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Images of Violence and Peace in the *Siddur:* From *Seder Rav Amram* Until Today

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Abstract

This study traces images of violence and peace in the liturgy from *Seder Rav Amram* until today. The thesis is divided into six chapters excluding the introduction and the conclusion. These chapters are divided according to three major divisions. Part one is titled, "The Traditional *Siddur,"* and explores *Seder Rav Amram* and Seligman Baer's *Avodat Yisrael.* Part two is titled, "Nineteenth-Century Reform Prayerbooks," and includes Isaac Meyer Wise's *Minhag American,* David Einhorn's *Olat Tamid,* and the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book.* The final section is titled, "Liberal Liturgies Today," and explores *Gates of Prayer* and contemporary liturgies of the Conservative and Reconstructionist movements.

Most of the research for this thesis utilized primary sources—mostly prayerbooks. However, a number of secondary sources dealing with the history and development of liturgy, especially Reform liturgy, were consulted. I limited the scope of my research to Shabbat and Weekday liturgy; in general holiday liturgy has been excluded. However, I have included the textual additions for Chanukah and Purim as case studies to further explore how each prayerbook deals with images of violence and peace.

In addition to getting a thorough understanding of images of violence and peace in the *siddur* and how they have evolved from *Seder Rav Amram* until today, a reader of this study will also gain a understanding of some of the general trends and changes in the history of our liturgy.

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much for the last several months, and I am grateful for her patience. I thank God everyday that she is in my life. I dedicate this study to her.

Introduction

I am a product of Reform Judaism. As one of its future leaders I share its ideals and work to ensure its bright future. It is through Reform Judaism and its liturgy that I became interested in liturgy generally. Eventually, my interest led me to undertake this study. This paper is in no way a comprehensive study of the changes in our liturgy through the ages; rather, it focuses exclusively on images of violence and peace and traces them from *Seder Rav Amram* to the liberal liturgies of today.

This paper is divided into three major parts. The first part examines images of violence and peace in the traditional *siddur*. The two texts I rely upon are *Seder Rav Amram* and Seligman Baer's *Avodat Yisrael*. Their compilation is separated by centuries; however, they are very similar in structure and content. The second section deals with nineteenth-century Reform prayerbooks. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Wise and Einhorn each published their own prayerbooks which reflected their views of what Reform Jewish worship should look like. They were quite different from one another. At the end of the century, the early editions of the *Union Prayer Book* were published, not by a single author, but by committees. These were the first official prayerbooks of American Reform Judaism. The *Union Prayer Book,* in revised form, remained the prayerbook of American Reform Judaism until the mid-1970s. The third section of this study deals with images of violence and peace in liberal liturgies today. While the focus

of the chapter is on Reform liturgy, the liturgies of the Conservative and Reconstructionist movements are brought in for comparison where it is helpful.

In order to limit my scope, this study includes only Shabbat and weekday liturgy; in general, holidays have been excluded. However, I have included the textual additions for Chanukah and Purim as case studies to further explore how each prayerbook deals with images of violence and peace. Each chapter has a subsection devoted to examining the liturgical additions for Chanukah and Purim and relating them to the images in the larger chapter.

I expect that this study will give the reader an understanding of how the images of violence and peace in the *siddur* have changed through the ages. In addition, it is my hope that through learning about changes in the imagery of violence and peace, one may also learn more about liturgy and liturgical change in general.

PART I: THE TRADITIONAL *SIDDUR*

Chapter 1: *Seder Rav Amram*

In the field of Jewish liturgy the work entitled *Seder Rav Amram* holds an important place. It is attributed to Rav Amram son of Sheshna the renowned Gaon and head of the academy at Sura in Babylon. Rav Amram headed the academy from approximately 853 until 871. *Seder Rav Amram* is the oldest complete *siddur* ("Jewish prayerbook") that we have. Its influence on later liturgies has been enormous. *Seder Rav Amram* is made up of two parts which are woven together: the text of Jewish prayers and *halakhic* ("Jewish legal") decisions concerning prayer and its performance (Preschel 1). This study, is concerned with the text of the prayers.

In *Seder Rav Amram* we find images of violence and of peace. I will present the images found in *Seder Rav Amram* in general terms and then give specific examples of those images from the text. In subsequent chapters I will compare later *siddurim* ("prayerbooks") with the material discussed in this chapter. *Seder Rav Amram* is, thus, the foundational yardstick by which everything which comes afterwards will be compared.

The audience for a *siddur* is Jews. The *siddur* is both a reflection of the ideology of the community and a projection of the ideology of its author to the community. The contents of a *siddur* are influenced by many factors including its author, the community for which it is intended, and deference to the liturgical traditions. What we find in a *siddur* frequently reinforces the

Jewish ideology and practice which the elite rabbinic class of the community wants to perpetuate; however, since there are many factors which influence the contents of a *siddur,* it is difficult to know which are the deciding factors in any given case.

Images of violence in *Seder Rav Amram* are mostly directed against heretics, sectarians, or Israel's enemies. The images are connected to the idea of justice. Justice in *Seder Rav Amram* means both rewarding the good (in this case faithful Jews) and punishing the bad (heretics and sectarians from within and enemies from without). Redemption does not come without judgment.

This concept of judgment is shown clearly in the version of *Emet Ve'emunah* which is found in the evening service of *Seder Rav Amram*. It reads:

> True is our King, there is none like him, who has delivered us from the hands of the kings, and who has redeemed us from the hands of the terrible ones. God who on our behalf dealt out punishment to our adversaries and paid back all the enemies of our being. Who has kept our soul in life and has not suffered our feet to be moved. Who made us tread on the high places of our enemies, and raises our horn over those that hated us. Who made for us vengeance on Pharoah, signs and wonders in the land of the children of Ham. Who in His wrath smote all the

> firstborn of Egypt, and brought forth his people Israel from among them to eternal freedom. Who made his children pass between the divisions in the Sea of Reeds, but sank their pursuers and their enemies in the depths. (52)

Here the text makes clear that Israel's redemption is intrinsically linked to judgment of its enemies—the good are elevated and the evil are punished.

This pairing of Israel's redemption with the judgment of Israel's enemies is reinforced from the parallel prayer in the morning service *Emet Veyatsiv*. Here again, judgment and redemption are juxtaposed in the text. The text assumes that there is a connection between the two—one people's redemption demands another's punishment. Referring to the plagues and the Egyptians drowned in the Sea of Reeds, a section of the prayer reads, "All their first born you killed, but Your first born [Israel] you redeemed. You divided the Sea of Reeds and the arrogant were drowned, but your beloved ones passed through and their foes were covered by water, not one of them remained" (*Seder Rav Amram* 20).

The most direct image to appear regarding Israel's enemies can be found in *Birkat Haminim* ("the blessing over heretics"). It reads:

> For the apostates let there be no hope, let the heretics perish in a moment and may all your people's enemies quickly be destroyed. And the sovereignty of arrogance quickly uproot,

> break and humble in our day. Blessed are You, Adonai, who smashes the wicked and humbles the insolent. (25).

Ismar Elbogen cites evidence from the church fathers suggesting that the prayer over *minim* once contained the word *"notsrim"* ("Christians"). This hypothesis is confirmed by the Oxford Manuscript of *Seder Rav Amram* which also includes the word (Elbogen 46). Also, a Palestinian text found in the Cairo Genizah refers to *"notsrim"* (Schiffman 55). Even though these texts say "Christians," *Birkat Haminim* was not aimed a gentile Christians, but Jews and Jewish Christians (Jews who had taken on Christianity) (Schiffman 53-57). It was a polemic aimed at Jews against becoming Christians. If Jews heard this malediction everyday in synagogue, they might be less likely to embrace Christianity since it would be clear they would be scorned by the Jewish community. It also makes clear to the Jewish Christians, who were still participating in the Jewish community, that they were not welcome. It made a statement that either one remained faithful to normative rabbinic Judaism, or one needed to be ostracized from the Jewish community. Later (by the Amoraic period) the term *"notsrim"* came to be understood by both Jews and Christians as referring to Christians in general (instead of Jewish Christians specifically) (Schiffman 60). Eventually, less specific words were used to refer to the *minim* in order not to arouse the ire of the Christian authorities (Elbogen 46).

Not all of the images of violence presented in *Seder Rav Amram* entail judgment of Israel's enemies. Sometimes God directs violence at Israel, and Israel prays that God will relent and be merciful. The Torah service for Mondays and Thursdays contains the following:

> Merciful One, have mercy on us and remember unto us the covenant of our ancestors. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not look upon the stubbornness of this people or its wickedness or its sin. Turn from your wrath, and have compassion of this evil against your people. And remove from us the yoke of the gentiles for this is your way—to liberate, to rescue, to redeem and to save in every generation. (56)

Israel appeals to the merit of its ancestors to temper God's judgment for Israel's sins. The prayer reminds God that mercy is God's way even if it is undeserved.

