Summer Liturgies: The Development and Evolution of URJ Camp *T'filot*

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I would like to give my sincerest thanks to my parents for inspiring me to lead a proud, Jewish life. Without their commitment to my Jewish identity, I would not have had the amazing, life-altering experiences that URJ summer camps offered me. I would also like to thank Dr. Rabbi Richard Sarason for all of his help. Working with him was a fun, enlightening experience that helped me focus what I was writing. Finally, I would like to acknowledge all the people I interviewed not only for sharing their experiences with me, but also through their dedication to the URJ camp system. Through their work, thousands of Reform Jewish youth each summer have the opportunity to craft a meaningful Jewish identity through study, activities, and prayer. It takes a combination of knowledge, desire, and experience to enact such a positive experience for the participants of the camp program. It is my hope that the passion for camp, prayer, and Judaism from all of the above continue as the Reform movement continues to evolve in order to keep Judaism relevant.

ABSTRACT

The Union of Reform Judaism began to establish summer camps in the middle part of the twentieth century. Since their inception, prayer has been an integral part of the program. This thesis seeks to uncover what about prayer was so important as to make it a part of the daily schedule. Furthermore, it compares and contrasts different services from various camps through the decades. It analyzes many aspects of the service including the liturgy, prayer space, music, and participation in order to uncover certain challenges associated with prayer at camp and how a cross section of URJ summer camps overcame these challenges to create a meaningful prayerful environment for their participants whose age ranges from elementary school to college-aged staff.

The majority of the research for this thesis involved examining camp material found in the America Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio as well as interviewing camp directors, former camp employees, and camp faculty members. The archival documents provided evidence as to how camps adapted services to cope with changes in American culture in order to keep the program relevant. The interviews centered on current camp services, thus providing information about the similarities and differences among contemporary services in URJ camps.

The thesis is comprised of an introduction followed by four chapters. The main discussion of the introduction focuses on the reasoning behind Jewish prayer and what makes the summer camp an ideal setting for it. The first chapter examines the early Union camps' services and how historical and cultural circumstances shifted the focus of services from frontal worship to emphasizing personal prayer and spiritual development. The second chapter surveys the goals behind camp prayers and how a cross-section of

URJ camps accomplishes them. Chapter Three looks specifically at the influence music has had on camp services and how the introduction of the guitar and new melodies have affected services. Finally, the fourth chapter analyzes the relationship between education and prayer and how the camps approach teaching liturgy and prayer to their campers.

Union camps offer programs to thousands of Reform Jewish campers and hundreds of staff each summer. Thus, they are a powerful tool for cultivating a Reform Jewish identity among their participants. This thesis proposes that, since their inception in the 1950s, URJ summer camps have used services to help cultivate an identity by making them an opportunity for participants to contemplate and articulate key Jewish issues.

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INTRODUCTION

JEWISH PRAYER AND ITS IMPORTANCE AT SUMMER CAMP

T'filot have been a part of the camp program since the inception of Union of Reform Judaism summer camps. This thesis will seek to answer why the crafters of the camp experience decided to make prayer such an integral part, as well as how services at URJ camps have evolved over the decades of American Reform Jewish camping. However, before answering these questions it is important to ask a more general question: why do Jews pray?

Asking various subsections of the Jewish community would elicit different answers. The most traditional Jews would say that they pray because God commands it of them or perhaps to bring about the coming of the Messiah. Other groups would say that it is part of Jewish tradition. This second answer conjures up images of prayer as a folkway that human beings crafted instead of being divinely ordained. Yet other Jews would answer that they pray because they glean something personally from the prayer experience.

All of these reasons are valid. To find one single reason why all Jews pray is as fruitless an endeavor as finding a single method of Jewish prayer. However, just as there are commonalities among all Jewish forms of prayer, so there are certain commonalities among all of these reasons for praying. One such commonality is that prayer is an expression of one's Jewish identity. As Stefan C. Reif writes in his book *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, "Together with other developments in the last half-century, [the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel] have brought about a revival of strong commitment, public identification and

group pride that have made their mark on the content, appearance and purpose of the *siddur*, whatever rite or variety of Jewish religious expression."[1] Prayer not only gives one an opportunity to explore his or her Jewish self, but also enacts one's identity within the larger Jewish community. The 1930s and 1940s saw great tragedy and great celebration among the Jewish people. Both the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel solidified the Jewish identity of American Jews. After these events, being Jewish could not be limited to one's religious practice in the way that early Reformers argued. Instead, being Jewish necessitated identification with a group of people. In the middle of the twentieth century, prayer continued the transformation perpetuated by the 19th century Reformers from being liturgy to becoming a mantra whose recitation classified one as a Jew. Jews prayed not only to express their allegiance to God but also their allegiance to the Jewish people.

In addition to casting one's lot with a community, prayer acknowledges one's commitment to the discipline of a people. Rabbi Jules Harlow describes prayer as a Jewish disciplinary practice by asking, "Why pray? There are many answers to this question...A committed Jew prays because prayer is one of the Jew's many obligations."[2] While Harlow's words reflect an attitude that prayer is a *mitzvah* and thus binding upon all Jews, his notion of commitment remains even in modern Reform Jewish thought. Reward for performing *mitzvot* and concomitant punishment for disobedience are antithetical to Reform ideology, but the obligation a Jew has to himself and his community is still present. Worship as an activity in and outside of the camp context

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[1] Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1993, 261.

[2] Rabbi Jules Harlow, *Pray Tell: A Hadassah Guide to Jewish Prayer* (Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 2003), xiii.

provides one with a time to ponder the words of the liturgy in an attempt to discern personal and communal meaning from them. The act of praying allows one to center his or her thoughts on a topic. Thus, the contemplation that occurs during *t'filot* not only leads to one cultivating a Jewish identity, but also striving to become a better person through communicating with the transcendent. Harlow continues, "Prayer should be an elevating experience. Although prayer often concerns basic human needs, prayer allows us to reach out toward the highest, the infinite, the Creator of the universe."[3] While admitting that Jewish tradition mandates prayer, Harlow attributes a purpose to this practice: prayer elevates the person praying to a higher level of concern. Thus, even in the strictest prayer environments where liturgical recitation takes the same form as it has for generations, Jewish prayer requires a balance between the words uttered, *keva,* and the feeling behind them, *kavanah.* Such a balance is necessary in order for one's prayer to have personal meaning.

Harlow concludes the introduction to his book by saying, "Through worship, we aspire to understand God's ways as we strive to draw nearer to God."[4] Prayer gives one an opportunity to engage in pondering fundamental questions that have no definite answer. In a liberal setting, there is no single path to "draw nearer to God." Rather, it is incumbent on the individual to come up with meaningful answers. Harlow's statement assumes a distant, transcendent God, with prayer as the quintessential method of traversing the gap. At a basic level, prayer is an admission that the world as it is could be made better. Petitionary prayer has the one praying ask for specific needs and for means to improve the world. Less specific prayers acknowledge a divine presence in the world.

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[3] Ibid, xiv.
[4] Ibid, xiv.

Ultimately, prayer is an attempt to inspire the one praying to retain an awareness of that presence.

Thus, Jewish prayer is a medium through which one is able to contemplate meta-questions about human existence using a framework that reminds one of his or her identity as a Jew. The form of prayer becomes crucial to this process. Though the topics pondered during prayer could be intellectually and emotionally challenging, formal Jewish liturgy has a ritual element that simultaneously provides the people praying with a framework for their inner dialogue as well as personal comfort with the words they recite through routine. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman in his book *The Art of Public Prayer* states, "Religious ritual is how we structure sad and happy moments so that they occur within a framework that we understand and appreciate."[5] Liturgical recitation enacts a ritual, as it is a repeated action whose purpose is to focus one's thoughts. The words uttered are not as important as the action itself. Prayer is a vehicle to engage one's thoughts. All prayer forms serve in this manner. Whether Jewish or non-Jewish, fixed or spontaneous, prayer is an active experience in which one participates. To use Hebrew terms, one's *keva*, fixed prayer recitation, does not become prayer without *kavanah,* intentionality or purpose. Prayer as a ritual allows the one praying to frame his or her interactions with the divine. Fixed prayers are a historical record of how the progenitors of a tradition conceived and interacted with God. Spontaneous and creative prayers follow this same mold and may even adopt similar vocabulary. Prayer that makes use of both of these forms allows the one engaging in prayer to cast his or her experience in a traditional Jewish setting.

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[5] Lawrence A. Hoffman, The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only (SkyLight Paths Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 1999), 25.

However, Jews, particularly in a liberal setting, face an additional challenge with regard to prayer: the God of their personal theology may not be the God present in Jewish liturgy. Thus, traditional communal forms of prayer could be deterrents in the communication a Reform Jew wishes to have with his or her image of the divine. Hoffman suggests that crafting a personally authentic prayer mindset is a means to overcoming this challenge. "If we can avoid the self-defeating notion that our prayers are pictures of reality that demand intellectual assent, we will have gone a long way toward making it possible to say them meaningfully, even if we do not believe them to be literally true."[6] In the Reform Jewish context, prayer is not an action mandated by God. Instead, Jews make the decision to dedicate their time to praying in either a formal or informal setting. Thus, a Reform Jew does not pray to receive grace from God or to deter God's wrath. Even if the person praying does not literally mean the words that he is saying, he or she seeks to improve the spiritual self. Prayer in a Reform Jewish setting entails an internal dialogue in which one's observations, thoughts, and emotions combine in order to craft a personal ethos. The ethos created through prayer is constantly in flux as it is dependent on all the combining factors. Thus, even though prayer occurs in a single setting, its influence extends far beyond.

As argued above, prayer is a fundamental Jewish activity that exposes one to the traditional Jewish ethos and thus provides him or her with an opportunity to cultivate a Jewish identity. Thus, prayer became an integral learning tool for teenagers at youth group conclaves during the decades leading up to the birth of the Union camping movement. "In 1947, Chicago like other regions of the country...began to offer regional Labor Day Conclaves wherein Reform Jewish teenagers and local rabbis gathered for

[6] Ibid 150.

recreation and study."[7] Reform Jewish camping has its antecedents in NFTY programs. The Union decided to use long weekends and other vacation times to have teenagers work with faculty members in a close intimate setting. While education was the primary goal, having teenagers develop relationships with faculty members showed Judaism to be a religion that one must live. However, brief periods of study and prayer on weekends were not enough to cultivate a Jewish identity. Rather, the rabbi-student relationships these weekends cultivated were early opportunities for Jewish teenagers to explore their religion as a meaningful way of life. As Rabbi Ernst Lorge said, "We foresaw that the educational experience in a summer camp for two or three weeks would equal or surpass what we could give a Jewish kid during a whole year at Sunday school."[8]

Because much of the camp program came from the youth conclave model, the early years of Union camping sought to provide a spiritually rich experience specifically for teenagers of confirmation age. A letter advertising camp to individual rabbis said, "We want your young people of confirmation age and other, both boys and girls."[9] The letter specifically advertises for confirmation-aged children. While it mentions that the camp would be open to other ages, it seems as if the camp's greatest interest would be younger highschoolers going through confirmation. Confirmation was a rite of passage celebrating coming of age where teenage Reform Jews literally confirmed their faith in God. Thus, the Union sought to use its camp as an educational and identity-forming

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[7] Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, "The Beginnings of Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, 1952-1970: Creation and Coalescence of the First UAHC Camp," in *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping,* edited by Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 54.

[8] Taped interview of Ernst Lorge, May 1972 (Lorge Papers, AJA).

[9] Letter Dated February 26, 1952 To All Rabbis in the Midwestern, Rocky Mountain, and Great Lakes Regions of the Union, 648/1/1, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

experience more than a social one. Prayer, as part of its curriculum, would continue to perpetuate this goal to the present day.

The prayer experience at camp would be able to supersede youth group conclaves in a multitude of areas including setting. Camp lasted for a longer period than youth group conclaves and was situated in a more secluded area. Thus, summer camp provided a golden opportunity for the campers to pray in a quiet, more intimate environment more conducive to prayer. In a summary of the goals of Union Institute, J. S. Ackerman, the chairman of the board of directors, stated that camp exists "for the purposes of worship, study, and fellowship in close contact with God and nature."[10] Nature was an important part of the camp experience. Conducting services outside indicates a fusion between the liturgy and an all-encompassing primal experience. Thus, summer camp was an opportunity for the campers to combine their familiar Temple practice with an unfamiliar setting in nature. Such an experience would allow God to permeate into the lives of the campers and staff at times previously unconsidered. Camp was an opportunity to bring God out of the sanctuary and allow the campers to form a bond with God in a more holistic manner.

The fall before Union Camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin was dedicated, the camp committee issued a memorandum reading, "(During) the summer period the program will consist in the main of Jewish Study, worship, recreation, and manual labor. The purpose of the program is to provide for our youth and adults an intensive religious Jewish experience, to develop leadership for our congregations and to train young people in their responsibilities as Americans and Jews."[11] The outspoken goal of Union Institute

[10] History and Purpose of Union Institute 648/1/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[11] Memorandum on Camp Institute November 29, 1951, 648/1/4, AJA Cincinnati, Ohio.

since its inception was to help its campers cultivate Jewish identities. While many camp programs focused on study of a variety of different texts and topics, prayer too became an integral part of the program. The camp governance saw prayer as different, but supplementary to study. Prayer was an experience that allowed the participant to immerse himself or herself physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Thus, in order to "train young people in their responsibilities," the camp sought to instill a sense of Jewish identity and pride.

To make Judaism relevant for the campers, those overseeing the camp program wished to follow the youth group model and have the participants craft part of their prayer experience. After a couple of summers at Union Institute, Rabbis Ernst Lorge and Karl Weiner, two rabbis who served as faculty members and were integral in crafting the camp program reported, "In worship, they will create services expressive of their own aspirations and will pray in the rustic outdoor chapel that youngsters built in the last two summers."[12] This passage highlights two nuances of camp services. The first was that it stressed that the campers crafted and executed services that in turn would be meaningful for them. Far from the congregational setting which saw rabbis and other adults lead prayer, the campers took leadership roles during services. Thus part of camp culture was to distinguish the prayer experience campers had at camp from services at their home congregations. The other nuance mentioned was a physical manifestation, as the campers were the ones who built the chapel, a metaphorical gesture of how they would create services.

[12] Rabbi Ernst Lorge and Rabbi Karl Weiner's Report on Union Institute Program to Chicago Federation, UAHC dated May 27, 1954, 648/1/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Overall, most reports said that the religious program of Union Institute during its first summer was successful. The services were inspirational and achieved their goals of getting the campers to contemplate spiritual topics as well as exposing them to Jewish modes of thinking. "Probably the most successful single facet were the religious activities... Very frequently a genuine mood of religious devotion was generated at these occasions, and many of the participants were deeply moved by them."[13] This report from one of the earliest summers at Union Institute described the *t'filah* portion of the summer as "the most successful." It describes such success as stemming from "religious devotion" and participants who were "deeply moved." While the report lacks detail, what we can glean from it is how those evaluating the program felt the camp reached its goals. Such terms used in the description laud the sense of *kavanah*, intentionally and sincerity, that services provided the campers.

