous system as an information processing and storage system organized around retention of a set of ideas which provide anchors for new information and ideas as these are received.⁹¹ As the mind takes in new material, it reorganizes itself to accommodate this new information and thus is in a "perpetual state of change."⁹²

The new structure becomes part of [the learner's]
information processing system and is used. . .to
scan the environment for new information. . . .⁹³

The process by which Ausubel recommends linking new learning to the existing cognitive structure is the presentation of Advance Organizers. An organizer is a general idea which is fairly abstract relative to the material and which precedes the material. It functions as an "ideational scaffold" to organize the more detailed material to be presented later.⁹⁴ Organizers, with their higher level of abstraction and inclusiveness, are to be distinguished from summaries and overviews, which are "ordinarily presented on the same level of abstraction. . .as the learning material;" and "simply emphasize the salient points of the material" by omission of details and simplification.⁹⁵

For unfamiliar subject matter, the advance organizer is expository, and encapsules wholistically the material to be covered. For familiar material, the organizer is comparative, enabling the learner to integrate

new concepts with basically similar concepts while discriminating and differentiating the new from the old.

In Ausubel's advance organizer model, the teacher begins the unit by presenting an initial organizing idea. This idea is clear, stable and inclusive enough to anchor all the facts and new ideas that the students will learn in the course of their study. The teacher then ensures the stability of this organizing idea by two processes: first, by linking it to any already present relevant concepts, and then by differentiating it from those concepts so that it is not absorbed by them.⁹⁶ Each subsequent component unit of the course is then introduced by its own organizer. In relation to each other, these units are progressively differentiated in descending order of inclusiveness.⁹⁷ Instead of beginning with facts and building up the ideas of the discipline inductively, in Ausubel's scheme, the learner confronts the most abstract ideas first.⁹⁸ Therefore the discipline is carefully built up in the mind of the learner from the top down.⁹⁹ While mid-point summaries or intra-material comparisons may be used by students and teacher as an evaluative procedure, these techniques are not to be substituted for the more effective advance organizers. These initial organizing ideas create a learning set that helps students perceive similarities and differences as they go along, creating their own discriminations in response to personal sources of confusion.¹⁰⁰

There are four reasons why Ausubel's plan of offering advance organizers is appropriate for adult students with limited time for study:

(1) First, the presentation of an organizing idea insures that the material to be presented will be meaningfully related or relatable to relevant ideas in the student's cognitive structure. Ideational linkages will be forged between the new learning and old ideas. Entry level

knowledge and adult life experience are thus respected and utilized. In addition, with each advance organizer, the student is given a tool for judging whether incoming material is relevant or irrelevant to the purposes of the course.

(2) Second, Ausubel's deductive procedure saves time. Since adults can acquire most new concepts and propositions by directly grasping higher-order relationships,¹⁰¹ the routine introduction of concrete props, empirical manipulations and discovery techniques can be eliminated. Concrete exercises can be reserved for illustration and practice or for the creation of dramatic moments that will increase retention of selected ideas.¹⁰²

(3) Thirdly, Ausubel insists that meaningful reception learning guided by advance organizers is an active process. It involves integration of new ideas with the in-place cognitive structure, selection of the established idea appropriate for attaching the new idea, re-working of the new proposition to blend with the personal frame of reference, and reconciliation of discrepancies or re-organization of existing knowledge under more inclusive principles.¹⁰³ Confronted with a body of knowledge essentially pre-organized by the teacher, the students must work along with the teacher to clarify and define each facet of the presentation.

(4) Finally, advance organizers can challenge and stimulate mature minds by suggesting new unifying concepts for familiar material. Joyce and Weil, in their discussion of Ausubel's teaching model envision a more creative function for an advance organizer than Ausubel suggests himself, "that is, to provide a new persepctive. . . ."

For instance, the concept of balance or form, though generic to the arts, may be applied to literature, mathematics, to the functioning of the branches of government or even to our own activities.¹⁰⁴

The advance organizer of a theater analogy for worship services has been used in the teaching unit in Chapter V precisely to provide a new perspective on well known, even partially memorized material. Therefore, while the advance organizer model developed by David Ausubel is not the only model that might be used for adult Jewish education, and cannot be used in isolation from affective considerations, it has proved a useful guide in the construction of the unit of study presented in the next chapter. The playbill course outline and the questions in the playbill that introduce each lesson are examples of advance organizers at work.

CHAPTER IV

Footnotes

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CHAPTER V

GATES OF IDENTITY

The following chapter is a five session, ten hour mini-course for adult students. The course is organized according to the mental model explained in Chapter I. Encouraging students to confront the tenets of contemporary Reform Judaism as they are discussed in Chapter II herein, this course also addresses the specifically contemporary nature of Gates of Repentance as described in Chapter III of this paper. Activities and occasional pauses in the lesson plans to consider "potential loadings" were suggested by the material presented in Chapter IV. This course, then, is a natural outgrowth of the research and analysis that has preceded it.

SESSION I

THE HIGH HOLIDAY DRAMA

AIMS:

1. to define the concept of a mental model.
2. to explore a mental model that compares and contrasts various aspects of drama and worship.
3. to apply the model of drama to High Holiday services by determining the mahzor's characters, plot, type of play and expected effect on the audience.
4. to set personal learning goals related to a better understanding of Jewish identity through the High Holiday liturgy.

MATERIALS:

1. overhead projector
 - (a) transparency of "Theater/Sanctuary Floor Plan" (p. 229)
 - (b) blank transparencies
 - (c) marking pens for acetate transparencies
2. blackboard and chalk
3. a copy of "From the Text" for each student (pp. 230-238)
4. "Playbill/Syllabus" (pp. 239-249) for each student. The teacher should plan on advance registration so that each student's name can be listed in the Playbill in the "About the Cast" section. If advance registration is impossible, these pages can be left blank, and the teacher should ask students to list each other's names as each student is introduced.

TIME ALLOTMENT:

Greetings and Teacher's Introduction	10 minutes
Defining "Mental Model"	20 minutes
Comparison of Drama and Worship	30 minutes
Development of The Theater Model:	
Recall (whole group)	15 minutes
"From the Text" (small groups)	20 minutes
Review Course Outline	20 minutes
Set and Share Personal Goals	20 minutes

LESSON PLAN:I. Teacher's Introduction: LectureA. Purpose of the Course

The High Holiday mahzor is a rich and complex text. There are many ways to approach it. A class might focus on the history

of prayers, on the structure of the prayerbook, or on the meaning and relevance of prayer and teshuvah. While this course will at some points touch all of these topics, its main purpose is to use Gates of Repentance as a tool to help you articulate your Jewish identities.

B. Overall Approach

In order to use the book effectively as an identity-tool, it is important to organize the knowledge that you already have about High Holiday services into a mental model which can serve as an organizing principle for studying Gates of Repentance.

II. Defining "Mental Model"

A. Introduction of the Concept: Lecture

A mental model is a kind of metaphor that helps people organize difficult or new material in terms of a familiar image. For instance:

- (1) we say that a shift pattern on a car is "like the letter H"
- (2) we say that changing trends in child rearing are "like the swing of a pendulum"

Discussion:

The class should suggest other examples of mental models.

Other terms for this concept that students might know are:

"organizing principle" or "Gestalt."

Summary/Transition:

The task for this session is to understand a mental model that focuses on the important features of the High Holiday services.

B. Visual Display and Discussion

The teacher shows the Theater/Sanctuary Floor Plan (p. 229) on an overhead projector and asks what kind of room is portrayed on the diagram. Students should see immediately that the diagram can represent either a sanctuary or a theater. If not, the teacher can add in marking pen the word bimah.

Summary/Transition:

The mental model to be explored in this session is drama. We are going to explore the hypothesis that in important ways High Holiday services, when read from Erev Rosh Hashanah to Ne'ilah, constitute a drama. In addition, the total experience of being at High Holiday services has much in common with being at the theater.

III. Comparison of Drama and Worship:

A. In what ways are drama and worship services alike or dissimilar?

Whole Group Task:

The teacher divides a clean overhead transparency into two columns:

Worship Service

Worship Service

Like Drama

Not Like Drama

Students draw on their experience and contribute suggestions to fill in the two columns. The teacher writes their suggestions in the appropriate columns on the transparency.

Potential Blockage: The teacher must be aware of initial discomfort--the analogy is strange to some students, and the process of thinking in a fresh way about such an over familiar part of life may be difficult.

Procedure:

- 1) acknowledge the possibility of discomfort.
- 2) stress the fact that the theater is very familiar; everyone's had ample experience with it.
- 3) provide an icebreaker, (ie) "You need tickets for both High Holidays and the theater," or "How do you feel when you come late to services? and to the theater?"

Some Possible Answers:Like Theater

public shared experience
 action of shared experience
 goes according to a
 "script"
 compressed vivid language
 depends on comprehension and
 manipulation of symbols
 costumes
 spectacle
 music
 importance of skilled
 performance
 participation of spectator
 (emotional, intellectual)
 time set aside from work and
 the rest of life - a time
 for the inner self
 appeal to emotion
 stage is focus of attention
 audience in balcony and in
 orchestra have different
 levels of involvement
 audience-performer relationship

Not Like Theater

on-stage action is scant
 intermissions last over-
 night (or ten days!)
 audience and actors have
 copies of the same
 script
 the audience reads aloud
 from the script
 no one is really "acting"
 the time and space frames
 of audience and per-
 formers are the same.

- B. Aside from the immediately observable similarities, what funda-
 mental assumptions do drama and worship share?

Teacher Lecture with Class Participation:

- (1) Both drama and worship depend on a belief in the existence
 of ultimate truth.

In worship, "Source of Truth" is one of the names we
 give to God. In theater, the search for truth provides
 the energy behind the exposition. Theatrical plots often
 depend on the faith that the real link between characters

(or the real story of what someone did) can be known.
c.f. Oedipus, Rashomon, Shakespeare's comedies, Who's
Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Students should be asked to
suggest other examples.)

- (2) Both theater and worship require faith that life can be ordered, that logic, sequence and reason are valid bases for action.

In our worship content, we thank the Creator for an ordered universe. In the theater, we impose strict esthetic expectations on form. We do not expect to see Polonius at Ophelia's funeral. A sequence of action, once begun, cannot reverse itself without betraying the audience. (The interplay of logic/form and emotion/surprise in both theater and worship is a fascinating topic which the teacher might want to discuss if the class has moved very quickly to this point.)

- (3) Both theater and worship assert that humanity is vitally interconnected, and that the connections between people are worth exploring.

In the sanctuary, we worship as a congregation and celebrate our group experience. In the theater, it is hard to conceive of drama at all without human interconnection. cf. Amanda and her mother in The Glass Menagerie, Willie Loman and his sons in Death of a Salesman, the tragic constellation of Othello, Iago and Desdemona. (Students might contribute more drama

examples - or they might think of specific prayers that refer to the interconnection of humanity.)

IV. Specific Development of the Model as It Relates to High Holiday Services: If the High Holiday Service Is Like a Drama, Who Are the Characters? What Is the Plot? How Is the Audience Expected to Respond?

Recall of Previous Experience: (Whole Group Task)

Using the blackboard to list responses, the teacher asks the class to recall whatever they can about High Holiday services. Using a brainstorming technique (everything that is said is recorded, no comments from the group on any item, no putdowns) students may list feelings about services or particular prayers, names of prayers, themes, choreography, ideas. After five to ten minutes, students review the material on the board, filling in thematic contents for prayer titles if they can. The teacher then divides a clean section of the board (or a sheet of newsprint) into the following sections: Characters, Plot, Audience. On the basis of the material evoked so far, the students attempt to organize their knowledge of the High Holiday services under these rubrics.