Images of peace found in *Seder Rav Amram* are connected to the images of violence which have already been discussed. As we have seen, images of violence are reflections either of punishment of Israel's enemies or of God punishing Israel for its sins. The liturgy in *Seder Rav Amram* portrays peace as God's protection of Israel from war and persecution. Peace is also understood as instances of God's mercy upon Israel, that is, when God does not punish Israel for its sins by bringing famine, war, or any other kind of desolation. *Hashkivenu,* for example, asks God for protection, particularly

from the dangers associated with nighttime. These would include both the physical dangers of attack associated with darkness and God's taking of a person's life during the night. "Spread over us the shelter of your peace," it says. It ask God to protect Israel from plague, war, and famine. It also expresses the hope that one will be able to rise in the morning to life renewed (52). In *Sim Shalom,* a second instance of peace as an image, God is asked to bestow all that is good upon Israel—peace, mercy, and blessing (26). Peace is all that is good. It includes prosperity and health as the inverse of war and famine.

Whenever imagery of peace is found in the prayerbook it asks God to protect Israel. The images of peace do not conflict with the images of violence directed towards Israel's enemies or Jewish heretics. In fact they complement one another. *Seder Rav Amram* puts forth an ideology which sees the defeat of Israel's enemies as a prerequisite for peace. These enemies can be both internal and external. Internally, heretics, apostates, and sectarians threaten the stability of Judaism. If their views are allowed to flourish, other Jews may follow them, and the more that Jews sin, the more likely it is that there will be divine retribution against the Jewish community. Externally, Israel's enemies threaten not only Israel's stability but its existence. The ideology of *Seder Rav Amram* is "us versus them." If our enemies flourish, we cannot; therefore, their downfall is our salvation.

Chanukah and Purim in *Seder Rav Amram*

During Chanukah and Purim there are liturgical additions that thank God for all the miracles that God has done for the Jewish people. On both Chanukah and Purim the additions as found in *Seder Rav Amram* begin, "For the miracles and for the mighty deeds and for the victories and for the wars and for the redemptions and for the salvation that you performed for our ancestors in those days and in our time" (98, 100).

After this section the text becomes specialized for each of the holidays. A portion of the text for Chanukah reads:

> In the days of Mattathias, son of Yochanan the High Priest, the Hasmonian and his sons, when the wicked Greek kingdom rose up against them—Your people Israel—to make them forget your Torah and cause them to stray from the laws of your will, You in your great mercy stood up for them in the time of their distress. You took up their grievance, judged their claim and avenged their wrong. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, the arrogant into the hands of those who study your Torah. (98)

The section for Purim reads:

> In the days of Mordechi and Esther in Shushan the capital when Haman the wicked rose up against them, and sought to

> destroy, to slay, and to exterminate all the Jews, young and old, babies and women, in one day—on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, the month of Adar—and to plunder their possessions, You in your great mercy nullified his counsel and broke down his thoughts and caused his plans to return upon his own head, and they hanged him and his sons from a tree. (100)

The insertions for both Chanukah and Purim extol God for coming to Israel's aid. They thank God for punishing those that tried to destroy Israel. The text has no problems thanking God for not only "mighty deeds," but for "wars" that God fought alongside Israel on its behalf. Because of God's intervention, Israel is able to attain military and political victories against difficult odds. Even when the Jews are no longer in danger, as in the Purim story, justice needs to be carried out. Therefore, even though Haman is no longer a direct threat to the Jews after he is found out, he and his sons are hanged. Not only are they hanged in the story, but, by including the hanging in the text at Purim time, the *siddur* reminds the reader of that those who rise up against the Jews will eventually be punished. A line at the end of both the Chanukah and Purim additions reads, "Just as you did miracles for them, thus, do for us, Adonai our God, miracles and wonders at this time" (98, 100). There is an acceptance here that not only did God intervene and help conquer Israel's enemies in the past but that God will do so again.

In *Seder Rav Amram* images of violence are connected to God's saving power. God saves us by helping us defeat our enemies, by getting out of our midst those who will lead us to sin, and by saving us despite our own sins. All of these images are essential if we are to experience peace. The image of peace presented in *Seder Rav Amram* is that of well being and prosperity. These can only be achieved when the Jewish people is not under attack by enemies, the Jewish community is unified, and Jews are living by God's Torah. While we may have some difficulty with these images today, it was clear for the author of *Seder Rav Amram* that there can be no redemption without divine judgment.

Chapter 2: Baer's *Avodat Yisrael*

A comparison of Baer's nineteenth-century *Avodat Yisrael* and *Seder Rav Amram* reveals a number of differences in the images of violence and peace. However, what is most striking is that even though ten centuries divide the works, in most respects they are the same. The differences I found between Baer's *Avodat Yisrael* and *Seder Rav Amram* are the exceptions. For works written in vastly different times and places, their similarity is remarkable.

As with my analysis of *Seder Rav Amram,* I will begin by examining the images of violence and peace found in *Avodat Yisrael* in general. I will then look at how they vary from the images found in *Seder Rav Amram*. In addition, as with *Seder Rav Amram*, I will look at the liturgical additions for Chanukah and Purim in *Avodat Yisrael.*

Avodat Yisrael is consonant with *Seder Rav Amram* in that its images of violence are primarily visions of punishment for Israel's enemies. Also, as in *Seder Rav Amram*, judgment of Israel's enemies is viewed as connected intrinsically to the redemption of Israel. The texts of *Emet Veyatsiv* and *Emet Ve'emunah* (which were discussed in the previous section on *Seder Rav Amram*) have almost the same wording in *Avodat Yisrael.* Again, punitive judgment upon Israel's enemies is seen as the necessary counterpart to Israel's redemption.

This theme of judgment is carried throughout *Avodat Yisrael*. *Birkat Haminim*, for example, concludes, "Blessed are you, Adonai, who smashes his enemies *[oyevim]* and humbles the insolent" (94). This *chatimah* differs slightly from the *chatimah* in *Seder Rav Amram*. *Seder Rav Amram* reads, "Blessed are you Adonai, who smashes the *wicked [reshaim]* and humbles the insolent" [emphasis mine] (25). There are a number of differences like these between the two texts. In fact, within *Avodat Yisrael* there is a variant text of this malediction written beside the dominant one. However, with one exception, the version in *Seder Rav Amram* and the two versions in *Avodat Yisrael* vary only slightly. The message of all three texts being the same: those who are a threat to the Jewish people should be destroyed by God. The one interesting difference between *Seder Rav Amram* and the secondary text in *Avodat Yisrael* is the characterization of the enemies. *Rav Amram* says, ". . . may all your people's enemies quickly be destroyed" (25). In the same spot Baer reads, ". . . may all your enemies quickly be destroyed" (93). While *Seder Rav Amram* asks God to destroy Israel's enemies, *Avodat Yisrael* expands the idea by making the slanderers and heretics explicitly God's enemies. I believe, however, that the idea is the same. However, an additional connection is made; the enemies of Israel are assumed to be God's enemies.

While *Avodat Yisrael* parallels *Seder Rav Amram* in most respects, there are some additions to the service which reinforce the concept of

judgment that we have seen in *Seder Rav Amram*. The biblical passage *Shirat Hayam* ("Song of the Sea"), for example, is found in *Pesukei Dezimrah* in *Avodat Yisrael*. In the text Israel's passage through the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians is recounted. The theme is the same as that expressed in *Emet Ve'emunah* and *Emet Veyatsiv* which also recount Israel's redemption at the sea; however, in *Shirat Hayam*, the recitation of the actual biblical text is brought in to the service. Through its recitation, the worshiper reenacts the song of thanksgiving which Israel sang to celebrate its own safe passage through the sea and the drowning of its Egyptian pursuers.

As was true in *Seder Rav Amram*, not all of the images of violence depict judgment of Israel's enemies. Sometimes God directs violence towards Israel, and Israel prays that God's mercy overcomes God's harsh judgment. An example of this can be found in the inclusion of the biblical passage of the *Akedah* ("Binding [of Isaac]") in a special section of daily readings in *Avodat Yisrael*. After the *Akedah* passage, there is a supplicatory paragraph which includes:

> "Our God and God of our ancestors, remember us with a favorable memory before you . . . and remember on our behalf, Adonai, our God, the covenant, the compassion, and the oath that you swore to Abraham our father on Mount Moriah. You saw before You, the *Akedah,* when Abraham our father bound

> his son Isaac upon the altar and suppressed his mercy for his only son and wished to slaughter him in order to do your will, so may Your mercy suppress Your anger from upon us and may your mercy overwhelm Your attributes." (*Avodat Yisrael* 157-58)

Israel appeals to the merit of Abraham to temper God's judgment of Israel. It is a plea for God to use mercy in judging Israel.