However, there was an issue of balancing creative services with more traditional modes of Jewish prayer. A report analyzing the early years of the camp program stated:

> As discussion ensued, it became apparent that it was necessary to evaluate the effect that the Institute sessions in the past have had upon our youth. Various problems were brought forth, e.g. as a result of writing their own prayers they felt that they could not have 'living Judaism' through the Union Prayerbook and thru the services conducted by their own rabbi; often their sense of values back in the city was distorted and caused confusion in their lives at home, school and temples; the rabbi's role at the Institute was minimized to the point where the youth almost rejected rabbinic authority in the areas of worship. It was felt that we must constantly evaluate the program of the past and use the evaluation for building future programs that will meet the needs of youth in the Reform movement.[14]

Especially in the realm of prayer, it was of the utmost importance for Union Institute to create a warm, innovative environment. Too much use of the UPB would too closely

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[13] Preliminary report of summer operation of Oconomowoc, 648/1/5, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[14] Minutes of the Rabbinic Program Committee, November 9, 1955, and March 20, 1956. (Ernst Lorge Papers)

resemble services at home congregations where teens often felt a distance between them and the clergy leading the service, and thus between the congregational forms and their own spirituality. The crafters of the Union Camp program felt that innovative prayer experiences that differed from worship in the home congregation were a necessity. The goal of camp was to instill a sense of "living Judaism" in its campers. Thus, stressing God's immanence became a crucial goal for the camp program. Because the participants spent weeks in an entirely Jewish setting, summer camp was the perfect opportunity to stress the proximity of God, and thus a Jewish identity, by means of the worship service.

This tension between traditional and creative, collective and personal modes of prayer permeates the history of Union camping. Today, various camps attempt to overcome these tensions in a variety of manners. This thesis seeks to analyze those attempts. I have divided my thesis into four chapters. The first will examine various services used through the fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties in an attempt to show how the socio-historical context of American Reform Judaism has affected camp services in the past. Chapter Two will discuss the goals of camp services at Union Camps in general and describe how a cross-section of camps achieve these goals. Chapter Three will look at the evolution of music and its effects on URJ camp services. The final chapter will look at camp prayer beyond the *Beit T'filah* and specifically at what educational programs teach about prayer. I use these four chapters to show how the URJ camp movement has crafted a *t'filah* program that portrays prayer as a meaningful way to continue to make Judaism relevant for both its campers and its staff.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND HISTORY ON THE EVOLUTION OF CAMP SERVICES

Summer camping offers a unique opportunity for the participants to both learn and express their Jewish identities. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the services at camp. Unlike services in the home congregation, camp services provide the campers with a time when they can both create and express themselves spiritually as members of their own peer community. These creative expressions often characterize a service as a group develops a theme on which to base their service. While generally based on the formal liturgy used, the service mostly takes its character from the individual service parts written on the adopted theme. While home congregations by no means offer monolithic services that lack any unique characteristics, an individual camp service, because of more flexibility, often takes on the specific nuances its crafters intended. In this chapter, I will show how history and the cultural context of those crafting the service have affected camp *t'filot*, mostly focusing on the service parts and readings used as opposed to any specific integral liturgy. While each service is different both in content as well as tone, there are common themes within a time period that reflect a distinct amalgamation of both American as well as Jewish identities. I have broken up this chapter into four sections, each corresponding to a decade from the 1950s to 1980s. These decades not only represent the first years of Union camping, but also a time in Jewish and American history characterized by the tensions associated with war, victory, and survival.

The 1950s

The decade immediately following World War II saw the birth of Union camping. The American victory in the war coupled with the establishment of the State of Israel generated a sense of pride in American Jews both as Americans and as Jews. However, the State of Israel was surrounded by enemies. From its establishment until the Six Day War, the State of Israel experienced not peace but rather an uneasy ceasefire with its Arab neighbors. The Zionist enterprise had yielded a Jewish State but its continued existence was by no means a certainty. Still, the day-to-day reality of the State of Israel was not much I the consciousness of American Jews in the 1950s. In many ways, the American Jews of the 1950s strongly resembled other Americans of other socioeconomic backgrounds. They moved to the suburbs with congregation buildings moving there shortly thereafter. Also, Jewish families took part in the baby boom. In the political landscape, Senator Joseph McCarthy began a crusade that was infamous for labeling outside influences as un-American and thus detrimental to the country. June, 1953 saw the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg after being proven guilty of treason. They were but two of many people accused of betraying America by being Soviet spies, but they were the only two Jews and the only two to be executed. Their fate sent shock waves throughout the Jewish community. Especially while trying to develop a relationship with the new Jewish nation, Israel, and crystallizing their national identity as Americans, Jews were forced to ask themselves how Jewish they should be.

In terms of religious expression, most Reform congregations used the *Union Prayer Book*, newly revised edition of 1945 (UPB). While making more use of the Hebrew language, this edition still contained much that characterized the Reform

movement in its classical stage. English hymns, readings and translations dominate the pages whereas the original publication used Hebrew very sparingly. The UPB uses the high English style associated with more formal religious worship as opposed to an informal or conversational tone. Parallels between camp liturgies and the UPB characterize the camp services of the 1950s.

Many of the 1950s services reflect the Reform movement's emphasis on worship as service to God. A service for the intermediate session at Union Institute (later renamed Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute) in 1959 argues, "We call our prayers services to demonstrate that we are servants of the Lord. The servant owns no property except what he receives from his Master..."[15] This reading reflects one common theme in the 1950s service in which God is portrayed as a master who is in constant control of the fate of all humanity, rather than emphasizing God's loving relationship to the Jewish people. Human beings are eternally subjugated to God while simultaneously owing infinite gratitude. A possible explanation for a reading such as this could stem from a reaction to materialism becoming more of a factor in people's lives at this time. As rampant materialism took hold of all Americans, including Jews, the camp service sought to refocus one's attention on their spiritual responsibility and on something higher and more worthy than owning property and posssessions. Words such as "prayer" and "meditation" are much rarer in the services of the 1950s. Perhaps it is because they entail a more personal experience which is distinct from group worship.

It would be a mistake, however, to label the camp services in the 1950s as only stressing one's personal duty to God. There were many services from this time that stressed God's presence. These services not only prayed to a God who was the ruler of all of creation

[15] Worship Service from Intermediate Session, 1959, 648/1/3, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

but also a loving parent who should be thanked and loved in addition to served. One such service describes a *mitzvah* as an opportunity to "(do) things for God. To love and obey Him, to think of Him and bless His name, to thank Him always for His goodness.[16]" This passage reflects a dichotomy. While mentioning obedience, its first reference is to showing one's love for God. It defines a *mitzvah* as an opportunity to show both one's love for, and obedience to, God by loving others. The service on July 7, 1959 says that God shows love through nature. Later that service includes a reading which says, "Oh, Lord, we thank you for all the goodness and kindness that we have enjoyed today. The beautiful world and the good friends all about us are gifts of Your love for us."[17] The services of the 1950s demonstrate a multifaceted understanding of God: a God who rules with a loving nature, who should be embraced as much as feared and loved as much as revered.

Although they included elements of both prayer and meditation, services at Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI), were largely considered communal worship rather than a time for personal prayer, reflection, and conversation with God. The URJ favored the term "worship" over "prayer" through the turn of the 21st Century with its most prevalent use at camp services occurring in the 1950s. "Worship" can be celebratory while "prayer" implies asking things of God. The mindset of the 1950s was to use services to literally serve God as opposed for petitionary prayer. It is important to note that OSRUI was the Union of American Hebrew Congregation's (UAHC) earliest camp and the only one to be in existence for a majority throughout most of the 1950s. The early 1950s were a period in both American and Reform Jewish American history in

[16] Worship Service Four, ibid.
[17] Service on July 7, ibid.

which the individual was still secondary to the greater society and in which "wants" were secondary to "needs". There always has been a strong streak of individualism and liberalism in American culture. After the pent-up demand of the war years, things took off in the prosperity of the 1950s. Those returning from the war married, had children, and had to provide for their families. Thus, the work ethic predominated over the type of individualism and self-preoccupation that was to characterize the baby-boomers (having to do with the fact that they grew up in an affluent, post-war world). Their parents went through the Great Depression and World War II. The older generation in the 1950s sought to make up for the time lost during the war and had to provide for their families. Korea, the Cold War, the Atomic Age, and the Red Scare all reinforced communal values. Thus there was a great emphasis on fulfilling one's duty. One's private needs, be they psychological, social or spiritual, were not deemed to have the same importance as the needs of the greater community. This notion was carried over from World War II which reinforced duty during wartime. The older generation was used to making personal sacrifices. As this expressed itsef in Jewish worship during this period, it meant a greater emphasis on *kevah*, fixed liturgical wording, than on *kavanah*, one's personal intention and quest for meaning in prayer.

OSRUI's initial schedule exemplified these characteristics. First off, the time allotted for services in the daily schedule limited the amount of creativity possible. OSRUI throughout its history has offered two services per day, one *shacharit* and one *maariv*. On the schedule for its second session in 1957, weekday morning services only lasted a half hour and evening services were twenty minutes, directly before the end of

the day.[18] However, most congregations had no weekday services. Thus, OSRUI instituted services partially as learning opportunities. However, the specific time allotted for services express the values Union Camp in the late 1950s wished to relay to its campers in terms of worship style and service structure. Thirty minutes for a morning service and twenty for the evening service did not allow for much time for creativity in the service. Thus, the *t'filah* experience represented UPB's streamlined services as opposed to a service with multiple options offered by *Mishkan T'filah* in the early 21st century. The 1959 Junior Session allotted only fifteen minutes for both morning and evening services.[19] Even though camps today allot thirty minutes for a service, they often go longer in order to incorporate creative readings crafted by the campers. This is not to say that services consisted of the recitation of the exact same prayers in the exact same manner on a daily basis, but rather that the schedule dedicated less time for campers to write their own creative and personally meaningful parts of the service, a defining trait of camp *t'filot* a decade later. Perhaps OSRUI saw daily services as a novelty because it was not the practice of congregations to have daily services. Thus, the services became a way to convey an intensification of Jewish values.

Camp services at this time also made use of responsive readings, a popular method for English reading in Reform communities.[20] The responsive reading method entails a leader reading a line followed by the entire congregation responding with the next line. This characterized the style of worship in the 1950s. It is a style in which the camp congregation follows a particular leader and focuses on *kevah* as opposed to *kavanah.* The responsive reading also stresses the particular written words instead of

[18] Camp Schedule, 1957, 648/4/1, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[19] Junior Camp Schedule, 1959, 648/1/2, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[20] Family Service on June 18, 1959 amongst others, ibid.

creating a meaningful prayer experience for the one praying, although many creative services generated now use responsive readings. A member in the congregation does not even have the opportunity to read the words at his or her own speed due to the need to create a single voice for the community. Responding in unison prevents the individual from going at his or her own pace in an attempt to stress a particular word or phrase.

Many services began and closed with a hymn,[21] a trait similar to Protestant church worship and the custom in UPB. While this is certainly not unique to the UAHC camping experience, it does show how close the camp service in the 1950s follows the UPB and thus the style and content of the greater Reform movement. Because Union camping was in its infancy in these years, there was not a strong sense of what a camp service should look like as distinct from a congregational service. Thus, in direct contrast to later decades, camp services in the 1950s strongly resembled the congregational Reform service of the period. However, the addition of daily services was innovative.

One's gender also affected his or her communal role in 1950s American culture. This was before the dawn of the women's liberation movement. While the 1940s saw women work as men served as soldiers in the war, upon their return home women also returned to their homes. One service in 1959 adds a specific nuance to the responsive readings. It separates the parts boys should say from the parts dedicated to girls. One line for the boys reads "Thank Him for our talents and skills!" while the females respond "Thank him for the gift of love!"[22] This reading distinguishes between the males who have talents to work and earn a living and the females who are thankful for love. While I do not think this is as extreme as would be a reference to the love of a good husband who

[21] Service on July 7 is one of many such examples, ibid.
[22] Worship Service 6, ibid.

would provide for the girls, these lines show the males as the providers and the females as the ones who love and take care of the families. This reading not only establishes roles but also the proper emotions that are gender-based. It is emblematic of the pre-feminist movement and pre-individualist service readings that developed in the next decades.

The camp service elevated the group over the individual to point where in one particular service it did not call the participants "campers" but rather "congregation."[23] While there were older staff members, camp administration and rabbinic faculty, a vast majority of the participants were indeed campers. Thus, the terminology used by this and many other parallel services in the 1950s used sought to cultivate a t'filah experience that resembled the greater Reform movement with elevated language and generally elevated mannerisms through which the participants were worshipping an almighty, transcendent God.

Camp worship in this decade used not only the model of the congregational service but also the UPB as a way to define itself. Worship Service Six says "And our Prayer Book says of God: 'Thou art as close to us as breathing, and yet art father than the farthermost star,"[24] By quoting the prayerbook, it is providing the camp service with a sense of legitimacy for the campers. The prayerbook is something official in Jewish tradition. Sitting in an outdoor, non-traditional chapel on benches instead of pews was a new experience for the campers. Even though the words were the same, the atmosphere was different. So the camp service had to go further to legitimate itself. Thus, the camp service in the 1950s quoted the prayerbook and made specific mention of doing so in order to attempt to emulate the larger Reform worship experience.

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[23] Worship Service 5, ibid.
[24] Ibid.

The 1950s was a time when one performed one's duty, and social role was more important than publicly expressing one's feelings in American culture and congregational practice. This manifested itself in the 1950s at UAHC camps through methods such as stressing "worship" and utilizing responsive readings. The individual was not as important as the community. One's identity as Jewish, American, and male or female played a great part in defining his or her role in society. Thus, these are predominant themes in the Union camp services in the 1950s.

The 1960s

While the first half of the 1960s saw many of the same tropes in both American society as well as camp liturgical practice, as the decade progressed, the culture of young people began to shift. The late 1960s were a time in American life where counterculture attracted many followers. The lack of resolution in the Vietnam War coupled with the ongoing civil rights movement and the earlier death of a young president caused great unrest among the college students who became the camp counselors. It was a time of great social upheaval where the younger generation felt the need to free themselves from the social constraints of their parents. The new ideals of the counselors affected all aspects of camp. Social action and protests were forms that demonstrated the young adults' newfound need to express themselves and change the world as opposed to following an established order. The effect of the countercultural revolution on camp services was great. No longer was communal worship the primary goal of camp services. Rather, the feelings of the individual came to the forefront. However idealistic, this quest often reflected a certain pessimism. The need to take action to make the world a better

place stemmed from the contemporary displeasure with the state of both America and Judaism in the mid and late 1960s.

Social action became a common motif of services during the 1960s. A havdalah service in Kallah Aleph 1967 at OSRUI added a petition to the havdalah blessings: "May the light of this havdalah candle kindle in our hearts the resolve to brighten the lives of others during the coming week."[25] This brief plea is a possible reference to social action. While it does not mention any specific actions one should do or injustices in the world, the fact that others need light in order to have their lives brightened is a statement that there is injustice and darkness in the world. Just as Shabbat is a light to the Jewish people that brings joy, so too was it incumbent on Jews to spread that light to the outside world.