New Data, "From the Text": (Small Group Task)

Each student gets a copy of "From the Text" (pp. 230-238). The class is divided into small groups (pairs and threes). Working in groups, students skim the material, and correct, support or supplement the hypotheses the class has developed as to the identity of the characters, the general content of the plot and the expected effect on the audience. After ten minutes, the class reconvenes as a whole to discuss findings.

V. Using the Course Syllabus/Playbill

A. Overview

Under teacher direction, students scan the Playbill (pp. 239-249) to familiarize themselves with its contents, (see p. 195). Some time can be given to the page on "Sessions and Assignments."

Potential Loading: In working through the lesson, students have acquired a stake in their own discoveries about the thematic structure of High Holiday worship. The teacher must acknowledge the extent to which some students have committed themselves to positions which diverge from aspects of the Playbill. It will be helpful and honest for the teacher to suggest that the Playbill presentation be regarded as a working hypothesis designed to help students apply the mental model of theater to High Holiday worship. The Playbill will organize, but should not limit the class's study. The teacher can promise that valid personal insights into Gates of Repentance or related worship experiences will not be slighted in discussion because they may not fit into the model.

B. Setting and Sharing Personal Goals:

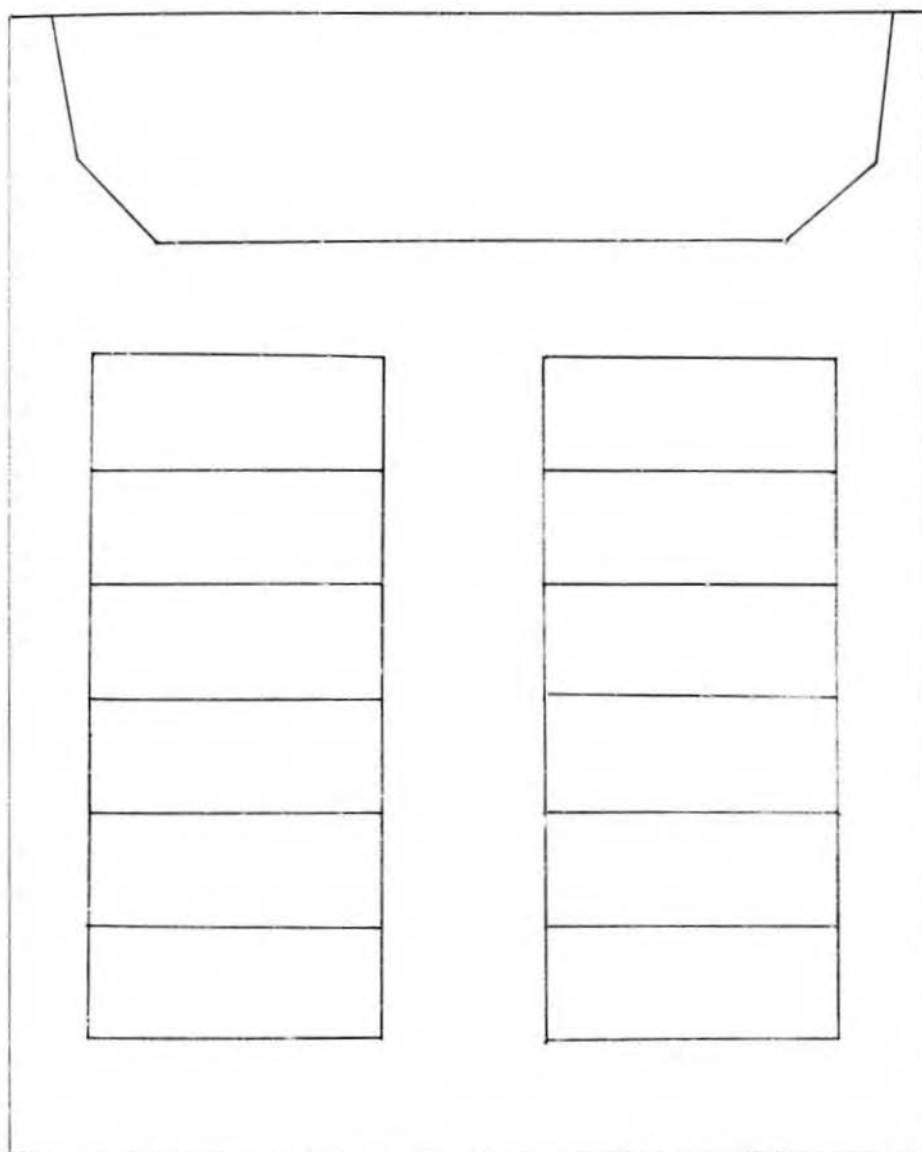
The teacher should move as quickly as possible to the list of "Potential Goals" and the section entitled "Who's Who in the Cast." Because the entry "Each of Us" occupies a featured place in the "Cast of Characters," it is important to stress that just as we come to pray as individuals, we also come to study as individuals, with unique needs and goals. The teacher asks the students to compose their own entries for the "Who's Who" section, telling something important about themselves, and explaining their goals for studying High Holiday liturgy. They may also include personal reactions to High Holiday worship or special High Holiday memories. The "Potential Goals" page is a thought

prompter. After considering the suggested goals, students can individualize them to suit their own needs, or depart from them entirely to develop wholly individual goals based on their own appraisal of what the course seems to offer them. After some minutes of private writing or thought, students are asked to introduce themselves as "Members of the Cast" and share their Playbill-style bio's and learning goals.

Assignment for Session II:

Read the Shofar Service, pp. 138-50 in Gates of Repentance.

Appendix To Session I
Theater/Sanctuary Floor Plan



(reproduce diagram only)

Appendix to Session I

From the Text

These eight selections are representative of contemporary prayers and meditations in Gates of Repentance.

- 1) what main dramatic characters are mentioned in each selection?
- 2) how do these characters interact? What is the nature of their relationship?
- 3) as you read all the selections, how many basic stories or plots can you find? Describe them.

The questions that accompany the passages on the following pages will help you to answer the three basic questions above.

Directions for the teacher:

This page and the following eight pages constitute a kit that may be reproduced on five pages, back to back. Alternatively, students may read the selections from Gates of Repentance. A list of page numbers and the accompanying questions can be prepared and dittoed.

(1)

In the beginning God created heaven and earth,
 and the earth brought forth life,
 and life gave birth to man and woman.
 And they became conscious:
 Aware that they were free
 to create or destroy,
 to live or to die.
 Conscious also that they were not alone.
 Slowly they became aware of a Presence
 greater than themselves,
 whose will must be done
 if we are to endure
 and become what we can be.
 This vision was seen by the founders of our people.
 At the Mountain they pledged themselves
 and us, their children,
 to live by its light,
 to share it with others.
 Here we stand, heirs of the past
 and makers of the future—
 priestly, privileged,
 but heavily burdened
 with blindness, folly, unfaithfulness.
 Can we re-open our eyes to wisdom,
 to be, or hope to be, at one with the One?
 This day, if any day, can make us whole.
 Trembling, we pray to gain
 a new heart, a new spirit. (GOR249)

- (1) According to this poem, what is the basic story that links the characters.

(2)

Once more Atonement Day has come.
All pretense gone,
naked heart revealed to the hiding self,
we stand on holy ground,
between the day that was
and the one that must be.

We tremble.
At what did we aim?
How did we stumble?
What did we take? What did we give?
To what were we blind?
Last year's confession came easily to the lips.
Will this year's come from deeper than the skin?
Say then:
Why are our paths strewn with promises like
fallen leaves?
Say then:
When shall our lust be for wisdom?
Say now:
Love and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall embrace.

*O Hope of Israel:
In our weakness, give us strength.
In our blindness, be our guide.
When we falter, hold our hand.*

Make consistent our impulse for good;
let us know the joy of walking in Your ways. (GOR249-50)

(2) What character is the speaker here?

The poem changes direction at the italics.

Who is being addressed at the beginning of the poem?

Who is being addressed at the end of the poem?

IN THE TWILIGHT

In the twilight of the vanishing year, we lift up our hearts
in thanksgiving.

*Our souls are stirred by the memory of joy, as the new year
begins.*

We were sustained by love and kindness; comforted in
times of sorrow; found happiness in our homes, and
gladness with our friends. We lift up our hearts in
thanksgiving, as the new year begins.

As the new year begins, our spirits rise in grateful song.

But there were dreams that came to naught . . . and times
when we refused to dream. These, with much regret, we
now remember, as the new year begins.

As the new year begins, contrition fills our thoughts.

Some of our days were dark with grief. Many a tear fur-
rowed our cheeks: alas for the tender ties that were
broken! We look back with sorrow, as the new year
begins.

As the new year begins, tears well up within us.

Yet we look ahead with hope, giving thanks for the daily
miracle of renewal, for the promise of good to come. May
this Rosh Hashanah, birthday of the world, be our day of
rebirth into life and peace, serenity and safety, as the new
year begins.

As the new year begins, so is hope reborn with us! (GOR51-2)

(3) Who is speaking?

What psychological process is at work?

(4)

Hear Me, Jacob,
 Israel, whom I have called:
 I am the One,
 the Beginning and the End.
 My own hand founded the earth
 and spread out the skies.
 Thus says the Eternal One,
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,
 who made the earth and all that grows in it,
 who gives breath to its people
 and spirit to those who walk on it.

*I, the Eternal, have called you to righteousness,
 and taken you by the hand, and kept you;
 I have made you a covenant people,
 a light to the nations:
 to open blind eyes,
 to bring the captives out of prison,
 and those who sit in darkness from their dungeons.*

Thus says the Eternal One,
 Creator of heavens,
 the One Who Is:

*I am; I will be; there is none else.
 Justice is My speech,
 right, My declaration.
 The troubled past is forgotten,
 hidden from My sight.*

For behold,
 I create a new heaven and a new earth,
 the past forgotten, never called to mind.
 Be glad, then,
 and rejoice for ever in My creation.

*Before us lies a new day,
 and in the distance a new world,
 ours to create,
 by the strength of our faith. (GOR20-21)*

(4) What character is speaking? What is the speaker's tone and attitude?

How does the speaker define the dramatic situation?

(5)

WE WILL NOT FORGET YOU

God of our people, hear our prayer:
We who speak are Jews.

Remember

The bush You kindled once in the desert air,
Years ago, on Horeb's lonely sand,
That fire You lit to set the centuries aflame
And say to us Your endless, perfect Name,

'I am what I will be'—

It burns eternally now, that light
Upon our altars now, against the night.
And there are deserts still. We are the Jews;
We do not forget.

Remember

The words You spoke in stone
And thunder.

The mountain smoked
And the dismayed multitude
Stood off, hearing the first time
The words they could not refuse,
Fearing the burden and the God that set
Them into history.
And there are mountains still. We are the Jews.
We cannot forget.

We come here then. But something far more deep
Compels: the ancient desert dream we keep,
A people touched by God, a certain grace
That tells of You. We are
Locked with You in old identity,
Remembering the lightning of that place;
Something in us of Your awesome will,
Something of that mountain's thunder, still.

Love us, as much as we will let You.

We are Your Jews,

We will not forget You. (GOR21-22)

(5) How does this speaker define the dramatic relationship?

What is the speaker's self-definition?

Is it complementary to the demands being made in poem (4)?

(6)

Today let us remember the earth's oppressed;
 let us restore their human heritage
 to the victims of torture,
 the weak and the weary,
 all who are imprisoned without cause.
 Let us remember them,
 bring peace to every home,
 and comfort to every heart.
 We know the wisdom by which You would have us
 live;

oceans of ink have been spilled to say it:
 be faithful, be true. love one another as you
 love yourselves.
 But the world is dark, Lord, and cold with fear
 and rage.

The hammer of Chaos beats loudly within our breasts:
 How can we endure?

Lord, today we turn to You,
 uncertainly proclaiming Your glory
 with scarce remembered words of a half-forgotten faith.
 We have confessed our sins and promised to forsake them.
 O find us as we grope for You in our darkness.
 Lord, pardon us as we knock upon Your door,
 for it has been said:
 The gates of repentance are never barred.
 And it has been taught:
 We know our sin is pardoned when we no longer commit
 it.