Images of peace in *Avodat Yisrael* also parallel the images found in *Seder Rav Amram*. Just like images of violence, images of peace are particularistic. Peace is when Israel is free from warfare or famine. Again *Hashkivenu* and *Sim Shalom* are good examples here as they were for *Seder Rav Amram*. While *Seder Rav Amram* uses *Sim Shalom* for all services, *Avodat Yisrael* adds *Shalom Rav* in place of *Sim Shalom* in the evening service.* However, *Shalom Rav* is just another version of the prayer for peace and adds no important new imagery to what is found in *Seder Rav Amram*.

Chanukah and Purim in *Avodat Yisrael*

There are almost no differences between the liturgical additions for Chanukah and Purim in *Seder Rav Amram* and the additions in *Avodat Yisrael*. In *Avodat Yisrael*, the introductory part of *Al Hanisim* is exactly the same as in *Seder Rav Amram*, with the exception of the words, "for the

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* Shalom Rav (in a shortened version) does appear in the Oxford manuscript of *Seder Rav Amram* (it does not appear in the other two major manuscripts). It can be found in the Afternoon Service (*SRA* 50).

redemptions" which has disappeared from the text. The specific additions for Chanukah and Purim are also almost exactly the same as in *Seder Rav Amram*. None of the slight differences make any significant changes to the meaning of the text.

Again, as with *Seder Rav Amram,* the compiler of this *siddur* did not seem to have any problems with the redemption of Israel being dependent on God's punishment of Israel's enemies. In this text of thanksgiving, Haman and his sons are hanged from the tree; he needs to be punished so that Israel can be redeemed. There is a line, however, which appears in *Seder Rav Amram* at the end of both the Chanukah and the Purim passages that is not in *Avodat Yisrael.* It reads, "Just as you did miracles for them, thus, do for us, Adonai our God, miracles and wonders at this time" (98, 100). I do not believe that Baer believed less than Amram that God does miracles in our time; perhaps he just wanted to make this passage more purely one of thanksgiving and remove some of its supplicatory nature.

The images of violence and peace in *Avodat Yisrael* parallel the images in *Seder Rav Amram.* In both God helps protect Israel from its internal and external enemies. In both, also, God is asked to be merciful to Israel despite its sins. The image of peace in the two *siddurim* is particularistic; it is focused on Israel and its well being, not that of non-Jews or the world as a whole. As with *Seder Rav Amram, Avodat Yisrael* assumes that Israel

cannot be redeemed or live in peace without the punishment of those who would stand in the way of Israel's well being and prosperity.

PART II: NINETEENTH-CENTURY REFORM PRAYERBOOKS

Chapter 3: Wise's *Minhag America*

Isaac Mayer Wise published three versions of *Minhag America:* all Hebrew, Hebrew/English, and Hebrew/German. For this study I have used the first edition of the Hebrew/English version published in 1857. When one opens *Minhag America* one notices it that it is both similar and different from a traditional *siddur*. Opened from left to right it is almost indistinguishable from the traditional *siddur*; it is all in Hebrew and hews closely to the traditional form. However, when opened from right to left (like any English book), one sees a *siddur* which is primarily in English; the English also follows closely the structure of the traditional *siddur*, but in the vernacular. Each English passage is introduced with the first couple of Hebrew words that begin the same passage in the Hebrew section. In looking at images of violence and peace in *Minhag America,* I have chosen to focus on the English text since most worshipers understood the English far better than the Hebrew. In addition, Wise's translation is usually faithful to the Hebrew.

Just as *Minhag America* parallels the traditional *siddur* in form, it also parallels the traditional *siddur* in content, albeit with some significant changes. Images of violence in *Minhag America* are not sanitized. *Emet Ve'emunah* and *Emet Veyatsiv*, for example, retain the paired imagery of redemption for Israel and punishment for the Egyptians (18-19). In addition

Shirat Hayam is also included in *Minhag America*, both in Hebrew and English. Verses like, ". . . thy right hand, O God, crushest the foe," and "Thou sendest forth thy fiery breath, and consumest them like stubble" are left intact without comment (12-13).

Since Wise made many other changes to his *siddur,* his decision to leave images of violence against Israel's enemies in place is especially noteworthy. For example, Wise removed any mention of a personal messiah, bodily resurrection, the sacrificial cult, and the restoration of *Eretz Yisrael* from *Minhag America* (Ellenson *Between* 182). His inclusion of these violent images leads me to believe that he was comfortable with them.

While it appears Wise was comfortable with some types of violent imagery appearing in the *siddur,* he completely eliminated *Birkat Haminim.* Apparently, he thought a malediction against heretics and slanders was unredeemable, so rather then trying to alter *Birkat Haminim,* he chose to eliminate it altogether. As a reformer himself, the inclusion of a prayer that had been written to reinforce traditional rabbinic Judaism at the expense of non-Jews seemed untenable to Wise, who wamted a Judaism open to the non-Jewish world.

Images of violence against Israel's enemies in *Minhag America* are mixed. On one hand, Israel's redemption is linked to the destruction of Israel's enemies. In its texts the worshiper still recalls the drowning of the Egyptians as a necessary counterpart to Israel's redemption at the Sea of

Reeds. On the other hand, the most direct image to appear regarding Israel's enemies *(Birkat Haminim)* has been eliminated. It seems apparent that although the coupling of judgment and redemption is still deemed necessary, Wise is conscious of the images and choose to eliminate what he feels is the most distasteful. The Egyptians drowning at the sea and Haman's hanging are mythical events from the our biblical heritage (which Christians share), while *Birkat Haminim* was not biblical and was understood to be against non-Jews. Wise retained the mythical, biblical images but rejected offensive images of rabbinic origin.

As was noted in both *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael*, not all images of violence are directed towards Israel's enemies—sometimes they are directed against Israel itself. This fear of God's wrath turning upon Israel is apparent in *Minhag America* as well. For example, the Torah service for Mondays and Thursdays begins with the following:

> O Lord! who art long-suffering, and abundant in grace and truth; chastise us not in thy anger. O God, have pity on thy people, and save us from all evil. We have sinned against thee, O Lord our Ruler! forgive us we beseech thee, according to thy abundant mercies. (Wise 27)

Israel prays to God not only to protect Israel from its enemies but also to ask God to be merciful and to withhold punishment for all of Israel's sins.

Just as was seen in both *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael*, there are two main images of violence which are depicted in *Minhag America*. The first image is that of violent punishment of Israel's enemies. The classic example from the liturgy that I have been coming back to is the drowning of the Egyptians in the Sea of Reeds. This punishment of Israel's enemies is the necessary partner to Israel's redemption. The second is that of God directing violence against Israel in punishment for Israel's sins. The punishment could consist of being handed over to their enemies, or it could be famine, sickness, or plague, both of these well documented bibically. Images of violence in *Minhag America* reflect both the wish for God to defeat Israel's enemies and the hope that God will have mercy even on a sinful Israel. If God hearkens to Israel's prayers and protects Israel from God's anger and from Israel's enemies, then Israel can have peace.

The images of peace in *Minhag America* are similar to the images found in *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael;* however, the peace imagery in *Minhag America* is more universal than that of the previous two *siddurim.* While both *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael* only request peace for Israel, *Minhag America* broadens the request, including non-Jews as well. In *Sim Shalom,* for example, typifying a formula used in other prayers as well, the text reads, "Mayest thou be pleased, to bless thy people, Israel, and all other nations with the fullness of Might and Peace. Praised art thou, God, source of Peace" (25).

This is the first *siddur* in this survey that makes requests which go beyond the needs of Jews to include the needs of all people, and, yet, Israel is still mentioned. The text could have read, "bless all people"; instead, it says, "bless thy people, Israel, and all other nations." While Wise wants to broaden the prayer to request peace for all people, he does not want to jettison the special status Israel has with God. Therefore, the prayer continues to reinforce this special relationship by asking God "to bless thy people, Israel" along with all the nations of the world.

I find it interesting that *Sim Shalom* contains the phrase, "Might and Peace" (Wise 25). It seems strange that "might" is mentioned in a prayer for peace, particularly a prayer that includes other nations besides Israel in its request. Perhaps Wise believes that a people can only have peace if they are not powerless. It is not such an unusual idea; in fact, it is an essential part of every country's defense strategy. If a country, or in this case a people, is strong, then it will not be attacked or persecuted by others. Perhaps we can understand it by comparing it to the idea of "black power" in America in more recent times. It is as if Wise is saying, "Jewish power" and power for all other peoples as well. If no one is powerless, perhaps everyone can experience peace—for Israel and for all people.