A collection of creative service parts from Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI) in 1968 builds on this theme but makes it much more specific. It specifically bring racism to the forefront of the service. This service represents social action not as an abstract means of bettering the world, but rather a necessity to improve the lives of others. The service opens with the words of "We Shall Overcome," a ballad of the African American community during the Civil Rights movement. There are consecutive service parts, one from the point of view of an African American and one from the point of view of a white American. The camper writing from an African American stance wrote, "I am a Black American. I love my country, but that love has not been returned. Instead, it has been warped, warped into a hole (of) suspicion, distrust..." The white American service part reads, "I am a White American. People often call me a racist because I hate the Negro. But it is an understandable hate. Do you want your children to

[25] 648/7/9 AJA Cincinnati, Ohio.

be exposed to the violence caused by the American Negro? The only way to protect you and your children from this violence is to keep the Negro out of your schools and neighborhood."[26] Both of these service parts are written from the first person point of view. The point of having this service was to personalize the plight of African Americans in the 1960s in order to make the goals of the Civil Rights movement more concrete. This method is in direct contrast to the abstraction of theological issues that characterized the services of the 1950s. Between the 1950s and the 1960s, camp *t'filot* sustained a type of revolution that shifted the focus from concern about God to concern about one's fellow human beings Also, the service part written from the white person's point of view ends with the phrase "Help us make a better America." These words reflect Senator McCarthy's methods of weeding out the undesirables to keep America a Christian capitalist country. This service part, certainly written in juxtaposition to the service part reflecting the mindset of the minority, indicates the dangers of a monolithic society. It is not only in conversation with the previous service part but also with the earlier social norms of the previous decade.

An undated evening service from that same year also exemplifies the 1960s' view on the nuances of society and prayer. "As time passed, the pagans' worship disappeared, as did the pagans, eventually. Now the Jews, especially the Chasidim, reintroduced the dance into prayers and the worship service."[27] It is important to note how this service part views Chasidic Judaism. It sees Chasidism as a unique, personal and authentic expression of Judaism. Its method of worship, dancing, adds *kavanah* to the service. It is a physical and embodied personal practice that brings one closer to God.

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[26] 670/3/6 AJA Cincinnati, Ohio.
[27] Ibid.

Once again, God's close proximity is stressed as opposed to divine transcendence. This service part lauds Chasidism, certainly a striking departure from the decorum-based services of classical Reform Judaism prominent in the prior decade.

1968 was an especially turbulent year in American history. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April of that year. Robert Kennedy suffered the same fate as the summer was starting. These two political assassinations alone demonstrated political instability and social unrest. However, in addition to the assassinations, the Tet Offensive had begun earlier that year and proved that the Vietnam War was not going as successfully as the American public had been led to believe. The thought of this already unpopular war lasting even longer was enough to spread a general pessimistic feeling that insinuated itself into the camp services. There is a call for social action, but the reasoning behind the call was clear and extremely pessimistic.

The July 4, 1968 service had a topic of peace. Lynn Eisenstein, a camper, wrote "Why did God create the earth? He created the earth so man could have a chance, so man could see what it is like to live with others, to get along with friendship and peace. So far man has about one percent of what God meant for man to have."[28] The service part concludes by saying "When will man ever learn?" which is a line from Pete Seeger's anti-war song "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" Not only is this an instance of how popular culture had infiltrated camp services, but it also expresses extreme doubt about humanity. The theme of this service part is that God provided man with everything, but mankind is abusing the world by abusing the rights of others. War is the ultimate evil.

The idea of the ill effects of war appears not only in reference to the United States but also the State of Israel. The Six Day War caused elation in the Jewish community but

[28] Ibid.

also confusion. The war brought a sense of pride to all Jews. Jewish Americans now experienced a more conflicted identity. The question of how Jewish one should be weighed heavily, especially on the minds of Reform Jews. An undated service in 1968 began with a creative reading "What is a Jew?" "To be a Jew is to share in the triumphs and failures of people you never met, but who are your people because they searched the same search, and dreamed the same dream."[29] To begin a service with "to be a Jew" brings the question of identity to the forefront. At a time when Israel was in the aftershock of both fearing for its existence as well as celebrating its greatest victory, Jewish identity became an important topic. This reading is an attempt to answer the question of what it means to have a dual identity. The Six Day War brought the question of balancing dual identities to the forefront of the Jewish American mindset.

The Six Day War also demonstrated Israel's military power in the Middle East. At a time when many Americans disagreed with how their country was using its military might, Jewish campers also used their services to question what would be right for Israel to do with its newly acquired territories. In an evening service on June 21, 1968, Jodi Stern wrote, "Today, in our service, we will be talking about the relationship between Arabs and Israelis, Whites and Blacks. We will be talking about Arabs' rights in Israel."[30] The author of this service part used the term "relationship." The term has a positive connotation but could be used to describe the impediments to a healthy relationship between the two parties. Stern also specifically mentioned the rights of Arabs. This juxtaposition with the rights of American blacks is significant because it shows how social issues in the United States affected the perception of social issues in

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

Israel. This particular plea on behalf of Israel's Arab population reflects a universal ideal. Stern here expressed her views that the State of Israel, and by extension all Jewish people, should be concerned with the rights of the Arabs in the territories Israel conquered. Here, the victory of the Six Day War comes with the price of diminishing the universal goal of peace and love between all human beings. This service part reflects the mindset of the writer in which universal rights were more important than the military victory of the Jewish people in the Six Day War.

The 1960s were in many ways a reaction against the formal upper-middle-class or bourgeois lifestyles of the 1950s and their perceived hypocrisy in the light of social inequality in America. Camp services reflected the newfound social and political instability of both America and the State of Israel in the latter half of the decade. The ills of war, whether it is won or lost, are a common and important topic. The necessity of human rights for all was also a topic. Camp *t'filot* provided an opportunity for the campers to reflect upon their unease with their society. The idea of a service at camp turned from a duty one has toward God to an opportunity to articulate one's personal views. The turning from a communal experience to a personal one was characteristic of 1960s counterculture and emblematic of the changes in American culture.

The 1970s

The 1970s continued the theme of change from the 1960s. However, it was far less radical in some cases. The feminist movement impacted upon both American society as well as the Reform movement as Sally Priesand became the first female to be ordained as a rabbi in America in 1972. Rabbi Priesand's ordination demonstrated how the

Reform Movement was shedding the notion of traditional gender roles, both from the American as well as the Jewish point of view. However in other instances, the Reform Movement took steps to become more traditional. The CCAR published a new siddur in 1975 entitled *Gates of Prayer.* It maintained some facets of elevated language but broke from the UPB by its increased utilization of Hebrew and its inclusion of more traditional practice. UAHC Camps in the 1970s followed this mold. No longer were UPB page numbers included in services. More Hebrew type was found in the camp services. Finally, the increasing quest for meaning in a service saw camp services looking to sources outside of Judaism to aid in their personal spiritual expression. While this had happened before in the history of the Reform movement, the sources were wider now and did not simply reflect the Christian environment.

In the 1950s, a few of the standard prayer rubrics were incorporated into each service. The Barchu, Shema, V'Ahavtah[31] and Adoration were included in each service.[32] Also, any transliteration found in services from this period used the Ashkenazi pronunciation. While coming to support the Zionist cause, the Reform movement did not broadly adopt the Sephardic pronunciation that Israel uses until services in the 1970s. The Six Day War in this case caused a paradigm shift in the minds of Reform Jews in an identification with Israeli culture. During a time when both HUC started its mandatory year in Israel program for rabbinic students and the World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its headquarters to Israel, the Reform Movement also shifted to liturgical use of the same Hebrew pronunciation as Israelis as opposed to the Ashkenazic pronunciation of

[31] Usually found in translation.
[32] Family Service June, 18, 1959, 648/4/2 AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

their central and eastern European forbears.[33] Following the example set forth by the Movement as a whole, Reform summer camps in the 1970s started to use the Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation in their services.

Also, much of the liturgy used in camp *t'filot* began to appear in Hebrew where English was previously predominant. One such example is the V'Ahavtah. The other, more emblematic shift was from the English Adoration near the conclusion of the 1950's and 1960's services to the Hebrew Aleinu in the 1970s service and going forward. This shift parallels a change in both the mindset as well as the prayerbook of Reform Jews. Classical Reform Jews abandoned the traditional Hebrew text of the Aleinu in favor of an English rendering that paraphrased and somewhat revised the original. The early Reform Movement struggled with the notion of Jewish particularism, especially when discussing the messianic era. While the traditional Aleinu speaks solely of a redemption of the true followers of God, the English adaptation by the Classical Reformers adopted a broader view of who these followers were. *Gates of Prayer* included an English as well as a traditional Hebrew text of the Aleinu. Thus, while still not abandoning the universal ideals set forth in the earliest stages of the Reform Movement, the Movement in the 1970s reclaimed the traditional first paragraph of Aleinu for its services. Camp services demonstrated this by replacing the "Adoration" with the "Aleinu."

The 1970s also perpetuated the service topics established in the 1960s. However, there was a more optimistic tone. During the Shoresh Service in 1975, one camper wrote, "We are Shoresh. We work together to get things done. We do silly and serious things together. We learn Judaism together. We have projects and that is where working

[33] While it is true that the Reform Movement began in Central Europe and its early stages in America had a predominantly German following, the second generation after the mass Eastern European immigration at the end of the 19th century saw many of them adopt Reform Judaism as well.

together comes in. Shoresh is just one big happy group doing things together."[34] While this service admits that there are projects and a need to "get things done" at camp, it represents the work as a joyous occasion to come together.

Also, services during this decade continue to elevate the individual over the communal. Beyond what commenced in the 1960s, the camp services in the 1970s specifically express their freedom to do so. In the July 30, 1975 service, one camper wrote "This is the time to speak to God or think of God. But this is done individually."[35] While this introduction to Silent Prayer has its antecedents dating back even to the 1950s, that fact that a camper articulated it as a service part demonstrates this generation of campers' desires to create a personally meaningful service experience. The idea of prayer here is a personal, intimate encounter with God most likely in the form of a conversation. As noted before, the services of the 1960s began to favor an immanent concept of God rather than a transcendent one. This service part is an example of that idea crystallizing and becoming a focus of Camp Services in the 1970s. While the sixties show initial steps toward privatization with regard to prayer during services, the mid-seventies completely elevate the individual's prayer experience above the traditional and communal. There is an idea that the *t'filot* at camp are breaking from tradition but it is in order to achieve the most meaning in the service. Another camper at that same service declared, "So the traditional prayer of some, or the contemporary prayer of others are towards the same goal and should be accepted in today's society."

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[34] Shroesh Service July 27, 1975, 670/3/6 AJA Cincinnati, OH.
[35] Ibid.

The 1980s

The 1980s brought with them a solidified quest for spirituality in their services. While the camps did not wish to halt this quest in any manner, they decided to erect formal boundaries in order to maintain a certain level of dignity within the service. The camp administration did not wish to limit anybody but still wanted to create what they deemed to be an appropriate spiritual atmosphere and group context. While references to songs and poetry from popular culture still permeated the services, the focus shifted to what would be appropriate for someone to say while leading a service.

It is in the 1980s that for the first time we see an administrator dictating to a coordinator how to help the campers write service parts. OSRUI in 1986 used a worksheet entitled "*T'filot* Description" in order to help the coordinators guide the campers in crafting the service. One key passage says, "Please keep your hand very much in the planning, but as deceptively as possible. Also, be sure to check out all themes with either me or Andrea. I would also like to ask you to stress to the campers that *t'filot* (are) not a play or a show to be put on."[36] This guide is very detailed. The method sets limits to what the campers are able to do in order to fulfill their responsibility of leading the camp in prayer. Ultimately, they have a great deal of freedom as to what to say, but the service is presented as having a very rigid structure. Coming up with a theme is of the utmost importance and, according to this page, it is the most difficult part, as it is the only time the writer, be he faculty or a camp administrator, suggests that coordinators come see him if they have difficulty. This sheet represents a counter-balance to the massive individualism of the 1960s and 1970s. The campers are free to choose a topic and write on it as long as it is appropriate, but they are heavily influenced by an authority.

[36] T'filot Description, 648/21/8, AJA Cincinnati, OH.

The campers do not have the final say but ideally there would be no disconnect between the campers and the administration. Expressing one's innermost thoughts is a secondary consideration behind conforming to the process. Some service parts in the past had taken the form of a play script. These directions speak out directly against that in an attempt to prevent the "me generation" from robbing the camp service experience of its transcendence and worshipful quality. Thus, free expression needed to be limited in the 1980s. The personal spirituality was not more important than the integrity of a service.

To further this idea, the Tzofim service evaluation at OSRUI in 1988 argued, "(They) should have a counselor service after kids go to sleep so the counselors can really pray."[37] This remark assumes that counselors really want to pray and that the camp services are insufficient. They are too personal. The service leaders craft a service that expresses too much of their own feelings. This statement is a backlash from the counselor's point of view to complement the guidelines mentioned above. The 1980s saw a reaction against the intense individuality prominent in the previous two decades.

Conclusion

The Reform Movement wished to show that Judaism was dynamic and often changed throughout history as circumstances dictated. The UAHC camps embodied these changes as well. Thus, *t'filot* at camp evolved from very formalized worship in the classical Reform style to stressing a more personal prayer experience, which was also appropriate developmentally to the age cohort of adolescents. All the while, themes of civil rights, war, and Jewish identity became prominent topics that service leaders expressed. While the 1980s saw a slight backlash in the form of limiting the creativity to

[37] 648/21/11, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

a level deemed appropriate, there is still is attention to personal meaning. While there is little analysis of the historical impact of the cultural context from the 1990s or 2000s and even fewer archival sources for the services of the 1990s or 2000s, one theme has emerged. The publishing of *Mishkan T'filah* represented a continuing shift of the Reform Movement toward including more traditional liturgy. While *Mishkan T'filah* reflects a number of trends including pluralism and inclusivity, reinterpreted traditionalism is also well-represented. In a similar move, Goldman Union Camp in 2005 adopted a prayer card with the additional evening prayers of *Maariv Aravim* and *Hashkevienu*, two prayers previously not recited during the service. 2009 saw a Shabbat prayer-card supplement with additional prayers recited only on Shabbat morning. While it is too soon to see how much tradition the Movement and thus camp services will incorporate, there will be continued evolution that manifests itself both in the liturgy recited as well as the service parts. The tensions between divine immanence and transcendence as well as *kevah* versus *kavanah* will continue to alter the landscape of camp *t'filot*.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GOALS OF CAMP *T'FILOT* AND NOTABLE DIFFERENCES ON HOW CAMPS ACHIEVE THEM

T'filot have been a required program at Union Camps since their inception in the 1950s. While camp facilities, programs, and leadership have changed, *t'filot* have been a mainstay as a regular part of the daily routine. Camp directors and other administrative personnel with the responsibility for different degrees of religious observance and Jewish education all agree that services are as necessary in the early twenty-first century as they were in the middle of the Twentieth Century. The movement has grown, changed, and is on its third daily *siddur* since that time, but *t'filot* at camps remain a constant. While the previous chapter focused on the effects of history and culture on Union camping's services, particularly at OSRUI and GUCI, this chapter will explain why services are still an integral part of the camp program, and will compare the different fragments of many of the camp services. It will also examine the goals of the services and will offer a comparative analysis of the *t'filot* of sample Union camps in different regions.