Use us, Lord, to speed the day of reconciliation when
 poverty, racial prejudice, and religious hatred no longer
 threaten to destroy us;

*when violence, angry conflict, and mistrust are forgotten
 evils;*

*when our wealth is used to feed the hungry and heal the
 sick;*

*when we cherish the world and hold it in trust for our
 children's children,*

*when the weak become strong, and the strong compas-
 sionate,*

*and that which has been commanded shall come to pass: Let
 justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a
 mighty stream. (GOR445-46)*

- (6) What obstacles complicate the plot, making it difficult for the
 main characters to unite?

What effect does the speech have on the audience?

(7)

We are tenants in the house of life; our days on earth are but a span.

Time, like a river, rolls on, flowing year after year into the sea of eternity.

Its passing leaves bitter memories of hours misspent.

Now they come back to accuse us, and we tremble to think of them.

But Your purpose gives meaning to our fleeting days,
Your teaching guides us, and Your love sustains us.

To You we pray for the knowledge and strength to live responsibly.

Deliver us from bondage to the past; release us from the stranglehold of evil habits; make us free to start afresh.

Let this be for us the beginning of a new season of life and health.

Liberate us from the fear of death, and from the scornful laughter that mocks our labors.

Though our lives be short, let them be full; hold our mortal days in Your hands as eternal moments.

We, dust and ashes, are endowed with divinity; compounded of clay, we live in dimensions clay cannot enter, regions where the air vibrates with Your presence.

Judge us less harshly than we can judge ourselves; judge us with mercy, O Fountain of life, in whose light we see light! (GOF294-95)

- (7) How does this poem expand your understanding of the characters and their relationship beyond what you learned in poems (4) and (5)?

Is the character speaking as "We" here the same as the character speaking as "We" in poem (5)?

Before what part of the service would this poem be most appropriately placed?

(8)

Jerusalem is the joy of all the world!
 But the whole earth is Yours, Lord,
 and all who dwell there are Your children.
 Wherever we seek You, we may find You.
 Wherever we ponder Your teachings,
 Torah makes its home.
 Wherever we do justly and love mercy,
 Your presence abides.
 In the four corners of earth we, Your people,
 are called to witness:
 to the light of the Eternal,
 to a teaching of compassion,
 to the vision of redemption:

*It is too small a task for you to be My servant
 merely to preserve the tribes of Jacob
 and to restore the survivors of Israel:
 I will make you a light to the nations,
 that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.*

Sing, O heavens: exult, O earth!
 Break out in song, you hills!

*O Lord, You have comforted our people,
 and shown compassion for the afflicted!*

The storm will end, a rain will fall,
 A quiet meadow wind stir into being,
 And over a dead tree trunk, a waking bluebell
 With tongue of dew will carol in the morning. (GOR444-45)

(8) Where does this speech fit in the plot or story as you see it?

At the beginning? middle? end?

Appendix to Session I

PlaybillGATES OF IDENTITY

A Drama in Four Acts

(Playbill, p. 1: Title Page)

Note for the teacher:

This Playbill/Syllabus is more than a course outline. The "Cast of Characters," "Credits" and "Scenes and Numbers" pages support the theater hypothesis and offer a handy guide to references in the text and to the organization of the services. The "Plot Summary" and "About the Cast" pages are used for learning activities in lessons IV and I.

The Playbill may be reproduced as shown here on the next 12 pages, or it may be retyped with the paper inserted horizontally into the typewriter, two pages to a sheet according to the scheme outlined below. Reproduction by copy machine should be back to back. The following page layout should be used: Set the pages up in your typewriter in this pattern and sequence.

Sheet 1	-	pages 12 (blank)	-	1
		pages 2	-	11
Sheet 2	-	pages 10	-	3
		pages 4	-	9
Sheet 3	-	pages 8	-	5
		pages 6	-	7

Place the pages on top of each other so that the side of Sheet 1 with pages 1-12 is on the outside and the side of Sheet 3 with pages 6-7 is on top as the center spread. Fasten down the center with two staples,

fold, and the Playbill will be a little book the size and shape of a real theater Playbill.

This cover page (Playbill, p. 1) may be embellished with an appropriate drawing or reproduction of a woodcut, papercut or other Jewish art with a High Holiday theme.

(Playbill, p. 2)

GATES OF IDENTITY

Sessions and Assignments

- Session I: A new look at High Holiday services. They really can be compared to a drama, with characters, a plot, even sound effects and props!
- Once the model is understood, class members set their learning goals for the course.
- (Assignment: read Shofar service, pp. 138-50)
- Session II: God as a major character in the High Holiday drama: what kind of role is it? Can we pray even if we're afraid there's no "actor" playing this part?
- (Assignment: read pp. 383-7, and "The Centenary Perspective.")
- Session III: Our name is Israel. We are the audience, the performers, and the main character in this drama. How comfortable are we in these roles?
- (Assignment: read Unetaneh Tokef, pp. 106-110, Viddui Confession, pp. 324-333, Selichot pp. 273-279, 334-337.)
- Session IV: The Plot: Do we take it seriously?
- (Written Assignment: "Ethical Will.")
- Session V: The Subplot: What makes this drama "Jewish theater?"

(Playbill, p. 3)

Plot Summary

Is it a love story?

Is it a courtroom drama?

(To be filled in during Session IV)

(Playbill, p. 4)

Cast of Characters

ROLE	PLAYED BY:
The Eternal, 386	<u>God</u>
Our King, 57	<u>God</u>
Goodness and Compassion, 506	<u>Cod</u>
Father, 121	<u>God</u>
Redeemer, 173	<u>God</u>
Infinite Presence, 403	<u>God</u>
One Who dwells in our hymns, 164	<u>God</u>
Source of Peace, 267	<u>God</u>
Source of Life and blessing, 310	<u>God</u>
The One who is and will be, 387	<u>God</u>
Judge, 176	<u>God</u>
Lord of Hosts, 64	<u>God</u>
Master of all the living, 105	<u>God</u>
Teacher of Torah, 91	<u>God</u>
Source of Salvation, 106	<u>God</u>
Shield, 171	<u>God</u>
Rock of Jacob, 171	<u>God</u>
The Eternal Power at the heart of life, 175	<u>God</u>
Source of our strength, 110	<u>God</u>
The Answer, 172	<u>God</u>
Author of freedom, 310	<u>God</u>
<u>Humanity</u>	Cain and Abel, the stranger, the sick, the bereaved, the captive, God's children, the faithful, the just and upright, the wicked, oppressors, all who sing and all who weep.

AND ALSO STARRING: "EACH OF US"

(see pages 9-10.)

(Playbill, p. 5)

ROLE:

Israel, exemplar of the Highest,
a kingdom of priests and a holy
people, God's suffering servants,
a vine out of Egypt, the Covenant
people, K'lal Yisrael.

PLAYED BY:

This Congregation, in the
company of:
our psalmists, prophets and
teachers, 67-8
Abraham, 125; Isaac, 125
Jacob, 444, 212, 145
Sarah, Rebekkah, Leah, 61
Rachel, 61, 434; Ephriam, 203
Moses, 453, 212, 152
David, 465, 212, 97
Hannah and Eli, 129
Ezra and Nehemiah, 133
The High Priest, 421
Elijah, 465; Amos, 369
Isaiah, 369; Micah, 368
Habbakuk, 369; Jonah, 457
Ezekiel, 443; Jeremiah, 201
Hillel, 369; Raba, 370
Rabbi Judah the Prince, 3223
Rabbi Akiva, 433, 323
Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel, 432
Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava, 433
Rabbi Yishmael, 432
Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakki, 380
Rabbis Chama bar Chanina, Levi,
Jonathan, Jacob, Abahu, Tarfon,
Chisda, Resh Lakish, 373
Samuel ben Nachmani, 323
Rabbi Amnon of Mayence, 106
Kalonymos ben Meshullam, 434
Leo Baeck, 440
the six million, 25

(Playbill, p. 6)

Credits

SCENERY:

The Open Ark
"The gateway to the Lord," 497
Sinai, 418, 148
Mt. Moriah, 146
Mt. Nebo, 480
Shiloh, 133
Ramah, 434, 203
Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, 419
Horeb, 21
the valley of dry bones, 443
Egyptian bondage, 27, 89
Exile in Babylon, 420
Nineveh, 457
The First and Second Temples, 425, 419, 421
The Water Gate, 133
The Rhineland, 434
Belsen and Auschwitz, 440
"Israel, independent at last," 442

SPECIAL EFFECTS:

"The Light of the Divine," 49, 163, 187

SOUND EFFECTS"

The Shofar

PROPS:

"The Book of Life," 30, 38

(Playbill, p. 7)

Scenes and NumbersPROLOGUE:Erev Rosh HashanahACT IRosh Hashanah Morning

- Scene 1 Morning Blessings, 79-91
- Scene 2 Shema, 99-104; 167-173
- Scene 3 Tefilah, 104-119; 173-187
- "Unetaneh Tokef," 106-110; 175-179
- Scene 4 Torah Service, 120-137; 188-207
- "Avinu Malkenu," 121-189-90
- Scene 5 Shofar Service, 138-50; 208-217
- "Aleinu," 156

ACT IIErev Yom Kippur

- Scene 1 "Kol Nidre," 249-253
- Scene 2 Shema and Blessings, 253-259
- Scene 3 Tefilah, 260-268
- Scene 4 Confessional
- "Viddui," 269-272
- Scene 5 Prayers for forgiveness
- "Selichot," 273-279
- Scene 6 "Avinu Malkenu," 280-281
- (reprise)
- Scene 7 Concluding Prayers, 282-287

(Playbill, p. 8)

Scenes and Numbers

<u>ACT III</u>	<u>Yom Kippur Morning</u>
Scene 1	Opening Prayers, Songs of Praise, 292-303
Scene 2	Shema and Blessings, 304-8
Scene 3	Tefilah, 308-323
	"Unetaneh Tokef," 311-315 (reprise)
Scene 4	Confession
	"Viddui," 324-333
Scene 5	Prayers of Forgiveness
	"Selichot," 324-337
Scene 6	Torah Service
	"Avinu Malkenu," 339-40 (reprise)
Scene 7	Additional Prayers, 361-391
<u>ACT IV</u>	<u>Yom Kippur Afternoon</u>
Scene 1	Preliminaries, 394-8
Scene 2	Tefilah, 398-408
	"Now all acclaim You King," 401-402
	Contemporary Confession, 401-405
Scene 3	"From Creation to Redemption"
	"Avodah," 410-449
Scene 4	Torah Service, 450-469
Scene 5	Memorial Service
	"Yiskor," 477-494
<u>EPILOGUE:</u>	<u>Yom Kippur Concluding Service</u>
	"Ne'ilah," 497-528

(Playbill, p. 9)

About the Cast

AND ALSO STARRING:

EACH OF US:

Student name

Student name

Student name

Student name

(To be filled in at the end of Session I.)

(Playbill, p. 10)

AND ALSO STARRING

EACH OF US

Student name

Student name

Student name

Student name

(Playbill, p. 11)

"GATES OF IDENTITY"

Potential Goals

I want to:

- _____ understand the main themes of the High Holiday services
- _____ read through Gates of Repentance slowly enough so that I can think about its contents
- _____ grasp the structure of a worship service
- _____ tell someone how I feel about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
- _____ break out of the feeling of alienation that grips me during the High Holidays
- _____ get an overview of the themes of Jewish liturgy that I can transfer to other services
- _____ feel closer to what Judaism is about
- _____ feel closer to myself when I am praying
- _____ feel closer to the congregation and to K'lal Yisrael
- _____ understand Judaism better so I can discuss what it means with my children
- _____ feel more at home with this prayerbook (I am used to the Union Prayerbook II)
- _____ feel more at home with this prayerbook (I really prefer the Conservative or Orthodox services I grew up with)
- _____ Other:

(Playbill, p. 12 is blank, and may be used for notes.)