The final lines of the prayer summarize the overall images it purveys. While the *chatimah* of *Sim Shalom* in *Seder Rav Amram* and in *Avodat Yisrael* is, "Blessed are You, Adonai, who blesses his people, Israel, with

peace," the *chatimah* in *Minhag America* reads, "Praised art thou, God, source of Peace" (25). Again, while in the traditional *siddurim* the focus is on God granting peace to Israel, in *Minhag America,* a more expansive peace is requested, this time without Israel's special status being mentioned. Perhaps because Israel's special status is so evident in the body of the prayer, Wise felt secure in emphasizing universalism in the *chatimah.*

Chanukah and Purim in *Minhag America*

The additions for Chanukah and Purim in *Minhag America* are consistent with the images of violence found in the rest of the *siddur* which were discussed above. Wise does not eliminate violent imagery which is part of the historical narrative of the *siddur,* but he does eliminate references to violence in the present or the future. That is, *Minhag America* eliminates requests of God to continue operating violently in any way. Therefore, according to Wise, God's violence is a historical fact, not a current reality. As mentioned above, the images of Israel's enemies drowning in the Sea of Reeds is retained; however, *Birkat Haminim,* which asks God to destroy heretics and slanders is eliminated. The same ideology permeates the additions for Chanukah and Purim. The insertions which include the specific historical recounting for Chanukah and Purim are left mostly intact. Where the imagery of the biblical text is violent, Wise left the text alone with only slight changes. For example, a section of the Purim insertion regarding God's punishment of Haman reads, "Then thou, in thy unbounded mercy,

settest at nought his device, pervertedst his thought, broughtest his wickedness on his own head, and he and his sons were hung on the gallows" (24-25). The imagery remains basically the same as the traditional text that was inherited; however, there is one major difference. In *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael* the last line reads, "and they hanged him and his sons from a tree" (*Seder Rav Amram* 100, *Avodat Yisrael* 101). Wise renders the line in a passive voice. While the image remains the same, the power is blunted somewhat by the use of the passive voice. Haman and his son are hanged, but neither God nor the Jews actually do the hanging.

The introductory passage of *Al Hanisim* that is found with only minor variations in both *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael* reads, "for the miracles, and for the salvation, and for the mighty deeds, and for the victories, and for the wars that You brought about for our ancestors in those days at this time" (*Avodat Yisrael* 100). This passage of recognizing God's miracles is not found in *Minhag America.* It is not biblical and, from Wise's perspective, not essential to telling the historical story of the Jewish people. Wise is also uncomfortable with the idea of God performing miracles, which is the crux of *Al Hanisim* (Ellenson *Between* 195).

The Chanukah and Purim additions reinforce the evidence from other parts of *Minhag America* which show that, although he might blunt it somewhat, Wise did not eliminate violent imagery if it was a part of the biblical strata of the historical recounting of Israel. However, if it was of

rabbinic origin and not essential to the unfolding of Israel's story, Wise felt he had license to eliminate it.

Chapter 4: Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*

Compared to Wise's *Minhag America, Olat Tamid* (1858) was the minority *siddur* in the fight for prayerbook dominance in America. By 1881, it was still only used by relatively few congregations, but among those who used it, its following was fierce (Ellenson *Between* 190). While Wise created a *siddur* which could be opened from the left and used in Hebrew, or opened from the right and used in English, *Olat Tamid* was made of one cloth, Hebrew and German intermingled, and, like any good German book, opened from the right. It is clear when one looks at the original *Olat Tamid* that the dominant language is German not Hebrew (and this impression carries over to its later English versions as well). Since Einhorn believed that Reform should not be severed from its German roots, he resisted publishing an English version of *Olat Tamid,* and no English translation was published until 1872. Also, unlike Wise who often reworded objectionable parts of the service, Einhorn tended to omit entire sections, like *musaf* for Shabbat and holidays (Ellenson *Between* 191-92). While making modifications to the text, Wise remained dedicated to the structure of the traditional *siddur* and only strayed from it occasionally. However, as I noted above, Einhorn was more radical in his willingness to alter the structure of the *siddur.* While it is clearly still loosely based on the traditional *siddur,* in both its structure and its imagery, it is a new prayerbook.

Just as the structure of *Olat Tamid* is a more radical departure from the traditional *siddur* than *Minhag America,* the images of violence in *Olat Tamid* are more suppressed than they are in *Minhag America.* Found only in English, *Emet Veyatsiv,* for example, cleans up considerably the image of the Egyptians drowning in the Sea of Reeds. The central section of this text reads:

> In truth, Thou art our God, and none besides, and we are Thy people. From the hands of mighty oppressors Thou hast saved us and miracles without number Thou has wrought in the midst of us. Thine outstretched arm led us forth from Egypt, the house of bondage; and whenever our foot would stumble, Thy help supported us. The proud waters that would have gone over our souls were stayed by Thee, and all they that were incensed against us were put to shame and confounded. For Thou wast on our side, when men rose up against us. (4)

In the previous *siddurim,* we have observed a pairing of Israel's redemption with the punishment of Israel's enemies—each was given equal emphasis. However, in *Olat Tamid* Israel's redemption is emphasized while the punishment of Israel's enemies is minimized. The most vivid image of punishment to remain is, ". . . all they that were incensed against us were put to shame and confounded" (4). What a difference this is from the same section in *Seder Rav Amram*: "All their first born you killed, but Your first

born [Israel] you redeemed. You divided the Sea of Reeds and the arrogant were drowned, but your beloved ones passed through and their foes were covered by water, not one of them remained" (*Seder* 20)! The emphasis of the prayer in *Olat Tamid* completely changes with only a nod to the original text. In addition, the parallel text in the morning service, *Emet Ve'emunah,* in *Olat Tamid* does not even mention the Egyptians (22). While *Emet Veyatsiv* remains particularistic in form, recalling Israel's redemption, even this particularity is tempered somewhat in the final English paragraph. A line from it reads, "Stay, we beseech Thee, everywhere on this earth the ravages of war and plague" (4-5). In this prayer which traditionally recalls Israel's redemption from Egypt, the above line is inserted by Einhorn asking God to stop war and plague everywhere on earth—not just for Israel, but for everyone. In *Emet Veyatsiv* while maintaining a focus on Israel's redemption, Einhorn minimizes the images of punishment of the Egyptians and casts the prayer in a more universal light. Einhorn eliminated other images of violence from *Olat Tamid* as well. Neither the *Akedah* nor *Shirat Hayam* (which was found in *Minhag America*) are found in the Shabbat or weekday services of *Olat Tamid.* Of course, as in *Minhag America, Birkat Haminim* is also not included in *Olat Tamid.*

Images of peace are also significantly recast in *Olat Tamid.* In *Seder Rav Amram* and *Avodat Yisrael* peace was asked for only on behalf of Israel. Peace is God's protection of Israel from war, famine, and plague. In *Minhag*

America peace remains particularistic but includes other peoples as well. In *Olat Tamid,* however, Einhorn removes all the particularistic imagery from prayers requesting peace(in both the Hebrew and English texts). *Sim Shalom,* for example, is recast as follows:

> Grant peace, happiness, and blessing, grace and mercy, unto us and unto all the sons of men, Thy children. Bless us all, O our Father, with the light of Thy countenance; in this light Thou hast given us Thy law for life, the love of virtue and justice, blessing and mercy, duty and peace; may it please Thee to bless us with Thy peace at all times and in every hour. Be praised, Thou Giver of peace. (10)

Other prayers for peace, *Oseh Shalom* at the end of *Kaddish* for example, are recast in similar ways to remove any particularistic request of peace for Israel—all requests are universal and ask for peace for all humanity.

Images of violence and peace in *Olat Tamid* are significantly different than the images portrayed in the other *siddurim* examined. The coupling of Israel's redemption with the punishment of Israel's enemies is greatly minimized. Also, images of peace no longer request peace for Israel; instead, they request peace for all humanity.

Chanukah and Purim in *Olat Tamid*

The textual additions for Chanukah and Purim in *Olat Tamid* reinforce the images found elsewhere in Einhorn's prayerbook. As with Wise,

Einhorn chooses to include enough of the original liturgy to tell the story of Chanukah; however, Einhorn was much more liberal in his editing of these textual editions than was Wise. Even so, both the introductory paragraph of *Al Hanisim* and the Chanukah-specific section remain true to the spirit of the traditional *siddur*. It is interesting to note that while Wise omitted the introductory paragraph *Al Hanisim*, Einhorn includes it. This goes against the general pattern of Wise including more of the traditional text. However, it seems that Einhorn did not have the same aversion to the inclusion of miracles in the text as Wise did (Ellenson *Between* 195).

There is also an additional English passage which has no Hebrew equivalent in *Olat Tamid* which captures poetically the theme of light and hope which Einhorn emphasizes. The final section of this insertion reads, "Blessed be Thou, O God, Ruler of the world, who didst wondrous things for our fathers at this season in days of yore. Thy light hath shone forth unto us, in all the days of our wanderings; and in it, we will behold the light, wherewith to illuminate our paths. Amen" (56).