Goals of Camp *T'filot*

While geography, the faculty, and the overall camp program all affect the final content of the *t'filot* program at various camps, the religious leadership at each camp states two primary purposes for maintaining services as a daily activity. Paul Reichenbach, the Director of Camping and Israel Programs at the Union of Reform Judaism observes, "One (goal) is for kids to find and discover that prayer and worship are something meaningful and inspiring to them above and beyond the camp setting. It is the

setting. It is the ambience. It is the sense of community which contributes to how *t'filah* at camp becomes meaningful and pleasurable."[38] Thus, one goal of *t'filah* as a summer camp experience is to get the campers to realize that worship is an important part of their Jewish identity. Reichenbach here admits a theme that was present at the onset of Union camping: that camp is an extremely meaningful but discrete and finite experience. Thus, a goal of the camp program as a whole continues to be the development of a Jewish identity for its campers that extends beyond the camping experience itself. Services are instrumental because they a part of strengthening a spiritual bond and awareness.

While the Union created summer camps for children to spend their time in a Jewish environment over the summer, camp also has similar effects on staff members. Most of the staff at Union camps are college-aged young adults who are living on their own for the first time in their lives. Camps do not exist for the sake of staff members, but that does not limit the benefits the staff receives from the program. In many instances, staff members get more out of the educational and religious experiences than the campers do. Rather than let their Jewish education and identities diminish as they enter adulthood, camp staff members make an active decision to spend their summers in an entirely Jewish setting. Just like for campers, it is obligatory for staff members to attend services. Staff members also influence and are influenced by services. Rabbi Michael Weinberg in Chicago has thirty-two years of experience as a faculty member at OSRUI and spent time as a staff member at both OSRUI and GUCI. He notes, "I understand camp to be living a fully Jewish life in a fully Jewish environment. To me, worship is an important component of a Jewish life along with *Torah* and *G'milut Chasidim*... (A goal of camp services is) to develop a worship habit and to give campers and staff an opportunity for

[38] Paul Reichenbach. Interview by author. Telephone Call. September 6, 2012.

communal praying."[39] Thus camp services also benefit the staff members by helping to maintain or let their Jewish identities evolve. Since staff members have only a minimal Jewish experience outside of the summer, the services are as instrumental for them as they are for the campers. As staff members make the decision to spend their summers as part of the Jewish camp community, *t'filot* provide them with a uniquely Jewish prayer experience that allows them to struggle with the motifs and moods of prayer in order to create a meaningful Jewish identity.

The other meta-goal of services as a program is pragmatic. As many of the campers are pre-bar and bat mitzvah age, Union camps also continue to have *t'filot* in order to educate the campers about the liturgy. Jerry Kaye, the director of OSRUI said, "The goal is to familiarize campers with the text of *Mishkan T'filah* and to give them an opportunity to learn how to participate in services and to some extent lead services."[40] While not all camps in the Union conduct the service from *Mishkan T'filah*, all camps use services as a vehicle to teach the liturgy to its campers and staff. Bobby Harris, the director of Camp Coleman in Cleveland, Georgia, describes the goal of *t'filot* as "to build a bridge with prayer, the connection to spiritual self and to have an understanding of what some of the prayers mean, to have an understanding of the order of the service and to be able know rudiments of Jewish prayer liturgy."[41] The educational goals of the camp service according to these two camp directors stress different functions of the service. OSRUI's service places a greater emphasis on the method of prayer. Each camper reads from *Mishkan T'filah* during every evening service, which in turn allows the camp service to parallel the services in many of the URJ's congregations. Thus, services are an

[39] Michael Weinburg. Interview by author. Skype. September 4, 2012.
[40] Jerry Kaye. Interview by author. Telephone. September 13, 2012.
[41] Bobby Harris. Interview by author. Telephone. September 13, 2012.

opportunity to build not only a personal connection to one's spirituality, but also a connection to the Reform Movement as a whole. Camp Coleman focuses on the meaning of the individual prayers and mixes the ideas of *keva* and *kavanah* so that individuals can derive a personal meaning from the prayers. The tension between one's inner spiritual journey and one's identity as a member of a group, a theme which has greatly influenced the form and content of camp *t'filot* since Union camping's beginnings, is still a prevalent issue. As Reichenbach notes, "One of the strengths of our camping system is that while our universal goals are shared, each camp creates its own culture. There are different practices from camp to camp."[42]

While the *siddur* that each camp uses serves as the general structure of the service, whether it is a formal prayerbook, an abridgment of a publication, or a document with the liturgy written on it for use only in the camp environment, the educational goals of the service are not limited to learning the specific liturgy. Rather, camps use their services to teach a specifically Reform ideology that encourages those praying to wrestle with the meanings of prayer in order to create a personally meaningful experience and to develop a personal theology. Reichenbach says, "The other goals are for kids to learn the language of prayer; to become comfortable with it and have a sense of Reform *t'filah* for themselves...that they will take home to their home synagogue."[43] By using the phrase "Reform *t'filah*," Reichenbach stresses the importance of the services espousing a specifically Reform Jewish ideology, that allows the individuals to think about the meaning of prayers. The services do not describe God in one specific way. Many of the camps stress that the campers write service parts based on the prayers. This method

[42] Paul Reichenbach interview.
[43] Ibid.

allows the campers to internalize a specific prayer and to expound upon it in an attempt to make it personally meaningful. The Reform ideology that Reichenbach mentions is one that stresses a personal merging of *keva* and *kavanah* with regard to the specific liturgy. Camp services teach the prayers as part of Jewish tradition. They stress Reform Judaism and Reform liturgy as entirely authentic modes of Jewish spiritual expression, provided that one considers a deeper meaning of the prayer. Services at camp go beyond teaching the specific words used in prayer in order to influence the participants to look at the meaning of the prayers as a whole in order to derive personal meaning and attachment to liturgy.

Thus, *t'filot* at camp have two basic goals. The first goal is to use the service as a vehicle for the campers and staff members to struggle with Jewish liturgical and theological concepts in order to create a lasting Jewish identity. The second goal is educational, seeking to teach the meaning of the individual prayers, the overall structure of the service, and the Reform value of struggling to create personal meaning in and through the liturgy. While one goal is existential and one pragmatic, both stress the necessity of a personal involvement with prayer. The camp program views *t'filot* as an active educational program. While physical activity is limited during services, the underlying assumption of camp services is that campers and staff should use this time to ponder the nature of the individual prayers, the service, and the worship experience as a whole.

Notable Differences Among the Camps

While the goals of *t'filah* as a program are similar throughout the camps, culture, geography, and the leadership of the camps all influence how these goals are accomplished. While the music played is similar and the liturgical base identical, each camp adds different nuances to its service. These nuances often depend on how big the camp space is, the facilities at the camp, and a general ideology the camp leadership wishes to convey. Just as a service in a northeastern Reform congregation would look dramatically different from one on the West Coast or in the South, each camp has applied its own cultural lens to its services.

I will examine closely five summer camps that are a cross-section of the URJ camping environment. While not all camps are included, the differences in the execution of *t'filot* show strong parallels that provide an accurate representation of the spectrum of prayer experiences the individual camps offer.

OSRUI stresses Hebrew in its *t'filot* more than the other camps. There are no English songs and the prayers are read entirely in Hebrew. For each *maariv* service, campers have a version of *Mishkan T'filah* in front of them that offers no transliteration. OSRUI is also the only Union camp that has a Hebrew immersion unit. Unlike the services in other units, the campers write *kavanot* in Hebrew with the help of Israelis and faculty members and the *d'var torah* is entirely in Hebrew. Rabbi Michael Weinberg indicated this to be a frustrating process at times. "When we give a little *d'var* to teach about something, it has to be in simple, simple Hebrew, making it more challenging to discuss more complex theological concepts." Unlike the other units, *chalutzim*, the Hebrew immersion unit, uses *Haavoda Shebalev*, the *siddur* of the Israeli Reform

movement, which serves both as an ideological and educational tool. "Once upon a time, we used *Gates of Prayer*, but ten years ago we made the decision that we were a Hebrew Zionist program, so we should use a Hebrew Zionist Reform prayerbook. The next year when they go on the Eisendrath International Exchange study abroad in Israel program for highschoolers and see *Haavoda Shebalev*, they are familiar with it."[44]

OSRUI also has *t'filot* twice a day. It has a *shacharit* service led by faculty in the morning and a *maariv* led by a cabin or committee in the evening. The *shacharit* is often not a full service but rather a teaching surrounded by liturgy. Leading services for the campers entails different things. While some campers may write service parts, others read the prayers or call out page numbers. Due to the size of the camp, each unit does services by itself except on very rare occasions. The nature of this separation allows for great diversity among the different services in both form and content of the service. Services tend to vary in terms of length and *kavanot.*

Services at Camp Coleman can take one of three forms: regular services, *kavanah*, and *keshet.* For the regular services, the participants have a prayer card created specifically for Camp Coleman and groups rotate to write service parts that relate to the prayers. *Kavanah* is an opportunity for the participants to take a closer look at a prayer in order to study it and glean meaning from it. Staff members present a particular *kavanah* and have to receive approval from a programmer before executing it. *Keshet* is run by faculty members. While it is similar to *kavanah*, *keshet* is not limited to looking at one prayer, but rather can look at a portion of the service or more general themes associated with *t'filot.*[45]

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[44] Michael Weinberg interview.
[45] Bobby Harris interview.

Coleman uses its facilities to help craft a prayerful experience. Its two chapels are in radically different environments, but both stress being in the middle of nature. Friday night services are held in the amphitheater facing the lake. The beauty of the surroundings adds to the tone of the service. Being faced with such breathtaking imagery creates a sense of majesty, showing the wondrous nature of God's creation. The other chapel is embedded in the woods with no other building around it. It is intimate and simple, which stresses the community praying. The amphitheater portrays a transcendent God who creates the wonderful majesty of nature, whereas the chapel in the woods stresses a personal close atmosphere with the rest of the camp where God's immanence is closely felt.

Coleman's prayer environments, some of the most powerful in all of Union camping, serve to further the camp's goal of inspiring prayer habits within its campers and staff. "It is important for us that kids get inspired Jewishly at camp. It is important for me that they take that information with them when they leave camp. If they are going back to a congregation or to youth group things, hopefully they will bring with them a feeling about being Jewish and expressing their spiritual side of life. If they go back to a temple, it is important that they do not feel out of place. They will recognize the prayers that we do."[46] The emphasis Camp Coleman places on *t'filot* is one that seeks to be inspirational to its campers. The grandeur and beauty of the prayer space infuses Judaism with a sense of dignity and splendor. Just as the location of services is an attempt to express Judaism in a magnificent way, so too are *t'filot.*

Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York has prayer rubrics that greatly depend on the faculty members. Because faculty stay for only a short portion of the summer, services

[46] Bobby Harris interview

are radically different throughout the summer. However, the lack of time faculty are present places a great deal of service leadership responsibilities on the song leaders. Cantor Dreskin notes, "New faculty members may take their cues from the songleaders. The faculty member who comes in is responsible for all of the text." They work closely with the song leaders and often find themselves assisting them as opposed to the other way around.

Cantor Dreskin also stresses the creativity and the personalization of prayer at Kutz. As a leadership camp, Kutz seeks to create a personal connection to Judaism along the lines of other camps. However, because leadership is such a focus of the camp, crafting a personal identity becomes even more stressed. To help achieve this goal, services at Kutz take many forms. "At Kutz, every once in a while, they do visual worship with everything on slides. Sometimes, they do a yoga service or a visual service to try to get to everybody during the summer."[47] Kutz seeks to provide creative meaningful worship experiences for its participants in order for them to be able to lead similar services in other circumstances such as youth group events.

As Kutz Camp focuses more on training leaders for NFTY, it is of no surprise that they have an additional goal for their *t'filot* that pertains to leadership specifically in the congregations. Cantor Dreskin noted, "In some ways I think that camp worship succeeds when kids come home and have the ability to help congregations move forward with their *t'filah.* So many times customs or melodies begin at camp and then go back to the congregations. I heard the *imahot* at camp before it was in any congregations."[48] The emphasis Kutz places not only on fostering one's Jewish identity but also on leadership

[47] Cantor Ellen Dreskin. Interview done by Author. Telephone. September 12, 2012.
[48] Cantor Ellen Dreskin interview.

highlights the importance of congregational life. The *T'filah* experience here serves a reflection of the greater explicit values of the camp. Kutz camp to more of a degree than the other Union Camps specifically trains Jewish leaders to serve outside of the camp context. Prayer is a focal point because Kutz teaches its campers how to be of service to their congregations in the facets of temple life.

Camp George, the youngest of the camps discussed in this chapter, still is in the process of resolving the tension between the personal and the communal needs of prayer. "Song leaders with help from faculty (lead the services). Only occasionally do some campers lead...It used to be that a cabin led a service, but we felt we were not going as deep. We felt that we wanted to take a little more control over the prayer experience, so it was a lot less camper-led."[49] Because the camp has multiple age groups that range from elementary school to high school, service parts written by the campers have the danger of either being too deep or too juvenile for the camp community. However, camper participation does increase on Shabbat.

While there is only one Beit T'filah, it stresses both God's immanence and transcendence, as it is nestled in the woods but overlooks water. Similar to Camp Coleman's goals of seclusion and breathtaking scenery, Camp George uses its prayer space to be simultaneously intimate within the camp community and show God's majesty through creation and nature. While most of the camp services are divided by units, on Shabbat, the entire camp comes together for Friday night, Saturday morning, and Havdalah services.

Goldman Union Camp, a smaller camp, has all of its services as one unit. It only has one *Beit T'filah* which is neither secluded nor offers particularly breathtaking

[49] Rabbi Noam Katz. Interview done by Author. Skype. September 20, 2012.

scenery. The focus of the service is the cabin that leads it. Each cabin works with a *t'filah* coordinator, occasionally with faculty assistance, to come up with a particular theme for the service. Because the entire camp has services together, some of the parts may be too juvenile for some or two complicated for others, but the goal of the process is to get each camper to articulate his or her thoughts on a given theme and present them to the camp community.

At GUCI, there is also a tension between balancing the communal and personal modes of prayer, most notably with regard to prayer choreography. Rabbi Marshal Klaven, who was the *t'filah* coordinator in 2004, discussed a minor conflict with a staff member who wished to remain standing for the *V'ahavtah*, which went against camp tradition. Rabbi Klaven used this as an opportunity to explain Reform Jewish practice. "The conversation (I had with the person) was educating them on the 'why' which is the essence of Reform Judaism. This was about helping them understand the 'why' behind Reform principle. And having them understand my challenge of them being distracting. I wanted to get them to understand the community's perspective."[50] Klaven explained a specific instance that was a common occurrence across many of the Union camps. "There were issues going on within the prayer environment at a lot of Reform camps; a tension between the individual's way to pray and the communal way to pray. There would be people that would stand for both the Shema and V'ahavtah."[51] Rabbi Klaven opened up a discussion about the relationships between the staff members and the traditions of the community, albeit the greater Reform context. Issues dealing with the interplay between form and content and *kevah* and *kavanah*, which have been tensions

[50] Rabbi Marshal Klaven. Interview done by author. In Person. August 29, 2012.
[51] Ibid.

the Reform movement has faced since its inception, continue to be present in the URJ summer camp environment.