SESSION II
GOD AS A MAJOR CHARACTER
IN THE HIGH HOLIDAY DRAMA

AIMS:

1. to determine the broad analytic questions that might be asked about any dramatic character: what are the character's motivations and inherent traits? what is the character's condition (position, circumstances, responsibilities, limitations)? what is the character's style of communication? what reactions does the character evoke in other characters?
2. to apply these questions to "the God character" in the High Holiday liturgy, as portrayed in the texts of Avinu Malkenu, Adonai Adonai El Rachum, and the Shofar service.
3. to associate the "condition" of God as Father with the "trait" of rachamim, and the "condition" of God as King with the "trait" of din, and explain why these roles are viewed by the liturgy as necessarily complementary.
4. to explain the concept of the Thirteen Midot, or divine attributes, and the relationship between their recital and the pardoning of Israel's sins.
5. to express personal feelings about some aspect of this newly organized knowledge of God as portrayed in High Holiday liturgy.

MATERIALS:

1. large newsprint pad and markers
2. blackboard and chalk
3. photo of President John Kennedy and one of his children in the Oval office. Books of Kennedy photos can be found in local public

libraries. The best series to use for this lesson is "The Story of A President and His Son," Laura Bergquist, Look, December 3, 1963, reprinted in Kennedy and His Family in Pictures, by the editors of Look, (Cowles Magazines and Broadcasting, Inc., 1963).

4. copies of a ditto of "Exodus 33:18-34:9" (p. 262)
5. copies of a ditto of "Rabbenu Tam's Enumeration of the Thirteen Midot" (p. 263)
6. Gates of Repentance for every student.
7. copy of The Centenary Perspective (pp. 272-278) for every student (see p. 261 for directions).

TIME ALLOTMENT

Setting the pattern:

How does one analyse a dramatic character? 20 minutes

Applying the Pattern to Avinu Malkenu 20 minutes

Applying the Pattern to Adonai Adonai El Rachum 30 minutes

a. Guided reading - "Rabbenu Tam's Enumeration"

b. Lecture

Applying the Pattern to the Shofar Service 20 minutes

Appreciating Gates of Repentance 30 minutes

Acting Preparation Exercise

LESSON PLAN:

I. Setting the Pattern

How does one analyse a dramatic character?

The teacher begins by asking class members to suggest a dramatic character that all might be familiar with so that the class might do a brief case study. After the choice is made, the teacher asks the class to analyse the character. As the

discussion proceeds, the teacher continues to probe for the questions that the students feel they must ask to carry out their analysis (ie. "What is the character's motivation?"). After about ten minutes of discussion, the teacher takes a large newsprint pad and marker, and asks the students to summarize the questions that they had to consider in order to analyse the character. The list should include at least the following:

- (1) What are the character's motivations?
- (2) What are the character's main traits?
- (3) In what conditions or circumstances is the character found when the play begins? What are the character's limitations and social position?
- (4) What is the character's typical style of communication and action?
- (5) What reaction does the character evoke in others?

If any item on this list has not emerged from discussion, the teacher can add it to the end of the class list. The teacher transfers the categories to the blackboard, writing across the top to create columns:

motivation * traits * conditions * style * reactions

The class now has a format for analysing "the character God" in High Holiday liturgy.

II. Applying the Pattern to Avinu Malkenu (pp. 120-22)

- A. Background (This information may be incorporated in a brief lecture):

Avinu Malkenu is an expansion of a short supplication offered

by Rabbi Akiba on public fast days: He prayed as follows:

"Our Father Our King, we have no King but Thee. Our Father Our King, for Thine own sake have compassion upon us.

(Taan. 25b) (Max Arzt, Justice and Mercy, pp. 118-19)

Considerable later expansion stressed Israel's own lack of merit, but presented for God's consideration the merits of Israel's ancestors and of those who died al kiddush ha Shem. For their sake, worshippers asked God not to punish them for their sins. The Reform version of Avinu Malkenu is a return to simplicity. It retains the basic petitions for compassion, life and blessing, but de-emphasizes Israel's lack of personal merit and dependence on the merits of martyrs.

B. Procedure (Whole Group):

The students read the prayer (pp. 120-122) and work together to fill in the chart on the blackboard. The teacher records their suggestions in the appropriate spaces.

C. Father and King Imagery

Need for Clarification:

These are umbrella images, encompassing between them all the other divine "roles" (see "Cast of Characters"). Their implicit contradiction points up the limitation of this study format in an instructive way: what will emerge when the sample texts are all analysed will not be a coherent and unified picture of a dramatic character, but a complex and often contradictory itemization of traits, conditions, reactions, etc.

Illustration: Father and King

The teacher shows a clear reproduction (Xerox) or a book illustration print of any photo of President John Kennedy in the Oval office with one of his children. What was the shock value, poignancy and charm of the photo when it was first published? (The class should note the contradiction between the father's and the presidential role.)

- (1) What parallels can be drawn between Father and King?
- (2) What distinctions are there between two roles?
- (3) In Jewish liturgy, what trait is associated with the fatherhood aspect of God? What trait is associated with God's Kingship? (The answers are rachamim and din-- how are these qualities complementary?)

Potential Loading: There are three sources of loading here:

- 1) dealing with God at all makes some adults uncomfortable,
- 2) dealing with God in human terms is awkward for some (students can be told that later in the lesson they will explore alternate approaches),
- 3) the use of specific masculine imagery is troublesome for some. (The teacher can tell the class that the editorial committee did consider this imagery a great problem, almost deleted it, and restored it only at the last moment. In many other places, the book uses non-sexist terminology. The class can also consider the juxtaposition of Meditations 11 and 12 on pp. 231 and 232.)

D. Summary

The teacher asks a class member to summarize what the class has learned about "the God character" from Avinu Malkenu.

III. Applying the Pattern to Adonai Adonai El Rachum, (p. 122)

A. Transition/Introduction: Lecture

This brief prayer formula located immediately after the Avinu Malkeinu can be transferred as is the column of "traits" because it is a list of midot or divine attributes. However, to transfer this list whole without knowing its source or the story behind it would be to miss a wonderful insight into the character we're examining.

B. Procedure:

Guided Reading of Exodus 33:18-34:9 and Rabbenu Tam

The teacher distributes dittoed copies of Exodus 33:18-34:9.

- (1) Where in these verses is the prayer text to be found?

(Students will need to compare the text of the prayer on p. 122 with the ditto.)

- (2) How is the prayer different from the Biblical verse?

(Omission of "Yet He does not remit all punishment. . .")

- (3) What incident is being recounted in the verses?

- (4) Why is the passage referred to as the Thirteen Midot or attributes? How many attributes can be counted?

After the students make their own count, the teacher distributes dittoed copies of Rabbenu Tam's Enumeration of the Thirteen Midot, (Max Arzt, Justice and Mercy, p. 127) (p. 263)

Lecture:

Why did Rabbenu Tam think it was so important to have a precise count of God's attributes listed in this passage? The passage has magical potency. Rabbinic tradition teaches that when this passage is recited, God will forgive Israel's sins.

Rabbi Judah the Prince said, "A Covenant is established (between God and Israel) that whenever the thirteen attributes are invoked, that prayer will not be in vain." (RH17b) Under the influence of Isaac Luria (1534-72), the custom arose to recite the Thirteen Attributes before the open ark. (Max Arzt, Justice and Mercy, p. 126)

C. Summary Question:

If God provided Moses with a formula whereby sins might be forgiven and prayers might not be in vain, what insight into God's character might the class add to its charted analysis on the blackboard?

IV. Applying the Pattern to the Shofar Service

A. About the Shofar Service (Guided Inquiry)

The mahzor itself uses organizing rubrics to gather and hold in balance the disparate elements of God's character. The Shofar Service is a major organizer.

(1) What events are connected with the sounding of the Shofar?

How do these events organize God's career from Israel's point of view?

- a) Abraham/Isaac - beginning of a relationship with a people, covenant with family of Abraham,
- b) Sinai - giving of Torah, Covenant with the people,
- c) Holy Temple - national worship established,
- d) End of Days - redemption and completion of purpose.

(2) How is the Shofar Service divided? What are its themes?

- a) Malchuyot - Kingship, Sovereignty,
- b) Zichronot - Remembrance,
- c) Shofarot - Revelation and Redemption.

B. Procedure: (Small Groups)

Once the class understands the structure of the Shofar service, the teacher divides the class into small groups and asks them to read pp. 208-217, using the data so gained to complete the character analysis chart. After ten minutes, the class reconvenes as a whole to correlate results and complete the chart on the blackboard.

V. Appreciating the Portrayal of the God Character in Gates of Repentance

A. How is Gates of Repentance's portrayal different?

Lecture:

The Reform Avinu Malkenu and the Shofar service are abbreviated, but they are thematically very close to their equivalents in the traditional mahzor. Therefore, they have yielded a broad outline of the way the "God character" functions in traditional liturgy. As is evident from the variety of "traits," "motivations," etc., traditional Judaism never limited its conception of God to one image. There was never any doubt that God was One, but the Being of God was so enormous and difficult for human minds to confront, that the idea wasn't easily captured in words. In fact, Maimonides recommended that people not apply descriptive language to God because of the implied limitations in any linguistic concept. Rather, Maimonides said that God should be described only in negative terms, (ie) "not unjust" or "not unmerciful," since by calling God just we are limited by our human notions of what justice might be. (see Louis Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, New York: Behrman House, 1973, pp. 39-41)

Gates of Repentance continues the tradition of presenting the character of God in a great variety of ways. However, there is an additional reason for Reform's variety of expression. Reform liturgy is committed to express not only the many facets of God's Being, but also profound differences in vision and faith among Reform worshippers. Reform Judaism, built on respect for the autonomy of the individual, explicitly engenders and encourages diversity of thought. Reform also responds to the facts of modern life: scientific thought and modern history have left their mark on Reform faith. Therefore, Reform liturgy expresses ideas about God that are qualified, conditional, and skeptical. When traditional liturgy speaks of God in one breath as Creator and Healer, and in the next breath as Warrior and Defender of Israel, all of these terms, though contradictory in content, are on the same level of belief. Reform liturgy, on the other hand, juxtaposes terms that imply belief with terms that imply speculation and limited belief. Its language is frequently ambiguous and naturalistic.

Discussion:

The class might examine the "Cast of Characters" in the Playbill and discuss the differences among the various roles that God plays in Gates of Repentance. Which names for God are easiest and most comfortable for class members to use?

- B. Finding the inner logic of Gates of Repentance's new God passages through an acting preparation exercise.

The class can discover something about the special nature of Reform liturgy's treatment of the God character by working

through a simple acting preparation. In preparing a role, an actor will study his or her character's situation, lines and emotional responses to other characters and stage business. For every scene that the character is in, the actor might try to remember a situation in his or her own experience that was comparable in some measure. By remembering that evocative situation vividly, to the point of vicariously reliving the associated emotions, the actor can use those real emotions to play the scene in a believable manner.

The Exercise:

The teacher asks students to pretend that they are actors. How would they prepare to play the role of God? (Students should choose one aspect of the "God character" as revealed by their analysis, and think of some situation in their own experience that gave them the feeling of mercy, power, creativity, etc.) What was the situation? What powers and talents did it call forth?

After five minutes of thought, the teacher asks two or three people to share their acting preparations with the rest of the class.