Except for an insertion for the Shabbat before Purim (Shabbat Zakhor), there is no liturgy included in *Olat Tamid* for Purim. The insertion for Shabbat Zakhor, goes a long way towards shedding light on how Einhorn reworked the images of violence in the Purim text. Only once, near the very beginning, is Haman mentioned in the passage. The passage recounts the story of Purim and Haman's plan to destroy the Jews. The first section ends

with, "Him [Haman] Thou hurledst into the very pit of destruction which his hands had dug for the innocent" (46-47). This is in keeping with the retelling of the Purim story. It is the final paragraph which is a fascinating reworking of our Purim texts. It reads:

> As then, so at all times hast Thou, O heavenly Father, been the tower of our help and the rock of our refuge whenever men rose up against us. Thy shield always was held over us when we went forth to do battle against Amalek, the implacable foe, to wage war upon falsehood and evil. Gird us anew with the courage to defend the right and the truth, whenever or by whomsoever they be assailed. Let us lead the van in the combat against error and malice until heathendom and selfishness be everywhere uprooted on Thy footstool, and to Thy throne from all zones and under all skies rise the homage due Thee as the sole Ruler of all the worlds. Amen. (47)

Rather than the traditionally understood physical enemies which will confront us in every generation, Amalek becomes our new eternal enemy—falsehood and evil. We no longer ask God to destroy people; rather, we ask God to erase falsehood and evil and give us courage to fight for right and truth. Note also the use of the term "heathendom" in the above quotation. This is a term Christians could agree with too. God should destroy heathendom; this is like saying that God should uproot unbelief. We no longer ask God to destroy evil people, but ask God to destroy evil and

unbelief. Needless to say, there is no mention of Haman and his sons being hanged on the gallows.

The textual additions for Chanukah and Purim project imagery of hope and spiritual fortitude. Even with the inclusion of the *Al Hanisim* text (which was not found in Wise), overall, the emphasis moves from physical victories of God and Israel in the past and in the future (although is can be found in the Chanukah texts) to spiritual ones. In *Olat Tamid*, we do not ask for God's help to defeat our enemies; instead, we ask for God to help us create a world full of right and truth, not just for Israel, but for everyone. Einhorn's universalistic orientation and willingness to depart from the traditional structure and content of the *siddur* make *Olat Tamid* a vastly different book from the traditional *siddur* or *Minhag America.*

Chapter 5: The *Union Prayer Book*

In 1892 the first *Union Prayer Book* was published by The Ritual Committee of The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). It was based primarily on the rite set forth by I. S. Moses of Milwaukee. However, the 1892 *Union Prayer Book* was recalled shortly after its publication (Hoffman 95).* It was replaced by the 1895 *Union Prayer Book* upon which all successive editions were based. Although there were a number of revisions of the *Union Prayer Book* (most recently in 1940), they did not depart markedly from the rite laid down in the 1895 prayerbook (Ellenson *Between* 199). The *Union Prayer Book* remained the official prayerbook of Reform Judaism until *Gates of Prayer* was published by the CCAR in 1975. Unlike the other prayerbooks surveyed in this paper, *The Union Prayer Book* is the product of a committee, not the work of a single author. As such, it is a work of consensus and reflects the many hands which went into creating the final product.

In comparison to the other prayerbooks in this survey, the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* most resemble Einhorn's *Olat Tamid.* These editions of the *Union Prayer Book* resemble Einhorn's work in their lack of Hebrew, the brevity of their services, and their general approach to liturgy. They open from right to left, and much of them is written only in the

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* For more information about the history of the *Union Prayer Book* (including the recall of the 1892 edition) see the articles by Silberman and Hoffman.

vernacular (Ellenson *Between* 198). Even with their similarity to Einhorn, each of these early editions of the *Union Prayer Book* diverges from *Olat Tamid* in a number of important ways.

In discussing the *Union Prayer Book,* I will consider the 1892 and the 1895 editions, noting where the images of violence and peace within them coincide and where they diverge. As with the other *siddurim,* I will then look at the liturgical additions for Chanukah and Purim and the images reflected in these texts.

Images of violence are almost nonexistent in the 1892 *Union Prayer Book. Emet Ve'emunah,* the evening prayer which recalls redemption from Egypt, is found only in English. The text does not mention the punishment of the Egyptians at all. Also, it is universal in tone; the most particularistic line reads, "And we are Thy people Israel, whom Thou has redeemed from the power of tyrants. (11). This is one of only two times that Israel is mentioned in the prayer. Closer to the main theme of the passage is, "And now that we live in a land of freedom and justice, we shall cling still more faithfully to Thee and Thy word" (11). The 1895 *Union Prayer Book* uses almost exactly the same language saying, "And now that we live in a land of freedom, may we continue to be faithful to Thee and Thy word" (22). The punishment of the Egyptians is not mentioned in the morning counterpart to the above prayer. Neither the 1892 nor the 1895 *Union Prayer Book* mention the drowning of the Egyptians in the Sea of Reeds. Also, they both include

language which asks for redemption not only for Israel but for all persecuted people. A line from *Emet Veyatsiv* in the morning service of the 1892 edition reads, "May Thy light and Thy love abound to all Thy children; may the righteous of all nations rejoice in Thy power" (39). A verse from the same section of the 1895 edition reads, "May Thy love descend upon all Thy children, and Thy truth unite them in the bonds of fellowship" (62).

In the traditional *siddur,* the redemption of Israel is paired with the punishment of Israel's enemies. This pairing is completely absent in the 1892 and the 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book.* In both, the redemption of Israel is linked not to the destruction of Israel's enemies, but to the redemption of other oppressed peoples. While these prayers still commemorate Israel's redemption from Egypt, they have become prayers concerned with more than just the People Israel. The final paragraph of *Emet Ve'emunah* in the 1892 edition reads:

> O Eternal, our God, who hast revealed Thy glory unto our fathers, and hast saved them from the hand of the mighty; be near, we beseech Thee, to all who suffer persecution for the sake of their faith in Thee, and redeem them from their bondage. Be praised, O God, Redeemer of Israel. (12)

The last paragraph of the 1895 edition reads, "As Thou hast redeemed Israel and saved him from arms stronger than his, so mayest Thou redeem all who are oppressed and persecuted. Blessed art Thou, O God, redeemer of Israel"

(22). Along with eliminating the punishment of Israel's enemies, both editions recast this prayer to commemorate the Israelites' redemption from Egypt and to ask God to redeem all the oppressed—Jews and gentiles alike. Like Einhorn, neither *Union Prayer Book* includes *Birkat Haminim, Shirat Hayam,* or the *Akedah.* All of these texts would be out of place in a book which is very universalistic in tone.

The universalism of the *Union Prayer Book* extends beyond removing images of violence towards Israel's enemies to the way images of peace are portrayed in these prayerbooks. As mentioned earlier, in the traditional *siddur,* peace was seen as an absence of violence and persecution from Israel's enemies. The prayers of the traditional *siddur* ask for peace for Israel in particular, without mention of the other nations. However, both editions of the *Union Prayer Book* take a universalistic approach to the peace imagery they employ. As the *chatimah* for *Sim Shalom,* the traditional *siddur* uses, "Blessed are You, Adonai, who blesses his people Israel with peace" (*Avodat Yisrael* 104). In contrast, both the 1892 and the 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* use, "Praise be to Thee, Giver of peace" (1892 48, 1895 92). While both editions use the same universalistic *chatimah* for *Sim Shalom,* they are different in other ways. The 1892 edition includes *Sim Shalom* in both Hebrew and English. The English contains no references to Israel. It begins, "Grant peace, happiness and blessing, grace and mercy to us and to all Thy children." However, in the Hebrew it retains the more

traditional "to us and to all Israel, your people" (48). The same pattern is repeated throughout the prayer with the Hebrew retaining more particularistic language and the English reflecting a universalistic understanding. The 1895 *Union Prayer Book* contains only a English version of *Sim Shalom*. While it requests peace for all people, it gives Israel a special role in bringing about peace. It says, "Grant us peace, Thy most precious gift, O Thou eternal source of peace, and enable Israel to be a messenger of peace unto the peoples of the earth" (92). While peace is requested for all people, Israel has a special role of helping bring peace to the world.

The 1892 and 1895 editions both retain the traditional Hebrew text for *Oseh Shalom* at the end of the *Kaddish*; the text asks God to "make peace for us and for all Israel" (1892 *UPB* 59, 1895 *UPB* 107). However, the English of both editions removes all images of particularity. While eliminating the reference to Israel, the 1892 edition retains the spirit of the original text saying, "May He who preserveth peace in His heavenly spheres, bestow peace upon us, and upon all mankind" (59). The 1895 edition is freer with the text and rewrites it in keeping with the theme of mourning associated with the *Kaddish* at the end of the service. It says, "May the Father of peace send peace to all troubled souls, and comfort all the bereaved among us" (107).

The images of peace set forth in the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* are universalistic in nature but not entirely so. Whereas both Wise and Einhorn change the Hebrew as well as the English removing

references to Israel, both editions of the *Union Prayer Book* maintain mention of Israel in the Hebrew text (when Hebrew text is given) while using a universalistic rendering in the English. As with Wise and Einhorn, however, the texts in both Hebrew and English are more universalistic in nature than the than the text of the traditional *siddur*.