Klaven characterizes the challenge of difference between the individual's and the community's prayer habits as one that leads to healthy discourse. As the *t'filah* coordinator, he used many of the disagreements between himself and the staff or campers as opportunities to begin a discussion pertaining to one's method of praying. "(Some common discussion points were): How do we construct the communal space that allows for the individual but does not let the individual dominate over the community? I dealt with it on a per case basis. I wanted to talk with them and find out the reasons why these individuals were doing something different than the community. In that conversation, I learned that some things they knew and some things they didn't know."[52] He viewed his role at Goldman Union Camp for the summer to be a liaison of prayer not only between the faculty and the campers but also for individuals. Camp has the opportunity to be an emotionally charged time where individuals are encouraged to examine themselves. Klaven decided to use his role to be a spiritual consultant to those who needed him. Klaven encouraged discussion and debate as tools that people could use to enhance their liturgical knowledge.

While tensions arose during Klaven's tenure at Goldman Union Camp, his overarching goals of the *t'filot* program held the prayer experience of the individual in the highest esteem. Klaven not only focused on acquainting the campers with the liturgy but also enabled them to explore the facets of spirituality that were meaningful to them. "I wanted the kids to relate to prayer; to feel comfortable with it. Two things need to

[52] Ibid.

happen, they need to be familiar with the prayer and get to know themselves."[53] Klaven's program pushed the children to intimate levels of self-examination. To him, the liturgy could be a powerful force in the prayer experience, but it would be incomplete without the camper's full self-involvement through the means of reflection. He pushed the campers to use their self-discourse to influence the writing of their service parts. Klaven continued, "I had experience GUCI prayer in which it was so superficial, working at a lower lever that had no relation to the prayer. My goal was to see if there could be a better sense of connection. I challenged them to look at a theme, look at a prayer and get them to meet the two."[54] Klaven used his *t'filot* program to inspire the campers and staff to cultivate a deep relationship with liturgy and prayer in general. Klaven's program sought to explain to the campers how special an opportunity leading the camp in prayer was. He viewed having the camper develop a relationship with prayer as a necessary first step in accomplishing this.

Conclusion

URJ summer camps face the same issues that congregations do with regard to services. Questions about why to hold services as well as about how to conduct them feature prominently. Ultimately, unlike a congregational service, camp services are often educational tools that help teach the prayers. Because camp is too short a time period in comparison with the Hebrew school year, services at a basic level offer an opportunity for daily recitation of prayer. Since rote memorization has not been a Reform method of teaching since the early twentieth century, camp services also provide the campers and

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

staff members with an opportunity to create personally meaningful moments in prayer. Whether these occur through the music, listening to readings, or preparing personal *kavanot*, camp *t'filot* offer a chance for the participants to wrestle with Jewish themes. The ultimate goal is to synthesize various themes into a personal theology, ethos, and identity. The great struggle about how to use a single service to inspire the youngest campers and oldest staff members alike still remains present. The faculty, songleaders, and *t'filah* staff all take these into consideration when crafting a particular camp worship experience.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC IN CAMP *T'FILOT*

Novelist Arnold Bennett wrote in his novel *Sacred and Profane Love*, "(Music is) a language which the soul alone understands but which the soul can never translate." While this quote does not portray a uniquely Jewish idea about the use of music in prayer, a study of Jewish *t'filot* since antiquity would yield a similar idea. Jewish services often use a type of chanting that is particular to the time of the service. The occasion of a particular service in regard to the yearly holidays, Shabbatot, and weekdays dictates not only the words sung at the service but also the melodies used, particularly in the Ashkenazic rite. Thus, the specific melodies that comprise any service affect its general tone or feeling.

This chapter will examine how specifically the music during the service has changed alongside other portions of camp services. The first section will discuss the nature of liturgical music from the 1950s until the early 1970s. The second section will look at Debbie Friedman's revolutionary influence on Jewish music as a whole, especially at camps. The following section will describe the process songleaders currently go through before working at camps. This chapter will conclude by discussing some challenges songleaders face while trying to engage the camp in prayer. Perhaps more than any other facet of the Reform Jewish camping experience in America, music has the ability to shape one's camp experience. This chapter will seek to show how the camp administration has used and influenced this powerful tool.

Music During Camp *T'filot* During the 1950s and 1960s

As discussed in the previous chapters, early camp services strongly resembled the format of services in the congregations. The format of most of the services used many passages from the *Union Prayer Book.* While the 1960s brought new motifs that often stressed the individual's spirituality and concerns of the generational cohort, most innovation during services occurred through the writing of individual creative readings. The readings enabled the author to articulate a thought for the congregation to consider during services, but had little effect on the overall tone of the service. Ehtnomusicologist Judah M. Cohen explains:

> A creative approach to worship remained the norm as rabbis and campers searched for new and meaningful ways to create spirituality-fulfilling prayer experiences. Yet, as experimental as these approaches were, they often took place within a less-than-inspiring musical framework. The most fertile areas for musical creativity remained the opening and closing 'hymns' and the end of the silent prayer... Outside of this, however, the 'creative' nature of the services was almost exclusively textual. Especially within an environment of ecstatic music-making, attitudes toward worship began to feel a little strained: campers from this period consistently saw their most spiritual religious experiences at camp as involving the song sessions, sometimes eschewing mention of *t'filot* altogether.[55]

Thus the usual tone of camp *t'filot* during the first decade of Reform camping grew increasingly insufficient for the evolving demands on a service. During this period, Reform Jewish summer camping did not have the tools or infrastructure to introduce musical creativity into the service. Therefore, service planners were dependent upon the only sources and models they knew: the service format and music used in Reform

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[55] Judah M. Cohen. "Sing Out for Judaism: A History of Song Leaders and Song Leading at Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute" in *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping* Michael M. Lorge and Dr. Gary P. Zola, eds, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006), 193.

congregations. Thus most of the prayers the campers recited were the responsive readings used in congregations. Largely, the music in camp services came from a choir or a couple of individuals serving as *shelichei tzibur*. Cohen notes, "A choir of campers joined the song leader in leading the music of the Kabbalat Shabbat service, which ended with the blessings over wine and bread to indicate the start of the Friday evening meal."[56] The practice of using a choir to sing in place of the congregation reflected the classical Reform custom which was waning but still prevalent in many of the educational and spiritual programs both in the Union and at summer camps in the 1950s. The 1960s saw congregations and summer camps begin to move away from the worship practices of classical Reform Judaism, except in the field of music.

The camp administration of Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute realized that the prayer experience the camp was offering was growing increasingly insufficient for the spiritual demands of the campers and staff, so three faculty members decided to hold a meeting in January of 1967 to discuss the issue. Rabbis Ernst Lorge, Mark Shapiro, and Hillel Gamoran met and discussed adding a program each day to teach the campers the melodies. The theory behind this idea was that as the camps began to create a musical culture, the campers needed opportunities to learn the new music. Because earlier camp services emulated the services at congregations, the campers were already familiar with the format and structure of the camp service. New music, they concluded, required allotting a great deal of time for the campers to accustom themselves to the new melodies. While this particular program had minor successes, the camp movement was at the dawn of an era of unprecedented musical creativity that would revolutionize not

[56] Ibid, 187.

only the entire Jewish summer camp movement, but eventually the musical worship style of the entire Reform movement.[57]

Before moving into the next decade, I would like to examine one more aspect of music during camp services. During the 1960s, Israel and Zionism had an increasing impact on OSRUI's culture. In a previous chapter we noted how service parts were polyvocal regarding their feelings about the Six Day War. Nonetheless, the war galvanized the North American Jewish community's attitude to Israel. The summer of 1968 saw the camp rename its units with Hebrew names including a Hebrew immersion unit. Zionism's penetration into the realm of liturgy not only manifested itself through the songs sung but also the very pronunciation of prayers. Before the Six Day War,

> Ashkenazic Hebrew...was the form used in most American synagogues and was used for the standard portions of the prayer service and a few of the Shabbat songs. Sephardic Hebrew, the form of pronunciation adopted by Israeli pioneers, and eventually the State of Israel, was used whenever singing Zionist or Israeli songs.[58]

After the war, the prayerbook was exactly the same and melodies were largely unchanged, but the camp administration decided to adopt the pronunciation used in Israel, as a method of demonstrating its allegiance to the Zionist cause. This slight shift in content was evidence of the elevated importance of Israeli culture in the camp context.

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[57] Ibid, 193.
[58] Ibid, 187-188.

Debbie Friedman's Metamorphosis of Camp Music

In a *New York Times* obituary, Debbie Friedman is credited with "helping give ancient liturgy broad appeal to late-20th-century worshippers."[59] This obituary elevates Friedman to the level of a miracle worker who figuratively resurrected an increasingly insufficient musical worship style in liberal Jewish settings. Her work inspired camps to use contemporary folk-style music to invigorate the campers and inspire them to actively participate in services.

Friedman, who grew up in the Union's youth group, NFTY, sought to spread her love of music by writing inclusive melodies, that is, melodies that could be sung by everyone, not just the professional musicians. She observed that the days of a regular choir leading Reform services in congregations became increasingly rare during the 1960s and felt that the youth *t'filot* should follow suit. In April of 1971, she created a complete setting of a Kabbalat Shabbat service from the *UPB*. She entitled her work "Sing Unto God," a common phrase from the Kabbalat Shabbat liturgy. While she initially recorded it with a choir group, she wanted to include the voices of all the campers when she began to teach her music to the *Chalutzim* unit at OSRUI that summer. "Nearly every prayer had a new musical setting, shattering the traditional model of services at camp; and at least two of Friedman's pieces followed a radical new format, combining English and Hebrew within the same composition."[60] Those lessons that summer forever changed the way music would be sung during services not only at camp but even in the congregations, spanning across the denominations. Campers were not sung at as had been the case in previous summers. Rather, their voices were able to join

[59] Margalit Fox. "Obituaries: Debbie Friedman." *The New York Times*. (New York). 11 January 2011, np.
[60] Ibid, 198.

the rest of the group, fostering a sense of community. Friedman's melodies were simple yet popular. Campers of all ages felt free to join in and enjoyed participating.

Before Friedman, there was a dichotomy between Hebrew and English. All songs and prayers where used in entirely in one language or the other. Friedman's work combined the two, which proved to be a powerful teaching tool that caused words and phrases from the two languages to mingle and create meaning for the participants in the service. Cantor Alane Katzew writes od Debbie's later years, "...Debbie also helped many North American Jews to increase their Hebrew vocabulary by combining Hebrew and English texts in her compositions and making use of catchy, short Hebrew phrases."[61] Friedman's music allowed campers with little or no musical training to participate fully in services with regard to both the familiar style of her melodies as well as the lyrics. As Katzew continues, "She was a pied piper, able to encourage even the non-singers in a group to participate energetically in a song session." Friedman not only encouraged but also inspired campers to sing. She was the voice of an age that emphasized the individual's voice over the community's. Her melodies inspired them to pray with *kavanah* by making the *keva* accessible. Her music inspired camps across the nation to transition their *t'filot* from choir-based performance to full communal participation. "She was the quintessential American Jewish folk singer, honoring the power of group singing through accessible melodies and meaningful lyrics in both Hebrew and English."[62]

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[61] Alane S. Katzew. "Tribute: Secrets of a Song Prophet" from *Reform Judaism Magazine* Spring 2011 8 November 2012, <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=2599>.

[62] Daniel Hillel Freelander. "Tribute: Singing Our Souls" from *Reform Judaism Magazine Spring 2011*, 8 November 2012, <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=2598>

As noted, Friedman was also the first major artist to write compositions that included both Hebrew and English words. Along with the melodies, which eloquently provided the campers with an opportunity to feel and express emotions, her songs also were influential teaching tools. Using a Hebrew word or phrase in the middle of an English text provided insight into the meaning of that Hebrew word. Deriving meaning from an entire Hebrew prayer could be a daunting task for the younger campers at Union camps who have a limited knowledge of Hebrew. Friedman's lyrics allowed the campers to define uncertain Hebrew words by relating the unknown Hebrew word to the English that surrounded it. When coupled with the strong intonation of her melodies, her music became a powerful tool that songleaders and service leaders could use to make the services more relevant to the lives of the campers.

Ultimately, Friedman was a pioneer whom her peers and students regard with the reverence of someone who blessed a community with an eternal gift. Cantor Rosalie Boxt commented on how Friedman was able to adapt an aging liturgy to her contemporary circumstance in order to create a new relevance for music and Jewish study. "Because much of the Hebrew liturgical text of standard Shabbat worship, particularly Friday night worship, in many congregations was set in such a way that choir or cantor was responsible for expressing the Hebrew, our communities often were unfamiliar with the words of our prayers. For many who could not read Hebrew, the songs would be an entree into those prayers, but many melodies were not congregational in design."[63] Debbie Friedman wrote her music in order for campers and congregants to enjoy, internalize, and sing. The second half of the twentieth century was a time when individuals sought to have their personal voice heard within a group context. During this

[63] Cantor Rosalie Boxt. Interview done by author, Email, October 15, 2012.

period of unprecedented individualism, Friedman's music found a balance between the voice of the individual and the collective because it was the voice of a particular generational cohort that grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. The musical style was very much the style of that generation.

The language associated with Freidman's songleading is different from how people described services before her. She wanted the campers to invest personally in prayer. Before her, camp services usually only made use of a couple of singers or a choir. She was the first person to popularize liturgical pieces by using her guitar. While guitars were not absent from the camp music scene, Friedman altered Union camping's services by introducing the guitar as an instrument to facilitate prayer. Through her guitar melodies and rhythm, campers became more eager to participate. Katzew continues, "She also used her guitar to connect with people. It was almost an extension of her body and soul. Just as a ventriloquist relies upon a 'dummy partner,' when Debbie could no longer belt out an energetic song, her voice too tired to project, the energy flowing through her fingers carried on the rhythmic drive."[64] Friedman's music, specifically her use of the guitar, altered the language associated with worship at camp. Her music was "energetic" and American, possessed an attractive rhythm, and allowed her to "connect with people." Every song she wrote was a positive argument to institute change in Reform prayer. Her guitar and the melodies that came from it convinced camp administration and the leadership of the Union how services could be made more relevant and engaging.

Summer camps continue to follow Friedman's model of creating an engaging atmosphere through the use of music. Cantor Ellen Dreskin, a longtime faculty member

[64] Alane Katzew interview.

at Kutz camp, explains, "I think that the kids absolutely relate to music more than they do (to) the spoken word. So I think it is the perfect way to reach them. They want to be moved. Every emotion is very intense at camp. When you use music and poetry as opposed to prose from the *siddur*, they are going to remember more what they get emotionally than what reaches them intellectually."[65] Music is the most efficient way to craft any atmosphere as it affects the emotional tone of a given service and allows the participants more genuinely to craft a meaningful prayer experience. In sum, as Katzew states, "Debbie had the gift of melody, the seemingly innate ability to compose songs that quickly imprint themselves on listeners' souls. In this way she was able to make learning Hebrew fun and entertaining for children and adults alike."