Application to Gates of Repentance:

What this acting preparation exercise does is help people focus on the interface between their notion of God and their own experience of life. Reform liturgy addresses many people who have trouble relating to a traditionally formulated externalized God "character." These people are sometimes more comfortable thinking of God as a name for a constellation of

values that become real in the world through people's lives (ie.) compassion, creative power, righteousness. The liturgy, therefore, must put people in touch with the God-moments in their own lives. To see this process at work in Gates of Repentance, members of the class can read aloud to each other from the following selections:

- p. 10, #6 (Martin Buber), p. 232 #14 (Chasidic, 18th c)
- p. 185, "O fill our minds with knowledge"
- p. 187, "Be among those. . ."
- p. 320, "You are with us in our prayer"
- p. 367, "Towers of Hope"
- p. 398-9, "We know You, yet. . ."
- p. 406, "Let me hear You, Lord"

For an intriguing counterpoint, the teacher may ask the class to read at home (in this order) p. 4, #8; p. 7, #18; p. 230, #7.

Assignment for Session III:

Read pp. 383-7 and Xerox of The Centenary Perspective (pp. 272-278)

This document is also available in Eugene Borowitz, Reform Judaism Today, Volume 1 (New York: Behrman House, 1978). If the books are used instead of the Xeroxed sheets (which can be reproduced back to back), the teacher should prepare a ditto containing the questions that are found on The Centenary Perspective pages herein, pp. 272-278. Ask the students to bring their copies of The Centenary Perspective to class for Session III.

Appendix to Session II

Exodus 33:18-34:9

He said, "Oh, let me behold Your Presence!" And He answered, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the Name LORD, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show. But," He said, "you cannot see My face, for man may not see Me and live." And the Lord said, "See, there is a place near Me. Station yourself on the rock and, as My Presence passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen."

34) The Lord said to Moses: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered. Be ready by morning, and in the morning come up to Mt. Sinai and present yourself there to Me, on the top of the mountain. No one else shall come up with you, and no one else shall be seen anywhere on the mountain; neither shall the flocks and the herds graze at the foot of this mountain."

So Moses carved two tablets of stone, like the first, and early in the morning he went up on Mt. Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, taking the two stone tablets with him. The LORD came down in a cloud; He stood with him there, and proclaimed the name Lord. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed: "The LORD! the LORD! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of fathers upon children and children's children, upon the third and fourth generations."

The Torah: The Five Books of Moses (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society, 1962), pp. 161-162.

Appendix to Session II

Rabbenu Tam's Enumeration

On the exact order of the Thirteen Attributes there were differences of opinion among the Geonic interpreters of the Talmud. The enumeration suggested by Rabbenu Tam (France, 1100-1171) is as follows:

1. Adonai: The Lord is merciful before one has sinned.
2. Adonai: The Lord is also merciful to the repentant sinner.
3. El: He is all-powerful
4. rahum: He is compassionate
5. vehannun: He is gracious
6. erekh appayyim: He is slow to anger
7. verav hesed: He is abounding in kindness
8. veemet: And in truth
9. notzer hesed laalafim: Maintaining kindness to the thousandth generation
10. nose avon: Forgiving sins committed with premeditation
11. vafesha: And sins committed in rebellion
12. vehataah: As well as those committed unwittingly
13. venakkeh: And acquitting the penitent.

(Tosefot, R. H. 17b)

Max Arzt, Justice and Mercy, p. 127.

SESSION III

THE CHARACTER ISRAEL: STARRING "EACH OF US"

AIMS:

1. to evaluate the interaction between the three roles that the congregation plays in the High Holiday drama: they are audience, performers, and members of the collective main character, "Israel."
2. to acquire an overview of the issues that shape Reform Jewish identity.
3. to identify the major themes in The Centenary Perspective.
4. to identify continued Jewish survival as the major Reform Jewish identity concern.
5. to inventory personal Jewish values and behaviors, identifying values and behaviors that are important for Jewish survival.
6. to summarize and evaluate liturgical statements about "Israel" by using them as the basis for composing a personal definition of membership in the "house of Israel."
7. to express the personal meaning of the act of attending High Holiday services.
8. to discover and articulate feelings about the High Holiday self-inventory process, and about being part of a Jewish family.
9. to compare feelings about the High Holidays with other students, and to discover the commonality of some of those feelings.
10. through sharing experiences which touch basic concerns, values and beliefs, to experience a sense of community among class members.

MATERIALS:

1. A copy of Gates of Repentance for each student
2. Pencils and paper

3. Table I: Audience

Instructions (p. 269)

Survey study sheet #1 (copies for all class members) (pp. 170-171)

Centenary study sheet #2 (---"---"---"---"---"---"---) (pp. 272-278)

4. Table II: Performers

Instructions (p. 279)

Note Sheet #3 (p. 280)

Cartoon study sheet #4 (p. 281)

5. Table III: Israel

Instructions (p. 282)

Note Sheet #5 (p. 283)

TIME ALLOTMENT:

Work Session I	30 minutes
Work Session II	30 minutes
Work Session III	30 minutes
Group Summary	30 minutes

LESSON PLAN:I. Work Sessions at Activity Tables

This lesson is designed to give students an opportunity to work independently with a wide variety of materials that evoke strong personal responses. While students will be working in close proximity to one another in activity groups, and will be able to share reactions to the material informally, the tasks are essentially individual. Any student who desires to retain privacy at any time will be able to do so, and yet remain supported by the knowledge that other people are confronting the same challenges at the same time.

The room is to be set up with three activity tables, each large enough to accommodate 1/3 of the class, and each containing materials sufficient for each class member. Table I is designated "Audience," Table II--"Performers," and Table III--"Israel." As students enter, the teacher will ask them to sit at the various tables so that the groups will be roughly equal in number.

Each table will have as its centerpiece, a sign that provides an introduction and directions for that table's activities. On each table will be pencils, paper, and the dittoed materials needed to accomplish the designated activities.

Students will work at each table for 1/2 hour, so that at the end of 1-1/2 hours, every student will have worked at every table. The teacher will circulate, answer questions and offer guidance and support as needed. After giving a quiet "Five minutes left" warning to each table, the teacher will direct the transition from one activity table to another at the 1/2 hour intervals.

For the last half hour, the class will meet as a whole. The teacher will ask several class members to share their letters to a young Jew (from Activity Table #2), and will give the class copies of the Centenary Perspective paragraph on "Israel" for comparison and evaluation. Did the class members come close to the vision of "Israel" expressed in the Centenary paragraph? What were the differences?

II. Summary Problem

As a result of the class activities, the students will realize that they function in three ways on the High Holidays: as audience, as performers, and as "Israel." The problem is to take one vivid and

dramatic segment of the High Holiday service, specifically the Kol Nidre (pp. 249-253) ceremony, and to analyse it from the point of view of audience, performer, and "Israel." A sample analysis is provided here. (Student suggestions will go beyond the sample):

Audience:

the congregation is witness to recitation of a legal formula
the congregation remains silent while watching the spectacle
of the rabbi's removing Torahs from the ark, calling up
designated Torah bearers from the congregation (choreography)
people respond in individual/personal ways to the symbolism
of the open ark (laying bare the heart, open door to God,
treasure revealed, a holy time and place. . . .)

people respond in individual/personal ways to Gates of Repentance's expansion of Kol Nidre's meaning: "for rash words, broken pledges, insincere assurances, foolish promises may we find forgiveness" (p. 250)

in some congregations there is a musical performance of the
Kol Nidre melody.

Performers:

it is necessary that each person recites the legal formula of disclaimer, because it is a personal statement having to do with private undertaking of obligation.

Israel:

the fact that officers or otherwise designated members of the congregation hold the Torahs symbolizes that the congregation as a congregation is bound before God by the formula being recited.

people have the sense that the same scene is being enacted throughout K'lal Yisrael.

Gates of Repentance alludes to the bitter historical association that Kol Nidre had for Jews in the past. Recital of Kol Nidre is an expression of solidarity with those Jews. (The teacher can clarify, or can ask a student to clarify the historical allusion to forced apostasy. Max Arzt's Justice and Mercy, pp. 203-205 is a good source of information about this.)

Assignment for Session IV:

Read Unetaneh Tokef, pp. 106-110; Viddui, pp. 324-333, Selichot, 273-279, 334-337.

Table I

InstructionsAUDIENCE

THE ATMOSPHERE ON EREV ROSH HASHANAH IS FESTIVE--EVEN A BIT FRANTIC. ACQUAINTANCES GREET EACH OTHER LIKE FRIENDS, FRIENDS EMBRACE WITH ENTHUSIASM. EVERYONE IS DRESSED IN HOLIDAY ATTIRE.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ROSH HASHANAH AUDIENCE? WHAT ATTITUDES, VALUES AND CONCERNS DO REFORM JEWS BRING WITH THEM WHEN THEY ENTER THE SANCTUARY?

Directions:

First complete the SURVEY (Study Sheet #1)

(time limit: 30 minutes)

You have already had a chance to read the Centenary Perspective.

Now, discuss the questions in the margins with the people at your table. Take turns reading each question aloud, and let everyone at the table answer.

Table I

SURVEY

Study Sheet #1

The following questionnaire is an adptation of a famous study originated by Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenbaum in the late 1950's when they studied Jewish belief in Lakeville (Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier). The study was used a second time in 1973 by Leonard Fein in Reform Is a Verb, a study of Reform Jews commissioned by the UAHC.

Please put a U next to items that emphasize universalist obligations.
Put a P next to items that relate to particularist obligations.
Put a star next to those items that relate to Jewish group survival.
Then check the applicable column to the right.
A single item may be marked with more than one symbol.

TO BE A GOOD JEW:		Essential	Desirable	Makes no Difference	Comment?
U, P, or *					
	1. accept being a Jew and don't try to hide it				
	2. contribute to Jewish philanthropies				
	3. support Israel				
	4. support all humanitarian causes				
	5. belong to a synagogue				
	6. attend weekly services				
	7. lead an ethical and moral life				
	8. attend High Holiday services				

HOW TO BE A GOOD JEW:

U,P, or *	Essential	Desirable	Makes no Difference	Comment?
9. observe Shabbat with home ritual				
10. attend a Seder				
11. attend holiday services				
12. be well versed in Jewish history and culture				
13. know the fundamentals of Judaism				
14. have mostly Jewish friends				
15. promote the use of Yiddish				
16. know how to read Hebrew				
17. give preference to Jewish candidates for office				
18. gain respect of Christian neighbors				
19. promote civic betterment				
20. marry within the Jewish faith				
21. work for equality for blacks, women				

Table I

THE CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE

Study Sheet #2, p. 1

Reform Judaism:
**A CENTENARY
PERSPECTIVE**

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

We celebrate the role of Reform Judaism in North America, the growth of our movement on this free ground, the great contributions of our membership to the dreams and achievements of this society. We also feel great satisfaction at how much of our pioneering conception of Judaism has been accepted by the Household of Israel. It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; and that change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality in Jewish life. Moreover, though

xix

- a. Define the word "tradition." What is the meaning of tradition in Reform Jewish life if "change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality?"
- b. Which types of passages in Gates of Repentance are most satisfying to you: the free contemporary poems, or the prayers that you can identify as coming unchanged from the traditional mahzor?
- c. Do you agree that the forms of our tradition should reflect a contemporary esthetic?

Table I

Study Sheet #2, p. 2

xx. *A Centenary Perspective*

some still disagree, substantial numbers have also accepted our teachings: that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; that women should have full rights to practice Judaism; and that Jewish obligation begins with the informed will of every individual. Most modern Jews, within their various religious movements, are embracing Reform Jewish perspectives. We see this past century as having confirmed the essential wisdom of our movement.

Obviously, much else has changed in the past century. We continue to probe the extraordinary events of the

One	past generation, seeking to understand
Hundred	their meaning and to incorporate their
Years:	significance in our lives. The Holocaust
What We	shattered our easy optimism about hu-
Have	manity and its inevitable progress. The
Learned	State of Israel, through its many accom-

plishments, raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion. The widespread threats to freedom, the problems inherent in the explosion of new knowledge and of ever more powerful technologies, and the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture have taught us to be less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching. We have learned again that the survival of the Jewish people is of highest priority and that in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment.