Chanukah and Purim in the *Union Prayer Book*

The first thing one notices of the liturgical additions for Chanukah and Purim in the 1892 *Union Prayer Book* is that Hebrew is nonexistent. The addition for Chanukah is not much different from that found in Wise or Einhorn. Unlike Einhorn, the introductory paragraph, *Al Hanisim,* is not included. A section of the addition for Chanukah reads:

> Then in the fullness of Thy mercy didst Thou aid them in their distress, fight their battles, and give victory to the feeble over the strong, to the few over the many, to the righteous over the wicked, to those who obeyed Thy word over those who assailed truth and virtue. Israel, Thy people, was saved, and restored to freedom and independence. (16).

While the text does not avoid talking about the battles, there also is nothing important in it that is new to the *Union Prayer Book.* As with Wise and Einhorn, the text for Chanukah varies only slightly from the traditional *siddur* text.

The Evening Service for the Sabbath in the 1895 *Union Prayer Book* has a seven-page addition for Chanukah. It includes some introductory and concluding readings, a selection from 2 Maccabees, the benediction for miracles, the *Shehecheyanu,* and the Chanukah hymn *Rock of Ages.* Part of the selection from 2 Maccabees reads, "And when one of the Jews came in the sight of all to sacrifice to the idol, Mattathias was inflamed with zeal, neither could he forbear to show his anger, and he slew him, and also the king's commissioner, and the altar he pulled down" (42). Within the additions the story of Chanukah unfolds; however, the text from the traditional *siddur* is not used or paraphrased as it is in all of the other prayerbooks which have been surveyed in this paper. The violent imagery, while not graphic, is not excised from the text. Perhaps it is seen as so central a part of the Chanukah story that the authors felt it needed to be included.

While, this is a story about the People Israel in the Land of Israel, the text does not ignore the American situation. Part of the concluding reading says:

> Whilst we render unto God the glory due to Him, we also honor the memory of those who gave their lives that their nation might live and Israel's faith endure. Before these lights, fit symbols of the rays which their daring shed into the gloom of their misery, we would be filled with a like spirit of devotion to the weal of this our country. (46)

It is fascinating that in a prayer for the martyrs of Israel there is also a call for devotion to America. American Jews could appreciate that just as Israel fought a war for freedom that is remembered at Chanukah time, America also had to fight a war for freedom and independence. There is a sense that freedom and independence come at a cost, and Jews, especially, must be willing to fight for them. Perhaps it is also a reassurance by the authors that loyalty to the Jewish people need not come at the expense of loyalty to America.

The 1892 edition includes a section in the evening weekday service called "The Maccabees. A Meditation." The meditation ends as follows:

> It therefore behooves us to express our unfaltering trust in the final victory of truth and right over falsehood and iniquity, to preserve within our hearts a courage undaunted, and ever to prove faithless to the memory of our heroic ancestors. Let our every deed, yea, our entire life emphasize our devotion to all that is good and true, and let us never be deterred by difficulty, however great and formidable it may seem, ever relying on the divine protection which secures victory to the righteous cause. (153)

This text expresses hope and confidence of victory, not of Jews over gentiles, but of "truth and right over falsehood and iniquity." This universalizes the passage; it affirms God's protection and aid for all righteous people and all righteous causes, Jewish or not.

The 1895 edition uses a different text for the morning service than its evening service. The text universalizes the Chanukah struggle while maintaining a mission for Israel. An excerpt from the text reads:

> Thou hast entrusted Israel with Thy sacred word and hast appointed him a guardian of truth, a warrior in the cause of justice, a defender of liberty for mankind. Wondrous victories for human progress and for right have our forefathers achieved by Thy help. (81)

The text goes on to retell the story of the Maccabees and their rededication of the Temple. After the rededication of the Temple the text continues:

> Its [the Temple's] perpetual lamp signalized the triumph of the light of Thy truth over heathen darkness, and the victory of a faith ransomed by the blood of martyrs. . . . Not by might nor by hosts, but by Thy spirit do right and liberty triumph.
>
> . . . Hasten the day when nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation nor learn war any more, but walking in Thy light, shall dwell together as brethren in unity acknowledging Thee as the Father of all men, the Lord of righteousness, the God of peace. Amen. (82)

Rather than thanking God for military victory, this passage reframes the battle as a universal battle for right and liberty. Israel does not win the battle because it is mighter, but because Israel and God are on the side of right. As was read above, "Not by might nor by hosts, but by Thy spirit do

right and liberty triumph" (Wise 82). It is not might that makes right; rather, it is right that makes might. The text also changes the focus from one of battle to one of peace. It asks for a time when all shall live together in peace—while Israel is the messenger of peace, it is peace for all that is requested.

The 1892 edition contains a prayer for Shabbat Zakhor (the Shabbat before Purim) which thanks God for redeeming us from Haman. A section of the text reads, "The day had been fixed on which the cruel counselor was to satisfy his revenge in a deluge of blood. Then by Thy might the schemes for the enemy were foiled and Thou didst thrust him into the snare which he had laid for the guiltless" (69-70). While the text does have some violent imagery of Haman's plans for the Jews, it leaves out any mention of Haman and his sons being hanged on the gallows. The passage ends with a universalistic message, "Hasten the day, O God, when all hatred, all malice and prejudice shall vanish from the earth. Let all men recognize that in Thine eyes, O Heavenly Father, all Thy children are alike so that side by side all may labor together in love, united by a common faith in Thee. Amen" (70). Not only does the closing of this passage not mention Israel, it states unequivocally that in God's eyes, all people are the same.

The 1895 edition has a lengthier section for Shabbat Zakhor which includes a couple of readings, biblical texts from the Torah and the Book of Esther, and a mediation. I will focus on the mediation. After talking about the need to remember Amalek and Haman, the text asks:

> Why, year after year, recall the sin of the Amaleks and the Hamans and their punishment? Does not our religion teach us that forgiveness is the duty of man, retribution the work of God? But the solemnity with which Israel condemns Amalek's barbarism and Haman's cruelty is an admonition that strong arms were given, not to destroy the weak, but to protect and defend them, and that the crafty are caught in the nets which they lay for the feet of others. May we be warned by this experience of the past, never to make the weakness of our neighbors an excuse for any injustice towards him. (86)

The text ends with the same ending as the 1892 edition, word for word, asking God to obliterate hatred from the earth and reminding us that all people are the same in God's eyes (86). In the traditional *siddur* the Purim text ends with the hanging of Haman and his sons. The above text justifies recalling the sins of Haman and his punishment, but his actual punishment is not mentioned. The 1895 *Union Prayer Book* justifies the inclusion of Purim which has an element of retribution by talking about the lesson the Jews can learn from the story—that power should be used to protect the powerless.

The Chanukah and Purim texts from the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* soften images of violence and heighten images of peace. The most graphic examples of this are the Purim texts which recast prayers

which traditionally depict violent punishment of Israel's oppressors into prayers that call upon all people, of all faiths and backgrounds, to labor together united in love. Prayers usually full of violent imagery are now full of peaceful, hopeful imagery. In the Purim text particularly, the meaning of the original is completely changed to create a more palatable text.

While in the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* images of violence are subdued, images of peace are given greater prominence. As with Einhorn and Wise, redemption is no longer coupled with punishment of Israel's enemies (although some punishment can still be found). In most cases the English text removes references to Israel in prayers for peace; although, unlike Wise and Einhorn, the particularistic renderings still remain in much of the Hebrew (where Hebrew is present). The *Union Prayer Book* was the official liturgy of American Reform Judaism for eighty years. The images of violence and peace reflected in its pages have made an important imprint on the minds of countless worshipers.

PART III: LIBERAL LITURGIES TODAY

Chapter 6: *Gates of Prayer* and Other Contemporary, Liberal Prayerbooks

The adoption of *Gates of Prayer** in 1975 as the official liturgy of the Reform Movement signaled a new era in American Reform liturgy; the new prayerbook of Reform Judaism reclaimed much of the traditional material that *Olat Tamid* and the *Union Prayer Book* had abandoned (Ellenson *Between* 202-03).

Both the form and the content of *Gates of Prayer* reveal pluralism as the prayerbook's most fundamental underlying principle. In his introduction to *Gates of Prayer,* Chaim Stern writes:

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

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* Unless otherwise noted, all references here to *Gates of Prayer* relate to the original 1975 edition.

> Faithful to this view, we have tried to provide room for many ways of worship. (*Gates of Prayer* xi-xii).

While the traditional *siddur* opens from the left and the *Union Prayer Book* opens from the right, *Gates of Prayer*, in the spirit of pluralism, is available in two editions—one which opens like an English book and one which opens like a Hebrew book. There are also a multiplicity of services available to the worshiper. For Shabbat evening, for example, ten alternative services are offered; six different liturgies are offered for Shabbat morning. The services run the gamut from "The Classical *Siddur*" which "adheres closely to both the structure and the content of the classical *siddur*" to an "Equivocal Service" in which "no passages intended for English reading contain the word 'God'" (Stern 171-76). Not only are the themes of the services different, but both the English and Hebrew texts of the prayers vary from service to service. Since there are so many different textual versions in *Gates of Prayer,* a comparison of the contents of *Gates of Prayer* to older prayerbooks is difficult. Therefore, I have chosen to focus primarily on service one of *Gates of Prayer* which most closely adheres to the classical *siddur.* By using the most traditional service, one can see how far the Reform movement was willing to go in reclaiming traditional texts in creating *Gates of Prayer.* I will however, make reference to material in other services when I deem it necessary.