Havah Nashirah and Its Relationship to Contemporary Camp *T'filot*

In most services at camps, a vast majority of the music is led by songleaders who receive training at a retreat before they lead campers in prayer. At Havah Nashirah, an annual conference of Jewish music professionals held at OSRUI, songleaders have their own program track. While there is some emphasis on learning and rehearsing the music used, there is also attention to the process a songleader uses during different parts of the day. URJ camps have song sessions after most meals. While the song sessions may use liturgical pieces, the tone of a song session is different from that of a service. While song sessions are often rowdy and, on Shabbat evenings, usually turn into a mosh pit at Goldman Union Camp, *t'filot* are more sedate.

However, the dichotomy between song sessions and services is not that stark for all of the leadership at camps and Havah Nashirah. Rabbi Noam Katz, the Dean of

[65] Ellen Dreskin. Interview by author. Telephone. September 11, 2012.

Jewish Living at URJ Camp George in Toronto and a faculty member of Havah Nashirah stresses, in his teaching the similarities between the two, as opposed to focusing on the differences.

> You can have an elated feeling of spirit and excited energy in a prayer service, just like you have moments in a song session that are contemplative and meditative and beautiful. In a song session, the song leader has a blank canvas on which to paint to choose specific songs to create a mood... Songleading a prayer service effectively does the same thing with binding people to one another, but the *keva* of the siddur really helps to give you a strong blueprint of the narrative you are trying to convey.[66]

To Katz, the main difference between a song session and a service is that the prayer rubrics ground the service. Songleaders have the power to completely determine the tone of any song session they lead, whereas the words used during the service are largely predetermined. Most of the creativity of the songleaders occurs with the choice for opening and closing songs. The liturgy always provides a base for the services at camp. Regardless of a specific service's theme, the use of Hebrew or English songs, or supplementary readings included, camp services continue to be rooted in the liturgy of the *siddur*.

A challenge of songleading in the service setting is how participatory *t'filot* should be. Songleaders are trained in their craft and a tension arises with regard to how much their voices should be a part of the community. At Havah Nashirah, Katz instructs the songleaders to "know before whom they stand... With song leaders we need to look at another component of the equation, the people. We are there to facilitate group singing and group participation. Long gone are the days of Classical Reform Judaism where the

[66] Noam Katz. Interview by author. Skype. September 20, 2012.

job of the rabbi or soloist was to sing on behalf of the community."[67] Katz's statement acknowledges camp's and the entire Reform movement's past but also alludes to the revolutary effect that the folk music movement had on camps. One of his goals at Havah Nashirah is to teach the songleaders about balancing their talent with the prayer needs of a community. "We talk about keeping the ego in check, being there, as Debbie (Friedman) taught, to make everybody else shine."[68]

Hava Nashirah is a program that tailors itself to the many expressions of one's Judaism through the means of music. It resolves the tension between songleading during a song session and serving as a *sheliach tzibur* who leads the camp in prayer. Cantor Dreskin, who has served on the faculty of Hava Nashirah for thirteen years, explains, "The URJ songleaders actually have their own track. They teach the songleaders for hours. The songleaders see everything modeled in the dining room, in services, and in workshops. You can have a track that is just worship."[69] Hava Nashira practices the pedagogical tactic of seeing, doing, and then teaching in order to reinforce the lessons they teach about songleading. The fact that the program has a separate track to teach how to lead services highlights the differences between leading songs and leading prayer. Given the power of music to influence one's Jewish identity, URJ camps have had to constantly struggle with differentiating the various methods by which the songleaders could use music to affect the camp experience.

Most URJ camps do not have a staff position dedicated solely to *t'filot.* Therefore, much of the crafting of services becomes the responsibility of the songleaders and faculty members. As most songleaders are of college age and have very little formal

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Cantor Ellen Dreskin interview.

training in leading services for a congregation, the interplay between them and the faculty members becomes an educational experience for the songleaders. Katz notes:

> *T'filah* is a great opportunity for our young songleaders to partner with visiting faculty made up of rabbis, cantors, and Jewish educators in our region. Those staff that have shown an interest in songleading are in great proportion going to be the next wave of Jewish prayer leaders, whether professional or lay, so it is a great opportunity for them to learn from the professionals in their midst to experiment and build up their own prayer repertoire.

Thus camp *t'filot* are also an educational experience for the songleaders. Through crafting and implementing a service, they gain experience not only in playing a guitar and singing in front of a group but also in leading a community in prayer. The discussions with the visiting faculty members make the songleaders more attuned to the questions surrounding crafting a service and a prayerful environment. While these skills are useful in their summer camp experience, the songleaders also take these lessons to their home congregations and colleges. Their songleading experience provides them with the grounding to lead services in congregations long after their camp experience has ended.

At Kutz Camp in particular, the faculty members assist the songleaders in crafting services. "Visiting faculty who are there for one or two weeks, if they are there over Shabbat, you are assigned a service and they work on the service. You put the entire service together. New faculty members may take their cues from the songleaders. The faculty member who comes in is responsible for all of the text."[70] While this system does not downplay the importance of rabbinic and cantorial faculty, the fact that the musical decisions largely fall to the songleaders shows the emphasis that Kutz places on education and leadership.

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[70] Cantor Ellen Dreskin Interview.

Continuing what Debbie Friedman did, Cantor Dreskin in her camp services mixes Hebrew and English words in order to create a more meaningful prayer moment. She uses popular American music to supplement the prayers. "There is a lot going on at camp taking English songs and putting them in the place with prayers. The idea of using *It's a Wonderful World* came from Congregation Beit T'filah in Tel Aviv where they use the song in Hebrew and put it in for *Ma'ariv Aravim.* We even do the whole song in English and then put the *chatimah* in."[71] Many camp services follow the same pattern, especially with regard to opening and closing songs for the services. This process creates a fusion of Jewish and American culture, where one is supplementary to the other. The use of popular music is a tool for internalizing the liturgy by the one praying as opposed to the more formal service led directly from the *UPB* that was found in summer camps during the first two decades.

Havah Nashirah is an institute that seeks to teach participants to be leaders of the music program at URJ congregations and camps. The fact that such a program exists shows the emphasis the Reform movement places on music, especially for the summer camp experience. While leading prayer requires a different mindset than leading other songs, the ultimate goal is the same: to use music to create a powerful, influential mood. The music used during worship mirrors music used at other times.

Challenges Involving Music and Prayer

A common example of the tension between song session and prayer occurs during the recitation of *Birkat Hamazon* after each meal. While it is a prayer, it is also a transition from the sedentary meal time to a more energetic song session. Further

[71] Cantor Ellen Dreskin Interview.

complicating its place in camp worship is the sheer length of the prayer. The melodies most camps use are upbeat but lack accompaniment thus enabling the campers and even staff to get anxious. Of all the prayers sung at camp, it is the one with the least amount of *kavanah*. To make it more pleasing, campers in some camps yell out words that rhyme with the Hebrew or bang on the tables during certain portions. Many administrators at camps join in or at least create a culture to do so, but Goldman Union Camp Director Ron Klotz decided these actions are not conducive to a prayer environment. "I felt that if we let any of those things start, we would be singing something that is certainly not a prayer. I always said to staff that if we are to pray after the meal, then let's pray. if we want to sing a rowdy song, so be it, but let's not kid ourselves into thinking that it shows any respect for the meal or thanks for it."[72] While Klotz does not distinguish entirely between prayer and song, he does attribute a notion of sincerity to prayer recitation. He continues, "I instructed the songleaders to be strict and not allow any of it to begin." Klotz's words represent a philosophy that sincerity often separates prayer from song. However strict the policy may be, the underlying claim is that any prayer requires attention, effort, and respect on the part of the person praying.

Conclusion

As Cantor Dreskin alluded to above, emotional connection not only allows people to remember an experience better but also makes that experience more meaningful. While quotes and readings certainly contribute to crafting a prayerful atmosphere, the music of a service ultimately establishes the tone. Thus, songleaders have an incredible amount of influence on what the camp community will ultimately take away from a

[72] Rabbi Ron Klotz. Interviewed by author. Email, November 7, 2012.

service. Folk music that greatly influenced artists such as Debbie Friedman changed the nature of summer camp *t'filot* at URJ camps. Music by Friedman and the other artists continues to be the most popular music. Her music invited campers and staff members to join in the prayer experience. The invitation to pray with the song leader leaves a lasting effect on the individuals praying and has helped to shape the current state of camp services as a whole.

CHAPTER FOUR

T'FILOT IN CAMP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

URJ camps have been using camp services as an educational vehicle since the 1950s. In addition to teaching prayer vocabulary and melodies, *t'filot* also contribute to a sense of a Reform Jewish identity for the campers and staff. However, services are just one among many programs at camp the primary goal of which is to educate. URJ camps have offered campers an intense educational program covering a myriad of topics. Often, a given camp session has a general theme that all of the *limudim* or *shiurim* (study sessions) relate to in some fashion. This chapter will look at what the formal educational programs teach about prayer, as well as how the camps use prayer to further other themes. A meta-goal of the camp programs parallels a goal of the *t'filot* programs. Both strive to get the campers and staff to contemplate Jewish views on a variety of subjects in order ultimately to create a Jewish identity. Throughout their existence, URJ camps have used liturgy and prayer as a lens through which to view other issues. While specific liturgical pieces are not common focal points of study, themes stemming from one's general views of the meaning of prayer are common in camp educational programs.

Formal Discussions of Liturgy in Educational Sessions

Far more programs make use of broad themes associated with prayer and worship rather than exposing campers to specific pieces of liturgy. However, occasionally camps use educational sessions to study the wording of certain common prayers and other themes directly related to liturgy. The goals of these sessions pertain to making specific

prayers relevant to the campers. In these instances, the programs treat the prayers as central to one's Jewish identity where the specific prayer is the main focal point of the study.

One Goldman Union Camp age group in 1977 dedicated its program to studying prayer. It began by defining and describing prayer before delving into the prayer rubrics. The program included broader questions such as "How does prayer bring God into the world?" as well as more specific questions such as the form and functions of individual prayers.[73] The questions assume that prayer has the purpose of uniting an individual and community with God. The program juxtaposed personal with communal prayer. It aimed to provide a lasting value for the participants, as one of the final programs sought to compare and contrast prayer at camp with prayer in congregational settings. The overall goal of this educational theme was to make prayer relevant through the study of both the broad themes associated with prayer as well as its specific forms and details.

One focused program occurred during second session at GUCI in 2006. The theme was not a specific prayer but rather introducing the campers and staff to the ideas of *keva* and *kavanah*.[74] These terms were completely absent from the camp *t'filot* vocabulary. By introducing the campers to these concepts directly relating to prayer, the camp provided a conceptual framework that the participants would be able to use outside of the camp context. They included such a program in the curriculum in order to get the campers to realize that there is relevance to both the formal liturgy as well as one's personal opinions with regard to wording of a prayer. While the program stressed

[73] *Geza Shiur* topics, 1977. 670/8/9, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[74] Kevah and Kavanah, Geza Second Session 2006 Program Book, Goldman Union Camp Program Records, Zionsville, IN.

exposure to the prayer, one still had the obligation to have one's words be an authentic expression of one's self.

A rare instance of liturgy comprising the theme of a camp session was Marshal Klaven's *Ivrit* program at GUCI in 2004. Prior to Marshal, the program dedicated itself to teaching modern Hebrew vocabulary. The results were usually poor, as there was little retention from year to year on the part of the campers. Marshal believed this challenge was a result of minimal reinforcement from outside the program. "Anything they are going to use more than conversational Hebrew was the driving force of my change. I am not going to go into something that they do not have reinforcement in after camp.... So, I wanted to do stuff that they would get constant reinforcement at home, which is liturgy."[75] Marshal changed the Hebrew program at Goldman Union Camp from conversational Hebrew to teaching liturgy. The program previously took time to teach vocabulary, but Marshal's program focused more on having the campers arrive at a level of *kavanah* when they recited the particular prayer. He used group discussions to provide the campers with an opportunity to articulate how they felt about the wording of the prayers. While the impetus for this change was a desire for the campers to study something during the Ivrit program that would be reinforced both at camp and at home, Marshal placed a greater value on prayer than on learning modern Hebrew words. Because of this program, campers not only had a better understanding of the prayers recited in a service but also had a more personal connection to the prayers.

These examples are rare cases when liturgy was the main focus of a session. URJ Camps largely only informally study prayer as part of the *t'filah* program. Because there is scheduled time for services as well as time dedicated to preparing for services,

[75] Rabbi Marshal Klaven. Interview by author. August 29, 2012.

educational sessions at camps are usually opportunities to discuss other topics. As the next section will show, the programs occasionally incorporate ideas about worship and prayer into these sessions, but they are not the main topics for discussion.

Prayers as a Lens to Study Other Topics

As the twentieth century progressed, the worldwide Jewish community changed. The Holocaust, establishment of the State of Israel, and Six Day War had lasting effects on Jewish identity in the North American Reform Movement. This in turn had a great influence on the educational themes in camp sessions. As noted in Chapter One, the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s saw themes related to social action become prevalent in services. These themes permeated the educational sessions. The educational sessions at camps sought to create a Jewish identity and get the campers to think about ideas through a Jewish lens. The remaining portion of this chapter will show different ways OSRUI, GUCI, and Camp Swig have used *t'filot* in the broad sense of the word to examine other topics. Because prayer was both a common activity at camp and a process with which a vast majority of the campers were familiar, programs were able to use it as a base to discuss further topics. I have divided the remainder of this chapter into sections dedicated to broader discussions that used *t'filah* as a lens through which to view the discussion.

Prayer as an Expression of Jewish Identity

OSRUI in 1981 had the campers fill out a pledge sheet where they promised to incorporate many aspects of prayer into their lifestyle. This was one of many sheets

designed to encourage their campers to act in a way that expresses their Jewish identity. Some of the pledges included: "I will recite the *shehechiyanu* to sanctify significant events in my life" and "I will say the *Sh'ma* before I go to sleep at night." There were also pledges about attending services on a regular basis. The pledge sheet did not mention reciting all of the individual prayers in a service, but rather stressed that praying was a crucial manifestation of one's Jewish identity.[76]

Prayer as a Vehicle to Express One's Reform Jewish Ideology

One of the foci of the URJ camp movement to this day is to craft an authentic Reform experience for the campers. There is a common trope of needing to justify a Reform outlook on Judaism. One such *shiur* from GUCI in 1973 began with a skit that brought up the idea of how much influence tradition should have on a group. Dialogue from the skit read, "What are we doing here? Why are we standing here? Can we leave?' 'No! We always start *shiur* like this. Why should we change now? It's a tradition.' 'What do you mean 'it is a tradition?' I am all sweaty and hot.' "Yeah! This is crazy! What is this 'tradition' stuff? I do not care if you have done this every day for a thousand years. I am getting out of here.'"[77] While the skit does not specifically mention prayer, this dialogue presents a disconnect between traditional Jewish practice and Reform practice. Traditional practice in this case is the antecedent to complaints and a lack of understanding as to the purpose behind certain actions.