This is the major thrust of the document. Do you agree with the strongly particularistic message? Do you think it is felt strongly by the High Holiday "audience?"

Table I
Study Sheet #2, p. 3

A Centenary Perspective xxi

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

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

If you wish to do so, share your answers to the questionnaire (Study Sheet #1) with the people at your table. Does your group reflect this diversity? How do you feel about the degree of diversity you see?

Name three factors that make "steady belief difficult for some."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Table I

Study Sheet #2, p. 4

Torah results from the relationship between God and the Jewish people. The records of our earliest confrontations

III. are uniquely important to us. Lawgivers Torah and prophets, historians and poets gave us a heritage whose study is a religious imperative and whose practice is our chief means to holiness. Rabbis and teachers, philosophers and mystics, gifted Jews in every age amplified the Torah tradition. For millennia, the creation of Torah has not ceased and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the chain of tradition.

Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by

IV. which we strive to achieve universal justice and peace. Reform Judaism shares Our Obligations: this emphasis on duty and obligation. Religious Practice Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught

How is this conviction reflected in Gates of Repentance? Are you distracted by the shifts in tone, or is your worship experience enriched by the sense of a "chain of creativity?"

Table I

Study Sheet #2, p. 5

xxiv *A Centenary Perspective*

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

The State of Israel and the Diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.

Early Reform Jews, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism,

VI. regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in
Our terms of Jewry's service to humanity. In
Obligations: recent years we have become freshly
Survival conscious of the virtues of pluralism and
and Service the values of particularism. The Jewish
people in its unique way of life validates its own worth
while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic
expectations.

Until the recent past our obligations to the Jewish people and to all humanity seemed congruent. At times now these two imperatives appear to conflict. We know of no simple way to resolve such tensions. We must, however, confront them without abandoning either of our commitments. A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is

Table I

Study Sheet #2, p. 6

A Centenary Perspective xxv

self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations.

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbounded confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have

Hope:	lived through terrible tragedy and been
Our	compelled to reappropriate our tradi-
Jewish	tion's realism about the human capacity
Obligation	for evil. Yet our people has always

refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, on being granted life, seized it, nurtured it, and, rising above catastrophe, showed humankind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair: Jewish survival is warrant for human hope.

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

Physically, American Jews are thriving. List three ways we can assure our survival as Jews.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE

Passage on Israel

xxii *A Centenary Perspective*

The Jewish people and Judaism defy precise definition because both are in the process of becoming. Jews, by

II. birth or conversion, constitute an uncommon

The mon union of faith and peoplehood.

People Born as Hebrews in the ancient Near East,

Israel we are bound together like all ethnic

groups by language, land, history, culture, and institutions.

But the people of Israel is unique because of its

involvement with God and its resulting perception of the

human condition. Throughout our long history our

people has been inseparable from its religion with its

messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed.

Note to Teacher: Do not include this page when you give the Centenary Perspective to students for home reading in preparation for this Session.

This page is to be handed out as part of the Summary discussion (see p. 266)

Table II

InstructionsPERFORMERS

THE PERFORMERS IN THIS DRAMA OF HIGH HOLIDAY WORSHIP--THE PEOPLE WHO READ THE LINES AND SING THE SONGS--ARE NOT PROFESSIONAL ACTORS. SOMETIMES THEY DON'T BECOME ONE WITH THEIR ROLE. THEY COME ONSTAGE AS THEMSELVES, STILL CARRYING THE BUNDLE OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS, GRIEF, GUILT, PRIDE, LONGING AND CONFUSION THAT THEY USUALLY CARRY. THE SCRIPT IN SEVERAL PLACES GIVES THEM A CHANCE TO CONFESS THEIR PERSONAL FEELINGS.

Directions:

Here is a selection of these scripted "asides." (Study Sheet #3)

Read the indicated passages, then complete the cartoon on Study

Sheet #4.

(time limit: 30 minutes)

Table II

PERFORMERS

Study Sheet #3

Directions:

List key phrases in each prayer that describe emotional loadings and the burdens of circumstance. Which of these phrases apply never, sometimes, today, especially in synagogue?

p. 51

"In the twilight"

p. 165

"This Rosh Hashanah"

p. 180

"Why be concerned?"

p. 424-5

"We, too, pray"

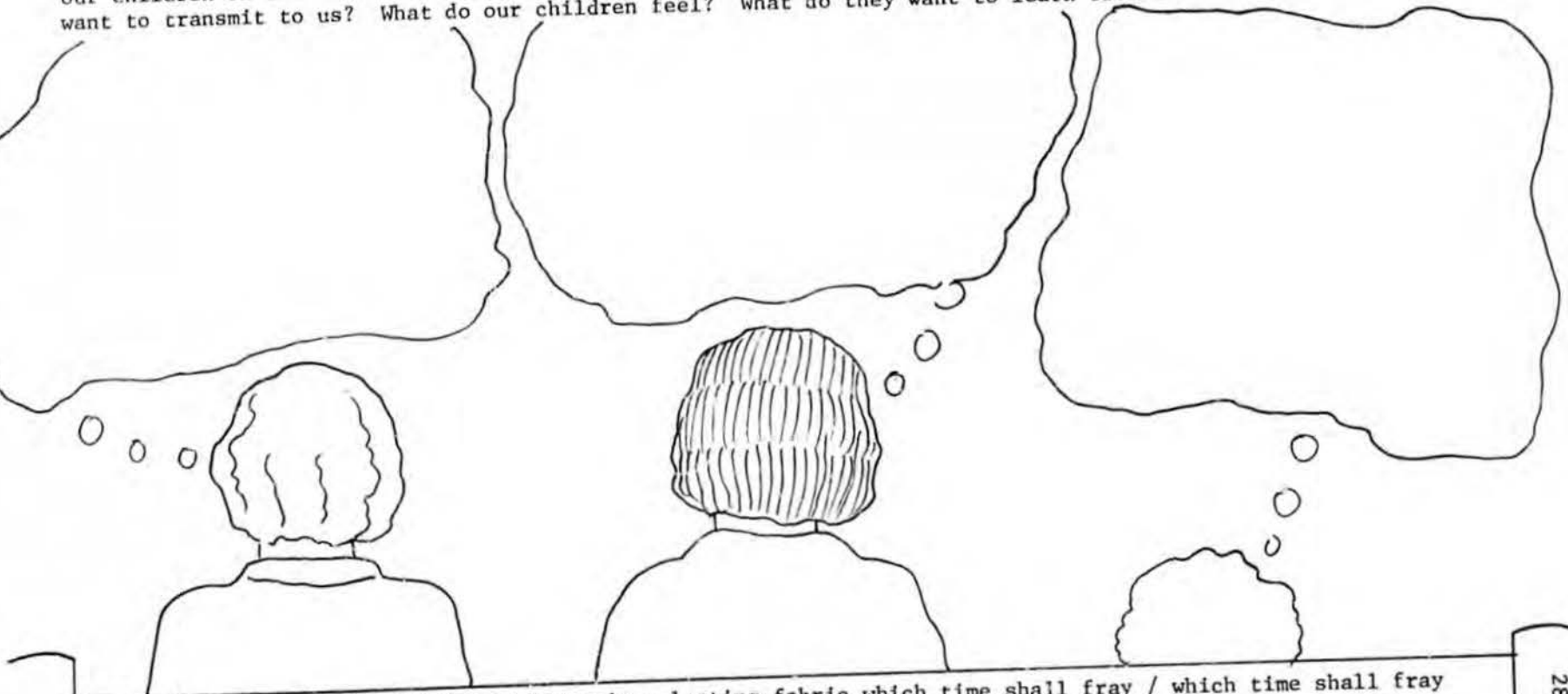
"Some have strayed"

Table II

"EACH GENERATION HAS ITS PATH; EACH A VISION OF ITS OWN" (GOR174)

study Sheet #4

Either in reality or in our imaginations, we attend High Holiday services with our parents on one side of us, our children on the other. How did our parents feel about Judaism? About the High Holidays? What did they want to transmit to us? What do our children feel? What do they want to learn from us?



"Love is the thread that binds our lives in a lasting fabric which time shall fray / which time shall fray but only to be rewoven by each generation." (GOR61)

Table III

InstructionsTHE CHARACTER "ISRAEL"

MOST PEOPLE "KNOW" A NUMBER OF CHARACTERS FROM SECULAR DRAMA AND LITERATURE: ULYSSES, MACBETH, TOM SAWYER, ANNA KARENINA. FOR MANY PEOPLE--THESE CHARACTERS ARE LIKE OLD FRIENDS.

BUT HOW WELL DO WE KNOW THE CHARACTER "ISRAEL?" WELL ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN "ISRAEL" TO OUR CHILDREN? PERHAPS WE'RE TOO CLOSELY INVOLVED TO PUT ALL OUR THOUGHTS INTO WORDS. LITURGY IS SOMETIMES HELPFUL IN COMPRESSING COMPLEX FEELINGS INTO NEATLY BALANCED STATEMENTS.

Directions:

Read the selections listed on Study Sheet #5, then write a brief letter explaining to a young Jew of your choice what it means to be a member of the House of Israel.

(time limit: 30 minutes)

Table III

"ISRAEL" THE CHARACTER

Study Sheet #5

You might want to take a few notes

p. 25
"And how unyielding"

p. 27
"What does it mean"

pp. 201-202
Jeremiah 31:1-19

p. 232 #15
"Israel is committed by the Covenant"

pp. 343-345
Deuteronomy 29:9-14, 30-11-20

p. 367
"Then Isaac asked"

p. 394
"At this hour Israel stands"

(If desired, the people at this table may divide the reading and share their notes.)

SESSION IV

THE PLOT: DO WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY?

AIMS:

1. to personalize the concepts of inner change and resistance to change by pinpointing some change in attitude, situation or habit that is needed but difficult to make.
2. to express the dynamic relationship of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and of individual prayers to each other by creating a coherent plot line that can serve as a metaphor for the entire drama of High Holiday repentance and pardon.
3. to explain the universality of the repentance/pardon plot.
4. to define and diagram the relationship between avera and teshuvah.
5. to describe the categories of sin dealt with in the Yom Kippur confessional.
6. to explain the value of the plural confession.
7. to explain the requirements for full teshuvah.
8. to recount the legend of the composition of the Unetaneh Tokef.
9. to identify the dominant imagery of the Unetaneh Tokef, and to explore the meanings below its surface.

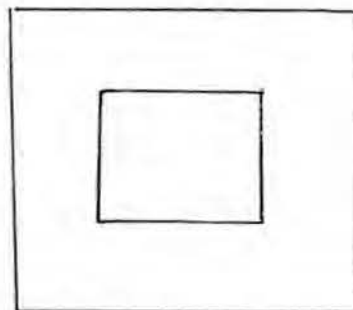
MATERIALS:

1. hat or box large enough to contain small pieces of paper.
2. half sheets of paper, pencils
3. a book or magazine illustration of an Ansel Adams photograph of scenery (no buildings or other obvious focal points).

Ansel Adams, (Hastings on Hudson, N. Y.: Morgan and Morgan, Inc. 1972) Introduction by Minor White.

Ansel Adams Photographs of the Southwest, (Boston, Mass: New York Graphic Society, 1976).

4. A few cardboard framing mats with windows -
These can be made by the teacher from oak tag, or they can be old slides with the film removed.