In addition to examining where Reform liturgy changes in *Gates of Prayer* in comparison to the *Union Prayer Book,* I will also cite other contemporary, liberal liturgies of the Conservative and Reconstructionist movements where I feel it is appropriate. Also, I will make reference to the 1994 gender sensitive edition of *Gates of Prayer* titled *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays.*

Gates of Prayer is much less adverse to particularistic language than the *Union Prayer Book.* Although, overall, particularistic language is common throughout *Gates of Prayer,* images of violence, as with the *Union Prayer Book* remain minimal. While the text of *Emet Ve'emunah* in *Gates of Prayer* varies from that of either edition of the *Union Prayer Book* (and the 1892 edition has no Hebrew text of this prayer at all), the images it reflects are similar. While the traditional *siddur* mentions the slaying of the Egyptian's first born and their drowning in the Sea of Reeds, *Gates of Prayer* makes no mention of either. This is true in *Emet Veyatsiv* as well. As with the *Union Prayer Book,* the emphasis in *Gates of Prayer* is on Israel's redemption, not the punishment of the Egyptians.

While *Gates of Prayer* does not contain imagery of violent punishment of Israel's enemies, it also does not try to universalize these redemption prayers to be a call for the redemption of all peoples. In the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book, Emet Ve'emunah* and *Emet Veyatsiv* ask for universal redemption. For example, the 1892 edition states, "May Thy

light and Thy love abound to all Thy children; may the righteous of all nations rejoice in Thy power" (39). In another place the 1895 edition of the *Union Prayer Book* reads, "mayest Thou redeem all who are oppressed and persecuted" (22). None of this universalistic language is in the versions of *Emet Veyatsiv* and *Emet Ve'emunah* found in *Gates of Prayer.* Neither violent images of punishment nor universalistic images of redemption are found in these prayers in *Gates of Prayer.*

Other liberal prayerbooks have had to struggle with whether to include the violent imagery traditionally found in these prayers which praise God for Israel's redemption from Egypt. It is exactly these images that the Talmud requires at this point in the service, so liberal liturgies have had to struggle with the tension between the Jewish tradition and modern sensibilities (Ellenson "How" 126-28). While the Reconstructionist prayerbook, *Kol Haneshamah,* like the Reform prayerbook, eliminates the violent punishment of the Egyptians from its text, *Siddur Sim Shalom,* the Conservative prayerbook, retains the traditional Hebrew text (*Kol Haneshamah* 75-77, 287-89; *Siddur Sim Shalom* 102-04, 204). However, the English softens the images slightly by using a passive voice. "You killed all their first-born" is rendered, "The first-born of the Egyptians were slain," and instead of having God drown the wicked, the text says, "the wicked drowned" (*Siddur Sim Shalom* 105). With this compromise the Conservative

Movement is able to fulfill its *halakhic* obligation to mention the punishment of the Egyptians while softening the text for the English reader.

As with Wise, Einhorn, and the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book, Birkat Haminim* is not found in *Gates of Prayer.* Similarly, neither *Shirat Hayam* nor the *Akedah* are found in *Gates of Prayer.* However, in the 1994 volume, *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays, Birkat Haminim* is reinstated, albeit with a rewritten text. While the traditional text of *Birkat Haminim* asks God to destroy the slanderers *[malshinim],* the text in the 1994 version of *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays* is titled "On Evil" and reads as follows:

> Let the reign of evil afflict us no more. May every errant heart find its way back to You. O help us to shatter the dominion of arrogance, to raise up a better world where virtue will ennoble the life of Your children.
>
> We praise You, O God, whose will it is that evil may vanish from the earth. (29)

Instead of being asked to destroy people, God is asked to destroy evil and to help those that have strayed to return to a right path. It is not Israel's enemies that are a threat and need to be destroyed; rather, it is evil, the eternal enemy of all humanity, that needs to be eliminated. Instead of eliminating *Birkat Haminim,* the 1994 Reform prayerbook rewrites the text to fit contemporary sensibilities.

Siddur Sim Shalom, the Conservative prayerbook, includes the traditional text for *Birkat Haminim.* However, as with the earlier example of the Egyptians being drowned, the English text here is softened. Rather then the traditional opening words, "Let there be no hope for slanders," *Siddur Sim Shalom* reads, "Frustrate the hopes of all those who malign us" (113). Again, the Conservative liturgy tries to make the English sound more palatable, but is wary about straying from the traditional text in the Hebrew. Other texts which are omitted from Reform liturgies, like *Shirat Hayam,* are also included in *Siddur Sim Shalom.*

The return of particularistic images in *Gates of Prayer* is reflected in the images of peace the prayerbook projects. In the more traditional services of *Gates of Prayer,* for example, the *chatimah* for the prayers for peace, *Sim Shalom* and *Shalom Rav,* has been changed back to the traditional formula. While both the 1892 and the 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* use, "Praise be to Thee, Giver of peace" as their *chatimah, Gates of Prayer* uses the traditional *chatimah,* "Praised be the Lord, who blesses His people Israel with peace" (140, 313). The English of *Sim Shalom*, however, is rendered more universally as "O bless Your people Israel and all peoples with enduring peace! Praised be the Lord who blesses His people Israel with peace" (313). The words, "and all peoples," are not found in the Hebrew, but are inserted here in the English.

In keeping with the principle of pluralism, however, other versions of these prayers are found in *Gates of Prayer* as well. For example, a Hebrew version of *Shalom Rav* found elsewhere in the prayerbook asks God to grant peace to "Israel Your people, and to all peoples" (202). Also, in the Hebrew, this *chatimah* is identical to the *chatimah* found in the *Union Prayer Book.* Since *Gates of Prayer* modernizes the English, the translations vary between the *Union Prayer Book* and *Gates of Prayer* even when the Hebrew is the same. While the *chatimah* in the *Union Prayer Book* reads, "Praise be to Thee, Giver of peace," the *chatimah* in *Gates of Prayer* reads, "Blessed is the Eternal God, the Source of peace" (1892 *UPB* 48, 1895 *UPB* 92, *GOP* 202). Similarly, more universalistic versions of *Sim Shalom* can also be found in *Gates of Prayer* (345). As with the *Union Prayer Book* (but unlike Wise and Einhorn), these more universalistic versions, retain a special request for Israel. The Hebrew texts say, "Israel and other peoples," not "all peoples." The texts try to be universalistic and particularistic simultaneously.

In addition, *Hashkivenu,* which disappeared from Reform prayerbooks, is once again found in *Gates of Prayer.* In it, the worshiper asks God to protect him/her from "hatred and plague . . . war and famine and anguish." It also asks God to protect us through the night and allow, "that we may lie down in peace, and raise us up, O Sovereign, to life renewed" (133). While the *chatimah* for Shabbat evening is, "Blessed is the Lord, whose shelter of peace is spread over us, over all His people Israel, and over Jerusalem" (133),

the *chatimah* for weekdays is, "Blessed is the Lord, Guardian of His people Israel for ever" (35). In both its Shabbat and weekday versions this is a particularistic prayer asking God to protect Israel (and on Shabbat Jerusalem). These texts in *Gates of Prayer* do not mention other peoples. Rather they ask God to take special care of "His people Israel" (35, 133). *Gates of Prayer* seems to be comfortable using particularistic imagery in its prayers for peace. Peace for Israel is primary; peace for other, when mentioned, is secondary.

While the Reconstructionist prayerbook, *Kol Haneshamah*, maintains the traditional *chatimah* for *Hashkivenu, Shalom Rav* and *Sim Shalom* are rendered in a more universalistic way. They add, "and all who dwell on earth" to supplement the mentioning of Israel. Also, as in the *Union Prayer Book* and the more universalistic versions in *Gates of Prayer,* the *chatimah* for both *Shalom Rav* and *Sim Shalom* calls God, "maker of peace" (*Kol Haneshamah* 103, 321). In contrast, the traditional text asks God to make peace for Israel (*Avodat Yisrael* 104).

The Conservative prayerbook, *Siddur Sim Shalom,* retains all of the traditional, particularistic imagery of *Sim Shalom* and *Shalom Rav;* however, it adds words to each to make the texts more universalistic. In *Sim Shalom* the words, "to the world" (in Hebrew only one word: *"ba'olam"*) are added to the first line so that the first words read, "Grant peace to the world" (121). The rest of the prayer maintains the traditional, particularistic

imagery. Also, the first line of *Shalom Rav* reads, "Grant true and lasting peace to Your people Israel and to all who dwell on earth" (303). The words, "and to all who dwell on earth" (found in the Hebrew text as, "*ve'al kol yoshvei teiveil*") are added to give the prayer a more universalistic message (302-03). However, the rest of the prayer, including the *chatimah,* maintains the traditional, particularistic imagery.