When applied to liturgy and prayer, there is an idea that Reform Jews should continue to adopt a new form of prayer. The use of the phrase "every day for a thousand

[76] *T'filah* Pledge Sheet, 1981. 647/20/4. AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[77] *Shiur* Day 1, 1973, 670/5/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

years" conjures up the image of a daily Jewish practice the most relatable to prayer. This dialogue started a discussion about the tensions between past and present in creating a meaningful Jewish lifestyle. The topic could pertain to traditional Jewish worship as well as to the classical Reform mode of worship from which the camps were moving away, since it portrayed traditional activity as a source of complaints from people who no longer find meaning in it. This skit represented a critique of all Jewish tradition as a necessary part of the Reform Jewish mindset. It made an allusion to prayer practices specifically to show that it is especially the duty of a Reform Jew to consider such practices because those are the most common they encountered. This skit used prayer to examine the Reform Jewish theme of meaningful, well-informed decision-making with regard to observance.

History through a Liturgical Lens

The early 1970s saw many programs parallel to the one above with similar, but not identical goals. A program from Goldman Union Camp in 1974 provided a historical perspective. The argument presented in the skit above discussed what, if any, value traditions had in contemporary Jewish practice. The following activity placed the same discussion within the Jewish historical narrative in a unit that dealt with the development of the Reform movement.

> Methodology: We meet in the *Beit T'fillah.* The Unit Head or Norm Roman begins to lead another traditional service. (Without the proper introduction) we just can't get into the service. He suggests instead that we return to a more normal UPB service. At the end of the service, we summarize what we have been doing in our last three *shiurim*, namely, trying to recreate the feelings which led to the development of Reform.[78]

[78] *Shoresh Shiur* Day Sunday, July 7, 1974, 670/6/10, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

This *shiur* was a culmination of three which showed why groups of Jews felt the need to reform. This program used prayer and services as a demarcation line for the Reform movement. Through this lesson, camp taught that meaningful prayer was a cornerstone of the Reform movement and a reason for its creation.

OSRUI in the early eighties wanted to teach about Isaac Mayer Wise and his contributions to both American and Reform Jewish history. An educational program had the campers use Wise's prayerbook, *Minhag America*, during a service. The stated goal was to "bring camp together to identify the ideals of the period" through looking at I. M. Wise's words and the audience toward which they were directed.[79] The service from Wise's prayerbook was used this particular morning from to highlight the historical and cultural circumstances of many American Jews in the late nineteenth century before the massive eastern European immigration. The campers had a reference point for what services were and what a service in the early 1980s looked like. This activity juxtaposed the services they had experienced with the services in Isaac Mayer Wise's day, thus allowing them to learn about American Judaism during that period of time.

A discussion of attitudes regarding prayer within the Reform movement over time was not unique to URJ camps in the Midwest. In 1967 Camp Swig in California used an article written that year by Irving Spiegel, which discussed the need to keep prayer relevant to the community. Excerpts from the article include the observation that "American Reform Judaism has been engaged in intensive research on ways to revise or replace its *Union Prayer Book* with one that would be 'more congruent to the needs of

[79] *Limud* for Friday, July 29, 1982, 648/20/13, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

contemporary man,"[80] a theme which reflected the interest in updating prayers and prayer language that became prevalent in the 1960s.

The article continued, "Rabbi Joseph R. Narot, chairman of Reform Judaism's committee on liturgy,...told 500 Reform rabbis that the present prayerbook was last revised thirty years ago 'before the Nazi Holocaust, before the atomic bomb and before the space age...The theological and moral questions that have been raised by these momentous issues call for new and more relevant liturgical creations'"[81] This lesson studied a rabbi's words about how historical circumstances necessitate an evolving view of prayer and thus evolving liturgy. His argument was that *t'filah* must remain relevant for the people praying. This article stressed how important prayer should be in the life of the community. Its inclusion in a camp program demonstrates how the camp sought not only to teach the liturgy in a Reform context, but also used a critique of the prayerbook to have the campers begin to develop a personal theology.

During that same session, Camp Swig turned its attention to the *Union Prayer Book* in use at the time. With increased attention paid to individual prayer as opposed to communal worship, the camp sought to have the campers look at the prayerbook in a critical manner. One program asked the campers the following questions:

> Worship: *The Union Prayerbook* is the almost universal standard of Reform worship. Does it provide us with the kind of religious expression that fills our needs? Should it be revised, and if so, in what direction? Should it be abandoned in favor of 'creative worship'? Who is to be continuously creative within the Temple? Is there value in familiarity, in novelty? What constitutes Jewish worship? What should be the role of the rabbis and of the laymen in creating worship?[82]

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[80] "Reform Rabbis Study Revisions in Prayer Book", July 11, 1967. Form #108, 1967, 671/1/11, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Session II form #110, 1967, 671/1/11, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

These questions framed a conversation in which the campers to critically examined the prayerbook that Reform camps and congregations used at the time. At the same time that the music at camp services began to influence the prayer practice of congregations in the Reform movement, counselors and faculty members at URJ summer camps used the camp setting to instigate discussion about the direction that Reform prayer should take. The CCAR eventually published a new prayerbook in 1975.

The 1978 GUCI *shiur* program taught the history of prayer. Instead of focusing on liturgy and how it evolved throughout history, it dealt prayer with as a general concept for "communicating with God." One of the first programs of the summer described the difference between sacrifice and prayer. The explicit goal was to show prayer as an evolution in communication with God.[83] The implicit goal was to show that prayer in Judaism transcended petition for one's physical needs. In other words, one does not pray in order to receive physical objects or benefits, but rather to keep in close contact with the divine.

Later educational sessions during the summer discussed the Temple as the primary place of worship but then exposed the campers to how, once it had been destroyed, prayer became the sole means of communicating with and serving God. The goals of the fifth day of the program were that "Kids should understand how the worship needs once satisfied through sacrifice were satisfied after the destruction of the Temple by remembering Jewish laws, writing them down, gathering together to hear the laws, (and eventually) forming a synagogue."[84] The Temple in Jerusalem had once been the most important place for Jews to congregate, the synagogue as its heir became the

[83] *Geza Shiur* "The Origins of Prayer" 1978, 670/8/13, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[84] Ibid.

primary place that ensured perpetuation of the Jewish people by offering a location for Jews to worship in a centralized location. Below, are more examples of using prayer to argue for the importance of the synagogue in Jewish life.

Not all prayer situations discussed at camp had the positive connotation of creation or finding personal meaning in prayer. Camps felt the responsibility to present Jewish history honestly, which involved discussing times of great persecution. The Holocaust was a common topic for education sessions. One such program used prayer during the Holocaust as a vehicle to express the Jewish obligation to bless God even in times of great strife. "During the Nazi holocaust this problem was of utmost importance to the observant Jew who would never knowingly omit a prescribed blessing... When the Nazi mass murders of the Jews began, rabbis shared historical sources for an appropriate blessing."[85] This program stressed a personal responsibility associated with blessing. It presented martyrdom as "the greatest mitzvah." This program used the extreme example of the Holocaust to teach that Jews have a responsibility to one another and to God. A blessing provides a religious framework for an activity. One uses a blessing in this dire circumstance to show that one is thinking about God in a positive way at the very moment of great personal despair.

Prayer and Its Relation to Prayer Space and Ritual Objects

A similar program at OSRUI half a decade later also taught the historical progression of Jewish worship. The program asked the campers to identify three objects from the Temple that would still enhance their contemporary prayer experience. There

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[85] Alexander Guttmann, "Some Responsa Dealing with Halachah in Holocaust Cases," 1976, 670/7/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

was a note at the bottom of the program's instruction which read, "It is important to remember that the object of this exercise is not for the campers to come up with the correct answer but rather that they go through a process similar to the one that occurred at the time of the destruction of the Temple."[86] The note at the bottom of this program placed its lesson in a historical context with the goal being to put the campers into the mindset of late first and second-century Rabbis so that they might be in a position to craft a tradition. However, the lasting effect of this lesson transcended its explicit goal. By having such discussions, the *limud* provided the campers with an opportunity to ponder elements of prayer outside of the recited words. The *limud* discussed objects, setting, and methods of prayer without mentioning any of the liturgy. Implicitly, this lesson taught that prayer space, ritual objects, and methods of prayer contribute to the prayer experience alongside the specific words one speaks.

The following summer at OSRUI, prayer space was the focal point for another educational program. "Our Aim: To show that both David and Solomon believed a central place for worship was needed to unify the Hebrews into one people. Capable of keeping the covenant. (Perhaps we can also demonstrate that the Temple (and ritual in general) existed for our sake and not for God's and that its purpose is to help us draw closer to God.)"[87] This program equated proper worship with a particular space. It is another example of a URJ camp showing prayer as an activity that goes beyond one's words. Instead of showing prayer as an intimate conversation between an individual and God, the program taught that the how, where, and why a group prays expresses that particular group's ideology, thus giving the group an identity. The note in parenthesis

[86] *Limud* on Tabernacle, Temple, Synagogue, 1983, 648/20/14, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[87] *Shiur* for June 29, 1984, 648/21/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

argued that the program should also explain that prayer is an activity a group undertakes to benefit itself. While prayer may take the form of public worship, that worship benefits the community by conjuring God's presence among the group.

Teaching Shabbat through Prayer

Another meta-theme for educational programs at summer camp is Shabbat. As camp is an entirely controlled environment, the camp administration and faculty members have the opportunity to create an entire Shabbat experience. Most programs define Shabbat as a day of rest and study. However, others identify it as a day on which one should turn his or her thoughts to more profound ponderings. A group of campers at GUCI in the mid-1970s crafted a Shabbat service which had the following theme: "The Sabbath is for many things. The first two weeks we explored Shabbat as a time for rest, and then as a time for study. This week we will discuss and present Shabbat as a time for request. This does not mean asking God to give us a new bicycle or dollar, but rather to give us strength, health, (and) peace."[88] The prayer experience on Shabbat should be one that leads the one praying to a higher level of thinking. It reflects tones set forth in Abraham Joshua Heschel's book, *The Sabbath*. Shabbat prayer should elevate the person praying to a mental state that makes physical items subordinate to spirituality.

A program at OSRUI in 1982 used a service as a lens to show how Jews have crafted traditions rooted only minimally in the Torah text. The goal of the program was to show how little the Torah said about Shabbat observance and thus how many of the traditions associated with Shabbat observance were of human creation. The program consisted of the campers simulating a Shabbat morning service until one of the staff

[88] Worship Chug Description, Session #1, 1974, 670/6/11, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

members stood up and yelled, "This isn't the right kind of thing for me to do on Shabbat, I don't like this."[89] The staff member would be thought of as disruptive and rude, which would provide the basis for the conversation as to why he acted the way he did. The goal of this educational session was to show that going to services is a human-made tradition. Portraying services in this manner demonstrated both the power that human beings have to craft traditions as well as the limits of these traditions in certain cases.

Later in 1982, OSRUI held a program that taught the Shabbat services by having the campers completely create them. The campers broke into three groups. One group crafted a Shabbat evening service, one a Shabbat morning, and one a *Havdallah* service. The goal of this session was to get the campers to ask themselves what it takes to create one of the Shabbat services. Each committee had its own goals as to themes that each service should stress.[90] The program allowed for creativity within what it deemed an appropriate structure. The mere recitation of prayers helps build one's vocabulary, but this program presented the service as a whole. The point of this educational program was to teach that each service on Shabbat has its own traditional themes in addition to those of the weekday liturgy.

GUCI in 1978 also used Shabbat to instigate a discussion about communal versus personal prayer. The main goal of the lesson on July 18, 1978 was "We want to introduce the kids to the idea of community and how people of a community depend on each other. We want to discuss (the age group) *Shoresh* and camp as communities and finally the prayer community. Why do we pray together? What are the different ways

[89] "Shabbat in the Torah" 648/20/4, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[90] *Tzofim Aleph Limud* Days Seven, Eight, and Nine. 1982, 648/20/6, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

and places in which we pray? Why is Shabbat a human need?"[91] This *shiur* portrayed prayer as a way to build a community identity, arguing that people come together to pray because their prayers are similar. Even in an intimate moment, one's identity is tied closely with a group. The purpose of prayer in this sense is to show that everyone in the community has similar needs and desires. We come together to pray because our petitions to God reflect a common mindset among a group of people. Thus prayer helps an individual build a common identity with a group of people.

The educational programs that focused on *Havdallah* mainly discussed the ritual objects of the service as symbols for Shabbat. The goals for a *Shoresh* (the youngest unit at the camp) *shiur* on *Havdallah* in 1978 were "to show *Havdallah* (through) creating Shabbat Symbols. What is *Havdallah*? What are the parts of the *Havdallah* service? The idea of holiness is equal to separateness. Each group will create a symbol for Shabbat and present it to the unit."[92] Here, the *shiur* used the *Havdallah* service a vehicle to discuss Shabbat. The symbols were the focal point in an attempt to ground the essence of Shabbat in something tangible.

Lifecycle Events

In addition to using prayers in both a broad and specific sense, URJ camps also use services associated with lifecycle events to have the campers think about their faith. One such program occurred in 1978 at GUCI. The program consisted of the unit breaking into groups with the goal of "meeting to discuss the confirmation curriculum

[91] *Shoresh Shiur* "Shabbat-Introduction to Community/Prayer" 1978, 670/9/6, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[92] *Shoresh Shiur Kallah Bet,* Day Five, 1978, 670/9/6, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

and service."[93] This activity took the form of a committee meeting. They used the confirmation service as a lens to discuss one's faith. One's own creative portions of the service reflect one's theological desires and identity. This activity took place in a unit discussing the life cycle. Here, a service is a tool to project the desires of an individual as he or she is ending his or her formal Jewish education.

Prayer Leading to Social Action

While camps portrayed prayer as a way to center one's thoughts and communicate with God, the late 1970s and 1980s held programs that showed the limitations of thought without action. Because the Reform Movement became so committed to social action, many camp programs used prayer to motive campers to act. A *limud* at OSRUI in 1977 pointed out the limitations of prayer without action. The goal of this *limud* was "To transfer the notion of *avodah* to *avodat halayv*. It is our intent to move the campers from the notion of work and sacrifice to the concept of prayer as a way to service and communicate with God."[94] By referring to prayer as *avodah* and pointing out that this can mean both work and worship, OSRUI placed a great emphasis on prayer as fulfilling one's duty to serve God by working improve creation. The argument was that prayer was powerful not just for the individual but also had lasting effects on the outside world. Part of the lesson had the staff members "discuss prayer as a way to communicate and to understand God as well as a fulfillment of the covenant (*mitzvah*) and as a way for us to better understand ourselves by looking into our own thoughts and motives." The term "fulfillment of the covenant," made prayer seem a personal responsibility, not a choice.

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[93] *Geza Shiur Kallah Aleph* 1978, 670/8/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[94] Horowitz, Rabbi D. M, "*Limud* on July 5" 1977, 648/17/12, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Communication with God was a means to fulfill the ends of doing work to improve the world. This program argues that prayer has a social action component in it.