5. Gates of Repentance for every student
6. blackboard and chalk
7. dittoes on the background of Unetaneh Tokef (p. 276)
8. assignment dittoes: "Ethical Wills" (p. 277)
9. "Maimonides' Definition of True Repentance," Louis Jacobs,

A Jewish Theology, (NY: Behrman House, 1973), pp. 240-249. (p. 275)

TIME ALLOTMENT:

Discovering the Plot: Three Guided Experiences

Introspective	15 minutes
Esthetic	15 minutes
Creative	15 minutes
Summary	
Taking the Plot Seriously	20 minutes
Understanding the Terminology	30 minutes
<u>Unetaneh Tokef</u>	15 minutes
Explain Written Assignment	10 minutes

LESSON PLAN:

I. Finding the Plot through Guided Experiences

The teacher explains to the students that the first part of the session will be devoted to three journeys of thought and feeling. At the end of these three experiences, they will have some vision of the organizing action or plot of the High Holiday worship drama, along with a sense of their own personal connection to that drama.

The first experience will be introspective; the second will be esthetic; the third will be creative.

Potential Concern: Adult students approach classroom learning with several concerns relating to their self image and performance. Predominant among these is the need to retain a sense of autonomy and self-direction commensurate with adult status. In taking people through apparently unconnected guided experiences without having them "freeze up" or get resentful, it is important for the teacher to provide some orientation as to what will happen and what the result will be. Once this is done, students and teacher can be partners, and the students can yield control of the proceedings to the teacher until they have reached the agreed upon destination.

A. Introspective Experience

(The teacher should designate this and the subsequent parts of this segment of the session with its label (ie) "This is the first experience, the Introspective Experience," so that students can remain oriented in the lesson at all times.)

The teacher gives the students half sheets of paper and pencils, and presents the following problem:

- (1) "If there were one thing in your life that you have control over that you could change to make your life better, what would it be? In total confidentiality write it at the top of the paper."
- (2) "Write down the reason that you don't make the change."
- (3) "Now, at the very bottom of the paper, characterize your reason in one or two words."
- (4) "Tear off just the words at the bottom of the paper--do not put your name on it--and put the piece of paper into this box (or hat). These words will be important later

in the lesson." (The teacher passes around the box or hat. When it is filled, the teacher puts it aside.)

B. Esthetic Experience

The teacher shows a picture of an Ansel Adams photo (or a photo taken by a comparable artist), and asks:

- (1) "If you had stood on the spot where Ansel Adams stood, in the same light, would you have seen this picture?"
- (2) "What is the function of the edge of the photograph?"
- (3) "What makes this photograph art?"

The students are thus led to the insight that art is the result of esthetic choices which impose structure and limits on experience. To test this generalization, the teacher may give the students framing mats cut from cardboard (or blank slide holders) and ask them to use the "windows" of these mats as viewfinders to compose pleasing "photos" of something in the room. (The selectivity imposed by the frame instantly changes perception.) Students should be encouraged to verbalize their generalization about this experience, because the concepts of limits and structure are basic to the next experience.

C. Creative Experience

- (1) The teacher tells the following story:

Two people marry when they are young. Shortly thereafter, they have some difficulties, including the infidelity and utter thoughtlessness of one of the partners. So they start to live apart. Now and then they speak to one another. The faithful partner maintains a fine career as a legislator and judge. The other partner experiences the ups and downs of life, and occasionally feels alienated and estranged. Despite their separation, the partners see each other on holidays and at life cycle events. They don't ever divorce. There's always the feeling for both of them that someday, perhaps, they'll get back together.

(2) Discussion

This story is a situation, not a plot.

What elements are required to structure a plot?

(eg. The ongoing jealousy of a first mate for his captain is a situation: the decision of that mate to encourage the captain to become suspicious of his wife turns the situation into a plot.)

- (a) a specific time frame (limits)
- (b) an event that sets the underlying conflict in motion
- (c) complications
- (d) obstacles to overcome
- (e) resolution

(Students may suggest some or all of these, or may have additional good ideas.)

(3) The creative challenge

Both the prophet Hosea and the rabbinic interpretation of the Song of Songs use marriage as an analogy for the relationship between God and Israel. The students have probably recognized the same analogy in the story of the separated couple. Using what they know of the High Holiday services, they are to continue the analogy, turning the situation of the separated couple (they may continue the metaphor, or may work directly with God/Israel or with God/the individual) into a plot with a specific time frame, complication, obstacles and resolution. The class may work as a whole group or in pairs. Once the task is explained, this part of the

exercise should take about ten minutes. It should be made clear that the plot of estrangement (sin), repentance and reunion applies to both God/the individual Jew and God/Israel.

(4) Summary

- (a) Once the plot has been created (or several different plot ideas have been suggested by pairs of students, the students record their own versions of the "plot" on the "Plot Summary" page of the Playbill.
- (b) The teacher then asks what obstacles the students thought of for the characters to overcome in the plot. The teacher then suggests that the class has already identified the real obstacles in the High Holiday drama. These are the words on the pieces of paper in the box or hat. With the class' permission, the teacher reads the contents.

II. Taking the Plot Seriously:

A. Open Discussion: Dealing with Feelings.

The teacher initiates discussion with the question: We now understand the plot of the High Holiday drama. Do we take it seriously? If we go through the motions, but don't ever take it seriously, why not? What impedes us? If we do take it seriously, what makes it work for us?

B. Teacher Summary: Lecture.

Three factors make the plot of the High Holidays deeply serious:

- (1) Adults do change and grow. No individual is finished and sealed at age 21. Whether or not a person achieves a

flash of insight at services, High Holiday worship is a ritual acknowledgement of a very real process of adult growth and renewal.

- (2) The Viddui doesn't mention anything specifically Jewish. It is a universal document. The flaws and failings that we confess on Yom Kippur are an accurate description of the human condition. When we pray on the High Holidays, in our crowded synagogues, with all the distractions around us--what we are talking about, at least in our confession, is what it means to be human.
- (3) High Holiday liturgy is universal in another way. Israel is a real entity, a particular people. But Israel is also a symbolic character. Israel stands for all unredeemed humanity--exiled from its better self, scattered, sinning, spiritually lost, but capable of redemption. The following is a very Jewish story--but it is not about Israel alone: (read Gates of Repentance, p. 244, #56).

III. Understanding the Special Terminology of the Plot

Just as one cannot understand Macbeth without knowing the full meaning of "kingship" for the Elizabethan mind, so one cannot fully understand the plot of the High Holidays without knowing the meaning of "sin" and "repentance" in Jewish terms.

A. Initial Definition

The teacher asks the students for their definitions of sin and repentance.

The teacher asks the students if they know the Hebrew words for sin and repentance. (The work teshuvah is widely known from

the liturgy; the word averah, accented differently, should be readily known to speakers of Yiddish.)

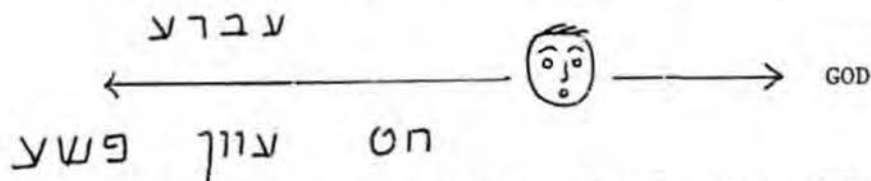
B. Averah (Look at: Viddui Zuta and Viddui Rabba, pp. 269-272)

- (1) What is the mood of the first paragraph, p. 269?
- (2) What three synonyms for sin appear at the end of that paragraph?

These terms are the subdivision of the category averah:

חטאנו	חטא	unwitting offence
עו'נו	עוון	deed of insolence
פשענו	פשע	outright rebellion

The category of averah can be diagrammed in this way:



Averah means turning away, turning aside from God and from God's expectations for human conduct. If averah means turning away from God, how would one label the arrow that points toward God? (teshuvah)

- (3) Read the Viddui Zuta. How would one characterize these sins? (Student responses should be supplemented by the teacher so that all the material below is covered.)
 - (a) they are a distortion of good mental health and wholeness (a negation of the Hebrew root שלם).
 - (b) they are just the sins we recognize most clearly in others. . . we need to be reminded that they are also our own.

- (c) they are not sins between people and God, but sins against the self, against loved ones, against other people. They are the petty sins of daily life.
 - (d) Therefore, why the acrostic? (Turn to p. 327: "an alphabet of woe.")
- (4) Why does Judaism prescribe a plural confession? Student responses should be supplemented by the teacher so that all the material below is covered:
- (a) we are responsible for the moral state of the community (we are responsible for the moral growth of our children); everyone interacts with other people.
 - (b) according to Maimonides, "It is very praiseworthy for the penitent sinner to confess his sins in public, informing others of the offenses he has committed against his neighbour, saying to them: 'Verily, I have sinned against So-and-so and have done such-and-such to him but now I am sorry and I repent.' Whoever is too proud to confess his sins to others but keeps them to himself is not a true penitent."
(Louis Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, New York: Behrman House, 1973, p. 249)
 - (c) the teacher and the class may want to elaborate on the possible psychological advantages that they see in plural confession.

C. Teshuvah (Texts: Selichot prayers, pp. 276-77, 331-2)

1. Maimonides' traditional definition of true repentance is quoted in Gates of Repentance on p. 268:

What is genuine repentance? When an opportunity for transgression occurs and we resist it, not out of fear or weakness, but because we have repented.

2. Application

- (a) the teacher asks the students to think of examples of "genuine repentance"
- (b) the teacher reads to the class the example that Maimonides himself provides: (Jacobs, pp. 248-9; quoted here, p. 275)

3. Contemporary Imagery

The teacher asks readers to read aloud the contemporary Selichot prayers on pp. 276-7, 331-2 GOR)

How are these poems similar? What is the imagery of human failure? What imagery indicates a turning toward God? Is this a universal image? What other kinds of images might be used for the healing and hope that accompany teshuvah?

IV. Confronting the Imagery of Unetaneh Tokef (pp. 106-110 GOR)

A. Preliminary Introduction

The teacher should make sure that everyone understands the reference to the legend of this prayer's composition on p. 106 GOR. ("The Background of Unetaneh Tokef," (p. 276), can be duplicated and distributed to the class.)

B. Identifying the Imagery

What images dominate this poem?

For how many people in the class are the images of this poem the dominant images of the High Holiday liturgy?

Potential blockage: For many people, these images dominate the High Holidays to such an extent that when these individuals become too sophisticated for such literalism, they feel they've altogether outgrown the High Holidays. The task here is to outgrow the Sunday School level of comprehension, and move on to an adult understanding of this poetry. The first step is to identify and acknowledge the problem: (ie) "There are many people who were brought up to think that on Rosh Hashanah God opened a great big book in the sky, and that on Yom Kippur God recorded their fortunes for the year and closed the book. If and when we stop believing that story, what happens to our view of the High Holidays?"

C. Moving Beyond Literalism

- (1) Why does "the book of our days" bear the "signature of every human being?" Why would God need a book? Is it because God needs an aide memoire, or because we place the signature of our deeds in concrete reality?
- (2) What is the "still small voice?"
- (3) On page 311, the stern and hopeful decrees for the coming year are transformed into metaphors of inner life.
What is the message of this transformation?

D. Summary

Despite all the things that happen to us that we cannot control, the painful message of this prayer is that we are responsible for our own lives.

V. Written Assignment

The written assignment for the course is to use the ethical precepts implicit throughout the Confessional and Selichot prayers (pp. 269-279, 324-337) to construct individual ethical wills. The assignment sheet (p. 277) contains an explanation of ethical wills and instructions.

Appendix to Session IV

A Definition of True Repentance

from Maimonides' (1135-1204) Yad Ha-Hazakah (The Strong Hand),
a Code, written in Hebrew:

"What constitutes true repentance? If the sinner has the opportunity of committing once again the sinful act and it is quite possible for him to repeat it and yet he refrains from so doing because he has repented--for example, a man cohabited unlawfully with a woman and after a time found himself alone with her again and he still loves her and is still as healthy as ever and it takes place in the same province in which he had previously sinned with her and yet he refrains from repeating the transgression--he is a true penitent. . . But if he only repents when he is old and when he is no longer in any event able to do what he had done previously, even though this hardly qualifies as the best form or repentance, yet it is still effective and he is considered to be a penitent. Even one who had sinned all his days but repented on the day of his death so that he died in a state of repentance, all his sins are pardoned. . . What is repentance? It is that the sinner relinquishes his sin, removing it from his thoughts and resolving never to do it again. . . and he should feel remorse for his past misdeeds. . . so that the One who knows all the heart's secrets can testify that never again will he commit the sin. . ."