Chanukah and Purim in *Gates of Prayer*
and Other Contemporary, Liberal Liturgies

Unlike the early editions of the *Union Prayer Book* the Hebrew texts for Chanukah are restored in *Gates of Prayer.* Similarly, the additions for Chanukah in *Gates of Prayer* return to a more traditional form than that found in the early editions of the *Union Prayer Book.* Both the introductory paragraph, *Al Hanisim,* and the Chanukah-specific paragraph are included in English and in Hebrew. The introductory paragraph is left in its traditional form; however, the Chanukah-specific paragraph is softened slightly in the Hebrew and more so in the English. The traditional text states, "You took up their grievance, judged their claim, and avenged their wrong. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, and the wanton into the hands of diligent students of your Torah" (*Avodat Yisrael* 101). The English of *Gates of Prayer,* however, condenses all this into, "Though the power of Your spirit the weak defeated the strong, the few prevailed over the

many, and the righteous were triumphant" (69). While the overall idea is the same, the strongest violent images are eliminated from the English of *Gates of Prayer*. In the Hebrew of *Gates of Prayer*, only "avenged their wrong" is eliminated.

Also, in a *Gates of Prayer* section with readings for special occasions, there is a three-page selection of English readings for Chanukah. It contains an introductory reading and a selection from I Maccabees. A paragraph in the introductory reading is reminiscent of the 1895 *Union Prayer Book*. The text in *Gates of Prayer* reads:

> Help us to understand and proclaim the truth, that not by might and not by power, but by Your spirit alone can we prevail. Grant to each person and every nation the blessings of liberty, justice, and peace. Let injustice and oppression cease, and hatred, cruelty, and wrong pass away, so that all human beings may unite to worship You in love and devotion. (397)

Just as in the *Union Prayer Book,* this passage transforms the Chanukah message into one of universal freedom and peace. The Jewish people did not win its battle because it was more powerful, but because it was fighting alongside God on the side of right and liberty. While Chanukah is a story of Jews fighting for freedom for themselves, this text expands the message of Chanukah to remind us that God is on the side of all who fight for peace, liberty, and justice.

The Purim additions in *Gates of Prayer* include the introductory paragraph, *Al Hanisim,* and the Purim-specific paragraph. As with Chanukah the introductory paragraph is left intact; however, the Purim-specific paragraph is redacted to eliminate violent imagery. It reads:

> In the days of Mordecai and Esther, the wicked Haman arose in Persia, plotting the destruction of all the Jews. He planned to destroy them in a single day, the thirteenth of Adar, and to permit the plunder of their possessions.
>
> But through Your great mercy his plan was thwarted, his scheme frustrated. We therefore thank and bless You, O great and gracious God! (69)

There is no mention in the above text of retribution; Haman is not hanged. In fact, there is no mention of punishment at all.

The prayerbook section with readings for special occasions has two parts dedicated to Purim: one for Shabbat Zakhor and one for Purim itself. A reading from the section for Shabbat Zakhor says:

> How often our people has had to defy prejudice and slander, hatred and oppression! In many lands and ages Amalek and his cruel descendants have risen up against us, and untold suffering has been our lot. For our loyalty to God and our ancestral heritage we have paid dearly.

> But the same heritage has given us strength to bear our suffering with dignity and fortitude, and to remain unshaken in our conviction that in the end good must triumph over evil, truth over falsehood, and love over hate. (400)

These same images can be found in the section for Purim itself. A segment of it reads:

> This day brings to mind the darkness and gloom we have experienced in many generations. Painful trials and bitter struggles, torment of body and agony of mind have been our portion too many times. But sustained by the undying hope that in the end right will triumph over wrong, good over evil, and love over hate, we have held aloft the banner of your truth.
>
> . . . Before the mighty onrush of Your light and love, we shall yet see the forces of darkness, cruel Amalek and vindictive Haman, succumb and vanish. And although many a bitter experience may await us before prejudice and hate shall have vanished, still we trust that in the end all humanity will unite in love. (403)

In a post Holocaust world (*Gates of Prayer* was the first American Reform Movement prayerbook after the Holocaust), Amalek is not just a metaphor for our battle with falsehood and evil (as it is for Einhorn), but a reminder of the flesh and blood people who have risen up to slaughter us. However, even

with this reminder, the text is optimistic saying that in the end right, good, truth, and love will prevail. While Jews have suffered more than their share of suffering and persecution in human history, the text still affirms that eventually the world will be united by a universal love, and peace will reign for all of humanity.

The Conservative prayerbook, *Siddur Sim Shalom,* retains the traditional text in the Hebrew for both Chanukah and Purim. The English of the Chanukah text is rendered fairly true to the Hebrew; however, the English of the Purim section is rendered in a way to minimize the violent imagery without leaving out sections of the text. Like Wise many years earlier, *Siddur Sim Shalom* renders the line about the hanging of Haman and his sons in a passive voice, saying, "Haman, together with his sons, suffered death on the gallows he had made for Mordecai" (119). This is in keeping with what was noted earlier: the Conservative *siddur* tends to retain the traditional Hebrew while rendering the English in keeping with softer, less violent imagery. In addition, *Siddur Sim Shalom* does not include sections with more universalistic readings for Chanukah and Purim; this further sets it apart from *Gates of Prayer.*

The images in the additions for Chanukah and Purim in *Gates of Prayer* mirror those in the rest of the prayerbook. While images of peace are rendered in more particularistic imagery than earlier Reform prayerbooks, images of violence are not reinstated. *Gates of Prayer* reflects much stronger

images of Jewish particularity throughout, including in its peace imagery. However, it is not comfortable with Jewish particularity coming at the expense of other peoples. Therefore, images of violence remain minimal as they are in the *Union Prayer Book*.

Conclusion

What I learned studying images of violence and peace in the *siddur* surprised me. My expectation was that images of violence would decrease from *Seder Rav Amram* to the *Union Prayer Book* and that images of peace would increase. I believed that with *Gates of Prayer* the images would move back towards the traditional *siddur,* even if only slightly. None of these suppositions was entirely incorrect; however, the images were much more complex than I initially thought.

Images of peace did not necessarily grow in number as the prayerbooks became more modern—they just changed. While certainly the *Union Prayer Book* (and *Gates of Prayer,* for that matter), was more universalistic in its vision of peace than the traditional *siddur,* I was surprised to find that the images of peace in the *Union Prayer Book* were more particularistic than those found in Einhorn and on par with those found in Wise. While, for example, in both the 1892 and 1895 editions of the *Union Prayer Book* Israel is mentioned (along with all peoples) in the prayer *Sim Shalom*, Einhorn removes particularistic requests of peace for Israel in both Hebrew and English. While certainly, in general, *Minhag America,* is a more particularistic *siddur* than the *Union Prayer Book,* I was shocked to find that regarding images of peace they were similar—including Israel, but also other peoples.

I expected *Gates of Prayer* to include more particularistic images of peace and more images of violence than the *Union Prayer Book*. While there were more particularistic images of peace, images of violence did not return. The traditional pairing of Israel's redemption with the punishment of Israel's enemies is absent in even the most traditional service in *Gates of Prayer.* Also, the violent images of the Purim texts, including the hanging of Haman and his sons do not appear. So, while particularity returned to some of the peace imagery in *Gates of Prayer,* violent imagery towards Israel's enemies is not restored. In fact, it is sometimes made into peace imagery. Instead of hoping for a future when Israel's enemies will be wiped out, *Gates of Prayer,* hopes for an time when "all humanity will unite in love" (403). While in a post-Holocaust world, *Gates of Prayer* recognizes that evil people do rise up against us (instead of just evil), the optimistic, universalistic hope found in Einhorn and the early editions of the *Union Prayer Book* is reflected in *Gates of Prayer* as well.

When embarking upon this study I hoped to gain a better understanding of images of violence and peace in the *siddur* and their development. That has certainly happened. However, I have, in addition, learned an enormous amount about these prayerbooks and their development in general.

Prayerbooks, and liberal prayerbooks in particular, are, in a way, always works in progress. They leave their mark, hopefully inspiring a

generations of worshipers, until the next generation renews the process and creates their own prayerbooks. Similarly, this paper is a work in progress. The Reform Movement has already begun a process to create a new prayerbook for the twenty-first century. It will draw from the traditional *siddur,* the liberal liturgies which came before it, and the experiences and dreams of a new generation of American Reform Jews. It will project a new set of images which will inform the minds and hearts of American Reform Jews for years to come. Liturgy, and particularly liberal liturgy, is, for me, a wonderful source of inspiration. Putting into words our hopes, dreams, and fears open up pathways to God. Looking at the images we choose to include in our prayerbooks also opens up a fascinating window through which we can learn more about ourselves.

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