A similar program in the 1980s urged campers to use their prayers to inspire them to perform social action. The program played off the notion that there is a prayer for peace at the end of each *Amidah*, but reciting this prayer was not as important as using one's actions to bring about peace. A 1984 study session at OSRUI asked the campers to consider one thing they could do to bring about peace in their home, school or community. Thus, the prayer for peace supplemented one's actions or served as an impetus for action. Prayer is important because it asks the people praying to focus their minds on a theme, but their actions are even more important.[95] The same file describes day nine of the program's main question to be "Tell how you want someone else to help you: Which is easier for you: helping someone else or asking for help?" This question had the camper juxtapose their thoughts about taking acting versus feeling. The purpose behind asking questions such as these was to present prayer as a method that uses one's thoughts and feelings to lead ultimately to action.

Communal Prayer

A common theme that used prayer was the importance of the congregation in the communal life of a Jew. Many such programs divided the synagogue into *Beit K'nesset*, *Beit Midrash,* and *Beit T'filah*, house of assembly, house of study, and house of prayer. These programs established community, study, and prayer as common Jewish values that permeate many Jewish communities. The congregation as *Beit T'filah* was crucial to one's Jewish identity because it "emphasized the importance of communal worship, of

[95] *Limud* Description sheet, 1984, 648/21/2, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

the need for ten people to join in prayer together. Vital to the survival of Judaism has been our relationship with God. The synagogue has allowed us as a community to express that relationship."[96] This lesson stressed the *Beit T'filah* as a central institution in Judaism. It portrayed prayer as something that bonded the Jewish people both horizontally across the different communities at a given time as well as vertically throughout history. The words recited at camp or at their home congregations bind them as part of the Jewish tradition.

Conclusion

While prayer at Union Camps was rarely the primary theme for a session of camp, camps used themes related to both specific prayers and general issues associated with praying to open up channels of discourse for the campers. Because praying was a common experience that campers had at camp as well as at their home congregations, it was a useful method of getting campers to think more deeply about a wide range of Jewish topics. Summer camps used prayer as a way to view Jewish history and, more specifically, Reform Jewish history. Because services on Shabbat were greatly distinguished from services during the rest of the week, they provided an easy entry for a conversation about Shabbat. The intimate moments that *t'filot* provided the camp community allowed the programmers to ask questions about the camper's personal thoughts regarding prayer. These questions ultimately led to a discussion of values and expressions of the individual's Jewish identity. Just as *t'filot* at camp strove to have the campers create a Jewish identity, having the campers study broad and specific modes of prayer opened up discussions about how they wanted to express this identity.

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[96] *Limud* Days Seven and Eight, 1983, 648/20/14, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the process of writing this thesis, I kept remembering one story. I was seventeen years old. I was working at Camp Livingston, a Cincinnati Jewish Community Center camp that was open to youth from all over the Midwest and Kentucky. It was one of the two summers between my seven years as a camper and four consecutive years as a staff member at Goldman Union Camp. I was still adjusting to the new camp when I met a camper around bat mitzvah age who also had been a camper at GUCI. Seeking justification for switching camps to work at Camp Livingston, I asked her what it was that made her change camps. She told me that it was an easy decision for her and her family to make. Camp Livingston was much more activity-based than GUCI, where "all we did there was pray."

My first thought was that it was not true. I look back on my camp experiences and, while I remembered some of the times my cabin led services, most of my camp experience was crafted outside the *Beit T'filah*. Perhaps the forty-five minutes of scheduled services each day coupled with singing a lengthy *Birkat HaMazon* after each meal was simply too much for her and a multitude of other campers who shared her sentiments. Regardless of whether or not her idea was right, in a sense it meant that Rabbi Lorge and the crafters of the Union Camp program were successful. Using study and prayer to cultivate the campers' Jewish identities has been a goal since the early meetings discussing the camp program. However, focusing too much on education and prayer does not distinguish summer camp enough from Sunday school for some of Union

Camp's potential clientele. Are Union Camps alienating people from their program because of this?

The simple answer is yes. By dedicating two, three, or even four hours of the schedule to educational activities, ultimately that time is taken away from other activities that more people associate with a summer camp experience. However, I argue that this was exactly the point of crafting a uniquely Reform Jewish summer camp experience in North America. Many of the camps today quickly fill up their allotments for the summer and have to reject applicants. While there is not a strict screening process, URJ camps do require a rabbinic signature on each camper's application. The signature ensures that the families of the campers who enroll in URJ camps have a rabbinic presence in their lives and thus a connection to their home Jewish communities. Camp Livingston and other JCC camps do not have such a requirement. Thus they advertise a program for a different target audience. The difference between a URJ congregation and a Jewish Community Center is parallel to the different camp programs. While both institutions seek to cultivate a sense of Jewish community, they go about it in different ways. Even though there is overlap, just as there are overlaps in the camp programs, people walk into a JCC with different expectations than walking into a temple.

URJ camps use education sessions and prayer as both a means and an end. As discussed above, prayer is a tool to teach the campers about a Jewish way of thinking about the world and their roles in it. But URJ camps also seek to craft a meaningful prayer experience that provides the campers with a sense of spiritual fulfillment. An advantage URJ or any other Jewish denominational camp has over a JCC camp is that services only have to represent that denomination's *t'filah* experience. While not all

attendees of URJ summer camps may belong to Reform congregations or identify as Reform Jews, there is an understanding that their attendance at a URJ camp will be an American Reform Jewish experience which includes prayer. Thus *t'filot* at URJ camps use Reform liturgy and Reform methods of prayer. The early days of Union Camp saw a choir, but as the decades progressed, services added guitars and more folksongs to help the campers achieve spiritual fulfillment from the services.

It would be difficult for me to predict where the next changes are going to occur in URJ camp services. Camp *t'filot* could mirror how services in Union congregations are changing. A big change that occurred was a new prayerbook issued in 2007 that featured two-page spreads and more prayers in Hebrew. This prayerbook, *Mishkan T'filah*, uses its two-page spread to lay out the formal liturgy on the right side of the page and poetic interpretations, primarily in English, on the right-hand side. This prayerbook reflects the movement as a whole's desire to include more Hebrew in the service while maintaining the option of more creative readings for those who want them. But the Union is different now than it was in 2007. After the restructuring that occurred in 2008 all but eliminated the regional offices, thus making the Union offices more centralized on the East Coast, there has been more disconnect between the congregations and the Union. The lack of a regional presence has made the regions more independent of one another, and thus the summer camps offer radically different experiences to better suit their campers and families. It looks extremely unlikely that URJ camp *t'filot* will all change in the same manner as the decades progress; except insofar as they reflect common changes and shifts in American culture.

Furthermore, as much as the content of services has changed throughout the history of URJ camps, the forms have remained consistent. Since its inception, OSRUI has offered two services a day, which is a rarity among URJ camps. OSRUI, unlike its Midwestern counterpart GUCI, also has a history of leading services using a *siddur.* I predict that these trends will continue even though the specific liturgy uttered and the creative readings will change. *Mishkan T'filah* represents a desire in the Reform Movement to include more of the traditional liturgy. GUCI has followed suit in this regard. For *ma'ariv* services, GUCI since 2005 has included *Ma'ariv Aravim,* and Shabbat morning services include *Yotzeir Or*, *Sim Shalom*, and more of the Torah service liturgy. These changes correspond to the services present in *Mishkan T'filah*, all of which include the Hebrew of these prayers. Many of the services included in *Mishkan T'filah*'s predecessor, *Gates of Prayer,* gave these prayers only in English, despite the Hebrew being present in its first service. Because the Goldman Union Camp services utilize English only in creative readings, its services glossed over most of these prayers until they were included in Hebrew in the new *siddur.*

Musically, I think camps will continue to utilize folk-songs style. Two of the most popular contemporary Jewish musicians are Rick Recht and Dan Nichols. Both of these artists have produced music in both the folk and rock genres. While their folk melodies have permeated into camp services, many camps include their rock and roll songs only very rarely. Similarly with other musicians, song leaders seem to only be comfortable using certain songs, especially for opening and closing songs, to enhance the camp *t'filah* experience. It is conceivable that these boundaries will blur in the future. URJ camps still seek to promote *kavanah* to such a level during services that they use

English songs and folk songs which were once taboo during *t'filot*. Perhaps the next stage in development is expanding acceptable genres. Perhaps this generation's "rocking out" will parallel the previous generation's use of guitar.

Another area for change in camp *t'filot* is the use of creative readings, usually in English, and usually written by individuals within the group leading services. GUCI makes this a mainstay of their *t'filah* process, as only in rare instances of musical aptitude do campers lead songs and thus liturgical portions of the service. However, as discussed with regard to Camp George, the use of creative readings written by campers often detracted from the *t'filah* experience. While the camps are situated in completely different cultures, the questions they ask with regard to *t'filot* and the conclusions they reach are paradigmatic of all the camps. In the future each camp will have to continue to contemplate camper participation in services. Because campers range in age from early elementary school to early high school, there is a vast developmental difference. Perhaps some camps will come to the conclusion that leading services at camp becomes a rite of passage akin to one's Bar Mitzvah or confirmation. It seems that the polar extremes of this issue that Goldman Union Camp and Camp George represent are well established in their camp's traditions and prayer experience. But perhaps new staff, faculty, and camp directors that were brought up in one system will seek to improve the other. Each camp will have to individually ask how comfortable it is with the status quo and what portions of *t'filot* require change.

A theme of all Jewish prayer that can certainly be applied to URJ services is that one generation's *kavanah* becomes the next generation's *keva*. What is creative for one group becomes a mainstay for the next. The guitar, which was used sparingly in the first

decades of Camp services is a mainstay for every service now. The same can be said for creative readings. OSRUI advertised its outdoor *beit t'filah*, which was built by campers in order to create an atmosphere for prayer previously unseen by its constituents. Now, every camp has one if not multiple outdoor chapels and congregations with means have decided to follow suit. Due to camp's impermanent nature, it is an occasion for experimentation in order to arrive at new ways for creating meaningful Jewish experiences for its campers. The successes become integrated into the prayer experience at other camps and even at congregations.

I took part in the *t'filah* program at GUCI for five summers without being aware of the opportunities for innovation they offered, but I had an agenda. During my three summers as a counselor and two running the program, my goal for the program was to get the campers to articulate a coherent thought based on a theme chosen by the cabin. Especially for younger groups, it was difficult to explain this process. What I found to work the most successfully was to have a faculty member meet with the cabin together with me. We began each meeting discussing what the word "spirituality" meant. The most meaningful definition I remember was when a faculty member defined it as being part of a greater whole. This one sentence summed up not only the goals of decades of URJ camp services but also generations of Jewish prayer. Prayer in its most basic form is an acknowledgment that we are but a slim portion of existence. This thesis has stated that prayer connects people latitudinally among a group of contemporaries and longitudinally within groups spanning different times reciting liturgy that expresses common ideas. When praying, people connect themselves via a spiritual bond. For Jews, perhaps there is a feeling of community spanning across different denominations. Today,

many people go to services and feel a sense of warmth when they hear a melody they first heard while sitting in a summer camp service. Prayer forms connections because there is power in the specific words of the liturgy. Jews are able to achieve *kavanah* by realizing that the fixed liturgy is part of their heritage and that they themselves are the heirs of a beautiful tradition whose prayers are still as meaningful today as when they were first uttered by their ancestors in some cases thousands of years ago.

The sense of spirituality that prayer gives is not only shared among Jews but also has a sense of universality. When praying, one not only has the opportunity to bind himself or herself to the Jewish people but also to a greater existence that pervades throughout the cosmos. What better place is there to engage in this activity than summer camp? Many URJ camps have their chapels in secluded areas so that their campers can have the sensation of being in nature while praying. As discussed earlier, praying outside of urban life, albeit for a brief period of time, allows one to transcend the self by exploring a new frontier. Jews of a traditional mindset would use this experience to be part of God's creation. Jews with alternative views on God's role in creation still use this prayer setting to marvel at the wondrous nature of existence which was, at the very least, not created by human beings. Camps conduct services in this setting to show the limitations of technology and modern conveniences and how human beings live within a vast network that includes unexplored portions of the self, surroundings, and the vast expanse of the cosmos. After experiencing a Shabbat evening service in rural Wisconsin where the numerous stars illuminate the sky, it is quite difficult to say *Ma'ariv Aravim* with a roof over one's head.

My most challenging moments while in charge of the *t'filah* program occurred when meeting specifically with the older cabin groups. There was a tension between the administration who wanted the oldest campers to set an example for the younger campers by using their service parts to articulate a universal message whose application could extend beyond the camp context. The campers wanted to use their final service to declare their appreciation for camp and to urge the younger campers to not take their camp experience for granted. I was stuck in the middle. My goal for services was for the people leading to write and deliver short service parts on a topic meaningful for them. As camp was a powerful time in these camper's lives, it made perfect sense to me that they would want to use it as a theme and a teaching tool. This tension describes the balance between personal and collective that Reform prayer in congregations and at camps has had to strive toward since its inception. How much of the service should be personal and how much should be communal?

There is no set formula to answer this question. The oldest campers were struggling with their first steps into adulthood. Going to camp which was an automatic decision for many years was no longer going to be an option. Their identity was at a point of change. Surely camp experience which prides itself on helping campers cultivate an identity should be sensitive to this. But also, should the community be subject to many service parts on a topic that they cannot relate to? These questions are the current generation's iterations of whether or not to use a choir as opposed to a guitar, or the *Union Prayer Book* as opposed to a creative service. It is extremely difficult to craft a meaningful prayer experience with so many people coming from different congregations,

backgrounds, and ages. It is questions like these that allow the crafters of URJ services to contemplate for whom camps have *t'filot.*

My greatest moment of pride while coordinating *t'filot* came during my first summer as head coordinator. A couple of my campers from the previous summer sat behind me at services. I had them when they were eight years old, the youngest age-group for which GUCI offers a program. They had never experienced a URJ camp before. I did not seek to be an example for them of what it means to be successful at GUCI but rather wanted them to learn what it meant to be a good American Reform Jew. My new job would limit my interaction with the campers to my work with them on their services. When they came back the following summer, they sat behind me with a prayer card in their hands during one service in particular. They sat up straight and participated very well in the service, reading the Hebrew and singing along well. What I heard in their voices though was not obedience, but rather a desire to be there. They knew that praying at that time in that place was the right thing for them to do, not only because it was camp, but also because they were using services to cultivate and express their Jewish identities. These two nine-year-olds taught me why the Union has camps allot regular time for services.

URJ summer camps have the difficult task of helping their campers comprehend ideas of God, existence, and their own Jewish identities when they do not possess the right vocabulary to articulate their thoughts or even questions. Thus, camps create a prayer experience. While it only provides the campers with enough thoughts to begin a discussion, *t'filah* programs across the camps reach them by instilling a feeling of spirituality through music, setting, peer community, repetition, and opportunity to lead.

While this may discourage some people from attending URJ camps, for the many who find meaning in the prayer experiences, it is infinitely valuable. They may not be the most physically active or the most memorable camp experiences, but URJ camp *t'filot* have found a way to make a lasting impact upon administration, faculty, staff, and campers of all ages.

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