Louis Jacobs, A Jewish Theology,
(New York: Behrman House, 1973),
pp. 248-249.

Appendix to Session IV

The Background of Unetaneh Tokef

No one knows exactly who composed this prayer, but the legend regarding its composition is one of the best known stories about our liturgy:

In the 10th century, Rabbi Amnon of Mayence (Mainz), a wealthy scholar and leader of the Jewish community, was repeatedly pressured by the Bishop of Mayence to convert to Christianity. Finally, Amnon wearied and asked for three days to consider the Bishop's request. He spent the next three days in such guilty despair, that he failed to appear on the appointed day. He was arrested. Pleading guilty, he begged that his tongue be cut out for not having rejected the Bishop's proposal without hesitation.

Instead, the Bishop had his men cut off Amnon's legs (which had not brought him to his appointment on time) and arms. It happened to be the morning of Rosh Hashanah. Dying of his wounds, Amnon begged to be carried to the synagogue. He interrupted the service just as the congregation was reciting the Kedushat ha Yom of the Tefilah. Amnon asked for a brief pause in the service. On the spot, he composed the Unetaneh Tokef prayer. As the last words were on his lips, he died.

Three days later, R. Amnon appeared in a dream to the foremost liturgical poet of the time, Kalonymos b. Meshullam, and taught him the poem.

Appendix to Session IV

Ethical Wills

Written Assignment:

Due Next Session *

Using the ethical precepts implicit throughout the Confessional and Selichot prayers (pp. 269-279; 324-337), construct an ethical will addressed to your children or to a hypothetical younger generation. Among the topics that you might want to write clauses about are: Jewish identity, learning, responsibilities in the Jewish community, responsibilities to the world community, synagogue affiliation, religious observance, personal ethics, business ethics, and human relationships.

Background:

The ethical will was a popular Jewish literary form from the Middle ages through the 18th century. Written in the form of a testament from parent to child (customarily father to son, with each paragraph headed by the phrase, "My son"), the will would set forth the parent's basic practical teachings on morals and behavior.

Perhaps the earliest extant Hebrew ethical will is attributed to Solomon ibn Gabirol, and is called "The Gate of the Commandment of the Scholar to His Son." This will, written in Arabic, was translated into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon, who later addressed his own ethical will to his son, Samuel (translator from Arabic to Hebrew of Maimonides' Guide to the Perplexed). Ibn Tibbon's will is somewhat unusual in that it is introduced and concluded by poems, refers to details of family life, designating brides and bridegrooms for the children, and offers specific reproof for Samuel ibn Tibbon's faults.

- more -

* The teacher will have to return these papers by mail as soon as possible after the last session. Grades are not appropriate for this assignment, but margin notes and end comments are in order.

From the 13th century on, ethical wills became a customary practice within certain families, and during the 16th and 17th centuries, ethical wills were prevalent among the leading Jewish families of Eastern Europe.

More information on ethical wills can be found in the Encyclopedia Judaica, Volume 16, pp. 530-1).

SESSION V

THE SUBPLOT: WHAT MAKES THE DRAMA JEWISH?

AIMS:

1. to organize previously learned information about Jewish history along a timeline.
2. to observe and discuss the ways in which other class members organize their views of Jewish history.
3. to analyse the contrasting sequences of incidents that form the liturgical histories of the Jewish people as presented in the traditional mahzor and Gates of Repentance.
4. to compare the sequence of incidents established by class agreement (and therefore representative of the class' version of Jewish history) with the liturgical version of history in Gates of Repentance.
5. to articulate the organizing principles that guided the selection of incidents in the liturgical versions of history in the traditional mahzor and in Gates of Repentance.
6. to review the work of the course, summarizing both the information gained and the personal application of that information.
7. to evaluate the degree to which personal study goals were accomplished during the course.

MATERIALS:

1. strong cord stretched across the front or side of the classroom. At one end of the cord is a sign: "Creation." At the opposite end is a sign: "Redemption." Near the Redemption sign is a third sign: "Now." The signs are pinned to the cord with paper clips.
2. a package of paper clips and a package of index cards (3 x 5)

3. magic markers for every student
4. stapler
5. blackboard and chalk
6. copies of Gates of Repentance for the class
7. copies of Philip Birnbaum's High Holiday Prayer Book (N.Y.: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1951) or any comparable traditional Hebrew/English mahzor--or Xerox copies of Birnbaum, pp. 812-830; 838-844 (Avodah and "Ten Martyrs," English only), for half the class.
8. record or tape of cantorial rendition of Hineni, heani mima'ash.
9. ditto copies of Evaluation sheet (p. 286-287)

TIME ALLOTMENT:

Introduction and Statement of Purpose	10 minutes
First Selection of Incidents	20 minutes
Second Selection	20 minutes
<u>Avodah</u>	
Group work	20 minutes
Discussion	20 minutes
Summary and Evaluation	
Writing the Critic's Review	15 minutes
Evaluation Form	15 minutes

LESSON PLAN:

- I. Introduction and Statement of Purpose (Lecture with some questions)
 There are two intersecting plots in the High Holiday Drama. The main plot has to do with communal and individual repentance. The second plot is about God's relationship to humanity, and especially to Israel, beginning with the first words of the Torah, and ending with a future redemption that brings all humankind under God's rule.

Questions:

How do the two plots interact? (Student answers will summarize their learning from the last session.)

How can a story that encompasses all of human history, with a special emphasis on all of Jewish history, fit within the covers of a prayerbook?

There must have been a rigorous editing process to produce the kind of narrative that would be useful for worship purposes.

What we have in the mahzor is not all of Jewish history abbreviated, but a special liturgical history. It is a sacred myth of Jewish peoplehood that answers these questions: how did our world begin, how did our people begin, what episodes shaped our people's special character, and what is our people's special mission?

Purpose of the Lesson:

The purpose of this session is to examine the liturgical history outlined in the mahzor, and to deduce from it the principles by which it was constructed.

II. Organizing History

The first task is for the students to determine how they have already selected and organized their own knowledge of Jewish history.

A. First Selection

- (1) A timeline is strung across the classroom, with signs on it indicating "Creation" at one end, "Redemption" at the opposite end, and "Now" $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way across.
- (2) The teacher gives each student magic markers and three index cards, and asks the students to write down on the

cards three crucial events in Jewish history from Creation to the present. (For the purpose of this exercise, Bible stories before Abraham are to be considered part of Jewish history.)

- (3) In groups of three, students hang their cards on the timeline with paper clips (with the rest of the class and the teacher monitoring accuracy of placement and spacing). Duplicates are to be stapled to the bottoms of hanging cards, so that the class can see which items were most popular.
- (4) The class discusses the duplications and the balance of the events selected (did everyone write "Sinai" or "Holocaust?").

B. Second Selection

- (1) Students receive three more cards apiece, and write on them more events that have not appeared so far (a name of a great personality can be considered shorthand indication of that person's historical milieu, lifework and contribution).
- (2) Repeat the placement and discussion procedures.

III. The Avodah Prayer

A. Background (Lecture)

There are allusions to Jewish history throughout the mahzor, and to trace them all is an impossible task for a limited class period. However, there is one long prayer in the mahzor which does present a coherent story of Jewish history from the time of Creation. This prayer is Amitz Koah--an intricate piyyut

by R. Meshullam b. Kalonymus (Italy and Mainz, d. 1020). Because Kalonymus leans heavily on the account given in the Mishnah (Yoma) of the preparation of the High Priest for Yom Kippur worship, this part of the Yom Kippur service has traditionally been called the Avodah, which means "ritual worship." (cf. the song "Al shloshah devarim" which some students might know.)

B. Timelines of the Avodah Prayers (Group Work)

- (1) The teacher asks half the class to read the Gates of Repentance Avodah, pp. 410-447, and half the class to read the traditional Avodah and Ten Martyrs sections in Birnbaum pp. 812-830, 838-844. (Because the Gates of Repentance Avodah section incorporates material selected from Eleh Ezkereh, the piyyut recounting the suffering of the ten great rabbinic martyrs of the Hadrianic persecution, both groups will need to consider the martyrology passages along with the Avodah prayer.)
- (2) The teacher asks each group to construct a timeline on paper reflecting the selection and organization of material in the prayers that they are reading. Members of the groups may elect to work individually or to cooperate within their groups with oral readers, discussion and a secretary. (Allow 20 minutes.)
- (3) The readers of the traditional mahzor describe what they have read and report their timeline conclusions. A group member copies their timeline on the board so that it is available for comparison with the class' timeline.
- (4) The readers of Gates of Repentance make a similar report.

C. Principles of Selection (Discussion)

- (1) There are a number of possible organizing principles of selection that might have guided the authors of both the traditional and the contemporary mahzors:
 - a) God guides Jewish history
 - b) Jews are the chosen people
 - c) Jews have survived for a reason
 - d) Humanity is progressing toward the light.
- (2) Given the evidence of the class' reading, which of these principles guided the composition of the traditional Avodah? What other principles might apply?
- (3) What principles guided the composition of the Gates of Repentance Avodah? What other principles might apply?

IV. Summary and Evaluation of the Course

A. Introduction

Because this course offers an intense experience which calls forth many personal responses, a summary experience and discussion are desirable.

B. Method

- (1) The teacher asks the students to read the translation of the Hineni prayer p. 19, and points out the similar prayer on p. 247. What is the function of these prayers? The prayers express the reader's state of readiness to lead the High Holiday service, and the reader's intent in offering prayer.
- (2) As a result of participating in this course, the students have acquired a new state of readiness for High Holiday

worship, and perhaps a new understanding of their own intent in prayer.

- (3) The teacher asks the students to look over the Playbill, and to think for a short time about what they have learned about themselves, their Jewish identity, and the High Holiday liturgy.
- (4) After allowing a brief period for reflection, the teacher notes that it is customary for dramas to be reviewed. The teacher asks the students to compose headlines and lead paragraphs for their own "Critic's Reviews" of the High Holiday drama. While people are writing, the teacher may play a record or tape of a cantorial rendition of hineni he'ani mima'ash.
- (5) Students read their reviews out loud.
- (6) The teacher supplements this summary process by giving the students the Evaluation (p. 236) for in-class completion.

Appendix for Session V

Evaluation

1. Please rate
- Gates of Repentance
- as a work of liturgy:

	<u>Satisfies</u> <u>intensely</u>					<u>Doesn't satisfy</u> <u>at all</u>				
depth of concern	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 0
meets personal needs	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 0
expresses Jewish values	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 0
poetry	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 0

2. Please rate
- Gates of Repentance
- as a text on Jewish identity:

	<u>Very expressive and</u> <u>helpful in clarifying</u> <u>issues related to</u>					<u>Not at all</u> <u>helpful</u>				
Jewish identity	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 0

3. The mental model of worship as drama was helpful to me in the following ways:

___ I could see worship as an interaction between two characters.

___ I could understand the progression of the plot of personal repentance.

___ I could trace the subplot of Israel's movement toward redemption.

___ I realized that the congregation was both audience and participant.

Which of the insights above or what other aspect of the drama model was most helpful to you and why?

If you felt that the model was not helpful, or that some other model would have been more useful, please explain:

4. The main goal I set for myself for this course was:

I accomplished/did not accomplish this goal. (Please explain.)

5. The most interesting thing I learned about Gates of Repentance was:

6. The most significant thing I learned about myself was:

7. How do you think you might relate to High Holiday services differently next time you sit through them?

Additional Comments: (Is there anything else that you would like to say or explain further that this Evaluation Form doesn't ask for?)

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